

# Masterpieces in the making

More than 170 projects vied for recognition at the 2012 NSW Architecture Awards in Sydney this week. TRISHA CROAKER looks at four that captured the judges' imaginations.

## COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

**Sir Arthur G. Stephenson Award for commercial architecture and Milo Dunphy Award for sustainable architecture**

**1 Bligh Street** by Architectus + Ingenhoven Architects  
Few architecture enthusiasts would be surprised by this year's commercial and sustainable architecture awards winner - Sydney's most talked-about building in recent years, 1 Bligh Street.

"As a 21st-century commercial office building, there is currently no peer in Australia," the commercial architecture jury chair, Andrew Cortese, says.

The architectural achievement of 1 Bligh Street is exceptional, representing "the intelligence of a well-conceived and thoughtful architecture", he says. "It describes

the promise of what a tall commercial building in Sydney can be, and its influence to development in the city of Sydney is potentially profound. Not only is it a benchmark for the investment value of its six-star environmental performance and workplace amenity, but for the evolution of the city's urban planning framework."

The chair of the sustainable architecture jury, Sandra Kajji-O'Grady, says: "There is a growing sense of corporate responsibility towards the environment, helped by recognition of how a green building might be good for business."

"Already there are high-rise towers proposed, or under construction, that are aiming to better it. We liked that the sustainability features at Bligh Street were so well integrated into the larger design concept and sort of invisible to most people."

## INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

**John Verge Award for interior architecture**

**John Kaldor Family Gallery, Art Gallery of NSW, PTW Architects**  
Nineteen projects competed for the John Verge Award, with the John Kaldor Family Gallery by PTW Architects the clear winner, the jury chair, Andrew Cortese, says.

"The bequest of the John Kaldor Family Collection to the Art Gallery of NSW was not only one of the single largest donations of art, but also consolidated the gallery as holding Australia's most comprehensive representation of contemporary and modern art. It required a substantial addition to the galleries exhibition space, and great consideration as to the manner in which that space would be appended to the existing facility."



and subtle, he says. "The gallery, in consultation with the original architect of the 1970 and 1988 extensions, sought to consolidate the contemporary art program within the existing facility. Rather than extending the building with a new and distinctive form, the conversion of the generous on-site basement storage facilities was sought. This was constructed with the same dimension and exposed structural system as the gallery spaces above, due to the foresight at the time for the gallery's possible expansion."

## RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE - HOUSES

**Wilkinson Award for residential architecture - houses**  
**Cliff Face House** by Fergus Scott Architects with Peter Stutchbury Architecture  
Facing west to views across Pittwater, this home by Fergus Scott and Peter

Stutchbury displays "excellence in conception and execution", the jury chair, Camilla Block, says.  
With a site bounded by six-metre sandstone cliffs and a road to the east, and running steeply downhill to the Pittwater shoreline on the west, Scott and Stutchbury have employed the rock face as wall in several rooms, with the building forming a "veiled scaffold" to it.  
Counterpointing this is a frostily



Show-stoppers ... award winners (clockwise from main) 1 Bligh Street; John Kaldor Family Gallery; Cliff Face House; the Bell Romero Houses. Photos: HG Esch, Brian Steele, Michael Nicholson, John Gollings

transparent "lantern of polycarbonate" over the upper level. "The quality of the house is affirmed in the detailing," Block says. "The Cliff Face House impressed all members of the jury with its range and control. The lantern, shaded by a fly-roof, presents a luminous spectacle at night. The copper screens create a dynamic yet pragmatic facade, and the irregular internal rock face encouraged moments of architectural improvisation in a house whose overall order reveals a deep well of experience."

## RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE - MULTIPLE HOUSING

**Aaron Bolot Award for residential architecture - multiple housing**  
**Bell Romero Houses** by Chenchow Little Architects  
Two contemporary mirror-image houses in a heritage area in Mosman were awarded this year's top multiple



housing award, with multiple-apartment complexes in Jacksons Landing, Abbotsford Bay and Alexandria also receiving Architecture Awards.  
The jury chair, Ian Moore, says Chenchow Little's Bell Romero Houses was the smallest of the projects in the category but displayed the largest architectural ambition.  
"The project's spatial qualities and, in particular, the introduction of natural light and ventilation through internal courtyards and skylights is masterful," he says. "Built in a heritage conservation area, it played by the council rules requiring pitched roof forms and dark recessive colours but subverted them to offer a compelling argument for the successful integration of contemporary architecture."

# Popular choice

For the first time the vote for the Premier's Award was in the hands of the public via an online poll, writes KILMENY ADIE.

The state government's most senior architect says letting the public choose the Premier's Award has proven a success and that he'd welcome a repeat of the system next year.

NSW government architect Peter Poulet had to narrow down 74 candidates for the coveted design award to the three finalists from which the public would choose.

This was the first year the public was able to vote, via an online poll, for their favourite architect-designed building, which turned out to be the Gildany Miirlarl Education Space,

an outdoor education and performance area at Mutton Bird Island, Coffs Harbour, designed by Fisher Design + Architecture and Mackenzie Pronk Architects.

Poulet says he consulted his heart as well as his head and looked beyond pure aesthetics when choosing the final three for the Premier's Award category in the Australian Institute of Architects' 2012 NSW Architecture Awards.

"Good design is not just about how things look, it's how they work and contribute to people's wellbeing. It can facilitate community interaction, wellbeing and health, resulting in

more resilient, sustainable and liveable places," Poulet says.

"[The finalists] were chosen easily because they displayed a broad understanding of the contribution that design and innovative thinking makes to our social cohesion and our physical environment."

Poulet's other two shortlisted projects were Ropes Crossing Community Centre, in western Sydney, and Common Ground, a 104-unit permanent housing residence targeted at reducing homelessness at Camperdown.  
"All three entrants exhibited



Popular choice ... Gildany Miirlarl Education Space, Coffs Harbour. Photo: Tom Woods

exceptional design thinking and I was thrilled that a project that celebrates Aboriginal culture and history in a regional setting was awarded," Poulet says. "It's pleasing to see young emerging architects producing thoughtful and creative work. "The public liked that the project

brought together Aboriginal and European histories and stories in a spirit of reconciliation." Poulet says opening up the award to the public vote was "an opportunity for architects to engage with the general public in an immediate and direct way".

# Green design goes high-rise

Large companies are now driving energy efficiency, writes KILMENY ADIE.

Office blocks have become greener and homes have become smarter in 2012, according to one of the state's leading architects.

The president of the NSW Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, Matthew Pullinger, says building design is becoming even more energy efficient, driven by large corporations spruiking their environmental credentials.

His comments come as some of the best-designed buildings of 2012 have been recognised at the annual Australian Institute of Architects' 2012 NSW Architecture Awards.

"Banks, or financial institutions, know sustainability is an important element of their operations and what better emblem of that than their head office," he says.  
Pullinger cites Sydney's 1 Bligh

Street, designed by Australian firm Architectus, together with German company Ingenhoven Architects, as an example of this phenomenon, as the only Sydney skyscraper with a six-star green star rating.  
"For major commercial developers to deliver a building like that is a really healthy sign ... tenants want it and they're prepared to pay for it ... developers do it because they can ask for a premium," Pullinger says.

He says large corporations are also increasingly building their flagship offices with employees in mind. "There is a trend, a blurring, between where you live and where you work. So you see office fitouts that look a little - and I don't want to be flippant - like the Qantas lounge.

"And there's the idea you're mobile at your place of work, and not necessarily fixed to one desk."

When it comes to home design, there has been a trend towards bringing the outdoors in, pushing the open-plan living concept further and with indoor-outdoor kitchens in vogue, Pullinger says.  
"You'll see a rash of houses this year that are a little ambiguous about where the house ends and the outside space begins. Homes might have big, folding glazed areas that are rooms at one time and indistinguishable from the courtyard at another time," he says.

"It's evident more and more people are concerned about their impact on the environment and the sustainability dimension is critical. "In NSW we must have water tanks and there are significant incentives for solar and on-site energy generation, and these will continue to emerge as trends."

## And the winners are ...

- PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE**  
Sulman Medal Ravenswood School for Girls - BVN Architecture  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ Stanmore Public School - Neeson Murcutt Architects  
■ Sydney Grammar School assembly hall - PTW Architects  
■ The Concourse, Chatswood - Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp (fjmt)  
■ Dapto Anglican Church auditorium - Silvester Fuller  
**Commendation**  
■ All Saints Greek Orthodox Grammar School gymnasium - Candalepas Associates
- URBAN DESIGN**  
Lloyd Rees Award Taronga Zoo upper entry precinct - BVN Architecture  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ 1 Bligh Street Sydney - Architectus + Ingenhoven Architects  
■ Harry's Park - Harry Seidler & Associates
- COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE**  
Sir Arthur G. Stephenson Award 1 Bligh Street Sydney - Architectus + Ingenhoven Architects  
**Commendations**  
■ Enterprise 1 Innovation Campus, University of Wollongong - Bates Smart  
■ 9 Castlereagh Street lobby and forecourt Sydney - Harry Seidler & Associates
- INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE**  
John Verge Award The John Kaldor Family Gallery, Art Gallery of NSW - PTW Architects  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ Tusculum Street Residence - Smart Design Studio  
■ Reuben Hills - Herbert & Mason  
**Commendation**  
■ AECOM Sydney workplace - BVN Architecture
- RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE - HOUSES**  
Wilkinson Award Cliff Face House - Fergus Scott Architects with Peter Stutchbury Architecture  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ Inner House - Bates Smart  
■ Kellie Residence - David Boyle Architect  
■ Marrickville House 2 - David Boyle Architect  
■ Smea Schoff House - Sam Crawford Architects  
**Commendations**  
■ Seacliff House - Chris Elliott Architects  
■ Tusculum Street Residence - Smart Design Studio  
■ Skirt + Rock House - MCK Architects
- RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE - MULTIPLE HOUSING**  
Aaron Bolot Award Bell Romero Houses - Chenchow Little Architects  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ Stonecutters and Knox on Bowman,
- Jacksons Landing - Tzannes Associates  
■ Marina Apartments - SJB Architects  
■ SOHO Apartments, Alexandria - SJB Architects
- SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE**  
Milo Dunphy Award 1 Bligh Street Sydney - Architectus + Ingenhoven Architects  
**Commendation**  
■ Ausgrid Learning Centre - DEM
- SMALL PROJECT ARCHITECTURE**  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ House Kalafatas Challita - Tribe Studio  
■ Red Lantern - Lacoste + Stevenson Architects with Frost\*  
■ Little Napier House - Bureau SRH Architecture
- HERITAGE**  
Greenway Award Exeter Farm - Design 5 - Architects  
**Architecture Awards**  
■ Central Railway Station - OCP Architects  
■ Restoration of Swifts, Darling Point - Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners  
■ Metcalfe Bond by Smart Design Studio in association with Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority - Smart Design Studio  
**Commendation**  
■ Newcastle Regional Museum - Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp (fjmt)
- AWARD FOR ENDURING ARCHITECTURE**  
■ Australia Square - Harry Seidler & Associates
- COLORBOND® AWARD FOR STEEL ARCHITECTURE**  
■ Milson Island Indoor Sports Stadium - Allen Jack+Cottier Architects
- BLACKET PRIZE**  
■ Dapto Anglican Church Auditorium - Silvester Fuller
- PREMIER'S AWARD**  
■ Gildany Miirlarl Education Space - Fisher Design and Architecture in association with Mackenzie Pronk Architects
- PRESIDENT'S PRIZE**  
■ Professor James Weirick - MLA Harvard, University of NSW
- MARION MAHONY GRIFFIN PRIZE**  
■ Julie Cracknell - Cracknell & Lonergan Architects
- EMERGING ARCHITECT PRIZE**  
■ Penny Fuller, Silvester Fuller
- ADRIAN ASHTON PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURAL JOURNALISM**  
■ David Neustein - Architectural Review Asia Pacific
- NSW 2012 GEBERIT PRIZE**  
■ Avoca Beach House - Architecture Saville Isaacs