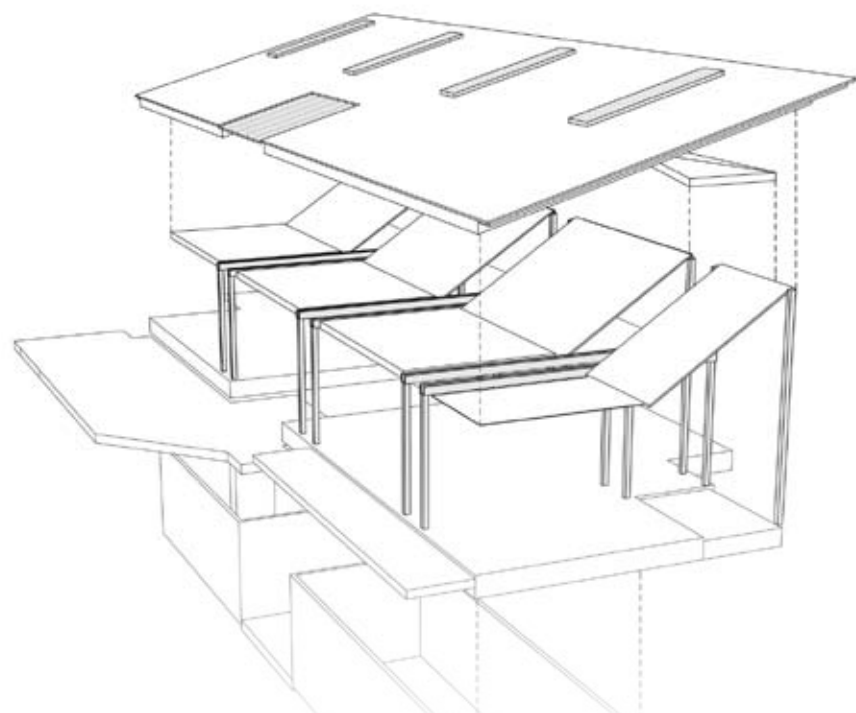


“ The project went through a thorough conceptual design phase including sketching, and cardboard and computer modelling, identifying forms, timber finishes and lighting nuances which captured the sense of being within the forest. ”



LEFT AND FAR RIGHT
Natural materials harmonise to playfully sculpt the changing quality of the isolated bush setting in New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds

MIDDLE
Constructed predominantly in timber framing with exposed LVL beams and an inverted timber truss roof structure



TRANQUIL KUMUTOTO

Campsite planning and folded planes

Fond memories of family camping holidays in the South Island bush with boat-only access and no power were the inspiration for a unique bach (a quintessential Kiwi holiday shack or house) that achieved top honours in the 2007 New Zealand Timber Design Awards.



Black beech flooring, hoop pine ply lining
and low-sheen finishes

The judges said of the Residential Architecture supreme award winner by Jeremy Smith of Irving Smith Jack Architects that it responded effortlessly to the challenging task of forming a permanent structure on the owners' tranquil, secluded camp spot. "Simple detailing and the use of folded planes and natural materials harmonise to playfully sculpt the changing quality of light and shadows, mimicking the effect of the surrounding landscape."

The design brief was driven by a desire for more permanent accommodation on this magnificent site — which had helped generate many happy family holidays — without losing the joy of being in the bush.

Concepts explored timber finishes and structures that would capture the existing campsite's ability to draw light from the full height of the forest. "One of the beauties of working with wood is the way in which you can fuse the specific qualities of each timber member into the space as a whole," says Smith. "The architecture benefits from the way each piece of timber is selected and crafted."

Form evolved through interpreting the dense green forest floor, the sea edge silhouetted between darker, vertical forest trunks and the movement of the upper canopy to filter light.

"The project went through a thorough conceptual design phase including sketching, and cardboard and computer modelling, identifying forms, timber finishes and lighting nuances which captured the sense of being within the forest. Combining timber finishes and structure by merging the interior and exterior forest spaces, the design reflects campsite planning where kitchen, internal and external living areas, communal and withdrawal spaces, private bedrooms and bathrooms — each with unique bush views — are linked by a main circulation route."

Openings in the roof, walls and floor planes bring the forest's colour changes, movement and light indoors. And along with an elevation, which draws the sea views inwards, the secret of the bach's success is revealed: to feel sheltered but still a part of the bush.

The shaped ceiling plane modulates high and low volumes of light either side of the rough openings. A greenish hue, which reflects off the lower roof, washes the ceiling through the high-level glazing, while the movement of the kanuka trees casts shadows through skylights. Repeated elongated windows mirror the vertical height and texture of the tree trunks and full height sliders open the living areas to sea views through the treetops.

The lushness and colour of the uphill forest floor is captured through high-level broad glass. The lowered seaward deck allows silhouetted views of the sea through the forest, replicating the scene when the family camped on the forest floor.

The bach is constructed predominantly in timber framing with exposed LVL beams and an inverted timber truss roof structure. Low-sheen paint and stain finishes were selected for their soft, absorbent and natural palette to complement the hoop pine plywood linings and black beech flooring. The interior plywood, exposed LVL beams and posts were coated with Resene Aquaclear satin, while higher-impact timber areas were coated with Resene Qristal clear polyurethane, satin. Linings and structure were seamlessly detailed to allow the beauty of the natural timber finishes to soften the interior, providing a backdrop for the natural bush surroundings.

Externally, band-sawn plywood cladding and cedar battens were coated with Resene Woodsman for protection.

With boat-only access to the site, careful planning was required to deliver materials economically to a timetable that matched construction progress. Smith says builder Mark Shields deserves a lot of the credit for the beautifully constructed house, particularly given the challenges of the climate, remote location, the site's steep contour on a steep site and difficulty storing materials.

PENELOPE LAWRY

LOCATION Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand

ARCHITECT Jeremy Smith, Irving Smith Jack Architects

BUILDER Mark Shields

ENGINEER Derek Crombie, GHD

WOOD PRODUCTS LVL, hoop pine plywood, black beech flooring, band-sawn plywood with cedar battens

PHOTOGRAPHY Paul McCredie