

Q&A: Residential building designer of the year Adam Hobill



Adam Hobill recently won HIA-CSR ACT and Southern NSW residential building designer of the year for the second consecutive time. Photo: Beth Jennings

Adam Hobill attributes his success as a building designer to the collaborative relationships he develops with his clients and builders.

Hobill recently won the HIA-CSR ACT and Southern NSW Housing Awards residential building designer of the year for the second consecutive time. This is the fourth time he has taken out this award.

The Canberra-based designer has been running his own business, Adam Hobill Designs, for almost 20 years.



Adam Hobill Design's O'Connor House won the award for design excellence. Photo: Marina McDonald

Allhomes recently spoke with Hobill about his work and the creative process.

What attracted you to start a career in the design industry?

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Adam Hobill attributes his success to developing strong collaborative relationships with his clients. Photo: Marina McDonald

What attracted you to start a career in the design industry?

I have always been somewhat creative and I've applied that to building design.

I remember as a child sitting on the kerb of the family home just drawing it up. I've been around the building industry for most of my life so I've been exposed to the nitty-gritty of building as well and that's been beneficial.

Do you have a particular design philosophy?

My design philosophy is really about putting the client first and getting a deep understanding of their needs and their brief and delivering a creative solution around that.

One of the things that I pride myself on is my ability to give the client what they want rather than being overbearing in what I think they should have.

When approached by a new client, where do you start?

Lots of questions! The first thing I try to understand is everything that influences the design brief of my client. I've honed my skills in asking the question within the question. The more inside my client's head that I can get as early as possible the more it helps me to understand the real sweet spots of their brief.

Every site is unique so getting an understanding of each particular building site and the personalities of the people behind the design brief is essential.

Do you have a particular design process that you follow?

It seems obvious but I start with a site analysis and understanding the site and its context. This means not just the site itself but what is going on around that site such as buildings, roads, trees, orientation, topography, all of those things and then you just start to work away for a conceptual design process.

It's a big jigsaw puzzle I guess, a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle of getting these big lumps in the right spots on a particular site to suit a particular brief.

What have been some of your best projects over the past two years?

There are lots actually, it's hard to count favourites. There was a great project which we did in O'Connor on Boobiella Street.

I had some clients there with a challenging block with certain things that they wanted to achieve. They were focused on a view, for example, and they were really able to entrust me to come up with a design solution for that. It was a design that we were proud of and really that's the basis of the building designer of the year award which we won.

What do you attribute your award success to?

One of the things that we really pride ourselves on is the service that we offer our clients so I think the relationships we have built with the building industry and builders, in particular, really also help with the result we achieve. We place a high importance on the quality of our documentation and we really value the relationships we establish with builders. The relationship between the client, the builder and the designer is really important in getting those really outstanding results.

I'm president of the ACT chapter of the Building Designers Association so my recognition in winning awards like these as a non-architect designer gives some confidence to others in similar positions to me.