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PHIVE Parramatta Civic Hub, Manuelle Gautrand West Sydney Architecture, NSW Property Photos

## PHIVE Civic Center Parramatta

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Architects: Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

Location: Parramatta, West Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

PHIVE Civic Center in Parramatta



Photos below © Sara Vita

The project "PHIVE", located in Parramatta square is an exceptional public and cultural facility filled with community and exhibition spaces all around the main library, as well as the City of Parramatta's Council Chamber.



The building also houses a Discovery Centre and cultural heritage spaces which includes interactive displays and exhibitions, and an Aboriginal Keeping Place for local Indigenous objects.

A Research Lab and professional services provides access to Council's cultural heritage collection, and cultural programs.

Phive is now a new city landmark and a place where locals and visitors can meet, discover, learn and share.



#### THE GLOBAL URBAN APPROACH

The city's main central esplanade runs alongside the site and the Townhall on the south facade.

We wanted to accentuate the luminosity of the square and its openness to the sky and the sun, all over the year.

Sculpting the project's volume with the sun course, was also a very sustainable and human goal: allowing the sun all along the year to illuminate the esplanade is a generous way to celebrate and emphasize the notion of "public space".



#### THE ENVELOPE, BOTH A ROOF AND A FAÇADE, WORKS AS A MAGNIFICENT PROTECTIVE SKIN

The envelop, which is both a roof and a façade, is made of hundreds of folded panels that open views successively to the west and the east, to the square and the sky, expressing the uniqueness of this public and cultural building. It is also a very sustainable skin, protecting from heat while filtering light and views, creating a poetic atmosphere internally and to the exterior of the project.

The colors are inspired by the soil and the local flora, such as native waratah, bottle brush and grevillea.

The slopped envelop is also precisely drawn and sculpted itself to act as a passive thermal design. Phive is an holistic project, which is sculpted to encourage hot air to move up until the spire.





#### PARRAMATA CITY: THE SOCIAL AND URBAN CONTEXT

Parramatta city is located on the west side of Sydney, being part of the Great Sydney as an important business district.

The site forms part of the three-hectare Parramatta Square redevelopment precinct located at the core of the Parramatta Central Business District. Development near the site is primarily commercial with a lot of offices, and retail. Development to the north comprises of a range of two and three storey commercial buildings. To the east is located the recently constructed Western Sydney University Campus. And to the southeast is the Sydney Water building, which is a high-rise commercial office tower.



There are several heritage items located in the vicinity of Parramatta Square, notably Parramatta Town Hall located directly to the west of the site, that we currently refurbish and connect to our building, mainly through an open ground floor which is fully open from east to west in this existing heritage building.

Bicentennial Square (Centenary Square) and the very old St John's Pro-Cathedral are located to the east of our site.

The renewal of Parramatta Square will deliver a complete revitalisation of this area through development that transforms the area to a community orientated civic space that injects social, cultural and economic activity into the heart of this Parramatta CBD.



#### A MULTIFACETED PROGRAMM AND AMBITION FOR THE PROJECT

The City of Parramatta Council required that an architectural design competition be undertaken for all major development within Parramatta Square in order to deliver the highest standard of architectural, urban and landscape design within this key CBD precinct. Accordingly, a design competition was convened for our 5PS site, that we won in 2016.

The Jury strongly endorsed “the iconic and contextual scheme” that we proposed: a scheme that was described as “an undeniable modern interface with Parramatta’s history, while being an exemplary architectural and sustainable masterpiece, that delivers a 21st century solution within the City of Parramatta Council’s modern smart-city metropolis”.



In line with the program's goals, we decided to accentuate the diversity and the variety of all functions that were wished in the project: we wanted Phive to be much more than a Library. It is an exceptional public and cultural facility filled with community and exhibition spaces all around the main library, as well as the City of Parramatta's Council Chamber, with all its offices, meeting and creative rooms.



The building also houses a Discovery Centre and cultural heritage spaces which includes interactive displays and exhibitions, and an Aboriginal Keeping Place for local Indigenous objects.

A Research Lab and professional services provides access to Council's cultural heritage collection, and cultural programs.

Phive is now a new city landmark and a place where locals and visitors can meet, discover, learn and share.

Photos below © Nils Koenig





#### THE GLOBAL URBAN APPROACH, THE MAIN GUIDELINES

The city's main central esplanade runs alongside the site and the Townhall on the south facade. Urban planning guidelines required that the esplanade should not be "too significantly shaded" at any time of year: it was an interesting guideline that we decided to maximize in our project. We wanted to accentuate the luminosity of the square and its openness to the sky and the sun, all over the year: and in a way, it was our departure point in our conceptual process. We worked at sculpting the building's volume to allow for the full daily path of the sun.

Playing with the sun course was incredibly motivating and fruitful: we felt the necessity of deeply working with the climate, and of combining our architectural project with a strong urban design that allows the birth of a generous public space in front of our project, a fully animated esplanade that can play the role of a new magnet in the middle of the city.



Most part of the time, the urban regulation are more about alignments and heights, which are directed from the pre-existence of the other buildings. The link with the natural elements, like the sun, the wind and in a more general way the climate is not the core of the regulation. In our case, it was so inspiring to create a project directly connected and interlinked with the site's geography, with its specific climate and orientation. And from this conceptual departure point, our process was always related to the specific geography and climate in this west part of the Great Sydney.

The final volume that we carefully sculpted with the sun course gives the impression of literally bending to the sun's passage across the sky, resulting in a vast sloping plane that curves down towards the esplanade on one side, giving a long, slender southern facade.





To the north, it stretches towards the sky, finishing at the north-east corner in a fin, an urban marker, so thin that the sun's rays can pass right through it.

The project is deeply contextual because the highest point, the spire, corresponds to the east corner of the site where new developments become higher and higher.

From the Townhall at the west side to the new developments on the east side, our sloped envelop progressively accompanies and links the whole scale of the district.



Sculpting the project's volume with the sun course, was also a very sustainable and human goal: allowing the sun all along the year to illuminate the esplanade is a generous way to celebrate and emphasize the notion of "public space".

Inside all the floors are stepped, like terraces one upon the other: each of them gets a piece of view on the esplanade. It is a way to give the impress that the building is like a theatre: each floor is like a balcony on the esplanade, which becomes a magnificent urban stage.

With the intention of integrating the existing town hall into the new project, the new building also stretches to the west over the roof line of the town hall, crowning it with a crystalline architecture, and creating spaces in close proximity to its municipal functions for new activities for Parramatta's elected officials and community. This long section projecting over the roof is where the officials' offices and meeting rooms are located.

Photos below © Brett Boardman



The ground floor is a vast foyer, an 'Urban Living Room', where you can find a concierge, the visitor services, the Council customer services, a lot of breathing spaces and a cafe, as well as spaces for live performances and cultural activities.

The ground floor is the fluid continuity of the esplanade with quite the same finishes. This level acts like a generous platform, where everybody is invited to enter, and then get the envy to go up.

We want for this space to encourage a lot of animation; we are conscious that spaces will be full of life and most part of the time a little bit noisy. But progressively, when users will go up, they will find smaller spaces, cultivating a calmer atmosphere, dedicated to smaller groups or individual work in a quiet ambience. The rise through the different levels is precisely organized to provide different atmospheres along your journey, from animated and noisy ones in the ground floor, to calm and confidential atmospheres in the other levels.

Finally, the interior of the ground floor is an extension of the Square: a sort of urban foyer or urban living room, a flexible place to meet, exhibit and explore. It presents as a red cocoon, with pops of vibrant green furniture scattered throughout its interior.

The ground floor café activates the corner of Parramatta Square and the new Civic Link on the south-east angle of it. A large exhibition-discovery centre takes place just below the ground floor lobby.



Underneath this ground level, there is a shared 'super basement', including around this large exhibition-discovery place, other exhibition spaces (for digital experiences) and a big open amphitheatre that plays as a welcoming space for people coming by car through the basement car parking.

The library floors are organised with open flexible lounge and study areas facing the public square. Behind are the collections, and closest to the circulation core of the building are all of the smaller enclosed meeting rooms and services. This allows for maximum flexibility, reversibility, modularity and allows for future flexibility in the way of using the whole building.

The third level is dedicated to community rooms with 2 large flexible community spaces facing the square. A big amphitheatre joins the two main library's levels, creating a monumental atrium in the middle of the volume.

In the interior distribution, the higher you climb the more the rooms become slender and intimate: progressively, when users will go up through the library, they will find smaller spaces, cultivating a calmer atmosphere, dedicated to smaller groups or individual work in a quiet atmosphere.

The council chambers are at the top level and cantilever over the old town hall. This heroic engineering feat is quite an experience to behold and reinforces the important historical relationship to old Parramatta Town Hall. The suspended space includes the council chamber as well as offices and meeting rooms for Parramatta's elected officials and community.