

Lifeguard tower wins architecture award

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A Christchurch architect has won an award for designing a lifeguard tower for a beach he patrolled as a teenager.

Twelve regional projects were recognised at a ceremony last night for the 2011 Canterbury Architecture Awards.

Wilson & Hill Architects were co-winners in the small project category for The Chair, a new lifeguard tower at Woodend Beach.

Dougal Holmes, southern region programmes and services manager with Surf Life Saving New Zealand, said the chair was designed by David Hill, who had patrolled the beach as a surf lifesaver in the 1980s.

The Chair had replaced the "very tragic" lifeguard tower which was more than 30 years old, he said

The Chair, funded by a grant of about \$30,000 from the Waimakariri District Council, was constructed last year.

"It's an amazing piece of architecture," Holmes said. "All the locals I've spoken to think it's great."

Awards jury convener Stephen Crooks said the project was a "simple but brilliant concept, superbly executed".

"You can't help smiling when you see this little building sitting amongst the windswept dunes."

The other small project winner was a study centre at the University of Canterbury's Rochester and Rutherford Hall by Ian Cumberpatch Architects.

Crooks said it had been a challenging year for architects, but the standard of the winning buildings was high.

"Canterbury, and Christchurch in particular, has a strong architectural tradition. We have designed good buildings in the past and we should have confidence that we'll design good buildings in the future."

- The Press