



David Burton & Sophia Leopardi, Co-directors of designbyWBL

designbyWBL

Sophia Leopardi and David Burton are the co-directors of designbyWBL, leading interior design and architecture, respectively. With distinct yet complementary backgrounds, they ground their practice in shared values, curiosity, and a unified approach to design.

Sophia is passionate about deepening the bonds between people and place, guided by a holistic approach that connects design and memory. Her interior design practice extends beyond the physical, exploring how an environment can—and should—feel. By listening carefully and distilling the essence of a site or brief, she conveys an authentic enhancement of everyday rituals. Through heightened textures, tactility, and sensory engagement, Sophia infuses joy and timelessness, drawing from a globally attuned perspective while responding through a contextually appropriate lens.

David brings rigor and clarity to his work, believing that the understated simplicity of a space can reveal its true potential. Inspired by regionalism, personal stories, and contextual layering, his architectural approach is rooted in restraint and enduring value. With extensive experience across the architectural community, he applies precision in identifying opportunities and shaping spatial responses. A lateral thinker with keen business insight, David grounds the studio's creativity, ensuring focus where it has the greatest impact and lasting legacy.

Together, Sophia and David balance vision and structure—the poetic with the practical. Sophia approaches each project with imagination, emotion, and possibility, while David anchors these ideas with flow, function, and deliberate hierarchy. This interplay allows designbyWBL to create spaces that are both resonant and refined, continually pushing the studio—and each other—toward richer, more meaningful outcomes.



Boxwell Residence

Boxwell is a layered residential project in the Adelaide Hills, conceived as an unfolding of time, material, and memory. Set within a mature, established garden, the home feels both secluded and deeply connected to its surroundings. The new work extends the original Victorian homestead, which had evolved under many custodians, uniting a patchwork of outbuildings through a shared material palette and deliberate formal composition. This arrangement allows the owners to gather or retreat as needed, with spaces attuned to their rhythms.

Rather than simply renovate, the design sought to revive the home's character and continue its legacy. A damaged 1960s pavilion was replaced with three key elements: the original heritage home, remnants of the outbuildings interpreted through a raw, utilitarian lens, and a new insertion bridging past and present. Together, these elements reframe the rear of the home as a north-facing sanctuary embracing both garden and pool.

In collaboration with landscape designer Lee Gray, the garden becomes both backdrop and extension, enhancing light and seasonal living. Inside, the kitchen forms the social heart, while generous living spaces invite pause and renewal. Anchored in sandstone and enriched with bagged brick, steel, and ribbed glass, Boxwell mediates legacy and place, balancing permanence with openness.







