



TIMELESS HOUSE (below) The clients wanted a house that would remain 'timeless'. The design uses natural materials that weather gracefully over time, incorporated into a conventional building form with elegant proportions.

MODERNIST HOUSE (bottom) The design responds to the orientation of the site and the environment while meeting the clients' aesthetic preferences for a new house that reflects the modernist 1960s houses that can still be found in the Floreat area.



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and sustainability of your built environment; improve the efficiency of your lifestyle or business and deliver time and cost efficiencies.”

While other ‘specialists’ may provide building design services, architects are rigorously trained in the profession. Much like medical practitioners they have to complete at least seven years of study and practical experience in order to sit the examinations that, once passed, officially acknowledge their qualification as architects. And it doesn’t stop there; to remain accredited they must prove to the Architects Registration Board that they are worthy professionals by completing regular professional development and displaying good industry knowledge.

1 The Royal Australian Institute of Architects new website ‘Find an Architect’ (findanarchitect.com.au) has made sourcing architects a lot easier. It’s an online Australia-wide directory of qualified and experienced architectural firms. Don’t be limited to searching only within your suburb – it’s not necessary for your architect to have an office around the corner – search instead by state, for example WA.

2 Look for the ‘A+’ badge when browsing architects’ websites – the logo denotes firms that are recognised by the Australian Institute of Architects for upholding the highest industry standards. They also have access to the latest industry information and advice, which means you

6 MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE FROM DAY ONE

tips on how to select the right architect *By NEIL COWNIE.*

WHEN YOU DECIDE to build a new home or add to your existing home you are about to step forth on an exciting journey, where your hopes and dreams become physical reality. Your best friend and confidante on this journey will be your architect.

Architects turn dreams into reality and will support you through the process. Such a shared journey involves discussions about your personal habits, style preferences, hobbies and even your family relationships, so it’s really important that you choose an architect you can trust.

So how do you find the right architect for you, your vision and, importantly, your budget?

In my travels as an architect over the past 30 years, I am often asked this question and these are my tips for making the right choice.

Firstly though, it’s important to understand at the outset why your project should be led by the architect and not by the ‘build’.

It’s like putting the ‘cart before the horse’ to lock yourself into a construction package before properly considering the

building design with a suitably qualified and independent professional, i.e. an architect. Don’t waste your sizeable investment by overlooking this important stage.

Your lifestyle needs and your budget will be better met this way.

According to findanarchitect.com.au, working with an architect gives you the best chance of achieving your vision.

“Finding an architect that suits you and your project is the key to success – from building a new home to developing a commercial space. An architect can help you improve the appearance, functionality



also have access to the best design and construction solutions to meet your brief.

3 Choose an 'independent' architect One of the many benefits of working with an architect is the independent advice and guidance that you'll receive throughout the whole process. Their autonomy makes for your peace of mind; they will act as your advocate when dealing with other contractors. So, look for an architect that is not compromised by association with other components of the design and build process.

4 Good design is about personalised tailoring Each new client and site presents an opportunity for an architect to provide unique outcomes. Be wary of firms who display a cookie-cutter approach to design. Experienced architects draw upon the parameters and opportunities that each new site presents, as well as the vision and lifestyle of each client, to purpose design houses. Each house pictured here looks distinctively different because each house has been designed to respond to the client's specific requirements, its setting and environment.

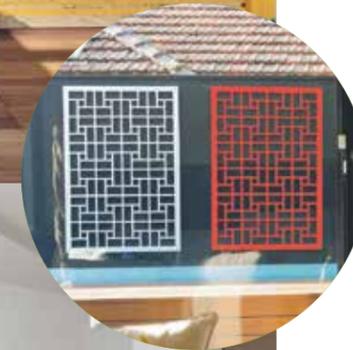
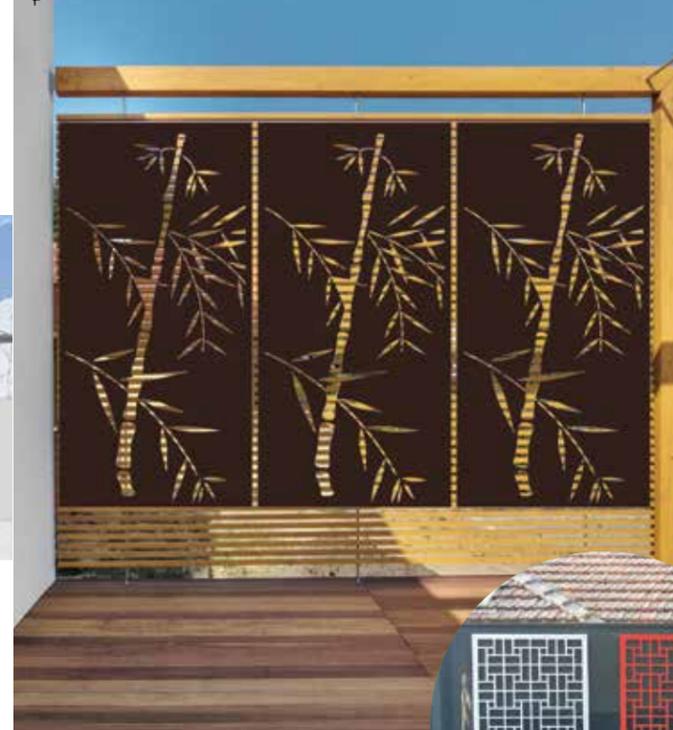
6 In the final stage of your selection I strongly recommend that you ask for the contact details of referees - not just past clients, but also builders and other consultants such as structural engineers. You'll be able to gauge by their responses if the architect is capable of providing the standard of design that you require, such as complete project follow-through, adequately detailed technical drawings that minimise cost variations and onsite administration. Visit neilcouniearchitect.com.au. **PL**



5 Maintain direct contact throughout When you've created a short list and you start contacting architectural firms, make sure to confirm that your chosen architect will remain your point of contact throughout the whole process. The direct relationship is so important for understanding your needs and also to ensure consistency of communications. A good architect will streamline the whole design and construction process for you from initial pre-design meetings to the final built construction.

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) **COTTAGE ADDITION HOUSE** The brief was to design a large addition for a small timber framed cottage without 'swamping' it. The varied elevation of the site is used to advantage by the design of a two-storey rear addition as a split-level, which reduces the bulk and impact of the addition from the street. The new roof and building materials echo the cottage without replicating the original period building.
RURAL HOLIDAY HOUSE Set in an undulating rural paddock this split-level house is designed as two simple pitched roof buildings that step down the hill. The clients' called for a house that 'belonged in the rural setting' and that maximised the outlook and orientation to the north.
ENVIRONMENTAL HOUSE The 'honest' modernist

aesthetic of this design with rammed earth and timber is in response to the clients' request, including compact elements that maximise passive environmental factors with geothermal heating and cooling. The house is set back from the street to maximise exposure of the indoor and outdoor living areas to the northern aspect.
ROOF TERRACE HOUSE Being on the south side of the street the house is designed with deep courtyards to allow the northern sun to penetrate the outdoor spaces and living areas. This space also addresses the brief for a non-imposing house. A single storey house is designed to reduce the visual bulk of what would normally be a two-storey building and the incorporation of a roof terrace provides additional outdoor living areas.



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