

Wylde Street, Potts Point

Case Study

masonry.
style and
function

Case Study

10 Wylde Street,
Potts Point NSW

Project: 10 Wylde Street Apartments

Location: Potts Point NSW

Developer: Investec

Architect: SJB Architects

Builder: Richard Crookes Constructions

Blocklayer: Brickmen Constructions Australia

Featured products: Austral Masonry Solitary
Smooth in Ash –

390 x 90 x 40 mm (type 5071)

390 x 190 x 40 (type 5031)

Single bullnose 390 x 90 x 40 mm (special)

Double bullnose 250 x 90 x 40 mm (special)

Photography: Brett Boardman

Side elevation designed to take full advantage of
northerly harbour views and natural light



Front elevation and southern facade



Bullnose masonry units used on front elevation

In Potts Point, a perfect blend of design, materiality and place

With killer north views across the Royal Botanic Gardens to the Opera House and beyond, the new luxury apartments at 10 Wylde Street, Potts Point could well be the embodiment of the real estate agent's mantra "location, location, location".

Surprisingly, this is the first major residential development in Potts Point in more than five years. Beginning in the 1920s, the upmarket suburb was the site of Sydney's earliest apartment buildings and as a result it now boasts the highest concentration of Art Deco buildings in Australia.

Today only a handful of the grand houses remains and the suburb is an increasingly dense urban environment. Some of the mid-century tower buildings are of mixed quality but the area retains much of the Deco character for which it is justly renowned.

"Macleay Street in particular has a really beautiful tradition of crafted masonry buildings," explains Adam Haddow, the project's design director. "So our intent was to add to that image but in a contemporary way." Haddow worked with the project architect Charles Peters and interior design director Jonathan Richards.

The seven-storey building houses 22 apartments in a mix of one-, two- and

three-bedroom formats, the latter being half of the mix. Three apartments are adaptable to special needs residents while two basement levels accommodate 30 vehicles and secure storage for each apartment.

The design challenge was to provide a balance between the formal, classical values of Potts Point's Art Deco character with the need to access the highly-prized northern views.

The designers chose concrete block as the facade material for all but the northern elevation. Concrete masonry is part of a palette of natural materials, including copper, that are renowned for their beauty and ability to age gracefully.

The unit selected was Austral Masonry's Solitary Smooth blocks in Ash. The designers chose to give emphasis to the horizontality of the walling by specifying a very wide aspect unit, commonly called a Roman format because it is reminiscent of the broad brick proportions favoured by the ancient Romans.

The principal block used in this project block is 390 mm long by 40 mm high, an aspect ratio of 10:1. In contrast, a standard clay brick has a face area of 230 x 76 mm or 3:1. The renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright used broad aspect bricks, about 6:1, to emphasise the horizontality of his celebrated Prairie Style houses. (Austral Masonry's sister company, Bowral Bricks, manufactures a dry-pressed clay brick with these dimensions, the Bowral 300, available in three colours.)

For the Wylde Street project, the perception of width was further enhanced by striking the horizontal mortar joints (that is, recessing the mortar by about 10 millimetres) while leaving the vertical joints flush with the unit face. "We wanted the beautiful proportions of the Roman block and the horizontality that comes with that," says Haddow. "It reinforces the really low-lying horizontal nature of the building."

Site Considerations Site and Surrounds



Overhead view of Potts Point and surrounds



View from Wylde St looking east

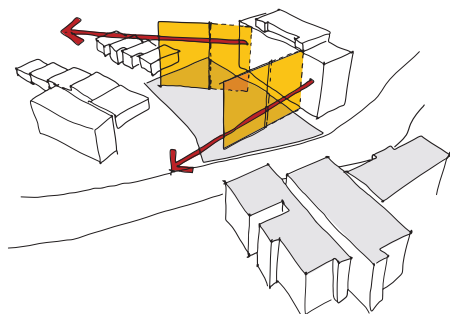


View from Wylde St looking north east



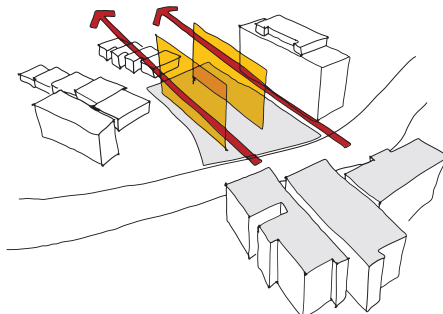
Contribution of Existing Building to Potts Point Ridgeline

Site Considerations Orientation

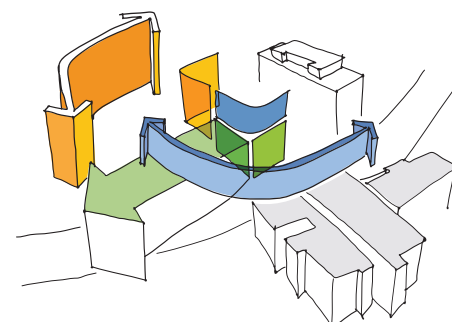


Rear View Constraints

Existing views enjoyed by adjoining neighbours greatly impact on the ability to redevelop the site. An inferred development envelope exists as a result of respecting view angles - existing building and approved DA.



Adjoining View Constraints



View Opportunities

Views from the site are excellent across every level on the eastern edge looking towards the harbour and heads. To the west, city, harbour and opera house views are best at the upper levels while lower in the building local street views and northern harbour views are appreciated.



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View Looking North



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West Streetscape View



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South View of adjoining neighbour

Complementing these masonry units are two shaped blocks, custom made at Austral Masonry's Coffs Harbour plant, to the architect's specifications.

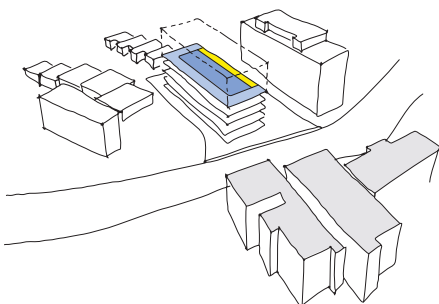
Double bullnose units – colour-matched, each 250 x 90 x 40 mm with a 60 degree radius at their ends – cap the leading edge of the masonry columns separating the Juliet balconies facing Wylde Street. Their height maintains the pitch of the standard blocks. They also feature on the vertical edges of the louvered openings at the street level.

Single bullnose blocks – again colour-matched and with a 60 degree radius on one end but otherwise identical to the standard units – soften the vertical edges framing the Wylde Street balconies.

The design of these special units required close cooperation between the architect, builder and Austral Masonry's technical and manufacturing specialists. Once the designs were signed off, special moulds were made and colour samples of the custom blocks despatched for final approval.

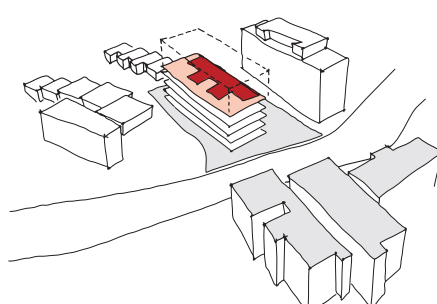
A total of 110,000 masonry units were manufactured and delivered to the Wylde Street site, of which 90,000 were the standard broad aspect units, 390 x 90 x 40 mm.

(The Austral Masonry Solitary series is available in a wide range of sizes. As well as the Smooth Face selected for this project, they are made in Split Face from a double block that is split to expose two units with random face textures. Smooth and Split Face units can be combined to create uniquely-textured feature walling, for example in alternating courses for a corduroy effect.)



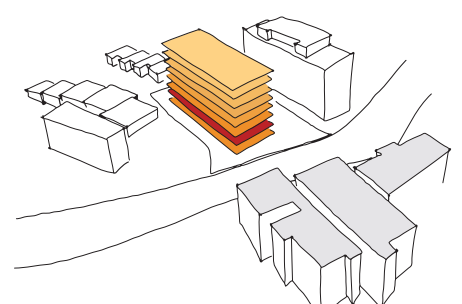
Views and Fire

To achieve floor to floor glass we must either maintain a 1100mm setback from all edges or accommodate a 900mm vertical spandrel. The views to the east, north and west warrant setting the glazing back to enjoy floor to ceiling glazing. To the south a spandrel will help to reduce the privacy and overlooking impacts from the adjoining residential building.



Balconies

Setbacks in the floor areas are required to accommodate appropriately sized balconies. Terraces are provided at the ground floor, ranging in size and orientation in accordance with the need to landscape and maintain privacy.



Making up the Difference

To make up the floor area we have lost across all levels as a result of the simple fire separation and view considerations we have inserted an additional floor - within the approved overall building height.

Site Considerations Surrounding Buildings



1950's example - 3 Wylde Street



1930's example - 5-11 Wylde Street



Example of 1950's Apartments - 12 Wylde Street



Colour



The new building was designed to echo existing neighbouring buildings



Front elevation



Breeze walls create a striking feature and improve thermal performance

To the street, 10 Wylde Street presents as a masonry structure and references the proportions of the surrounding early-20th century apartment buildings. The street facade curves gracefully as it follows the bend in Wylde Street. The western (street) and eastern elevations display a strongly-gridded articulation, with the Juliet balconies giving depth and proportion while retaining privacy and allowing views to the street on the west or across Garden Island and to The Heads on the east. Masonry's high acoustic values also minimise the impact of traffic noise from the street.

By contrast, the northern facade is transparent with slim aluminium framing, slender columns and finely-detailed slab edges that mirror those of adjacent buildings. Its lightness is in marked contrast to the solid gravity of the masonry facades.

The footpath was widened by 900 mm to improve pedestrian access, and the building set back a further 900 mm to

create a landscaped buffer separating pedestrian traffic from the enclosed ground floor apartment terraces.

Residents enter through a well-defined portico directly off Wylde Street. This maintains a visual link to the street and leads to a brick-paved accessway which follows the southern boundary, flanked by tall, colour-matched masonry fences. The southern facade has minimal reveals that are shielded by perforated copper panels.

An interesting detail is the twin panels of hit-and-miss (perforated) blockwork that rise along this elevation. This relatively simple technique – omitting alternate masonry units while maintaining structural integrity – allows light penetration into the internal entry hallways while minimising overlooking from an apartment building to the rear.

All apartments have large private open spaces, some with landscaped courtyards, others with large balconies. The broad elevation along the northern face maximises the view potential and solar

access, with most receiving year-round, direct sunlight into living areas. Cross ventilation is fostered by the building's relative slenderness along its north-south axis.

Haddow describes 10 Wylde Street as "a reimagining of what contemporary apartment living could be in the city," pointing to the street-sensitive design which retains privacy and those all-important views. This is combined with a "level of detail that is more akin to a private home than a residential apartment building," he adds.

As a project, it was "on time and on budget; the builder performed exceptionally well and the blocklayers were great," Adam Haddow reports. Number 10 Wylde Street, Potts Point reached practical completion in late 2014.

Concept Designs



View from Wylde St looking east



View from Wylde St looking ?



Side elevation with breeze walls



View from Wylde St looking ?

Inspirational Images



Colour



Bond method for breeze walls



Stack and bond technique

Completed Project



The west face of the completed project features colour-matched double-bullnose masonry units running the full height of the columns

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