

## HOUSES AWARDS 2014 WINNERS OFFICIAL JURY CITATIONS

### **Australian House of the Year**

#### ***Invisible House by Peter Stutchbury Architecture***

There is something absolutely Australian about this project, not just its connection to an undeniably spectacular setting, but also its modesty, clarity, resourcefulness and consequential delight. Being (another) rural retreat with a jaw-dropping view, this project needed to convince the jury that all the moves made to create it are in harmony with its location, and that it is a great piece of architecture in its own right, and this it has.

Its magic is created through balance, such as the gridded rigour of the plan balanced with the bloated curve of the long section, or the transparency of the simple exterior balanced with the solid, albeit sliced, nature of the interior rooms. The form, materials and details are mastered in this house, running from inside to out and then into the landscape as one.

From both inside and out, changes in nature are apparent, in wet and dry, hot and cold and through the seasons of the year. This elegant building, looking out from its position nestled into the hilltop, has left us drawn to see more.

### **New House under 200m<sup>2</sup>**

#### ***Dogtrot House by Dunn and Hillam Architects***

Although in an obvious lineage of Australian shed architecture, this simple shelter is convincingly a permanent campsite, where the experience and delight of being in the place is more important (and rejuvenating) than conventional comforts. Yes, you will occasionally get wet and cold, but genuine immersion in a special place has clearly underpinned the development of this scheme.

Careful consideration of the plan reveals that the major room at the north is essentially a covered outdoor room – the caravan annexe or tent fly. It is the space for community, from which daily activities are planned, launched and celebrated. Truly interior spaces are the all-weather places that permanent campsites require – for sleeping, ablutions and cooking.

Considerable effort has been made throughout this house in plan, section and materiality, all of which contribute to the sense of care and privilege. Although base camps can be made in multiple (and often destructive) ways, Dogtrot House is rendered in an articulate and rigorous manner by architect and builder while never presuming that buildings are more significant than landscape.

### **New House over 200m<sup>2</sup>**

#### ***Invisible House by Peter Stutchbury Architecture***

New houses have the opportunity to explore form, orientation, planning, exterior and interiors. A great house does this with no corner ignored, with as much emphasis on space as on object, function and form, indoors and out.

At the Invisible House we find a collection of spaces that are distinct from one another, but which feel as though they belong together – open spaces are balanced with enclosed, long with short, horizontal with vertical. This is achieved through a masterful command of material; primarily local stone, concrete and wood, and a pared-back yet crafted approach to detailing. This approach extends from the bathtub to the roof, where water puddles before flowing through troughs to drop onto the landscape.

The jury was impressed with the great variety of spaces created in a small footprint, as well as the level of restraint in the work and thus the cohesiveness achieved. Doing neither too much nor too little has resulted in a new house that feels as though it were always part of this timeless landscape.

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## **House alteration and addition under 200m<sup>2</sup>**

### ***Cabin Two by Maddison Architects***

Cabin Two expresses a structural and architectural honesty that extends to every part of the project. By freeing Cabin Two from connecting to the existing 1960s log cabin, the architects have allowed it to respond to the site, its orientation and vegetation. This freedom has created a completely new set of geometries. When accessed from the garage, which grows out of the topography and opens to the views, Cabin Two appears as a closed and folded roof.

The materials selected for the project convey an architectural and structural honesty that moves from the exterior to the interior. Externally the exposed laminated beams anchor the project to the site.

The possible complexity of the geometries created by folding forms have been embraced and simplified with a delightful and calm interior, achieved with the use of a simple and rigorous palette of natural materials. By carving the project into the site, intimate, well-planned spaces have been formed. These open up to the views and allow unique spaces for both connection and privacy.

## **House alteration and addition over 200m<sup>2</sup>**

### ***Skylight House by Andrew Burges Architects***

The Skylight House offers a refreshing, modest, sustainable and uplifting answer to the reconfiguration of a Californian bungalow in Sydney's North Shore. Through a series of simple moves, the architect has fundamentally shifted the relationship between interior and exterior, and between old and new, while maintaining a compact and economical floor plan that leaves space for a generous backyard.

This modesty in plan has been artfully offset by the generosity of the section and the play between the smooth, sculptural forms of the ceiling and bulkhead datum and the rawness of the recycled face brick. Skylights have been carefully placed to welcome southern light into the open-plan kitchen, living and dining space.

Within this generous interior, timber joinery adds another delightful dimension to the texture and warmth of the space. By liberating the kitchen from its previously landlocked position, a new type of living that connects old with new through light, space and materials has been achieved.

## **Apartment or Unit**

### ***Loft Apartment by Adrian Amore Architects***

This reworking of an existing loft-style apartment in inner Melbourne brings an operatic virtuosity to a conventional two-storey warehouse volume.

A modest corner entry is linked to the central space at the lower level via flanking curved walls, aligned to reinforce the diagonal view through to the opposite corner. The triple-height, light-filled living area is abundant with interwoven, curved, painted plaster surfaces, orchestrated by a sensual twisting staircase that serves the two main levels. An unassuming straight staircase provides access to an upper dining area and rooftop terrace on the third level.

The minimalist materials and colour palettes contrast sublimely with the complexity of the convoluted forms, and re-used elements are subsumed into the vitality of the new. Spatial layouts are relatively straightforward but also provide in-built flexibility and adaptability.

Resolution of the interior architecture has been fuelled by a strategic decision made during the design phase to remove a dominant restrictive roof truss, enabling access and usage of the rooftop area and the sculptural form-making that envelops the whole. This apartment is a masterful embodiment of form and function.

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### **House in a Heritage Context (joint winner)** *Westgarth House by Kennedy Nolan Architects*

Set on a corner block with its frontage to the narrow dimension, the original configuration of this house ignored the site's long side boundary, the potential of space behind it and the desirable northern aspect.

The insightful decision made by the architect to shift the entry to the long side of the site allows visitors to enter into the freer living spaces and provides a strong connection with the garden. This rationalizes the spaces in the early building as the more private and personal family accommodation.

Imaginative use of readily available materials and standard construction techniques have been applied to create this very successful example of a collaboration between owner, architect and a skilled builder. This well-crafted economical dwelling clearly provides an engaging and responsive family house and is a replicable approach to thoughtfully dealing with early heritage building stock.

### **House in a Heritage Context (joint winner)** *Middle Park House by Jackson Clements Burrows Architects*

This compelling contemporary building is the result of the joint efforts of client and architect. The project is outstanding in both planning arrangement and contextual "fit." The designers have deliberately chosen to not derive a solution utilizing obvious clues from neighbouring buildings, but rather to accommodate an extensive two-level program into what appears to be a single-storey volume.

This deft arrangement and management of the building form, its adjacent open space and prominent location have elaborated the essence of new building placement within Heritage Overlay and Special Building Overlay areas.

An uncompromising hold on the site boundary along the side street has maintained strong site definition and created spatial flexibility on the northern side of the new building. This building not only speaks of the private needs of its inhabitants but also successfully declares its place in the public realm at an urban level.

Skilful form-making, appropriate materiality and interior detailing assembled with a light touch are hallmarks of this heritage infill exemplar.

### **Outdoor** *The Garden Project by Welsh and Major Architects*

The placement of the garden at the centre of the site is integral to the success of this extension to a Sydney home. By shifting the focus onto the outdoor spaces, the architect has transformed the house into an inner-city garden oasis.

Instead of extending directly from the original late-Victorian house, an autonomous "garden room" has been placed at the western edge of the site, bookending the garden to create a contained courtyard. The floor and ceiling planes, rather than the walls, define the interior of the pavilion. This creates a harmonious connection between this space and the loosely structured garden.

The new room is multifunctional – it can be used for extra accommodation, as somewhere for quiet reflection or as an entertaining space. An adjacent garage and carport allows the spaces to be used together as one larger entertaining zone when desired.

With the guidance of the landscape team, Peter Fudge Gardens, significant trees were retained on site. The garden room wraps around the deciduous trees that provide protection from the summer sun, while allowing the winter sun to warm the internal areas. The choice of robust materials such as concrete, hardwood timber and galvanized steel will beautifully patina over time and recede into the garden.

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## Sustainability

### *The Commons by Breathe Architecture*

To find that sustainability underpins this multi-residential project is uplifting and commendable. This project demonstrates how strategic plan and sectional arrangements, along with genuine materiality, can result in an authentic and eminently liveable place. Volume, space, light, air and a sense of community are the basis for delight of occupation, confirming there is a market for commodities beyond the usual finishes and material palette.

The committed approach to sustainability has been clearly described by the architects: "We took out car parks, airconditioning, second bathrooms, individual laundries ... Instead we gave space, height, thermal efficiency, double-glazing ... solar hot water, solar PV ... and tiny utility bills."

The idea of the apartments being the setting for long-term occupation and community is enabled through a communal rooftop with vegetable plots and laundry-hanging facilities – an urban backyard. The fact that this value base has been successfully put to the multi-residential market suggests the ideas are replicable and transferable, and hopefully, influential.

The Houses Awards attracts Australia's leading architects and designers to form a highly qualified jury. The jurors for 2014 were: **Brian Donovan**, Principal, BVN Donovan Hill (QLD), **Maggie Edmond**, Founding Director, Edmond and Corrigan (VIC), **William Smart**, Creative Director, Smart Design Studio (NSW), **Emma Williamson**, Co-Founder, CODA (WA), and **Katelin Butler**, Editor, Houses magazine (VIC). Architectural advice in Heritage category provided by **Peter Williams** of Williams Boag Architects on behalf of the Heritage Council of Victoria.

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- Ends -

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*Houses* is Australia's leading residential architecture magazine for designers and their clients. *Houses* presents inspiring residential projects by Australia's best architects and designers. These projects reveal the way that a house, through occupation, becomes a home – the architectural ideas, and the people and products behind them. *Houses* includes extensive pictorial coverage and engaging stories together with floor plans and detailed lists of the products used. It is the only publication to carry endorsements from both the Australian Institute of Architects and the Design Institute of Australia.

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