

Building 'will be to Parramatta what Opera House is to city'



+1 more Melanie Kembrey

Parramatta has been busy telling everyone it is taking off as Sydney's second CBD – and now it is set to have a space-ship-like building right at its centre.

Councillors were expected on Tuesday night to endorse the design of a \$50 million glass building which will house new council chambers, offices, a library and technology hub.

The building will be constructed as part of the multibillion-dollar Parramatta Square redevelopment and features a stack of transparent glass with a large screen for public art projections.

Lacoste + Stevenson Architects principal David Stevenson said it will be a "canvas for artistic expression in a way we haven't seen before in a public building in Australia".

While a flood of artists' impressions have been released for buildings due to be part of the urban renewal project,

construction has only started on one.

But Parramatta Council is standing by its deadline, with a spokeswoman saying the redevelopment is still expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

The design of the civic building was selected by a judging panel and is the work of French firm Manuelle Gautrand Architecture and Australian firms DesignInc and Lacoste + Stevenson.

The building, which will include a public roof garden, will connect with and extend above the locally heritage-listed Parramatta Town Hall.

Lord mayor Paul Garrard said: "It will be to Parramatta what the Opera House is to the city."

Western Sydney University Professor Paul James, who was director of the Cities Programme of the United Nations from 2007 until 2014, said he liked the

idea of juxtaposing landmark buildings as part of Parramatta Square. However he said the city needed to ensure the buildings remained connected with public spaces.

“The CBD section itself is, I think, in danger of losing its sense of identity and just becoming one of the hollow shells that often cities become,” Professor James said.

A development application for the proposed new council building is expected to be lodged by the end of the year.