

Higher Place

Thoughtful design balances inner and outer vision

Elysia, the first purpose-built world-class health retreat in Australia, opened its doors to the public in the Hunter Valley in January this year. A place of pure tranquillity which embodies the concepts of 'inner peace' and 'outward vision', the luxury health retreat has been more than five years in the making.

Elysia's seventy-two villas and two three-bedroom lodges, together with its sport, social and spa facilities, are built to the highest standards of design and comfort.

However, the design element Allen Jack+Cottier's project director Peter Ireland hopes will resonate most with the resort's Australian and international guests is the fact that all the villas and treatment rooms are built around - and into - the beautiful natural hill atop the site, preserving intact the hill's original form. Dubbed 'meditation hill', the villas and health and relaxation facilities encircle its middle and lower levels, as if it were truly a higher place of peace.

While the villas face outward to the swoop of the Brokenback Range, and towards the west, all the beauty and health treatment rooms face inwards towards the hill. That formation, with the sense of community it creates, is how Ireland originally conceived the project.

As he first walked around the site, he remembered villages and hill towns in Greece and Italy. "European hill towns are all about an interpretation of the landform; they respect the structure on which they are built, they work with it rather than change it. When I arrived here I knew immediately how that concept should shape our response to this project."

Together with the design team and landscape architect Vladimir Sitta of Terragram, AJ+C worked to turn this vision into a reality, reinforcing the natural site features. Guests are now ever conscious of the hill, and curve slowly around it to reach the summit, which is redefined with a double helix sculpture - the apex and spiritual centre of an exciting project.



photo - nic bailey



photo - peter ireland

New Associates



photo - nic bailey

AJ+C is proud to announce the promotion of key AJ+C staff, Mark Louw and Russell Parker. Mark has been promoted from Senior Associate to Associate Director, and Russell has been promoted to Associate.

Asia Calling



Vietnam is the latest country in Asia to be seeking out AJ+C's award-winning design. AJ+C is designing a residential apartment development in Ho Chi Minh City and a new seaside resort near the small fifteenth century township of Hoi An. "The materials available in Hoi An are influencing the design", said Reg Smith. "These are thatched roofs, exposed ceiling timbers and lots of natural stone. It's important to understand these traditional methods of construction, and recognise their beauty and significance in the local culture."

ESD Awards



photo - tyrone brimigan

Kogarah Town Square has been repeatedly recognised throughout the industry for its leading edge sustainable and energy efficient design. The square was recently awarded the annual RIA award for Energy Efficiency and ESD Architecture. The jury recognised the "projects positive contribution to Kogarah's urban environment and its provision of infrastructure for a sustainable future".

Corner Stop

200 Goulburn Street may be at DA stage, but already it's easy to see the impact it will have on the Oxford Street scene. Featuring a large north facing forecourt and café, this apartment block of crossover apartments has crisp, clean architectural lines. "Height and set back constraints on the corner were limiting factors", said Reg Smith, project director, "but the resultant podium section of the building reaches out to have dialogue with Oxford Street and the view through Riley Street to the harbour".



image - aj+c graphics

New Neutral



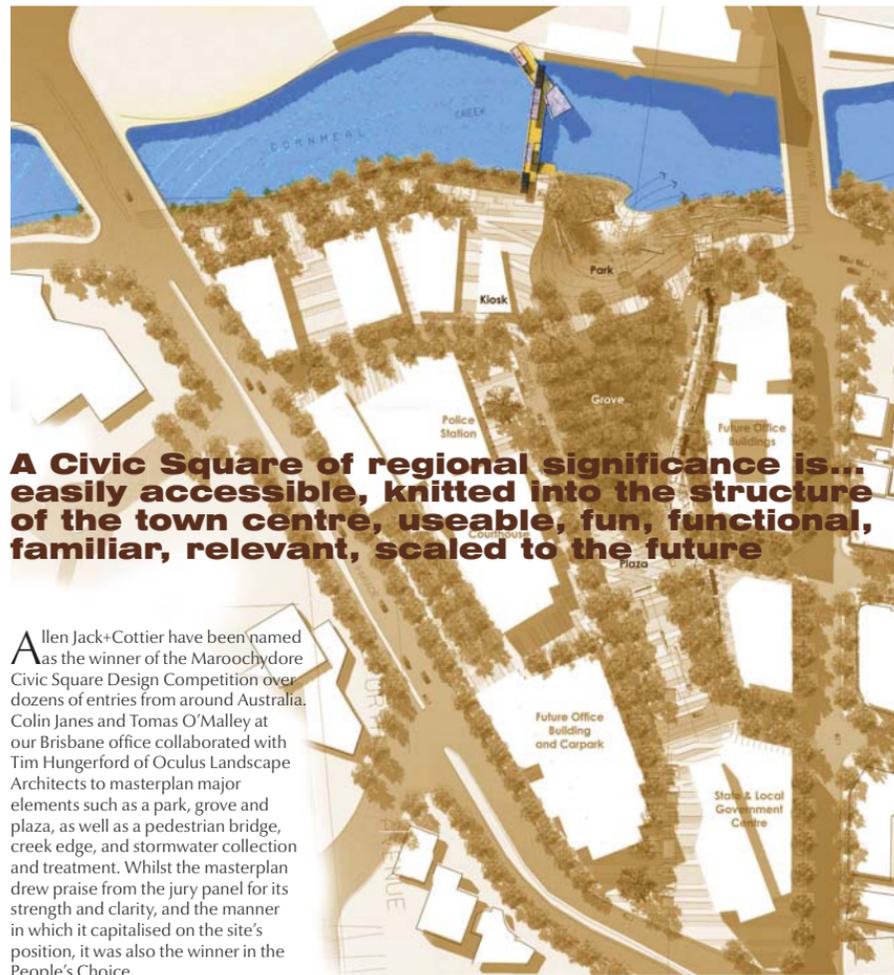
photo - nic bailey

Key to the success of the display suites in the AJ+C designed extension at UPA Christian Care Wahroonga was a focus on the particular requirements of aged care. "We were conscious many of the residents were leaving their big family home", said interior designer Sue Melosu. "The furnishing had to appeal to people who had collected things all their life, so we hunted around for an eclectic mix of pieces. And, in creating four colour schemes, we based them all around neutrals, as a backdrop to these pieces."

Winning Plan

Maroochydore Civic Square Design Competition

Allen Jack+Cottier have been named as the winner of the Maroochydore Civic Square Design Competition over dozens of entries from around Australia. Colin Janes and Tomas O'Malley at our Brisbane office collaborated with Tim Hungerford of Oculus Landscape Architects to masterplan major elements such as a park, grove and plaza, as well as a pedestrian bridge, creek edge, and stormwater collection and treatment. Whilst the masterplan drew praise from the jury panel for its strength and clarity, and the manner in which it capitalised on the site's position, it was also the winner in the People's Choice.



A Civic Square of regional significance is... easily accessible, knitted into the structure of the town centre, useable, fun, functional, familiar, relevant, scaled to the future

Middle Path

Masterplanning creates a central statement

Buildings built to street edges, heavy traffic, limited space – creating an environment sensitive to pedestrians and the occupants of urban apartment blocks poses some interesting questions. A response to these issues was a central concern when South Sydney Council approached Allen Jack+Cottier about masterplanning a through-block pedestrian route south to Green Square station. “The masterplanning concept for residential development in the Green Square precinct was to design block defining perimeter buildings that created a series of central courtyard spaces”, said Reg Smith, project director. This drove the final massing of three buildings that constitute the Linc – Linc Central, Linc North and Linc East. The relationship between these three buildings and the



adjacent Hudson development (AJ+C 1998) was a further influence on their design. Together with landscape architect Anton James, Allen Jack+Cottier worked towards creating a sense of continuity between the two developments. The façade of the Linc Central building acknowledges the Hudson, and is set onto the street, with a retail space and live or work units at ground level. These units are designed for flexibility in their use as commercial, retail or domestic living spaces depending on the rate of growth and development in the area. “The ceramic mosaics that clad the large flower pots of the Hudson’s courtyard were the inspiration for a dramatic stepped water wall feature in the pedestrian walkway through the Linc site”, said Smith. This water wall also masks background noise, and, together with an installation of banded poles that line the route, stimulates the visual interest of the passers-by.

Grand Design

Re-thinking urban housing creates a rare community



Tregoyd is a large Federation period residence, erected in 1908, which stood on a 8500m² site overlooking the harbour suburb of Balmoral. For many years the home of Sir Tristan Antico, founder of Pioneer Concrete, the grounds contained rugged sandstone cliff faces and many old and significant trees. Into this sensitive environment AJ+C have inserted eleven new residences. A curtilage was established for the historic house, agreed with the Heritage Council and Mosman Council, and the houses carefully threaded into the surrounding landscape to maintain the privacy of adjacent properties. “We worked very closely with existing neighbours”, said Mark Louw, project architect, “to satisfy their concerns about change”.



The houses themselves followed a landscape approach, with each house a series of pavilions that minimise large footprints, accommodate the existing mature trees, and best capture the harbour views. “While we had to create a strong consistency among the houses, we’ve given them a subtle individuality through differing roof pitches and forms.” Today, two mini-neighbourhoods – one of seven houses, one of four – have now been added to the Estate, and are linked through the garden by pathways that provide all residents with access to communal pool and tennis court facilities. “The project is successful from a contextual point of view in the way it fits into the original estate”, says Louw. “But, for me, the biggest plus is the community feel. You can witness it in the rapport of the people who live there. One rarely comes across such a strong community bond.”