

Urban Ideas

A PUBLIC INTEREST MAGAZINE FROM THE URBAN TASKFORCE AUSTRALIA

August 2015

Designs by:
Koichi Takada
FJMT
MHN Design Union
Collins Turner
Renzo Piano
Rogers Stirk Harbour
Wilkinson Eyre

**A NEW
SYDNEY STYLE**
evolving from recent sculptural buildings

Urban Taskforce
AUSTRALIA

A new Sydney style is evolving from recent sculptural buildings

With the increasing globalisation of world cities comes a need to ensure each individual city retains its own character. Cities must be both Global and Local. Sydney has a very special natural environment with its flowing bays around the harbour, sweeping beaches, billowing sails and winding river valleys. But the historic European layout of Sydney is defined by a rectangular grid which is not really the character of the natural environment. A number of recent buildings however are reflecting the curvilinear spirit of Sydney and these are beginning to define a new 'Sydney Style'.

City Planning has often been a debate between the order of the city as a whole and the flair and excitement that a special building can deliver. Italian architect Aldo Rossi wrote about the city as a backdrop of ordered buildings offset by special one-off cultural buildings. In the Sydney context our Opera House sums up Rossi's approach where the cultural building accessible to all becomes a free form expression of its own use and setting. But apart from the Sydney Opera House, and some of Harry Seidler's early towers, the urban architecture of Sydney has followed the rules and is neatly lined up with the street edges. It is only in recent years that the development industry has challenged this planning orthodoxy to propose new architectural forms that create a counterpoint to the unity of the city.

A NEW SYDNEY TREND TO SCULPTURAL BUILDINGS

This issue of Urban Ideas explores these issues and presents a recent and current trend towards free form sculptural buildings that challenge the existing linear grids of the city. Melbourne has been seen as being more innovative in its architecture than Sydney for some decades but a new creative spirit is emerging in Sydney. Just as Jorn Utzon was an outsider from Denmark when he designed the Sydney Opera House there are now more international architects bringing innovation to Sydney. Frank Gehry's amazing 'paper bag' building for the Business School at UTS is an example of a very sculptural building as is Chris Wilkinson's resort hotel at Barangaroo or Renzo Piano's apartment buildings. Japanese architects, either local or from Japan, are adding another layer with Koichi Takada's flowing buildings.

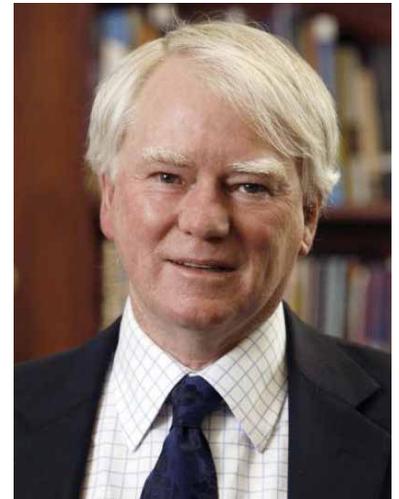
A number of Sydney architects are exploring similar fluid geometries through the work of Richard Francis-Jones, Tony Owen, Collins and Turner, Lava and Enter Projects. But these architects need the developers of the projects to want to innovate and this is where a few projects are now getting support from the industry to deliver even more sculptural buildings.

SYDNEY'S CHARACTER IS ONE OF FLOWING SCULPTURAL SHAPES

Sydney is a city blessed by its location. The famous harbour with its bays and peninsulas is very different to the flat landscape of many cities. It seems very appropriate that the special buildings would reflect the local character of the harbour that is conveyed by the topography of a flowing series of bays and peninsulas, the sails on the water or even the sandy beaches with the waves rolling in. Artists like Brett Whiteley have captured this sensuous flow of water and landscape. There is a new design spirit emerging in Sydney that reflects the flowing shapes of our famous harbour and beaches.

DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IS DRIVING INNOVATION BUT COUNCIL PLANNERS CAN PREFER UNIFORMITY

The projects outlined in this edition of Urban Ideas demonstrate that the development industry is keen to undertake innovative ideas. The risk in developers taking this path however is not a financial one but a planning risk. Many planning documents require development applications to relate to the existing character and the council planners who administer the rules often prefer projects that comfortably fit the rules. A one off, exotic looking building, can set off alarm bells in planning departments and this culture leads to more of the same. It is important that the development industry is able to innovate with building design with their talented architects but this needs a supportive planning system.



The Urban Taskforce is keen to have responses to the proposals illustrated in this issue of URBAN IDEAS and we welcome comments to admin@urbantaskforce.com.au

Chris Johnson AM
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Taskforce Australia

"There is a new design spirit emerging in Sydney that reflects the flowing shapes of our famous harbour and beaches."

Credits
Cover image featuring 'The Cloud at Barangaroo', a project by Lendlease

Sydney has a character of organic flowing shapes



Spinnaker



Rock formation, Bondi Beach



Sydney Harbour's flowing bays

Sydney's stunning harbour sets the city apart from others around the world. It is the flowing topography of the drowned river valley that sets the pattern for development. Governor Philip tried to establish an order on the landscape that Governor Macquarie continued both for Sydney and Parramatta. But Macquarie, and his architect Francis Greenway, respected the traditions of the Scottish Enlightenment where development worked with nature rather than overpowering it. The planning system has evolved however towards a more orthogonal street pattern with most buildings respecting this.

In early days building materials were pretty simple and apart from the odd windmill most were built to a rectangular plan. But a closer look at our natural systems demonstrates an organic interaction of waves and sand hills, of wind and sails and flowing bays and winding rivers. It is these references that are leading to a new approach to a 'Sydney Style' that is being applied to a range of buildings from houses to community centres, to apartment buildings and to office buildings. The images on this page reflect the essence of Sydney's natural systems.

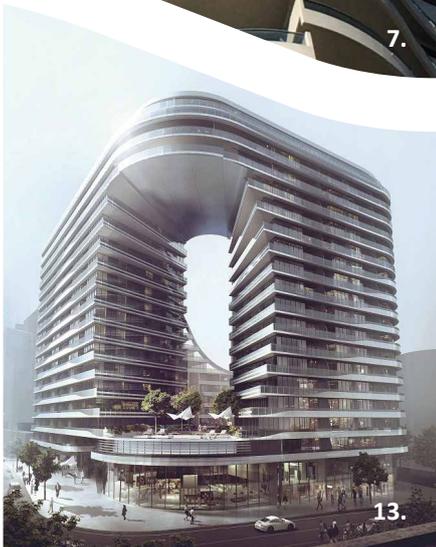
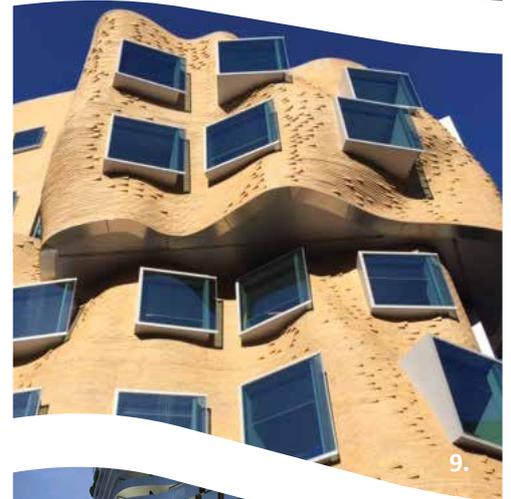
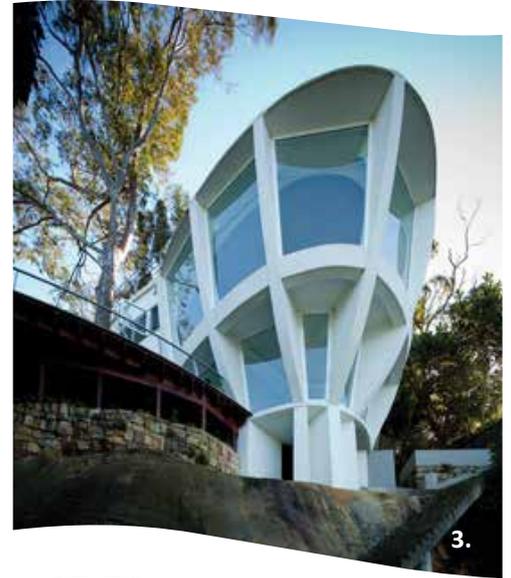
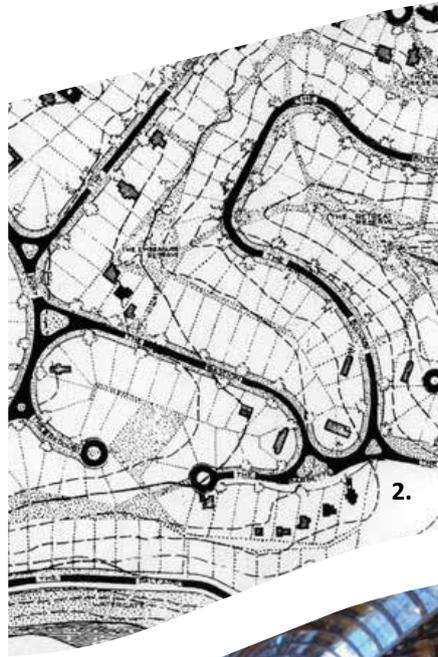


Winding river



Wave formation

Sydney has a history of organic buildings

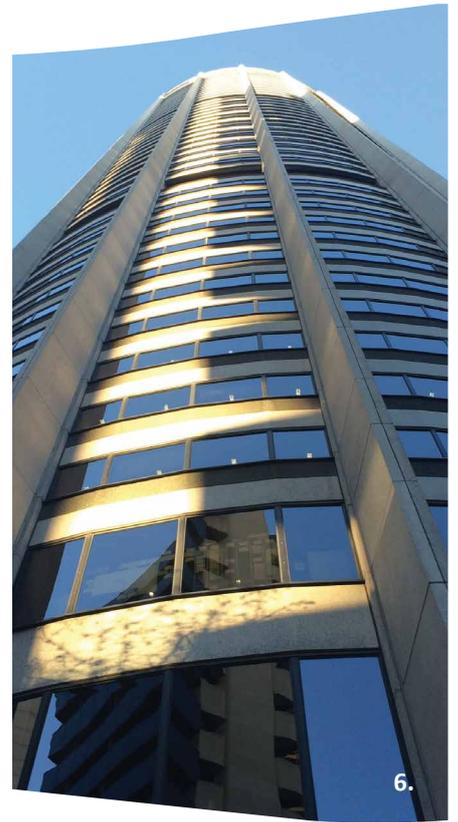




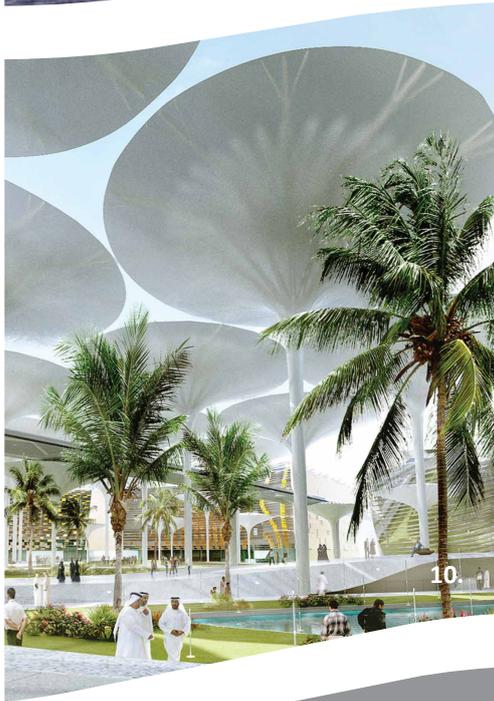
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10.



11.



12.

1. **1820s** – Liverpool Hospital staircase by Francis Greenway
2. **1920s** – Castlecrag suburb by Walter Burley Griffin
3. **1960s** – Seaforth House by Stan Symonds (photograph by Brett Boardman)
4. **1960s** – Sydney Opera House by Jorn Utzon
5. **1960s** – Breen House, Cronulla by Reuben Lane
6. **1960s** – Australia Square by Harry Seidler for Lendlease
7. **1990s** – Horizon Tower by Harry Seidler

8. **2010s** – 1 Bligh Street by Ingenhoven + Architectus for Dexu
9. **2010s** – Business School by Frank Gehry for UTS
10. **2010s** – Masdar City Centre by Lava Sydney Office
11. **2010s** – Bondi Apartments design by Enter Projects
12. **2010s** – Barangaroo by Rogers Stirk Harbour for Lendlease
13. **2010s** – Infinity by Koichi Takada for Crown Group
14. **2010s** – 200 George by FJMT for Mirvac
15. **2010s** – Chatswood Mixed Use by FJMT for KWC Capital Partners

Lendlease have incorporated many organic forms into the innovative architecture at Barangaroo

The Lendlease development at Barangaroo is establishing a new mixed use precinct for Sydney's CBD that takes a fresh look at building forms on this important waterfront site. Most of the buildings respond to the edge condition of the site with more fluid geometries involving flowing curves and circular geometries. Such a spectacular site calls for more expressionist architecture with buildings capitalising on the expansive views across Sydney Harbour.

Anadara, nicknamed 'The Cloud', is a flowing apartment building on the waterfront at Barangaroo South developed by Lendlease and designed by FJMT Architects. The R1 restaurant building is located overlooking the harbour and the design was the result of an architectural competition. The architects are Collins and Turner who have won numerous architectural awards. The three commercial towers at Barangaroo designed

by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners demonstrate the expressive form of the buildings that the Pritzker Prize winning Richard Rogers office is famous for. The floor plate is rounded at each end giving excellent views across the harbour and the city.

The most sculptural building at Barangaroo South is the dramatic flowing curves of the Crown Sydney Hotel Resort. This building is at the northern prow of the precinct and it therefore takes on a more iconic role as a building in the round. The design by English architects Wilkinson Eyre demonstrates their architecture as a natural bridge between art and science. At an early development stage are three residential apartment towers at Barangaroo designed by Pritzker Prize winning architect Renzo Piano. These are also responding to the waterfront setting with the use of flowing curves in the spirit of many of the Barangaroo buildings.



Crown Resort Hotel and Renzo Piano Residential Towers



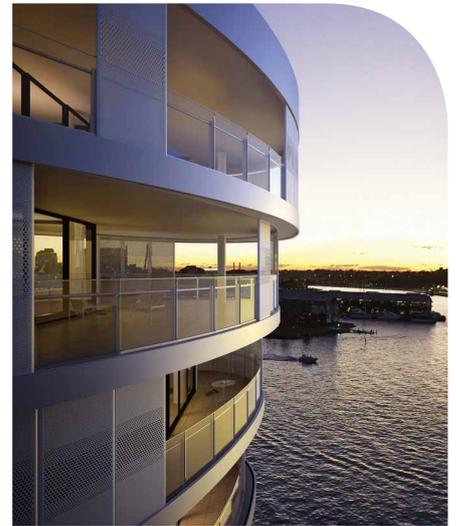
Commercial Tower



R1 restaurant



3 Commercial Towers



Sunset view from Anadara 'The Cloud'



Crown Resort Hotel



Anadara 'The Cloud'

www.barangarootsouth.com.au

www.fjmt.com.au

www.collinsandturner.com

www.rsh-p.com

www.rpbw.com

www.wilkinsonyre.com

Mirvac & architects FJMT have developed innovative solutions to both office & apartment buildings

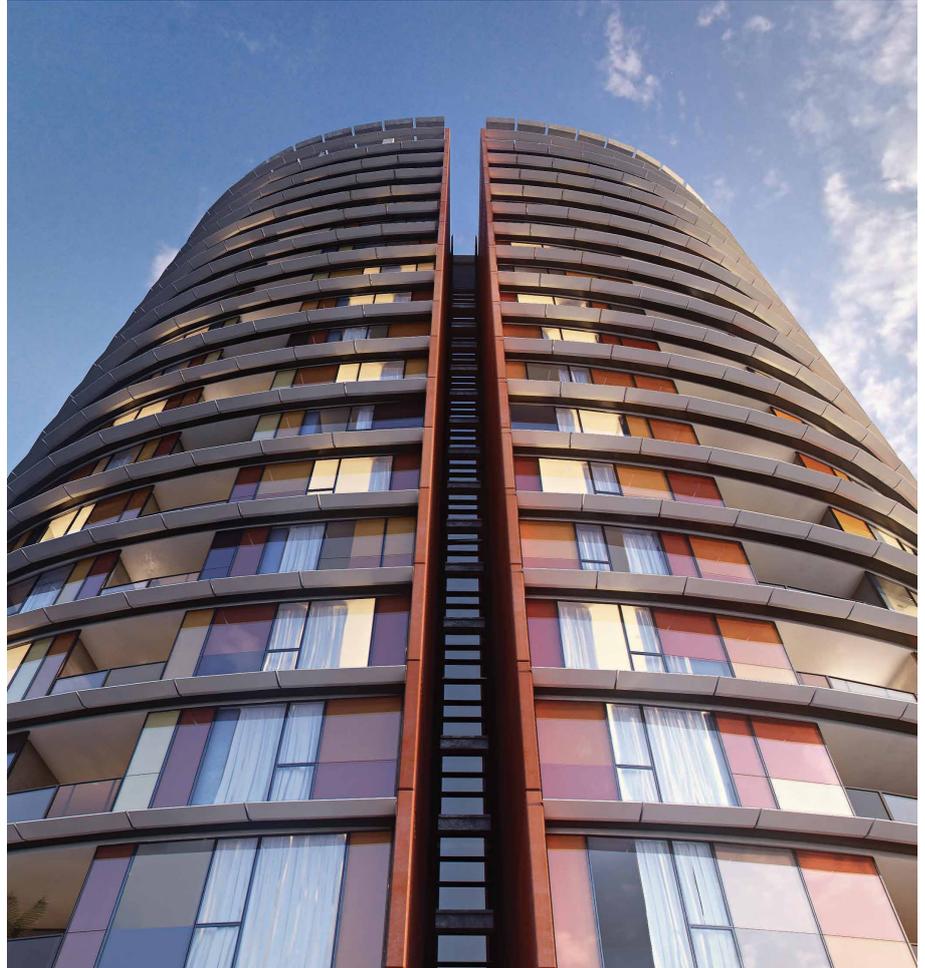


Perspective view of 200 George, Sydney

Mirvac has an excellent reputation as developers of quality buildings. The renewal of the Walsh Bay precinct from a working port to a mixed use precinct is a very successful creation of a new cosmopolitan environment. More recently Mirvac have developed a new commercial building at 200 George Street and a new apartment building at Green Square with both designs incorporating circular geometry through the design input of Richard Francis-Jones of FJMT Architects.

200 George is a new commercial building at the Circular Quay end of George Street. It replaces a nondescript building with a taller tower that has a series of circular shapes that evolve as the building gets taller. The floor plans give a variety of floor plate sizes and configurations while giving a dynamic expression to the new building compared to its mainly rectangular neighbouring buildings. The exception is across George Street where Harry Seidler's Grosvenor Place also has a strong use of the circle in its geometry. 200 George uses timber in an innovative manner behind the external glass skin. At ground level the building creates a thoroughfare to an existing laneway and provides new public spaces.

Ovo at Green Square is a new apartment tower that also utilises circular geometry to give a dynamic expression to the building.



Ovo, Green Square



Harbour view of 200 George, Sydney



City skyline at Ovo, Green Square



Atmosphere at Ovo, Green Square

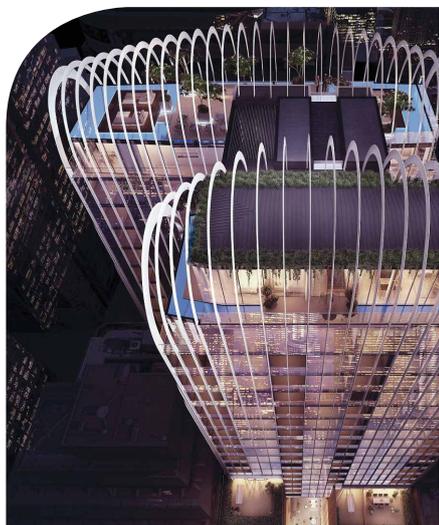


Street view of 200 George, Sydney



200 George Street, Sydney

Crown Group have developed exciting apartment projects for Sydney sites



Sydney by Crown Group



Infinity by Crown Group



Infinity by Crown Group

Crown Group led by architect Iwan Sunito and Paul Sathio have developed a very innovative approach to the design of inner city apartment buildings in Sydney.

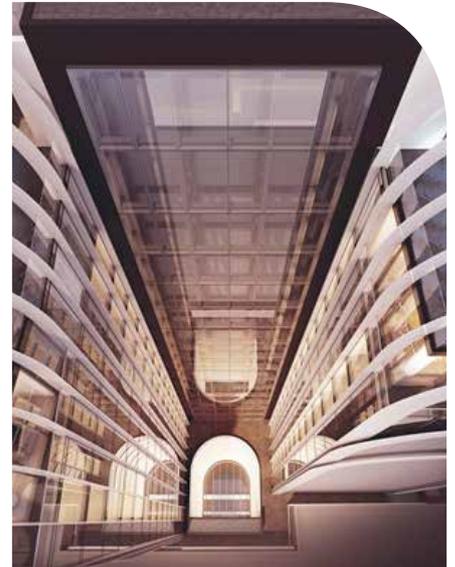
At Green Square, Crown Group held an architectural competition won by Koichi Takada, a Japanese architect now working in Sydney. Koichi's approach to design is informed by nature with an interest in the more fluid shapes that come from natural systems. The design of "Infinity by Crown Group" creates a rolling continuous building form that gives a strong identity to the building. The large site could have had two separate towers but the creative linking of the building form into one flowing shape gives a much more interesting solution. To the north a large opening allows sunlight into the central shared courtyard and to the south a direct connection to the Green Square railway station makes this a very well connected location for urban living.

"Sydney by Crown Group" on Clarence Street in the centre of Sydney is another innovative apartment building that sets itself apart from most tall city buildings with its dramatic roof profile. The architect is Koichi Takada and the design begins with a dramatic flowing lobby space and culminates with a pair of steel roof circular forms. These are important shared spaces for residents contained by the soaring vaults and create a resort like environment within the urban structure of the city.

"Viking by Crown Group" is located near Green Square adjacent to the Victoria Park development on an elongated triangular site. The design by MHN Design Union does not use curving shapes but innovates through the use of colour and an abstract art like expression of individual windows on its southern elevation. What could have been a flat uninteresting south elevation has become a vital and dynamic expression of urban living. The architects were influenced by the art of Kinetic artist Yaacov Agam.



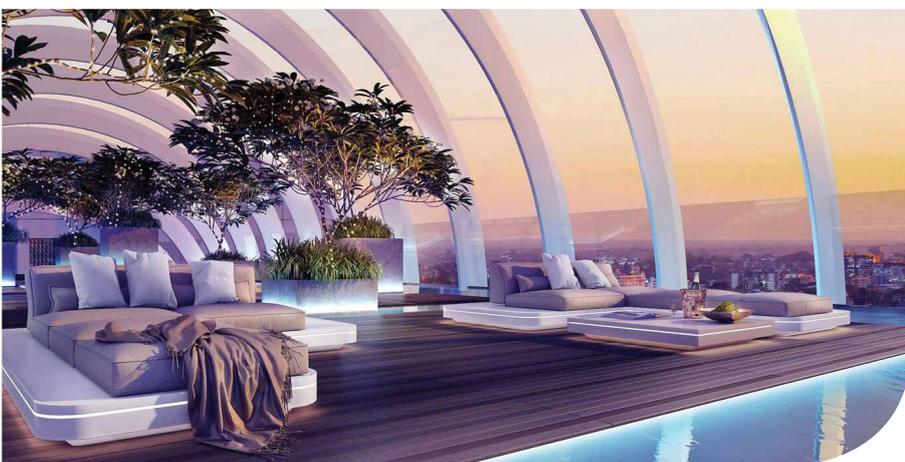
Sydney by Crown Group



Sydney by Crown Group



Viking by Crown Group



Sydney by Crown Group

www.infinitybycrowngroup.com.au

www.sydneybycrown.com.au

www.vikingbycrown.com.au

www.koichitakada.com

www.mhndu.com

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INNOVATION IN DEVELOPMENT

This issue of Urban Ideas demonstrates the innovative way many developers are producing new buildings. Developers are often not thought of as innovators but as this publication shows the spirit of innovation and creativity is alive and well with Sydney developers.

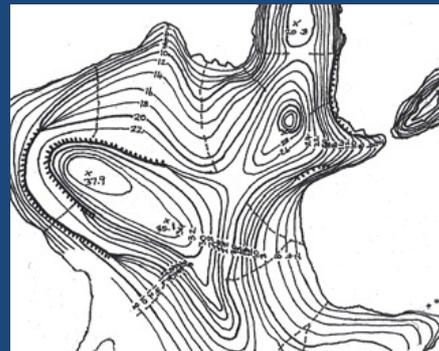
We also believe that developers and their architects represent a more adventurous approach to how a city like Sydney changes than many of the planners working in councils who administer the planning rules.

Our cities are better if there are buildings that express individualism within the collective structure of urban precincts. In this publication we have used the circle as the symbol of innovation within the order of a rectangular planning grid.

There is a new design spirit emerging in Sydney that reflects the flowing shapes of our famous harbour and beaches.



Barangaroo's flowing architecture



Sydney's flowing contours



Publication Supported by:



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