



Character and authenticity

An imaginative addition to a 1900's weatherboard cottage creates a perfect, and award-winning, family home.

Photography by Bridget Arnott



Pretty Beach hugs a gentle curve of coast and is backed by national park. It is home to this stunning residence, which combines a 1900s weatherboard beach cottage with a 2006 pavilion designed by multi-award-winning architect David Boyle. Rather than a contemporary knock-down-rebuild, the focus of this project was to add another layer of history to the house. David, an alumnus of Newcastle University, was charged with maintaining the charm and character of the old two-bedroom beach cottage, while creating a functional home for a modern family with four young children.

And what a success! The existing cottage has been converted into four bedrooms with a veranda/play area, and is now the children's domain. The pavilion includes a new entry and a master bedroom suite on the lower level, and an open-plan living and kitchen area on the upper level. The living and kitchen areas take advantage of spectacular north-easterly views of Brisbane Waters. The kitchen is partially screened from the living space, which opens out to a covered deck and the children's cubby house in the backyard. Designed under a tight budget, the pavilion has a timber post and beam structure and is clad in fibre cement. It is sympathetic to the original cottage in its form, but contemporary in its details.

The original cottage is now the children's domain, with four bedrooms and a play area. The rooms are furnished with secondhand finds and feature charming, whimsical murals.





The upper level features a series of solid core doors that hinge open, allowing a flood of additional natural light that the budget would not otherwise have afforded. The doors are the signature of the house, like breathing walls, they open to capture morning sun, cooling breezes, direct views and screen the house from an adjoining pedestrian path up the hill to the national park. The doors open at varying degrees so you can easily open them up or close them down to let in the desired degree of light, air or outdoors according to your mood. They also provide fantastic cross-ventilation – there is no mechanical heating or cooling in the home at all. The doors have been painted in a tonal range of green and brown, inspired by the surrounding landscape.

Despite the modern additions, the house has maintained its old-world cottage feel. The family chose to use recycled timber for the floors and have furnished the home with recycled furniture, mainly sourced from local second hand shops and garage sales. The decorating makes the most of handmade, reused and repurposed objects. In fact, the kitchen floor and cupboards were repurposed from timber found in a family shed in Lennox Head. One favourite feature is the old claw-foot bath, installed on the terrace just behind the original cottage, which is a beloved bathing spot in both summer and winter.

In 2011, the residence won David the Australian Institute of Architects Small Projects award, which recognises project that have been constrained by space or cost restrictions, yet have achieved a level of invention, creativity and craftsmanship beyond these constraints.



Revere the old, rather than obliterate it

The pavillion is sympathetic to the original cottage in its form, but contemporary in its details. It includes an entry, master bedroom suite and open-plan living and kitchen area. The living areas take advantage of spectacular north-easterly views of Brisbane Water.



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Breathing walls

The use of hinged solid core doors in the pavillion is an ingenious and affordable idea. Not only are they incredibly functional, allowing the owners to vary light and air movement within the house, they also form a stunning feature from both within and outside.

The use of different tones in earthy yet modern colours creates a huge, sculptural centrepiece for the home. Its solid functionality beautifully complements the recycled materials and flea market finds used throughout the home.

The cross-ventilation aspect of the doors is so effective that no mechanical cooling is necessary, even at the height of summer. The intention of cross-ventilation is to keep a structure as naturally cool as possible to reduce reliance on electric fans and air conditioners. This is great for both the environment AND your bank balance. By positioning openings across from each other, good airflow can be maintained. This will naturally pull cooler air in and expel warmer air from your home.



David Boyle Architect was established in 2002 and specialises in residential design. Their projects have received many architectural and industry awards and have been featured in publications and on television programmes.

They specialise in offering clients a personalised and professional architectural service with a focus on design excellence based on responsible and creative resource allocation and underpinned by sustainable passive design principles.



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