

Perth “monofunctional”, disconnected: Danish architect

■ DOES THE STATE NEED DESIGN LEADERSHIP FROM THE TOP?

BY GEMMA BATTENBOUGH

An international architect who was commissioned by the Western Australia state government to brainstorm on regenerating Perth's CBD has called the city “monofunctional” and claimed it needs a “personality transplant”.

Professor Jan Gehl studied public spaces and public life in the capital 15 years ago, and now he's back with a fresh and critical eye. The City of Perth and the state government are paying Gehl \$250,000 to dream up ways to revitalise the CBD.

“Perth's future development relies heavily on physical projects taking full advantage of the city's greatest assets – the fabulous landscape setting and the wonderful climate,” he said.

The city needed to reassert itself with “more experimental and leisure-orientated uses”, he said.

Gehl recommended increased housing density for the inner city, more student facilities and education



Perth at night: dead and empty?

departments. More diverse public spaces were needed to engage city-dwellers and it was essential that the city be made to feel safer at night. The city was dead at night time, he said.

Director of Perth-based **DnA Architects**, Wayne Duffy, told *Architecture & Design* that Gehl's input was a great move for the city but that more should be done to engage the local profession.

Architects in Perth would benefit from strong political leadership, such as that recently seen in France with the discussion around rebuilding and

redesigning Paris, he said.

“In France, they start with the president and it really gains great momentum. Here, the momentum is in breakaway forums and urban design discussion groups, but it is very hard to get a concept in front of the power brokers. It doesn't seem like an easy path to get a fresh idea delivered,” Duffy said.

“The problem comes down to urban maturity and the willingness to find a solution within our own ranks. I think the skill base is here,” he said.

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Community centre paves way for green rating

A NEW library and community centre in Surry Hills is being praised for setting new standards in sustainable design and paving the way for environmental systems in public buildings.

The Surry Hills Library and Community Centre includes a library, child-care facility and community centre with a 125 person function room, small meeting rooms and neighbourhood centre.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the building sets a benchmark in green building design and will be a starting point for the development of a green rating system for public buildings.

“It demonstrates important sustainable design possibilities and

is an innovative example for other developments,” she said.

Simon Barr, from **FJMT** told *Architecture & Design* no current ‘green design tool’ exists for public buildings which required the firm to use the **Green Building Council of Australia** (GBCA) Greestar Office Design Guide V2 as a guide to best practice” to ensure the sustainable accountability of the development.

“We ran into complex and often conflicting programmatic requirements which required development of innovative solutions with respect to construction, services and security to satisfy the client's brief” he said.

He said a new benchmark design tool and or system for sustainable

design in the public sphere is essential to raise awareness and promote innovative developments in the future.

“Without defined parameters, clients don't understand what value is integral to sustainable design philosophies and until clients can see the real value in sustainable design strategies they are less inclined to pursue innovative solutions” he said.

“New standards will create certainty in the industry and promote sustainable design on a broader level.”

Experts claim a new system would deliver benefits to clients, architects, designers and the environment and pave the way for future development.

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||| UNITED STATES

A major downturn in private-sector projects has pushed architecture firms in South Florida to lay off up to 80 per cent of their staff. Experts say the private sector has "more or less dried up" as competition for institutional work increases with the global financial crisis. While opportunities still exist in the public sector, Miami-based **Zyscovich Architects** says more firms are diversifying their services to find more work. The firm has turned to urban design, planning, education and aviation to boost its billings and break into new markets.

||| AUSTRALIA

Customs House is aglow with creative light artworks as part of **Smart Light Sydney**, which runs until 14 June. Smart Light Sydney showcases dynamic light art sculptures and is the only major international lighting event driven by energy conscious and innovative design to recognise the importance of lighting design in cities and its role in the city night-scape. All exhibitions are free, open weekdays from 8am until midnight, Saturday 10am until midnight and Sunday and public holidays 11am until 5pm.

||| UNITED KINGDOM

Wilkinson Eyre Architects has been dropped from a landmark tower development near Blackfriars Bridge, ending a seven-year involvement with the site. Having won planning permission for the 23-storey office tower and 42-storey residential building development in 2002, the project has now been reviewed and other architects appointed. Developer, **Circleplane** is blaming the decision on the recession and increasingly difficult market conditions. The newly-appointed architects are yet to be named.



||| SOUTH KOREA

Seoul's forthcoming international business district will transform the city to a world-class destination, according to an acclaimed US architect. **Daniel Libeskind**, master architect of the Yongsan Dream Hub, said the development will combine historical and contemporary aspects as part of a \$22 billion plan to refurbish and modify the city's appearance. The plan will house a 600-metre-high landmark building and develop hotels and commercial complexes in the centre of Seoul. The project is expected to break ground in 2011 and be completed by 2016.

||| QATAR

"Glittering" buildings in Qatar are being compromised by poor quality building materials, according to an industry expert. Broadway Malyan architect, **Alicia Perez**, told delegates at the 2009 Q-Rex conference in Qatar that poor quality construction and materials is creating cracks and flaws in Qatar's buildings. She also pointed to flaws in finishing and joints, as well as inadequate "functionality of design". According to Perez, there is a need to bring in "international-quality" contractors to address issues between designers and contractors. However, Perez also said the city holds "tremendous new opportunities" in architecture and design.

Voluntary carbon market an "opportunity": GBCA

THE COALITION'S proposed voluntary carbon market could provide a number of opportunities for the commercial building sector, claims the **Green Building Council of Australia** (GBCA).

A voluntary carbon market would allow the commercial building sector to fully participate in reducing its carbon emissions and be recognised for doing so, GBCA CEO Romilly Madew said, commenting on the coalition's Climate Change Strategy, announced on Monday.

"It's vitally important that we introduce measures that support Australia's property and construction industries to improve energy efficiency in buildings and reduce Australia's carbon footprint," Madew said.

The opposition proposes the establishment of a government-authorized voluntary carbon market, from 1 January 2010, based on the

Chicago Climate Exchange, which would enable the immediate recognition and involvement of individuals and communities, agriculture, various forms of bio sequestration, additional energy efficiency measures by business, and importantly, the commercial building sector.

"The coalition's proposal would complement industry-led initiatives such as the Green Star environmental rating tool for buildings, which encourages and rewards the use of renewable energy sources," Madew said.

"The Green Building Council of Australia welcomes the Coalition's Climate Change Strategy and will continue to work with both sides of politics on this and a range of other initiatives to improve environmental outcomes for all Australians," Madew said.

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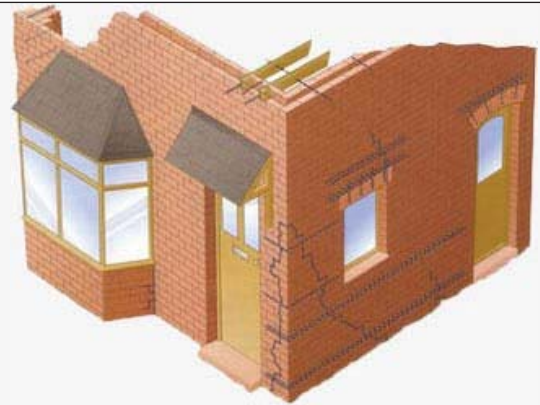


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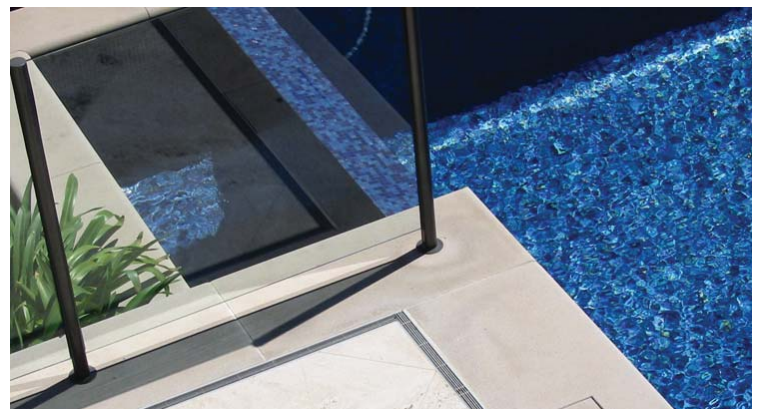
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