

NIDA extension wins design award

Robert Harley

The extension to the National Institute of Dramatic Arts in Sydney – a project by Hassell in association with Peter Armstrong Architects – has won this year's Sulman Award for Public Buildings from the NSW Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

In a unanimous decision, the jury called the NIDA extension "a project of intelligent resolve ... of memorable discovery and clearly defined priorities ... illustrating that a building of significant accomplishment need not be overdramatised."

The jury members, headed by Peter Stutchbury, were prepared to take some tough decisions.

They were willing to withhold the highest award for residential architecture; prepared to comment critically on the Sulman runner up – the Sydney Conservatorium of Music; and confident enough to criticise the increasing conservatism of local government.

Speaking at the announcement of the awards last night, Mr Stutchbury said fear of potential litigation was limiting the willingness of councils to be pioneers of urban initiatives.

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THE BEST OF NSW ARCHITECTURE...

**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS,
NSW ARCHITECTURE AWARDS**

- **Sulman Award for Public Buildings**
National Institute of Dramatic Art extension by Hassell in association with Peter Armstrong Architecture (1)
- **Greenway Award for Conservation**
Craiglee Lee at Palm Beach by Dawson Brown Architecture (2)
- **Architecture Award for Housing**
House for Art Collectors by Marsh Cashman Architects (3)

OTHER AWARDS

- **Architecture Award for Public Buildings**
Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Conservatorium High School Daryl Jackson/Robyn Dytke Pty Ltd and the NSW Government Architect with Tanner Associates as Heritage Architect
- **Architecture Award for Conservation**
Redleaf (Woolahara Council Chambers) Allen Jack & Cottier Architects
- **Conservation Architecture Award**
Woodford Academy by Design 5 Architects

visited had been determined by councils' personal safety nets," he said.

"Slowly the art of architecture is being whittled toward a more predictable and forecast outcome."

One of the jury's more controversial decisions was its award to the Conservatorium of Music – designed by Daryl Jackson/ Robin

Dyke Pty Ltd and the NSW Government Architect and short-listed for the World Architecture Awards.

The jury acknowledged that the architects faced a "Herculean, architecturally almost impossible" task in accepting the political decision to remain on the controversial, and in many cases rundown, site. Having inherited



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In particular, the jury praised the building's entry room as "one of Sydney's finest".

The jury did give a rare Greenway Award for Conservation to Craiglee Lee – the reworking of a 1916 timber bungalow by Dawson Brown Architecture.

Commendations for housing went to Dale Jones-Evans Architects, Nicholas Murcutt Architect, Clinton Murray Architects and Allen Jack & Cottier Architects.

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The jury presented a special jury award to Tom Uren for his "consistent efforts toward the welfare of our collective built and natural environment."

RAIA NSW president Caroline Pidcock made two awards: one to Che Wall from Advanced Environment Concepts for work in sustainable architecture, and the other to the institute's national public relations manager, Stella de Vulder, for her work in the promotion of architects and architecture.

this location, the architects had to grapple with how to put a very large building – equivalent to a mid-sized city office building – on the site, but the solution was described by the jury as "a curate's egg containing both wonderful spaces along with the planning difficulties associated with multiple functional small rooms".