

Architects lauded for design quality

Awards judges rate top of the south an architecture 'hot spot'

The top of the South Island has become a hot spot in New Zealand architecture, says a judge of the region's architecture awards.

The New Zealand Institute of Architects' 2012 Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards were announced last night, with nine Nelson and four Marlborough projects recognised.

The convenor of the awards jury, Nelson architect Jeremy Smith, said the quality of entrants was impressive.

"The top of the South Island has become one of the hot spots in New Zealand architecture," he said. "There have always been able architects ... but regional development, increased national and even international awareness of the district's advantages, and a growing appreciation of the value of good design have increased the demand for quality architecture."

The awards function was held in the Saxton Pavilion, which received the public architecture award.

Mr Smith said the Arthouse Architects-designed pavilion exemplified the sophistication of the area's new architecture. The awards jury praised them for "challenging the design orthodoxy for public sports buildings".

Another Arthouse Architects project, the development of Victory School, won the sustainable architecture award.

Mr Smith said it demonstrated good architecture can make a real difference at grassroots level. The redevelopment was "a model of community involvement", and with its reuse of materials and existing buildings was an outstanding example of sustainable architecture.

Six Nelson houses received awards. The jury said the Carver house by Redbox Architects, was a "warm and comfortable house" with a sensitive balance of "light, scale and intimacy".



Sophisticated: Saxton Oval Pavilion designed by Arthouse Architects.

Image: OLIVER WEBER

Arthouse Architects' "House for Tree Lovers" exhibited "the craft of an architect totally familiar with the qualities of a unique environment", Guy Herschell Architects' Radman Brown House in Richmond was a "well-considered and appropriately simple family home", Palmer & Palmer Architects' Twenty-One House was "a beautifully composed and sequenced series of spaces", and Tennent and Brown Architects' Waiwhero Farm House in Moutere Hills was "a wonderfully elegant contemporary home".

The jury gave awards for enduring architecture to the house in Melrose Terrace, Nelson, built in 1961 to a design by the architect Ernst Plischke, and the other to the Britannia Heights House, built in 1960 and designed by Hal Wagstaff Architect.

Also on the jury were architects Meredith Robinson and John Melhuish, and Nelson artist Hillary Johnstone.



Sensitive balance: Richard and Raffaella Carver outside their family's home at Monaco. The house, built by Harris Builders and designed by Redbox Architects, was a winner in last night's Nelson Marlborough Architecture Awards.

Photo: MARTIN DE RUYTER/FAIRFAX NZ