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Photography Derek Swalwell



FINDING CONNECTION



**EIGHT ARCHITECTS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
AND DESIGNERS EXPLORE HOW THEIR SHARED
DESIGN LANGUAGE PUSHES THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN NATURE AND THE BUILT FORM.**



Pictured: Sandcastle by Luigi Rosselli
Architects and Dangar Barin Smith

Photography Prue Ruscoe

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LUIGI ROSSELLI ARCHITECTS

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DANGAR BARIN SMITH

New South Wales, Australia

LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT

WILL DANGAR

DANGAR BARIN SMITH

What was the first project you worked on with architect Luigi Rosselli?

I first worked with Luigi on a very small penthouse development in Sydney's CBD for a property developer called Zaro Elizov, who realised the value of a good landscape outcome. This was in the early 1990s. We have worked together ever since.

What makes your collaboration with Luigi Rosselli Architects so effective?

Luigi and I share the same views about how a landscape and building should interact. He likes his buildings to be feathered by the landscape, which suits my style. We want the building to feel like it has been inserted into an existing landscape.

Our relationship relies on both of us having an efficient way of working and an understanding that the projects will evolve during construction. We are also both completely comfortable with providing feedback. The collaboration is based on a shared knowledge of design, and a passion for great outcomes while providing practical solutions for our clients that respect sustainability and budget.

Typically, how do you respond to the architecture to ensure your design is intuitive to the established design language and there is harmony between the built environment and surrounding landscape?

When LRA sends us the concept design for a project, Luigi will have already done a sketch of the landscape around the building. We use this as the starting point for our design. We have a relationship that has formed over three decades of complete trust, which allows us to massage the outskirts of the building and the associated garden structures if we believe there are other ways to design these elements. This goes both ways in the event he feels strongly about any landscape elements.

What do you admire most about Luigi Rosselli Architects' work?

Luigi and his team are prolific architects across multiple disciplines. However, what I admire most about him is his ability to transform existing structures. Architecture is a very difficult profession and adapting these buildings into beautiful, functional, generational family dwellings is the hardest of all areas to practice in.

ARCHITECT LUIGI
ROSSELLI ARCHITECTS
LUIGI ROSSELLI ARCHITECTS

Describe the synergy between your architecture studio and landscape consultant Will Dangar:

I've always thought that nature is an important component of architecture. First of all, because you build in nature, and second, if nature is absent in the urban environment, you try to recreate this in an environment where you can feel the fresh air, the seasons, and see birds, plants and life. With the privilege of cities like ours that aren't too dense, we try to bring a garden feel into the most compact of sites.

We tend to give a choice to the client of landscape architects; it's as important as choosing your architect. Clients favour Will Dangar for his communication and incredible experience; his portfolio is astounding.

Will has his own way of getting a brief out of a client, but we give him my original yellow trace sketches and communicate some of the concepts deliberated in this design. That way, he doesn't go on a different tangent unrelated to a project. He understands the needs within the building.

How does working so closely with a landscape designer or architect like Will Dangar enrich your work as an architect?

It is fundamental – you can see in the final stage of a building site there's a beautiful building, but there is something lacking – a harshness. Then the landscape is created in the final few weeks, and you immediately see the difference. It's important the two things work together – we know that from the ongoing collaboration with Will Dangar.

A lot of elements in our projects hinge on the landscaping. Sometimes we build around a tree, integrate planting into the roof and a building's facade or form a courtyard that needs a certain atmosphere; that's the landscape architect's work.

Will is knowledgeable about plants and always selects quality, substantial plants, which means six months later, the garden is quite established. He is also very good at mixing different origin plants. While other landscape planting can be quite desert-like with lots of mulch, pebbles and dryness, Will's projects by contrast, are lush, succulent and full of life.

Pictured: Sandcastle by Luigi
Rosselli Architects and Dangar
Barin Smith







How does it contribute to a more impactful project outcome?

It is well known that living next to plants and gardens makes people feel more at ease, comfortable and less anxious. It's an important psychological element.

It's important to increase the effect of plants in absorbing CO2 and providing a healthier environment. That's the goal in most of our designs – to maximise the amount of plants growing. If we can't do it outside, we'll do it inside.

What do you admire most about Dangar Barin Smith's work?

Will is very creative; he consistently comes up with great ideas. He doesn't follow the schemes and habits of everyone else. He's always developing new concepts and methods of construction.

In the Sandcastle project, we had a very steep site. Other landscape architects would not have coped with the sloping site and demanded a retaining wall. We would have ended up with kilometres of retaining wall – a monster from the street. Will Dangar proposed a design that was able to creatively forgo this, and the garden is now fully established and working very well.

“While a lot of other landscape planting can be quite desert-like with lots of mulch, pebbles and dryness, Will’s projects, by contrast, are lush, succulent and full of life.”

– Luigi Rosselli



Pictured: Sandcastle by Luigi Rosselli Architects and Dangar Barn Smit