

Design of the times

Amanda Davey

A SECLUDED and unpretentious weatherboard home at Careel Bay scooped the pools at the Building Designers Association of NSW Annual Design Awards earlier this month.

Winning Best New Dwelling, Best Use of Timber and Premier Award for Design Excellence, the house, owned by Peter and Maya Orczykowski, is seen as a prime example of lightweight construction incorporating a flexible floorplan that maximises the site and the water views.

The Orczykowskis only decided at the last minute to build a new home on this Pittwater site rather than renovate when the builders' quotes confirmed that a new build would cost roughly the same as the proposed renovations.

"We spent a lot of time and money getting plans drawn and the DA approved for the renovations but in the end we decided a new house was more practical, and I have to say that a year later, there is nothing I would have done differently because we are enjoying it tremendously," Mr Orczykowski said.

The Orczykowski house at Careel Bay won three prestigious prizes for various aspects of design.



Built with timber and corrugated iron, the house was designed by the peninsula's Peter Downes, who specialises in contemporary homes on difficult coastal sites.

"We initially proceeded down the path of alts and adds to a point where we could get accurate costings," Mr Downes said.

"Eventually, it became obvious that it was likely to be not much more expensive to build a new home.

"The first thing I did was to list the various rooms into five self-contained zones including a general living area, parents' retreat, secondary bedrooms, family room and garage/laundry."

The wide site provided the designer with an opportunity to maximise the view potential from as many rooms as possible.

The north-facing site also offered an excellent opportunity for optimal passive

solar design and the project easily passed the statutory requirements.

"I designed it to suit our climate, our lifestyle and to optimise the views. The lightweight construction minimised potential geotechnical issues and allowed maximum flexibility of design," Mr Downes said.

Importantly, the new house was in the same spot as the old one minimising disruption to the existing landscaping and bushland.