



# Lifting the lid

A post-war brick cottage makes way for a new era of contemporary coastal living, writes **Catherine Nikas-Boulos**

## PROJECT

### Builder

Vanda Constructions,  
vandaconstructions.com.au

### Architect

Adam Hobbs, principal architect  
at Hobbs Jamieson Architecture,  
hobbsjamieson.com.au

### The problem

A post-war single-storey masonry dwelling in Queenscliff that wasn't taking advantage of the north aspect

### The site

Significantly sloping block

### Design solution

Replacing the old home with an open and light three-storey, four-bedroom home, taking in sweeping views

### How long did it take

11 months

There's a lot to love about Sydney's northern beaches. Along with sun and sand, its distance from the CBD can make it feel like a holiday destination.

When one homeowner in Queenscliff decided it was time to upgrade a dated post-war cottage with water views into a home worthy of its address, architect Adam Hobbs was on the job.

"The main briefing from the owners was to take better advantage of the available north easterly aspect and views to the water, while designing a home that was more consistent with the scale and finish of the rest of the houses on the street," says Adam.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the exercise was designing the new facade, for which Adam was free to create a unique design that ultimately brought something fresh to the streetscape.

"There was a limited brief in terms of how it would look, so we could explore our own design philosophy," says Adam.

The spectacular result is a home that doesn't forget to address its street frontages, nor its coastal location.

"It rests comfortably within the context of the street and the site and manages its scale through interlocking volumes and complementary material use," he says.

The new entry is a significant improvement on the old home that was originally on the site that they demolished.

Located on a sloping site, entry from the street is directly on to the first floor.

"Entering from street level into the house allows a stronger entry presence and makes things very practical," Adam says.

"The deliberate mix of materials and textures also aids in breaking down the scale of what is a very large home."



### Uphill battle

This project started with the demolition of the old building, which was the easiest part of the job. Because the site sloped significantly, the new home had to be designed around the complexities of the existing block.

The brief was to create a dwelling that not only improved access to the street and provided generous spaces, but also that took advantage of the aspect.

To break up the size of the house, it was constructed using a varied natural palette of materials and colours.

Getting materials to the deepest part of the block towards the back was a time consuming and costly project, so the business of

managing the build was rather complex.

"We looked to keep the materials lightweight as much as possible due to the difficulties in crane costs and access to the lower end of the site, which happens to be two levels down from street level," says Adam.

### Mixed materials

Adam classifies the new three-level build as a "contemporary mixed material home".

"The external form was heavily influenced by the need to break down the building's scale," he says.

"This mixed material approach has also been carried throughout the interior fitout with all surface selections made for their durability."





The upper living area flows on to a generous rear deck accessed via bi-fold doors.



## THE SOURCE

**Caesarstone kitchen benchtop** from [caesarstone.com.au](http://caesarstone.com.au)  
**Tile flooring** from [Amber ambertiles.com.au](http://Amberambertiles.com.au) **Blackbutt flooring** from [Timber Yard Sydneytimberyardsydney.com.au](http://Timber Yard Sydneytimberyardsydney.com.au)  
**External fibre cement sheet cladding** from [James Hardiejameshardie.com.au](http://James Hardiejameshardie.com.au)

Externally, several James Hardie fibre cement sheet cladding products are offset by smaller areas of natural clear finished hardwood elements and plywood sheet soffits.

Internally, the floors are dark walnut stained blackbutt flooring and most joinery is satin polyurethane finished.

Tiling is muted in grey, white and black tones with smaller highlights in textured finishes, giving it a modern coastal feel.

### Finished product

The finished home is a visual feast, especially from the rear north-facing deck.

Other highlights include the vaulted ceiling in the living area and a large double height

void to the north linking the study space with a second living area on the lower ground level.

A detailed bespoke staircase that connects all three levels with a central American oak screen is also a talking point.

"Apart from that, the focus on functionality and textural exploration permeate throughout the home," he says.

The new beach home, which took 11 months to complete, now features four bedrooms, two living areas, a study and two powder rooms. It is also kitted out with a butler's pantry in the kitchen, cellar, workshop and a double garage.

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**Pictures** Luc Remond

