



**BEST HIGH-RISE
ARCHITECTURE
AUSTRALIA**

Platinum Apartments
by Squillace Architects

Australia



Squillace Architects is an award winner this year for the design of Platinum in Melbourne, Australia. Squillace Architects is an architectural and interior design company with offices in both Sydney and Melbourne that has developed a reputation for creating design-driven responses across a range of project types including single dwellings, medium and high density residential, hospitality, commercial and adaptive re-use.

Salvo Property Group's brief with Platinum, now an award-winning high-rise apartment building close to Melbourne CBD, was to create a design that capitalized on its location in a way that previous developments in the area had failed to do. This would differentiate it in the marketplace, elevate the client's brand and assist in the growth of their business. Squillace's architectural concept was successful in winning a private competition staged by the client to find the best design for the tower.

Ultimately Squillace's concept won because it not only met the client's expectations but also introduced further initiatives. These included a vertical garden and impressive recreational facilities, as well as exhibiting a retail response that would activate the street and hence revitalize the area. Squillace, originally a Sydney firm was selected ahead of the more established local architects, as the client recognized the potential that they could deliver a fresh approach which would add to the project's competitive edge.

Located in the Crown Precinct of Southbank Urban Development zone on the south of the Yarra River, opposite and within walking distance to the CBD, the Platinum site is serviced by an array of public transport, including the famous Melbourne tram system. Platinum is also ideally positioned in between the dining and shopping precincts along the south bank of the Yarra, the



historic shopping and dining precinct of Clarendon Street, South Melbourne and the South Melbourne Markets. The site is 150m from Crown Casino, the development of which has spearheaded redevelopment of this former industrial zone into a vibrant high-density part of central Melbourne.

The design focus was on the external appearance as well as the internal offering of the apartments and common areas. Importantly, the design capitalizes on views both back to the CBD and to the south over Port Phillip Bay and Albert Park. The brief also required Squillace to produce an affordable product of a mix and size that would respond to the market. They had to strike the balance of feeling more upmarket than the surrounding competition but be priced competitively. The common areas and facilities were also to go beyond the typical offering of surrounding developments and

display qualities similar to those found in a hotel.

The building features two and three-bedroom apartments with more luxurious four bedroom, sub penthouses and whole floor apartments at the upper levels. Efficiently designed as a 'blank canvas', all apartments are available in a dark or light scheme. As there are no dominant architectural elements in the interiors, the occupants can furnish and style each apartment to their own taste. All apartments feature an external balcony while those on upper levels have a winter garden.

Squillace's final approved design for Platinum can be described as a successful urban design response that contributes to the street appearance and appeal whilst also delivering on the developer's expectations of yield. Maintaining a focus on design quality in all aspects also resulted in the approval of 20 additional levels over the precinct's



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desired maximum height. By rising above buildings directly adjacent to its site, Platinum avoids the undesirable effect of having buildings of equal mass and height. Instead it follows the stepped, articulated cityscape that makes Melbourne a unique and attractive city with its clustered forms book-ended by smaller forms with irregular heights.

Squillace's response to the lack of street life and landscaping of this formerly industrial area was to design a seven-storey vertical garden on two street frontages. This conceals the car parking, whilst also providing it with natural ventilation; one of the building's many sustainability strategies. The green wall of the podium addresses the principal corner of the development and also softens what was previously a rather harsh urban environment and substantially contributes to the 'greening of Southbank'. Plants have been specially selected for their survival ability and are

irrigated by rainwater harvesting from the building.

At ground level, spaces are designed to interact with and address the street in this superb inner city location. They promote vibrant activity via the inclusion of a café and restaurant which enliven the street frontage. The fact that residents can enjoy social activity such as this within the comfort of their own building also adds a perfect inner city vibe.

The building's crown contributes beauty and elegance to the cityscape's skyline by featuring a blend of platinum blades and coloured curtain wall glazing. Taller, high quality buildings such as this usually break the sky with an interesting gesture at their crown and this, along with the green wall ultimately gained the support of the Department of Planning.

The tower connects the base and the crown through a carefully articulated building form and mix of pre-cast concrete and performance glazing. It



addresses views in all orientations and, as such, makes an urban contribution not only to the north facing the CBD but also to the west and south. The tower element of the façade is articulated both vertically and horizontally to break up its mass. On the one hand emphasizing the height but then subtly changing in external modeling as the façade rises. The external modeling responds to the internal planning as well as the orientation of each façade.

The luxuriously designed common areas have finishes that are warm and opulent at all levels. Users enter the building through a rich space addressed by a concierge and flanked on either side

by a café or restaurant. As they progress through the space, the residential lift lobbies, departing from the extreme white corridors so often found in buildings of this type, feature wall paper, bronze mirrors and strip LED lighting.

The journey through the common areas reaches a pinnacle with Platinum's impressive sky lounge, pool and gym facilities. Rather than placing them in dark, windowless, left over spaces, Squillace has put them at the very top of the building. In this prime position they are designed to become an extension of the apartments and afford Platinum's residents a further element to an already enviable lifestyle.



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