

SAM CRAWFORD ARCHITECTS

BUNDEENA BEACH HOUSE

architectural+interior review

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PROJECT

Bundeena Beach House

ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE

Sam Crawford Architects

AWARDS

2006 RIAA Colorbond® Steel Award

2006 RIAA Commendation – Single

Housing New

2005 Australian Timber Design Awards,

Winner – Residential Class 1

2005 Australian Timber Design Awards,

Highly Commended – Major Award

PRACTICE PROFILE

Established in 1999, Sam Crawford Architects is a young, innovative, design-driven practice, focused primarily on residential design and community projects. The practice, comprised of three project architects plus the principal, also has extensive experience in heritage conservation, interior and furniture design.

PROJECT ARCHITECT

Jonathon Moore

DESIGN ARCHITECT

Sam Crawford

OTHER ARCHITECTS

Jane Silcock, Jolyon Sykes

INTERIORS

Sam Crawford with David Forbes

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

360 Degrees, and client

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Mark Fefolija, O'Hearn Consulting

BUILDER

Premier Waterproofing

PHOTOGRAPHER

Brett Boardman



Australians share a cultural memory of summers spent beachside, in an ambiguous space between indoors and outdoors. In this great Australian myth, sand brings the beach inside while meals and showers are taken in backyards, parks and beaches, inverting the interior/exterior distinction in a quasi-mystical communion with the environment. This enduring image of a shared national childhood infuses contemporary architecture, informing the relationship between beach houses and their surrounds. Nowhere is this more successful, however, than in Sam Crawford's beautifully simple Bundeena Beach House.

Bundeena, situated on Sydney's southern-most edge where the city bleeds into the Royal National Park, is an ideal location for such an exploration. The hamlet is clustered around the beach, a mix of 1970s brick veneer houses and 1950s beach shacks that recalls sunny beach holidays. Immediately behind the last houses, national park stretches out on all sides: the town is enveloped by the natural environment.

The client's brief emphasised this relationship to the surrounds, specifying a simple building that would reach out to the natural environment. Taking advantage of a remarkable site that

opens directly onto the beach front and commands stunning views on many sides, the house has been designed to coax its users outside and to bring the natural surrounds into play inside the house.

To this end, decks and large windows create intermediate spaces, livable areas that incorporate sea breezes, sunshine and stunning views. Pathways through the house lead inhabitants along decks and verandahs, gently forcing them to move between inside and outside, to literally taste the salt in the air. To reach the master bedroom on the second storey, the owner mounts a staircase that commands views back over Bundeena to



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1. The extensive use of outdoor decks blurs the distinction between interior and exterior, opening the house to its surroundings.
2. Glass sliding doors allow the second storey's stunning views to dominate the master bedroom.
3. Exterior decks coax inhabitants outside by providing the only method of access to some rooms.
4. The view from the beach. Jaunty angles and large glass windows create a playful take on the conventional beach house.



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the treetops of the national park beyond. On all sides, the natural environment infiltrates both the interior spaces of the house and the day-to-day movements of the inhabitants.

Similarly, the exterior living areas are designed to accommodate shifting environmental needs, making the beach more suited to human habitation by offering carefully considered protection. At the front of the house, operable timber louvred walls enclose a breezeway room, providing shield against both the harsh morning sun and the inquiring eyes of beachgoers. Behind the living room, an open deck is protected from the brisk breezes by its position behind the house. Such clever manipulation of these intermediate spaces opens the beachside environment to year-round use.

The evocation of a nostalgic childhood seaside implied by this ability

to live between interiors and exteriors is also evident in other design features. The simple design, clad in corrugated iron and rough sawn plywood, reads as a stylish reinvention of the classic 1950s beach shack. And the jaunty angles of the master bedroom that perches atop the house has a slightly offbeat, playful feel that adds a carefree dimension to the design.

This integration of the natural environment runs deeper than a lifestyle choice or aesthetic gesture, however. Built on a sand dune, subject to strong winds and sea swells, exposed to corrosion from the salty air, Crawford's design is conscious of the environment as a structural factor as well as an aesthetic one.

In accordance with council regulations, the house sits 600mm off the ground on steel posts that are driven into the dune, while its structural

stability is paradoxically strengthened by the use of lightweight, flexible materials that are capable of responding to the environmental pressures exerted on the structure. As a result, the house moves with the shifting movements of sand and sea, occasionally shaken by a surge of swell.

At the same time, the elevated construction and lightweight materials minimise the building's impact on the site, allowing wind, sand and animals to move around the house. As such, the house becomes absorbed in the environment, responding to its changing conditions without disrupting its natural patterns.

This minimisation of disruption to the environment is also explored on a more global scale with a number of sustainable measures. Cross-ventilation, water tanks, the use of fans instead of air-conditioning, the use gas space and

water heating instead of electrical, and a design that carefully manages solar gain depending on seasonal needs all minimise the site's impact on the environment. At the same time, each of these devices integrates the surrounding environment more firmly into the design of the house. The result is a natural, airy and sun-warmed interior that avoids the stark sense of separation from the outside world created by dark, air-conditioned spaces.

Bundeena Beach House is an elegant response to a very Australian context. Its success lies in its debt to a lifestyle that is lived at the junction of inside and outside, and that incorporates both the natural and human worlds. The house that results is both environmentally responsible and deeply evocative, a triumph of simple design capable of embodying some of our most fondly held images of ourselves. +



5. Even the bathroom participates in this merging of interior and exterior. Compromising on the owner's original desire for outdoor bathing, the room includes large bifold windows immediately above the bath which have been positioned so as to ensure privacy elsewhere in the room.
6. Large sliding doors and comfortable decks allow seamless movement between interior and exterior, while louvre walls provide shade and privacy for the front deck.
7. Corrugated iron, rough sawn plywood and wooden supports evoke 1950s beach shacks, while the jaunty angles and clever design put a modern spin on this Australian classic.
8. Perched atop the house, the master bedroom opens onto a deck that affords stunning views of the sea.



PRODUCTS

Walls Timber Stud **Roof** Lysaght Zincalume Custom Orb **Windows** G James Breezeway louvres G James 675 Series WRC and aluminium windows **Doors** G James 675 Series aluminium door **Floor Finishes** Ironwood recycled blackbutt and ironbark **Wall Linings** Carter Holt Harvey Wood Logic Shadowclad plywood Brims Hoop Pine Ply plywood **Ceiling Linings** Brims Hoop Pine Ply plywood and plasterboard **Paint** Resene "Black" **Sanitary Ware** Roger Sellar **Joinery** Custom **Hardware** Style Finish Madinoz **Wall and Ceiling Insulation** Nastar Easymade Bulk/Polyester