

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

news, views and the latest trends in Australia and *beyond*

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04 MAY 2009

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IN PROFILE

This black box named SheOak sits within the Casuarina estate on a beach-front lot



Storrs house incorporates low energy lighting, solar water heating, over 60 000 litres of water storage

Both designs were awarded a 2008 Regional Commendation by the Australian Institute of Architects



BASE ARCHITECTURE

AS BRISBANE'S POPULATION ROCKETS, RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY IS POWERING FULL-STEAM AHEAD.

TIM STEWART, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF **BASE ARCHITECTURE**, TELLS *ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN* HOW DESIGNS ARE RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING MARKET.

How is the industry in Queensland?

At the beginning of the year the industry was equally divided between commercial and residential projects, but the residential sector now makes up about 80 per cent of the market. The financial crisis is making it harder for commercial projects to obtain funding and easier for parents wanting to build their own houses. I think we can expect to see a return to normal by the end of the year.

How is design changing as a result?

Nearly 90 per cent of residential briefings are for four-bedroom houses with two living rooms and a study. People are trying to squeeze more out of less space and are concentrating on resale value. They are also focusing more on space than on green materials. People are just not prepared to spend the money for green initiatives

What does Queensland residential architecture need?

People often think building a house with a water tank and efficient lights makes it 'green', but sustainable residential designs in Queensland need significant improvements. Green credentials need to be more reflective of good design rather than green items like water efficient taps. Architecture needs to focus on sun-shading, ventilation, and passive solar design, which saves on heating and cooling costs. Essentially, the complexity of design needs more focus.

What could take sustainable design forward?

There is a growing need for increased awareness of what is 'green'. Sustainability is an issue that is still in its infancy, but it is about educating people in the best ways to do it, and also looking into the way we plan communities. It is important to understand a good sustainable design is not necessarily more expensive. While the materials may cost a little more, an efficient house is not necessary more costly. It is up to architects and government initiatives to take this forward.

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