

# What I like about you



## Graham House • 1961

North-West Victoria

Architect: Neil Clerehan

We recognise fashion revivals in clothing but they're less acknowledged when it comes to architecture. Plywood walls and ceilings are currently very popular yet the material was in use during the late 1920s by architects such as Saarinen, Rietveld, Eames, Breuer and Aalto. And then in the early 1960s Melbourne architect Neil Clerehan was part of a group that led a plywood revival.

I spent many summer days lazing around with my mate Charlie Graham at his family home in north-west Victoria. The Graham House was designed for Annie and Doc [Peter] Graham by Neil Clerehan in 1961. The design is ingenious for its response to the rough country life of a large family with six children, hot inland climate and material selection of lightweight, flat products that were easily transported to this once isolated site.

The house is a simple box with beautiful and practical quondong veneer plywood lining the interior walls. The concrete slab floor was lined with cork tiles and exterior walls clad with asbestos sheets, recently painted green. The "box" is protected from the weather by a floating parasol roof on steel trusses supported by locally harvested yellow box bush poles.

As an architect I'm inspired by many people and their motivations to push design boundaries and use innovative materials. Let's move forward, producing great designs using sustainable materials, without forgetting to acknowledge the great innovators of our past.

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