

# 02 Box Modern

Design Handbook 2026

Box Modern is maturing, evolving from simple, symmetrical forms into a more dynamic, purposeful style. Boxy forms are reimagined with bright colour combinations to reflect a more creative, lifestyle-led approach.



# Meet your team of experts

Guided by leading experts in architecture, design, lifestyle and global trend forecasting, this handbook draws on deep experience and distinct perspectives in creating homes that are thoughtful, relevant and future-focused.



Neale Whitaker  
Interior Design Expert

Neale is a renowned Australian design expert recognised for his thoughtful approach to residential architecture and interior home design.



Justin Logan  
Architect/Founder, OBI Office

Justin's residential architecture is recognised for creating connection, wellbeing and a strong relationship between interior and exterior spaces.



Rebecca Caratti  
Editor-in-Chief, VOGUE Living

Rebecca leads Vogue Living, recognised globally for its design authority, creative and cultural reach and rigorous curation.



Jenny Li  
Trend Specialist, WGSN

Jenny analyses global data and trends shaping design, lifestyle and consumer behaviour and contributes as a researcher and writer for WGSN content.



Matt Leacy  
Creative Director, Landart

Through Landart, Matt designs landscapes connecting nature and architecture, creating outdoor spaces that restore and inspire.

Cover  
The full facade of this Box Modern home features bold, stacked volumes, asymmetrical windows and light planting between the driveways that softens and divides the horizontal lines of the frontage.

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# Lifestyle themes

Guided by dynamic, purposeful and flexible ways of living, the Box Modern home supports creative expression and evolving routines—balancing functional simplicity, modular adaptability and multigenerational connection within a bold, playful, experimental canvas for contemporary life today.

## 01—Evolved Living

Box Modern focuses on agile spatial design and streamlined surfaces that adapt to changing routines, offering practical comfort without excess.



Jessie Street House by BuildHer Collective. Photography by Dylan James.

## 02—Creative Living

Box Modern offers a minimalist canvas for experimentation, where modular forms and crisp lines become tools for imaginative living and evolving personal style. Pops of colour and tactile finishes turn the home into a creative playground.



Milan Design Week photography by Paul Barbera.

## 03—Multigenerational living

Modular zoning and vertical stacking create distinct living areas, balancing autonomy and togetherness in multigenerational households. Upstairs-downstairs living, private retreats and open-plan communal areas allow families to coexist comfortably.



## 04—Autonomous Living

In Box Modern homes, Autonomous Living is expressed through efficiency, adaptability and confident self-reliance. Modular forms, durable materials and streamlined smart systems work together to help reduce maintenance while supporting evolving routines and multigenerational needs. This approach delivers flexible comfort, performance and resilient, low-intervention living.



# Dynamic, bold & purposeful



Modular layouts and adaptable frameworks support evolving routines and multigenerational living. Box Modern prioritises flexibility, functional simplicity and a blank canvas for creativity, with minimalist surfaces and agile design inviting experimentation and play.

Box Modern is a bold, purposeful style that celebrates creative ingenuity, design flexibility and personal expression. It transforms simple cubic volumes into distinctive homes through smart layouts, purposeful materials and pops of colour. Clean architectural lines maximise flexibility, with open-plan spaces that support evolving routines and room functions. The design also offers the freedom to bring the homeowner's ideas to life, shaping spaces that truly reflect who they are and how they want to live.

A home designed for imagination—a flexible canvas where personal stories, bold ideas and everyday creativity naturally take shape.

Functional simplicity is at the heart of Box Modern. Pragmatic and restrained forms allow personality to stand out without visual clutter. A base of clean whites and cool neutrals provides a flexible backdrop for personal touches and seasonal updates. This minimalist canvas is punctuated by contrasting pops of colour ranging from brilliant reds to yellows and blues. Surfaces combine smooth render and matte finishes, balancing structural precision with softness and delight.

Box Modern offers a flexible foundation for self-expression. It is a blank slate where clean lines and adaptable structures meet bursts of colour, modularity and personality. Minimalist architecture becomes a personalised statement, layering in creativity and joy as life evolves.

- 1 At the rear, the upper level in Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding extends slightly beyond the lower in horizontal blue Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture 325mm, hinting at layered geometry while keeping the alfresco and dining spaces open and light.
- 2 Each side of this Box Modern duplex reveals a recessed entry framed by bold volumes, with the upper level contrasting the ground floor to clearly define the building's form.

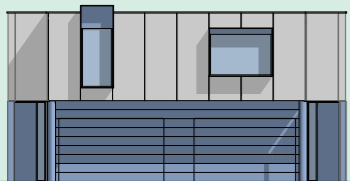


# Floorplan

The Box Modern home is perfect for compact blocks and flexible, multigenerational living. Stacked, rotated volumes create expressive simplicity in an efficient, considered floorplan for families seeking adaptability and ease.



From Justin:  
 'Box Modern thrives on purposeful simplicity and is ruthless in efficiency of space—bold volumes, clean lines and flexible spaces that evolve effortlessly with the people who live in them.'



## The brief

**Site & location context**  
 Sydney, NSW. Inner suburban block, temperate, sun-exposed climate.

**Homeowner profile**  
 Established couple with adult children.

**Intended use**  
 Multigenerational dual-occupancy—parents downsizing from family home helping children enter the market through shared ownership.

## The layout

3–4 bed | 3 bath | 1 car per home

Box Modern layouts are highly efficient, maximising compact footprints while remaining flexible for changing needs. In this floorplan, two dwellings are exact mirrors of one another. Entry flows naturally from the garage or street into the open kitchen / dining / living area, with a double-height dining void. Rear-facing living areas extend effortlessly to the outdoors, while smart storage keeps every space purposeful. Upstairs, the master suite overlooks the garden, with secondary bedrooms and rumpus arranged for adaptable zoning.

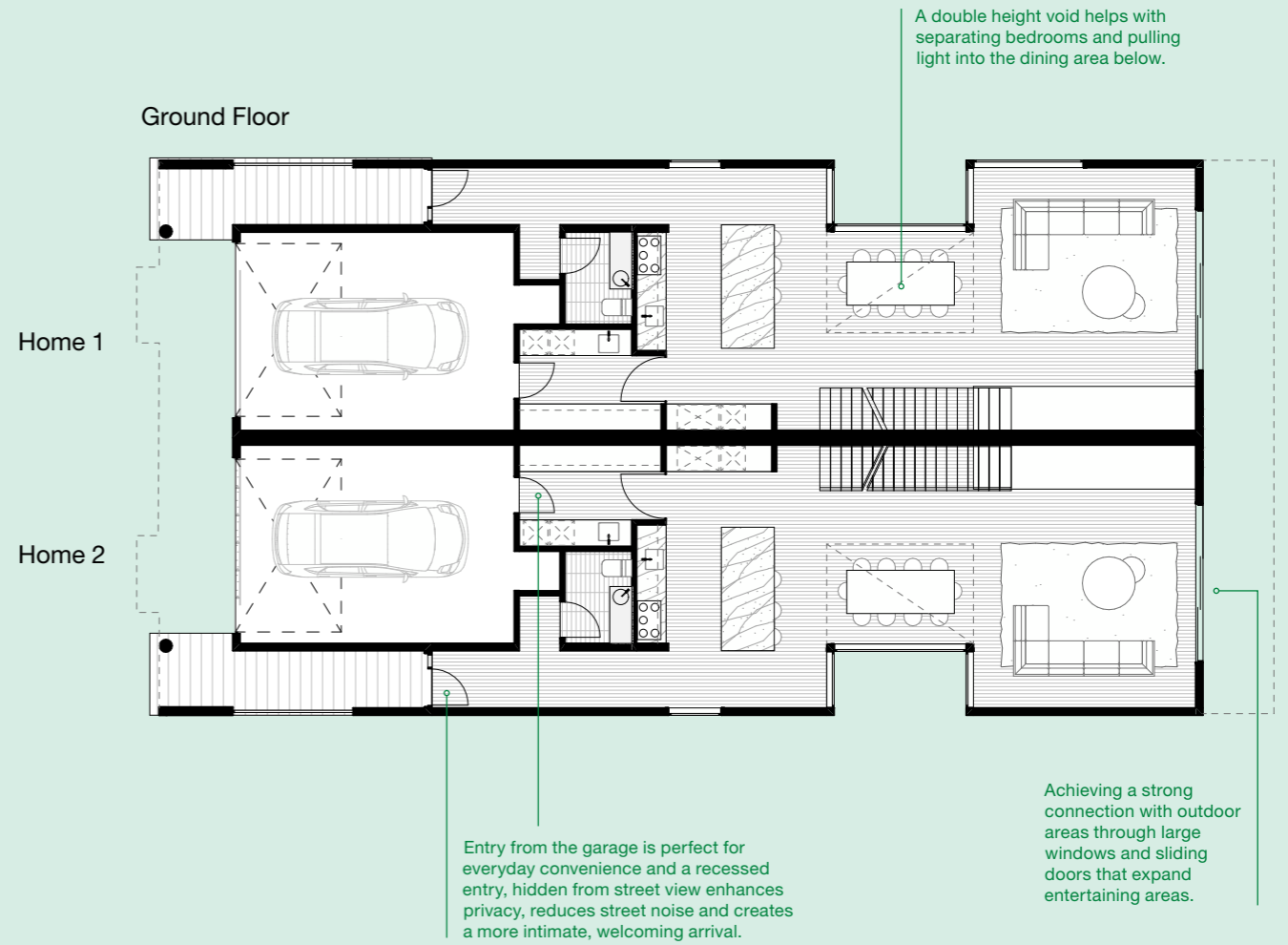
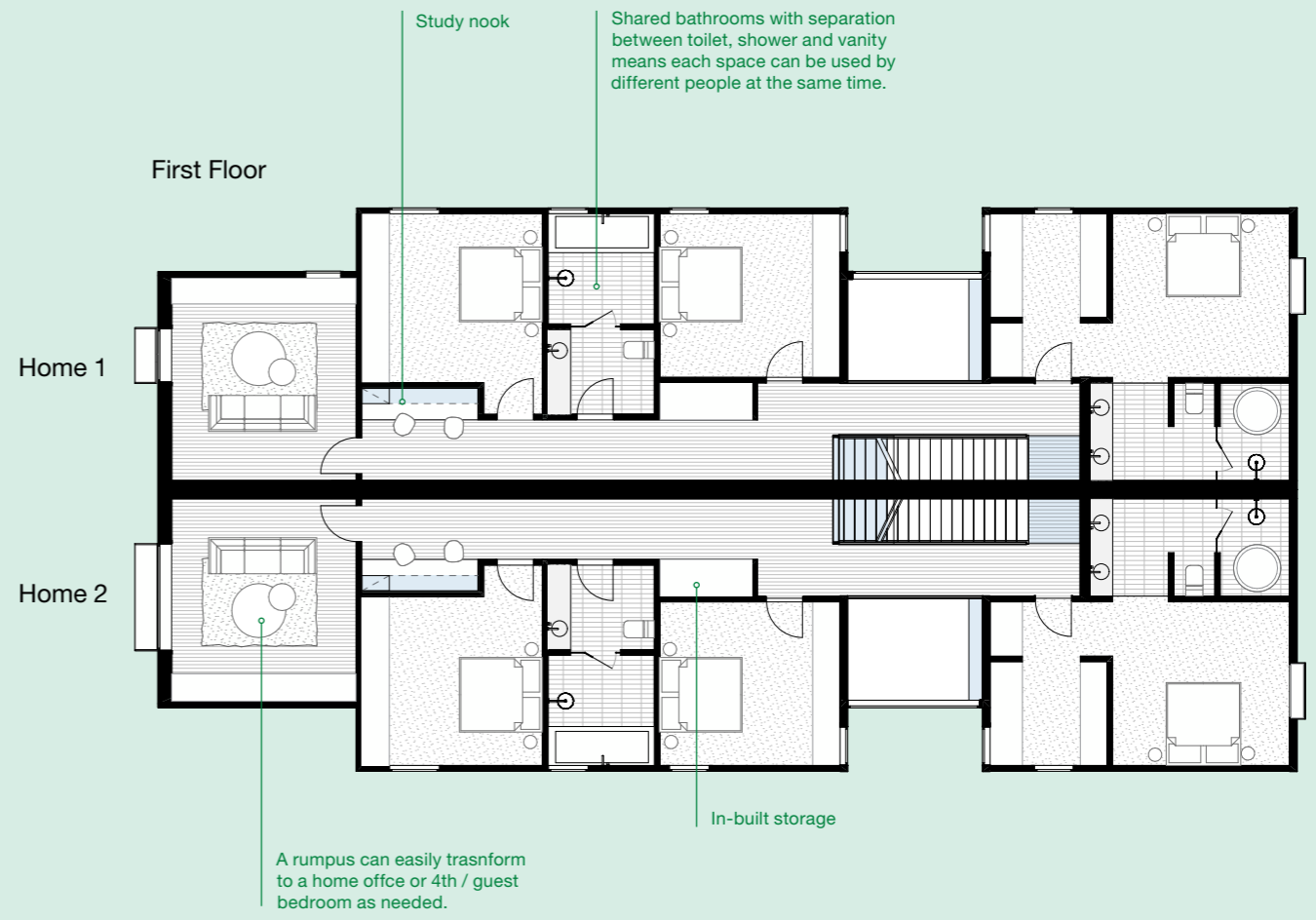
## Why it works

Every space is efficient, intuitive and connected. Expansive glazing and voids enhance light and openness. Clean lines and storage-led planning create a calm, minimalist canvas that allows spaces to adapt and personal style to evolve.

Every square metre is optimised, with storage and service walls organising circulation, reducing clutter and simplifying interiors. Designed for urban blocks, the layout balances flow, efficiency and long-term comfort.

## Adaptations

Box Modern's modularity supports multiple future scenarios: flexible zones shift easily as families evolve, the rumpus can become a home office or extra bedroom or the two dwellings can operate as one. Colourways can be customised without disrupting the architectural intent. Cabinetry, outdoor kitchens and interior layouts can reconfigure around service walls easily.



# Design features

## 1—Flat Roofline

Hidden flat roofs with parapet walls and sharp, well-defined edges create a strong outline and reinforce the style's modular, cubic character.

## 2—Cubic volumes

Stacked boxes, offset angles and boxed-in eaves create flexible zoning and a strong, uniform box effect with oversized windows for light and connection.

## 3—Defined exterior

Vertical or horizontal cladding or expressed panels create crisp lines to define the box shapes. Touches of other materials like timber or concrete add a distinctive material contrast.

## 4—Neutral canvas with bold accents

A base of clean whites and cool neutrals is punctuated by intentional, contrasting pops of colour allowing for personal and seasonal updates.

South House Rathmines by BuildHer Collective creates distinct spaces that speak to the homeowner's sense of identity—sophisticated and edgy with plenty of character and personality.



South Rathmines House by BuildHer Collective. Photography by Dylan James.

## 5—Interiors

Open-plan layouts, flexible furniture arrangements and smooth render or matte finishes create a tactile, adaptable environment. Playful storage and partitions support creativity and evolving routines.

The James Street House by BuildHer Collective has all shared living on one floor, with a big emphasis on creating both moments of connection and retreat within the home.



Jessie Street House by BuildHer Collective. Photography by Dylan James.



# Cladding solutions

Box Modern cladding solutions emphasise crisp geometry and modular expression, combining panelised systems and fine textures to reinforce cubic forms while supporting bold accents and adaptable detailing.

## Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture

Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture is ideal for ground floor applications, delivering a robust, modern render look with sharp grooves. Install vertically or horizontally for impressive, monolithic walls that highlight the geometric forms and tactile, minimalist aesthetic of Box Modern style.



## Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding

Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding offers a consistent, sand-like render finish that diffuses light for a calming, matte look. Its subtle texture puts focus on Box Modern's crisp lines and strong cubic shapes. Whether used on exterior facades or interior walls, it balances structural precision with a tactile, light-diffusing surface.

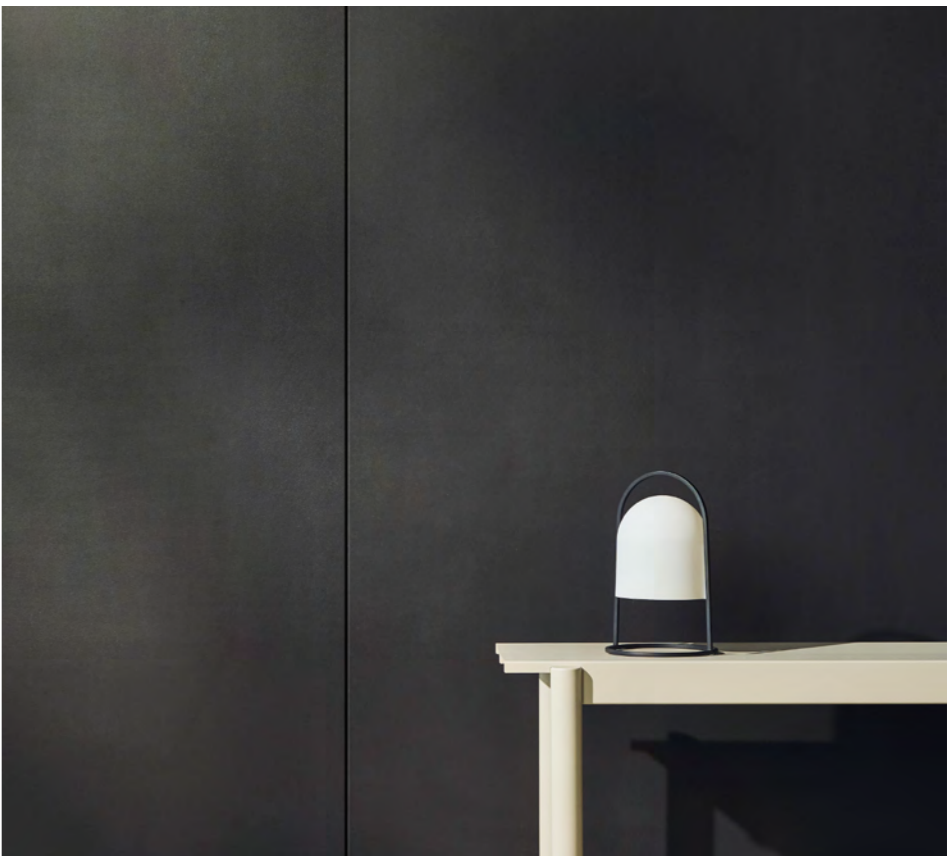


James Hardie has provided Australian-made building products for over 100 years, with a wide range of our fibre cement products being GreenRate™ Level A certified including Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding, Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture. All Hardie™ residential exterior cladding has a standard 25-year warranty period.



## Matrix™ Cladding

Matrix™ Cladding is ideal for Box Modern's modular aesthetic, with its expressed joint detailing reinforcing the stacked-box geometry. Its panelised format supports design flexibility and visual contrast, aligning with the style's creative expression.



# Introducing **NEW** Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC)

Build modern mixed-material homes with one trusted brand.

The introduction of Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel marks an important evolution in how modern Australian homes can be built with Hardie™ products. By bringing autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) and fibre cement exterior wall solutions together under one trusted brand, James Hardie offers a complete exterior wall solution for builders, installers, designers and architects delivering modern mixed-material homes.



Dulux Acratex® Coventry®  
Coarse Steel Trowel Applied



Dulux Acratex® Mediterranean  
Classique Coarse



Dulux Acratex®  
Super Trowel 2mm



Dulux Acratex® Contempo  
Advance® Coarse

James Hardie provides an integrated exterior approach to deliver speed, efficiency and contemporary design. Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel works seamlessly with Hardie™ fibre cement cladding to enable modern, mixed-material designs, delivering energy-efficient performance, design versatility and streamlined installation backed by a 25-year warranty.

Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC) finished in Dulux Acratex® Coventry® Coarse on the ground floor, and Axon™ Cladding 133mm on the upper storey.



# Colour palettes

The Box Modern colour palette pairs a clean neutral base with confident, contemporary accents. Crisp whites and cool greys create a calm canvas while bold blues, greens and expressive tones introduce contrast, personality and creative energy across adaptable, light-filled spaces.



From Jenny:

'Box Modern colour palettes push beyond safe neutrals, using bold, intentional accents to energise spaces and express evolving, creative individuality.'



## Scheme 1

## Scheme 2

## Scheme 3

Roof

Colorbond® steel Surfmist®

Colorbond® steel Surfmist®

Colorbond® steel Surfmist®

Main Walls

Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist®  
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel  
Surfmist®  
Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®

Dulux® Colorbond® Surfmist®  
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel  
Surfmist®  
Taubmans® Colorbond® Surfmist®

Dulux® Birkshire White  
Wattyl® Calcium  
Taubmans® Milk Cloud

Dulux® Ocean Surf  
Wattyl® Wedgewood  
Taubmans® Dakota

Dulux® Misty Moss  
Wattyl® Kentucky  
Taubmans® Sage Craft

Dulux® Colorbond® Woodland Grey®  
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel  
Woodland Grey®  
Taubmans® Colorbond® Woodland Grey®

Trim



Front Door

Dulux® Tingle  
Wattyl® Flaming Orange  
Taubmans® Nullabor Sunset

Natural Timber



# Style variations

While Box Modern retains its strong cubic language, variations respond to lifestyle, site conditions and climate. Colour accents, cladding orientation and modular layouts adapt to context, allowing homes to balance bold expression, functional flexibility and enduring performance as routines and family needs evolve.

## Crafted Box Modern

Simpler form with a distinctive colour palette and board-and-batten cladding to amplify a crafted feel, unified cladding carried consistently across the entire building.

Featuring Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim in board and batten application.



## Japandi Box Modern

Simplified, neutral colour palette, feature accent screening, warm tones, minimal approach to landscaping.

Featuring Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture horizontal and Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 300mm vertical.

## Multi-stack Box Modern

Multiple stacked intersecting volumes, using a palette of different cladding types and contrast colours to distinguish cubic forms, accented by brick, tile or timber textures.

Featuring Stria™ Cladding Smooth to the upper storey and Matrix™ Cladding to the ground floor.



## Medium Density Townhouse

Featuring clear zoning, repeatable forms and efficient, space-smart planning, with many features shared with the Barn style.

Featuring Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Smooth 405mm.



Get the Look

# Materials & textures

A restrained material palette pairs polished concrete, porcelain surfaces and fine textures with natural timber and stone. Matte finishes and subtle relief introduce tactile contrast, creating a confident yet adaptable architectural base.



From Rebecca:

‘Box Modern works best when materials are kept simple and precise. Pair smooth surfaces with tactile elements like timber or concrete, allowing contrast, proportion and restraint to create quiet luxury.’



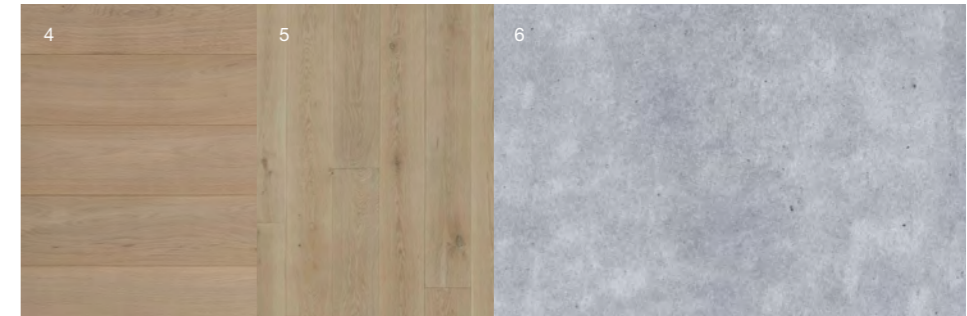
## Exterior

- 1 [Bordeaux Bluestone Cobblestones](#), RMS Traders
- 2 [Luna Wavy 23mm Mosaic Tile](#), The Pool Tile Company
- 3 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection](#)®, Weathered Teak, TimberTech®



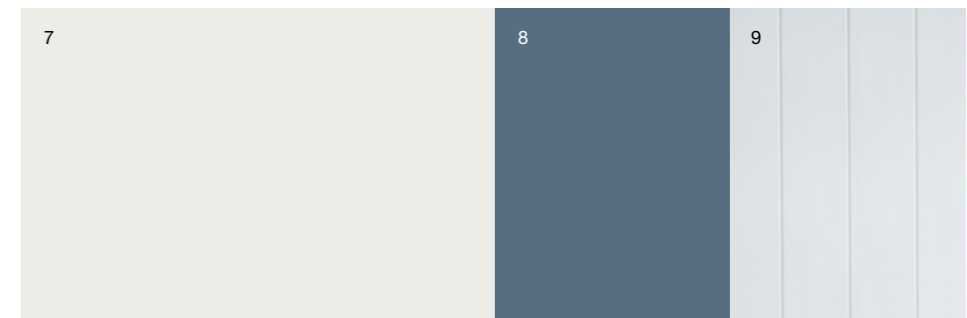
## Flooring

- 4 [Linen Floorboards](#), Royal Oak Flooring
- 5 [Bistre Floorboards](#), Tongue & Groove
- 6 [Polished Concrete](#), Architectural Grey, Geostone



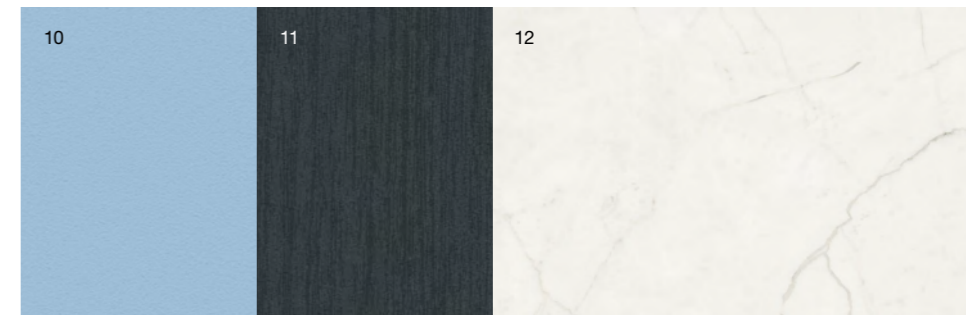
## Windows & Walls

- 7 [Dulux Natural White Interior Paint](#), Dulux
- 8 [Dulux Oceanic Interior Paint](#), Dulux
- 9 [Hardie™ Groove Lining](#), James Hardie



## Cabinetry

- 10 [Laminex Just Blue](#), Laminex
- 11 [Laminex Terril AbsoluteGrain](#), Laminex
- 12 [504 Lumena Porcelain Benchtop](#), Caesarstone



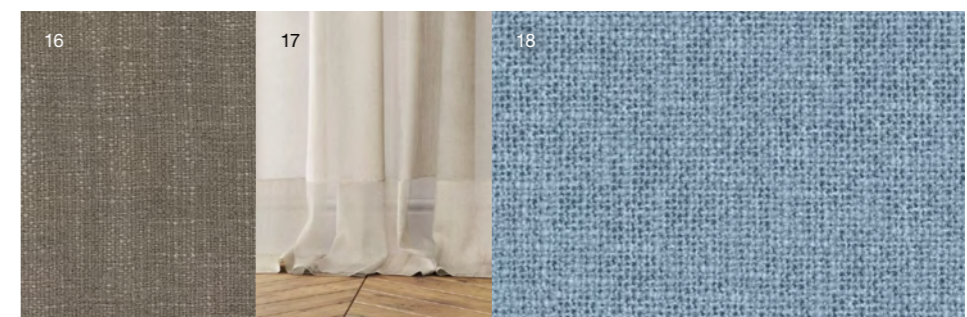
## Tiles

- 13 [Newport Matte Square & Subway Pattern Tile](#), Tilecloud
- 14 [Artesan Olympia Stone Tile](#), Artedomus
- 15 [Tavalera Handmade Tile](#), White, Ocean & Merchant



## Textiles

- 16 [Foundation M702 Upholstery](#), James Dunlop Textiles
- 17 [Quadrata Curtain](#), James Dunlop Textiles
- 18 [Pahi Upholstery](#), James Dunlop Textiles



# Landscaping

Landscaping for Box Modern reinforces its clean geometry and adaptable spirit, pairing structured planting with graphic hardscaping and modular outdoor zones. Defined edges, linear pathways and layered greenery extend the architecture outward, creating flexible spaces for gathering, retreat and play. Courtyards and terraces balance privacy with openness, supporting climate-responsive design and contemporary, multigenerational living.



From Matt:

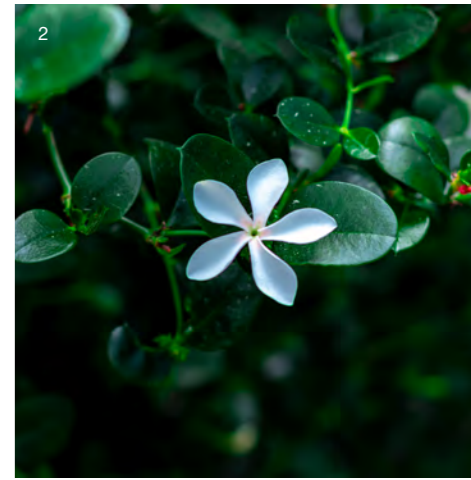
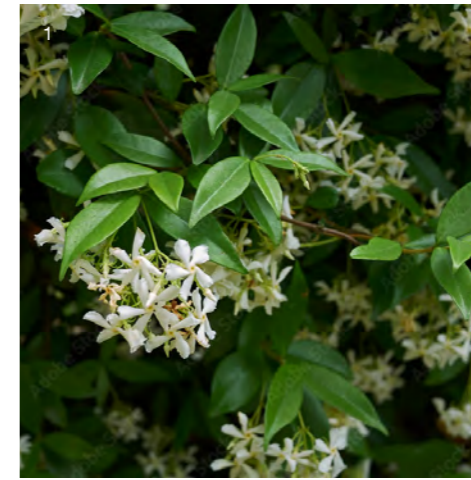
'Box Modern landscaping should feel intentional yet effortless, using structured planting and linear paths to extend the architecture while allowing adaptable outdoor zones to support evolving, contemporary living.'

At the rear, this Box Modern home features an open and light outdoor lounge area, kitchen and dining space surrounded by a lush raised garden, mature trees and a shared dividing wall with integrated planting to soften hard edges.



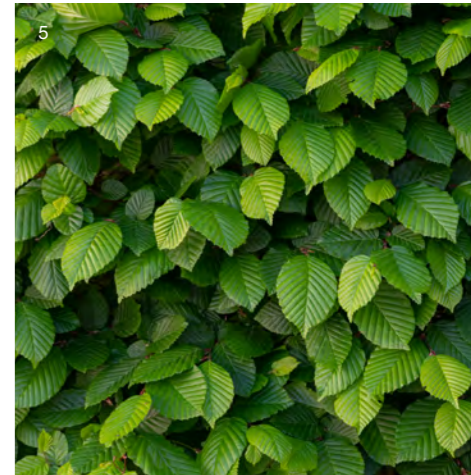
## Warm Climates

- 1 Asian Jasmine—low-growing groundcover or trellis creeper, often used to carpet large areas, suppress weeds and soften the edges of paths and garden beds, with dense, glossy foliage that forms a uniform green layer.
- 2 Desert Star—a dense, low-growing shrub commonly used for borders or low hedging, with glossy green foliage and white star-shaped flowers followed by decorative red fruit.
- 3 Ornamental Pear Tree—a deciduous feature tree commonly used for avenue planting or as a structured garden focal point, with upright form, white spring blossoms and strong autumn colour.



## Cool Climates

- 4 Hellebore—a hardy, shade-tolerant perennial commonly planted beneath trees or along sheltered borders, valued for its leathery foliage and winter-to-early-spring flowers that provide colour when much of the garden is dormant.
- 5 Hornbeam—a hardy, slow-growing deciduous tree or large shrub known for its dense, serrated leaves and popular as a formal hedge, screen or specimen tree.
- 6 Littleleaf Boxwood—a slow-growing, dense, broadleaf evergreen shrub prized for its small, glossy, deep green foliage.

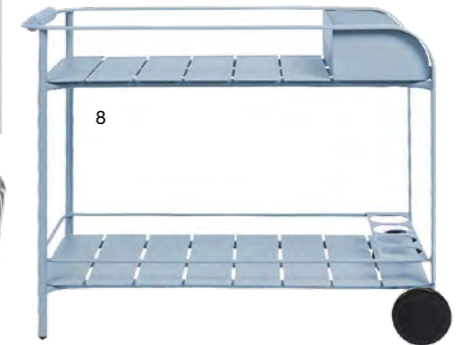


# Styling

Styling for Box Modern balances playful accents with simple, disciplined forms. Interior spaces favour sculptural furniture, soft textiles and graphic accessories that add personality without clutter. Outside, durable pieces, bold shapes and relaxed seating echo the same spirit. Matte finishes, modular accessories and practical details help create spaces that feel expressive, adaptable and comfortably contemporary.

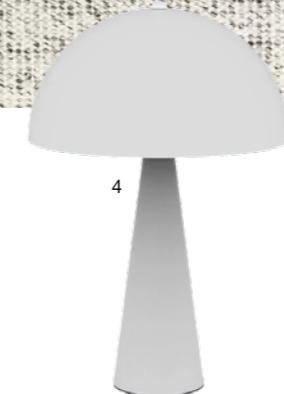
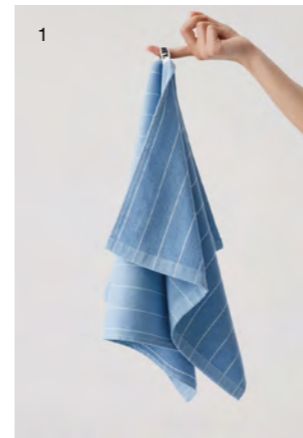
## Outdoor

- 1 Core Series Window Hood 300mm, Heka Hoods
- 2 Washing Laundry Basket, Soft Blue, Hay
- 3 LED Stainless Steel Mail box Front Plate, Bungalow Signs
- 4 Fora Outdoor Wall Light, About Space
- 5 Stripe Frankie Dog Bed, Temple & Webster
- 6 Linear Steel Side Chair, Muuto
- 7 Bit Stool Cone, Normann Copenhagen
- 8 Sundowner Bar Cart, Sea Mist, Fenton & Fenton



## Interior

- 1 Tea Towel, Hommey
- 2 Carlos Wool Rug, Temple & Webster
- 3 Bath Towels, Hommey
- 4 Remi Table Lamp, About Space
- 5 Halo Coffee Table, Fenton & Fenton
- 6 Sydney Wall Spout Cross Taps, Stainless Steel, Yabby
- 7 Russo Lounge Chair, Temple & Webster
- 8 Bobbie Serving Tray, Temple & Webster
- 9 Barro Butter Dish, Hay





### Explore the Hardie™ AI Visualiser

Visualise, customise and communicate your design vision with Hardie™ products and the latest modern home styles from the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2026.

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