

TALKING SHOP

HOME LIVING



Local developers *dare to dream*

Two locals are challenging the status quo when it comes to commercial and residential development in this country, creating projects built on the foundation of equitable sustainability.

When Ed Horton and Danny Flynn left big firms to start their own development and property services company *Stable* – out of Ed’s Terrey Hills barn, hence the name – they had a shared vision.

Firstly, they believed in sustainable development, buildings designed around people and people’s needs, and secondly, they saw an evolving landscape around workspaces.

Residing on the Peninsula, they could see there was a lack of purpose-built office spaces across the region.

“We saw a big gap in the market where there was horrible office accommodation on the Northern Beaches,” Ed tells *Peninsula Living*.

“Most respectable businesses were in North Sydney, Chatswood and the City, the traditional places where you would go to work.

“But the people here are a bit chilled, they like surfing, they don’t like wearing ties, there is a unique lifestyle on the Beaches. So, we created a building around those people and their needs.”

Lifestyle Working - Brookvale

That first groundbreaking project was the *Lifestyle Working* office complex in Brookvale, completed in 2008.

Their proposal for the building was radical in a traditionally conservative industry. Think 25-metre lap pool in the middle of a building, which harvests all its own water, and through solar panels and an embedded electricity network generates enough power to lay off 100 per cent of the base building energy costs.

“We really broke the mould and challenged convention as to how you create and deliver commercial office space, and how people work and where they work,” says Ed.

"There was a lot of nervousness in the industry because no one had done this before."

Stable owner Ed Horton.



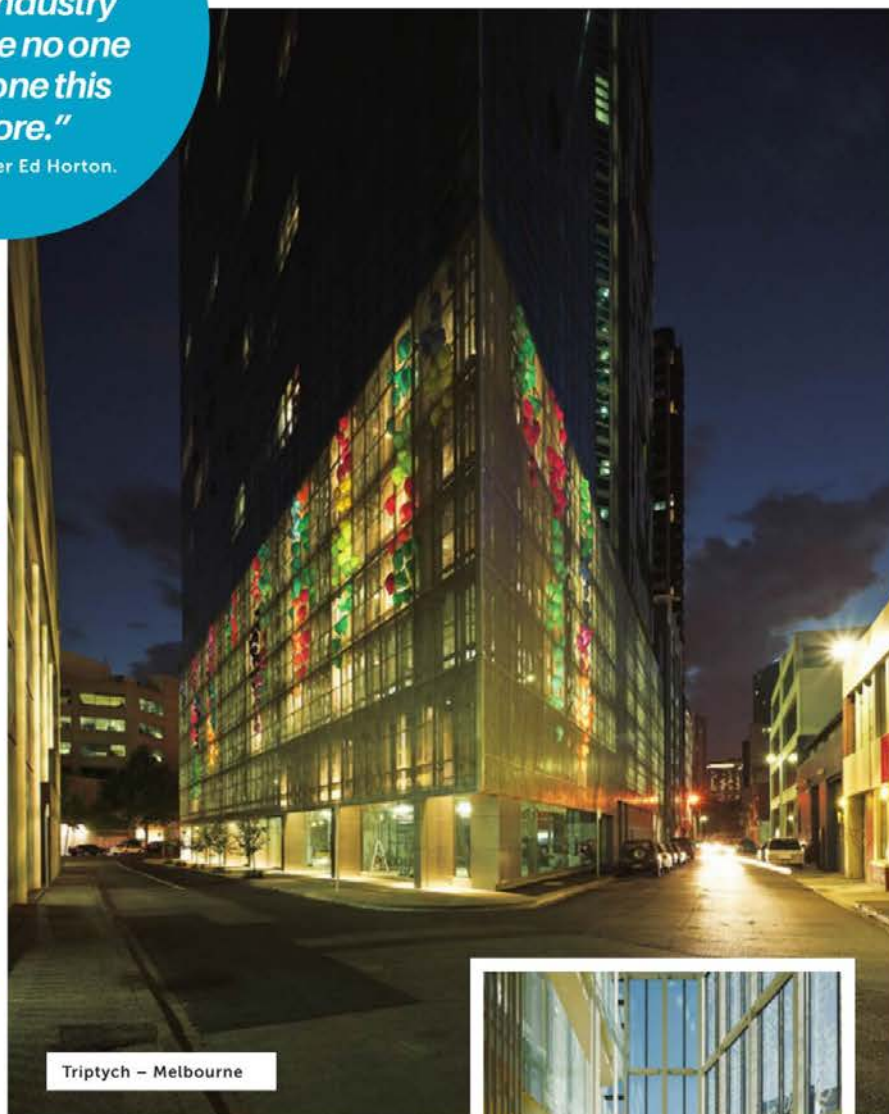
Lifestyle Working – Brookvale

The concept certainly raised eyebrows initially.

"There was a lot of nervousness in the industry because no one had done this before," Ed continues.

"I remember the valuer at the bank say, 'Can't you just build a box like everyone else? We understand them'. There was no historical evidence to support what we were doing," Danny adds.

Ed nods. "We had to be very convincing and we had to be very comfortable in our proposition in order to convince valuers, bankers and credit committees. But everything we did was based on logic, it wasn't just a whim or a feeling. It wasn't like, 'The vibe, your honour'.



Triptych – Melbourne

Triptych - Melbourne

After the early success of Lifestyle Working, Ed and Danny decided to take the same principles and apply them to residential developments.

The first of these was Triptych – a 28-storey high-rise of 256 luxury apartments.

Unlike Lifestyle Working, which is a 2.5 storey "groundscraper", Triptych didn't have the available roof space for solar, so its sustainability comes from cogeneration.

They also took the unprecedented step of collaborating with well-known



Australian artist Robert Owen, who integrated the artwork *Digital Showers* into the building's façade.

The culmination of all this was the prestigious 'Best Residential Development' accolade, which they received from the Property Council of Australia in 2012.

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Lifestyle Working - Collins Street

It was then time to take Lifestyle Working to Melbourne.

The Collins Street development, a joint venture with Lendlease, boasts Australian-first innovation.

It houses the Melbourne City Solar Farm, which enables office suites within the building to connect directly to strata title solar panels.

"As a result, all offices are self-sufficient in energy during the day," Ed says proudly. "We still think we're the only ones to have done that."

There are also zero carparks on-site. Instead, a fleet of solar-powered electric scooters are available to owners and tenants throughout the day.

The Green Building Council of Australia crowned Collins Street the first



Lifestyle Working - Collins Street

5-star Green Star Commercial Building. It also received the BPN Environment Building of the Year award in 2013.

"Collins Street is the evolution of Brookvale. It is a twin but not identical. You walk in and go, 'Ah, I've met it's brother', because you can tell the DNA is there," Danny tells *Peninsula Living*.

"We call Brookvale our 'Groovy Grunge'. On its front door, we have a sign that reads: 'No skateboarding, no smoking, no water wastage, no neck ties'. But in Melbourne, they love their neck ties, so we replaced that with, 'No attitude' - which is code for no dickheads," he laughs.

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The Burcham - Rosebery

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Arguably, Stable’s most innovative project to date is The Burcham.

The historic Wrigley chewing gum factory in Rosebery (more than 100 years old) was facing demolition when Ed and Danny saw its potential and stepped in to save it.

They then set about transforming the heritage building into 98 sustainable luxury apartments.

Cutting-edge technology, such as biometric fingerprint access, number plate recognition, an electric vehicle charging station, and smart home automation were engaged, offering a

new dimension to the self-sustaining features of water harvesting and solar panelling.

In another first, the rooftop’s makeover included edible gardens, which are managed by a gardening subcommittee made up of owners and tenants.

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"We wanted it to carry a bit of the Wrigley's DNA, so we also shipped two 50kg lights from Wrigley's original Chicago factory, which was demolished in 2014, and they sit on the front door of The Burcham," reveals Danny. "We also filled the void of the old water tower with an outdoor LED screen tailor-made for the space, so people can sit up on the roof and watch movies."

Danny divulges that he even lived in the complex himself to get the full user-experience, and would have stayed there if he hadn't missed the Manly lifestyle so much.

Qubec - Newport

At the time we sat down with Ed and Danny, the townhouses in their newest residential development, Qubec, had just about sold out.

Situated in Newport, the development was Stable's solution to downsizers and 'rightsizers' not having suitable local options.

Those looking to trade in their houses and expansive gardens for lock-and-leave, modern and spacious homes had to look beyond Pittwater.

"This one has been purpose-designed so this could conceivably be for whoever moves in, their last place," Danny explains.

"We've got the lift, wide doorways, very good acoustics, lots of outdoor areas, multiple small garden spaces, shops next door, a pub just around the corner, and two marinas across the road, so people can maintain their

lifestyle without having all their money tied up in a big house on the water."

Ed adds: "We focused a lot on energy because, aside from rates, the biggest bills you get are electricity.

"What we try to do is take the foot off people's necks in terms of the recurring operating costs of where they live.

"Introducing a virtual power plant was the best way to do this. So, each dwelling will be part of an external network grid of batteries that are virtually linked together.

"By having their own solar, battery and inverter linked to the social energy network, their electricity costs will be zero. It's one bill that won't be coming."

Ed and Danny lament the fact that their innovation in equitable sustainability is not being rewarded with tax or planning breaks, but they're proud their work is pushing boundaries at a time when environmental awareness has never been more valued.


"The authorities still penalise us," Ed says. "We don't get any reward for generating all the energy or making it a better place to live or work... For us to go the extra mile there's no incentive at this stage."

Danny nods. "We could be a lot more financially successful if we just built commodity buildings, but we decided to go down this particular path, and we're very content, very happy.

"More people would be doing what we're doing if there were incentives in place to do so." P

To learn more about Stable or any of their projects, visit stable.com.au.

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