

ALLEN JACK + COTTIER - NEWSLETTER #13



Image by AJ+C Graphics

BEYOND THE BOX

Revolutionary design on a budget

The brief from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation was simple: a multi-purpose recreation hall to be used for basketball, netball, badminton, volleyball and general recreation, to be built at Lake Ainsworth, near Lennox Head in Northern New South Wales.

For project leader Michael Heenan and his team, the challenge was to go beyond the traditional 'utilitarian' design of many sporting facilities, to create a building that would simultaneously inspire its users, respect its site, work efficiently in terms of environment and energy conservation, and meet tight budget constraints.

Exhaustive on-site and environmental research, coupled with a lateral approach to use of materials, proved to be the keys to Allen Jack + Cottier's inspired design. Detailed modelling showed that a transparent, insulating UV-resistant and cost-effective material could be used on a steel frame to add lightness and resilience to the structure. The design

result: three boxes where the volume of activity is enclosed in a dramatic luminescent tube-like expanse, which can be closed off at either end and reacts to outside weather conditions through a series of louvres and roof vents. At night, the space can be transformed into a theatre.

"In many ways it is a relatively simple steel frame shed, and that's where we are getting a lot of the construction economies", says Michael Heenan. "By using steel and cladding as a starting point, we have been able to move away from the traditional 'brick and tin box' idea of a sports shed, creating a lighter, more transparent structure. It's very exciting to have the flexibility to do that, to be able to think completely outside the box. It's what we try to do on all our projects."

Project Leader: Michael Heenan. Project Team: Anthony Kelly, Jane Stevenson, Mark Corbet, Paul Owen.

AJ+C APPOINTS NEW MD

AJ+C Director Glynn Evans recently took over the reigns as AJ+C's Managing Director from Peter Stronach, in line with our policy of rotating this role among key directors. During Peter's tenure the company has grown from 50 to over 100 staff and has expanded its operations into Brisbane, Malaysia, China and Antarctica. Glynn's appointment as Managing Director heralds a new era for the



Glynn Evans

TEAM SPIRIT

Summer in Sydney means three things: sun, sand and water. Taking advantage of these natural assets, AJ+C staff participated in several charity events during the summer months: one on the beach, and two on the water. AJ+C won third place for building a pagoda temple in a sandcastle building competition held by Cure Cancer Australia, and competed in two sailing events on Sydney Harbour, one to raise funds for Cure Cancer Australia and the other to raise funds for the Property Industry Foundation.



Photo by Ada Marier Photography



Elysia Photo by Chris O'Leary

company, which is always seeking to adapt to change and growth in the marketplace. Both Glynn and Peter continue to lead project teams within the practice, and to be actively involved in designing and building a range of client projects.

ELYSIA

Elysia, the first purpose-built health retreat in Australia, opened its doors to the public for the first time in January. The AJ+C designed project has already achieved success with the public and press, scoring a rating of 17/20 from a SMH travel review. There will be an article detailing the project in a future newsletter.



Ben List

Samantha Taylor

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Industry sponsored student prizes are one way in which architectural bodies seek to foster excellence in this country. Congratulations are extended to two AJ+C graduate architects who were recently awarded prizes on graduation. Graduating from Queensland University of Technology, Samantha Taylor of AJ+C's Brisbane office received the inaugural RAIA/Brisbane Architecturist Graduation Prize in Architecture. Ben List was awarded the 2003 Board of Architects Prize, while completing a Bachelor of Architecture at University of Technology, Sydney.

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 Malaysia t 603 5536 0144 f 603 5631 7276 e ajcdesigngroup@ajcarch.com directors Keith Cottier, Glynn Evans, Michael Heenan, Peter Ireland, Reginald J Smith, Peter Stronach
 associate directors Stephen Black, Colin James, Kathryn Loseby, Andrew Parker, Bernard J Rowe, John Sujrun senior associate Bill Clements, Sean Dean, Mark Louw, Kate
 Mountstephens, Tim Waldock associates Mark Corbet, John Gunnell, Nicola Middleton, Richard Terry, Tony Spragg newsletter design AJ+C Graphics

FRONT COVER Model photograph of AJ+C's Baoshan project, near Shanghai, People's Republic of China.

THE BIG PICTURE

Designing with vision has its own rewards

“The spaces between the buildings can be more important than the buildings.” It’s an intriguing statement from someone who has just been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to architecture, but this is a theme that has been consistently developed by Keith Cottier, a Director of AJ+C since 1965.

Cottier has always been interested in architecture in the context of a much bigger picture, focussing not merely on the single building component, but on the way each building works with its surroundings, and what it does in its social context to enrich people’s lives.

It is an approach that has led him to take a passionate interest in heritage and environmental concerns, as well as urban design and planning. “If you think about the bigger environment, you also head towards more sustainable development: you become more concerned with

wastage, and in the recycling of buildings, for example”, he says.

Over the years this focus has drawn many designers with similar concerns to AJ+C. It has also allowed Cottier to explore architectural boundaries through various related roles, including 10 years on the Board of the Sydney Cove Authority and six years as a Commissioner on the Australian Heritage Commission.

For his most satisfying project, Keith Cottier points to the redevelopment of Penfolds Magill Estate in South Australia, which involved overall site planning and reorganising of landscape, roads and buildings. “You don’t get that

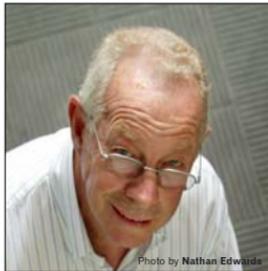


Photo by Nathan Edwards

able to flourish at the same time that I have devoted time to other organisations is a sign of what a good job my fellow directors have done. They all have a share in this AM award”, he says.



Photos by Nic Bailey



NATURAL ADVANTAGE

Man-made takes a back seat to commanding views and a spectacular environment

The natural beauty of the site was unarguable: set high on a ridge with views over Bouddi National Park and Maitland Bay through an uninterrupted wall of bushland. Here the architecture needed to be very simple and self-effacing.

The client’s love of bird-watching and enthusiasm for green issues allowed AJ+C to explore its commitment to sustainable design. The house was positioned on the site to maintain as many trees as possible, while minimising the bushfire fuel-load. Extensive native planting and a pond were included to attract more birds.

The heart of the house is a large open plan kitchen/dining/living room opening onto decks on the east and west sides. This arrangement takes maximum advantage of the expansive views. Large eaves overhang and horizontal louvres protect the glass, and glazed walls slide aside to allow outdoor living to follow

the sun. The house incorporates an aerated septic system, evaporative plate hot water system and rainwater harvesting that can be used for firefighting and garden irrigation.

While the building form for the three-bedroom home was kept simple, significant effort went into the detailing. All finishes and colours were agreed with the client and included in the documentation before tender, because AJ+C believes that such detailed planning makes the building process a lot calmer and risk free for both client and the builder. Getting the right builder for the job was also critical. As Glynn remarked: “It’s the people that make your building successful—or break it. John Greenwood, the builder, understood the spirit in which the house was designed. He and his team lovingly put it together as if it were a Swiss watch”

Project Leader: Glynn Evans.

Project Team: Kerry Fyfe, Michael Rogers, Bernard Rowe.



Photos by Nic Bailey

HIDDEN TALENT

Design challenges come out of the blue

The planning and design concepts for the Nuova apartment building were well advanced when Mosman Council threw in a challenging new request: to integrate a 25 metre public swimming pool facility, including a café and two retail outlets, into the ground floor of a seven-storey private apartment building, without inconveniencing the residents of apartments immediately above.

“It was a tight site. We were already well down the track in terms of planning for this project, but it was just one of those things—we had a problem to solve and we simply got on with it”, said project leader John Suprun. Unfazed, the project team worked to analyse every possible approach until an unlikely but interesting solution emerged—one row of massive columns rising out of

the pool itself, allowing access to the apartment building on one side, and swimming on the other.

Opening in December 2003, the integration of the pool into the site has proven to be seamless. So much so that people entering the complex often do not realise it includes a pool until they are well inside the building. With no street signage allowed, the dip café could also have remained hidden. Allen Jack + Cottier’s interior design team, lead by Sue Melosu, used a strong red fabric wall panel at the entrance to catch the eye of passers-by and lead them into the café, then kept the rest mostly white and fresh.

Project leaders: Reg Smith, John Suprun, Sue Melosu.

Project Team: Ross Chalmers, Theo Krallis, Ben List, Tony Spragg, Jennifer White, Robyn Pengelly, Warren Smith.

URBAN ASPIRATIONS

Good design is shifting from luxury to necessity

Since 2000, NSW Premier Bob Carr has been on a mission to lift the quality of design in Australia, and in particular, in New South Wales. “Crummy”, “Junk”. These are words he often uses to describe residential buildings that were thrown up in the 80s and 90s and continue to be built today.

Searching Sydney for an example that matched his vision of outstanding design, Carr recently selected Kogarah Town Square to launch the Year of the Built Environment.

Carr praised the AJ+C project as a European-style town square development that brought together public and retail space with apartment living as well as leading edge sustainable design, including stormwater recycling and solar power generation.

“Kogarah was unique and an example where we could draw on our expertise in urban design and push the boundaries with ESD principles”, says Project Architect Ross Chalmers, who adds, “having a council that was interested in ESD and keen to look at what the community wanted, contributed a lot”.

While the Kogarah project is now being seen as a benchmark for other councils, Chalmers estimates that in around two years the new government water regulations will see this level of water recycling in urban development more commonplace. The solar roof cells used at Kogarah may also ultimately be applied to suburban dwellings.

