Attachment E

Design Competition Report

Architectural Design Competition Report

26-38 Saunders Street, Pyrmont

Submitted to City of Sydney Council
on behalf of Toohey Miller Pty Ltd.

Prepared by Colliers Urban Planning

16 January 2026 | 2240676



'Gura Bulga'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

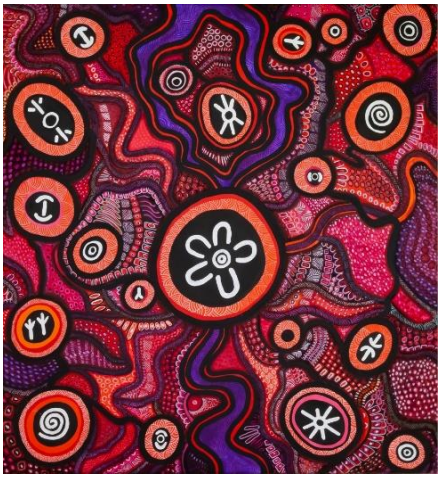
'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.



'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.



'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

Colliers Urban Planning acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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This Architectural Design Competition Report has been reviewed and endorsed by the Competition Jury, which comprises:



Lee Hillam (Chair)



Dr Michael Zanardo



Tai Ropiha



Peter Smith

16 January 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This Architectural Design Competition Report has been prepared by Colliers Urban Planning on behalf of Toohey Miller Pty Ltd. (the Proponent), for the Architectural Design Competition (Design Competition) undertaken for a residential development located at 26-38 Saunders Street, Pyrmont (herein referred to as the Site).

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the City of Sydney Council Competitive Design Policy and summarises:

- The Competition process.
- The Competitor submissions.
- The Jury's deliberations, decision and recommendations.

This Report should be read in conjunction with the Design Competition Brief (the Brief) provided at **Appendix A**. The Competition was conducted in accordance with the Brief, which was endorsed by the City of Sydney Council (Council).

Following the deliberations of the Jury, **the BVN scheme was selected as the winning scheme.** An overview of the process, the reasons for the winning scheme being selected, along with the Jury's recommendations for design refinements in the winning scheme to achieve design excellence, is outlined in the following sections of this Report.

1.1 Design Excellence Strategy

The Design Competition was undertaken in accordance with the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy, dated 16 December 2025 (refer to **Appendix B**).

The Design Excellence Strategy was prepared to define the location and extent of the Competition, the type of Competition, and the key elements of the competition process, including ongoing design integrity requirements.

1.2 The Project

The vision of the project was defined by the following key design objectives:

- **Create a sustainable, high quality architectural design** that reflects Pyrmont's strategic location through contextually rich, high-quality architecture that enhances amenity, connectivity and sense of place. The form, design and function of the tower should be of high quality and responsive to the wider urban context.
- **Craft a timeless built form** that sensitively responds to the evolving urban fabric, embodying design excellence and local character.
- **Establish a dynamic, articulated podium** that enlivens and activates the Saunders Street and Quarry Master Drive frontages with architectural expression.
- **Prioritise high quality frontages and the public interface**.
- **Prioritise exceptional residential amenity** for future occupants, while safeguarding solar access to neighbouring developments through sensitive site planning.

- **Incorporate diverse apartment typologies** that balance flexibility, structural efficiency, and premium materiality to support a range of lifestyles.
- **Maximise residential amenity** by optimising dual-aspect apartment layouts and orienting homes toward Rozelle Bay and Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- **Deliver a vibrant public domain** that seamlessly integrates residential life with activated ground-level retail, reinforcing Pyrmont as a thriving place to live, work, and gather.
- **Integrate generous communal open spaces and landscaping** throughout the site to foster wellness, social interaction, and biodiversity and landscaping,

1.3 Competitors

The five (5) architectural firms invited to participate in the Competition were (in alphabetical order):

- Aileen Sage
- Bates Smart
- BVN
- Smart Design Studio
- Woods Bagot

1.4 Jury

The Jury was formed in accordance with the Design Excellence Strategy, and comprised a total of four (4) members, with:

- Two (2) nominated by the City of Sydney, each of whom has no pecuniary interest in the development or involvement in the development approval process:
  - Lee Hillam (Chair) – DunnHillam.
  - Dr Michael Zanardo – Studio Zanardo
- Two (2) nominated by the Proponent:
  - Tai Ropiha - CHROFI
  - Peter Smith – Smith & Tzannes

The substantial breadth and depth of experience across the Jury ensured there was informed debate and rigour applied during the deliberation and selection process.

1.5 Technical Advisors

The Proponent made available several advisors during the Competition to provide technical assistance to the Competitors and/or the Jury, including:

- Urban Planning – Colliers Urban Planning
- Quantity Surveyor – WT Partnership
- Structural Engineer – Van der Meer
- Building Services – Donnelly Simpson Cleary
- Sustainability – Northrop
- Wind Engineering – CPP Wind Engineers
- Acoustic – Acoustic Logic

1.6 Observers

The City of Sydney Council appointed impartial observers to oversee the Competition. The following were present as impartial observers at various stages throughout the Competition process:

- Anita Morandini – Design Excellence Manager, City of Sydney.
- Marie Quattromani – Design Excellence Coordinator, City of Sydney.
- Ben Chamie – Area Planning Coordinator, City of Sydney.
- Shannon Rickersey – Senior Planner, City of Sydney.

1.7 Competition Manager

Colliers Urban Planning (Alex Heath) was engaged by the Proponent to act as the Competition Manager.

2.0 Competition Program Outline

An outline of the key events in the Competition is provided below in **Table 1.**

Table 1 Key Dates and Competition Program

Week	Day/Date	Milestone/ Process
Tuesday, 28 October 2025		**Commencement Date** • The Competition Brief was issued to the invited Competitors.
Thursday, 30 October 2025		**Competitors Briefing Session and Site Visit** • A briefing session and Site visit was conducted for all Competitors.
Monday, 3 November 2025		**Jury Briefing Session** • A briefing session for the Jury was conducted.
Monday, 10 November to Friday, 14 November 2025		**Progress Session date (Optional)** • An optional, informal progress session for Competitors to seek clarifications limited to planning and technical compliance only.
Monday, 17 November to Friday, 21 November 2025		**Quantity Surveyor Meeting** • Meeting sessions conducted via Microsoft teams attended by the quantity surveyor (QS) and Competitors prior to the lodgement of final submissions.
Wednesday, 26 November 2025		**Supplementary Jury Briefing Session** • A briefing session for Peter Smith (Jury member) was conducted.
Monday, 1 December 2025		**Final Submission Lodgement Date** • Competitors submitted electronic copies of their Final Submissions via the Design Competition Manager (DCM) online platform to the Competition Manager for distribution to the Technical Advisors and Jury.
Monday, 8 December 2025		**Lodgement of Presentation Date Material** • Presentations submitted via the DCM to the Competition Manager for compliance review.
Monday, 8 December 2025		**Summary Pack Lodgement Date** • Summary Packs submitted via the DCM to the Competition Manager.
Monday, 15 & Tuesday, 16 December 2025		**Presentation Date** • Competitors presented their Final Submissions to the Jury. • The Jury met, deliberated and decided on a winner.
Tuesday, 16 December 2025		**Notification to Competitors** • Notification of the decision outcome was issued to the Competitors via phone call.
Wednesday, 17 December 2025		**Formal notification of decision to Competitors** • Formal conclusion notification of the winner was issued to the Competitors via email.

3.0 Submission Summary and Assessment

A total of five (5) concept design schemes were considered by the Jury. Each scheme provided a distinct and unique response to the Brief. All Competitors presented a high-quality written submission and presentation, addressing the complexities of the Site and offering solutions to address the design objectives and requirements of the Competition Brief. A summary of the schemes and accompanying Jury's assessment is provided in the following section.

3.1 BVN

3.1.1 Summary of Submission

The BVN scheme proposed a 37-storey tower sitting above a podium ranging in height from 5-9 storeys, and which surrounded a centralised courtyard. The podium consisted primarily of sandstone cladding and sandstone coloured glass reinforced concrete (GRC), and generally maintained a 5-storey street wall to Saunders Street, before increasing to 9-storeys at its northern end. A pocket park was also provided at the northern corner of the Site, adjacent to Carmichael park.

The central courtyard was designed to resemble a 'deep shaded gully' consisting of landscaping, dwelling space, as well as pedestrian links. A publicly accessible through-site link traversed the Site, which was framed by double height entry portals on the Eastern and Western sides of Quarry Master Drive. A series of Ground Level retail premises fronted Saunders Street, whilst residential apartments were also provided, with direct access to Quarry Master Drive.

The podium rooftop comprised of communal open space, alongside a swimming pool, as well as providing a variety of internal communal areas.

The tower comprised a sculpted form with the floorplate cantilevering outwards at the lower levels, and also tapering in the southwest corner of the upper levels. The tower façade was characterised by tilted glass within a curtain wall system, with aluminium framing and spandrels of a similar colour palette to the podium. A total of 196 apartments were proposed.



Figure 1 Conceptual render of BVN scheme

Source: BVN



Figure 2 Conceptual render of BVN scheme from Quarry Master Drive at street view

Source: BVN

3.1.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury's assessment of the scheme is summarised below:

- The 'deep, shaded gully' approach to the internal podium courtyard was considered a successful response to the challenges of the DCP envelope.
- Internal apartment planning was successful in both the podium and tower.
- The expression of the podium exterior was considered a positive element of the design, with its diagonal lines providing a sense of 'movement,' while the use of sandstone cladding provides depth to the façade and aligns with the adjacent cliff-face at Carmichael Park.
- The sculpting of the tower form was considered a positive feature, with particular reference to the preservation of solar access to Goodman and Bank Street Parks.
- The consolidation of communal spaces on the podium rooftop was a positive feature.
- The small size of the Ground Level lobby spaces that open from Quarry Master Drive and service the podium apartments was questioned.
- The façade on the western side of Quarry Master Drive dedicates substantial frontage to services, with the reduction to visual quality and street activation seen as something that could've been improved on in the scheme.
- The tilted glass in the tower was also queried with regards to solar control.

3.2 Bates Smart

3.2.1 Summary of Submission

The Bates Smart scheme proposed a 36-storey tower rising above a 5–6 storey podium, which was designed in a rounded L-shaped configuration to create a public pocket park along the Eastern side of Quarry Master Drive. The pocket park was designed to be complemented by extensive landscaping, as well

as weave together active retail frontages, quiet seating areas, and open lawn to create an area that encouraged both social interaction and connection to nature and life on the street. Architecturally, the podium was expressed through a unitised masonry façade system, finished in brick or terracotta materials with a distinct horizontal banding.

At ground level, the Saunders Street frontage was also activated by a mix of food and drink premises and retail premises, whilst communal amenities were generally consolidated on the podium rooftop, and included an outdoor pool, external spaces, as well as internal recreational areas.

Above, the tower adopted a consistent triangular form with curved corners. In terms of materiality, the tower continued a horizontal striation pattern through a refined metal and glass façade. Bands of aluminium spandrels and integrated sunshades were also implemented. A total of 183 apartments were proposed.



Figure 3 Conceptual render of Bates Smart scheme

Source: Bates Smart



Figure 4 Conceptual render of Bates Smart scheme from Quarry Master Drive

Source: Bates Smart

3.2.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury's assessment of the scheme is summarised below:

- The inclusion of a pocket park fronting Quarry Master Drive was seen as a positive addition that offered genuine utility and amenity. However, there would be a need to manage any potential conflicts between private and public use.
- The outlook of podium apartments over the pocket park was considered positive.
- The materials selection was considered contextual and interesting.
- The distinct horizontal banding in the podium was discussed as giving the podium a larger appearance.
- The subtle and integrated façade design and wall to window ratio control in the tower was praised and appreciated.
- The internal planning within the podium was questioned, particularly the long double-loaded corridors, and the lift/staircase that seeks to manage the level change in the centre of the podium adjacent to the breezeway.
- The towers appearance from a distance was described as calm and elegant.

3.3 Aileen Sage

3.3.1 Summary of Submission

The Aileen Sage scheme provided a 36-storey tower sitting above a podium ranging in height from 5-8 storeys, surrounding a centralised courtyard. The building massing was divided into three distinct stratums to respond to the nature of the sandstone geology of the Site and surrounds.

The podium provided a unique composition of materials, with a gabion wall system characterising the street level, and a variety of rough-cast concrete and steel mesh trellis in the upper levels of the podium. A pool was also provided at the ground level, alongside other internal recreational areas, adjacent to the Eastern side of Quarry Master Drive. The central courtyard was designed as a 'quarry garden' in reference to the former sandstone quarry in Pyrmont.

Communal recreational areas were located throughout the podium, and in addition to this, spaces for interchangeable retail tenancies were also provided throughout Levels 1 to 4, whilst a variety of retail premises were also oriented to Saunders Street to provide activation.

Above, the tower adopted a consistent triangular form with curved corners. In terms of materiality, the tower was articulated with lightweight terracotta cladding, predominantly of earth tones such as pale ochres, umbers and warm grey. A total of 200 apartments were proposed.



Figure 5 Conceptual render of Aileen Sage scheme

Source: Aileen Sage



Figure 6 Conceptual render of Aileen Sage scheme from Quarry Master Drive

Source: Aileen Sage

3.3.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury's assessment of the scheme is summarised below:

- The composition and variety of surfaces and treatments throughout the development was interesting, however, would need further design development to achieve an elegantly distinguished podium.
- The tower form and aesthetic were considered elegant, and the Jury appreciated the responsiveness of the façade to the different outlooks and orientations at different heights.
- The pool located at the Ground Level was considered to be an engaging response to the scale of the internal courtyard.
- The approach to material use and selection was discussed as being novel and poetic.
- The alignment with the DCP envelope and compliance with technical aspects of the Brief were commended.
- The internal planning in the podium was considered successful.
- The approach to living within the apartment plans was thoughtful, clever and realistic.
- The quantity of climbing plants was queried for its long-term appearance, maintenance and potential obstruction to podium-level apartments.
- The extent of façade given to services fronting the western side of Quarry Master Drive was also questioned.

3.4 Woods Bagot

3.4.1 Summary of Submission

The Woods Bagot scheme provided two distinct building elements including an 8-storey building and a 36-storey tower, which were connected across the Ground Level and Level 1.

At the Ground Level, a range of retail and food and beverage premises were provided within the southern building (the tower), which fronted onto Saunders Street and an internal shared zone, which bisected the Site and also included a porte cochere and through-site connection. A series of pocket parks were also provided around the Site, with landscaping embellishing these spaces. Level 1 was characterised by a range of communal amenities, which were separated into distinct 'zones' to promote residential usage. These spaces included an outdoor pool, lounge, wellness centre, as well as a range of other internal amenity spaces.

The façade design and materiality of the towers were generally reflective and comprised of facetted glass frames within a shadow box, with external sun shading devices of varied depths. Both buildings also featured sculpted forms, characterised by large curves. A total of 193 apartments were proposed.



Figure 7 Conceptual render of Woods Bagot scheme

Source: Woods Bagot



Figure 8 Conceptual render of Woods Bagot scheme from the corner of Saunders Street and Quarry Master Drive

Source: Woods Bagot

3.4.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury's assessment of the scheme is summarised below:

- The sculpted form of the building was considered striking and gave the building an international flavour that would add a unique character, however, was somewhat challenging in the context of Sydney and Pyrmont.
- The offset facets in the façade were considered a positive way to deal with a predominantly glass façade and avoided problems associated with curved glass such as view distortion.
- The modular window system was a clever way to respond to the different solar conditions of all orientations while maintaining a controlled aesthetic for the external skin of the building.
- Landscaped areas at the North of the site create a connection and respond to Carmichael Park.
- The proposal to largely remove the podium creates a more open sky-view from the street and could improve the experience for pedestrians in the public domain.
- The efficient and squared basement proposal allows for significant contiguous deep soil areas along Quarry Master Drive.
- The building footprint was considered to impact the ability for perimeter planting on Saunders Street.
- It was thought the provision of through traffic between the two buildings had a negative effect on ground level open space, and pedestrian priority could be further strengthened.
- It was considered that there would be wind challenges with the proposed form, particularly at the Ground Level and Level 1 pool/communal area, and that there were further opportunities and design refinements that could have been explored to enhance comfort and utility of these areas.
- The omission of a podium and subsequent lack of a street wall was questioned for its contextual response, as well as the impact to the Ground plane experience.

3.5 Smart Design Studio

3.5.1 Summary of Submission

The Smart Design Studio scheme provided two distinct building elements including a 36-storey tower sitting above a 5-storey podium in the southern portion of the Site, as well as a northern building which reached a maximum height of 6-storeys. The centre of the Site comprised of a porte cochere and shared zone, which served a dual function as a publicly accessible through-site link. A range of other retail and food and beverage premises, as well as residential lobby spaces, were also provided at the Ground Level to activate Saunders Street as well as the shared zone.

The roof of the northern building was designated as a communal open space area, consisting of an outdoor pool, whilst Level 5 in both buildings comprised of internal recreational areas, including a wellness centre and gym.

The tower form comprised of a notable outward tapering through the lower to mid-levels, resulting in the floorplate shifting from a curved triangular form to a generally square shape. The tower façade was characterised by solid façade panels with a distinct chevron articulation, whilst the podium façade combined sandstone cladding with horizontal terrazzo elements. A total of 179 apartments were proposed.



Figure 9 Conceptual render of Smart Design Studio scheme

Source: Smart Design Studio



Figure 10 Conceptual render of Smart Design Studio scheme from Quarry Master Drive

Source: Smart Design Studio

3.5.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury's assessment of the scheme is summarised below:

- The Jury commended the country-centred design approach and the teams commitment to ongoing collaboration with Country.
- The geometries of the tower form were strong, and the chevron articulation considered elegant.
- The through-site link was considered positive in providing resident amenity for vehicle drop offs and delivery, however, the Jury questioned whether vehicle drop off could happen below ground in order to give the majority of space at the ground plane to open and safe pedestrian areas.
- The podium form was considered a strong contextual response, with the fine-grain articulation that seemed to make reference to the 'Woolstores.' This approach is reflected in the materiality of the podium and tower that responds to the sandstone cuttings and cliffs that define the character of the precinct. However, the podium's interaction with the North corner of the Site could have been improved.
- The carving and subsequent tower 'overhang' introduces a bold architectural expression, however was considered excessive. The Jury considered that there were further opportunities to refine the balance between the quantum of dwellings provided with a relationship to the street and those which prioritised district views.
- The Jury questioned the 'twisting' of the tower form in the upper levels as to whether it would reorient views away from the CBD and Harbour Bridge.
- The structural proposition was seen to be challenging.

4.0 Jury Decision

Following deliberations, the Jury unanimously selected the BVN scheme as the winner. In consideration of the five (5) schemes, BVN presented a compelling scheme that has the potential to achieve design excellence. The Jury thanks the entrants for a strong pool of high-quality schemes and well-presented submissions which enabled a rigorous and interesting debate.

The Jury considers that the following attributes of the winning scheme (in no particular order) were valued and should be retained throughout the design and delivery phases of the development:

- The compact form of the tower which is more slender than the maximum width of the DCP envelope, improves solar access to the public domain and future neighbours, and simultaneously improves the utility of the tower. The Jury acknowledges the tower's non-compliances with the DCP envelope which will be subject to further assessment.
- The sculptural appearance of the tower when viewed from afar; it presents a dynamic silhouette that tapers both upwards and downwards.
- The tower core's orientation and positioning, which aligns with views for apartments on all facades.
- The elegant podium form, its civic qualities, sandstone cladding treatment, and depth of façade to achieve modesty and privacy.
- Façade articulation that responds to the street levels and scale of the surrounding context.
- Variety in sizes to openings and depths in the podium façade.
- Generosity of double height entry portal on Quarry Master Drive, which enters the podium.
- Consolidation of the majority of communal spaces and the swimming pool on podium rooftop.
- The inclusion of the pocket park at the North corner of the Site, and the activation of a café space in this location.
- The proposal for significant planting on structure in the courtyard which supports mature tree growth.
- Direct street level entry for Ground Level apartments and overall activation at street level.
- Alignment of the entry portal on the eastern side of Quarry Master with the footbridge and Jones St pocket park to the East of the Site.

4.1 Further Refinement of the Selected Scheme

In acknowledging the limited competition working time and complexities of the Brief, there is a recognition that refinements and further design development will be ongoing. The Jury identified a range of matters that require resolution during the design development phase of the Project to ensure the design continues to respond to all aspects of the Brief, maintains the key design intent and principles, and ensures the scheme is capable of achieving design excellence. These matters are outlined below:

- Further investigate the energy and sustainability performance of the façade.
- Ensure that in units served by a plenum over a corridor, that the plenum has adequate unobstructed effective openable area (as defined under the NSW Apartment Design Guide) for natural cross ventilation.
- Explore reducing the extent and impact of services on the podium façade fronting the western side of Quarry Master drive.

- Reconsider arrangement of the service areas to reduce the length of façade dedicated to louvres and roller shutters.
- Conduct further analysis on the potential impacts of additional built form above the DCP envelope in the North corner of the Site, and reduce any impacts on light to the central courtyard and remove negative impacts to the amenity of Carmichael Park.
- Include localised wind management measures for the pool on the podium roof.
- The resolution of the commercial and residential spaces adjacent to the pocket park at the north of the site should ensure the success of both the tenancy, residents and the open space.
- For tower apartments oriented to the north-east, consider shallower living spaces with more facade length to capture oblique views of the western elevation of the CBD.
- Consider increasing sizing of the ground floor lobby spaces and improve the visual connection to the internal courtyard.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Achieving Design Excellence

The Proponent and Jury acknowledge the Competition submissions are concepts only and any technical resolution is preliminary. It is therefore understood that, while maintaining design integrity, the winning design must undergo further design development to address technical items and the Jury recommendations in concert with other outstanding matters to demonstrate the achievement of design excellence in any subsequent detailed Development Application at the Competition Site.

The Jury acknowledged the quality of submissions given the 5-week working period and were impressed by the calibre of the submissions and the commitment of all entrant teams to the provision of a high-quality residential outcome.

5.2 Concluding Comments

This Architectural Design Competition Report documents the Competition and the Jury's decision by unanimous vote in selecting BVN as the winner.

The Jury considers that the selected scheme by BVN demonstrates a superior response to the design, functional planning, and general objectives of the Brief, and subject to the resolution of the matters outlined in this report, the scheme is the most capable of achieving design excellence as per the statutory requirements.

The decision of the Jury will not fetter the discretion of the consent authority in its determination of any subsequent Development Application associated with the Site that is the subject of the Competition.

Overall, the significant efforts made by all Competitors are recognised, and the Jury wish to thank BVN, Bates Smart, Aileen Sage, Woods Bagot and Smart Design Studio for their participation in this significant architectural exercise.

The Jury confirms that this Report is an accurate record of the Competition Process and endorses the assessment and recommendations.