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Meet the architects behind Sydney's urban transformation

The growth trajectory for Sydney's inner-ring has long put pressure on the infrastructure that props up the city – housing, public transport, roads and beyond. It's no surprise then, that urban renewal has been touted as the city's answer to its woes.

Sydney architecture and design practice [TURNER](#) has built its reputation on delivering some of the city's most transformative urban renewal projects – from Green Square to Washington Park and more recently, Waterloo Metro, Waterloo Estate, Macquarie Square and Wentworth Point's Sanctuary.

The practice recently celebrated 21 years in business and Principal Nick Turner says he's watched Sydney change dramatically during that time.

"We've been lucky to play a role in Sydney's growth and transformation for many years," Nick says.

"20 or 30 years ago, large parts of the city were incredibly neglected and dilapidated. There was a lot of impetus and excitement in the air generally about what was possible for Sydney, but it took a great deal of strategic thinking and design to work those aspirations into realisable regeneration projects."

In 1995, Nick Turner won the competition for the Green Square Structural Master Plan in conjunction with Frank Stanistic, and later began his practice, Turner, in 2001. The winning design advocated the re-design of a previously industrial area into a nature-filled yet densely populated residential development. The 278 hectare Green Square redevelopment now has a population predicted to peak at 61,000 residents and 21,000 workers by 2030.

He says designing and working within the master plans for some of Sydney's most vibrant urban regeneration projects (Green Square and later Victoria Park and Washington Park) has been transformative in many ways.

"The Green Square redevelopment is Australia's largest urban renewal project and is now one of Australia's fastest growing developments, so there was immense pressure to get it right," he says.

"We were incredibly conscious to put aesthetic quibbles aside and concentrate on the social, environmental and economic imperatives, and I think the positive results are now evident."

He says landscape is the key to all forms of urban renewal.

"The way to create vibrant places in previously industrialised areas is to focus on making the spaces in-between the buildings work – the streets, plazas, courtyards and gardens, the private and public domain," he says.

And though urban renewal has swept through Sydney, he says the planning vision could be bolder and braver.

"I think as a city, we're not doing density well enough around significant pieces of public infrastructure. Transport is key, but we also need to look at major public parks and open spaces. It's about designing places with high amenity, accessibility and connection to nature – liveable places."

The practice's story has been shared in a book titled *Transforming the City*, written by Patrick Bingham-Hall. The book is available for purchase on the [publisher's website](#).

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