

Urban Design Awards 2023: Citations

Best heritage extensions, additions and alterations

Winner: 74 Charles Street, Kew - Robson Rak Architecture & Interior Designers



This development represents an outstanding model in judicious site planning and heritage dwelling improvement in a way that complements the urban and natural landscape. The imaginative renewal of this Victorian-era home, once occupied by Sir Robert Menzies, and its notable grounds is executed through a carefully sited single-storey contemporary wing that retains its street profile and canopy silhouette while adding an expansive new indoor-outdoor living area. The low, horizontal profile of the largely glazed addition, with careful attention to view lines, spatial separation, and experience of passage from old to new ensures a celebration of the host form and its intact canopy context of the grand palm, liquidambar, and golden elm. This project is a worthy award recipient in this category for its intelligent, understated approach and delightful execution.

Special Commendation: 35 Elgin St, Hawthorn - Rosstang Architects



At this home, the demands of a growing family and contemporary work from home obligations give rise to a distinctive extension in the form of a freestanding studio outbuilding positioned in the rear yard of the parcel accessible off the rear lane.

This modest elevated studio, positioned above a rear garage, is a delightful insertion in the 'backyardscape' of Hawthorn, gently nestled around a thriving canopy of an established (and treasured) fig tree. The careful use of vertical timber cladding with floor-to-ceiling glazing (overlooking the private garden and pool) and generous internal qualities makes this an inviting addition that deserves a special commendation in this category.

Commendation: 20 Studley Ave, Kew - Robson Rak Architecture & Interior Designers



The judging panel was impressed by the careful and minimal expansion of the footprint of this imposing family home through the clever re-levelling of the rear garden area and reimagining of interior areas and their connections to integrate the gardens and outbuildings with the family home. This has seen their successful integration and the minimal need for building footprint expansion. Discrete basement garaging and small internal and external changes have made minimal visual changes and, in conjunction with investment in quality landscapes, have successfully integrated the home and street in a manner the judging panel found highly commendable.

Commendation: 9 Randolph St, Hawthorn - Riofrio Carroll Architects



The need to see high-quality and low-cost solutions for upgrading heritage dwellings remains in need of good exemplars.

The judging panel was impressed by the strategies and value applied to every square metre of this thoughtful refurbishment and extension. The honest restoration of the historic cottage front rooms is complimented by a beautifully crafted extension that delivers both comfort and utility in a small footprint and with well-conceived integration with the external courtyard and side setback zones.

Best small-scale residential development

Winner: 46A Kinkora Rd, Hawthorn - Clinton Murray Architects



The judges were impressed by the way the sculptural expression of the home successfully negotiated its heritage streetscape context and unique parkland interface.

Innovative roof expressions and green roof carport treatments share and interconnect views and landscapes with the street and setting, while the restrained and beautifully composed suite of materials and textures sensitively respond compellingly to the valued public and street spaces. The transparency of the form and its generous articulation complement these narratives in a design solution that delivers a beautiful home and corner expression on this compact triangular site.

Commendation: 56 Park Cres, Kew - Kathie Mathes and Andrew Simpson Architects



The 'Ants Nest' is a rare architectural exploration befitting its steeply sloping site and its particular users' needs.

Replacing an old weatherboard cottage, this inventive double A-frame composition is carefully sited to step downslope to the ephemeral creek line around a gigantic remnant oak tree. The resulting dwelling has split-level arrangements with towering internal volumes that are light-filled and enable views' through' the landscape from the street frontage. The landscape threshold around the building aids its integration into the slope and frames views to the broad glazed street presentation. The form is an unforgettable insertion into a mixed streetscape, demonstrating how intelligent, site-specific bespoke design of buildings and landscapes are integral to successful urban design. The project is worthy of a commendation in its category.

Commendation: 17 Manningtree Rd and 2A Thomas St, Hawthorn - Ascui & Co Architects



The renewal of a single-storey Victorian-era heritage dwelling on a corner allotment adjoining an activity spine represents an unusual set of circumstances that invites an inventive design response. This development, comprising the subdivision of a traditional parcel via the addition of a new rear dwelling above parking, represents an innovative model that could well be replicable across the municipality.

The success of this project is in its judicious massing and materiality, with a ground plane of semitransparent black mesh and batten framing (containing 2nd dwelling entry and garages) and upper levels in bespoke light-toned brickwork that accords well with the robust tones of the heritage host position to the corner. The project offers a viable address to the side street (Thomas Street) with random hit-and-miss brickwork through which organic landscape (from the dwelling's terrace) poked through. This creative approach is acknowledged with a commendation in its category.

Best medium-scale, multi-dwelling residential development

Winner: 15-19 Fenwick Street, Kew - ANGLE and Edition Office



The campus of 3 pavilions that collectively form the residential campus at this address has delivered a remarkable place and residential experience that shares its views not only with fellow residents but also with the neighbourhood.

The conceptual urban response has blurred the boundaries between buildings and landscapes creating a synergy between built form and landscape, doing justice to its setting. Elements such as the off-form concrete and external staircases that, in the wrong hands, might have been at odds with the context, in this case, have been managed to anchor a compelling place experience and residential setting.

Commendation: 177 Auburn Rd, Hawthorn - WAF Constructions and Splinter Society Architecture



Corner buildings on Boroondara's main thoroughfares play an important role in aiding the legibility and reading of our townscape. The junction of Auburn Road and Auburn Grove at the cusp of the Auburn Activity Precinct represents one such opportunity.

The 'Auburn Apartments' represent a model of contemporary corner infill that speaks to its diverse context. The project offers an elegant, respectful composition of layered architectural parts underpinned by an intelligent use of tactile finishes rhythmically framed to each of its public street interfaces and supported by a lush native landscape. The project exhibits generosity in its arrangement of internal communal spaces and front and side setbacks, with high-quality articulation using copper, bronze, and recycled ironbark. It is an artful creation deserving of a commendation in its category.

Best non-residential development

Winner: 254-262 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn - Idle Architecture Studio



This development exemplifies new design and development language along the evolving Burwood Road commercial spine, with a particularly enticing ground level and plane and a rhythmic façade that wraps the building's three public sides.

The Xero HQ is a five-storey commercial (retail and office) development on the south side of Burwood Road, encompassing a full urban block between Elizabeth and Guest Streets. It employs a generous rebated ground place with a welcoming commercial and retail address (with north aspect) and a dynamic operable faceted glazed street wall that engages beautifully with the streets. Upper levels behind the parapet are elegantly simplified, well set back and recessive with generous communal outdoor spaces that support a successful working environment. The project represents an excellent commercial infill form that is deserving of the award in the non-residential category.

Commendation: Balwyn High School - B&C Wings, 40 Buchanan Avenue, Balwyn North - Balwyn High School and Brand Architects



The new school-funded project successfully integrates a series of key elements of student life, notably the resources hub, year 12 centre and campus administration, via a new building program that replaces ten end-of-life classrooms with 24 new learning environments. The judging panel was similarly impressed by innovations in construction, notably the prefabrication of the development to overcome difficult construction access constraints and the incorporation of a large capacity solar array delivering more than 90% of the school's power needs and a consequent enduring reduced operational cost benefit.

The role of the project in successfully integrating old and new with the rest of the campus has created a strong place experience for students to support their well-being, individual and collective places to both socialise and learn in a vibrant and shared learning experience.

Commendation: Carey Grammar School - Centre for Creativity and Collaboration, 349 Barkers Road, Kew - Carey Grammar School and Architects



The new middle school of Carey Grammar arks the southwest corner of the campus, with a new campus wrapping the retained hall and performing arts space. The building adopts a dynamic sculptural expression to each of the frontages, with the wave façade form to the northern campus walk interface, particularly successful.

Internally, the muted external material language is enriched with a street network of double-height street forms linking key nodes and housing neighbourhoods together with specialist nodes for science and technology. The creation of the winter garden courtyard delivers a further hub and gathering place for students whilst the learning spaces are arranged to support a culture of learning with the expansive external windows showcasing some of these activities that brings welcome life to the street.

Best apartment or mixed-use development

Winner: 14 Elizabeth St, Glen Iris - BASScare and Smith + Tracey Architects



Retirement living accommodation and support for our ageing community is a critical public concern in Boroondara as our population profile changes. The conceptual framing, design, and delivery of housing for later in life must be of a high standard.

The Morgan Glen Iris retirement village in Elizabeth Street, Glen Iris overlooking the Back Creek Reserve, is one such model that demonstrates how we can design a fit-for-purpose facility in a place-specific manner. The project is a carefully layered three-storey complex across an unusual triangular site with a gentle curvilinear profile supporting 62 dwellings addressing either the public streetscape or the lush landscape of the creek corridor. Accommodation and vast communal spaces enjoy aspect to nature and an architectural form that addresses each of its multiple sides. A strong horizontal language, generous private and communal spaces, wide landscape setbacks, and a warm 'homely' tone and character are convincing in awarding this project the highest honour in its category.

Commendation: 469-471 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East - Pitch Architecture & Design



The judging panel was impressed by the clarity and appropriateness of the response to this site with two interfaces to laneways and a primary frontage to a main street interface in the Camberwell Junction.

The proposal creates, in the brick podium, a well-resolved expression in the round and in the inclusion of a ground-level health club facility, an alternative land use to the ubiquitous fully glazed shopfront retail so often applied. The positioning of the above podium form and its expression is both simple and typically generous, delivering a clear demarcation of podium to upper form and an elegant composition and façade treatments that celebrate the different ties of the form and gives both expression and amenity to the residents and a generosity between form to the internal laneway network.

Best sustainable development

**Winner: 2 Amy Street, Camberwell - Homeowners Maria and Carl,
Neil Architecture and Phillip Johnson Landscapes**



Sustainable practice in domestic design and development is a necessary step in the evolution of our neighbourhoods. This is commonly realised through conspicuous additions and technologies which erroneously affect neighbourhood character. But 2 Amy Street, Camberwell is a project that seamlessly incorporates passive and active sustainability measures that fit within its urban context. The judges were impressed with the many sustainable attributes of this dwelling, well-configured and seamlessly arranged on the site in tandem with the stunning external works, including front and side native gardens and chemical-free, natural lap pool. Together with judiciously located solar panels, water storage, fluid internal-external spaces and site-responsive glazed walls and roof form (enabling cross ventilation and abundant light without impeding on neighbours) the house competently serves as an active environmental, energy device and a warm and welcoming abode for its family. It is a site design and approach that deserves the highest award in its category.

Commendation: 13 Sunbury Crescent, Surrey Hills - Parallel Group and Zen Architects



Sometimes the hidden secrets within a home are what sets a project apart. While awards often celebrate public profiles, this home in Surrey Hills has an abundance of internal delights that showcase subtle sustainability. It represents a conventional dwelling conversion and rear extension but does so in an innovative manner – comprising an integrated home business foyer and a generous, light-filled living quarter benefiting from broad soaring north-facing timber framed window and a unique upward peeling roofline.

The sustainability features of this home are genuine but understated, as it befits a standard suburban allotment of this kind with a foundation of good northern orientation and sloping northern aspect. As a modest extension footprint, it demonstrates a careful use of recycled (exposed) masonry, raw timber window frames, natural wood panel flooring with expansive (north-facing) operable fenestration resulting in a particularly high amenity environment. Passive features are supported by integrated renewable energy (photovoltaic panels) and rainwater harvesting, resulting in a subtle but meaningful demonstration of sustainable practice.