

Best house is an apartment block

Sandra Killen

A BLOCK of 34 apartments designed as an "accommodation destination for the young, independent population of Fortitude Valley" has won a major architectural award.

The Queensland chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects last night named Brisbane's House of the Year as Abitare Apartments in Robertson St, by architects Fairweather Proberts.

RAIA awards director Jennifer Taylor said the quality of the project was well above usual schemes of similar density due to its planning, restrained use of different materials and colour, and innovation on a modest budget.

She said it provided a positive prototype for the rapidly expanding market in medium-density housing in the city.

Project architect Liam Proberts said Abitare, surrounded by former industrial buildings, was designed to be part of the unique urban fabric of inner Brisbane.

"The internal spaces are focused around a living area that includes the balcony as part of this space and encourages an informal use," Proberts said.

Flexible living spaces are achieved with sliding walls and fully retractable glass doors.

The Building of the Year was awarded to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Central Building and Energy Unit by architects Cox MSJ.

Other awards were:

Commended houses:

Fairweather Proberts for

Arbitare Apartments; Fairweather Proberts for Catalina (lots 15-18) houses and apartments at Teneriffe; Geoffrey Pie for a house at Ascot; Bud Brannigan at New Farm; Paul Uhlmann at Brookfield; Richard Kirk at Highgate Hill.

Commended commercial buildings:

James Street Market in Fortitude Valley (Cox Rayner); Kooroomba Cellar Door at Boonah (Blair Wilson & Associates); Breakfast Creek Hotel, Albion (KP Architects); Fujitsu Building, Newstead (Cox Rayner); Building at 417 Logan Rd, Stones Corner (Russell Hall)

Commended interiors:

Conrod fitout, Herston (Phillips Smith Conwell Architects)

Gadens Lawyers office fitout, City (Hassell)

Commended public buildings:

Princess Alexandra Hospital Central Building and Energy Unit (Cox MSJ)

Logan Entertainment Centre, Logan Central (Cox Rayner)

Brisbane Powerhouse, New Farm (Brisbane City Council with Cox Rayner and Allom Lovell)

Fern House, Mt Coot-tha (City Design-City Business-Brisbane City Council)

Subtropical design:

James St Market, Fortitude Valley (Cox Rayner)