

Five designers harbour a Sydney dream

Report Robert Harley

Australia's most prestigious design competition, for the precinct of parkland and buildings that will line East Darling Harbour in Sydney, has been narrowed down to five very different proposals.

Unveiling the shortlist on Friday, NSW Planning Minister Frank Sartor said the competition was a once-in-a-century opportunity for the people of Sydney.

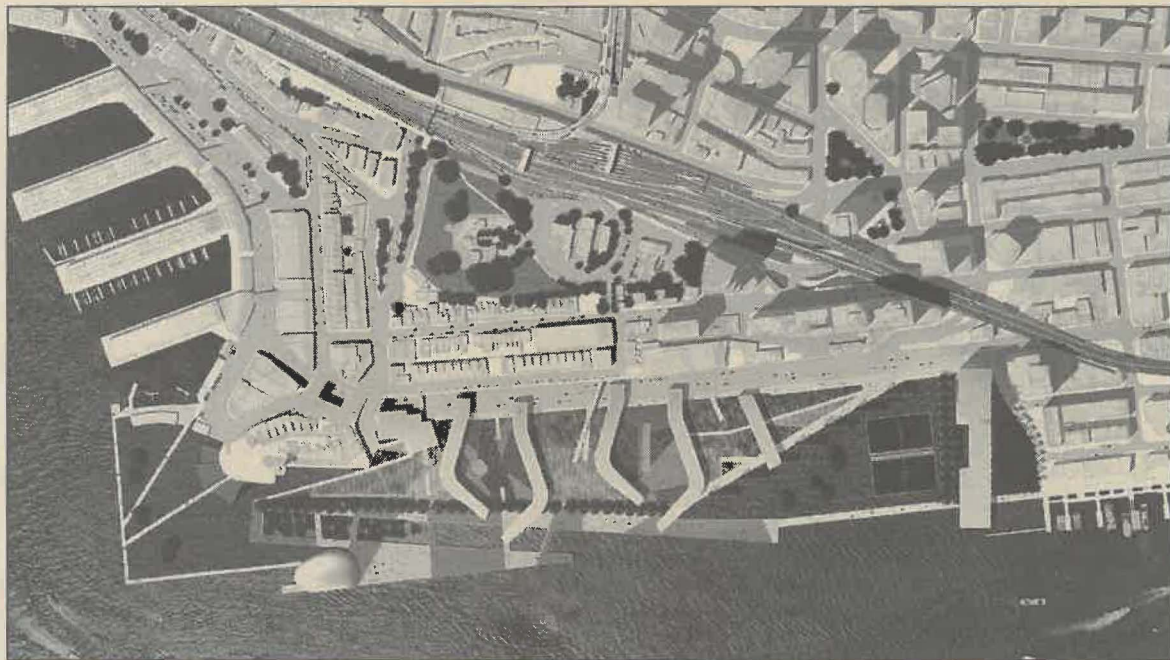
The site, occupied by wharves, covers 22 hectares of prime harbour land. Each proposal must provide 11 hectares of open space; maintain and improve the passenger terminal; and in the buildings proposed, set aside 75 per cent for commercial use.

Jury chairman Chris Johnson said the competition had attracted outstanding designs from several countries. "We need a very Sydney solution, with a bit of a wow factor," Professor Johnson said.

The five shortlisted are:

□ The Winner of the Pritzker Prize this year, Thom Mayne from the Los Angeles-based Morphosis, has teamed with Project Architecture and Hargreaves Associates to produce a plan with a set of sinuous finger wharves.

□ The Richard Rogers Partnership from the UK has teamed with Sydney architects Lippmann Associates, US-based landscape architects Martha Schwartz Partners and property giant Lend



The design by a consortium led by Pritzker Prize winner Thom Mayne is among the five on the shortlist.

Lease with a design that aims to bring the harbour back into the site, almost creating an island.

□ Australian architects Peddle Thorp Walker have a proposal for two wedge shapes, one of parkland and one of buildings.

□ A consortium involving Hill Thalix Architecture + Urban Projects, Paul Berkemeier Architects and Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture turned

Hickson Road into a grand boulevard.

□ Lend Lease itself came up with a proposal with a central park that rises to connect the city with Observatory Hill.

All five schemes will be on public exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art until August 17, after which each team will be given \$100,000 to work up its scheme.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the competition was a "once-in-a-lifetime chance for the state government to get it right".

"I look forward to the designs addressing critical planning considerations of public transport, sustainability, working harbour, public domain, heritage conservation views and cultural facilities," she said.