



Location Location

text: **Georgi Waddy** photography: **John Girdlestone**

With a fantastic view across the sea to Kapiti Island on the south-western tip of NZ's North Island, this new holiday 'bach' cuts a silvery streak in amongst the native bush.

In Maori the area is known as the "perching place of the kakariki bird", and here, sitting amongst the New Zealand natives, this new holiday bach has a bird's eye view of Kapiti Island. The house is made of corrugated natural aluminium, untouched and raw.



To keep waste and costs to a minimum, the interior of the house was built in natural pine plywood throughout, limewashed above 2.4 metres for effect. **opposite page** The building's footprint was shaped to incorporate the mature trees surrounding it, in order to connect with the existing natural environment.

With a bird's eye view across to Kapiti Island, off New Zealand's North Island, the design challenge was to reinvigorate a fabulous site and transform an old rundown bach into an eco-friendly modern holiday house.

The owners had used the 1930s bach as a family no-fuss holiday destination and had even considered selling it until thankfully the agent talked them out of it! She explained to them they were on prime real estate in the area and were better to renovate than to try and find another home as well positioned as this one.

So with that realisation, and memories of dark and damp winters in the old house, the Lloyds decided to renovate their cottage and create something that would incorporate all the family, including the grandchildren. Luckily for them, local residents and architects, William Giesen and Cecile Bonnifait, both lived in the area and were passionate about the peninsula. A neighbour had previously used their expertise to renovate a similar style of house across the road so they were able to combine their skills to come up with a solution. Initially the Lloyds were reluctant to pull down the old house completely but they soon realised the economical benefit of starting over again.

During the design process both architects believe the structure develops from a concern in "forming one body with the landscape", so they took major steps to devise a plan in order to maximise this stunning position. Protected from the renowned

Wellington southerlies, the site has wide views to the north completely surrounded by New Zealand natives.

Without disturbing the native trees on the site they asked a local arborist to carefully manicure them so the trees could determine the foundation of the house's footprint. This enabled the design site to connect with the interior with large louvred windows at both ends opening on to tree trunks, bringing the outside in.

"We wanted to keep the design of the building compact," Bonnifait explains, looking up at the design of the home with one end at 2.8 metres and the west-facing roof over five metres high." By keeping the west end higher than the east we were able to achieve two storeys comfortably; in this way we managed to retain the small footprint and create a sense of space and discretion."

The Lloyds wanted to keep the house as self-sufficient and modestly built as possible whilst at the same time understanding the need to be sympathetic to the natural environment. They are happy with the spacious outcome and especially love the way the angle of the roof mirrors the slope of Kapiti Island.

"It's a great place to come and rest," Trevor Lloyd remarks. "The project was a family affair, we were all involved. We wanted somewhere simple to come to, where the grandchildren could stay, chore-free, well-ventilated yet warm; we are thrilled with the outcome and can see it being a very economical house to live in." →



The red bookshelf was designed to hide the kitchen utensils from the living area and the locally sourced rice lamps help to soften the interior space. **opposite page** The double-skin verandah works as a valuable heat exchange in winter and keeps the house cool and breezy in summer months. The aluminium doors and louvred windows maximise the indoor-outdoor flow, the *Macrocarpa* decking is unsealed to develop a natural patina.

With a small footprint of only 145 square metres the house was raised by 700 mm off the ground to maximise the view, to keep sand away (the whole area was once sand dunes), and inhibit wildlife coming into the house. By doing this the view was improved immediately: the tall ancient Pohutakawa and Puriri trees camouflage the house so it sits gently in the landscape, only visible to birds.

“We love the way the house sits. It feels like it is on an island and we have managed to keep everything here without changing the natural landscape,” explains Giesen.

The exterior of the house is made of corrugated natural aluminium, untouched and raw, easily maintained and a jewel on the visual landscape. Both architects love the way it reflects the bush which is a forever changing patina of light. During the winter, heat is captured by double-glazed windows, also fitted in aluminium, to match the silver exterior. The verandah is double wrapped with two layers of glass adding warmth to the house during winter and shelter from the wind.

“The verandah is the heat source of the house,” explains Giesen. “When the sun is high in summer the area is easily warmed and in winter when the sun is low it reaches inside to the living areas.” It also has high louvred windows increasing air movement, high enough to be safely kept open for long periods; the pattern is repeated along the west-east axis where louvres keep the air

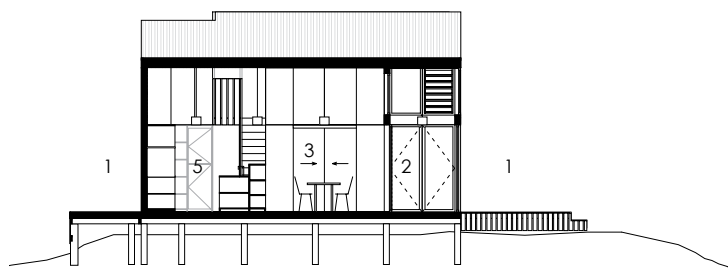
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In the interior the main emphasis was to maximise the living spaces, hence less space was used on utility areas (bathrooms, laundry and the stairs) enabling four generous bedrooms in the house with plenty of space and privacy around them. All the bedrooms are approximately 10 square metres in area, two upstairs and two downstairs, all with huge windows facing north with vast views across the trees to the coastline beyond. The stairs are narrow but adequate, measuring only 650 mm, and provide a whimsical child-like feeling of “going up a tree house” – perfect for extra family members, guests and grandchildren, all frequent visitors.

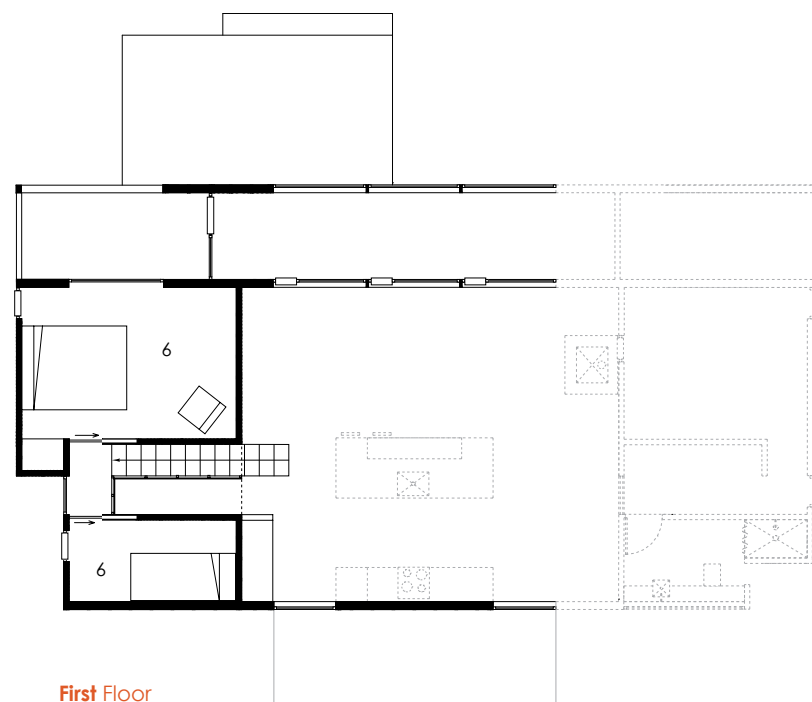
To maintain privacy between the living room and the main bedroom, a small hall area divides the bathroom and the bedroom, creating a sense of arrival. During summer both downstairs bedrooms are kept cool and connect with the main verandah. During winter an internal louvred window draws warm air into the bedroom from the wood burner and a ceiling fan distributes the hot air around the house, making it an efficient warming device for the home.

Although not completely off the grid, the Lloyds feel confident this will be a beach house economical to run, with little hot water cost, only fallen wood to burn and low-energy lighting. And as we leave on a sunny afternoon we notice it is also hard for the many native birds to leave this natural setting, as they perch undisturbed and plentiful on this unique peninsula. 🌿

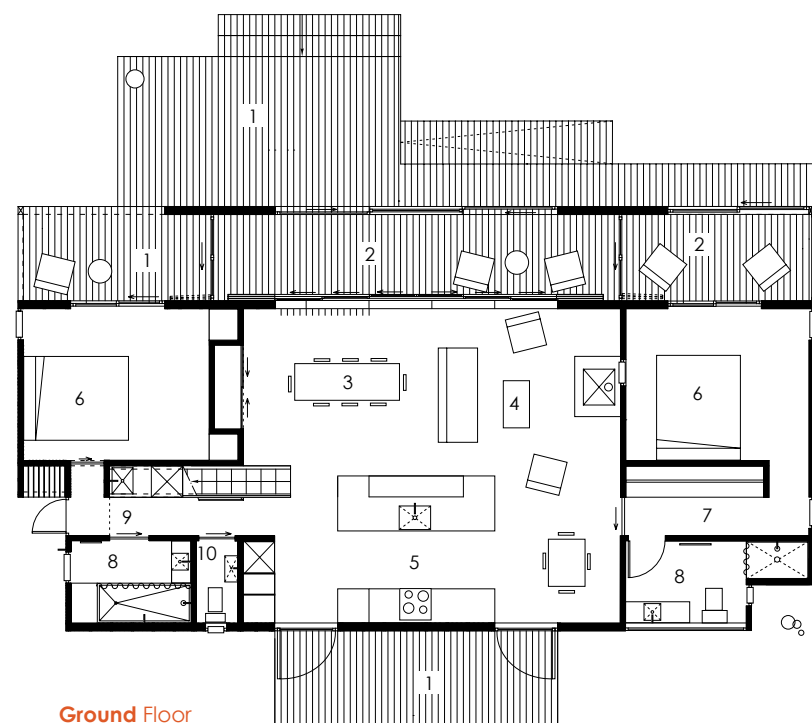




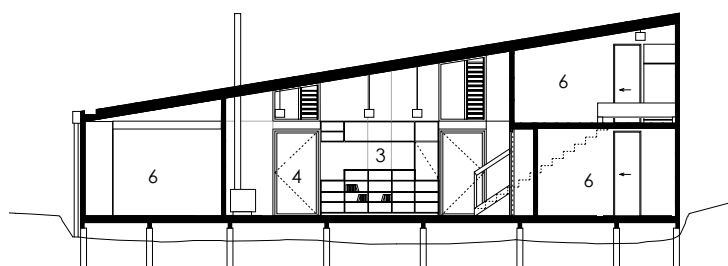
East Elevation



First Floor



Ground Floor



North Elevation



- 1/ deck
- 2/ glazed verandah
- 3/ dining
- 4/ living
- 5/ kitchen
- 6/ bedrooms
- 7/ wardrobe
- 8/ bathroom
- 9/ laundry
- 10/ toilet



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