

02 Modern Farmhouse

Design Handbook 2025

Facade & floorplan designed by
Three Birds Renovations



Meet your guide

Three Birds Renovations

As part of our 2025 Design Handbook series, we've teamed up with celebrated renovators, Three Birds Renovations, to craft a stunning Modern Farmhouse facade and floor plan. Known for their down-to-earth, relatable and accessible approach to design, they bring their signature magic to every project. Get ready for a layout that's as functional as it is beautiful.



From Three Birds Renovations:

‘The Modern Farmhouse aesthetic beautifully balances timeless charm with contemporary functionality. It captures the warmth and character of country living while integrating the modern conveniences and efficiencies of a new build.’

Cover

Balancing grandeur with traditional charm, the Modern Farmhouse, clad here with Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding in alternating 200mm and 300mm widths, combines clean lines, gabled rooflines, and a mix of natural textures like timber and stone.

In this handbook, Bonnie Hindmarsh, Erin Cayless, and Lana Taylor from Three Birds Renovations will guide you in achieving the Modern Farmhouse exterior look and creating the welcoming feel of a traditional farmhouse. Their design approach offers homeowners a true sense of space, connection, and relaxation every time they walk through the front door.



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Lifestyle themes

The Modern Homes Forecast 2025 identifies four lifestyle themes changing the way we design and build our homes today. Global and local changes are reshaping how we live, and here we show how Modern Farmhouse homes are evolving to reflect these shifts.

01 Building Efficiencies

Modern Farmhouse homes can take advantage of passive cooling strategies by using high-performance windows. Double-glazing helps regulate indoor temperatures, keeping homes cooler in summer and warmer in winter, reducing reliance on heating and cooling.



‘Pre-primed cladding is a total game-changer. It speeds up installation and saves on painting costs.’

—Three Birds Renovations



03 Flexibility

A well-designed Modern Farmhouse embraces flexibility, allowing spaces to evolve with the needs of its owners. Clever zoning, multi-purpose areas, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow ensure the home adapts as life stages shift—whether it’s adult kids staying longer, elderly parents moving in, or the rise of working from home. As Three Birds put it, 'A multi-purpose room is a must' to create a home that stands the test of time. It can function as a study today, a playroom tomorrow, and a guest suite in the future. This thoughtful approach keeps the home versatile, practical, and ready for whatever comes next—without the need for major renovations down the track.

- 1 House 16 is clad in Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 300mm, painted in Dulux Weathershield® in Grey Port. Design and photo by Three Birds Renovations.
- 2 With clever zoning, multi-purpose spaces, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow, these homes can adapt as life stages shift—whether it’s adult kids staying longer, elderly parents moving in, or the rise of working from home. Design and photo by Three Birds Renovations.
- 3 Alfresco entertaining areas, covered decks, and fire-pits create extra living zones where the whole family can come together or retreat for some peace and quiet. Design and photo by Three Birds Renovations.

02 Wellbeing

Large windows and skylights bring in abundant natural light, boosting mood and energy, while high ceilings and open-plan layouts enhance the feeling of space and freedom.



04 Resilience

Many Modern Farmhouses integrate solar panels and battery storage, helping homeowners harness the power of the sun and reduce reliance on the grid.



Cohesive, classic & comforting

Modern Farmhouse blends rustic style and modern convenience, with pitched roofs and large windows that create a sense of openness and connection to the landscape.

Theme insight Resilience

A Modern Farmhouse is designed for both beauty and function, embracing passive design principles to create a home that is comfortable, efficient, and connected to its surroundings. Orientation is key, with the home positioned to maximise natural light and ventilation, reducing the need for artificial heating and cooling.

Three Birds Renovations emphasise that ‘we always design homes with liveability in mind—good flow, good light, and spaces that feel connected.’ Wide eaves, covered porches, and awnings further enhance this efficiency, shielding windows from excessive heat in summer while allowing winter sunlight to filter through, ensuring year-round comfort.

1

As the idea of a tree-change remains popular, Modern Farmhouse is a slice of rustic charm for inner city living. Modern Farmhouse style has shifted to focus on simplicity and practicality, embracing more relaxed designs that prioritise family and multi-generational living.

Modern Farmhouse style blends rustic style with modern convenience to create a harmonious blend of indoor and outdoor living. It has become a mainstay of Australian home design. As the style has evolved, it has become a simpler, more relaxed design with an emphasis on function and family. Multiple buildings are often connected, facilitating multi-generational living and the style itself creates charm and nostalgia for simple times in urban locations.

Natural-look materials on the exterior — like vertical joint cladding, timber windows and brass accents — add beautiful definition and timeless charm.

Large, expansive windows and open-concept living spaces strengthen the connection between indoor and outdoor areas. This evolution merges traditional appeal with contemporary enhancements, creating an atmosphere of comfort and togetherness.

Theme insight Wellbeing

The Modern Farmhouse style aims to capture a nostalgic feel delivering on warmth, cosiness and togetherness, combined with modern upgrades.

- 1 Verandas, alfresco dining zones, and lush gardens provide a connection to nature, perfect for unwinding after a long day. Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding wraps the Modern Farmhouse, painted in Dulux® Pozieres.
- 2 Large windows and skylights bring in abundant natural light, boosting mood and energy in the home office ancillary space.



2

Theme insight Flexibility

Modern Farmhouse designs often feature multiple interconnected buildings facilitating multi-generational living, wellness retreats or home offices. These rooms can easily change their purpose over time.

Design features

‘A Modern Farmhouse can be designed to suit any budget—it’s about smart choices, prioritising key features and knowing where to splurge and save.’

—Three Birds Renovations

1 A-shaped, hipped or gable roof

The style features multiple, interconnecting pavilions with an A-shaped, hipped or gable roof, creating simple and clean lines. The roof is extended with a large, covered porch or veranda with vaulted ceilings.

2 Contrasting materials

Natural-look materials on the exterior, such as vertical joint cladding and timber window frames, are contrasted with metallic accents, like barn lights, to add definition.

3 Neutral colour palette

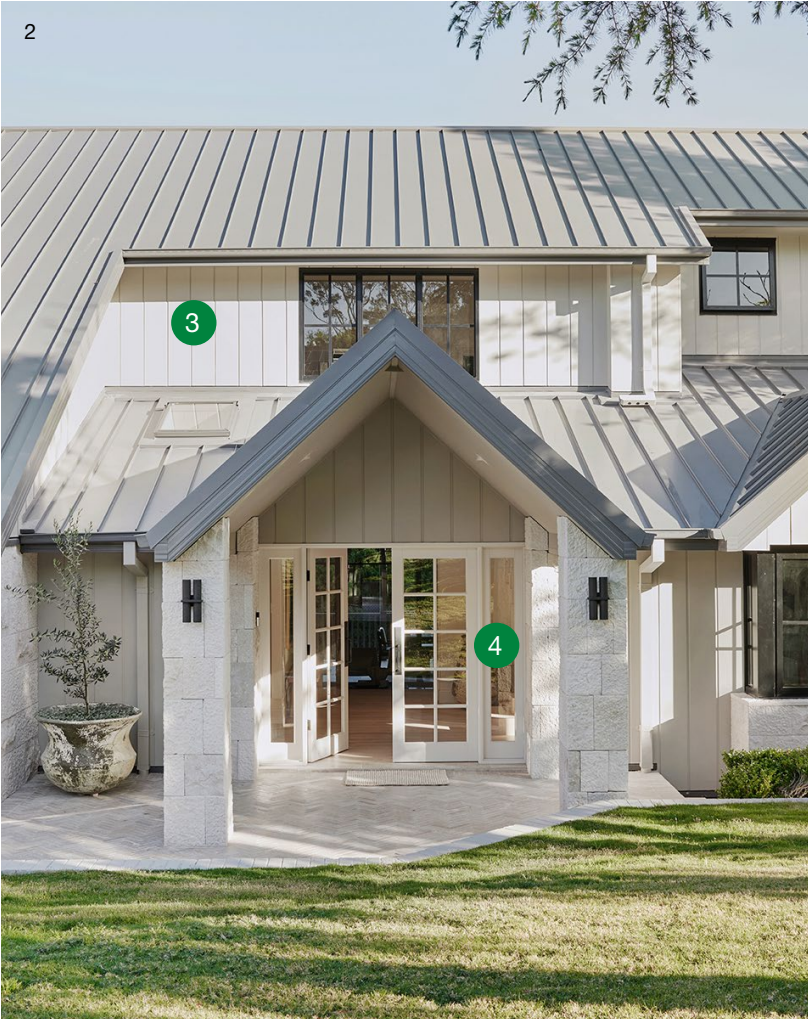
Neutral colours allow for the materials and textures to be the focus and create an atmosphere of calm and serenity.

4 Paned windows

Large, square or rectangular paned windows create a warm and inviting ambiance. Timber frames bring a natural, timeless feel that complements the Modern Farmhouse look while keeping things soft and organic.

5 Interiors

Lean into a mix of traditional and modern pieces, choosing furniture that feels inviting, well-balanced and ultra-cosy. Stick to muted tones and earthy neutrals. Layer in natural textures like linen, timber and aged brass to bring depth and a relaxed, lived-in feel.



Theme insight Wellbeing

A Modern Farmhouse is designed to feel warm, inviting, and effortlessly lived-in, with natural materials playing a key role in creating a calming, grounding atmosphere. Three Birds emphasise that ‘mixing textures—cladding with stone, or even some exposed brick—adds layers and depth without over-complicating the design.’ By thoughtfully incorporating timber, stone, and linens on the inside, these homes embrace a natural aesthetic that reduces stress and enhances relaxation, making everyday living feel like a retreat.

Theme insight Resilience

Strategic window placement enhances cross-ventilation, maximising airflow and natural cooling while reducing energy consumption.

- 1 High-performance windows are key - double glazing helps regulate indoor temperatures, keeping homes cooler in summer and warmer in winter, reducing reliance on heating and cooling.
- 2 House 16 uses strategic window placement to enhances cross-ventilation, maximising airflow and natural cooling while reducing energy consumption. Design and photo by Three Birds Renovations.
- 3 Layering natural textures, warm timbers and soft neutrals gives a considered balance between rustic charm and contemporary elegance in this home. Design and photo by Three Birds Renovations.

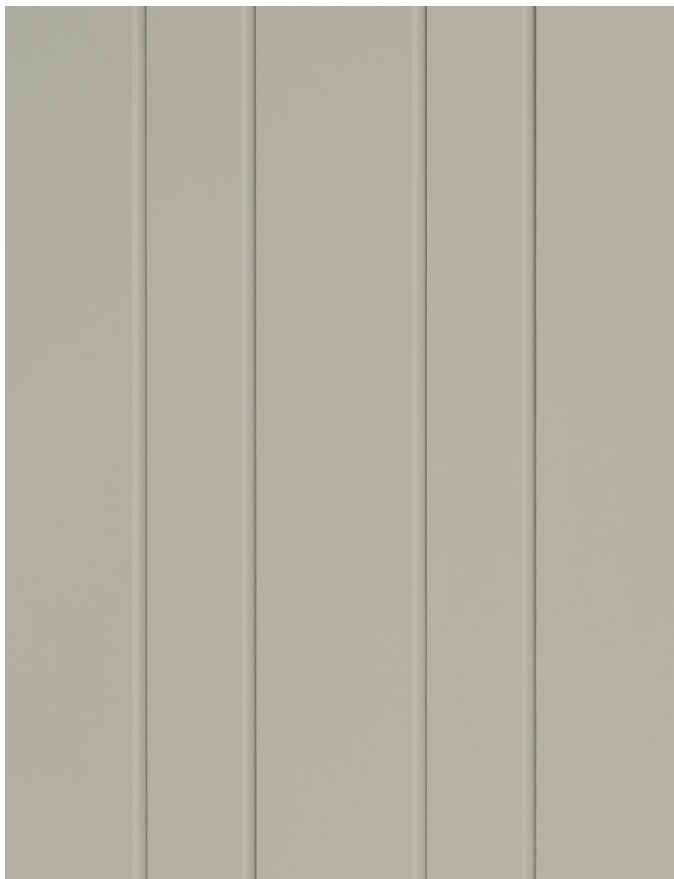


Cladding solutions

James Hardie exterior cladding products are perfectly suited to Modern Farmhouse designs, delivering the classic charm of timber with the durability of fibre cement. This combination makes our cladding ideal for achieving a crisp, clean aesthetic with long-lasting performance. Available in smooth or textured finishes, the range pairs beautifully with the contrasting tones and bold trims typical of Modern Farmhouse exteriors.

Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding

This cladding adds a contemporary twist to the traditional farmhouse aesthetic with its wide grooves and design flexibility. It creates a dynamic look that complements the mix of rustic and contemporary elements of Modern Farmhouse.



Theme insight Resilience

A Modern Farmhouse should be built to withstand the elements while maintaining its timeless appeal. The team at Three Birds Renovations loves using James Hardie cladding, saying ‘It gives that beautiful farmhouse feel but without the maintenance of timber.’ Unlike traditional materials, Hardie™ exterior cladding products offer high thermal performance, fire resistance, and durability, making it an ideal choice for Australia and New Zealand’s varied climates. It helps regulate indoor temperatures, provides superior protection against harsh weather conditions, and ensures the home remains low-maintenance and long-lasting.

Theme insight Building Efficiencies

A Modern Farmhouse can be designed to integrate solar power and battery storage, allowing homeowners to harness renewable energy and reduce reliance on the grid. Combined with LED lighting, energy-efficient appliances and water-saving features, these homes run smarter not harder.



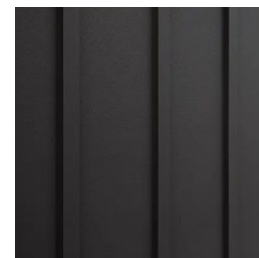
‘We used Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding because it is reminiscent of wide timber planks you might see on a traditional farmhouse, without the maintenance of timber, and with distinctive wide angled grooves that make it architecturally interesting.’

—Three Birds Renovations

Complementary Products



Axon™ Cladding



Hardie™ Axent™ Trim



Hardie™ Fine Texture Cladding

Materials & textures

Our James Hardie design expert has curated a collection of materials and textures for Modern Farmhouse style—a considered balance between rustic charm and contemporary elegance. This can be achieved by layering natural textures, warm timbers and soft neutrals.



Layering textures like matte finishes, timber and soft linen makes a Modern Farmhouse feel warm and inviting.

- 1 Calm neutrals and varied textures are light and airy for a warm and inviting feel.
- 2 Wool carpets in soft ivory bouclé add a layer of luxe comfort to interiors.
- 3 An elegant architrave effortlessly elevates the spaces of the Modern Farmhouse.
- 4 Rich walnut tones meet soft, textured finishes for a warm, sophisticated cabinetry design.
- 5 A warm, elegant ash wood floor offers smoky tones and the beauty of natural wood grain.
- 6 Textured renders on interior walls create an interplay of light and shadow that transforms spaces.
- 7 Benchtops with natural veining and honed finishes exude timeless sophistication, blending organic beauty with refined craftsmanship.



Theme insight Wellbeing

Natural elements like timber, stone and linen create a calming, grounding atmosphere, helping to reduce stress and enhance relaxation.



Colour palette

Three Birds Renovations have created a Modern Farmhouse palette all about soft whites, warm neutrals, and natural textures creating a mood that is cosy yet refined. Soft whites and warm neutrals enhance natural light, making spaces feel fresh and open.



Theme insight
Resilience
Lighter roof colours reflect heat, keeping the house cooler in summer.

Theme insight
Flexibility
A neutral palette is the foundation of timeless design—effortlessly adapting to any style, season or mood. Layered textures and subtle tonal variations create depth, warmth and an understated sense of sophistication.

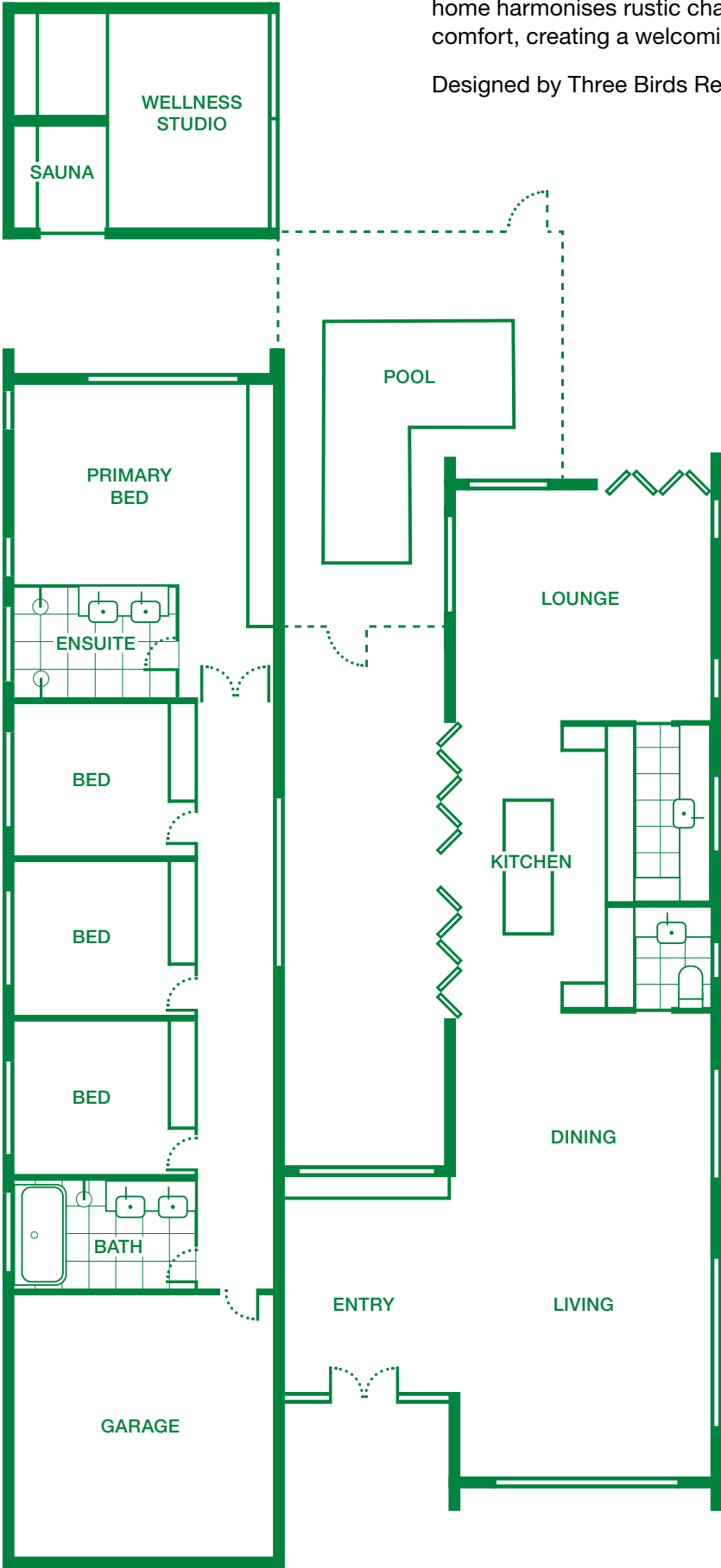
	Scheme One	Scheme Two
Fascia	Dulux® Pozieres	Dulux® White Dune Quarter
Main Walls	Dulux® Pozieres	Dulux® White Dune Quarter
Details	Dulux® Buff it Half	Dulux Weathershield® White Dune



Floorplan

The brief for this home design was to seamlessly blend functionality and aesthetic charm. A breezeway connects the garage to the main residence. The layout includes two lounge rooms, a practical mudroom, and wraparound decks that enhance the front facade and garage. Designed for a block size of 650 to 850sqm, the home harmonises rustic character with contemporary comfort, creating a welcoming and timeless retreat.

Designed by Three Birds Renovations.



Three Birds Renovations’ top tips

1 Preserve and re-purpose existing features

If you’re renovating rather than building new, work with what you have rather than starting from scratch. ‘If you want to keep costs down, preserve as much as you can—existing materials and slabs, anything that can be reused.’ Retaining existing structures, timber flooring, or exposed brick saves on demolition and material costs while adding authenticity to the home.

2 Use cladding to transform a home without demolition

Instead of expensive rebuilds or rendering, applying Hardie™ exterior cladding products over existing brick is a cost-effective way to refresh a home’s exterior. ‘Cladding over existing brick is a cost-effective way to give your home a whole new look without expensive demolition.’ This approach reduces labour costs and build time while achieving an elevated farmhouse aesthetic.

3 Choose low-maintenance materials for long-term savings

Some materials cost less upfront but require expensive upkeep over time. Three Birds Renovations highlight that ‘Hardie™ exterior cladding products are resistant to fire, termites and moisture, which is a massive plus for rural builds.’ Opting for durable, weather-resistant materials ensures lower repair and maintenance costs, making the home more cost-effective in the long run.

4 Reduce labour costs with smart building choices

Time on-site is money. Three Birds Renovations recommend pre-primed cladding, which speeds up installation and eliminates additional painting labour. ‘Pre-primed cladding is a total game-changer. It speeds up installation and saves on painting costs.’ Choosing larger board sizes also reduces the number of joins, cutting down on labour costs and ensuring a quicker, more affordable build.

5 Know when to save and when to splurge

Invest in the essentials like quality windows, insulation and durable finishes, because cutting corners here can cost you more in the long run. Cosmetic touches like paint colours, lighting and styling can be done on a budget and changed easily over time.



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