

DESIGN ENHANCING LIFE



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Newsletter

Saving Power the Old Fashion Way

Still today I hear people talking about 'the good old days'. Older generations often rattle off how things were better when they were young as they conveniently ignore the benefits that mankind now enjoys from advances in medicine and science. But there is one area where they just might have a point, and that is in the area of home design.

The price of electricity has risen in recent times, which is a problem that is compounded by modern home designs. In years gone by you would not have dreamt of building a house without a verandah. Yet today they rarely feature on any new home.

But what many people fail to realise is that verandah's are a very effective way of reducing power consumption. They stop the scorching summer sun from hitting windows and walls directly, which effectively keeps the house cooler in summer. And given that the winter sun travels at a lower trajectory through the sky, it is possible to design verandah's that still allow the warmth of the winter sun to heat the home.

Today homes are getting bigger, with greater demands for large indoor living areas. This additional indoor space ultimately comes at the expense of the verandah. This has the double negative effect of allowing the elements to impact directly on windows and walls, which means hotter homes in summer and colder homes in winter. It also means larger areas to heat and/or cool, which results in greater energy consumption.

Modern homes also tend to take up a larger percentage of the block they are built on, compared to house built 20 to 30 years ago. This often means less space for trees, lawns and gardens. Plants, and in

particular trees, provide natural barriers against the elements. Yet more and more homes are being built on bland blocks of land with little in the way of vegetation.

Looking into the crystal ball I see a time in the very near future where homes with verandah's and plenty of natural shade will become highly sought after, as people strive to reduce their energy bills and their impact on the environment. It's certainly worth keeping this in mind if you're planning a new home or renovation.

And it is certainly an option that I would only be too happy to explore with you for any upcoming building project you may have.



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TIPS FROM YOUR ARCHITECT

1. Maximise the future saleability of your home by ensuring you have great street appeal.
2. Maximise the liveability of your home by ensuring your house is light and airy all year round.
3. Maximise your home by ensuring you understand exactly how you live before embarking on any renovations.
4. And stay sane via pre-planning changes to your home so you don't have to undo anything you have done before.



The Upside of the Economic Crisis

If I told you that the Global Economic Crisis maybe the greatest thing that ever happens in your lifetime you may think I had gone mad. But it potentially is, providing you're willing to act now. **LET ME EXPLAIN WHY...**

A Buyers Market

The economic downturn has had a major impact across a number of industries. Growing unemployment, more people saving rather than spending, has already had a huge impact on many local companies.

The building industry in particular has started to slow down, meaning that more and more companies are fighting over fewer and fewer projects. As a result, labour prices in the building market have started to drop as companies look to do whatever it takes to win a building project.

The Australian economy has not yet bottomed out, and is not predicted to bottom out until late 2010. Based on this, the ideal time to start the planning, design and documentation phase of your renovation or new home is now, as this will result in your project being built just as the market begins to rise.

By getting started on your renovation plans now, you will achieve a bargain building price at the start of the next boom. A win/win in anyone language.

Material Costs

Of course it's not only the labour market that is feeling the pinch. A slowing building industry means that materials are also dropping in price. Companies that were turning over huge volumes of stock during the good times, are now needing to find other ways to move materials.

This means that many of these companies are open to negotiating on price, a practice that will be even more common when you're ready to start building, providing you get your plans designed now.

Bargain Whitegoods & Furniture

Mid to late 2010 will also be a great time to get some amazing deals on whitegoods, furniture and pretty much any electrical item you can think of. Everything from fridges and freezers, to iPods and LCD TV's have already dropped dramatically in price and will continue to do so.

A major retailer recently told me that now was the best time to purchase that he had ever seen, with everyone willing to negotiate heavily on price. By calling us now and getting us to commence work on the design phase of your new home or renovation, you will be ready to purchase when the market reaches its lowest point, and just before prices begin to rise again with an improving economy.

Cheap Money

As a result of the slowing economy, the Reserve Bank of Australia has repeatedly lowered interest rates, which means the cost of borrowing money is lower now than it has been at any time in the past decade.

In fact, it is likely that the next 18 months will offer you the cheapest money you will ever borrow. With banks and other lending institutions all looking for more business, this really is your chance to find that *'once in a lifetime'* loan deal.

Act NOW

Lower interest rates + cheaper products and materials + more competitive labour rates = massive savings on any building project. It's that simple.

So now is not the time to sit back and wait for the economy to pick up. It is the time when you should be designing that renovation that you've always been talking about but never got around to. It's the time to finally start work on your dream home, the one that you always said you would one day own.

You will never get building work done at a better price than you will in the next 18 months. This is the **ONLY** time in your life where you can potentially save tens of thousands of dollars.

But you need to act NOW.

Call me today to discuss your dreams and goals, and let me show you how to get them for the lowest possible price. Don't delay; you will never have an opportunity like this again.

Two Rooms for the Price of One

Almost every extension or addition to your family home is a significant financial consideration. You want to be certain that you're getting the best value for money. And whilst we ensure that any renovation work will give you great returns, by far the best returns in terms of useable space come from the creation of indoor/outdoor rooms.

An indoor/outdoor room is essentially a deck that has transitioned to become a room in its own right. Alternatively the living/dining room of the home has become the deck, with multi-folding or sliding doors or windows creating a seamless connection with the interior of the home.

Ideally these spaces are protected enough to be used as an extension of your indoor living area, or as a separate internal living space in its own right. It is a space that virtually offers you two rooms for the price of one.

An indoor/outdoor room can be designed with bi-fold doors or windows, or other window/wall systems that enable the space to be opened up to warming sunlight or cooling breezes on pleasant days, or shut off completely from the elements when external conditions are less than ideal.

Or it can be left more open, but still with a feeling of enclosure. And it's this balance of connection to the outside whilst still feeling protected and enclosed that requires the advice of an experienced architect.

We have created many indoor/outdoor rooms that have truly enhanced our clients' lifestyles, to the point where this space has now become their favourite area of the home. A well designed indoor/outdoor room captures the relaxed, laid-back sensation of the outdoors, with the comfort, security and privacy of being inside.

So what makes a space an indoor/outdoor room rather than just a covered deck?

Well as I previously mentioned an indoor/outdoor room can be designed with full bi-fold doors or windows that enable it to be closed off from wind, dust and prying eyes. Privacy is an important consideration when it comes to creating a relaxing environment.

But there are many other additions that can increase your enjoyment of this space such as:

- Built in bbq, or possibly a full outdoor kitchen complete with bench tops, cook tops, refrigerator and dish washer.

- Insect screening and Heating systems.
- Audio systems and/or home entertainment system.
- Full roof insulation with enclosed ceiling.
- Outdoor bar area.

The golden rules for creating the ultimate indoor/outdoor room:

RULE NUMBER 1:

Having a great aspect is crucial to the success of any deck or indoor/outdoor room. Without a great aspect your indoor/outdoor room will never be as pleasant as it should be.

RULE NUMBER 2:

Your deck, terrace or indoor/outdoor room does not have to be built at the back of your home. As I just mentioned, a great outlook is crucial to the success of this space.

If designed correctly your indoor/outdoor room could potentially work better if placed at the front, or even side of your property. It is also advantageous if your indoor/outdoor room can flow into a garden. This not only adds to the relaxed ambience of this space, but it also virtually allows your garden to be an extra room in your home or apartment.

RULE NUMBER 3:

The relationship of your indoor/outdoor room to your kitchen is vital. The kitchen is essentially the hub of your home so it is important to ensure that your outdoor space has an effective relationship with this area if it is to achieve its maximum livability potential.

As you can see from looking over these three golden rules, the design of your indoor/outdoor room is paramount in getting the maximum livability out of this space without needing to compromise.

So if you are looking at an extension that will give your maximum value for money, then call me today to discuss how an indoor/outdoor room can effectively give you two rooms for the price of one.



Book A Home Lifestyle Assessment TODAY!

Does your current home suit your lifestyle? If not, then you need our Lifestyle Assessment Service. Here's what you will receive:

- Lifestyle/Liveability Assessment
- Budget Assessments
- Project Viability Assessment
- Capitalization Assessment
- Home Design Solutions

Our lifestyle assessments will give you an honest appraisal of the potential benefits and suitability of any proposed building or renovation project.

With over 20 years renovation and new home design experience we are more than simply architects we are Brisbane's leading lifestyle designers.

Call us today on 07 3899 9450 to find out more.



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