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AJ+C has recently relaunched our website, with a whole load of updates and improvements.

We've increased the platform compatibility across desktops, tablets and mobile devices. We've added a new video section AJ+C TV, and made sharing content easier on social media or by email.

With over 100 projects featured, more on the way, and an expanded people section we believe the new site will give you, our clients, friends and collaborators, a greater insight in to the workings and philosophy of Allen Jack+Cottier.

COMPELLING SPACES WHY INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE MATTERS

This issue looks at some of our recent interior architecture projects – ranging from a major new library we have designed for the University of Western Sydney, to two extraordinary entertaining spaces high above the city, one new, in Parramatta to Sydney's west, and the other reworked, in the heart of the CBD. Also a sleek moulded interior of a young gentleman's bedroom suite in an inner city warehouse residence.

While there is increasingly much more attention paid to the 'wow' factor of the exterior of a building, it is also the quality of the interior spaces that matters. How it feels when you walk into a space, the quality of the light, the form and texture, and how naturally the spaces work and flow.

There is a saying that 'the importance of the cup is the space', and it's the same with a building.



It is not interior design in the sense of decoration – it goes beyond that. It is in a sense, the emotional heart of architecture – where the sense of wonder and delight in a building lies.

It is ultimately about the character of the building itself. So what we do at AJ+C is interior architecture, not decoration.

So with Kerry Fyfe heading our team, including Scott Norton, who is responsible for the wonderful University of Western Sydney Library, we are looking to re-invigorate and develop new areas of interior architecture at AJ+C.

Peter Ireland
Managing Director/Principal

THE JOY OF STAYING IN

When Principal Peter Ireland was asked to convert a 1920s inner city warehouse into a residence, the issue was too much space, rather than too little. At 1200 m² over two floors, the rough, open areas did not feel, or read, like a place to live. AJ+C's redesign introduced a number of bold gestures, the boldest a dramatic sculptural 'sleeping pod' placed on the upper floor. The two room pod gives order to the spaces around it – kitchen, entertaining, living and outdoor terrace, while acting as a counterpoint to the original linear warehouse form. Sleek moulded furniture, a skylight, LED lighting and tactile leather and teak flooring create a private cocoon, a space for sleeping and relaxation.



Cover: Inside the sleeping pod
Above: The ensuite
Photography: Allen Jack+Cottier



Image: Allen Jack+Cottier

NEW LIBRARY - OLD PRINCIPLES

If your idea of a library is hushed tones, dusty stacks, green institutional furniture and quiet surroundings, AJ+C's new 6700 m² learning centre at the University of Western Sydney's Kingswood campus at Penrith, NSW, will come as something of a surprise.

The design for the new UWS learning centre recognises that libraries are now much less 'institutional' and more welcoming, even playful, and are used as social and cultural hubs as well as repositories of knowledge. However, even though people talk and play music in this library, the traditional vertical stacks of books are still placed centre stage.

'For many people, the book remains a powerful symbol of learning,' says Scott Norton, AJ+C Director. 'So it was important to retain the idea of the book as the 'heart' of the library, to make the stacks and the books visible. At the same time we designed for the most advanced technology, now and into the future. So stacks are literally the first thing you see when you enter the 4 storey high atrium. You know immediately that you have arrived in a place of knowledge and stored collections.'

The library building is nestled into a sandstone outcrop or hillside, and is constructed mainly of red face brick. Entering under a cantilevered glass element, then through a low lobby, the visitor then becomes aware of the towering atrium and the stacks beyond. Study spaces are located on each level behind the stack with areas both for individual quiet study and interactive group discussion. Each desk has its own individual USB and power supply, so the user can move around with ease.

'Way finding is also an important element in this project, so the pathways and connections between the components are clearly expressed,' says Norton. Gone is the green-grey institutional palette of a traditional university library. All furniture and fittings have a high-end look, yet are functionally robust – more 'international lounge' than any university library of the past.

Q&A



KERRY FYFE DIRECTOR OF INTERIORS

What inspires you most about what you do?

What interests me most is the potential for architecture and interiors to come together, achieving something much more powerful, and nuanced, than either could do alone. I see interior design as integral to the practice of architecture – it's not simply about finishes and colour. Interior architecture has the power to influence how we feel and use a place, it can evoke emotion and responses as well as meeting our practical needs.

As an architect, why did you choose to focus on interiors?

Even as a young architect I had the sense that design is about dialogue and relationships – I saw a need for integration of buildings and their context, architecture and landscape and also insides and outsides of the buildings we create. These elements come together and influence the built form but also have great effect on how we feel when we are in a space. I've always looked for opportunities to work across the two disciplines as I believe that with their careful and close integration the result is a much better building.

What background do you bring to AJ+C?

I first joined Allen Jack+Cottier as a fairly fresh recent graduate architect. I'd worked for two years with architect Ken Woolley's office and then joined AJ+C. I was with the firm for 12 years before going first into a partnership, and then a sole practice, in 2006. Being in a small practice for almost 12 years as well as at AJ+C, I have the benefit of a broad range of experience from large to small, commercial to bespoke, and in a range of different practice models.

A chance conversation with Michael Heenan, AJ+C's CEO and Principal, led to an invitation to return. It's really great to be back, in the thick of this energised design-lead team of architects, with a range of scales and projects to work on.

My specific brief is to focus on interiors as an integral part of the firm's design service, working closely with the architecture team across a range of projects - residential developments, commercial and public developments, and private houses.

What are some of the more interesting jobs you have tackled?

I have designed everything from restaurants, universities, schools, wineries and apartment buildings, to a number of single houses - even a horse stud, and a villa in St. Tropez, in the south of France. I have also done a lot of commercial interiors, including for Campaign Palace, a fab ad agency fitout. At the moment we are working on two large hospitality projects, plus multi residential interiors and some exciting competition submissions – the work's been demanding but I'm loving it. AJ+C has a very dynamic team of people – it's a very exciting time to be here.

STUDIO A ROOM WITH A VIEW

When you're standing 300 m above Sydney's CBD, the view from Trippas White's new STUDIO bar and event space on top of Sydney Tower is a knockout.

The highest event space in the Southern Hemisphere, STUDIO has clear views over Sydney Harbour to the mountains.

AJ+C's brief was to design the 340 m² circular room with maximum flexibility for everything from conferences, weddings, breakfast briefings, sit down dinners, cocktail parties, to product launches.

'Our client wanted the new space to read like a New York loft or high end apartment, rather than a typical 'event' centre,' says Kerry Fyfe. 'Guests should feel like they were in someone's luxe private home, albeit one in an unusually spectacular location.'

'However, this is, ultimately, a commercial venue, so it has to function at a high level around the clock. Everything had to be high quality, very flexible, with the best and most durable fabrics, furniture and fittings,' she added.

The new STUDIO Sydney Tower is the antithesis of a conventional venue fitout. It is light, airy, sleek and tactile, with subtle lighting, smaller more intimate conversation spaces with low tables and seating. The contemporary, restrained design succeeds in allowing the breathtaking views to 'pop', day and night. Window seating around the perimeter allows people to sit high above the view and sometimes, in the clouds – simply relaxing and taking in the views over this breathtakingly beautiful city.

'Our client wanted the new space to read like a New York loft or high end apartment, rather than a typical 'event' centre,' says Kerry Fyfe.



Photography: Allen Jack+Cottier

SKYBAR AT V BY CROWN

In a city blessed with an abundance of great views, few would expect one of the most extraordinary of all to be found twenty three kilometres to the west of the CBD.

Designed by AJ+C, the V by Crown residential building set out to 'go beyond the ordinary, balancing comfort and an attention to detail,' says Michael Heenan, AJ+C's CEO. When AJ+C's interiors team was asked to do interiors for the V Lounge, their objective was to extend that design thinking. They created a spectacular space on top of the building for residents to enjoy.

The V Lounge Skybar sits twenty six floors in the air, surrounded by reflective 'infinity ponds' that give way to commanding views towards Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the developing centre of Parramatta.

'It's pretty spectacular,' says Kerry Fyfe, Director of AJ+C Interiors.

'Our job has been to integrate the building's external architecture with the interior architecture, making the view part of the space. One of our earliest, and most important, decisions was to remove an entire exterior solid wall.'

'With that single move, we delivered a jaw drop view, much more space, a more workable layout, and a place that people will really want to be in and use,' Kerry says.

This is a space that is clearly designed to enhance, rather than compete with, its outlook, and provide a luxurious contemporary space to enjoy.

The new V Lounge will be part-exclusive clubhouse and part-function room for its residents, with up to 200 people using the space at any one time. So a consideration was flexibility, making it feel more like an upmarket apartment than a commercial venue.



Image: Allen Jack+Cottier