

DESIGN AND  
BUILD WITH  
CONFIDENCE

## 6 Sydney Street, Prahran: a curvaceous, contemporary concrete sculpture

### Background

6 Sydney Street is a high-end residential development in inner-city Melbourne that explores concrete's versatility to achieve a fluid and sculptural outcome.

### The Challenge

Create a generously proportioned, multi-residential apartment complex on a height-restricted site, with clear connectivity to the adjacent parkland reserve.

#### AT A GLANCE

**Project:** 6 Sydney Street Prahran

**Main concrete elements:** Off-form floor/ceiling slabs, precast structural columns

**Architect:** Wood Marsh

**Landscaping:** Eckersley Garden Architecture

**Builder:** VCON

**Photographer:** Courtesy of Wood Marsh





### Solution/Outcome

Is it an expensive mansion, a luxury apartment building, or a concrete sculpture? That's the question one could reasonably ask of No 6 Sydney Street, Prahran.

This inner-city development deliberately blurs the lines between apartment and detached living. Yes, it's an apartment building; but within that fabric, each of its 15 residences are as unique as the building's free-flowing external form.

The natural fluidity of concrete comes to the fore in this building. The dimensional footprint of each floor slab varies considerably, as does the shape and curvature of its edge. (These dimensional variations are most obvious from the rear, where the building presents as a series of stepped levels.)

The slab edges also taper down to a thickness of just 150mm, giving the building a finesse and lightness that's in marked contrast to the rectilinear forms of the apartment buildings on either side.

Combined with the seemingly random placement of precast concrete columns, balconies and windows on each floor, the overall impression is of something that's been sculpted rather than built.

Architects Wood Marsh say the building's unique streetscape is a response to the client's brief of wanting each apartment to 'feel like an individual home'.

"There's a deliberate ambiguity to it," they say.

"We played with the idea of scale – something that can be viewed as a single structure within itself, rather than an obvious apartment building."

The overall form of the building, together with the attention paid to its detailing, was also an attempt to break down its mass – as was a decision to set it further back from the street, creating a wide, green frontage that establishes a connection to the park across the road.

The precast, fluted concrete columns between floors were cast in fibreglass moulds off site. The base of each column is recessed from the edge of the slab, while the top fans out to create a seamless connection to the soffits.

Each column is positioned to either frame a balcony or sit within it. The columns on the corner balconies are set further back from the slab edge, and contain hydraulic pipes to disperse rainwater from the roof.

Each individual residence has different access to light, sightlines and terraces. The third and fifth floors contain single-level penthouses, with the topmost level also featuring an oculus – a large void in the roof that allows natural light to illuminate its expansive balcony.

### BENEFITS OF USING CONCRETE

**Fluidity** – ability to achieve finely detailed, curving forms

**Aesthetics**

**Strength and durability**

