

# Bondi *barn*

A photograph of isolated dwellings on Greenland's icecaps inspired this barn dwelling in Sydney's famous beachside suburb of **BONDI**. The resulting home, orchestrated by **CLAYTON ORSZACZKY**, is made special by custom furniture and the art of landscaping.

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TEXT STEPHEN TODD | PHOTOGRAPHY PRUE RUSCOE





**B**ondi architecture is typically a mix of antipodean art deco, California bungalow and red brick faux baronial – a jumble on a good day; a dull, throbbing cacophony when gloomy. The Dangar family home – aka ‘the Bondi Barn’ – comes as welcome relief. With its blackened timber cladding, elegantly pitched roof and low picket fence, it feels like something of a gift to the street. Firstly, there’s the site upon which it is built, a deep triangular plot, nosing the road like the prow of a ship. Irregular, it breaks the monotony of the standard suburban block. Then there’s the fact of its otherness; it’s clearly not from around these parts. In fact, as Will Dangar explains, “I saw some of photographer Murray Fredericks’ iccap images from his Greenland exhibition one day when I was visiting him. Along the edge of the glaciers were these amazing, simple barn-like dwellings that I really liked. These, combined with some inspiration from both Japan and southern New Zealand lead us to the evolution of our own structure.”

Yet, for all its exotic origins, the Barn is no curio, no mere quirk. It’s anchored in an innate understanding of ex-urban living –



PREVIOUS | FROM THE STREET, THE STAINED CLAPBOARD AND PITCHED ROOF SIGNAL A QUINTESSENTIAL ‘HOUSE’. OPPOSITE | TRANSITION ZONES DOUBLE AS GALLERIES FOR ART AND OBJETS D’ART. ABOVE | THE KITCHEN/DINING/STUDY ZONE IS COMPRISED OF BESPOKE CABINETRY, FURNITURE AND FITTINGS, MAKING THE SPACE TOTALLY UNIQUE.



Dangar grew up in the Northern Tablelands of NSW – harnessed to a very urbane attitude. As principal of William Dangar & Associates landscape design, Dangar has seen many a fine home in two decades of creating gardens “for some very high net-worth individuals”. Let’s just say he knows a good home when he sees one. His is one.

A two-story rectangular volume under a 34° pitch, the Barn reads as quintessential ‘house’. The entrance is positioned on the short, Western side, allowing the long, Southern façade and the South-West corner to slide entirely open to a gently dappled garden. The angling of the house not only takes full advantage of the eccentricity of the block, but enables cross ventilation and passive cooling. At the entrance, a vertical grid remains open for airflow even when the door is shut. A lintel overhanging the Western façade ensures solar protection, a series of timber fins along the first floor allow ingress of light. They are like a second skin. But to suggest these features are purely functional would be disingenuous – they serve above all to add interest to the overall boxy logic of the structure. “It’s essentially a series of simple spaces that face a garden,”

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reflects architect Michelle Orszaczky of clayton orszaczky. “The pattern of roof and cladding create a very pastoral feel.” As the light fades on a late summer afternoon, the horizontal and vertical lines of the timber slats and corrugated roof cast long shadows and the house takes on a sculptural allure. When Dangar turns the pump on in the fish pond, the sound of slurping water seals the urban oasis deal: it’s a wedge of verdant heaven through the heart of a bleached Sydney beachside suburb.

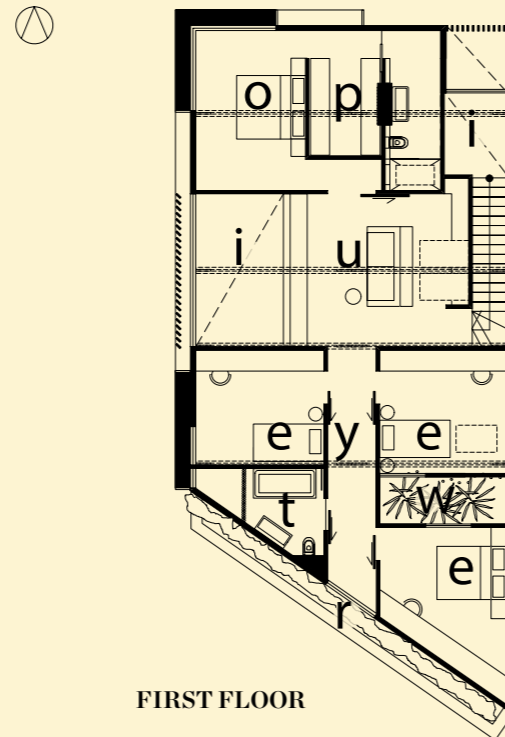
Amidst a paved pocket garden, behind the picket fence, the obligatory Bondi frangipani stands guard at the orange entrance door (a bold, custom colour mixed by Dangar’s interior designer friend, the colour expert Briony Fitzgerald). Inside is a double-height void, a vestibule creating a buffer zone between home and street. It is echoed in the paved mudroom at the back, a quarantined utility zone between the house proper and the garage where Dangar parks his Austrian-made KTM trail bikes (“I have six enduro-adventure bikes and ride once or twice a week. Clears the head.”) From there the ground floor exhales in a slow reveal, first the generous kitchen and dining area, then the



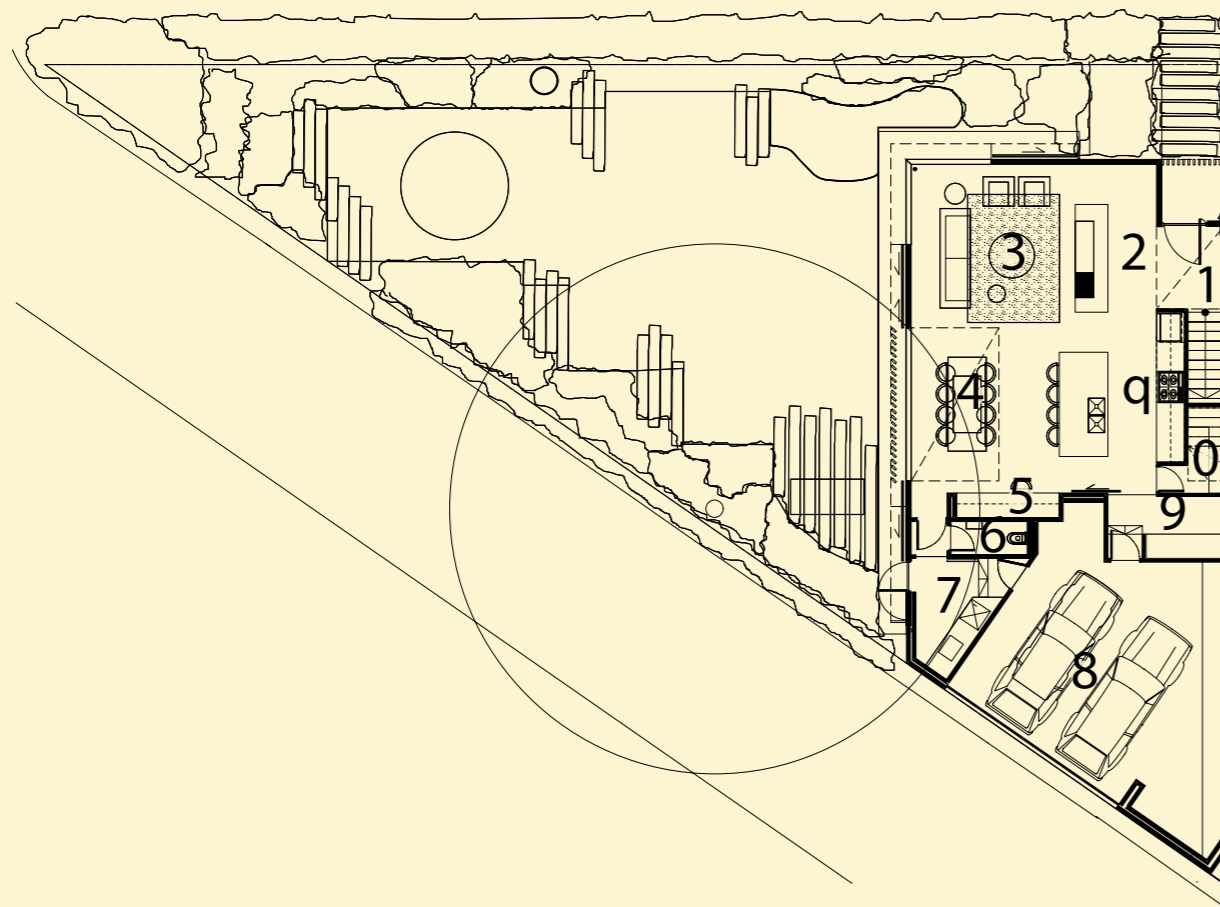


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*Interior designer Romy Alwill  
describes the whole barn as  
'understated, simple, unpretentious'.*  
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1	ENTRY	q	KITCHEN
2	FIREPLACE / AUDIOVISUAL	e	BEDROOM
3	LIVING	w	PLANTER
4	DINING	r	BATHROOM
5	STUDY	t	HALLWAY
6	GUEST BATHROOM	y	FAMILY
7	LAUNDRY	u	VOID
8	GARAGE	7	MAIN BEDROOM
9	MUDROOM	o	ROBE
0	PANTRY	p	ENSUITE



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



lounge zone, all opening onto the lush garden beyond. A built-in study adds a functional note – well lived in (the two young Dangar children make sure of that), this is clearly no display home. “I like the way the house is wearing in,” Dangar admits.

On the upper level, a family entertainment room sits at the top of the stairs, a neutral zone that effectively divides the children’s bedrooms and guest room from the master bedroom and ensuite. Perched directly under the roof pitch, if this space benefits from a soaring ceiling apex, its lower perimeter creates a sense of intimacy. Glancing down the kids’ wing, four timber barn doors are hung along expressed steel sliders creating a kind of dormitory uniformity. Dangar refers to the children’s rooms as “humble.” Interior designer Romy Alwill describes the whole Barn as “understated, simple, unpretentious.” Alwill devised all the bespoke joinery and custom-made furniture including the dining table, coffee tables, kitchen bench lighting, bar stools, side tables, bunk beds and so forth. Perhaps it’s this attention to detail which makes the apparent simplicity seem so special. (All these Alwill-designed



pieces were made by the construction arm of Dangar's company, Robert Plumb.)

The whole house, in fact, was constructed by the 11 full-time carpenters employed by Dangar at Robert Plumb, responsible for the project work undertaken within Dangar & Associates. "We built the house ourselves with a light documentation package which was not without its challenges, however being an owner builder combined with a terrific collaborative approach turned out very well and only slightly over budget."

As for the garden, it is Dangar pure, unimpeded by the needs of clients. Essentially, it's a series of planted 'drifts' – boxwood, japonica, and various grasses – laid out around a Sir Walter buffalo lawn and punctuated by the occasional dramatic tree, notably a 70-year-old crepe myrtle and a weeping mulberry he had craned in. Dangar's even gone so far as planting the curbside verge with natives, including banksia, lomandra, casuarina and dichondra. "If I can change the streetscape of Waverley council one bit at a time," he smiles, "all the better."

## DROP BOX

ARCHITECT Michelle Orszaczky  
LANDSCAPE William Dangar  
INTERIORS Alwill Interiors

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FINISHES  
Interior paint is Dulux Natural White.  
Joinery handles from Architectural  
Door Hardware.

LIGHTING  
Lighting from Spence & Lyda, and Inlite.  
Hallway pendants by Hub, brass Barn

Lights in kitchen from the Specified Store, and all fans from Hunter Pacific. Stone vanity top from By Builder. Internal Carcass and Laminate from Laminex. Floorboards from Precision Flooring. Tiles from Onsite Supply + Design.

INTERIOR HARDWARE  
All interior hardware from Architectural Hardware.

FURNITURE  
Slot Coffee Table, Ceramic Glaze Side Table, Strapped Bar Stools, Slot Sofa Table, and Support Table from the Specified Store.