



Unique property calls for unique design



Rose and John Duncan had a large plot of rural land featuring little more than a striking mountainous outlook. But that was all the design inspiration the couple required. They knew what they wanted and it was Jason Higham of Higham Architecture who was tasked with turning that into a tangible design for the section.

“The beauty of the property was that we didn't have the planning restrictions of a traditional urban section,” Jason explains.

“The positioning of the house could be anywhere, which enabled us to focus solely on what worked for the client brief, with sheltered outdoor living areas and capturing the sun and views becoming the key design aspects.”

The resulting design is low-lying to capture the surrounding views, with an abundance of glass to let in the natural sunlight and strong indoor/outdoor flow to make the most of the unique property.

The striking design – which recently took out the Highly Commended Award in the Residential New Home over

300sqm category of the 2015 ADNZ | Resene Architectural Design Awards for the Canterbury/Westland region – is essentially made up of three interlinked blocks, loosely forming the shape of a W in plan.

The home's public and private spaces are quite separate, with four bedrooms to

the left and the two living areas, kitchen, dining and study set to the right side of the house.

The design, which also went on to be

joint winner of the People's Choice Award, was described by judges as resulting in “a well-balanced large house, with a restrained use of traditional materials. The stone is nicely detailed to facilitate great depth to the reveals and facades”.

Jason was recommended to John and Rose by someone they knew, and he met with the couple at their existing home – a key part of the design process, Jason explains.

“As an architectural designer, it's

integral to get a feel for how people choose to live in their current situation. John and Rose had built a number of houses in the past, so had strong ideas for what they wanted, but were also keen for some fresh new ideas for what would probably be their last house.”

Higham Architecture has been operating since 1999 – a little over 16



years – and, Jason laughs, the company is (quite deliberately) still just him. “I really like the one-on-one contact with clients from start to finish,” he says.

“Developing that personal relationship delivers great outcomes. I can get a good feel for how people live and exactly what they’re after.”

Clearly, it’s a winning formula, with the company picking up in excess of 20 design awards over the years, starting with his second ever project in 1999 – a bathroom renovation.

While welcoming a baby to the family last year has changed life at home, it hasn’t dimmed Jason’s passion for the industry nor the quality he’s consistently achieving. “At the end of the day, I’m designing for my clients. Happy clients are the most important thing and any award is just a bonus,” he says.

“Architecture is an amazing opportunity to be creative – to utilise that ability to shape how people live and open up their ideas to different ways of achieving a building they hadn’t thought of.”

For more information on Higham Architecture find them on Facebook or visit www.highamarchitecture.co.nz.

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