



A SWELL TEAM



Swell Homes and Ambient join forces with Arcologic to create this Mt Pleasant Home

Swell Homes is a builder specialising in the fields of energy efficiency and passive solar home construction. Owner, Anthony Pillinger, has been building extensions in the Perth market since the 1980's, and has developed a team which is very experienced in renovations and additions. In 2015 the company was proud to win the HIA Greensmart Renovation/Addition Project of the Year Award, after many years of being a finalist. Swell Homes also builds 'design and construct' custom built homes, and to date has been a regular finalist at the HIA awards (with the anticipation of taking out this award in 2016).

Designs are created by Ambient, produced and overseen by Rachel Pillinger. Every home design by Ambient considers crossflow ventilation, provision of natural light, solar passive maximisation, water saving potential, and power saving features.

Swell Homes' team for this Brian Street project comprised Anthony 'Ant' Pillinger (Contracts Administrator), and Ben Lamond (Site Supervisor). The company's supervisors are all very hands on within their projects, and the 5 supervisors usually assist each other on sites during the running of a project, backing each other up as required. Ant and Ben are both mates from their University days, and both completed the Bachelor of Applied Science (Quantity Surveying). Andrew Annandale, Steve Dickie, Nick Ling, Matty Readhead, Jimmy Baker and Mike Voynovsky have all either completed their Diploma in Construction or are currently working toward completion.

"We all were exposed to construction early in our lives", says Ant. "Andy with a sheet metal worker's trade, Steve and Matty with a carpenter's trade, Nick an experienced hammerhand, Jimmy with a mechanical drafterperson qualification, and Mike with a ceramic tiler trade background".

"We are essentially design and construct operation, with Ambient providing contract documentation following the DA outline provided by Arcologic. Our structure is that we have a

THE TEAM



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Construction Manager overseeing contract documentation and execution, with a supervisor dedicated to each job. In the case of this project, we were approached by John Damant of Archologic to provide a budget based upon a plan that had an approved Development Application. This was forwarded on to the owners who selected Swell Homes and Ambient to prepare the full set of construction drawings, specification, and contract to meet the budget”.

“From the outset, this home required energy efficiency, and solar passive design married with medium to high quality finishes. This was driven out of the approved DA and the budget provided by Swell. Multiple versions of the budget were produced after the client’s decision to select Swell Homes to build their home. Through some re-negotiation of the scope of works, we eventually hit the mark on the client’s brief for quality and price”.

One aspect of this home that is prominent, is its light weight. While masonry a polished concrete slab were used on the ground floor (to provide mass and also give an economical outcome), the upper floor and walls were all timber framed. To achieve mass in the upper floor, Swell used Hebel Powerfloor (a 75 mmm thick aerated concrete flooring panel which was fixed to a traditional timber frame) in lieu of a suspended slab, in order to reduce construction costs and time, and to maintain thermal mass in the upper floor which was generally made of lightweight products.

Swell also uses Foilboard vapour barrier in lieu of builder’s paper on all of its projects. This is applied to the East, West and Northern faces, and their designs allow the void between the cladding and the Foilboard to

breathe whenever possible. Anthony says that he finds that they can obtain superior insulation performance by using these designs, products and methods. The home also has CFC cladding, and a tin roof, and the Energy rating that has been achieved by the combination of all of these selected products in this home, is 6-Stars.

“The convectional aspect of our sun facing walls I believe to be quite innovative. We did discuss these with regards to commercialisation, with representatives of CSIRO about 3 years ago, however I believe that the concept should be freely used in the industry in zones where heat is the predominant condition. The use of one-off or custom scaled products such as the solar screens do set this building apart visually. I believe that the heat chimney effect that our walls are built to emulate whenever possible, while unseen, is also unique”, says Ant.

The interior of the home incorporates a combination of timber and laminate finishes to cabinetwork. This is best highlighted in the kitchen. Externally, the use of decking mirrors the same timber tones as used inside, providing balance and texture. Rusted decorative steel panels which form external gates and screens also pick up the same tones as the timbers. An enclosed central courtyard (complete with decked walkway and pebbled garden) can be seen through multiple full-height windows situated in the main living/dining areas and bedrooms.

The home may look simple and unimposing, and this is not without intent. However its design is detailed and complex, and its construction is well planned and executed. “The job flowed quite cleanly for, and variations were mainly housekeeping. Sourcing custom shade louvres from interstate was a bit of a challenge, but far from insurmountable. This new home, pool and pool house project was constructed in less than 1 year. All in all, I think this home represents one of the easier jobs that we built last year!”

“We also learnt that Arcologic are great designers, and they attract nice, like-minded clients. We found through this (and subsequent jobs) that Arcologic and Swell Homes make a great combination. I think that John and his team have found a long term partner in Swell Homes, given our ability to deliver both documentation and finished product on cost and on time.”

Swell Homes has recently finished building some attractive and appealing homes in Fremantle and the surrounding area, and the company is currently carrying out with will be a breathtaking renovation to a home near Fremantle. The home has amazing river views that Swell Homes shall capitalise on further.

“We are pleased to say that we are still busy despite being in Western Australia, where mining, oil and gas are all having a somewhat negative impact on our economy at present, not to mention other worldwide trends that are occurring. Predicting the degree of impact on the housing market is tough when considering current versus future demand, and employee levels that our company is committed to”, says Ant.

“Part of our success stems from nurturing and training a team of brilliant people who all love to work together to achieve the goals of Swell Homes...and its clients”.



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Unit 1/14 Renewable Chase, Bibra Lake WA 6163
Fax: (08) 6434 1654 Email: info@svglass.com.au

Tel: (08) 9434 4311