

04 Modern Heritage

Design Handbook 2026

Modern Heritage is shifting, evolving into a richer aesthetic that integrates old-world charm with modern functionality, layering multi-sensorial detail and bold finishes.



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
Linea™ Weatherboard defines the heritage facade, while the side path leads to the modern extension and a second entrance set back from the street, hinting at the home's sequence of heritage and modern design.

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Lifestyle themes

Guided by enduring, creative and multigenerational ways of living, the Modern Heritage home responds to the emotional and functional needs of contemporary life, honouring history while embracing adaptability, layered comfort and expressive, sensorial daily living across generations.

01—Evolved Living

Evolved Living in Modern Heritage celebrates continuity and change, pairing preserved heritage structures with adaptable extensions, layered zones and tactile materials to support comfort, longevity and evolving family life.



Milan Design Week Photography by Paul Barbera.

02—Creative Living

This style celebrates expressive contrast fusing old structures with bold extensions. It invites storytelling through design, turning the home into a canvas of history and imagination.



Milan Design Week Photography by Paul Barbera.

03—Multigenerational Living

Modern Heritage supports multigenerational living through adaptive extensions and layered zones. It balances privacy and connection, allowing families to evolve together while preserving the home's character.



04—Autonomous Living

Autonomous Living defines Modern Heritage as resilient, adaptable and quietly self-sufficient. Preserved structures are supported by durable materials, passive design and thoughtful extensions, enabling the home to perform with minimal intervention. This approach helps deliver comfort and long-term adaptability.



Enduring, rich & sensorial



Deeper, more profound hues amplify the home's historical soul, while tactile materials and modern craftsmanship create warmth and comfort for all generations.

The style now welcomes enveloping, tactile design and deep, calming colours, honouring history while embracing modernity. Modern Heritage is a rich, multi-dimensional aesthetic that blends heritage character at the front with sensorial richness at the back. Deeper tones and tactile materials elevate the home's traditional charm with a contemporary edge, while an immersive layering of texture and colour creates spaces that feel both grounded and refined. This look celebrates a creative interpretation of heritage features, offering timeless comfort and modern expression that connect generations and evolve with the way we live today.

Original house details like masonry, arches and timber panels are thoughtfully preserved, anchoring the home in timelessness.

Framed glass panels and sliding screens allow spaces to shift fluidly between open, social zones and private retreats. Extensions are seamlessly integrated to the heritage structure, ensuring the home can evolve gracefully with future needs.

A palette that is grounded yet eye-catching features ginger reds, mulberry and navy, with vivid green accents for timeless appeal. Tactility is highlighted through grooved surfaces, brushed metal finishes and the rich interplay of marble, tile and natural-look materials. Large windows welcome sunlight and rounded forms soften silhouettes, creating a strong sensory experience that restores, not overwhelms. Modern Heritage homes celebrate the interplay of old and new, layering comfort, character and a sense of story into every detail.



- 1 A short corridor links the original home with the extension, thoughtfully distinguishing old from new while maintaining a respectful, cohesive connection through heritage colour.
- 2 This rear modern double-storey extension contrasts the heritage Linea™ Weatherboard front with Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding, in a bold heritage colour on the upper level and vertical Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 300mm below. Doors open directly onto the outdoor lounge, connecting indoor living with garden spaces.



Floorplan

This is a design that preserves original heritage fabric while introducing a refined, contemporary addition behind it. It creates modern function without losing character through crafted transition zones to bridge eras seamlessly. Light, privacy and heritage sensitivity guide the entire composition.



From Justin:
'Modern Heritage is a conversation between eras, honouring the original facade while creating modern, flexible spaces that are light, smart and beautifully connected.'



The brief

Site & location context

Ascot Vale, VIC. Heritage suburb. Narrow block (400m²) with existing heritage home.

Homeowner profile

Family seeking modern living behind an original heritage facade. Young professionals who bought earlier and are extending their home progressively as budget allows.

Intended use

Primary residence

The layout

3 bed | 2 bath

This Modern Heritage layout retains the original facade while introducing a double-storey addition to the rear. From the street, a path guides movement past the original heritage frontage to a new side entrance—which leads directly to the new family hub of kitchen, dining and living areas—giving the bedrooms ultimate privacy. Upstairs, the master suite overlooks the living zone below through a void that introduces light and volume, creating a parents' retreat while maintaining connection. Carefully considered screening, glazing and glass bricks balance light, privacy and sightlines, allowing spaces to feel open while remaining comfortably protected.

Why it works

This plan balances openness, privacy and family rhythms with subtle zoning. The transition zone creates psychological clarity: heritage rooms remain quiet, contemplative spaces, while the rear addition functions as an open, adaptable hub for daily life. The double-height void enhances volume and daylight and glass bricks allow light penetration without compromising privacy. Together, these elements ensure the home is adaptable, comfortable and harmonious across both eras.

Adaptations

This design adapts easily to varied heritage blocks. The rear volume can be single or double-storey, rotated to an L-shape for double-fronted sites, or aligned closely with the existing structure on narrow lots. Flexible curves, additional rooms and zoning changes are budget-dependent.

Ground Floor

First Floor

Kitchen, dining and living connect through to rear outdoor zones.

Transition point between old and new defines the new extension while respecting the heritage dwelling.

Bedroom zoning is quietly tucked away from the busy family hub, now situated at the rear.

Option for front entry directly to bedroom zone.

Glass bricks provide privacy on overlooked sites.

Void over living area brings volume and light into the master suite.

Upper story master suite creates the perfect retreat with the option to overlook main living.

Front lounge away from busy family hub and connected to the garden for a peaceful moment.

Side path guiding entry directly to new living spaces.



Design features

1—Flexible Roof

Roof designs either complement or contrast with the original structure, using matching flashings and bargeboards. Minimal trim preserves heritage features while allowing modern extensions to integrate seamlessly.

2—Dual exterior

Heritage facades are preserved, while extensions use modern cladding to create contrast. This duality allows the home to evolve while honouring its original character.

3—Statement junctions

Bold transitions through colour, form or architectural detailing visually bridge the old and new structures. These junctions celebrate the home's layered story and create moments of expressive contrast.

4—Integrated outdoor zones

Large windows, sliding doors and sheltered courtyards connect heritage interiors with modern outdoor zones. These layered spaces support family life and bring light into older layouts.



5—Interiors

Extensions feature simpler cornices and joinery, contrasting with heritage detailing. Coordinated furniture and finishes create harmony across eras, blending comfort, character and contemporary function.

BuildHer Collective project Cliff Street, Brunswick, designed by OBI Office. Photography by Dylan James.



Cladding solutions

Modern Heritage layering pairs heritage weatherboards with contemporary cladding, enabling personalised, context-responsive facades that honour character while supporting evolving performance and aesthetic preferences.

Linea™ Weatherboard

Linea™ Weatherboard is ideal for replacing old timber or cladding on heritage facades. Its deep shadow lines and crisp profile preserve traditional charm while delivering durability and low maintenance in modern applications.



Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding

Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding offers a consistent, matte finish for modern extensions. Its subtle texture creates a refined, contemporary counterpoint to heritage masonry and timber.



Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding

The wide grooves and unique profile of Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding contrast beautifully with heritage facades, especially when installed vertically, offering a contemporary edge that is both bold and expressive.



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.



Colour palettes

The colour palette draws on rich heritage tones layered with contemporary warmth, creating a balanced, inviting interior. Deep, grounding hues and tactile accents highlight original details while allowing light, texture and architectural character to remain the focus.



From Jenny:

'Colour in Modern Heritage homes should feel storied yet contemporary, layering deep, grounding hues with softened modern tones.'



Scheme 1

Scheme 2

Scheme 3

Roof

Colorbond® steel Monument®

Colorbond® steel Manor Red®

Colorbond® steel Monument®

Colorbond® steel Cottage Green®

Colorbond® steel Monument®

Colorbond® steel Gully®

Main Walls

Dulux® Natural White™
Wattyl® Cotton Grey
Taubmans® Couture White

Dulux® Natural White™
Wattyl® Cotton Grey
Taubmans® Couture White

Dulux® Natural White™
Wattyl® Cotton Grey
Taubmans® Couture White

Dulux® Colorbond® Manor Red®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Manor Red®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Manor Red®

Dulux® Colorbond® Cottage Green®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Cottage Green®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Cottage Green®

Dulux® Colorbond® Gully®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Gully®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Gully®

Trim

Dulux® Vivid White™
Wattyl® Watty White
Taubmans® Brillant White

Dulux® Vivid White™
Wattyl® Watty White
Taubmans® Brillant White

Dulux® Vivid White™
Wattyl® Watty White
Taubmans® Brillant White

Front Door

Dulux® Colorbond® Monument®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Monument®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Monument®

Dulux® Colorbond® Monument®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Monument®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Monument®

Dulux® Colorbond® Gully®
Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel
Gully®
Taubmans® Colorbond® Gully®



Style variations

While the preserved heritage facade anchors Modern Heritage, variations respond to lifestyle, site conditions and climate. Extensions, material palettes and junction detailing evolve to suit context, enabling homes that balance character, adaptability, comfort and long-term performance across changing family needs.



Coastal Modern Heritage

A coastal-inflected heritage extension blends tactile cladding, warm tones and relaxed indoor-outdoor living.

Rear featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding and Linea™ Weatherboard. Facade featuring Linea™ Weatherboard and Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim.



Side Extension

A pitched roof replaces flat form for a side extension expression of Modern Heritage design.

Featuring Linea™ Weatherboard and Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding.

Japandi Modern Heritage

A calm Japandi-inspired extension balances heritage character with restrained, nature-connected contemporary living.

Featuring Linea™ Weatherboard and Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth.



Get the Look

Materials & textures

A layered material palette pairs creamy whites and natural stone hues with reds and mulberry in unexpected areas, forming an expressive yet grounded base. Warm timber grains and green tile accents add tactile depth and sensorial richness.



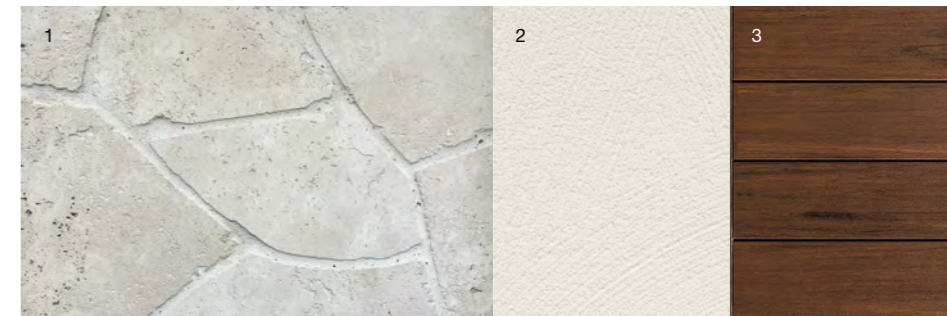
From Rebecca:

'Heritage character is elevated through statement junctions and the interplay of marble, tile and natural-look materials, creating layered richness where past and present coexist with quiet confidence and sensory depth.'



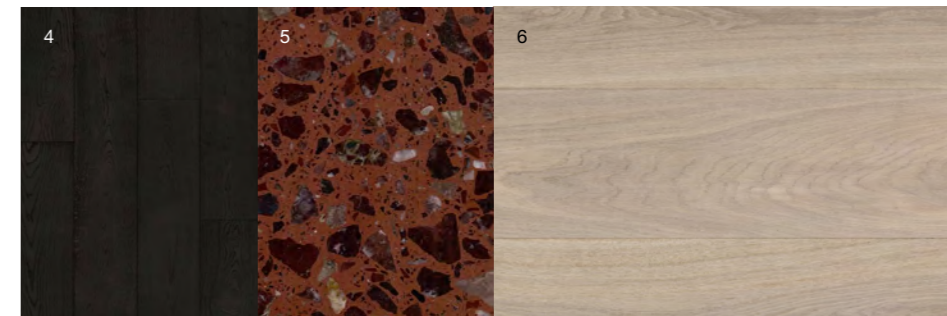
Exterior

- 1 [Travertine Tuscan Crazy Paving](#), RMS Traders
- 2 [Dulux Acratex® Contempo Advance® Coarse](#), Dulux®
- 3 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection®](#), Mahogany, TimberTech®



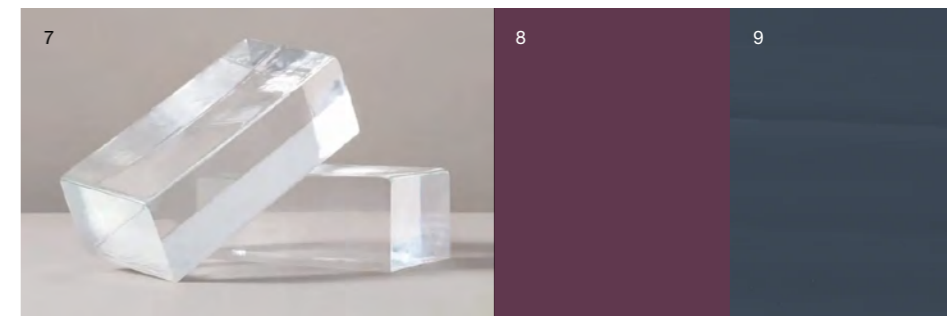
Flooring

- 4 [Raba Floorboards](#), Tongue & Groove
- 5 [Lafite Red Terrazzo](#), RMS Traders
- 6 [Dune Timber Flooring](#), Storey



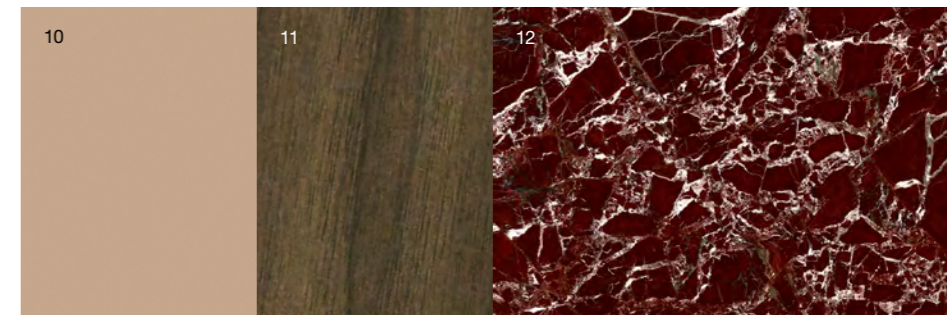
Walls / Windows

- 7 [Veridian Glass Brick](#), Austral
- 8 [Violet Poset Interior Wall Paint](#), Dulux
- 9 [Yacht Race Interior Paint](#), Porter's Paints



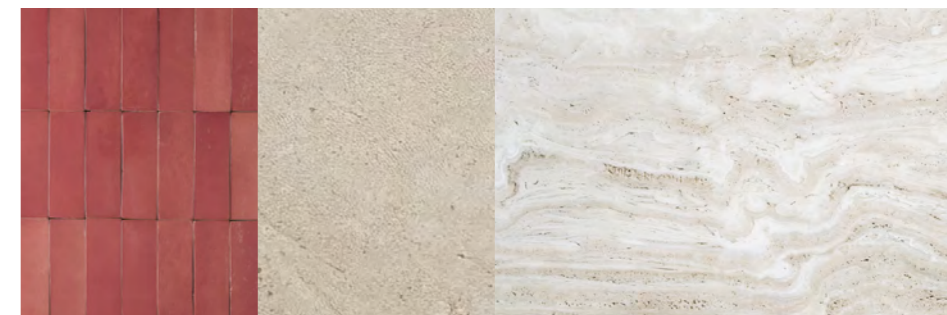
Cabinetry

- 10 [Laminex Outback Clay](#), Laminex
- 11 [Laminex Sepia Walnut](#), Laminex
- 12 [Rosso Levanto Marble Benchtop](#), CDK Stone



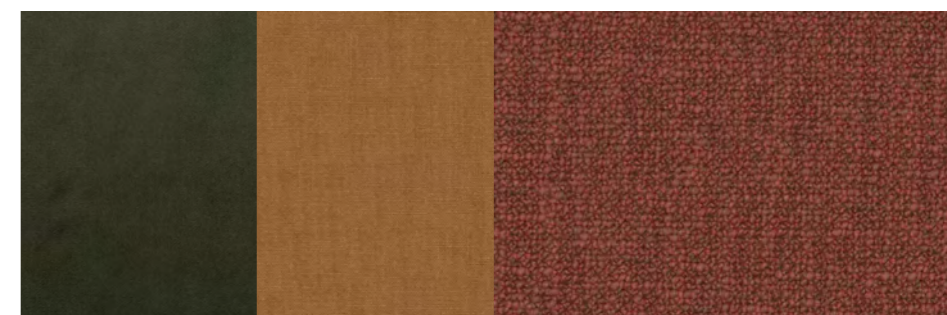
Tiles

- 13 [Noosa Gloss Zellige Pink Subway Tile](#), Tilecloud
- 14 [Natural Stone Crema Lyra Tile](#), Artedomus
- 15 [Natural Stone Travertine Zena Tile](#), Artedomus



Textiles

- 16 [Cleo Upholstery](#), Army, Warwick
- 17 [Mokum Eternal Upholstery](#), Copper, James Dunlop Textiles
- 18 [Mokum Pahi Upholstery](#), Lava, James Dunlop Textiles



Landscaping

Landscaping extends the layered character of Modern Heritage homes, blending preserved garden elements with contemporary planting, textured pathways and sheltered courtyards. Outdoor rooms foster privacy and connection, unfolding as restorative retreats that honour history while embracing seasonal change and modern family life.

Layered planting in the internal courtyard of this Modern Heritage home brings textured greenery into the home through floor-to-ceiling windows.

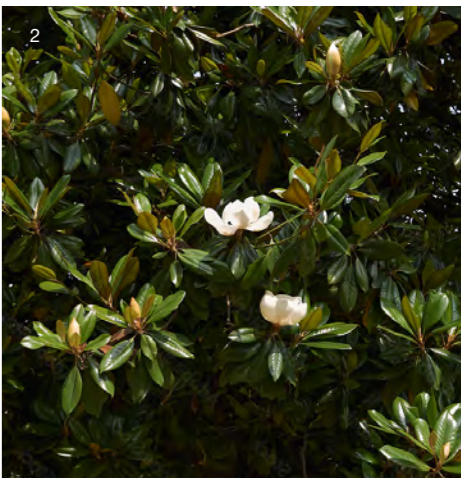


From Matt:

‘What I love about Modern Heritage gardens is layering planting, courtyards and thresholds so outdoor rooms feel connected yet private, honouring the home’s history while supporting contemporary family life.’

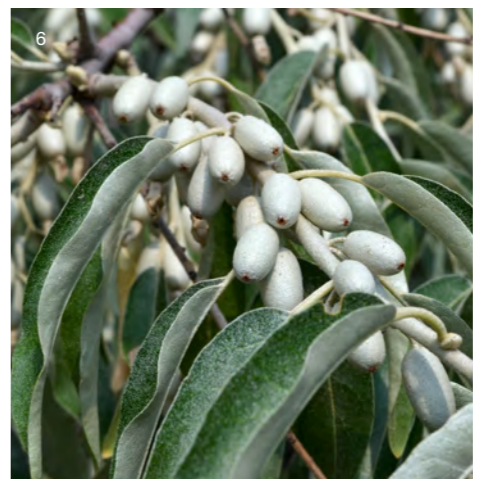
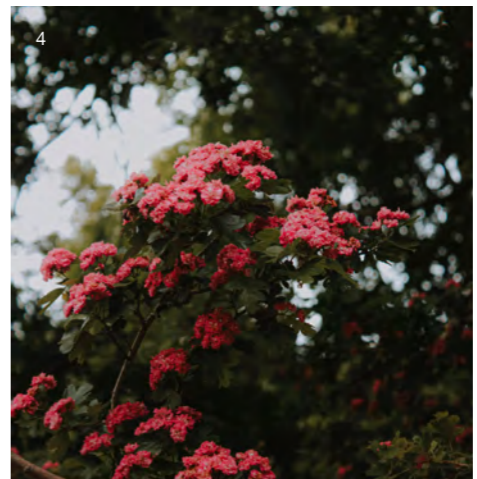
Warm Climates

- 1 Fragrant Gardenia—a compact evergreen shrub with glossy dark green leaves and highly fragrant white flowers.
- 2 Magnolia Teddy Bear—a dense evergreen magnolia with large, glossy green leaves and distinctive rusty-brown felted undersides.
- 3 Pride of Madeira—a fast-growing evergreen shrub with bold spires of purple-blue sculptural flowers.



Cool Climates

- 4 Crepe Myrtle—a deciduous small tree with smooth, mottled bark and summer flowering, valued for its upright habit, autumn colour and strong performance in cool climates.
- 5 Autumn Joy—a hardy, clump-forming perennial with fleshy grey-green leaves and flat flower heads that mature from soft pink to deep rust tones, performing reliably in cool climates and low-water gardens.
- 6 Silver Berry—a hardy, fast-growing, shrub known for its striking silver-speckled, fragrant, small, yellow-white flowers, and small red or silvery fruit.
- 7 Silver Birch—a slender deciduous tree known for its distinctive white, peeling bark and light canopy that casts gentle, dappled shade.



Styling

Modern Heritage styling centres on a layered, character-rich environment where heritage details meet contemporary flair. Textured fabrics, natural-look materials and deeper, enveloping colours create warmth and intimacy, while playful, creative and subtly whimsical touches layer form, character and a sense of story into every detail.



Outdoor

- 1 Rapid 1L Grey Willow Steel Watering Can, Bunnings
- 2 Makkari Polystone Outdoor Coffee Table, Temple & Webster
- 3 Smooth Solid Brass Floating Numbers, Black, Passio Interiors
- 4 Nordz Small Outdoor Wall Light, White, About Space
- 5 Natural Coir Doormat, Temple & Webster
- 6 Palissade Lounge Chair Low, Iron Red, Hay
- 7 Letterbox, Territory Red/Surfmist, Arko
- 8 Thetis Activity Mini Gym, Boori
- 9 Laundry Basket, Nougat, Hay



Interior

- 1 Raritan 2 Piece Basket, Freedom
- 2 Uciel Terracotta & Beige Cotton Cushion Cover, Kave Home
- 3 Watson Hand-Woven Jute Rug Oatmeal, Temple & Webster
- 4 Flores Ceramic Planter with Stand, Temple & Webster
- 5 Shaw Premium 3 Seater Sofa, Temple & Webster
- 6 Bobbie Side Table, Terracotta, Temple & Webster
- 7 Above Counter Curved Oval Basin, Matte White, Yabby
- 8 Harry Oak Knob, Linear Standard
- 9 Skyball Pendant, About Space





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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