



**LEE  
TURNER**

**DESIGN  
EVOLUTION**

**WORDS**  
DEBORAH  
NATION

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

TURNER ROAD  
ARCHITECTURE

Making a career move from professional rugby to architecture might not seem the most obvious of transitions. But for Cambridge born-and-bred Lee Turner, his rugby career in Ireland was simply time out from architectural design.

He had studied architectural design at Waikato Polytechnic after school and worked for a firm in Cambridge before taking a couple of years out to play rugby. After finishing up rugby in Ireland he moved to England, where he worked for HOK International and Chapman Taylor over three years. When he returned to Cambridge, Lee opened his practice, Turner Road Architecture, and since then it has grown to a staff of four designers and two support staff.

He's very passionate about Elevate, involving pre-fabricated architecturally designed transportable homes. He tested the market with a three-bedroomed, 115m<sup>2</sup> "highly spec'd" design, and it proved so popular he put the idea into production.

"I originally thought it would be for baches, which they do [sell to], but a big part of the market has been for retirees and second-home buyers."

Lee and his team have spent up to four years focused on this project, refining their systems, and they're now up to 16 transportable houses. The homes are actually built on site out the back of the office in Cambridge, which is ideal for his practical and hands-on approach. Pre-fabricated buildings is an area Lee is very passionate about and he feels there's plenty of scope to expand.

"I love design, so I think the idea is to come up with more models and I think we've still got lots to prove with Turner Road. Our architecture is evolving – I don't believe it's an age or experience thing – the ideas just keep on expanding."

The benefit of experience, however, means clients are now leaving design decisions up to Lee, giving him more freedom to flex his creative muscle. This means he, along with his team, who he says has contributed greatly to the aesthetics and success of Turner Road Architecture, have the freedom to forge new paths in architectural design.