

B4B

Boral for builders

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BORAL TIMBER'S STRENGTH AND DURABILITY

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Timber chosen for its strength and durability

Boral Timber's hardwood products have been used to provide strength and stability to a bushland dwelling located on the steep slopes above Clareville Beach in Pittwater NSW.

The project brief was to build a contemporary home that would mirror the traditionally crafted cottages in the Pittwater area and incorporate natural materials to blend in with the surroundings.

Boral's Australian hardwood timber provided the builders with a versatile, strong and durable material with which to work. Thanks to the timber's natural colour which was a key element of the project, it also minimised time spent applying surface finishes.

Structural, kiln-dried timber in blackbutt species frames the windows and doorways combined with a highly featured hardwood timber floor in dark red jarrah that runs seamlessly into the joinery. Blackbutt was also used to create a framed external screen as well as decking on one side of the house.

Tapered blackbutt rafters were attached to the steel structure, allowing for the wide eaves that run from the inside out. The spacing of the rafters to match the joints of the plywood ceiling aligns throughout the building, while the vertical battens on the external fibre-cement cladding create a consistent look and feel.

The use of all-Australian forest timber was paramount to builder Adam Van Der Wallen. According to Adam, the entire project, from the sustainability of the materials used, to the hand-dug foundations and the fixing of the roof sheets, was a work of passion.

"The realisation of the architect's vision required passion, dedication and top quality tradesmen from start to finish." Bringing the two dimensional image to reality called for a unique solution for every component of the build.

The steep hillside location of the block meant that every item used in the house had to be carried 50 metres from the street to the work site and four-metre deep foundations were hand dug because no machinery could gain access.

To achieve the minimalist look created by architect Richard Cole, every part of the house was custom made on site, without mouldings, fillers or coverings. *"Every sheet of plywood was cut to the millimetre. External fibro sheets arrived from the factory perfectly finished with clear sealer – installation had to be carried out with no scuffing or marking to avoid sanding,"* Adam said.

According to Adam, the tradesmen's high level skills were called upon to ensure a perfect fit for every component. Use of a laser level achieved a precision fit for the large deck doors, frame and track. Precisely cut plywood ceiling panels were sealed before being installed to avoid getting wet and stained. Five millimetre shadow lines were routed into the plywood panels to hide joins.

The 130mm wide floorboards were installed using a procedure not visible on the surface. Floorboards were fixed to the steel frame using holes drilled into the metal and counter sunk screws worked from underneath.

The tapered F27 grade blackbutt rafters had to be machined, dressed, sanded and re-routed on site and painted before installation.

Due to the steep nature of the block, the box-shaped window units could only be installed after a scaffold was built along the entire front of the house. *"Each window unit weighed 180 kilos and needed seven men to carry each one from the street."*

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Designed by Richard Cole Architecture, the Hilltop House won a 2010 Australian Timber Design Award in the 'Residential Class 1- New Buildings' category.