

Meet the young woman behind our most expensive house

At \$70 million, it may be the most expensive home ever built in the state, but the Oswal family say it doesn't need to be the most controversial.

Radhika Oswal (29) has spoken candidly to the POST about her life and the thinking behind the new Peppermint Grove house.

"God has been very kind to me and I feel privileged to be able to build my dream home," said Radhika.

The shire's full council is expected to approve the plans on Monday after a committee recommended approval last Monday.

The original plans have been slightly changed to comply with Peppermint Grove's building laws.



"Love and karma are all that really matter," says Radhika Oswal, pictured with her husband Pankaj. Picture: Paul McGovern

Architects have created a "beautiful, family home in a tranquil setting," Radhika said.

The two-storey home will have six bedrooms, an observatory with a revolving roof and a garage to fit up to 16 cars. A separate temple and gymnasium will be built beside the main house.

The home, on eight blocks of Warren Anderson's central Peppermint Grove superblock in Bay View Terrace, will overlook tennis courts and Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club.

"It is the most beautiful panorama with a vista over greenery to the yachts on the water," Radhika said.

The block was carefully selected for its Vaastu principles.

Vaastu is a Hindu canon of architecture, planning and design in harmony with physical and spiritual forces.

Local architects travelled with Radhika to India to meet the family's guru and learn the spiritual secrets of home design.

"Vaastu are simple concepts, it is really just a science that tells you how to be cool in summer, warm in winter, and makes the most of wind and light," she said.

The home will sit in the south-west corner and a manicured garden will fill the rest of the block.

Radhika said local and imported hand-carved sandstone and timber window frames would complement rich Indian tones inside and create a palatial but not ostentatious home.

Tenders for the constructions will go out to local contractors early next year.

Several builders have already expressed an interest.

"In consideration of our budget it will require a builder and craftsmen of significant calibre," Radhika said.

"It is a beautiful home with a beautiful outlook."

Radhika said she enjoyed entertaining but was not an extrovert. She said the home would be very welcoming and enjoyable for parties.

"One day when my two daughters are old enough to get married I hope they can still feel comfortable when they visit, and enjoy their own space; that's really what I want," she said.

The people closest to her were her family, she said.

Radhika has been in Perth with her husband Pankaj (34) for six years.

"Australia is home for me now, it's our future," Radhika Oswald said.

They have been married 10 years.

"We visit India a couple of times each year but our family often comes here," she said.

She said coming to Perth was important for Pankaj, a chemical engineer, who built the \$1 billion Burrup Fertiliser plant near Karratha. The first shipment of ammonia left Dampier last year.

Pankaj Oswald said the company was now the biggest Indian investment in Australia and one of the Oswald family's biggest projects.

It produces 760,000 tonnes of ammonia a year, 6% of the world's total, has created 1100 jobs and has projected life of 25 years.

"We were very blessed and lucky to come from families with wealth but Pankaj wanted to see what he could do for himself," Radhika said.

After finishing school Radhika also studied, spending a year in Switzerland studying gemology.

She is currently working on a new project from the Burrup Fertiliser office.

She plans to open a vegetarian international fast food chain, inspired by her religious beliefs.

"It will be fast casual, environmentally conscious promoting reduced carbon emissions," she said.

It will start in the United States and Europe first and Radhika hopes an outlet in Perth won't be too far away.

She said the only thing letting Perth down was the lack of international designers, but occasional trips to Singapore gave her a fix.

"Louis Vuitton only ever gets in a couple of the new styles, and they sell out," she said.

"They do special orders but it's hard to beat Singapore."

Radhika said she understood how lucky her life was and found inspiration in her devotion to one of Indian's most famous spiritual leaders, Ramesh Bhai Oza, nicknamed Bhaishri, or Big Brother.

"It's not about Hinduism or Christianity," she said.

"Life is about love and karma.

"Anything that defines love is religion and that doesn't need to mean sitting and meditating in a temple, it means living your life with love."

She said she was looking forward to a visit to Perth by her guru next June.

Radhika said Bhaishri would welcome anyone who wanted to attend the lectures.

"He lives by example, not only by what he preaches," she said.

"To be around him is inspiring.

"All that we have is here today but it could not be tomorrow.

"Only your beliefs, your hopes, your karma and your love matters."

She said some media reports might cause tension among her soon-to-be neighbours.

"I don't have enemies, she said.

"Not one."

Radhika said it was unfortunate a misunderstanding about the re-numbering of the street to make her home number 1 may have created tension.

The new house will now be number 2.

"I am looking forward to raising my family in my beautiful home and enjoying the surroundings," she said.

Radhika expects the home to be completed in 2010.

Romy Ranalli