

## RM Hope takes top award

A Canberra building the city's residents are not allowed to wander around in has picked up the top accolade at a property industry awards night.

The RM Hope building at 2 National Circuit was awarded the ACT Property Council of Australia-Rider Levett Bucknall Development of the Year at the council's awards night and gala ball on Friday. The building had already received the best heritage development award at the Property Council of Australia's Innovation and Excellence Awards in May.

Property Council ACT executive director Catherine Carter said the \$37 million heritage-listed development project had been the standout choice for the award. "It's an exceptional building that meets very significant operational and security requirements but also has an incredible history," she said.

The RM Hope building was constructed between 1939 and 1941 to house the Patent Office and was one of the first to be erected in the Parliamentary Triangle.

The office has also been home to the British high commission, the Federal Police and the local branch of what would become ASIO.

Sittings of the ACT Supreme Court were held there until the early '60s and a gated cell for defendants remains in the basement.

Ms Carter said the building presented a

challenging prospect for company ISPT when it began the redevelopment in 2011 due to the operational and security needs of the tenant, the Office of National Assessments, and the Commonwealth heritage listing.

The building was renamed the Robert Marsden Hope Building after the former royal commissioner whose recommendations in the '70s led to ONA's creation. Designers of the refurbishment project, Fender Katsalidis Architects, also picked up major awards at the recent ACT Institute of Architects awards night for their work on the building.

The ACT Property Council event, which was held at the National Convention Centre, also recognised development company GEOCON with the Business of the Year award.

Judges said the company was recognised for its excellence in client service, innovation and commitment to delivering quality and affordability across a range of sectors. Current projects include six residential developments, two commercial projects and four hotels – one an adaptive re-use of Juliana House in Woden.

The ACT Future Leader of the Year Award went to Northrop Consulting Engineers sustainability manager Karen Billington, and Rider Levett Bucknall director Mark Chappe won the Allan Wylucki Property Professional of the Year.

**Meredith Clisby**