



# Building alternative fundamentals

by Dan Ellis-Jones

Double clay brick is the most popular method of building residential property in Western Australia, but is it the most sustainable? There are some examples of other materials being used in regional WA, but the major players in the home building industry are using double brick as the material of choice for our homes.



**T**he Architect and Builder takes a look at the alternatives, but also speaks to one academic who believes that the sustainability pros and cons around the materials we use are mere red herrings and that we have the fundamentals of the process all wrong here in Western Australia.

### What are the alternatives?

The alternatives to double brick are varied, and clients should be made aware of their existence and the positive and negative aspects of each. Although architects and builders can be wary of non-conventional materials and building methods, the issue of diversity and sustainability in house building are becoming entrenched as part of the State Sustainability Strategy. This call for diversity and sustainability was also part of the outcomes of Year of the Built Environment last year. The need for innovative thinking in residential house building is shown when looking at the sprawl that makes up the edges of Perth and also popular holiday areas such as Busselton. Alternatives should take into account climate, geographic

- 1. The building has used an updated version of the verandah, which means that the windows are shaded from the summer sun, which is high in the sky, but lets in sunlight in winter, when the sun is lower, thus reducing heating and cooling costs. All photographs courtesy of Ecotect-Architects
- 2. The Eco-compound is a project that used alternative materials in a sustainable way, adhering to the main aspects of sustainable building