

# Sanctuary

MODERN GREEN HOMES

ISSUE  
62

SUSTAINABLE HOUSE  
DAY SPECIAL

KEEN ON GREEN

Australia's loveliest  
eco homes on show



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**PHILIP STEJSKAL**

Architect  
Philip Stejskal Architecture  
www.architectureps.com  
Works in Western Australia

**What kind of house did you grow up in?**

It was a house that my parents designed and built in the 1970s together with extended family. It was essentially a box from the outside, pretty bland, but on the inside every room was a different colour. My room was yellow, the lounge room brown, the toilet red and bathroom blue! It was built using concrete blocks, insulated on the outside and rendered, with double-glazed windows.

**What was the first design project you were really proud of?**

In 2014 I did a small project – an enclosed verandah, essentially – just \$140,000 in value, and I wasn't necessarily all that proud of it to start with. I almost didn't enter it into the local architecture awards, worrying it wasn't good enough. But it ended up taking out the national prize for alterations and additions that year, and made me realise that I had something to offer after all.

**What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?**

I can't think of a particular building, but a typology I've always admired is rural Australian structures, built by farmers using what they had at hand, extremely frugally and efficiently. They are often extremely elegant in their simplicity, the honesty and directness of their construction and their conservation of resources. These structures stand for decades, and when no longer needed they're dismantled and the components used elsewhere on the farm.

**What's on your drawing board right now?**

One project I'm particularly fond of is a new house up in Exmouth. It's been interesting designing for a different climate – we're so used to bringing winter sun deep into our designs, but in Exmouth, you want to keep sun out year round. We've approached this by designing a large roof that spans almost the entire site, with a series of courtyards below it and living spaces arranged in pavilions around them.

**What do we need to be considering to design our homes for resilience in a changing climate?**

Fundamentally, I feel it's a matter of designing 'responsively' – responsive to climate, to site, to brief and to budget; responsive to the impact of our choices, responsive to constraints but also to opportunities, responsive to our responsibilities as designers and as members of a community. To create buildings that take an active and responsible part in our stewardship of this planet, buildings that are adaptable, sparing in their use of resources, kind to their occupants and neighbours, uplifting places to be.

**INGRID HORNUNG**

Building designer  
Ingrid Hornung Designs for You  
www.designsforyou.com.au  
Works in Melbourne and country  
Victoria

**What kind of house did you grow up in?**

I started life in a two-room shack in the middle of an orchard, and spent most of my growing-up years in a triple-fronted brick veneer (NOT cream brick, though!). It was great, because we were part of a community on a dead end street, and we all played in the street together, in a big 'all ages' gang.

**What was the first design project you were really proud of?**

One of my first projects after striking out on my own was a warehouse conversion for a family friend. We solved a lot of challenging design problems along the way, and created beautiful spaces within the existing shell of the building. I didn't know enough at that early stage in my career to know how hard it was going to be.

**What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?**

I'll nominate Melbourne Design Studio's Hutt 01 Passive House in Coburg, Victoria (which featured on the cover of *Sanctuary57*) – for so many reasons. I particularly love that they used a tiny piece of land that no one else wanted, and that they created a family home that feels so generous within that space.

**What's on your drawing board right now?**

I have some 'jewel' projects, in which a small change makes a big difference: such as making two bedrooms out of one for growing siblings, or creating a space for working from home effectively (no prizes for guessing why these are needed now). I also have some 'forever' projects, such as a coastal home with room to accommodate extended family when they come for holidays. And everything in between.

**What do we need to be considering to design our homes for resilience in a changing climate?**

Use less and share more! Whatever the 'solutions' may be (and I certainly don't propose to know what the answers are), they will include fundamentally rethinking how we live together.

**If you weren't a building designer, what would you be?**

One answer to that question would be my teenage dream: being a writer of novels, living in an apartment in Paris! Considering how tough I find it to put words on a page at all, this path will definitely stay in the realms of fantasy. A more plausible alternative career would be as a research scientist. The summer I applied to study architecture, I also applied to work in Antarctica (I was a meteorologist at the time); in the end I chose architecture. I wonder what that other life would have been like?