

Expertise and vision transforms architect's own house

EMMA DANGERFIELD

Last updated 09:39, December 4 2017



SUPPLIED

Architect Jason Higham won Residential Alterations and Additions Architectural Design Award and Commended in the Residential Interiors Architectural Design category.

The three Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle, were among the design brief elements for architect Jason Higham when he set about renovating his own house on West Belt, Rangiora.

The catalyst to upgrade the family's 1950s weatherboard house was the imminent arrival of Jason and partner Natalie's daughter, now 3.

The couple needed to think about insulating the house and adding double-glazing, and while the original doors and most of the windows were kept, they have been given a modern new look.



But inside the house is where the magic really took place. Gone are the small, separate rooms, replaced by a huge open-plan living and kitchen area, complete with beech flooring, wooden cladding made from rimu recycled from the house, and stunning white-washed ply cabinetry.

READ MORE:

[* ADNZ Supreme Award 2017 goes to two 74sqm houses in Christchurch](#)

Even the splash-back is made from recycled galvanised steel — it used to be the roof of the back porch.

The family was out of the house for four months while the work was carried out and while it was a draining period, it had definitely been worth it, Jason said.

Initially the project got off the ground with all the bits and pieces which could be done without a consent, like the doors and windows. Then came the roof, the concrete tiles replaced by a lighter and more modern looking corrugated steel.

Because Natalie, a natural health professional, was keen to see natural materials used throughout, MDF was off the list, replaced by natural wood; toxic paint replaced by a natural alternative.

Even the typical rubber underlay was substituted by recycled wool.

The spectacular renovation project earned his business, Higham Architecture, a major prize at the ADNZ | Resene Architectural Design Awards - held at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, taking out the Residential Alterations and Additions Architectural Design Award last month.

The judges applauded the evolution of the home, which embraces the principles of 'reduce, reuse, recycle and upcycle', to meet the needs of a contemporary family.

"This understated house packs an outsized design punch via careful layout and high-quality detailing. Materiality is considered and authentic, with many materials having been successfully retained and/or upcycled from the original dwelling," they said.

- Stuff