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ALLEN JACK+COTTIER WINS URBAN DESIGN AWARD FOR HIGH DENSITY HOUSING

Sydney 30 August 2005

Leading Sydney based architects Allen Jack+Cottier have won the top award for High Density Housing for Bullecourt in Ultimo, on the western fringe of Sydney's CBD, in the 10th Annual Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA - NSW) Landcom Awards for Excellence 2005, announced on Friday night.

Executive Director of the UDIA, Dr David Poole, said the depth of entries for the awards this year has proven the industry is doing very well.

"Developers and architects are not just building an apartment block, they are building a whole neighbourhood, so we are seeing more green space, more water features, better integration into surrounding areas and the reuse of heritage buildings," he said.

The UDIA judges noted: "Bullecourt is a well executed development responsive to its tight urban site. The scale and density (are) nicely knitted into context... A cleverly designed courtyard provides a sanctuary for residents of this busy location, while maintaining important historic linkages. The variety in dwelling types and sizes, the opportunity for living/work space and separate commercial suites contribute to the neighbourhood and provide vibrant street frontages."

Designed in response to the unique context of the Pyrmont/Ultimo peninsula, Bullecourt's scale reflects the mass of former woolstores that lined the Western rim of Sydney in the early part of the twentieth century. The development comprises two main buildings aligned with the Pyrmont/Ultimo peninsula grid. A third, smaller-scale building links the main buildings to the restored historic Bristol Arms Hotel.

Reg Smith Allen Jack+Cottier Director responsible for the project, said: "A defining characteristic is Bullecourt's densely built inner urban location: people have been living and working on this peninsula since Sydney's earliest days. Our response builds on this layered heritage, to create a wonderful sense of connectedness for the people who live and work there today."

The 217 apartments in the development includes one-bedroom lofts, two-bedroom, double-storey, cross-ventilated apartments and three-bedroom apartments with garden courtyards. Apartments at street level comprise a home office concept that provides interchangeable living and working spaces in one-, two- and three-bedroom configurations. The development also provides additional retail and commercial spaces at ground level.

Project Architect and Allen Jack+Cottier associate Michael Buchtmann said the site was integral to the design approach taken with the development: "Distinction will be, we believe, an increasingly important issue in the future, both for our clients, and for the residents and users of the building. One way to provide this point of difference is to couple best practice environmentally sustainable principles with site specific design responses."

The Bristol Arms building on Harris Street accommodates studio, commercial and home offices with mezzanines set back from the street to reinforce the retail/commercial scale. Double-height ceilings in the building's corner units refer to the generous spaces of old warehouses. The Pyrmont Street frontage has large three-bedroom apartments with flexible plans suitable for home offices or families. These are contained behind a double-storey sandstone base all which incorporates metalwork grilles to reveal courtyard areas and makes a reference to the former sandstone quarries of Pyrmont.

This development is testament to Allen Jack+Cottier's commitment to building in a way that makes environmental sense. The basic planning maximises both natural light and cross-flow ventilation within apartments. Deep protected balconies take advantage of the aspect and extend living spaces outdoors. People's enjoyment of the building is enhanced by landscaped semi-public spaces between the buildings and on portions of the roof areas.

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