



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Strength in diversity celebrated at 2015 Auckland Architecture Awards

The diversity of Auckland's new architectural projects and the breadth of talent in the region's architectural practices is evident in the 2015 Auckland Architecture Awards which were announced on Thursday (28 May) at the MOTAT Aviation Hall in Western Springs.

Forty-four awards were shared among 20 firms for projects that ranged from modestly scaled home additions to large infrastructural works.

Three areas in the city proved to be especially fertile territory for award-winning architecture this year. Britomart's strength as a retail and hospitality destination was acknowledged with three awards; Hobsonville Point's primary school and multi-unit residential development Squadron Lane both received awards; and Titirangi contributed award-winners in both the Public Architecture and Housing categories.

Educational work features prominently in the roll of award-winners, as do new houses - a category that is a traditional strength of the country's architects.

Awards convenor Tony van Raat, the head of Unitec's Department of Architecture, said 159 projects were submitted into the Awards programme this year, 56 of which were shortlisted for a visit by a jury also comprising architects Peter Davidson and Murali Bhasker and lay juror Nicola Legat.

"The standard of entries this year was very high," van Raat said. "There were many projects of outstanding merit which revealed the skill, care and insights of their architects. New Zealand society continues to be well served by the profession, and in the Auckland region we were pleased to see that high standards are now common practice."

The awards jury said Mitchell & Stout Architects' new Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery in Titirangi, a winner in the Public Architecture category, illustrated the "transformational power of modern architecture." The gallery, which sits alongside Lopdell House, "provides the village with a new conception of itself," the jury said.

Mitchell & Stout's restoration and renovation of Lopdell House was also acknowledged in the Awards, the Heritage category. "Sharp, refreshed and skillfully adjusted to new uses, Lopdell House is now ready to act as a focus of the Titirangi community for another generation," the jury said.

At Allendale House, the Ponsonby home of the ASB Community Trust, Salmond Reed Architects have produced another successful marriage of heritage architecture and modern building elements. The Allendale Annex is a "beautifully built two-storey building" said the jury. "It displays a modesty and restraint appropriate to its occupant and a great respect for its Victorian neighbour."

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Winning an award for Small Project Architecture, Fearon Hay Architects's Te Kaitaka: 'The Cloak', was described by the jury as a "whimsical little building that will surely become one of the most-loved structures in the growing Auckland airport village." The jury said that the tussock-roofed building "hunkers down into its corner site like some shaggy Highland cattle-beast."

RTA Studio's Longroom Canopy is another Small Project Architecture winner. With its "elegant, lace-like screen that reintegrates the building with the street frontage" the lightweight shelter over an undistinguished Ponsonby building is proof, the jury said, "that you can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

The Education category of this year's awards recognised architects' ability to come to grips with the "new learning environments." Hobsonville Point Primary School, designed by ASC Architects, was described by the jury as "eminently suited to be a school of and for the future." Its community contribution was also praised: "The school serves as an anchor building that lends identity and a sense of place to the growing urban-village hub of Hobsonville."

In Avondale, Jasmax's three-stage, four-year project at Avondale College is another project with a positive communal effect. "The arrangement of confident buildings and courtyards must surely energise and affirm pupils each day," the jury said.

At the University of Auckland, the "intelligent reconfiguration, repurposing and remediation" of Building 303 - the tough old structure on the corner of Wellesley and Princes Streets - has created "warm public transition spaces, restful breakout areas and office environments that leave prison-style corridors well in the past", the jury said. "The students of the 1970s who toiled in this dour Brutalist block would surely embrace its recent humanising interventions with envy."

In south Auckland, Warren and Mahoney's MIT Manukau and Transport Interchange - an education facility that shares space with a lower-level train station - was deemed doubly transformational. "This handsome building of substance and gravitas is surely capable of delivering two transformations: first, to the educational aspirations of its surrounding low-income community, and second, to the urban fabric of the Manukau city-centre," the jury said.

With the Panmure Interchange, Opus Architecture has also addressed Auckland's transport challenge with a well-crafted building offering much more than just shelter to commuters. "The adoption of a bold, confident stance at the junction where new roads, a train line and new bus nodes meet, signals both that modern-era public transport has arrived in Panmure and that, under the great mountain, there is much potential to be unlocked in the area," the jury said.

Auckland's other great challenge is housing. At Hobsonville Point, the Stevens Lawson Architects-designed Squadron Lane Terraces, a "well-controlled and elegant block of 38 terrace houses" shows that this type of housing "need not be bland or unimaginative."

Another winner in the Housing - Multi-Unit category is Warren and Mahoney's Carlaw Park Student Village for the University of Auckland. Home to more than 400 students, the development is "notable for its human scale, well considered programme and intelligent response to its site", said the jury. "It is also a model for low-cost, high density accommodation."

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There were five successful entries in the Hospitality and Retail category of the 2105 awards. The Federal Delicatessen, designed by Nott Architects, prompted the jury to write: "New York? Montreal? You could be there in this loving tribute to a typical Jewish deli that has lifted itself well beyond pastiche and feels like the real Reuben."

At Japanese restaurant Masu at Sky City Grand Hotel, designed by Moller Architects, "dinner is made exciting and theatrical," the jury said. The restaurant "is a great showcase for the superb food of an ambitious and visionary chef."

Across town, on Stanley Street in Parnell, Rowe Baetens Architecture and Noel Lane Architects collaborated on the design of James, a restaurant within a reworked heritage building. "Coming from the near pitch-black bar area, the room is an explosion of eye popping, fun colour and a great environment for a party," said the jury.

Britomart's continued provision of high-quality premises to Auckland's retail and hospitality scene was recognised with three awards. At Orleans, designed by Cheshire Architects, "more is more," said the jury. "The attention to detail, the accretion of bric-a-brac, and the appropriately and artfully rough-and-ready construction used exercised here would get a location scout for the TV series *Treme* into a downright fever."

Fearon Hay Architects, working within the "ugly-duckling Seafarers Building" to create the restaurant Ostro have made a real contribution to the Britomart precinct, the jury said. "Not only has this project given Aucklanders a place to engage with the harbour-front, but the striking terrace on the opposite face of the building is also alluring to those at street level in Takutai Square."

The Pavilions at Britomart, a temporary cluster of retail and hospitality buildings also designed by Cheshire Architects, received awards in the Commercial Architecture category. "Skilled laneway and courtyard insertions continue the urban language and gritty fabric of this historic merchant precinct," the jury said. "Aucklanders have come to love spending time in this gentle quarter. They will miss it when it has gone."

Two older buildings, Roger Walker's Flint House, from 1969, and Mitchell & Stout Architects' Gibbs House, designed in 1985, received awards for Enduring Architecture. The Flint House in Birkenhead is a "perfectly maintained house from a classic period of New Zealand architecture", the jury said. "It is a reminder of how fresh, playful and essentially novel Roger Walker's work was - and still is."

The jury described the Gibbs House as a "post-modern pavilion" that is "luxurious without being lavish, daring without being showy, polished without being cold." The jury said the house is as "elegant yet playful today as it was when first built."

The new housing and addition-and-alteration awards categories were particularly well populated this year.

Mitchell & Stout Architects' rich vein of form continued with the Lake Pupuke House, appreciated by the jury for its "informal quality" and design elements "that engage the viewer and must provide the occupants of this unpretentious house with an ideal framework for the pleasures of domestic life."

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The intriguingly named 048per_VillaOP, by Townsend Architects and WHAT_architecture, certainly adds to the conversation around building modern houses in heritage neighbourhoods. "How intelligently and ultimately diplomatically the Grey Lynn house has inserted itself into a street of tiny cottages on very small lots," the jury said. "The language of the villa is extant but deftly mutated."

With 'Sod the Villa', Malcolm Walker Architects' "inspired and inspiring alteration to a rundown Grey Lynn house" rather paradoxically does not in fact "tell the villa to sod off". Instead, the jury said, the architects "have breathed life into the old belle, highlighted her beauties and revved up the programme with whimsy, craftsmanship and the deft manipulation of volumes."

In Point Chevalier, Megan Edwards Architects have shown what can be achieved with the notoriously difficult bungalow alteration. A modest bungalow has been transformed into a house that is "elegant, warm, poised and enormously appealing," the jury said.

Moving through the Periodic Table of housing types, Cook Sargisson & Pirie took on a "modern" style house in Mt Eden. The Peary Road addition is "confident, playful and hard-working," the jury said. The house is now "set up perfectly for casual family living while also achieving certain elegance and offering a host of surprises."

In Takapuna, Strachan Group Architects, working with Rachael Rush, looked not to the villa or bungalow for inspiration but to the boatshed, and have designed a house that is a "superb response to the lives of a busy boating and sporting family." The jury said the house is "a relaxed, confident family home with real personality."

Herbst Architects, a practice celebrated for its graceful incorporation of timber into their designs, picked up two awards this year. The Castle Rock House, a beach house at Whangarei Heads, has a "captivating level of delight," the jury said. "This project has a directness and simplicity that engages its occupants with both the essential and existential nature of the beach house."

Herbst Architects' second award was for an alteration and addition to Clevedon Estate. The jury noted that the "the filigree-timber-skin language so often deployed by this practice here sits in contrast to and in dynamic tension with the sturdy, South-Australian-Outback language of the large house already on the site."

Crosson Clarke Carnachan Architects (CCCA) is another serial winner in this year's Auckland Architecture Awards. The Crossing, "effectively a tent, consisting of a tight metal skin wrapped over a folded volume", is a small hilltop house that "operates with greatest effect because of its restraint and simplicity", said the jury.

CCCA's Red House, near Titirangi, also employs metal - bright red, in this case - on its exterior. "What goes better with the green of our bush than the pōhutukawa red?" asked the jury, declaring this as a house that "immediately declares the courage of its convictions".

In Westmere, CCCA "approached afresh" a common brief: the modern box attached to villa-bungalow-'statie'. Here, the jury said, this type is "elevated most successfully through the use of quality materials, a great build and a light touch achieved with skill and intelligence."

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CCCA director Paul Clarke was in the awards again for a collaborative project undertaken with fellow architect Wendy Shacklock. Te Kohanga House, on Waiheke Island, is a "considerate neighbour in its island community," with a form "clinging long and low to the cliff edge." The jury described the house's interior as "handsome, expansive and confident."

A contrasting approach to island architecture on Waiheke was pursued in Bull O'Sullivan Architecture's Ostend Road House. "The language of this house is modest, hand-wrought, direct and quirky," the jury said. The architect has given his clients "something they may have hoped for but did not necessarily expect to achieve: a joyful place to inhabit."

Waiheke Island architecture with grander proportions also received plaudits from the jury. Archimedia Group's cliff-edge Hekerua Bay Residence has been "built to a superb standard", the jury said. "This suave house takes its owners' Mediterranean background as a springboard for a programme that summons lazy days under a blazing sun."

Stevens Lawson Architects, a practice with Waiheke Island award-winners under its belt, this year won awards for mainland houses. The Rock House in Mt Eden has been "built with confidence and dexterity" on a challenging site dominated by a massive lump of basalt, which was subsequently designed into the home as a feature.

In Remuera, Stevens Lawson's In situ House is a "remarkable house by any measure", the jury said. It is a project that "pushed at all technical boundaries previously established in this country's residential projects."

Godward Guthrie Architecture's Muriwai House is also a substantial house, this time on a coastal cliff. "The confident use of in situ poured concrete and wood reassures occupants that the house can ride out the wildest storms the Tasman can throw at it", said the jury.

Godward Guthrie received another award, for an addition to the Burn House, a significant late-1960s home by emigré architect Franz Iseke. "The latest stage of this sensitive renovation has both restored the house's original programme from a previous mangling and given some much-needed extra space to the current owners," the jury said.

Dorrington Atcheson Architects were also doubly awarded this year. Marine Parade, a renovation of a 1970s house in Herne Bay, is "intriguing from the street with its spare and brooding style", while inside the house reveals a "host of pleasures and surprises that take their cue from its original quality build".

In Titirangi, Dorrington Atcheson Architects' Easterbrook House, although "modest in its aspirations, dimensions and budget" is, the jury said, a delightful home that "works hard in every way to provide storage, purpose, comfort, sun and surprise."

Bossley Architects' Fold House, conceptualised as an "encampment", continues the firm's tradition of exemplary Bay of Islands beach houses that exhibit a light touch. The house "delivers on the implicit and explicit requirements of its brief but gracefully and without contrivance transcends them," the jury said.

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Also in Northland, the Rawhiti Bach by Studio of Pacific Architecture is a house of two parts - a generous and open two-storey main house, and a sleep-out that is "a remarkably brave, hard-edged concrete structure clearly engaged with the future rather than the past."

Less substantial homes were also awarded this year. "Built on an extremely modest budget", the Sayes Stock House in Onehunga by Henri Sayes Architect, is "a charming small house that sets a benchmark for what can be achieved with resolve, resourcefulness and the disciplined delivery of grace notes where they will most count."

All winners of 2015 Auckland 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 convener statement, can be downloaded [here](#).