

## Innovative form, artistic role: Manuelle Gautrand on Parramatta's civic building



by [Michael Bleby](#)

Parramatta's new \$50 million civic building lets the city take the role of promoting innovative architecture and encouraging public art that public authorities increasingly need to play, architect Manuelle Gautrand said.

Ms Gautrand, whose Paris-based firm and two local houses won a contest for the design of the Parramatta Square building in March, said that, at a time when many developers and private investors were opting for "more commercial, neutral" architecture, municipalities had to do more.

"The responsibility of municipalities is to create art pieces and architectural pieces," Ms Gautrand said on Monday. "They have a responsibility to allow innovative architecture."

The crystalline design of Manuelle Gautrand Architecture and local collaborators DesignInc and Lacoste + Stevenson is for a civic and community building built onto and above the city's historic Town Hall that rises to the north-east and is designed to maximise sun falling into the adjacent square.

The transparent-looking six-storey, 8000-square-metre building will also have a large LED screen for public art projections.

"Architecture today has to allow digital art," Ms Gautrand told *The Australian Financial Review*. "Architecture today has to be more interactive with the public to allow technology inside its functionality into the envelope of the building."

A development application will only be made by the year's end for 5 Parramatta Square, the only public building to date in the \$2 billion Parramatta Square precinct that includes the [\\$220 million IPSQ tower Charter Hall is developing](#), Walker Corp's [90-storey Aspire](#) residential tower and [two twin commercial towers](#).

A City of Parramatta Council spokesman said it was "close" to finalising the winner of the design competition for the remaining site 3 Parramatta Square as well as an agreement with a preferred developer for the project.

The five Green Star-rated civic building will contain a library, a public roof garden, a customer contact centre, a visitor experience centre, community meeting rooms and a technology hub.

"We would like to create strong dialogue between the inside and outside," Ms Gautrand said. "That transparency is a way to link both together."

