

There's a house in that old substation

By MARK SKELSEY

FOR 80 years, it was an anonymous brick electricity substation — situated in the back streets of Paddington.

Now, following a \$500,000 residential conversion, this humble substation is the toast of the Sydney architectural community.

The conversion was one of 19 developments or landscape features which received NSW 2003 Architectural Awards at a gala Saturday night function.

When Mosman-based architect Emili Fox went to the substation, its interior had been stripped, exposing a series of trenches where electrical cables once ran.

She designed a new three-bedroom, three-bathroom home, which, if needed, can be converted into an art gallery and commercial office space.

The substation's facade was retained and a three-storey building constructed behind it on the small 114sq m block.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW president Caroline Pidcock said Ms Fox was one of the increasing number of highly talented women who were coming into architecture.

The substation house was not the biggest winner in the housing category — that went to a sprawling house near Yamba, on the North Coast, in an extremely exposed location.

The Toumbaal Plains house, designed by Fergus Scott, is a coastal house with an outside fireplace for a kitchen oven and eaves wide enough for emus and kangaroos to rest under.

It was a joint winner of the Wilkinson Award, given to the pre-eminent example of residential housing design.

In his jury report, jury chairman Professor Tom Heneghan said he was particularly impressed with the standard of new apartment buildings submitted as award entries.

"The multiple housing that has been accomplished in Australia during recent years has set a new standard of excellence, unmatched, I believe, anywhere in the world," he said.



Caroline Pidcock outside the substation which was turned into a house (below left). Picture: MATTHEW VASILESCU



Top award to North Coast cottage

PUBLIC BUILDINGS — Sulman

Award: UTS, Building 10 by Bligh Voller Nield and Woods Bagot

Architecture Awards:

- Birabahn (Indigenous Centre) Richard Le Plastrier, Peter Stutchbury and Sue Harper
- Andrew Boy Charlton pool, Lippmann Associates
- Eastern Avenue, MGT Sydney

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS —

Architecture Award:

□ Headquarters Training Command, Victoria Barracks, Bates Smart Pty Ltd

SINGLE HOUSING RESIDENTIAL

— **Wilkinson Award** (Joint Winner):

Toumbaal Plains house, Fergus Scott

Architecture Awards:

- Bay House by Stutchbury and Pape
- Casey House, Killcare, Jorge Hrdina

- Substation house, Emili Fox Architect

MULTIPLE HOUSING — Wilkinson

Award (joint winner): Mondrian Apartments, Stanisc Associates

Architecture Awards:

- 80 Renwick St, Redfern, Johannsen and Associates
- 138 Barcom Ave, Engelen Moore

LLOYD REES AWARD (Civic

Design): Victoria Park, Zetland by office of the Government Architect in association with Hassell and Turpin and Crawford Studio

GREENWAY AWARD: Chowder Bay Submarine Mining Depot, Allen Jack and Cottier

NSW 25-YEAR AWARD: Opera House by Jorn Utzon