

# President's Award

23–25 Egan Street  
Mackenzie Pronk Architects,  
Julie Mackenzie, Shack Design &  
Kieran McInerney

For those of you who have known me over the past 25 years, it will come as no surprise that my key professional passions lie in the fields of urban design and housing.

Creating communities and cities that are well designed and sustainable is a fundamental goal of the profession of architecture. Through our work in the built environment we strive to enhance the quality of life of the community and the environment. This task requires not only architects' involvement in the design of individually crafted buildings for clients with healthy budgets, but also the need to be involved in the bigger challenges ... to design and deliver affordable housing for those on more modest incomes.

This year, I wanted to use my President's Award to focus on affordability and to encourage broader participation in our awards process. Through our call for entries, I sought submissions for single houses built for less than \$500,000 and apartments built for an average cost (given that most developments contain a range of apartment types) of \$350,000 or less. I also asked our past president, David Brown, to assist me and the competition jury by focusing particular attention on the submissions that could be considered under the affordable category. I'd like to

thank the entire jury for their advice, but in particular David for his assistance.

This year, the President's Award goes to a group of residences in Egan Street, Newtown.

Several years ago, a group of five talented young students and graduates met while working together in the offices of Tonkin Zulaikha Greer. Most have now moved on to form

their own architectural practices. Faced with the very real challenge of most young adults, that of finding affordable housing but not wanting to rent, the young architects explored all the alternatives. They decided to design and build some apartments for themselves as a collective, pooling skills and resources to gain access to the housing market.



After a two-year search and countless sketch designs, they found and purchased a robust and characterful warehouse. It offered a simple architectural form, utilitarian finishes, original timber trusses, colourful painted signs and artefacts of industrial archaeology. The original building was built in 1923 and had been used as a metal workshop, panel beaters and mechanics workshop for 77 years – that history remains etched on the building facade.

The architects wanted to create three apartments for themselves and one shared commercial studio space fronting the street, while retaining substantial evidence of the working history of the building. One of their greatest challenges was convincing the banks to lend to a group of individuals to fund construction until the apartments could be strata titled. After much negotiation they succeeded. The design, layout and details of the apartments needed to be simple and common. Costs were strictly controlled. Materials were recycled on site, including bricks, original trusses and timbers.

The building presented an ideal opportunity for adaptive re-use with the new studio and apartments housed within the walls of the former building. The roof has been raised by 600mm to create two storeys and walls removed locally to create northeast facing courtyards and void spaces. This allows maximum penetration of sunlight without compromising the privacy or solar access of neighbouring properties.

Design for energy efficiency also underpins the project with the incorporation of solar heating, appropriate sunshading and stack ventilation. In realising this project the architects have not only demonstrated how to create a rich urban environment through the re-use of an industrial heritage building but they have delivered a model of affordable housing. The apartments and the studio are now homes to Julie Mackenzie, Neil Mackenzie, Heidi Pronk and Jason Veale. Well done!

Deborah Dearing, NSWRAIA President

# Adrian Ashton Award

Philip Drew  
Catherine Hunter

The 2006 Adrian Ashton Award for architectural journalism has been jointly awarded to Philip Drew for an article on architect Ian McKay and his Mangrove Creek House, which appeared in *Indesign* magazine, and Catherine Hunter of Channel Nine's *Sunday* program for a portrait of the architects Durbach Block. The two submissions had very different strengths – exploring and making the best of the opportunities their medium offered – while evoking an appreciation of the architects and their work.

**Philip Drew's** insightful article showed understanding and sympathy for McKay, an architect who has been somewhat neglected and who could be said to occupy a 'parallel universe' in rela-

tion to the mainstream profession. It is a piece of commentary about a significant subject, outside the usual preoccupations of architectural journalism. Drew demonstrates maturity and experience in his well-referenced and persuasive writing.

**Catherine Hunter's** short TV piece is direct and accessible but clearly based on skilful, thoughtful interviews and careful editing embedded in a strong visual story. Hunter has stood back and allowed the essence of the architects and their work to come through successfully encapsulating the approach of Durbach Block.

# Award

23–25 Egan Street Mackenzie Pronk Architects, Julie Mackenzie, Shack Design & Kieran McInerney – architects in association

The Egan Street project is a mixed-use development in Newtown, Sydney, which has converted a small industrial building into three double-height residential units of approximately 70m<sup>2</sup> each with a fourth equal sized office space located at the front of the building. The development was the result of a collaborative process involving all the owners who agreed that the building should have a singular and uniform program, layout, design and aesthetic.

Each unit is based on a simple geometric and proportional arrangement achieved by the division of a square into four equal quadrants, one of which forms the external courtyard of the unit. The interior of each unit is enhanced by the use of simple robust materials, reflecting the industrial history of the building, and by the manipulation of the double-height volume within each unit to achieve a remarkable richness and generosity of space within a very confined area. The office at the front of the site maintains the historic industrial relationship of the building with the street, while the carefully detailed steelwork contributes a striking contemporary layer to the facade.

The result is an impressively rigorous and convincing development which achieves a high standard of aesthetic and practical liveability. It offers a clear model for adaptive reuse and intelligent urban infill development as well as a blueprint for collaborative and affordable social housing in inner urban areas.



Photo: Oliver Berlin



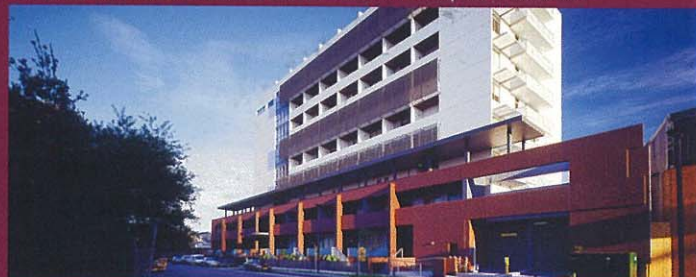
Newtown Silos Apartment Building  
Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Arch Pty Ltd



Spectrum Apartments  
Stanisic Associates Architects



M Central  
Dale Jones-Evans Pty Ltd Architecture & Marchese Partners Pty Ltd in association



Zone Apartments  
Stanisic Associates Architects

# Award

23–25 Egan Street Mackenzie Pronk Architects, Julie Mackenzie,  
Shack Design & Kieran McInerney – architects in association

The Egan Street adaptive re-use project provides an exemplar for regenerating the utility of existing building fabric in environmentally and socially beneficial ways.

By adapting an industrial facility for energy-efficient and climatically designed apartments and a common work space, the project has increased the diversity of building stock and use in Newtown. It provides a model for high-quality, well-planned living environments that maximise quality of space within a modest footprint.

The interiors are constructed using recycled timber structure, floors and stairs. The project exceeds the BASIX performance target for energy efficiency and passes the thermal comfort test, despite having been designed and constructed prior to BASIX becoming mandatory for multiple housing.

The environmental benefits of re-using buildings rather than building new ones are well documented. The low cost of this project relative to the amenity and environmental benefits it creates indicates the potential for positive social impact.

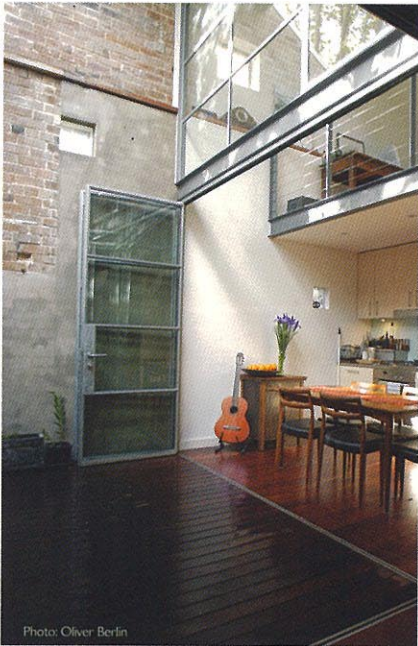


Photo: Oliver Berlin



Photo: Oliver Berlin



Kangaroo Valley House  
Utz-Sanby Architects



Woolworths Support Office, Norwest  
Woodhead International (NSW)

entries

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SCALE  
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