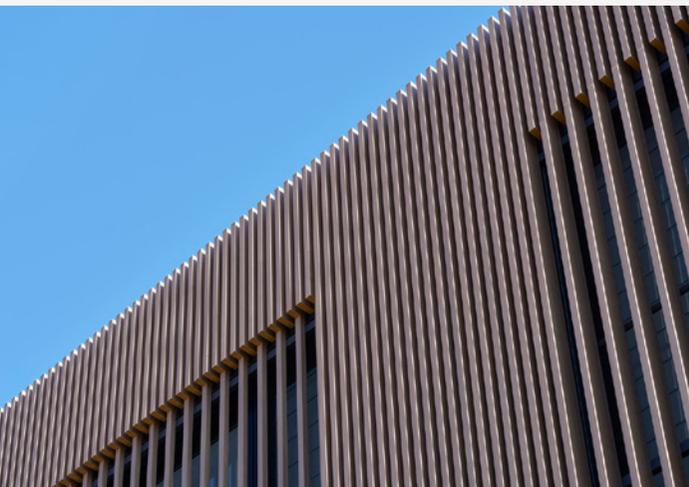




**Case Study**

# **Balgowlah Heights Residence**



## Background

Perched high above the Northern Beaches, this Balgowlah Heights residence is a contemporary dwelling anchored in its geographical and architectural context. This private home was designed for a young couple by Pittwater Design + Draft and built by Gavin Wilson and his team at Smith & Sons Renovations & Extensions Manly. The residence capitalises on sweeping views that extend from Sydney Heads all the way through to Barangaroo, while maintaining a subtle dialogue with the home's rich past and the architectural language of its surroundings.

"The existing house was a split-level home built in the 1940s that went through several renovations," explains Leigh Sym, Designer at Pittwater Design + Draft. "That resulted in a disjointed dwelling that lacked cohesion and identity." However, it was the home's layered past – manifested through the exposed Oregon rafters – that inspired the clients to re-introduce timber into the new design. "They wanted a warm, light-filled and modern home that had a prominent identity and featured a vertical timber clad exterior, a design element commonly encountered in the Northern Beaches," Leigh adds.

## Challenge

While the incorporation of timber would help achieve the desired effect, the properties of the material didn't lend themselves to this particular application. "Timber fades, leeches, bows and swells," Leigh explains. The alternative material had to be durable, easy to maintain and resemble the visual and tactile characteristics of wood to enable the clean, modern look the inhabitants were after.

In addition, the local council required the windows to be covered with privacy screens. The design team's vision involved incorporating the same product across the windows and walls to maintain a sense of cohesion across the envelope of the house. The selected solution had to be suitable for screening and allow the desired amount of light and breeze inside the dwelling.

## Solution

As part of the solution, Leigh proposed a spaced batten facade utilising Covet's Kabebari Ever Art Wood<sup>®</sup> Batten in the colour Kuri Masame. The lightweight timber look aluminium battens offered the desired visual and tactile qualities, without the complex maintenance. "I came across the Covet system on a walk in Manly. I got up close and saw its realistic timber grain," Leigh explains. "The texture felt extremely authentic, too, so I presented samples to the clients who were just as impressed. They were amazed by how realistic it looked."

The project team applied the exterior grade Kabebari Ever Art Wood<sup>®</sup> Batten system across the entire first-floor facade, using double-spaced battens across the windows, and single-spaced battens within the bi-fold frontage. "This allowed a consistent facade while ensuring operability," Leigh says. "It also allowed for the light and air to filter through the battens when closed, and increase the intensity of these elements when opened." The depth of the selected batten profile – 30 x 85mm – enabled the project team to comply with council requirements and ensured the residents could enjoy privacy without obstructing airflow, natural light nor visibility.

Leigh adds that the uninterrupted, clean result was made possible by the two-part concealed fix system which further enhanced the striking architectural appeal of the property and brings out the alluring quality of the Kuri Masame finish. "The warmth of the timber look really shines through without any visible fixings to disrupt the appearance," Leigh says.

The highly-resolved exterior empowers this contemporary home to take on a new identity, while maintaining a sophisticated visual link with the dwelling's rich heritage and geographical setting.

"We considered the competitors and explored alternative composite products but their profiles and materials lacked Covet's high-end textured finish," Leigh says enthused. "In addition, the communication with the Covet team made the whole process very smooth." And – perhaps even more importantly – the residents are just as happy. "I receive regular photos of those little moments where the light is captured in a beautiful way – or filtered between the battens down the stairwell," Leigh says with a smile.