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CEO

Reginald Smith

HEAD OFFICE – SYDNEY

79 Myrtle Street

Chippendale NSW 2008

AUSTRALIA

tel +61 2 9311 8222

fax +61 2 9311 8200

[www.architectsajc.com](http://www.architectsajc.com)

ALLEN JACK+COTTIER

Architects Pty Ltd

ABN 53 003 782 250



## Allen Jack+Cottier wins mixed-use development design in Suqian City, China

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In June 2010, AJ+C won a limited competition to design a mixed development on the east bank of the Grand Canal in Suqian City, Jiangsu province, China. The development includes a five-star hotel, serviced apartments, villas, retail and golf course.

The Grand Canal, linking Hangzhou in the south with Beijing in the north, is the longest canal in the world, covering 1776 km, and one of the oldest, dating back to the 5th century BC.

The design, submitted in conjunction with ASA Architects, uses the Grand Canal as its design source. An artificial channel draws water from the Grand Canal into the site forming a major axis which leads directly to the grand atrium of the hotel.

Water is the key to moving through the site. The intersection of waterway and hotel lobby forms the focus of this project and embodies a key concept of the Chinese landscape; the dialogue between the elements of mountain and water, in this case the mountains being represented by the tall buildings.

Lower rise buildings curve themselves according to the flow of the stream from the Grand Canal in a welcoming gesture while being architecturally expressed as contrasting elements to the 'mountains'. The many intersections between water and buildings provide opportunities for creating a variety of landscaped spaces which are differentiated by contrasting textures and patterns.

As the most prominent site element, the Grand Canal also embodies the essence of the ecological component of the site. While the plan doesn't try to pretend that large scale buildings and developments can be ecological, the design does recognize that many ecological design actions can be taken to reduce negative environmental effects and thus have less impact on a Greenfield site than a typical development.

The winning plan uses roof gardens, water harvesting, reed ponds, grey water re-cycling and high energy efficient double glazing systems.

For more information, please contact:

Nic Bailey

Graphics and Communications

Allen Jack+Cottier

T: +61 2 9311 8226

E: [nic.bailey@architectsajc.com](mailto:nic.bailey@architectsajc.com)

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