

Unique home in the Haven

Is it a ship, a shell, a wave or a house being constructed in Leighton Close, North Haven?

At the moment from the street it looks like the ribs of a ship under construction.

From the inside it could feel like living on the beach in the barrel of a wave.

From the outside it will look like a creamy coloured shell.

But eventually it will be a home for a young Sydney family who love sports and the beach.

For the last fortnight 11 architecture students from Newcastle University have built the first floor, the ribs and framework for the house, under the guidance of New York architects Jeremy Edmiston, a former Sydney lad, and Douglas Gauthier. Building contractors will take over from today.

Jeremy and Douglas flew out from their New York office to be on site and see their 'baby' through to completion.

"If you had to describe the shape, it's like a twisted rectangle on stilts," Jeremy said.

"If you sliced the house like a salami no slice would be the same shape."

The house shies away from traditional bricks and mortar construction. It will be made of plywood, insulated then a poly-skin will be sprayed on.

"It's in the spirit of the surf shack with indoor/outdoor living," said Jeremy.

Around a third of the living space comprises outdoor living/dining and entertaining.

"The polyurethane skin

will be like its own wet-suit, keeping with the surf-shack theme," said Douglas.

It's been a truly international effort to get the house to this stage. The architects are based in the US, an Italian company engineered the plan for the shapes of the ribs onto the plywood and a Gosford company laser-cut the ply. The concept has been published in many architectural publications around the world - incredible for a house that, until now, has never been built.

"It's like building a big model," said Douglas of the construction process.

Each piece of ply is a unique shape and numbered to fit in order, according to the plan - like a set of instructions to build a model plane or boat.

"It's a really efficient way to build a house. Adds more possibilities [to the construction industry]," Douglas said.

Jeremy said: "You can heat and cool this house without having to do it mechanically. We had to know what the sun and breezes do in this area. No

summer sun will get into the house to heat it up but all winter sun will warm the house in winter. There's plenty of cross ventilation for cooling breezes.

"The house responds to the climate and how we in Australia live both
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Unique project for students

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indoors and outdoors."

The University of Newcastle became involved through the strong links of the architectural industry. The band of students includes Bonny Hills lad Simon Hayward.

"We emailed the Dean and he said it would be a great project for them to be involved in," Jeremy said.

"In the architecture world this project is like an American barn raising, where a community comes together to build a barn," Douglas said.

"The world of architecture is like a community and this mentality sees that projects like this can be achieved.

"It's a unique learning experience in architecture and technology for the students and they would be interested in the complexity of it.

It will look like a normal house in the end but the method interesting in the world of architecture."

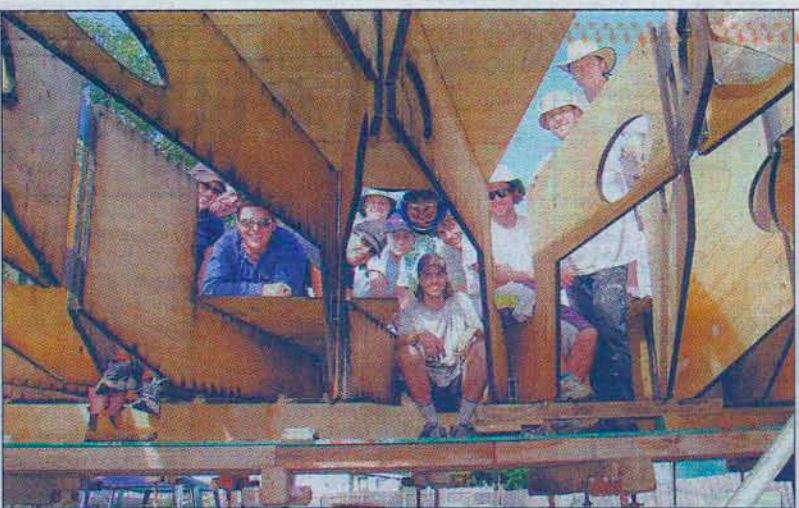


Architects on site: Jeremy Edmiston, left, and Douglas Gauthier with a three-dimensional plan of the home. The two travelled all the way from New York to see their project through to completion.

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A great first for these students and the Camden Haven: Pictured are Justin Spaul, Louisa Gee, Dave Arnott, Jo Redden, Chris Napp (architect from Michigan), Ksenia Totoeva, Ned Haughton (of Taree), Michael Dawes, Andrew Cabill, Simon Hayward (of Bonny Hills), Shaun Purcell and Jonothan Mentink all architecture students of Newcastle University helping build a unique home in North Haven.