



ISSUE #42  
REINVENTION

# *NATURAL WONDER*

## *WILLIAM DANGAR*

Will Dangar is something of a garden whisperer. Those who have witnessed him look at a new site are impressed by his innate ability to immediately see what is possible. He thinks large scale, favours unfussy planting borne of a strong horticultural knowledge and gets a kick out of working with interesting architectural forms. He has built a practice, Dangar Barin Smith with co-directors Tom Smith and Naomi Barin, where he is the go-to collaborator for significant Sydney architects and interior designers including Luigi Rosselli, Smart Design Studio, Andrew Burges Architects and BKH.

*PHOTOGRAPHY*  
*Prue Ruscoe*

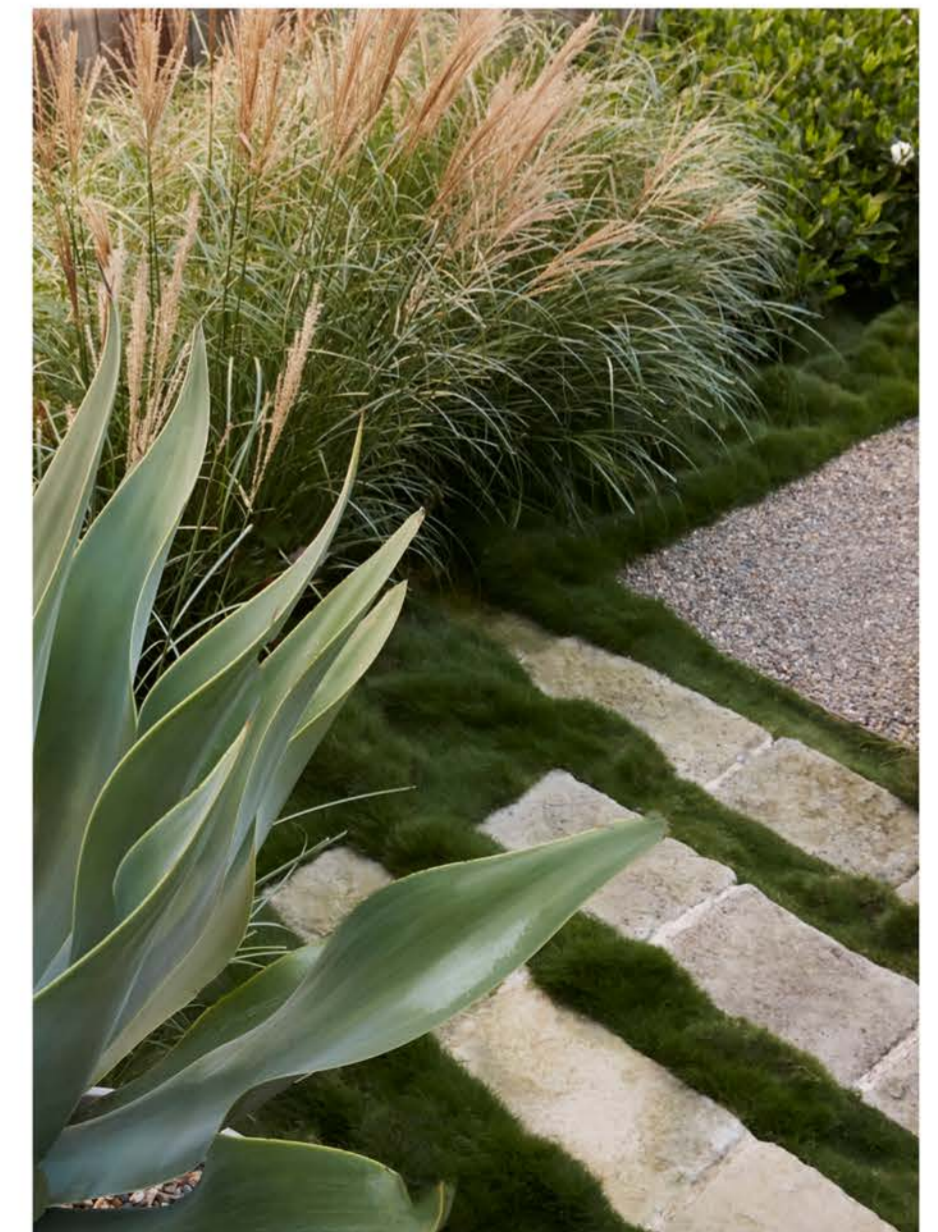
*WORDS*  
*Karen McCartney*



Grey and green tones combine using interesting Agave varieties mixed with Phormium, Gardenias and Zoysia grass between the stepping stones.

Will's commitment to quality architectural outcomes is personal as much as it is professional. His family home in Sydney's Bondi is built on a previously neglected pizza-slice shaped block where architects Clayton Orszaczky designed a residence influenced by Norwegian barns. "Visitors don't expect the garden to be so big but the reality is the house is small relative to the block and we could have probably built it about 30 per cent bigger, but it's all about balance and what is important to us as a family", he says.

His other award-winning architectural enterprise, undertaken with his wife Julia, is the Bismarck House – named after an impressive palm on the site. Designed as a rental from the get-go by Andrew Burges Architects, it is a built manifesto in terms of the low-maintenance cactus garden threading throughout the long north-facing block providing garden views at every turn.



An elegant composition of texture and form using Agave, Miscanthus and Zoysia.



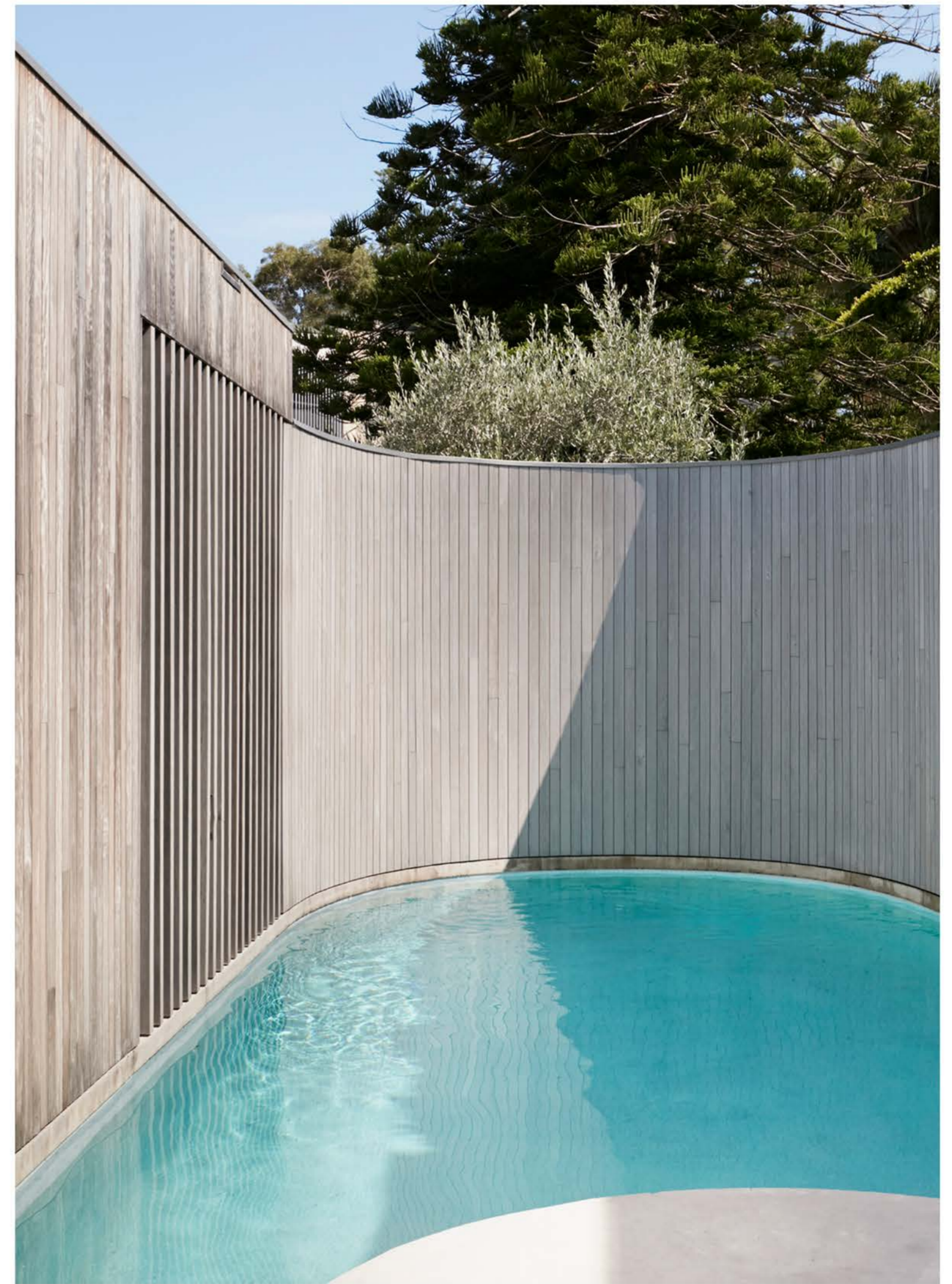
Will, along with Bill Clifton of Robert Plumb Build, always likes to have an ambitious personal project on the horizon and a large swathe of land in rural NSW is the next project to combine architecture and land regeneration.

Closer to home a project in Sydney's Little Cove, Manly, employs many of the same principles. "This garden had a number of constraints from the fact that it was a bandicoot habitat to managing water views", Will says. The house was designed by BKH with a simple geometry executed in weathered timber to suit the coastal site. The singular exterior expression lends itself as a backdrop to the layered nature of the planting. "You've got that rock star view and you just need a calmness around the building, alongside interest through textural change," he says.

A combination of low-maintenance grasses such as Chinese Silver Grass and New Zealand Flax, succulents and hardy trees settle the house into the landscape while the established Norfolk Island Pine, common to the area, frames the view. Fragrance comes courtesy of banks of gardenias.

"We have a great relationship with these clients and are working on another project with them. It is the best thing when trust has been established and it is all about the ideas and the collaboration. Like putting on an old pair of leather gloves – in the best possible way".

The planting design loosely replicates the headland landscape with subtle accents provided by the Aloe Vera and Flax.



**Project** Simon Howard  
**Design** Dangar Barin Smith  
**Landscape** Blayd Architected Landscapes

Exquisite detailing by architects Burley Katon Halliday  
with an olive tree popping over the top.