



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Buildings for living, worship and shopping win local architecture awards

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Longstanding tradition of high quality homes in the top of the South Island is again evidenced in the 2016 Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards which were announced at an event at Nelson's Saxton Oval on Thursday 5 May.

The Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards, which is a peer reviewed programme run by the New Zealand Institute of Architects, provide the benchmark for architecture in the region.

Twelve projects received honours at the event with houses the most awarded building type. Six new houses, two home alteration and addition projects, and an innovative multi-unit project impressed the judges. Awards were also conferred in the categories of heritage, commercial and enduring architecture.

Rachel Dodd, convenor of the awards jury, noted the high quality of the shortlisted projects. She said the opportunity to visit a significant number of buildings across a three-day period gave rise to a number of observations.

"Firstly, the term 'bach' seems to have lost its original meaning of a small, very modest holiday home or beach house," Dodd said. "Also, New Zealand architecture generally remains obsessed with views – sometimes to the detriment of other aspects, such as the relationship to your neighbours."

"The best projects we saw not only acknowledged stunning views, but also considered contextual issues – the sun and its path across the sky, the wind, the approach to the home, as well as the rituals, requirements and relationships of inhabitation and the atmosphere of the environment created."

Nelson's Irving Smith Architects' impressive range of high quality work was recognised with three awards in three categories.

The Awards jury praised an innovative and "invisible" heritage restoration of St Andrews Church as an "excellent example of how good collaboration between architects and engineers can achieve quieter and more sympathetic results for heritage buildings in need of care."

On Nelson's Upper Queen Street, a new retail development based on the "noble" premise that highly functioning smaller tenancies can contain the spread of 'big box retail', won Irving Smith a commercial architecture award. The jury pointed to the building's flexibility, which futureproofs it for adaptation into smaller tenancies. "We hope potential occupants soon seize the opportunities that the architectural framework has provided," the jury said.

Irving Smith's third award was for Duncan Bay House, which blends into the dark and brooding bush-clad slopes behind. "The house is well-modulated and positioned so that it claims stunning views down the bay without dominating the landscape", the jury said.

Nelson's Redbox Architects also won three awards this year, for two new homes, the Holliday House and Pearson Bach, and for an addition and alteration to the Tata Beach Family Bach.

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The light-filled Holliday House, described by the jury as “a lovely response to the clients’ brief”, was praised for the way it sits “quietly but confidently in its rural setting”.

A “questionable location” made the architects work hard for their award for Pearson Bach. “Addressing the challenges of a south-facing, sub-alpine lot, this building arranges itself around a central courtyard that makes the most of magnificent views over the lake,” the jury said. “The orientation means that interior spaces capture any available sun, and the layering of textures and materials, such as cork and cedar, along with the rich, folded ceiling planes create a warm and welcoming refuge.”

On the coast, Irving Smith’s Tata Beach Family Bach is “a brave and productive re-use of a utilitarian building that has created a gathering space that lovingly expresses the idea of family holidays by the water,” the jury said.

Local knowledge and an ability to skilfully position houses in challenging terrain is a theme of this year’s Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards. For Jerram Tocker Barron, the steep and difficult site of the Harden Reese House was a “springboard for the creation of a home that opens up to capture north-facing views while maintaining a level of privacy from neighbouring properties.”

Jerram Tocker Barron won a second award for Chisnall Alteration. The project has a clever, well expressed idea – a simple, cedar ‘wrap’ over an existing exterior – and is “a good example of how small but well thought through interventions can produce a meaningful result”, the jury said.

A “phenomenal panorama” drove the success of Matz Architects’ Split Apple House. “The architects married their international clients’ desires to a local sensibility, an understanding of the site and the wider context,” the jury said.

At the Torea Studio, designed by Tennent + Brown Architects, the power of narrative is the design motivation. The studio is a smaller partner for the 2014 New Zealand Architecture Award-winning Torea House, which sits just a short distance away on the wetland-edged site. Both buildings take the metaphor of the Torea, or oystercatcher, walking down the site towards the water’s edge for inspiration.

“Restrained and deceptively simple, this building of folded zinc is a joy to visit,” the jury said.

Across the country, multi-unit housing is a challenging building type. The Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards jury was delighted to confer an award upon Sussex Mews, by Box Design, a thoughtful mix of single- and double-level units cleverly arranged to maximise the available space. The variation in plan also encourages neighbourly interaction.

“Overall, this is a well thought out and considered response to the challenge of creating good quality, liveable density on the city fringe,” the jury said.

This year, the jury made one award in the category of Enduring Architecture, which recognises the continuing value of buildings more than 25 years old. Awaroa Bach, a grouping of self-built buildings by Athfield Architects that spans 45 years, bears the unmistakable design fingerprints of the late Ian Athfield.

“As we currently face challenges of construction affordability, energy efficiency and aged-care, this project demonstrates an architectural approach that shouldn’t be ignored,” the jury said. “For those lucky enough to stumble across it there can be no mistaking the author of this innovative and whimsical group of buildings.”

All winners of 2016 Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards are listed below. These projects are eligible for shortlisting in the New Zealand Architecture Awards, which will be decided later in the year, with winners announced in November.

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

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Full list of winners

(Photo credits relate to images in [this gallery](#)):

Commercial Architecture

Upper Queen Street, Irving Smith Architects
Photo: Patrick Reynolds

Enduring Architecture

Awaroa Bach, Athfield Architects

Heritage

St Andrews Church, Irving Smith Architects
Photo: Patrick Reynolds

Housing

Harden Reese House, Jerram Tocker Barron Architects
Photo: Jason Mann

Pearson Bach, Redbox Architects
Photo: Elspeth Collier

Holliday House, Redbox Architects
Photo: Oliver Weber

Torea Studio, Tennent+Brown Architects
Photo: Paul McCredie

Duncan Bay House, Irving Smith Architects
Photo: Patrick Reynolds

Split Apple Rock House, Matz Architects
Photo: Virginia Woolfe

Housing - Alterations and Additions

Chisnall Alterations, Jerram Tocker Barron Architects
Photo: Caroline Crick

Tata Beach Family Bach, Redbox Architects
Photo: Oliver Weber

Housing - Multi Unit

Sussex Mews, Box Design