



# MOORE PARK GARDENS

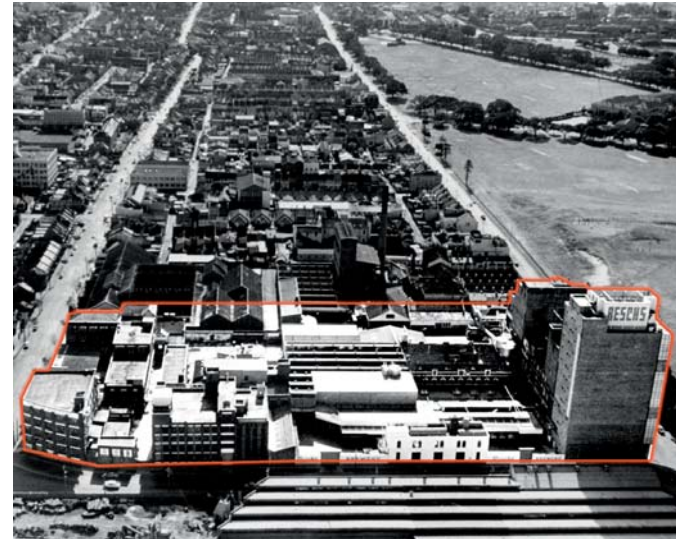
IT MUST BE LOVE...

**URBAN DESIGN**  
**ALLEN JACK+COTTIER**  
**ARCHITECT ALLEN JACK+COTTIER**  
**DEVELOPER DEALRUBY PTY LTD**  
**COMPLETED 2000**  
**CONSTRUCTION COST \$133M**  
**FSR 2.5:1 GFA 65 150 M<sup>2</sup>**  
**SITE AREA 2.66 HA**

Why do people love living at Moore Park Gardens?  
Architecture critics use it as a reference point; there is always a waiting list to buy apartments, and most residents say they would not live anywhere else.

So why are people so passionate about Allen Jack+Cottier's Moore Park Gardens development in Sydney's Redfern? What is it about this late 1990's inner city multi-residential complex that makes it such a great place to live, work and invest? And how has AJ+C's design thinking on multi residential projects evolved since this award-winning project was completed?

Here, we ask some residents and design commentators for their views.



## THE HISTORY

Since AJ+C started design work on this iconic site in Sydney's inner city [20] years ago, many things have changed. In those days the neighbourhood was considered very rough: fights broke out in the pub, the media regularly carried stories of petty crimes in the areas, Redfern's football team the Rabbitohs ranked at the bottom of Sydney underdogs. The once feted 'pride of the league' faced financial ruin and was forcibly retired from the code in 1999. There was not a café latte in sight, and you could still get a Sergeant's meat pie at the milkbar in Redfern's main street.

Right from the outset, Allen Jack+Cottier's design team wanted to design a development that was completely different to the run of the mill grey [90s] concrete boxes popular at the time. [insert brief].

Today, Moore Park Gardens is regarded as a pivotal development in Australian apartment design. Many of the elements pioneered by AJ+C at Moore Park Gardens – the mix of residential, business and shops and cafes, the sense of connectedness, the wide internal streets, wide range of apartment types and communal gardens - have entered the lexicon of apartment developments across Australia.



## DESIGN STATEMENT

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Moore Park Gardens (MPG) is one of Australia's leading medium density residential developments. MPG has been recognised by the industry as a premier example of sophisticated urban design resulting in the successful creation of a neighbourhood and community in a derelict industrial site. In addition MPG showcases the extensive use of Ecologically Sustainable Design (ESD) principles for sustainable urban living.

Moore Park Gardens is a 560 unit residential development on the 2.6 hectare Reschs Brewery Site in East Redfern, inner Sydney. Allen Jack+Cottier were initially commissioned to prepare a new masterplan for the whole site. The development was built in four stages, around a central road 'Sir Charles Moore Avenue'. The community facilities - a meeting room, gym, sauna, 25 m pool, child care centre and retail areas were established in Stage 1, along with five apartment blocks.

The next two stages consisted of two towers on the SW and SE corners of the site, and a series of low buildings that define the edge of Bourke Street and Sir Charles Moore Avenue. Between the towers and the low buildings are a series of landscaped courtyards. The two towers utilize a cross over design that allows 90% of the apartments to have cross ventilation and northern orientated living area.

The final stage was an infill building between the two towers, completed in June 2000.

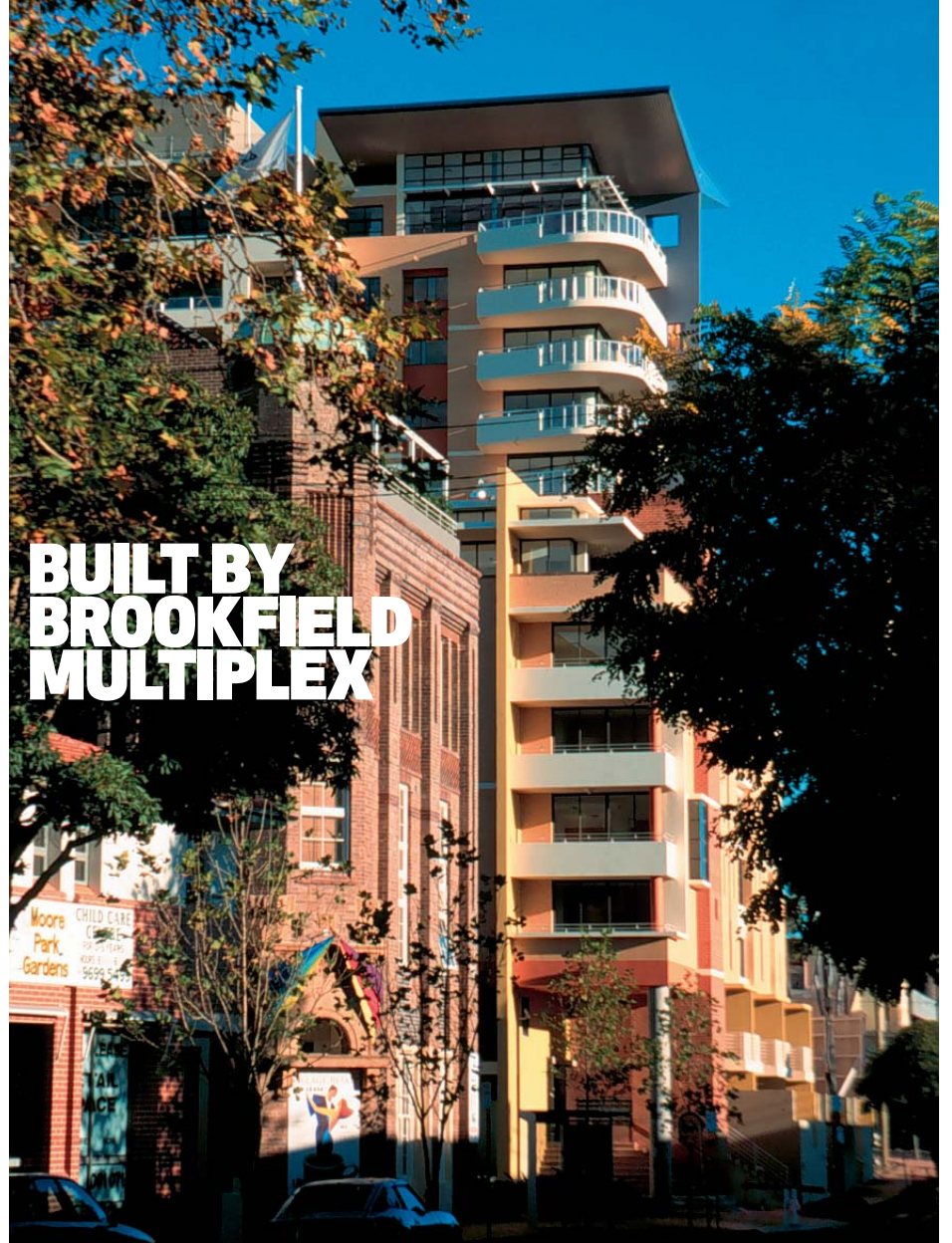
The site is traversed by a series of public pedestrian routes, linking Moore Park Golf Course (via a new pedestrian bridge), Edmund Reschs Reserve to the north of the site, Bourke Street, Crescent Street and any new development on the ACI site to the south.

The Property Council of Australia identified Moore Park Gardens as a development which demonstrates that good design impacts on improved financial returns. The sense of neighbourhood that has been generated through good urban design is evident in the initial high owner-occupancy rate of 70% (well up on the owner-occupier rates in the surrounding area). A feeling of belonging and confidence in personal and property security has been achieved without reliance on the devices of a gated community. By creating a number of buildings with their own identity, and a series of quiet public open spaces with pedestrian access across the site, it was hoped the development would become integrated with the surrounding community. This hope has been borne out with boosted land values in neighbouring sites and greater diversification in the socio-economic make-up of neighbouring properties.



***'It is an excellent example of how passive design can not only save on energy costs and improve indoor air quality, but also increase property value.'***

Melbourne Docklands ESD Guide, May 2006



**BUILT BY  
BROOKFIELD  
MULTIPLEX**





**560 APARTMENTS**  
**11 RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS**  
**4 STRATA PLANS**

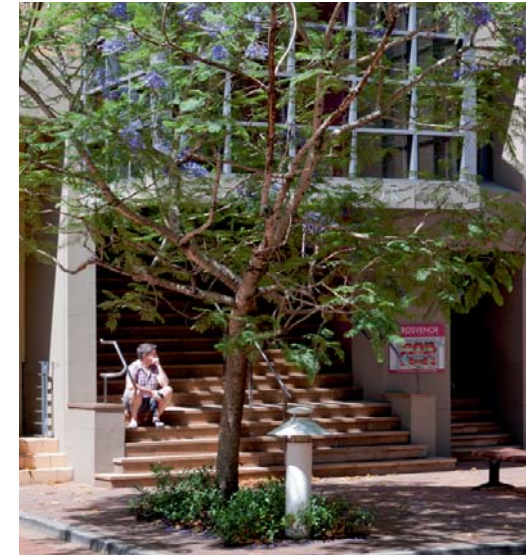
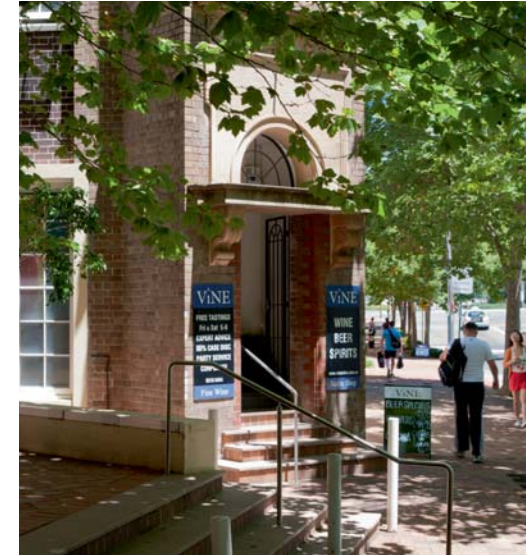
**1 COMMUNITY**

*'MPG was, and remains, one of Sydney's most successful inner city residential developments...*

*Designed by Allen Jack+Cottier back in the '90s, MPG provides 560 apartments in three to 20 storeys on 2.6 hectares. By our standards that's pretty dense.*

*But it doesn't feel it. With its sophisticated and varied composition, myriad walkways, luscious planting, parks, pools and established delis, it creates not just a community, but a genuine middle-class chic. This is seriously rare. The disgrace is that in the last decade's huge medium density boom, nothing has even come close.*

**Dr Elizabeth Farrelly**  
Columnist, author and consultant.





## GOOD NEIGHBOURS

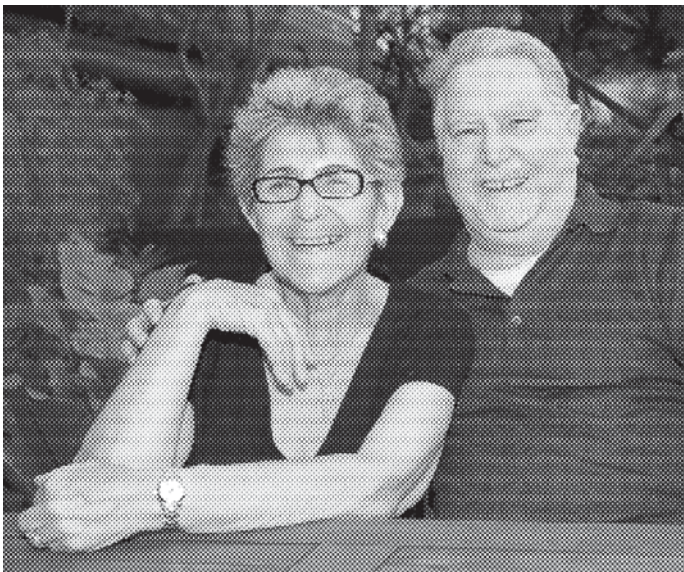
Bill and Maria Zachariou know a thing or two about marriage – they have been together for 50 years, and finish each other's sentences – and also what makes a real community. Having come to Sydney's Annandale as a young bride, and always lived in a single family house, country born Maria says at first she was not sure about living in an apartment. Now, the two things she most loves about their ground floor 110 m<sup>2</sup> apartment are its open design, and the fact that the apartment 'feels like a house.'

*'I knew when we bought it we could fit all our furniture in, and we did,' she says. 'For me, a home has to have a front door, and a back door, and a garden – here, we have them all. As well as the living spaces, we have another 35 m<sup>2</sup> of courtyard. I have always been a big gardener, and here, I can still be. It makes me happy to sit here and just look at the greenery.'*

Husband Bill, who is a very active Strata Chairman for the Moore Park Gardens Residents' Association, says they chose the apartment because it is both well located, and well designed.

*'Fifteen years ago, to buy a house in Redfern – people thought you were mad,' says Bill. 'Now Moore Park Gardens is very well known. Even the taxi drivers know it. We looked around for a long time, and this was by far the best-built apartment we had seen, anywhere. It was also the largest.'*

'Now we wouldn't live anywhere else...' he adds. 'We absolutely love it here, it's like living in a country town. You know everyone. Everything you need is here. We walk to the City and Woolloomooloo all the time. Who would have thought we would ever live in an apartment? But here we are, and it's great.'



**Name:** Bill and Marina Zachariou  
**Resident of:** Argyle  
**Moved in:** 1995

*'Moore Park Gardens has all the ingredients of a great community – a mixed population, all ages, straight and gay, cafes and shops and small businesses, and residents who stay here a long time. Its definitely not a transient population - you see the same faces for years, That shows how much people love living here.'*

## LOCAL PRACTICE

Physiotherapist Catherine Moore bought her initial Moore Park Gardens apartment in 1997 off the plan, encouraged by a school friend who worked for EDAW, the landscaping firm who designed the gardens. Since then she has moved to a second, larger apartment and also relocated her physiotherapy business to the complex.

*'I was a bit doubtful at first, as only three floors had been built, and it was a construction site. One day we put on hard hats and climbed up. Immediately, I could see how fantastic it was going to be! My friend mentioned that a lot of architects were buying in, so I knew Moore Park Gardens would be a great design. I bought my first apartment that day.'*

*'I am so glad I did. Moore Park Gardens has all the ingredients of a great community – a mixed population, all ages, straight and gay, cafes and shops and small businesses, and residents who stay here a long time. Its definitely not a transient population - you see the same faces for years, That shows how much people love living here.'*

The next stage was to bring her rapidly expanding physiotherapy business into the complex.

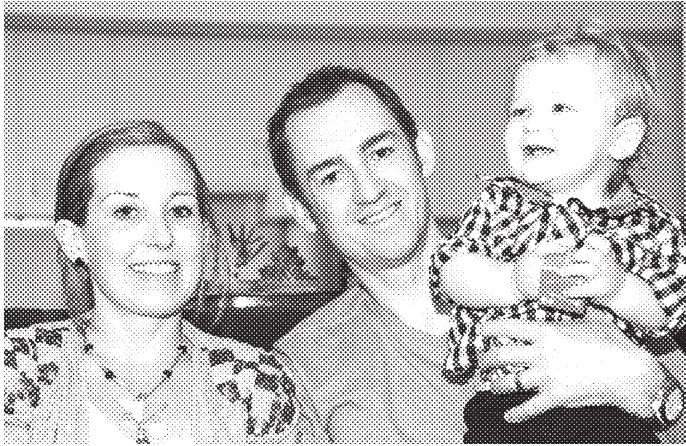
*'I realised there were no other physios in the area, and that this would be a perfect location,' Catherine said.*

Starting with a small 40 m<sup>2</sup> 3-person practice, in XXX, in 2008 she doubled both floor area and her staff. Her practice, Moore Health, hasn't looked back – business is booming. Catherine walks across the courtyard to work, and swims regularly in the complex's 25 metre pool.

*'Best of all we love the space – you would be surprised how much space and light there is in these apartments. As well as the high ceilings, courtyards and balconies, it's the sense of physicality I love... you can be immersed in the park, the beach and nature, in literally ten minutes. I think that's why there is such high demand for these apartments – that and the fact that they are so well designed. There is always a waiting list.'*



**Name:** Catherine Moore  
**Business:** Moore Health  
**Moved in:** 1997



**Name:** Michelle, Dan and Jackson Farrar-Eagles  
**Resident of:** Waverly  
**Moved in:** 2011

## ... AND BABY MAKES 4

*'This is in our opinion one of the best apartment complexes in Sydney,' says Michelle. 'It is exceptionally well designed.'*

Both Michelle Farrar-Eagles, who runs a fashion consultancy, and Dan Eagles, General Manager of ProDesign, travelled widely before moving to Moore Park Gardens. They compare living in their spacious apartment in the historic 'Wine and Spirit Store' to living in the hyper cool Meatpacking district in New York – close to the city, with huge light-filled loft spaces and a strong sense of community.

Prior to moving to the apartment upstairs and then buying their current one, the two lived in a house on a 580 m<sup>2</sup> block of land in Queensland. So space and light were key considerations, especially after the birth of their son, Jackson, in October 2011.

'This is in our opinion one of the best apartment complexes in Sydney,' says Michelle. 'It is exceptionally well designed.'

'In terms of how the complex works, its fantastic. There is the pleasure of living in the city, but you are just out of it. The design is flexible, we have everything we need, and we can walk most places. The main thing is it has a really nice community feel, almost like living in a big street. Its great,' she says.

Now installed with Jackson and Moet, their white Maltese Cavalier spaniel, Michelle and Dan love the size of their new apartment, the layout, and the amount of light and air it draws during the day.

'When we were looking around, what we noticed first is the size of these apartments, and the flexible layout,' says Dan. 'We really wanted something that felt like a house, and at the same time, like a loft apartment, and this does. The more we looked around the more realised that space was the key... here, we have an apartment that is bigger than a semi, and yet works better from a functionality point of view.'

Both Michelle and Dan have a good understanding of design, and are well on the way to completing the refurbishment of their apartment. Baby Jackson has plenty of space to roam around in, and Moet likes the greenery outdoors. Michelle has just been 'ordered' on to the Strata Committee [check name], to represent the younger generation of owners.

'We have no plans to move from here, its exactly what we were looking for. Best of all, we like the sense of belonging, that there are people all around who will help you with stuff. It's even more important when you have a family,' says Dan.

## THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

When mental health specialist Professor Ian Hickie, his partner Dr Elizabeth Scott and their family of [four] children moved to Moore Park Gardens x years ago, they were surprised by how much apartment living suited their hectic lifestyle, yet still felt like an inner urban community.

'We came here from a large terrace in Newtown, which most people think of as the ultimate in inner city living,' says Ian. 'But that's not the case. We are never going back to a house, ever - our quality of life here is so much better.'

Professor Hickie says that while people generally associate apartment living with a lack of community, and lack of variety, the reality in this case is completely the opposite.

'The way Moore Park Gardens is designed is the key,' he says. 'Old terraces are actually very difficult to live in. People live next door to each other and never speak. Neighbours are continually changing, and you are constantly battling the vagaries of an urban landscape that was designed in the 19th century. Plus all the spaces are from the same cookie cutter mould.'

'Here, it's exactly the opposite. The spaces in each apartment are beautifully designed, and very varied. Each apartment is a different layout, and the air flow and light and outlook are superb. Most importantly, the whole complex has been designed to create a feeling of connection between people and the community of which they are a part. That is totally lacking in most suburban housing.'

'From a mental wellbeing point of view, this is so much better. My seven year old has grown up knowing so many people, old and young. He can go around safely on his own, he uses the pool all the time, and would rather play in Moore Park than in a tiny back garden. This is not just a transient population...these are people he has mixed with all his life. They are all people who choose to live here, from a huge range of different backgrounds.'

In sense, this suburb is a REAL suburb. It's the sharing of things – the pool, the coffee shop, the gym – that makes the community, and that's what we have here.

'We never get the car out at the weekend, we ride our bikes everywhere, and we have everything at our fingertips. It's the community thing – because you have to share facilities like the pool, you get to know people much more than you would in a single family house. From a health and wellbeing point of view, it's great. And good architecture and design is the key,' he says.



**Name:** Prof Ian Hickie and Dr Elizabeth Scott  
**Resident of:** Caley  
**Moved in:** 2005

*'The way Moore Park Gardens is designed is the key,'*



## A SMART MOVE

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**Name:** Noel Jabaji and Ken Langley  
**Resident of:** Dowling  
**Moved in:** 2005

Initially, Noel and Ken looked for an inner city house to buy, then decided they would achieve better value by upgrading from Noel's smaller apartment in Moore Park Gardens to a larger one. Many years later, they have reversed the move, downsizing from a large three bedroom apartment to their current two bedroom apartment with dramatic views over Moore Park, and beyond.

*'We didn't even look anywhere else, to be honest' says Ken. 'The size and layout of this apartment – its much larger than most two-bedders – and its location are all perfect. It's close to both our jobs, it's pet friendly, and it has a great community feeling - more like living with family than in an apartment complex.'*

As well, buying in to Moore Park Gardens has proven to be a smart move for the pair from investment point of view. 'Moore Park Gardens is the most sought after complex in the area for both rentals and purchase,' says Noel. 'The value of these apartments outperforms all the others in the area – we trebled the value of our last apartment in the fourteen years we had it. The next door complex has not done as well.'

'Ultimately, it comes down to good design – each apartment is unique. This is the first complex in Sydney to have spilt level apartments. Coupled with the cross ventilation and high ceilings, it really doesn't feel at all claustrophobic, unlike many two bedroom apartments' he adds.

The pair also love the fact that the Moore Park Gardens community is so eclectic. 'There are lots of kids and oldies around,' Noel adds 'it's a genuine mix: we have gays and lesbians, families, singles, older couples – the whole gamut. I think we will be here for a long long time.'



Real estate agent Sue Shearer, who specializes in properties in the Moore Park/Redfern area, confirms that in investment terms, Moore Park Gardens outperforms the other developments in the area.

*'There is always a waiting list of buyers for Moore Park Gardens properties. People want this specific complex, and that is largely driven by the design. The comments I get showing people around are all about the design.'*

*'As soon as we get a new listing, we email our data base. Many properties don't even get advertised – they are sold straight from our waiting list'*

Rental performance is also strong.

*'In fact, we have 100% occupancy, or close to that. The vacancy rate for Moore Park Gardens is very very low...'*  
*Sue says. 'We usually have someone ready to move in to our owners' prior to the tenant moving out.'*

Sue Shearer, Director, Shearer Properties





*'Moore Park Gardens transformed private multi-storey residential development in Sydney by demonstrating to developers that good design was good business.'*

Trevor Howells - Architectural writer and academic.





**2001 DULUX COLOUR AWARDS  
BEST RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR  
1999 PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA  
DESIGN DIVIDEND, LEADING URBAN DESIGN DEVELOPMENT  
1998 URBAN DESIGN INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (UDIA)  
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AWARD  
1999 ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
PRESIDENTS AWARD**



## MOVING FORWARD

Allen Jack+Cottier Principals Peter Ireland and Michael Heenan talk about the influence Moore Park Gardens continues to have on mixed-use developments, both within the office and in the wider architectural community

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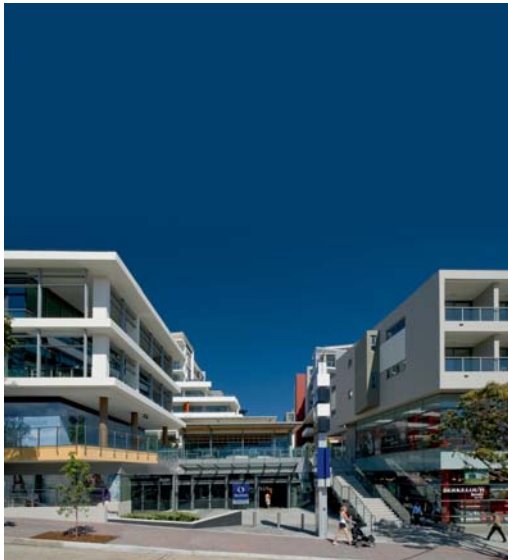
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### THE VILLAGE AND STOCKLAND BALGOWLAH



### ROUSE HILL TOWN CENTRE



### MACQUARIE VILLAGE



### BURWOOD PLAZA





AJ+C  
ALLEN JACK+COTTIER