

DESIGN ENHANCING LIFE



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Newsletter

ECO-HOUSING DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN COMPROMISE

It's a common misconception that environmentally friendly means going without some of life's comforts. In fact it's possible to have an eco-friendly home and all the advantages that come with that – such as dramatically lower power bills for starters – without needing to compromise on comfort or lifestyle.

Let me explain how...

GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, GREAT FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

A major lifestyle consideration is comfort levels inside the home. In other words, what is the temperature and climatic conditions like inside, compared to those outside.

This is one area of confusion that I would like to clear up. There is NO reason to not install air-conditioning or heating in your home if you choose to. However with a great home design you will seldom need them. Using eco-housing design principles I can create a home for you that is naturally warmer in winter and naturally cooler in summer without the need for electronic heating or cooling. And by using the correct level of insulation on those days where you might

need to turn something on, you won't need to run it for long to keep your home comfortable. So you save on power bills, and help the environment.

Saving money on electricity by not needing to run air-conditioners or heaters is great for your hip pocket, but what about your health? I don't know about you but I always feel healthier when I am in the fresh air and would much prefer a cool breeze to refrigerated air or the sun's rays over artificial heating.

ECO-COMFORT?

So it's easy to see that you don't need to compromise on comfort or lifestyle when building an eco-friendly home, but did you know that eco-housing principles can actually enhance the liveability of your home?

Let me give you an example using water conservation...

In the typical Australian home when you turn on the hot water tap you need to wait for the hot water to come through. If it's a cold morning and you're in a hurry to get out the door this can be a real hassle. If you're not inclined to waste

that water you might have the plug in and then scoop the cold water out to use for watering plants etc. but this can be a nuisance if you're running late. So often people end up washing their hands and face in cold water and running out the door shivering.

But a new home or renovation that adheres to eco-housing principles will most likely have a hot water circulation pump installed. These small pumps are highly energy efficient using little power as they circulate hot water through your pipes. The result is instant hot water the moment you turn on the tap! Not only do you save water, you now have greater comfort levels by being able to wash with warm water instead of cold.

So as you can see eco-housing principles do not need to come at the cost of comfort or lifestyle, they can in fact improve the liveability of your home whilst helping the planet we live on. If you would like to enjoy the financial, lifestyle and health benefits of eco-housing give us a call today and let Dion Seminara Architecture create a lifestyle enhancing eco-design for your home.



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ARCHITECT'S TIPS

Don't be afraid to engage an architect, particularly a **Dion Seminara Architecture** architect, who as registered architects have our work heavily scrutinized by a variety of regulators including the Australian Institute of Architects and the state government controlled Board of Architects.

Instead be afraid of those who suggest that you don't need our services.

Honesty - the very foundation of our business - is a little exercised option for many others in the building industry.

If you want to experience some old fashion honesty, integrity and great service call us today.



SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Stay and renovate or sell and look for something better? It's a dilemma that can cause plenty of sleepless nights not to mention arguments and fights. But there is an easy way to come up with the right answer – or at the very least give you 90% of the right answer.

Let me explain how ...

Whenever I am asked this question by clients I respond with three questions of my own, the answers to which typically help to make the decision for them.

QUESTION 1: DO YOU LOVE THE POSITION OF YOUR CURRENT HOME?

If you're in love with your current location then obviously staying and renovating makes a lot of sense. However, if you are not completely in love with your present location buying elsewhere might be a better option.

QUESTION 2: WHAT CHANGES DOES YOUR CURRENT HOME NEED?

This question is actually more involved and can really only be answered by me after looking at your liveability goals. Sometimes your current home might only need a minor renovation or extension in which case you will not need to sell. But other times it might require anything from a large renovation up to a major rebuild. In cases like this the answer to question three is vitally important.

QUESTION 3: ARE THESE RENOVATIONS POSSIBLE AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE?

Firstly we need to look at whether or not the proposed changes to your home are allowable under local building regulations. Assuming they can we now need to consider the cost because even if your renovation looks on the surface like it's straight forward, depending on your block and

what's required it might actually be a very big job. Things like access for machinery or the ground on which your home is built can have a big impact on the cost of your project and needs to be considered when weighing up your stay or go options.

CONCLUSION

So as you can see, these three questions help clarify the decision. If you don't love your current position or if your home needs an excessive or overly expensive renovation, selling or moving is the best option. However, if you love your present location and the size and cost of any required improvements are within your budget then why not stay? It makes a lot more sense.

WHAT IF YOU DECIDE TO SELL?

If you do decide to sell chances are you will still want to renovate any new property at some stage unless you are building a brand new home from scratch.

In this situation it pays to get advice on what will be involved in any renovations that may be required to your new home. Our Pre-Purchase Design Consultation is the perfect step to take before making your purchase. As part of this consultation I meet you at the property you are considering purchasing and give you my feedback on what is needed and the likely costs of any renovations. I explain any potential pitfalls or challenges with the property allowing you to make a truly informed decision before you buy.

So if you're unsure as to whether you should renovate or sell and buy elsewhere why not give us a call and let us help you explore all your options. Alternatively if you have decided to sell and purchase elsewhere call us to arrange for a Pre-Purchase Design Consultation to ensure that your new property can achieve your liveability goals within your budget.

WILL YOUR HOME REALLY BE 'GREEN'?

Climate change is a hot topic at the moment, particularly with the proposed Carbon Tax being debated across the country. There are those that believe and there are those that don't, but regardless of people's views on the carbon tax, most people would agree that using less non-renewable resources and building cost efficient homes is a worthwhile objective.

And because of this common belief the 'sustainable building' and 'eco-housing' industries have grown in size over the past couple of decades.

It is a large market and plenty of businesses in the building industry are keen to promote their so-called 'green' credentials. There are lots of builders, drafts people and building designers that claim to understand eco-housing design principles but do they really, or are they just saying that to get your business?

As an architect I have a very solid understanding of eco-housing design, not just theoretical, but in a practical sense as well. My own business – **Dion Seminara Architecture** – is carbon neutral thanks to our significant investment in solar power generation. So when I talk about sustainability I am actually walking my talk. I understand it and the benefit that eco-housing designs can offer.

DOES IT REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Truly understanding eco-housing principles makes a huge difference when it comes to designing homes. For example when I am looking at a project I am looking for ways to minimise the impact of any excavation and construction work on the site itself, particularly the impact on any native plants and animals. A lot of other so-called 'green' companies do not.

When looking at the materials to be used during construction I always consider how appropriate those materials are for the local climate. Sustainable materials are always recommended to my clients. Timber is actually surprisingly environmentally friendly, but only some forms of timber can be considered so and the manner in

which those timbers are harvested should also be considered.

Materials also play an important role in liveability and the cost of running the home. Some materials have natural insulation qualities that can lessen a buildings dependency on electricity consumption.

Water resources are a major consideration when designing a home. It wasn't that long ago that Australia was in the grip of a significant drought and whilst we have recently had rains we will no doubt face long dry periods again and perhaps in the very near future. Therefore considerations to things like rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, water conservation practices and fittings are important. It might come as a shock to some so-called 'green' building designers but there is a lot more to it than throwing up a rainwater tank.

DO THEY WALK THEIR TALK?

So if building in a sustainable way is important to you. If having a home that is cost effective to run is important to you. And if looking after the planet for future generations is important to you then you need to think long and hard about who you get to design your home.

It's really not enough to simply choose someone on the basis that they claim to practice eco-housing principles, because very few truly understand sustainable building let alone practice it. If they truly did understand it you would expect to see those principles incorporated into their own buildings and businesses, but so few do.

At **Dion Seminara Architecture** we not only understand it and practice it with our clients homes, we also practice it in our business and home lives as well.

So if you truly want your home to be eco-friendly and environmentally responsible then contact us today and let **Dion Seminara Architecture** create a sustainable home that perfectly suits your lifestyle needs.

FREE

IN OFFICE CONSULTATION

Did you know that we offer free 30 minute in office consultations? Whilst some of our earlier clients will be familiar with this service those more recent contacts may not. In essence it's a chance for us to meet and get to know each other in a relaxed setting before you engage us to help you achieve your lifestyle goals.

So if you're reconsidering having Dion Seminara Architecture help you achieve the perfect result for your project, why not arrange to come and meet with us in person first.

NOW ON

facebook

We are now on Facebook and we'd love you to join our community at:

<https://www.facebook.com/dsarchitecture>





Telephone: 07 3899 9450

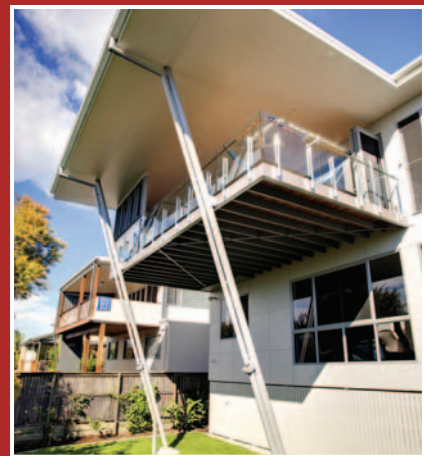
Mobile: 0402 842 096

Facsimile: 07 3899 8436

Email: architects@dsarchitecture.com.au

Suite 1, 6A Thynne Road Morningside Qld 4170

P.O. Box 465 Bulimba Qld 4171



www.dsarchitecture.com.au

Dion holds a Bachelor of Architecture with honours and is a registered architect and licensed builder. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects - at the most senior level - who has been recognised for his long standing involvement in the pursuit of excellence in the architectural profession and service to this association.