



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Local landscape inspire winners at 2015 Southern Architecture Awards

The skills of the region's architects in the field of residential design, and the relative local dominance of that type of architecture, are evident in the 2015 Southern Architecture Awards, which were announced on Friday night (12 June) at the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin.

Housing projects received 12 of the 16 honours conferred in the awards, which are part of the annual nationwide Architecture Awards programme run by the New Zealand Institute of Architects with the support of Resene. The country's premier architecture competition recognises outstanding work by New Zealand's architecture practices.

Craig McAuliffe, the convenor of the awards jury, said the jury was inspired by the projects it visited in selecting winning entrants in an area stretching from Central Otago to the foot of the South Island.

"We saw how architects drew inspiration from the local landscape in producing designs closely linked to their particular sites. These designs are unique - they're appropriate in their form and function, and they combine quality materials with clever plans to express the emotive qualities of space."

McAuliffe also praised the region's builders for their "attention to detail, quality of finish and use of materials."

"Architects and builders have a common goal - an ambition to produce the very best built environment possible," McAuliffe said.

Warren and Mahoney, an architecture practice with a long history of high quality work in the South Island and further afield, received four awards, one for retail design and three for houses.

In designing an outdoor recreation department for Invercargill store H + J Smith, Warren and Mahoney carefully considered customer flow and ease of navigation, delineating areas with a variety of floor finishes, display pods and colourful elements to deliver what the jury described as "a grounded space which balances textural warmth with contemporary elements."

At Bremner Bay near Wanaka, a Warren and Mahoney house made from robust exterior materials features a high ceiling supported by exposed trusses crafted from timber recycled from an old bridge. "The house is a strong composition of dark, cedar-clad buildings and materiality appropriate to its mountainous surroundings," the jury said.

In Warren and Mahoney's Closeburn House in Queenstown simple building forms matched with bold

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materials express the architect's emphasis on "natural belonging". "This gracefully detailed home eloquently resides within the existing contours of its site, while also presenting itself to the surrounding mountains with a breath-taking cantilever," the jury said.

Warren and Mahoney's final award was for the Kelvin Heights House, a large Queenstown home arranged as a series of pavilions to soften its scale and, the jury said, "maximise light, privacy and the sense of open space."

Mason & Wales, another firm of long standing - in fact, it is the oldest architectural practice in New Zealand - won three awards, all for houses.

The jury described the McEntyres Tarn Houses in Arrowtown as being "expertly designed at a refined scale" and said the Ross Creek House in Dunedin, which is surrounded by gardens and tall stands of native beech and kowhai, creates an overall impression of "restraint, refinement and elegance."

"Timeless elegance", the jury said, is also a characteristic of Mason & Wales' New Residence for the Harrington Family in Invercargill. The large, rural-styled house, with its natural materials and traditional gabled roof, is oriented towards the "warmth of the Southland sun."

At 'Hills', in Arrowtown, designed by Crosson Clarke Carnachan Chin Architects, the jury said "craft integrates with architecture to create a stunning home." The house is a modern interpretation of a "farmyard gathering of buildings", the jury said. Its materials may appear simple, but they are "sophisticated in their delivery."

At the Aro Hā Wellness Retreat near Glenorchy, Wellington-based Tennent + Brown Architects have applied a level of care and detailing commensurate with high-end residential work. The awards jury said the "thoughtfully considered collection of buildings respects its awe-inspiring site."

The other winner in the Southern Architecture Awards' commercial category is a building of greater scale in a very different setting. The Stadium Southland Re-instatement in Invercargill by McCulloch Architects meets the needs of groups ranging from small fitness groups to national sports franchises.

The architects' design for the stadium "enables a wide variety of users to comfortably co-exist, and has therefore encouraged a high level of community involvement", said the jury, which also applauded the lively use of colour in the building.

In Dunedin, the colour-filled OUCA Childcare Centre by Parker Warburton Team Architects received an award in the education category. The jury said this cleverly arranged, interconnected fusion of joyful buildings creates a safe, purposeful experience for children and teachers."

Assembly Architects' Rammed Earth House in Wanaka, which comprises three separate buildings oriented to pick up ridgeline views, shows "how it is possible to use traditional building styles even when clients have contemporary aesthetic tastes, the jury said. "Every space in the houses connects to the landscape of vast mountains and thoughtfully created sheltered courtyards."

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Another award-winning building with an interesting composition is the Wanaka House by Lovell and O'Connell Architects. The home has a "unique folded form that breaks away from traditional and contemporary preconceptions of what a house should be," the jury said. "There is fantastic attention to detail, with built-in furniture crafted around the needs and possessions of the owners."

In their design for the Arrowtown House, McCulloch Architects have reinterpreted the classic A-frame. The house, the jury said, is "a celebration of an iconic form, articulated and updated for modern living."

The awards jury said that some of the houses it visited were especially beguiling. For example, the Warburton House in Wanaka, designed by Sarah Ritchie Architect, has "a series of delightful spaces the jury just didn't want to leave". In the house "each expertly scaled space, with its celebration of light, form and personality, has its own surprise."

Another engaging project is the Dalefield Guest House, Queenstown, by Team Green Architects, a relaxed retreat for guests and a break-out zone from the formality and large scale of the primary residence.

"With its pared back simplicity, the building's exterior has the character of a 5 Star DOC hut," the jury said. Inside the house, "a lively and bright interior contrasts with the external colour palette and use of natural materials."

Joining Craig McAuliffe on the 2015 Southern Architecture Awards jury were architects Terry Barnes, Stacey Farrell and Chris Norman, and lay juror Chris Bates, a Dunedin property investor.

All winners of this year's Southern Architecture Awards will be considered for 2015 New Zealand Architecture Awards, which will be announced this November.

Rights-cleared, hi-res images of all award-winning projects and a pdf of the 2015 awards booklet, with citations and a jury convener statement, can be [downloaded here](#).