

# HOUSES AWARDS

## THE PINNACLE OF RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

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MEDIA RELEASE

3 Aug 2024

### 2024'S MOST EXCEPTIONAL AUSTRALIAN HOMES REVEALED

#### Houses Awards Winners

The country's most innovative, sustainable and inspirational homes have been named in the [2024 Houses Awards](#) with a refurbished Brisbane timber worker's cottage that doubles as a home and business taking out the premier award of **Australian House of the Year**. The winners (detailed individually on the following pages of this media release) represent the pinnacle of Australian residential architecture and are testament to the importance of good design in addressing present-day environmental, economic and population challenges. Such was the strength of this year's entries, the jury awarded joint prize winners across three categories.

These diverse houses provide insight into how the contemporary Australian home is changing, and how the country's best emerging and established designers are rising to meet complex briefs and responding to new modes of living with compelling solutions. The awarded homes include first-class examples of amalgamated living and work environments to accommodate working from home, a dwelling that promotes both environmental and human wellbeing, and existing housing stock that has been thoughtfully and sustainably transformed, rather than rebuilt.

The awarded projects have much in common. In the pursuit of more cost-effective and durable building materials, the archetypal Australian shed was a repeated source of inspiration. Multiple projects were based around central courtyards that connect occupants to place and climate.

Houses magazine editor and Houses Awards jury chair Alexa Kempton explained: *"The Houses Awards underscore the ingenuity and creativity that architects and designers can bring to a residential project on any budget and under challenging circumstances. This year, client briefs were met with well-crafted and sophisticated architectural thinking and the jury recognised the high level of adaptability inherent in this year's houses. A home's longevity and flexibility were paramount."*

*"Many homes demonstrated sustainable and responsible design, both in materiality and cost. The jury was delighted with alterations that celebrated an existing house and carefully maintained a relationship between old and new, as well as homes that generously engaged in a conversation with the street and community."*

The premier title of **Australian House of the Year** was awarded to **Red Hill House and Studio by Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)**, a stunning suburban home in Brisbane that is also the workplace of the architect owners. Deftly knitting together the public and private spaces, Red Hill House is an exceptional example of how a home and workplace can be thoughtfully combined in one site. The home also took out the **House Alteration and Addition under 200 sqm category**, in recognition of its intricate update to an existing worker's cottage.

Reminiscent of the typical Australian backyard shed, **New House over 200 sqm Shed House by Breakspear Architects (NSW)** is also an exemplary suburban home that cleverly melds home and workspaces. In a climate of economic hardship, its use of robust and inexpensive materials demonstrates how high-impact design can be achieved with less costly materials.

**New House under 200 sqm** was awarded to a former corner milkbar transformed into a delightful courtyard home. **Courtyard House by Clare Cousins Architects (VIC)** is a thoughtful yet playful example of how small-footprint, inner-suburban residences can be produced sensitively to their historical origins. For this reason, the home was also recognised as the joint winner of the **House in a Heritage Context category**.

**House Alteration and Addition over 200 sqm** was awarded to two homes. **Arcadia by Plus Minus Design (NSW)**,

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is a delicate reshaping of a 1920s house, which carefully restores the original home and transposes it around a courtyard pool. Joint category prizewinner **Blue Mountains House by Anthony Gill Architects (NSW)** is a masterful renovation and restoration of an existing home on a highly complicated site - a classified flame zone on the edge of a valley in the Blue Mountains.

In the **Apartment or Unit** category **57 Martin Street by Neometro (VIC)** was recognised by the jury as a blueprint for how modest, medium-density homes in inner suburbia could be designed to promote sustainable living as city populations climb.

Terrace homes are not known for their sprawling gardens, yet the **Garden or Landscape** title was awarded to **Redfern House by Anthony Gill Architects with Sacha Coles (NSW)**. It features a generous textural rooftop garden and a patchwork of green spaces throughout the home and demonstrates the role every suburban block can play in rewilding our cities.

Co-winner of the **House in a Heritage Context** category, **Tomich House by Mark Jeavons Architect with Ohlo Studio (WA)**, is a revival of a distinctive 1971 Iwan Iwanoff home that had fallen into disrepair. The jury observed the sensitive restoration of the home's original features and the careful extension honoured its architectural legacy.

**Carrickalinga Shed by Architects Ink (SA)** is a South Australian homestead that is deeply interested in both environmental health and the wellbeing of its occupants. The resilient, zoned steel structure is an interpretation of an Australian Federation farmhouse that protects a central courtyard from the Fleurieu Peninsula elements. The biophilic design strategy, sectional layout and investment in solar, battery and rainwater harvesting technologies made it a clear victor in the **Sustainability** category.

Emerging Architecture Practice was awarded to two design firms in 2024. **Architect George (NSW)** for their ability to overcome site complexities with skill and a sense of playfulness and **SSdH (VIC)** who set themselves apart for their approach to championing undervalued building stock.

**The complete list of 2024 Houses Awards winners (further details, commendations and jury citations on the following pages):**

- Australian House of the Year - **Red Hill House and Studio by Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)**
- New House Over 200 Square Metres - **Shed House by Breakspear Architects (NSW)**
- New House Under 200 Square Metres - **Courtyard House by Clare Cousins Architects (VIC)**
- House Alteration and Addition Over 200 Square Metres (joint winner) - **Arcadia by Plus Minus Design (NSW)**
- House Alteration and Addition Over 200 Square Metres (joint winner) - **Blue Mountains House by Anthony Gill Architects (NSW)**
- House Alteration and Addition Under 200 Square Metres - **Red Hill House and Studio by Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)**
- Apartment or Unit - **57 Martin Street by Neometro (VIC)**
- Garden or Landscape - **Redfern House by Anthony Gill Architects with Sacha Coles (NSW)**
- House in a Heritage Context (joint winner) - **Courtyard House by Clare Cousins Architects (VIC)**
- House in a Heritage Context (joint winner) - **Tomich House by Mark Jeavons Architect with Ohlo Studio (WA)**
- Sustainability - **Carrickalinga Shed by Architects Ink (SA)**
- Emerging Architecture Practice (joint winner) - **Architect George (NSW)**
- Emerging Architecture Practice (joint winner) - **SSdH (VIC)**

This year's winners were chosen by a panel of jurors who represent Australia's best architectural and design experts with specialist advisors providing expertise in the sustainability, heritage and landscape design categories. The 2024 jury included:

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- Sophie Bence, founder and co-director, Bence Mulcahy
- Adam Haddow, director, SJB
- Marika Neustupny, founding director, NMBW Architecture Studio
- Lachlan Nielsen, director, Nielsen Jenkins
- Alexa Kempton (jury chair) editor, Houses magazine, Architecture Media
- Simone Bliss (Garden or Landscape advisor) creative director, SBLA Studio
- Louise Honman (Heritage advisor) built heritage specialist
- Dr Pippa Soccio (Sustainability advisor) senior research scientist in building monitoring, CSIRO

The winners (listed on the following pages) are also detailed on the [Houses Awards website](#), and a full report of the winners will also be published in the August issue of Houses.

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### 2024 HOUSES AWARDS WINNERS AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF THE YEAR



#### Australian House of the Year Red Hill House and Studio - Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)

**Jury citation:** This exemplary home disrupts the well-trodden path of adaptations to a familiar housing type. It resists the temptation to expand and enlarge, instead containing all that is needed for a family of four in the footprint of the existing worker's cottage. Rather than consolidating rooms into one open-plan setting, it preserves the intimate scale of the home's existing rooms and introduces carefully placed openings in walls to permit connection and supervision as required. And rather than internalising all domestic space behind a defensive wall, it introduces a loose-fit room, intentionally free of program, that is open to both the garden and the street, enabling the house to converse with the neighbourhood. Now used as a workplace for the occupants' architecture studio, this shady outdoor room – ideally suited to the Brisbane climate – could readily be used for informal living. A large portion of the site is retained for garden.

Architects' own homes are often sites of experimentation – an opportunity to challenge “business as usual” thinking. Here, inspired by the shophouse, the architect-owners have explored how work and family life can practically coexist, while also occupying distinct zones of the house. The entry – serving house and studio – is moved away from the busy main road and onto the quieter side street, preserving domestic privacy; porosity is graded from the steel mesh-lined public-facing entry circulation to the cocooning bedrooms upstairs; robust concrete and steel in the undercroft give way to beautifully finished timber in private spaces.

In opting to stay within the existing footprint, in exploring ways that a private domestic space can engage with the neighbourhood, and in adopting a loose-fit, long-life ethos that supports the happy coexistence of work and domestic life, the architects have reframed the house without eradicating the qualities of the original. Confident yet understated and exquisitely resolved, Red Hill House and Studio is an exceptional example of the potency of doing less. It is deservedly named the 2024 Australian House of the Year.

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**New House over 200 sqm**  
**Shed House - Breakspear Architects (NSW)**

**Jury citation:** Shed House is an exemplary model for flexible living in a suburban context. The project combines the clients' home and workspace, and offers a way of living that not only embraces a balance between the two, but also ensures adaptability within each realm. The ground floor is loosely programmed, with limited walls and structure. Spaces are arranged around a central courtyard and can be occupied in various configurations for business and leisure.

The upper floor contains the domestic functions of the house. Living, kitchen and dining rooms are oriented to the courtyard, while bedrooms are positioned in the corners. The planning allows for an inward-focused occupation of the site, ensuring privacy and amenity on a typical suburban site.

In a time of escalating material and labour costs, the house embraces standard fabrication methods and materials, with an evocative and economical facade of corrugated steel. A covered verandah leads to the conventional front door, but the real engagement with the street is enabled by large, retractable doors at the building's front and back that achieve a permeable plan.

Evocative of the Australian shed in a suburban context, Shed House achieves a lot with limited means. The jury applauded this readily customisable and replicable model for living and working.

**Commendations:**

- Blok Belongil - Blok Modular with Vokes and Peters (NSW)
- Burnt Earth Beach House - Wardle (VIC)
- Carrickalinga Shed - Architects Ink (SA)
- James Street - Taylor and Hinds Architects (TAS)
- Maitland Bay House - Studio Bright (NSW)
- Naples Street House - Edition Office (VIC)

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### 2024 HOUSES AWARDS WINNERS



#### **New House under 200 sqm Courtyard House - Clare Cousins Architects (VIC)**

**Jury citation:** Responding to the heritage form of a former milk bar, this inner-suburban residence deftly responds to scale, cultural memory and architectural grain to deliver a delightful home that is both quiet and celebratory. On a corner site, the design employs a courtyard to manage privacy, buffering sleeping spaces from the activity of the street while offering snippets of joy and delight to passers-by through operable shutters to the garden and the canopy of a tree that is beginning to poke its head above the parapet.

Resisting the urge to shout from the street edge, the project instead uses simple materials and geometry that encourage you to look past it – to see it within the context of the neighbourhood. This project understands the role of the collective: the building has settled into its context immediately. The jury was delighted with the sensibility and subtlety of this project, the capacity for the home to support changing family needs over time, and the flexibility of the planning, which will ingratiate the house to all those who will have the privilege to call it home.

**Commendations:**  
Draped House - Trias (NSW)  
Kidman Lane - Plus Minus Design (NSW)  
Olive Tree House - Bastian Architecture (NSW)

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### 2024 HOUSES AWARDS WINNERS



#### House Alteration and Addition over 200 sqm (joint winner) Arcadia - Plus Minus Design (NSW)

**Jury citation:** Arcadia celebrates and maximises the concept of “alterations and additions” with great skill and care, making an excellent architectural contribution and positing an approach for others to study as a typological precedent. The street-front portion of the design highlights aspects of the original house: joinery modules speak to existing doors’ glass panel size and proportion. John Soane-esque moments are a delight: shelving intersects with columns, sliding doors and secret stairs, bringing the clients’ personality and architectural solutions into dialogue.

An independent volume addresses the rear laneway with a confident mix of practicality and understanding of context (form, material and scale), maximising potential for future and social interactions. A semi-external dining/multipurpose room links the public passage of the lane with the home’s contemplative courtyard. The rock- and water-filled open courtyard brings rainwater movement to occupants’ attention – cooking, living, dining, stepping and bathing functions are in close yet shielded adjacency. Careful attention to roof-edge detailing means changing drip patterns can be experienced. Inhabitation involves always being aware of place and climate: the courtyard is open to the sky, while sandstone – uncovered during construction – beds the project in its original ground.

Within a dense urban environment and busy, memory-filled lives, this house quietly raises appreciation of heritage, climate, nature and broader surrounds.

#### Commendations:

Mansard House - Studio Bright (VIC)

Randwick House - Anthony Gill Architects (NSW)

Six Chimney House - Vokes and Peters (WA)

Verandah Terraces - Phorm Architecture and Design (QLD)

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#### House Alteration and Addition over 200 sqm (joint winner) Blue Mountains House - Anthony Gill Architects (NSW)

**Jury citation:** Blue Mountains House is a sensitive renovation and extension on a complicated ecological site. The extension proposes a contemporary reading of the existing Pettit and Sevitt house, and together the two buildings frame a minimalist courtyard. The addition, considered metaphorically as a rocky outcrop, protects the courtyard from the street and climatic variables, while its roof can be climbed to access an elevated connection to distant views.

A careful consideration and understanding of the flame zone bushfire overlay allowed the existing house to be retained and subtly upgraded. The robust concrete and blockwork of the extension expands on the brick materiality of the existing, and enables the building to recede into the setting, engaging with the ground and the surrounding gum trees.

This house celebrates the landscape, without fixating on the view. Platforms connect to the ridgelines of the mountainous setting and remind occupants of place and climate. The new work has also ensured the future survival of the existing house, providing an alternative approach to the demolition of older housing stock in the face of challenging bushfire and climatic constraints. A masterful approach to scale and form, and a respect for the significance of place, set this apart as a worthy winner.

#### Commendations:

- Mansard House - Studio Bright (VIC)
- Randwick House - Anthony Gill Architects (NSW)
- Six Chimney House - Vokes and Peters (WA)
- Verandah Terraces - Phorm Architecture and Design (QLD)



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#### House Alteration and Addition under 200 sqm Red Hill House and Studio - Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)

**Jury citation:** Homes are now very often also places of commerce. Red Hill House and Studio is an exemplar home studio in a reworked historic Queenslander. Built entirely within the existing footprint, it exhibits fine-grain consideration for planning, materiality and detailing. The work is confident but sensitive, it responds to climate, and it beautifully elevates the ordinariness of the existing cottage.

The design engages thoughtfully with its context – a traditionally high-set Queenslander and gritty main road address in a neighbourhood of both residential and commercial buildings. The studio is located in the undercroft, open to the side street, while more private home life is accommodated on the upper floor.

The planning demonstrates a lived understanding of working from home with small children in tow, but is also cleverly loose-fit. Public spaces give way gradually to private ones, with well-considered interrelationships that enable work and home life to play out simultaneously. One can imagine a work meeting while children play in view in the backyard. Robust simplicity in the undercroft utility spaces and studio is balanced with intimacy and craft upstairs, the different moods distinguishing work and home. Ultimate luxe is found in the privacy of bedrooms and the living room. This sensitive and beautiful project is an exemplar for responsible, sustainable residential architecture. The new is carefully measured by the old, and the new is better for it.

#### Commendations:

Aru House - Curious Practice (NSW)  
Garden Tower House - Studio Bright (VIC)  
Patrick Street - Andrew Campbell and Georgina Russell (TAS)  
Stewart - SSdH (VIC)

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#### **Apartment or Unit** **57 Martin Street - Neometro (VIC)**

**Jury citation:** As our cities shift to support greater densities, mid-scale apartment and terrace projects play an important role in delivering diversity to our housing stock – enabling us to live happily closer together. Offering as much as necessary and as little as possible, 57 Martin Street is an incredibly successful example of design excellence and simple living. The townhouse – one of six – provides a living environment that is simple, elegant, robust and low maintenance. Oriented east–west, the design takes advantage of aspect and delivers excellent cross-ventilation outcomes.

Parking is grouped at the laneway entry, accommodating the immediacy of carparking desires while also permitting future conversion to garden space or more housing when private vehicle usage declines. Simple strategies such as deep soil planting and architectural curb appeal have been prioritised, elevating the building’s suburban condition. Cost has been managed by employing brick detailing to the street edge, while limiting its extent along the boundary edges – in the same way that heritage high street shopping strips present grandeur to the street and pragmatism to the lanes behind.

This type of housing is hard to make good, and 57 Martin Street is an excellent example of architectural integrity underpinning a sophisticated but affordable housing outcome.

- Commendations:**
- Kyabin Apartment - Brad Swartz Architects (NSW)
  - Little Young Street 4A and 4B - David Langston-Jones (NSW)
  - Sunshine Beach Townhouse - Zuzana and Nicholas (QLD)

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#### Garden or Landscape Redfern House - Anthony Gill Architects with Sacha Coles (NSW)

**Jury citation:** Redfern House offers a systemic approach to a narrow inner-suburban block, affording the design of house and landscape equal consideration. Its generosity to the street blurs home, garden and street, and its visibility to the wider neighbourhood is an invitation to others to follow a similar path by softening the public–private thresholds of urban living.

Terraces are often typified by a scarcity of garden, but this project makes the most of external spaces, finding many opportunities to support a diverse habitat. A green roof connects to a well-considered shaded garden. Water reuse is considered through passive stormwater reuse, which feeds productive and native plantings.

The project focuses on function and comfort through its subtle and tactile materiality. The imperfect is celebrated, taking visual cues from the urban grain that the garden sits within: poly piping, paving and pebble are nestled among a selection of plant species that celebrate movement, texture and colour – particularly on the green roof. The landscape design enfolds the existing home and its new addition at the rear of the site in a patchwork of planting, where greenery is not only viewed but also experienced from each opening within the terrace.

It is evident that the garden gives back to the landscape that it sits within. This admirable project offers an inviting landscape system that looks beyond the considerations of human occupation, demonstrates a holistic integration of home and garden, and explores the role every suburban block can play in ensuring the ecological future of our cities.

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#### **House in a Heritage Context (joint winner) Courtyard House - Clare Cousins Architects (VIC)**

**Jury citation:** Courtyard House is a highly articulate contemporary response to its inner-suburban heritage context. As a new house that replaced a structurally unsound but culturally distinctive corner shop and attached residence, the program involved negotiating detailed planning considerations. The resultant house is impressive for turning potential obstacles into opportunities. The architects have deftly manipulated the wedge-shaped one- and two-storey volumes to both respect the scale of the surrounding streetscape and settle the location of the courtyard for maximum solar gain.

From the public realm, the zero-boundary setback on two street frontages ensures the prominence of the building in its setting. The architects have firmly embraced this challenge, integrating memories of the former building through the chamfered corner, the entrance hierarchy and the control of privacy into and out of the courtyard. Within the home, the floor plan is driven by a quiet internal focus on the courtyard, achieving domestic intimacy.

Courtyard House is a crisp palimpsest, using a building vocabulary that is derived from the past, manipulated and given new meaning for the future. In scale, form, material and detail, this house delivers for its heritage context and for its inhabitants.

#### **Commendations:**

Crown Road Ivanhoe - Jane Cameron Architects and Architect Hewson (VIC)

Mansard House - Studio Bright (VIC)

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**House in a Heritage Context (joint winner)**  
**Tomich House - Mark Jeavons Architect with Ohlo Studio (WA)**

**Jury citation:** The renovation of Tomich House impressed the jury for its highly intelligent approach to the restoration and adaptation of a distinctive house designed in 1971 by Bulgarian émigré architect Iwan Iwanoff. Unique and expressive, the design is a significant work by Iwanoff, but in the intervening decades the house had been layered with additions and had fallen into disrepair. The key to this project lies in the clear articulation of a three-part program including restoring the 1971 structure, adapting the interiors, and reorganising the three-storey rear extension (1986) to better unite it with the original structure. These distinct actions have driven the architects' strategy for a major upgrade of this significant residence where the originality of the architecture meant that solutions were not obvious.

The jury was enthused by the serene interiors that calm the dynamism of the interior volumes. New cabinetry on the ground floor better articulates the use of space as originally designed, while the first floor offers a more thorough reorganisation to connect disparate parts of the house. The restrained palette of materials and colours achieves a high-quality yet masterfully understated result, thereby allowing the expressive architectural interiors to be appreciated. This careful and confident undertaking has delivered an architectural delight that is commensurate with Tomich House's significance to Western Australia's architectural legacy.

**Commendations:**  
Crown Road Ivanhoe - Jane Cameron Architects and Architect Hewson (VIC)  
Mansard House - Studio Bright (VIC)

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#### Sustainability

##### Carrickalinga Shed - Architects Ink (SA)

**Jury citation:** Carrickalinga Shed is a contemporary homestead with equally contemporary values of sustainability that represent a careful integration of environmental health and human wellbeing. The profound impact of the building on the lives of its inhabitants is eloquently expressed in their own words: “We breathe deeply and live longer.”

The hilltop site on South Australia’s Fleurieu Peninsula was selected for its expansive views, but the exposure of this setting underscores a significant need for protection. In response, the architecture provides a resilient building designed to withstand the harsh landscape. Robust, low-maintenance materials such as galvanised corrugated iron will provide longevity and ensure the embodied energy invested in this site will serve many generations to come.

The form, reminiscent of a fortified Roman courtyard villa, appears grand and imposing from afar yet maintains a comforting human scale inside. Four zones – each able to be shut off when unoccupied – radiate around an internal courtyard, which is a cornerstone of the project’s sustainability and liveability objectives. The courtyard is a biophilic design strategy that achieves environmental protection, thermal and lighting control, and enhanced spatial qualities that support social and psychological wellbeing.

The client’s dedication to environmental sustainability is emphasised by the early installation of a 250,000-litre rainwater tank and a 23-kilowatt solar system with a 45-kilowatt battery, installed during planning to facilitate their use throughout the construction process.

#### Commendations:

Huff’n’Puff Haus - Enviroecture (VIC)

Pocket Passiv - Anderson Architecture (NSW)

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#### **Emerging Architecture Practice (joint winner) Architect George (NSW)**

**Jury citation:** In a few short years, Architect George has built a profile of delightfully playful residential work worthy of acclaim. The built work demonstrates a capacity to deal with complex existing conditions with skill and enthusiasm.

Established in 2021 by principal Dean Williams, Architect George is committed to design excellence and a collaborative approach to architecture – both within its studio and with consultants and clients.

From a tight-knit heritage terrace in Surry Hills and a nostalgic 1970s apartment refit to an unpretentious and economical “shack” in Tasmania, the studio shows a deft hand, dealing with scale and context with a characteristic approach. Projects are contextual and individual, with a focus on contemporary, sustainable moves in direct response to client and site opportunities. Efficient footprints and simple building forms connect indoor spaces to gardens, sunlight and outlook, consistently delivering delightful outcomes.

Form, volume and detailing are employed with confidence, and despite their modesty, projects are surprising and joyful. The use of colour is to be commended – often subtle, occasionally bold and monochromatic, colour is drawn from context and client sensitivities, enhancing the experience of place and people.

The jury anticipates continued excellence and a bright future for Architect George.

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#### Emerging Architecture Practice (joint winner) SSdH (VIC)

**Jury citation:** SSdH is an exciting new practice bringing energy and resolve to the future of architecture in this country. Immediately noticeable in their work is a respect for built fabric, no matter how “ordinary” the existing condition. Established in 2020 by Todd de Hoog, Harrison Smart and Jean-Marie Spencer, the practice proposes that the architect’s role must encompass recognition and promotion of undervalued building stock, for the sake of bigger-picture environmental and economic responsibility. Their architecture is made with close attention to details of context, and a sprightly yet mindful restraint. The jury was impressed by the impact made to livability and longevity through small yet inescapable architectural insertions in Stewart.

More broadly, SSdH’s work shows cultural depth and significant maturity in sensibility, spatial organisation and structural-constructional integration. Both in the whole and in details, a questioning of purpose and interrelationships between as many architectural elements as possible can be seen, and the projects are brimming with ideas in response.

It is refreshing to be presented with ideas-driven bathrooms that are not solely about luxury material and fixture selections, and commercial projects that are concerned with public life. From the scale of the urban to consciousness of what might be touched, the practice shows architectural control and has produced real “improvements.”

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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 residential architecture publication to carry endorsements from both the Australian Institute of Architects and the Design Institute of Australia.*

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