

Architects pave way

There has been a revolution in the design of project homes in recent years, with builders commissioning award-winning architects to create homes of people's dreams that are also environmentally friendly.

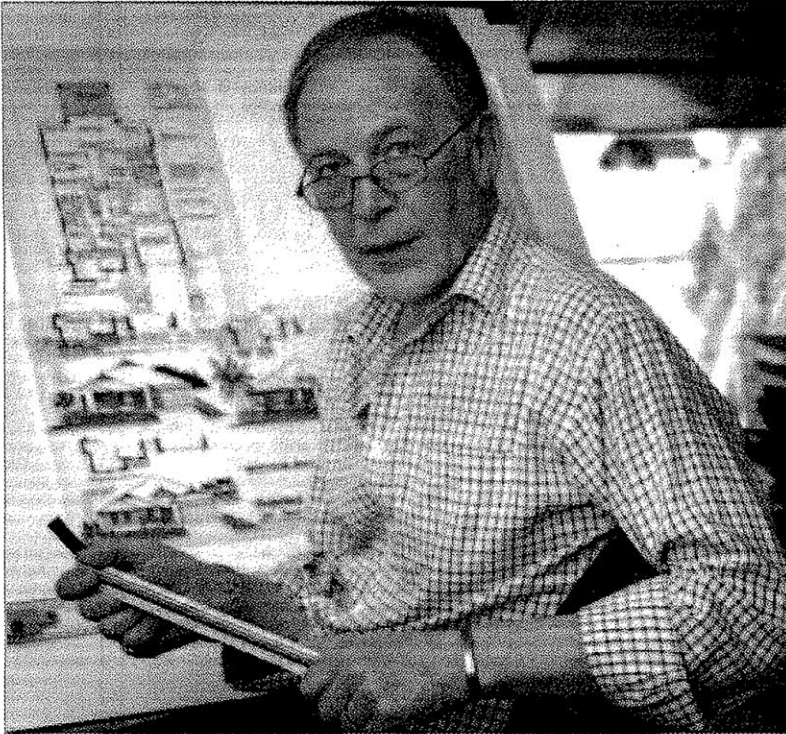
Not so many years ago the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) was issuing a dire warning over a perceived lack of quality design in the project home market.

Of great concern to the institute was the need to improve design as well as introducing smaller designs to achieve greater energy efficiencies.

Failure to do so, the RAIA warned, could effectively create a legacy of greenhouse gas emissions that would be with us for generations.

But while the RAIA was voicing its concerns, the leading project home builders of Australia were already paving the way forward by commissioning architects to create a new chapter in the Australian residential building industry.

In the Hunter, Maitland-based builder McDonald Jones Homes conducted an exhaustive search before engaging the award-winning, United



HELPING FAMILIES: Award-winning McDonald Jones Homes' architect Stuart Everitt is helping forge a new chapter in the Australian residential building industry.

Kingdom-qualified architect Stuart Everitt.

Mr Everitt's ideals sat well with the directors of McDonald Jones Homes, who had always been committed to offering affordable homes of quality to families.

"I believe all families should

benefit from affordable designed homes," Mr Everitt said.

"Through clever design, families benefit from central living areas naturally flowing from area to area. We're creating smarter designs that answer the needs of modern lifestyles

while embracing the delicate balance of daily family life."

But equally important to McDonald Jones Homes and Mr Everitt was the need to introduce smarter, more environmentally efficient homes.

"The climate enjoyed in Australia, like that of the

Mediterranean, lends itself to capitalise on large protected external spaces with full roof lines, pergolas and deep overhangs," Mr Everitt said from his office in Perth, Western Australia.

"This coupled with the need to maximise upon nature's energy source and today's sustainability issues have placed a huge responsibility and challenge on designers and home builders.

"All of the homes in our portfolio encompass not only the timeless principles of good architectural design but also address the environmental issues of energy and water sustainability and the use of alternative environmentally friendly building materials and components."

There is no doubt that there has been a fundamental change in the design and construction of homes over the past 20 years. Gone are labour-intensive building practices and the use of materials that are a burden to the environment. As an example, aluminium for framing and roof trusses is progressively replacing timber.

For most builders in the project home market, no single design can be the ultimate solution.

"The key to providing the appropriate range of homes is maximum flexibility and diversity," Mr Everitt said.

"As in any building design basic principles of function and form are paramount. The understanding of scale, proportion, light, space, mass and void are just as critical in the design of a private home as it is in any major public or corporate building."

continued next page

FAMILY ACHIEVES DREAM OF ARCHITECT-DESIGNED HOME

Living in an architecturally designed home was something that home buyers of a generation ago could only have dreamt of.

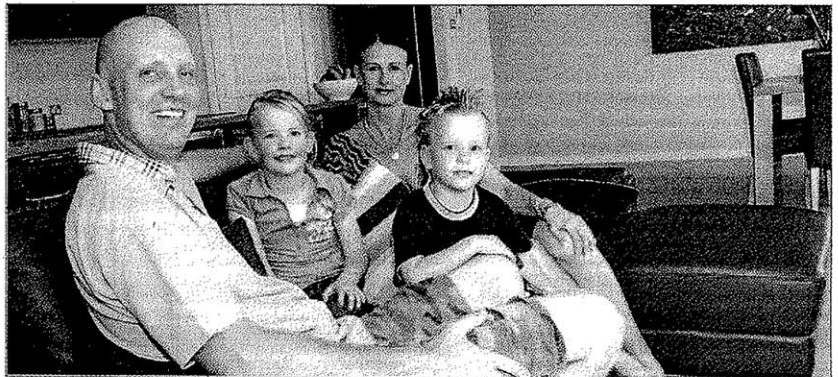
But with project home builders now employing the services of the best architects in the land, anyone can have a home created by an architect.

Tenambit's Martin and Simone Searle said their dreams were realised in 2007 when they took possession of a home designed by architect Stuart Everitt.

"It is just a wonderful home and we feel so lucky to have it," Mrs Searle said.

"The living areas are not just generous, they are functional and the whole house seamlessly leads from one living theme to another.

"Another great thing about our home, and I hope this doesn't sound too haughty, is that it is really nice when friends visit to be able to say it was designed by an architect."



LIVING THEIR DREAM: Martin and Simone Searle with children Sid and Florencia in their architecturally designed home at Tenambit.