

Garvan St Vincent's Cancer Centre

The architecture and urban design of GSVCC



Garden House



Garden House, to
the Garden House



Garden House, to
the Garden House



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U channel glass

The streetscape at the southern end of Victoria Street is currently in a state of relative disarray compared with that of the northern end – to the north, footpaths are populated with coffee drinking citizens enjoying an urban experience. The new Garvan & St Vincent's Cancer Centre (GSVCC) does not attempt to replicate this dense urban character but rather to humanize the pedestrian experience and transition the urban corridor to the verdant realm of Green Park and the St Vincent's Hospital campus.

The street level façade of the GSVCC proposition establishes an aerial garden floating over the Victoria Street footpath from four metres above the footpath to twelve metres in height. The aerial garden is an extension of the ground level garden located in the two metre setback zone between the footpath and the new chemotherapy suite. Most chemotherapy suites in Sydney are dire internal grey spaces – this proposed GSVCC suite creates an internal environment reflecting the compassionate values of the centre by surrounding the facility with lush and fragrant gardens.

Privacy is a central issue for the chemotherapy suite and a four metre glass plank screen protects the views into the suite from the footpath and conversely the views out from the suite toward Victoria Street. The garden is viewed through clear glass from inside the chemo suite with the obscure translucent glass of the glazed screen as a backdrop to the planting.





Section through planted zone

The perception of the screen from the footpath is similar to a Japanese shoji screen – with milky translucence obscuring the view, shadowed and articulated by the verdant silhouette of the dense garden.

The aerial garden is layered with fragrant Star Jasmine and similar finely detailed flowering creeper establishing the lower stratum of the garden, with Boston ivy creating the middle layer and the upper layer a spray of bougainvillea.



1 Turret form
2 White Thai Restaurant
3 The Apartment building

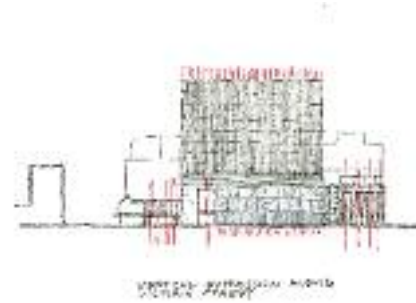
The boisterous bougainvillea will be somewhat loose in its expression, overhanging the façade line slightly, as it responds to the breeze rendering colour and movement to Victoria Street, in vivid contrast to the dense inner city built context.

The rhythm and detail of the east edge of Victoria Street as it extends from Surrey Street, continues along Victoria to Burton Street and then cranks south toward Oxford Street is an important reference for the articulation, tactility and urban scale of the GSVCC.



Ken Wooley's Garvan Institute

In the first instance, a diverse and complex architectural expression brings verticality as the major compositional element to the street – recognizable in the turret form on the corner of Surrey and Victoria Street and evident in the white Thai restaurant and punctuated dramatically in the apartment building on the north east corner of Liverpool and Victoria Street.



In the second instance, at the corner of Burton and Victoria Street the monumental corner architecture of Ken Wooley's Garvan Institute signals a change in scale, pattern and rhythm as Victoria Street changes direction into the hospital precinct. Significantly major work is being undertaken by the hospital at this intersection that informs the façade strategy of the GSVCC. The O'Brien Centre, currently nearing completion in Burton Street creates a new urban pocket park and entrance at the south east corner of the intersection. To construct this urban space the ramshackle structures to the north of the heritage DeLacy building have been demolished allowing the De Lacy Building to breathe and express its strong and rhythmic façade to the north.

The west facing the O'Brien Centre façade is a heavily patterned bronze metal screen which locates a neutral vertical surface adjacent to the complex De Lacy facade and, by contradistinction, magnifies the heritage quality of the façade in the new urban park.

These issues are crucial to the new composition of the south end of Victoria Street of which the GSVCC will be the major component. The intersection precinct will have visual and urban clarity which until now has been lacking and the expressive De Lacy building façade will be projected into the realm of Victoria Street.

The west façade of GSVCC refers to this revealed façade and in concert with the Garvan Institute façade establishes a staccato perpendicular pattern to the block between the northern bookend of the Green Park Hotel and the southern bookend of the Garvan Institute.

Adjacent to the hotel the GSVCC takes its height from the parapet of the hotel; it takes its colour from the brick colour of the hotel and it establishes a vertical rhythm which, although at a different "pitch" is seen in the De Lacy building and Garvan Institute façades in the near distance.



The entrance to GSVCC has a larger proportion and its singular concrete form is deliberately scaled in both height and width to relate to the width and height of the predominant individual building forms along Victoria Street.



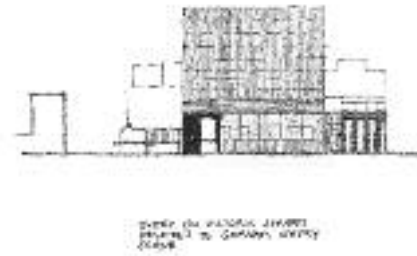
Further, its materiality distinguishes it from the hotel; from the low retail section of GSVCC and the garden of GSVCC immediately to the south.

At street level the architectural strategy is to reflect the diversely scaled and textured forms of the eastern edge of Victoria Street and interpret those ad hoc forms in a contemporary language. Essential is diversity, scale relating to the existing fabric and materiality relating to the masonry expression of the street.



The three dimensionality of the building is an essential component of the "reading" of GSVCC; and this is articulated in a variety of ways.

Firstly, the horizontal datum established by the neighbouring Garvan Institute ensures that the apparent eye level scale of the street edge is consistent with the scale to of the street to the north, the scale of the Garvan Institute; and importantly to the liberated façade of De Lacy building.



Secondly the detail of the sunscreen of the west elevation relates to the scale of the rooftop café and terrace of the Garvan Institute – known as “De Novo”. The skeletal steel frame of the terrace is a visually ambiguous element on the upper corner of the Garvan Institute and the GSVCC makes two urban gestures in respect of this frame and setback – a tapered and framed “reversed” bay window (a device used on each façade of the GSVCC) uses depth, colour and articulation to establish a dialogue with the Garvan terrace by its abstraction of the steel frame as an element of creating “frame”; by the depth of the reveal of the De Novo glazed west facing wall; and by the recessive colours of De Novo and the steel frame. Whilst the GSVCC uses the red oxide colour of the Green Park Hotel brick as its recessive device and De Novo is dark grey, the effect is similar in that a compositional dialogue of depth, scale and tone is established.

This dialogue allows the two buildings at the De Novo level to visually relate – to establish an architectural dialogue. This dialogue extends along the west façade by a finely articulated metal screen at close horizontal pitch behind which is the open breezeway connecting the GSVCC with the De Novo café in the Garvan Institute.



Image sample of screen

The breezeway frame is a very subtle visual device that mediates the scale of the larger sunscreen from Level 8 to Level 10 of the GSVCC. Whilst the two screens are of the same material their pitch differs and provides a transition in the façade as it rises from the base of the building – the concrete and garden structures – and merges into the upper plane of the form. The visual effect is that of a diaphanous veil becoming lighter as it visually coalesces with the sky.

The metallic screen has a very fine grain – a three millimetre thick aluminium flat 40 mm in width at forty millimetre spacing brings very fine architectural articulation to the form making of the building. In the streetscape the building appears to have a solid form and the ambiguity wrought by the screen is the essential character of this building – the fine screen changes its presentation to the pedestrian as they move past it, view it from differing angles, view it in differing light conditions, view it from afar and view it at dusk and at night.



Nortel Networks by night



Nortel Networks by day

Each of these viewing modes renders a varying transparent, to translucent to opaque reading of the façade. From a variety of angles and distances, the inner façade beyond, with its own articulation and 2 meter set-back will become more or less apparent.

Similar buildings completed by BVN demonstrate the ambiguity brought to the ephemeral façade in differing conditions. Images of Nortel Networks and Sovereign House are shown to demonstrate examples of these conditions.



Sovereign House by night



Sovereign House by day



- 1
Atrium Curtain wall.
- 2
Curtain wall to write-up areas with varied tone and rhythm spandrel panels.
- 3
Inner Façade protrusion reflecting the laboratory programme with varied tone and rhythm spandrel panels.
- 4
Planked off-form concrete service core.
- 5
"Breezeway" connection to "De Novo" café in the Garvan Institute.
- 6
Red Oxide steel connection portal to "De Novo."
- 7
Internal louver bank serving high level plant.
- 8
Curtain wall with varied tone spandrel and full height glazing to HOAC facility.
- 9
Aluminium louvered façade "veil" component.
- 10
Planted garden and primary u-channel glazing component at street level.

Exploded view demonstrating the façade articulation of the GSVCC behind the western outer louvered skin.



View demonstrating visually solid screen on northern facade



View demonstrating depth and transparency from afar

The screen is a device that protects the building from direct northern and most importantly western sun which effects demand on the mechanical plant resulting in a significant reduction in energy consumption. This is an architectural element borne of function – a sort of protecting veil – whilst bringing an intriguing urban artefact to the street.

Much discussion has been had regarding a potential three metre setback from Victoria Street above the “podium” level. The apparent form of the building is described by the limit of the diaphanous veil; however the actual built form of the building – the solid form – is actually setback two metres from Victoria Street and two metres from the northern plane of the veil. On Victoria Street the laboratory pod of the façade reduces the two metre dimension to 600 millimetres for part of the façade.

The visual depth created by the interplay of light between the veil and the true façade of the building contributes to the ambiguity of the architecture. From afar – from the intersection of Surrey and Victoria Streets, the northern façade becomes quite transparent as the angle of the viewer becomes flatter and the small scale of the veil blurs exposing the glazed form of the atrium. This view is one of two distant vistas to the building; the second being the view north from Oxford Street and Victoria. The former view exposes another “hidden” or “revealed” aspect of the façade – i.e. the “true” west façade is setback two metres from Victoria Street and is viewed at different angles, in different light and at different distances.

These changing viewing experiences expose the real architectural character of the building – a subtle, complex and considered layering of surface and volume which changes its character in deference to the passing day.

The north west corner of the tower of the building takes its articulation from the adjacent detailing of the Green Park Hotel. The fenestration on the north and west facades of the hotel is set in deep reveals and highlighted in a different colour from the plane of brickwork.



Reference to "bay-window-in-reverse"



Reference to red oxide bay windows

The northwest corner of GSVCC, after the transition in scale from the hotel by the vertical red oxide steel blades of the retail section, articulates its edge in a four part architectural strategy.

Firstly, the concrete entry portal – scaled to Victoria Street modulation – rises above the parapet of the hotel and retail section with three dimensional complexity typical of a built corner mid-block. This is a phenomenon that occurs along the length of Victoria Street as diversely expressed buildings change height, materiality and fenestration – a common inner city urban phenomenon.

Secondly, the red oxide coloured "bay-window-in-reverse" makes a clear reference to the Green Park Hotel deep revealed fenestration pattern albeit in a differently scaled and unambiguously contemporary manner.

Thirdly, the primary facade is layered two metres behind the metallic veil creating a visual depression in the façade defined by the north west corner of the building, the lift core and the upper and lower red oxide bay windows.

Fourthly, the urban scaled skywindow matching the lower "bay-window-in-reverse" – this large scale dialogue of contemporary building forms gives deep surface articulation from afar; gives the approaching pedestrian views to a composition of diverse building elements referring to the familiar heritage and streetscape elements of diverse materials, diverse scale, diverse fenestration and a richness of visual depth and form.

The architectural and urban design expression of the GSVCC is deliberately scaled to suit the passer-by, to the rich and diverse immediate urban context and to the broader sweep of cityscape.

It seeks to bring an architectural language that is determined by the functional need to provide solar protection; and is deferential to heritage and context which transitions between a dense urban setting and the verdant realm of Green Park and St Vincent's Hospital.

It seeks to articulate the important purpose of this facility – to harness technology for the betterment of human life. To this end the metallic diaphanous veil reveals the substantive body of the place – the fine grain componentry of the outer skin protecting and nurturing the dense substance of the inner realm.

Drawings

- 1.00 - Ground Floor
- 2.00 - First Floor
- 3.00 - Second Floor
- 4.00 - Third Floor
- 5.00 - Fourth Floor
- 6.00 - Fifth Floor
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- 27.00 - Twenty-sixth Floor
- 28.00 - Twenty-seventh Floor
- 29.00 - Twenty-eighth Floor
- 30.00 - Twenty-ninth Floor
- 31.00 - Thirtieth Floor
- 32.00 - Thirty-first Floor
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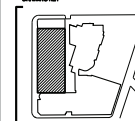
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CUEST

**GARVAN INSTITUTE
AND ST VINCENTS &
MATER HEALTH SYDNEY**

**GARVAN & ST VINCENTS
CANCER CENTRE**

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GRAPHIC SCALE

SCALE

1:400 at A3
1:200 at A1

STATUS

CRAWLING

West elevation – Internal

DRAWING NUMBER	ISSUE
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