



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Remarkables building just one highlight of 2016 Southern Architecture Awards

[Download gallery of winning images](#)

Fifteen projects, ranging in scale from a cleverly planned Stewart Island crib to a large, angular Remarkables ski field base, have been acknowledged as the lower South Island's best buildings at the 2016 Southern Architecture Awards.

The awards event, held at the Skyline in Queenstown, revealed architects working on projects of diverse scale and complexity. The peer-reviewed awards, a part of the New Zealand Architecture Awards programme run by the New Zealand Institute of Architects, set the standard for good architecture in the region.

The 2016 southern awards jury was led by Wanaka architect Sarah Ritchie, who describes the process of assessing each shortlisted project, first-hand, as an absolute delight.

"Across great distances and through very different environments we allocated awards to projects that responded to respective client briefs and landscape conditions with consideration, composure and rigour – while also allowing poetry to unfold," Ritchie said. "Wherever we went, one thing was reiterated over and again. The practice of architecture encompasses many skills, all of which are essential in order to achieve an outstanding outcome."

"We saw exquisite houses, some large, some compact, as well as carefully designed commercial buildings. Throughout each, care, craftsmanship and attention to the smallest details were common characteristics."

The enduring architecture award conferred to the Henderson House, a fabulously proportioned house designed by Australian émigré Ernst Plischke, which overlooks the Alexandra Township and the Dunstan and Hawkdun mountains, shows, said Ritchie, "how attention to such details can result in delightful buildings with lasting qualities."

Commercial architecture

Three projects, each with design for very different purposes received commercial awards this year.

At the Dunedin Botanic Garden, a new plant propagation and nursery by McCoy & Wixon Architects, is a "practical and playful response to a city-led commercial botanical brief". Through the clever and consistent use of materials the overall structure, which consists of greenhouses and shed workspaces, rises "above the purely functional and into the realm of the poetic," the jury said.

Sixteen hundred metres above sea level, the New Remarkables Base Amenities Building by Michael Wyatt Architect is a facility of great scale designed for heavy public use. "Set in the harshest of environments, this elegant shed is the workhorse of the mountain," the jury said. The building, designed to accommodate

3,500 guests per day, has a “triangular plan and soaring mono-pitched roof” that makes it a “dramatic and elegant wing to the mountains”, the jury said.

In the plan of the Calder Stewart Head Office Complex, by Mason and Wales Architects, the jury found “evidence of architect and client working closely together to create a functional and holistic office environment”. Built on a ‘greenfield’ landscape on the outskirts of Milton, the large commercial office building’s formation is based around cellular ‘pods’, which will allow the company to easily expand.

Housing

The number of awards conferred in this category confirms the strength of residential architects in the lower South Island. However, this year’s award winners were not solely confined to popular residential hotspots around Wanaka and Queenstown.

On Stewart Island, a “playful and surprisingly spacious three-storey bach” by Tennent + Brown Architects was praised for the way it responds to a difficult hillside site. “The skillful planning approach sensibly and creatively utilises every inch of space,” the jury said. “This is a place with an authentic holiday feel – a real delight.”

At Mission Cove, on Otago Peninsula, McCoy & Wixon designed a vibrant family home that is “beautifully integrated with the landscape”. It also employs inventive planning: private areas overlook pastureland while public areas enjoy harbour views and sun. The jury praised a timber-clad spine wall that divides private from public while providing “ample and discreet storage.”

McCoy & Wixon’s third winning project, a house on Dunedin’s Māori Hill, is “a secluded and deceptively simple haven that respects the surrounding community by scaling down as it approaches the street edge,” the jury said.

Like Stewart Island, Waikouaiti doesn’t always figure highly in architecture awards. However Tumai, “an artistic sculpting of architecture” by Architecture Ecology, bucks the trend. “The building, set in a stunning landscape, is not just a beautiful composition but also a sensible one. The form responds with elegance to the climate and setting.”

Passive housing, a type of thermally efficient housing gaining traction in New Zealand, also feature in this year’s awards. Rafe Maclean Architects’ George House is the South Island’s first Certified Passive House. “The architect’s carefully considered and assured design has led to a brilliant outcome. Rigorous research, calculations and calibrations will guarantee a warm, efficient and healthy environment for its occupants,” the jury said.

An Arrowtown town with “jewel-like” qualities also caught the jury’s eye. Designed by Bull O’Sullivan Architecture, the Hamilton Family Home is “inventive, challenging, playful,” the jury said. “This is, put simply, a gorgeous home.”

A nearby house, Bureaux’s Bendemeer Mountain Retreat is “both texturally rich and very appropriate to the rural site”, the jury said. “Although small in footprint, the generosity of the carefully controlled volumes provides flexibility in the ways that they can be occupied.”

The Sargent Residence, designed by Hyndman Taylor Architects for a Queenstown subdivision, offers “a level of privacy and shelter that does not compromise any of the incredible views on offer”, the jury said. “This house has character and personality, and is a very successful and intelligent response to new subdivision living.”

In receiving two housing awards, Anna-Marie Chin Architects showed an ability to work inventively at both large and small scales. Tom's House, "a playful collection of spaces arranged carefully within a tight envelope", has "Tardis" qualities, the jury said. "There is the very real possibility here of discovering spaces inside that from a study of the exterior would seem impossible."

At the other end of the scale, Anna-Marie Chin Architects' Copper House, which features faceted planes and copper surfaces, appears "sculpted from the land", the jury said. "Thoroughly well-crafted, the Copper House is a celebration of light and form, and an illustration of the confident spatial mastery of the architect."

Small project

The challenge of successfully designing smaller buildings, which requires an inordinate amount of creative thinking, is relished by architects. In awarding RTA Studio's Cardrona Hut for small project architecture, the jury said "This is *the* HUT... The elegance and scale of the proportions are the work of an architect that understands the psychological benefits of going 'small' in an environment where mountains loom large all around."

All 2016 Southern Architecture Awards winners are listed below. These projects are eligible for shortlisting in the New Zealand Architecture Awards, which will be decided later this year, and announced in November.

For more information, images of winning projects, or to arrange an interview with jury convenor, Sarah Ritchie please contact:

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Full list of winners:

(nb: photo credits relate to the images in [this gallery](#))

Commercial Architecture

Calder Stewart Head Office Complex by Mason and Wales Architects. *Photo: Graham Warman*

Dunedin Botanic Garden – Plant Propagation & Nursery Facility by McCoy & Wixon Architects

The New Remarkables Base Amenities Building by Michael Wyatt Architect. *Photo: Esther Small*

Enduring Architecture (Conferred upon buildings more than 25 years old)

Henderson House by Ernst Plischke. *Photo: Paul McCredie*

Housing

Stewart Island Crib by Tennent + Brown Architects. *Photo: Andy Spain*

Mission Cove Residence by McCoy & Wixon Architects. *Photo: Graham Warman*

Māori Hill House by McCoy & Wixon Architects. *Photo: Graham Warman*

Tumai by Architectural Ecology

George House by Rafe Maclean Architect. *Photo: Simon Devitt*

Hamilton Family Home by Bull O'Sullivan Architecture. *Photo: Patrick Reynolds*

Bendemeer Mountain Retreat by Bureaux. *Photo: Simon Devitt*

Sargent Residence by Hyndman Taylor Architects

Tom's House by Anna-Marie Chin Architects. *Photo: David Straight*

Copper House by Anna-Marie Chin Architects. *Photo: Marina Matthews*

Small project architecture

Cardrona Hut by RTA Studio. *Photo: Patrick Reynolds*