PROJECT LIVERPOOL: An Exhibition of Work from the Urban Design Studio, Master of Urban Design Program

Friday 7th November at 4:00pm

Henry Deane Building (ground floor) 20 Lee St, Sydney (off Railway Square)

The University of Sydney
Faculty of Architecture

Supported by the City of Liverpool

and the Urban Design Advisory Service

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LIVERPOOL “Pirelli Site” PROJECT – Extracts from the Brief

Sydney is a rapidly growing metropolis and within its vast area, Liverpool is one of the largest and fastest growing centres. As a result, the Liverpool central area is undergoing rapid transformation. It is also one of the oldest settled urban centres in Australia with an historic rectilinear street grid, several significant heritage buildings and many old landscape elements. Further, Liverpool’s population is ethnically one of the most diverse.

The semester’s project is set in this contradictory and exciting setting. Further much work has been done recently on central Liverpool to establish directions for urban form, future uses and the design of the public realm; and this is continues. However, east of the centre is an area that presents very different images and problems – and demands imaginative attention. This is the area encompassing the George’s River Corridor and Pirelli industrial site.

Connecting the Central Area, Georges River Corridor and “East Bank”

To the east of the centre are railway tracks (the main southern line from Sydney) and the deeply cut course of Georges River. The railway track provides a significant barrier to the river, while rail-and-river establish a double barrier to the area beyond where there is a 34hectare (Pirelli) industrial complex (which we shall temporarily call “East Bank”). The industry is likely to be relocated thus providing a huge development opportunity. It presents one of the most fascinating urban design challenges in Australia.

For Liverpool, it is a make or break opportunity to become a truly memorable and contemporary city. Further, the success of the existing centre and any new East Bank development depends upon the connections across the railway and the Georges River Corridor. Extension of the recently completed railway station and transformation of the river valley will be crucial to the success (or otherwise) of what might reasonable be envisaged as a “New Liverpool”.

The first challenge (Stage 1) is to develop an Urban Design Structure for connecting the existing centre with both the Georges River Corridor and the Pirelli industrial site.

While the focus of the project is on the connections between the city centre and the Pirelli site, the project necessitates a study area which embraces the city centre and Pirelli site, and refers to surrounding circulation systems (existing and proposed). It also necessitates some attention to the internal structure of the site and river corridor.

The proposal should show: a) the connections (for motor vehicles, cycles, pedestrians, buses, and possibly some types of public transport new to the district) between city centre and the Pirelli site; b) their place in the wider sub-regional system (SouthwesternSydney); and c) other key structural proposals or approaches which are an essential part of the strategy, if it is to be successful (e.g. outline building structures supporting movement, skeletal internal structure for the site, essential uses in key locations, key nodal points or landmarks). It may also be necessary to explain assumptions about associated approaches such as land subdivision.

The second challenge is to develop an Urban Design Concept for EITHER the St Georges River Corridor OR the “East Bank” Pirelli industrial site. This should be developed within the framework of the above structure.

Display panels should explain the main design ideas and their underpinning rationale; show the network and character of streets and other movement channels, and the location of strategic activities; and propose a 3 dimensional framework for building and spatial form, and key elements of image. In the case of “the Corridor”, landscaping will need to be shown in greater detail. Reference should also be made to design and place precedents and to the influence of theory. Concepts for either site will probably require some measure of incursion into adjacent areas for their realisation.

The panels displayed show the four group responses to the challenges set out above.