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**Competition winning design for Parramatta civic hub described as 'exemplary architectural masterpiece'**

BY KIM MEGSON



*The semi-transparent building will be formed of a stack of crystalline layers arranged in a wave-like structure extending from the city's Town Hall*

photo: Parramatta City Council

**French studio Manuelle Gautrand Architecture and Australian firms DesignInc and Lacoste + Stevenson have been unanimously chosen by Parramatta City Council to design a six-storey cultural hub for the Australian metropolis.**

Described by the design competition jury as "an exemplary architectural masterpiece," the semi-transparent building at 5 Parramatta Square will be formed of a stack of crystalline layers arranged in a wave-like structure extending from the city's Town Hall.

The glass exterior will include a large LED screen for public art projections, and cantilevered levels that will shelter public terraces and a rooftop garden.

The AU\$50m (US\$39m, €34m, £27m) building, which will have a floor area of 8,000sq m (86,000sq ft), will house the city's council chambers, as well as a library, visitor experience centre, technology hub, cafes, restaurants and community meeting rooms.

"This design truly cements 5 Parramatta Square as the civic heart of our city," said mayor Paul Garrard. "The transparency of the glass façade makes the building inviting and open for the community to explore."

"The jury was tasked with selecting an iconic design and they have certainly fulfilled that brief. The architects have produced a contemporary and thought-provoking design that is sure to become a must-see destination for visitors to Parramatta."

Garrard added that the building is sustainably designed to achieve a 5- Star Green Star rating and will include a number of modern technological features, such as the interactive LED projection screen.

"This will be a building that defines Parramatta as a Smart City," he said. "The interactive nature of the building and library of the future will be something that locals and visitors will be able to enjoy for decades to come."

David Stevenson from Lacoste + Stevenson said public art was an essential component of the design, with the building set to become "a canvas for artistic expression in a way we haven't seen before in a public building in Australia."

The concept designs will now undergo detailed analysis before a Development Application (DA) is lodged by the end of 2016.

5 Parramatta Square will form part of a larger city centre development which is adding extensive new areas of greenspace and public realm at a reported cost of AU\$2bn (US\$1.5bn, €1.4bn, £1.1bn).