

VISION

ISSUE 31

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IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY VIBE

Community Hub at the Dock, Melbourne

Viridian
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RISING STAR

Lift Shaft at Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney

A simple glass and steel lift-shaft atop a re-created headland may appear unremarkable on paper, but in a high visibility setting at Sydney's Barangaroo, WMK Architecture's answer is a big design deal.

Deft siting, material selection and design resolution produce the understated show-stopper. Bespoke Viridian glazing and exquisite sandstone, intersect poetically for a people mover that makes a stellar civic design exclamation mark.



18 IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY VIBE

Docklands Community Hub and Boating Facility, Melbourne

Melbourne's Docklands has experienced an unprecedented make-over since 2000. Not all of it winning the public's hearts and minds. More recent developments—a library of considerable note and new community centre/boating hub—are finally invigorating the water end of Bourke and Collins Streets.

Such projects, rather than wham-bam towers are vital set pieces in rounding out the true experience of place. A comparatively modest Community and Boating Hub may just signal a shift of gear from the rows of transplanted high-rise.

Central to this small, vibrant project is Viridian's performance glass to better bring the waterfront within reach of the everyday visitor.

RISING STAR





2
2 Starliner Loop
1 Waterline Terrace
0 The Colonnade
0000 Main
01 Cayman
02 Cayman

Sydney's Barangaroo parkland spears north and folds into its Harbour promising to become the project's crowning glory. It's already the parkland that is a songline of rich rhythms rather than the cluster of concrete and marble, closer to the commercial hustle of Darling Harbour.

In an age of intense commercial imperatives, it will surprise some that the most precious of urban resources—green open space—should deliver redemption. And ironically it's the North American landscape design stars, PWP Landscape Architecture in association with Sydney's Johnson Pilton Walker who deliver a contemporary park as garden that is so convincing and true to place.

If the southern end of the \$6 billion development is contentious in some circles, the 6 hectare, re-created headland park, is quietly stupendous. Responsible for the Sydney Olympic's Millennium Parklands, among a host of global landscaping treasures, Peter Walker's Barangaroo Reserve for the Barangaroo Delivery Authority—opened in August last year—is well on the way to ripening into the grandest of civic gardens.

Sydney's WMK Architects is a local architecture practice which contributed directly towards this parkland precinct with a glass sheathed, steel rimmed and sandstone edged lift-shaft, leading to a multi-event space and a 300 vehicle car-park sitting directly underneath Peter Walker's landscaping masterwork. What could have easily projected as over-wrought structure and eye-sore, dissolves into a quietly totemic gesture, highly respectful of the landscape fluency.





What could have easily projected as over-wrought structure and eye-sore, dissolves into a quietly totemic gesture, highly respectful of the landscape fluency.

PETER HYATT

Previous page and above:

A crystalline transparency south with translucent glass (above) on west-facing elevation to modify solar loads. View south towards the rapidly-rising commercial precinct.

PROJECT

Lift Shaft at Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney

CLIENT

Barangaroo Delivery Authority

ARCHITECT

WMK Architecture, Sydney

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Seraphic™ Design
Viridian ThermoTech™

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt



CLICK TO VISIT THE
BARANGAROO LIFT





Vision's Peter Hyatt met with WMK's project team leader Cecelia Wells to discuss the importance of this small, but jewel-like infrastructure within the parkland precinct:

PH Small projects usually demand a disproportionate and intense effort.

CW Yes, it is quite a complex project with a lot of stakeholder needs to balance. This project took many years to design, document and construct.

Is there a gold standard template for the design of this type of glass lift?

I wish there was a textbook to turn to. It is absolutely tailor made for the circumstances and offers extremely good value for what is really a little jewel.

How big a task is it to resist the architectural temptation for high-viz. design to overwhelm the practical need?

The original intent was for a glass box to sit harmoniously in context with the landscape. One of the paramount drivers of the design and build in the parklands was that the building should blend and connect very strongly with its setting.

What changed?

The design treatment changed—its permeability became the major focus. Its transparency became a critical attribute of the design.

We could almost equate your little steel and glass lift with a miniature skyscraper. It could have been cumbersome but you have stripped it back and it excels.

I'm pleased you think that because it was quite intentional to emerge out of the landscape and yet be its own object. We didn't want to make it appear like we're trying to just replicate rock. We needed it to have a sense of formality and degree of timelessness. The rough, quarry sawn sandstone and the refined technicality of the lift make for a heightened contrast in the landscape.

How do you future-proof such design?

We were designing for flexibility as its ultimate use was in development. The most likely use at the time, for which we were designing, was for a multi-event space and possible future cultural space and café. Everything had to be built to accommodate these best efforts, including the lift.

Left: Main public access point with proposed retail area in place, framed by sandstone amphitheatre.

Above: A product of intensive detailing from meticulous glass selection to unobtrusive fixing.

A virtual iceberg with nine-tenths below the surface?

The lift goes down to car park basement level two, and is designed to connect with the ground level, multi-event space, mid terrace level and the roof top park. The flexible design has provision to connect with a possible mid-level if a future use dictates the construction of a new floor through the space. Structurally the whole building is ready for that. There's an incredible amount that goes on in the building and incorporated into the design that you never see.

This is a very complicated project.

Elements of the lift core had to work super hard. The core incorporates space for future servicing, the café exhaust systems, all waste and vent pipes up and down the building are all reticulated through a side services core. All of this is wrapped as delicately as possible. The frit pattern on the glass helped dissolve the glazing into the landscape.

And yet you would hardly want this camouflaged.

No, but we were also concerned it would be quite dominant. The ceramic frit pattern glass layered over steel and concrete, really helps reduce its effect on the landscape by reducing its intensity a few notches and really contributes to its delicacy.

What about the glazing? There's nothing off-the-shelf about this is there?

It's a laminated glass system. We wanted as low an iron content glass that we could and that is why we chose Viridian SuperClear™. We solved this with a double-layered system of SuperClear™ and tough fritted laminate interlayer for extra strength. The frit is encapsulated between those two layers—the frit is thus protected.





*All of this is wrapped as
delicately as possible.
The frit pattern on the glass
helped dissolve the
glazing into the landscape.*

CECELIA WELLS, ARCHITECT



For us it was trying to enhance the experience of visitors as they rise up through this lift and expand their perception of the landscape. Then there are the technical challenges.

CECILIA WELLS, ARCHITECT

What was the major reason for sourcing your glass through Viridian?

We turned to Viridian for glass reliability and quality. Nickel sulphide failure is always uppermost in our minds. I'm not so sure it's such a big issue now with glass quality improving worldwide. We did look at using cheaper overseas alternatives. It became a huge challenge to test that and arrange for proven functioning assemblies, all installed on time. Viridian really had all of that expertise right here.

What about solar loads?

We had to develop the design specifically to suit the site and climatic considerations. There were also safety considerations about how breakable or prone to impact the glass may be. Then there are cleaning and shading aspects. The solar shading co-efficient is a very important consideration, so the frit was a very important aspect of the design to reduce the lift-car heat load.

Does such an exposed site present any other challenges?

A significant rooftop passive ventilation system draws in cool air from the main cultural space, as well as mechanical fans to provide back-up on very hot days. It's not air-conditioned, but the modeling shows it should perform well with the selected glazing providing a high shading co-efficient.

Any other climatic issues?

The prime challenge is keeping water out, so we came up with a complicated series of channels, drains, overhangs and systems to help slow down water as it approaches the lift.

It's an interesting marriage of art, technology and environment. How do you integrate all of those aspects? Are you thinking like an architect, a landscape architect or an engineer?

That's an interesting question. As an architect you're always looking for a way to elevate the design and to exceed expectations. We always try to inject an element of poetry. For us it was trying to enhance the experience of visitors as they rise up through this lift and expand their perception of the landscape. Then there are the technical challenges.

So there is also the diplomat's role required with your various masters?

There were multiple stakeholders involved and you have to balance the needs of all those involved for an economical, high performance project that also returns something to the public as a lovely little, surprising element in the landscape.

The counterbalance of beautiful materials
– one as dappled light transmitter, the other
milled sandstone.



Light is incredibly important by day of course and of an evening as night falls, through dusk, there is this incredible contrast of texture between the glazing and sandstone.

CECILIA WELLS, ARCHITECT







2
2. Bergin Lane
1. Western Terrace
0. The Gallery
10. North Cove
20. Creek
30. Creek

How difficult is it to remain true to your ideals and the public benefit rather than client pragmatism?

There can be pressure to bend a design or to be more cost effective or easier to build. But, if you work as a team towards a common vision, it's surprising what can be pulled off.

The role of materials can't be underplayed here when you have to balance and synthesize glass, steel and sandstone.

You have to develop a language of separation about planes, texture and light. Light is incredibly important by day of course and of an evening as night falls, through dusk, there is this incredible contrast of texture between the glazing and sandstone.

It's really about a heightened sense of place, light, textures and the split-second moment. That's a heady cocktail for those awake to such things.

That is absolutely true. I think that's what architecture at its best is all about. It is the alchemy of those ingredients such as the beautifully cut stone, the delicate transparency of the glass—bringing these elements to life.

There are so many disparate component parts that all have to work together. When do you know where to stop; when it's sufficiently pared and yet enriched with ideas?

It's a little like a Rubik's Cube—you pull one piece one way and something else doesn't work. Everything has a reason. One of the functions that doesn't sound very poetic, but had to be considered, was how to cut the rock, how to ensure easy maintenance—these such considerations. From experience

we have found that separation of elements with perfectly defined gaps is very important. We also put a lot of work into the integration and concealment of services. The glass is very neatly detailed, glazing terminations, spacing and scaling are all important. And lifts are notoriously very low in height which affects scale. You very rarely find a tall lift.

This feels larger than normal. Is that because of its transparency?

Dealing with a project the size of Barangaroo, you're going from an absolutely enormous scale down to the tiny scale of this lift. How do you break down that scale? We spent a lot of time looking at the jointing and different sized glass paneling in each plane. The net effect is that you're totally aware of coming from a large scale to a smaller, more intimate human scale. At all times the aim was to bring it back down to a scale comfortable for the visitor and for an inviting space.

Any disappointments?

Only that the lift travels so fast, you don't really get to appreciate what you're seeing through the frit as you're rising up and looking out across to the skyline!

Your project moment?

On opening day a number of us from the practice walked around the site retaining our anonymity and asked others what they liked most of all. They kept telling us: "We love the lift." That was unexpected... and immensely pleasing.

PROJECT

Lift Shaft at Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney

CLIENT

Barangaroo Delivery Authority

ARCHITECT

WMK Architecture, Sydney

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Seraphic™ Design
Viridian ThermoTech™

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

PWP Landscape Architecture
(Peter Walker & Partners) in
association with Johnson
Pilton Walker

BUILDER

Lendlease

FACADE ENGINEER

Aurecon

WINDOW INSTALLER/GLAZIER

Arch-System Fabrication Pty Ltd

GLASS SUPPLIER AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT

Viridian



IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY VIBE



All pop-up cities and overnight urban precincts experience growth pains. Not even Dubai and its mega-rich sister cities can entirely buy their way out of trouble. Speedy growth, just like speedy driving, brings big risks. True diversity and smaller mixed-uses are often overlooked in the rush to embrace the big end of town.

This partially explains why community facilities and attractions such as libraries, art galleries, green wedges, community centres and playgrounds appear if ever, or merely as add-ons, rather than intrinsic to the mix.

The matter of a Dockland's Library was addressed with Clare Design and Hayball's handsome \$15 million project finally opening last year. Talk about 'bang for the buck'. The whole precinct has been conspicuous by, and the poorer for, such absences. This modest, community-based project sits right alongside the library on Victoria Harbour Promenade adding much needed dimension.

In truth it echoes the library, not so much eyeball snapping, as a project of cool restraint rather than design antics. A charcoal-toned metal cladding punctuated with Viridian glazing in critical areas of public access and operation, reprises a welcome waterfront design vocabulary.

Known as 'Community Hub at the Dock', the \$8.5 million project is at first glance an unlikely hybrid of family centre and boating facility. The 1600 sq.m. building delivers 46m of lively waterfront façade.





The highly articulated eastern façade with public entrance (left) and first level administration areas. Glazing is a carefully programmed response to the circumstances of views, natural light and solar loadings.

PROJECT

Docklands Community Hub & Boating Facility,
Melbourne

CLIENT

Lend Lease on behalf of City of Melbourne

ARCHITECT

Hayball

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian EnergyTech™

Viridian SuperGreen

Viridian Vanceva Colour Range

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt

Vision's Peter Hyatt discusses the project with Robert Stent of Hayball about a long, low-rise building with sky-high ambitions for Melbourne's waterfront:

PH It's one of the smallest waterfront structures, if not the smallest on Victoria Harbour, yet distills more into it than its much larger neighbours.

RS That's an interesting observation given that there are so many inert large-scale residential buildings. Then you have large, campus style office buildings with their own inner life and urban environment where people spend most of their time. Our little building is alive seven days a week and six of those days are about providing community services. On the weekend, it comes alive in another way with boating activity. It really spills out onto the wharf and down to the water between the dock square and the dock. It creates a small intimate space for boating and children.

But this almost has an umbilical cord to the water with its permeable façade and that long ramp to the water. It's part community building and part multi-faceted clubhouse. This is a little more ad hoc and shed-like than say, the library building with its flexibility of use.

Right: Glass is critical to the project's success as public window and 'invitation'.
Below: Viridian's Vanceva colored glass range on the northern facade produces a subtle activation and visual warmth to interiors.





CLICK TO VISIT THE
COMMUNITY HUB





Aren't they rather strange bedfellows—a community boating harbor and family services operating out of the same building?

It is, but it provides a strong community focus. Its intensity is about community.

What were the key ambitions of your client and practice?

To provide an intense community focus on the intersection of Collins and Bourke Streets. Therein lies a question how it addresses that intersection on dock square. It's a pioneer for the narrow, wharf-like part of Victoria Harbor. It's really built on the wharf and marks a transition in scale. It's meant to be used extensively around the clock to activate the park and present itself as an accessible, inviting community building.

This lightweight form along with the new library you designed with the Clares, rather than the monumental type transplanted from the CBD, appears so much more successful and appropriate.

It is a shed that speaks of the Mechanics Institute and Country Women's Association. It's the type you find in small towns or around Melbourne such as scout halls where people gather. It comes from humble origins.

It's the type you find in small towns or around Melbourne such as scout halls where people gather. It comes from humble origins.

ROBERT STENT, ARCHITECT







Previous page: The main boat storage bay provides a Sunday morning community focus as boat crews train for up-coming Dragon-Boat races.



There's a real permeability to the building that permits it to readily open, close and adapt. Its openings, even to the sky in the children's play area, are all consistent with that permeable nature.

It opens and shuts right along that water edge almost as an extension of the Collins Street retail experience. This invites people to participate and better experience boating activity and community services.

The boating activity isn't to do with luxury yachts or motor-cruisers but canoes, paddle and dragon boats.

It is very much volunteer-based. It's that social capital of people coming together for a shared, not-for-profit purpose. It's often spontaneous and about the volunteers. It provides some of that important social capital settings by which people value each other and form healthy communities.

And it's really quite a utilitarian building that doesn't require marble, exotic finishes, or huge signage.

That's true. It's simply a shed.

As a practice do you have a preference, or philosophy, for utilizing local suppliers and materials in your pursuit of sustainability?

Of course we do.

But many don't.

As you know, it's something we do rely on when specifying products that we know. We want to ensure that there is as much local content as possible. Glass is certainly high on the list. We would much prefer to use local products for that reason but also for the reason that we know what they are. You know there are people who will support it. Builders often substitute much of what we have specified. This means we can't be so sure about quality or their appropriateness and capabilities. That's a serious issue in itself.

What about public liability issues once inferior plastics, glass or steel fails?

It's unconscionable behavior. There can be significant cost-savings in substituting materials and I'm sure the proprietor and client are not benefiting from the full savings, nor are they getting a material they can count on. The public will, down the track, eventually pay for it.



We would much prefer to use local products for that reason but also for the reason that we know what they are. You know there are people who will support it. Builders often substitute much of what we have specified. This means we can't be so sure about quality or their appropriateness and capabilities. That's a serious issue in itself.

ROBERT STENT, ARCHITECT





How important is the glazing to delivering a performance product that opens up to this setting, yet is so instrumental in meeting tough Green-Star ratings.

Of course. In every building glass is a very significant component of sustainability and where we endeavour to provide visual permeability to invite and engage the public.

What level of assistance did Viridian provide by way of samples, expertise or advice?

We rely on Viridian for all of this and they provide a great service in that respect. The technical aspects of glass have grown exponentially in terms of performance and types of glazing relative to use in recent years. It requires more assistance through the design phase to ensure that we use the glass most appropriate for the energy and sustainability standards, as well as providing the right type of glass to complement the design intent.

Previous page: A central indoor/outdoor play and gathering area allows a heightened waterfront connection.

Above: Boat storage below and admin.

Left: Areas above reveal an unorthodox combination of community services.



In every building glass is a very significant component of sustainability and where we endeavour to provide visual permeability to invite and engage the public.

ROBERT STENT, ARCHITECT



Docklands Harbour provides a mirrored surface for the community meeting spaces above the boating hub.



In so many magazine articles, often in the awards, everything from paint colour to tap-fittings are listed. When it comes to the glass, no reference is made. This treating it as a hole in the wall, left over by the builder that could be clad in cellophane is a consistent oversight. It's a good observation and one I can't really answer. It could be that a lot of the glass selected is on a technical issue and involves a series of calculations performed by specialist façade engineers, or by people such as those from Viridian. There can be a whole raft of people who will influence that, whereas most architects would be over the detail of selecting a tap or tile themselves, or through people within their office. They might rely on all of the above to advise them on the glass. That might be part of that issue.

Do you have a standout, or project highlight?

Being down there on a Sunday and seeing it in full swing. It's fantastic with that bustle of people everywhere using and enjoying the building just as we hoped they would.

PROJECT

Docklands Community Hub & Boating Facility, Melbourne

CLIENT

Lend Lease on behalf of City of Melbourne

ARCHITECT

Hayball

PROJECT TEAM

David Tweedie, Robert Stent, James Luxton, Yu Yuen Leow, Maebe Tetlow-Stuart, Alan De Menezes

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WINDOW FABRICATOR

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