

Backyard studio

The results of a little lateral thinking by a Year 8 student

BY AHARON ZEV MOSHEL

The original idea to build my studio came from my older brother, who built himself a dwelling overseas; when he came to visit, he mentioned that he wanted to build something in the backyard. He never got around to it but when he left I thought to myself, 'How hard can building a room be?'

I asked my father if he would let me take on the project, to which he said yes – and it all started from there.

I have always been passionate about building, starting with small projects such as boxes, plant holders and wooden picture frames. I like the idea of creating warm and inviting objects and places from wood, so making my own little pad out the back of our home became the perfect project for me.

I spent time sketching out building plans for what I had in mind; and these sketches are what I built from. Luckily the studio size is smaller than the minimum size that requires a building permit, so no interaction was needed with the council.

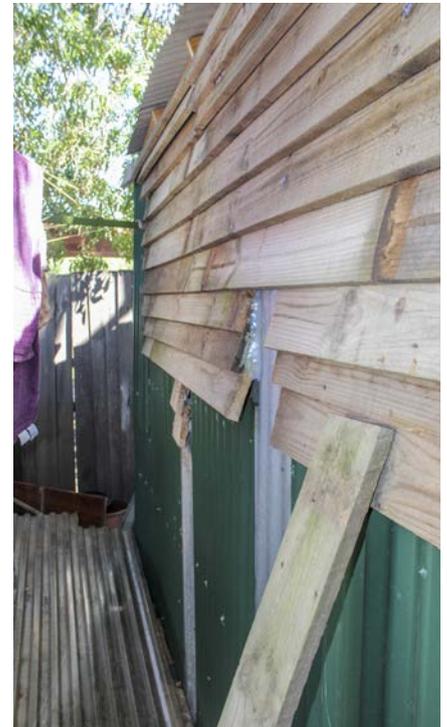
Almost all of the building materials for the project were found either on nature strips, skips or friends who had material that they wanted to get rid off. The lining used for the interior was being discarded by a packaging company, so I grabbed it before it was thrown out. The windows and doors were bought on Gumtree and eBay; the two side windows cost \$3.50 and the cedar doors and back windows were \$50. Other bought items include wool insulation, screws, nails and few bits of wood here and there.

Intuitive learning

As this was my first project I had no previous building experience, so it was mostly intuitive. If I needed to know how to do something I would look at tutorials on YouTube or borrow a library book.

Initially there was a storage shed on the concrete slab that was going to form the footing for my room, so the shed had to first be relocated to a different part of the garden. The new position had a small concrete slab, but I had to extend it fit to the size of the shed; that was my first practical introduction to building.

We had to buy all the basic tools such as a drop saw and hammer drill. Towards the end of the project I had a builder family friend come over and make



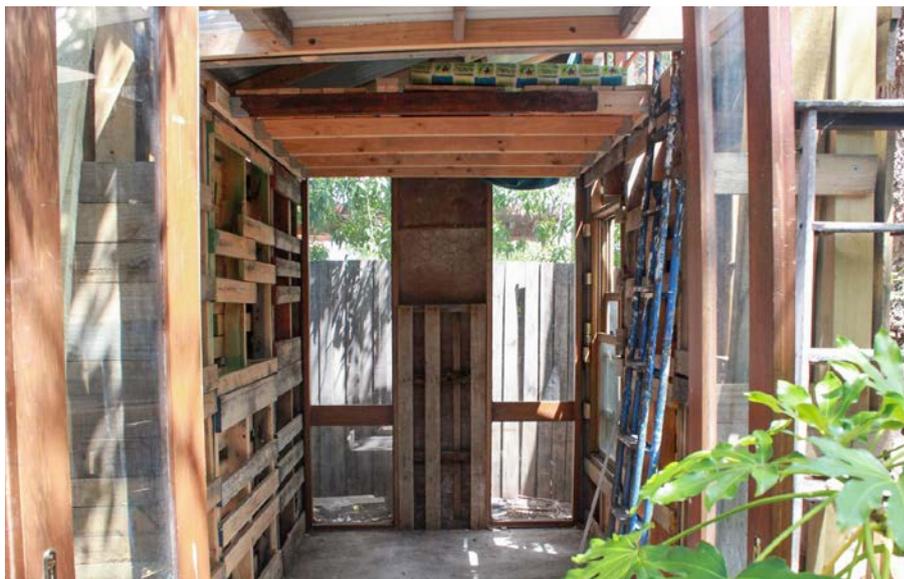
sure everything was safe and secure. He suggested a few adjustments be made to the loft but besides that, everything else was alright.

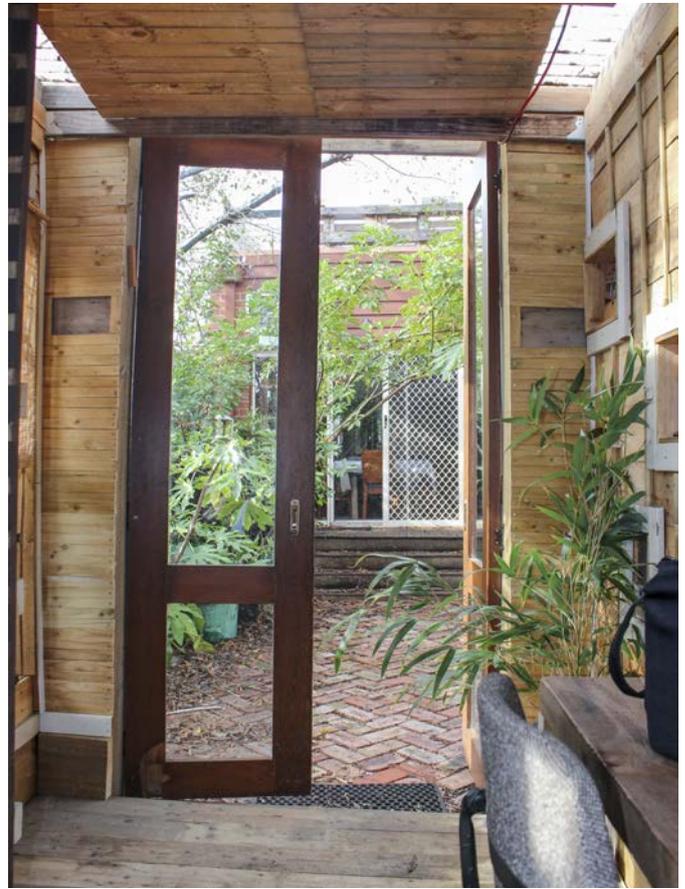
I also paved the outdoor area with left over bricks. Currently the rainwater that runs off the roof is not put to use but I hope to make an outdoor hot tub or something of the sorts to use the collected water in the future.

The project cost around \$600 and took five months from beginning to end. I had school friends come over and help me mix concrete and place the initial beams.

Initially my mother and sibling weren't quite sure about it all but when they saw I was serious about it, they were also very supportive.

My father helped me from beginning to end, whether it was picking up materials late at night or guiding me when I wasn't sure how to execute my plan. He was a great help.





Peaceful retreat

After a few months of hard work I have created a space for myself that I can retreat to, do my homework and sleep in if I feel like it. The finished room includes a couch, desk, bookshelf, the loft bed, storage and – best of all – a nice peaceful place to relax in.

As the bed is in the loft, it feels like sleeping in a tree house; I can see the branches around me when I go to sleep, not to mention the occasional possum

hanging out amongst the treetops. I can also see the stars and on warm summer nights I can even slide part of the roof back and sleep with the warm summer breeze all around me.

It gives me so much pleasure knowing that I made it from scratch.

I feel very passionately that more sustainable homes could be built, so that many more people can live in small beautiful homes that are both affordable and also built with a warmth and aura of artistic flair. I am definitely considering creating more eco friendly spaces. ♦

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