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WORDS ANYA POPE

Block rocking

Standing proud next to its low-rise urban neighbours, this playful home injects vibrant colour into a subdued Canadian cityscape

Like an invitation to come and play, 157 Coxwell Avenue decorates an Ontario city street like a giant Rubik's cube. The three-storey, 800sqft building is actually a two-bedroom family home, complete with natural air infiltration and underfloor heating to help cope with those freezing Canadian winters.

Measuring approximately 16x16ft, the resin-impregnated plywood frame stands on four steel pillars and was relatively easy to assemble, unlike its Rubik's cube equivalent. The multi-hued structure is certainly no wallflower among the adjacent Victorian properties, although its linear form echoes the low-rise apartments around it.

While it may look simplistic, architect Rohan Walters plants his inspiration firmly in the arts - his aim was to create a 'living painting' in the city. The idea for its trademark coloured panels was born when Walters was moping in an art gallery after leaving his job as assistant art director on a Harrison Ford film. The colours of the sky, flora and fauna in the paintings led to the deep blues, mustard yellows, bright reds and greens that pepper the building's walls, giving the impression a child has dropped its toy in the street. But this is one toy that's strictly for grown-ups!