

CASE STUDY

Avoca Beach House





Location

Avoca Beach, NSW

Architect

Dianna Thomas

Builder

Chris Wade Constructions

Photography

Brigid Arnott

Clients Needs

Avoca Beach House is a deeply personal family retreat – a new home designed to honour the atmosphere and memories of the original beach house that had occupied the Central Coast NSW site for generations.

Designed by architect Dianna Thomas and built by Chris Wade Constructions, the project sought to preserve the relationship between house, garden and broader landscape. Rather than maximising the site footprint, the new home retained the modest scale and informal character of its predecessor, while introducing new living spaces within the hillside garden.

Acacia was commissioned to design and manufacture a suite of predominantly Spotted Gum timber windows and doors for the residence and adjoining bunkhouse. These included sliding doors and windows, double hinged door units, tongue and groove clad doors, double hung windows and shuttered windows.

Challenges

The project presented several technical challenges arising from narrow access to the hillside location and the customised nature of the joinery.

A defining feature was a custom tongue and groove sliding door incorporating a circular window. Producing the circular opening within the timber cladding required thoughtful detailing, precision engineering and careful hand-finishing to avoid breakout and inconsistencies within the timber grain.

The finishing specification introduced additional complexity. External timber surfaces were clear coated to celebrate the natural character of the Spotted Gum, while internal faces were to be painted white after installation. Managing timber movement across differing coating systems and heat absorption levels required careful detailing to ensure long-term performance in the exposed coastal environment.

The narrow street frontage and sloping site created challenges for the delivery and installation of the large timber door and window units, requiring close coordination with the onsite team.



Solutions

Throughout the design and construction process, Acacia worked closely with the architect and construction teams to ensure the joinery responded seamlessly to both the architectural vision and practical demands of the site.

Acacia's advanced CNC capabilities enabled the precise fabrication of the circular window feature within the sliding door system. The circular frame was manufactured separately and integrated into a custom Accoya sub-frame before the surrounding cladding was carefully shaped and hand-finished to achieve a seamless appearance.

To address the challenges associated with differing internal and external finishes, Acacia collaborated closely with the builder to refine detailing and finishing methods, ensuring the long-term performance of the joinery systems in harsh coastal conditions.

Delivery and installation were carefully staged to suit the site access and ongoing landscape works, ensuring construction progressed efficiently despite, at times, demanding conditions.

Outcome

Delivered through a deeply collaborative process, Avoca Beach House is a refined example of contemporary coastal architecture grounded in restraint, craftsmanship and connection to place.

The bespoke timber windows and doors frame garden and ocean views while strengthening the relationship between interior and exterior spaces. The screened openings invite natural light and ventilation into the home, while customised elements such as the circular sliding door window and external bunkhouse shutters add moments of character and whimsy.

Externally, the Spotted Gum joinery brings warmth and texture to complement the home's understated material palette, while the painted white internal finish contributes to the calm, light-filled interiors. Together, the material selections reinforce the project's emphasis on authenticity and sustainability.

This project was shortlisted in the 2026 AIA NSW Regional Architecture Awards: Residential Architecture - Houses (New)



"I've had the pleasure of working with Acacia on several projects, and their expertise is evident in every detail, demonstrating their commitment to quality and architectural integrity.

At Avoca Beach House, their highly customised Spotted Gum windows and doors were crafted with precision to suit the demands of a coastal environment, delivering exceptional performance and durability. The sliding door with circular window is a standout feature, reflecting both technical capability and refined craftsmanship."

Dianna Thomas - Architect



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