

MONIER

INSIDE THE BLOCK

Architect Julian
Brenchley reveals
why ElementaTM
was the perfect
roofing choice

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TO KNOW ABOUT
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BEFORE YOU START

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Elemental has
The Block covered
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TOPPING OFF

THE
BLOCK

It's a fast-paced atmosphere both on camera and behind the scenes at The Block. Architect Julian Brenchley shares why Monier's new Elemental™ roofing system is the secret to the success of the project

It's organised chaos on the set of Australia's most famous building site – The Block, this year located in the upmarket suburb of Elsternwick, Victoria. Five teams of contestants, countless tradespeople as well as camera crews, traffic wardens, plus curious neighbours, are milling around.

As any renovator or builder will know, things don't always go as planned when it comes to constructing your dream house. Luckily, for most of us, these disasters are not recorded on camera. Not so for this year's contestants – an eclectic mix of novices, tradies and seasoned renovators.

There's drama at every turn.

This year The Block centres on five rescued weatherboard homes – uprooted from all over the state to be renewed in front of the cameras and then added to in the form of spectacular and imposing two-storey modern additions, which are topped off with sleek roofing courtesy of Monier's new Elemental™ series.

Inkstone



SPONSORS LIKE
MONIER STEP IN
BECAUSE THEY HAVE
ENOUGH SCALE TO
BE ABLE TO PROVIDE
THE MATERIALS AT
SHORT NOTICE

As host Scott Cam says – this time The Block is doing a whole street!

The unique project gives the teams the opportunity to provide or restore period features in the older homes – then complement them with state-of-the-art modern fittings and architectural elements in the two-storey additions. A perfect blend of styles. In theory.

It's a challenge, but luckily lead architect Julian Brenchley is across it all. Brenchley has been the architect behind the scenes at The Block from day one – from 2002, in fact. He is the one who sources the houses, designs the exteriors and deals with all the necessary planning permits along the way.

He's really the show's best kept secret.

"I am the architect behind the scenes," he says. "I don't get involved in interiors at all, which is probably a good thing. That's their [the contestants] bag really. Really the outside is my domain. I work on all the architecture and the approvals for the houses. Sourcing the houses, making sure the design works; that's where I kind of step in."

"We really are in the background of the show," he says, adding that there is a fair few dramas behind the camera as well as in front.

"Some would say there is a show in the background," he says, laughing. "That's the stress we have to deal with. But it is what it is and we have got it approved. It's great fun even if it's stressful."

What makes working on The Block so stressful is the extreme time constraints, says Brenchley, much more intense than regular building projects.



**JULIAN
BRENCHLY**
Lead architect
on The Block



LEFT
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“In a nutshell, that’s the show. Not so much the quality so much or the cost, it’s the time really,” he says. “There are challenges with availability, but that’s where some of these sponsors like Monier step in because they have enough scale to be able to provide the materials at short notice. That’s good for me.”

This year, Monier has helped to reduce his stress levels even further with its involvement in providing the roofing materials on the sparkling new rear additions. Brenchley chose Monier’s new Elemental™ product for all five buildings.

It’s the first time he’s specified Elemental™ for The Block, or any of his normal architectural projects – and he can’t praise it enough.

“It is an amazing product,” he says. “It’s amazing that they have been able to bring out a tile that looks like slate to the untrained eye and with robustness and longevity – and minimal maintenance. It’s really lightweight, and easy for the trades to use.”



The Block
Elsternwick
3185

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ABOVE
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Brenchley loved the look of the Elemental products – the sleek modern finish works well with the bricks used – and says the contemporary design was a perfect fit with the industrial look he designed.

The two-storey additions have an industrial-style feel to their styling – right on trend, and one that suits Elemental™ beautifully. The dark brickwork and upper-storey cladding complement the slate look of the roofing materials, helping to produce a cohesive aesthetic that won't look out of place in the neighbourhood.

And that's the sort of design details that count when it comes to selling the houses at the end of the series.

THE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN WAS A PERFECT FIT WITH THE INDUSTRIAL LOOK HE DESIGNED

“It's a really smart solution and it works really well for the area too – it suits the calibre of the area,” says Brenchley. “There are a lot of slate roofs here; it's that sort of language and that's why we went for that.

He adds that the ease of installation was a big plus for The Block's tradie team. “They are a quick install,” he says. “It's really important... well, it's important on any site of course, but for us it's vital. It's a low-tech install, even though it's a very high-tech product.

Brenchley says that the Elemental™ product looks great too, which is important in a prestige suburb such as Elsternwick.

Because, despite the seeming glamour of the television series, it all comes down to the local real estate market. At the end of the day, says Brenchley, to win The Block depends on each contestant being able to sell the properties for a good profit.

“The show is about being able to sell these places for the best possible price. That's what it comes down to. That's how you win, so really it's about finding the product that suits the architecture of course, the timeframe and then the end product – so what it looks like.”

However, while the sophisticated look of Elemental™ is “a really good part of the story”, Brenchley is full of praise for the way Monier has organised the product from installation right through to the final appearance.

“They have thought through Elemental™ and the install to make it easy,” he says. “The clipping systems, the flashing system, how it works with other trades – such as the plumbing trade for the downpipes and the gutters. The actual product itself lends itself really well to being integrated with other building trades. It's been very well thought out, the integration process.”

BELOW
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BRENCHLEY IS FULL OF PRAISE FOR THE WAY MONIER HAS ORGANISED THE PRODUCT FROM INSTALLATION RIGHT THROUGH TO THE FINAL APPEARANCE