

Attachment A2

**Draft Inventory Sheet - 3 Wylde Street,
Potts Point - Gateway**

Name The Gateway			
Address	3 Wylde Street, Potts Point	Lot number	Lot 1 DP 78034
Architect	Douglas Forsyth Evans & Associates	Construction date	c1959–1960
Builder	Sydney Fischer		
Listings	Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012: Within the Potts Point Heritage Conservation Area (C51), identified as detracting on the Sydney Development Control Plan building contributions map.		

Historical overview

The Cadigal people of the Eora nation have lived in the Sydney area for thousands of years and have shaped its landscape and nurtured its plants and animals. Before the arrival of the European settlers the Potts Point area was known as Kurrajeen (or Curageen) and Yarrandabbi. Governor Lachlan Macquarie set aside land near Elizabeth Bay, Potts Point and Woolloomooloo as a 'model fishing village' for Aboriginal people in 1820. At this settlement, known as Elizabeth Town, several huts were built, a patch of land was cleared for a garden, and boats were provided for use by the Aboriginal people who lived there. John Palmer's estate at nearby Woolloomooloo Bay was also an important gathering place for local Aboriginal people, and was the location of a corroboree in 1831 attended by Bungaree's son, Young Bungaree.¹

The rocky ridge that extended inland from Potts Point was called Eastern or Woolloomooloo Hill from the early days of white settlement. The earliest grant of land on Woolloomooloo Hill was made to Judge-Advocate John Wylde in 1822. In 1828 Governor Darling ordered the subdivision of Woolloomooloo Hill into suitable 'town allotments' for large residences and extensive gardens. He then issued 'deeds of grant' to select members of colonial society (in particular, his senior civil servants). The first seven grants were issued in 1828, and the other allotments were formally granted in 1831 including land granted to Judge-Advocate John Wylde (after whom Wylde Street is named).

Joseph Hyde Potts purchased land from John Wylde in 1830 and named the area Potts Point.

The subject site was at one time part of the grounds of Bomera, a large house constructed in 1856 by William McQuade that is currently owned by the Royal Australian Navy on Commonwealth land. The land had various owners until 1956 when it was purchased by the developer and builder Sydney Fischer.

In February 1948 Council granted interim development permission to Mandalay Pty Ltd to erect a block of residential flats on the subject site. However, construction did not go ahead and Fischer filed a new application in September 1955. One month later development permission was granted in October 1955 under the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance to erect a block of flats (home units) on the site.

Sydney Fischer commissioned architect Douglas Forsyth Evans to develop a new design for a residential building of studio apartments on the steep and challenging site. On 5 June 1957 Douglas Forsyth Evans wrote to Council requesting preliminary approval for a proposed design, noting as follows: 'The flats have been carefully designed and considered so that the finished layout will be of a high standard of living units'.² (These plans are held in the City of Sydney archives but not the final plans.)

Sydney Fischer later lodged an amended application providing for the proposed building to have basement and sub-basement floors to be used for the parking only of motor cars belonging to the occupants of the residential flats. Various small additional land parcels were also purchased

¹ City of Sydney 2013, 'Aboriginal People and Place'.

² Letter to City of Sydney, DA 908/57 file.

Historical overview

by Fischer to make the development viable. Following the change of ownership of the vacant site to Sydney Fischer, development permission under the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance was granted in November 1957 to erect a building of approximately 100ft by 170ft; a block of studio or one-bedroom flats (home units) with provision for carparking facilities in the basement and lower basement for building residents.

The Gateway was built by Sydney Fischer's construction company Australian Development Corporation, which was responsible for the construction of several residential apartment

buildings at the time including Bridgewater at 22 Waruda Street, Kirribilli. The journal *Building Lighting and Engineering* on 24 April 1958 noted lift-slab construction had been introduced into Australia the year before and was being applied in several buildings to speed up construction times with The Gateway one example cited.³

The building was completed by the end of 1958. The ambitious structure with concrete slabs on steel piers was engineered by Peter Owen Miller (1922–2013) of Miller Milston & Ferris. This included steel wind bracing exposed at the basement level. Miller was instrumental in pioneering lift-slab construction in Australia, and in the design of many notable buildings in Sydney and Canberra.

Eric Douglas Forsyth Evans

The following is extracted and edited from the entry on Forsyth Evans in the *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*:

Eric Douglas Forsyth Evans (1899–1968) was born in Rooty Hill, Sydney NSW. He trained under architect Varney Parkes and registered as an architect in 1923. His early works include house additions and walk-up apartment blocks which were largely undistinguished. This first notable work was the Rialto Cinema, Ryde (1932, now demolished). Marton Hall (1938, now demolished), a flat building in Wynyard designed by Evans in the 'Moderne' style, received attention from the architectural and social press for its stylish design and height.

Forsyth Evans was prolific in the postwar period and designed several prominent flat buildings in Sydney. These include The Chilterns, Rose Bay (1953), which was inspired by Corbusier's incorporation of piloti and glazed walls; Seven Seas, Kirribilli (1958), one of the first 'slab' format flat blocks in Australia; and the luxurious Glenhurst Gardens (1959), one of the first in Sydney constructed using lift-slab concrete floors.

While Forsyth Evans fell out of favour with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects over fees, he continued to attract various prominent Sydneysiders as investors due to his flamboyant lifestyle and social connections. He designed the Caprice restaurant, Rose Bay (1959), for restaurateur Jim Bendrodt; and Hotel Charles, Chatswood (1958), for the Waterhouse bookmaking family. He designed an Adventist church in Epping, NSW in 1961.

The Chilterns, Rose Bay (1953), is the only building by Forsyth Evans that is heritage listed (Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 1995) and on the Australian Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) Register of Significant Architecture.⁴

It is noted that The Gateway was designed in 1956–1958 when Douglas Forsyth Evans & Associates were completing multiple large projects and hence the office would have employed numerous architects. The preliminary drawings for The Gateway of 1957 are signed by Nado Milat (Nadomir Ivan Milat), an architect of note in his own right who graduated from Sydney University in 1955 and registered in NSW in the same year, his application for registration signed by Forsyth Evans. Another notable architect working in the company and linked to the design of The Gateway is Polish-born Tony Schmaehling (later of Schmaehling Boys and Vickery).

³ *Building Lighting and Engineering*, 24 April 1958, p 77.

⁴ Edited by Phillip Goad and Julie Willis, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, Victoria, p 238.

Historical overview

Sydney Fischer

Sydney Fischer (1927–2023) was a businessman, property developer and Australia's most decorated yachtsman. Fischer starting his building career enclosing verandahs to make an extra room for struggling families and their lodgers in the 1930s. With a sharp eye for acquiring undervalued property, he rode the home unit boom of the 1960s and 1970s amassing the capital reserves that would help make his Australian Development Corporation (ADC) into a highly profitable private company. Fischer purchased the Gateway site about the same time that he discovered sailing and bought his first yacht. Fischer self-funded five America's Cup campaigns and competed in 47 Sydney to Hobart yacht races, many in his famous yacht *Ragamuffin*. ADC would later build the striking Gazebo Hotel in Kings Cross. Built and operated by ADC in the late 1960s as a 200-room hotel it was later converted by Fischer's company to apartments. His initial design concept of a circular concrete and steel exoskeleton survives as evidence of his faith in his own ability as a builder and willingness to take risks.⁵

Description

A site inspection, including the interior of one unit (No. 17) and communal areas, was undertaken on 3 October 2024. The physical assessment is based on this and other available documentation.

Setting and context

The Gateway is located on the western side of Wylde Street at its northernmost tip before it falls steeply to Cowper Wharf Roadway. The topography of the area is undulating and the land slopes steeply from the site down to the harbour to the north and east of the site. The Gateway is situated at an elevated position on this promontory with wide views to the north, east and west.

The building is within the Potts Point Heritage Conservation Area. The immediate vicinity of the site is characterised by two-storey detached dwellings from the Victorian period of a small scale located to the north along the lower parts of the slope, interwar flat buildings and multistorey postwar and contemporary apartments that are comparable in scale to the east and south. The Gateway has a distinct and prominent streetscape presence due to its position at the end of the peninsula on Wylde Street.

Physical description

The Gateway flat building consists of eight storeys—one floor of carparking and seven storeys of residences originally containing 35 units and 16 garages. The building is on an irregular shaped lot and the land is undulating, resulting in a unique, elongated and faceted building form.

The Gateway is constructed of a steel frame of supporting piers with reinforced concrete floor slabs and red textured face brickwork external walls. Its construction used the lift-slab technique (floor plates cast on existing slabs then raised into position on steel columns) and it was one of the earliest buildings in Australia to utilise this construction method. The concrete slabs are exposed and project horizontally along the elevations, beyond the floor plate, at each level.

The eastern elevation facing Wylde Street has a consistent rhythmic pattern of projecting slabs, and balconies with timber-framed openings. The windows are grouped together with vertical rows of fixed and transom windows with light blue panels to the bottom. The doors leading to the balconies are surrounded with fixed fanlight windows to the top and a large, fixed window to its side. The balconies have a metal balustrade with curved corners and this is consistent throughout the building, a recent sympathetic replacement of the original. The eastern elevation also has a vertically proportioned projecting bay, which houses the stairwell. The bay contains a vertical row of timber-framed windows with fixed yellow tinted frosted glass panes and yellow solid panels at floor slabs.

The rear elevation has a similar pattern of fenestration. The balconies to the rear elevation are trapezoidal in shape. There is an ambulatory along the rear that provides access to the

⁵ Syd Fischer obituary, *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 2023 (<https://www.smh.com.au/national/i-don-t-want-to-be-poor-sydney-to-hobart-veteran-and-developer-played-tough-20230227-p5cnuh.html>)

Description

apartments. Garages are located at ground level with aluminium roller shutters, some of which were added later. The Y-shaped steel frame of the wind bracing is exposed at the basement level, now encased in a fire rated coating.

The entryway is marked by an angled concrete hood, with cast concrete 'THE GATEWAY' lettering, supported on slender steel columns. The drive entry is paved in stone crazy paving. The main façade at the entry is faced in sawn sandstone with a distinctive mural etched into the stone. Designed by German-born sculptor Kurt Norden, it depicts Aboriginal people, animals and landscape elements including city buildings and The Gateway itself. The mural extends into the lobby area, which has dark polished exposed aggregate concrete floor and timber panelling. The lift is original and the stairwell retains its original simple metal balustrade.

In plan, the apartments are distributed off the lift stair lobby or along a semi-open ambulatory located along the rear elevation of the building. The units have an irregular plan due to the shape of the building. There are generally five units per floor with two-bedroom units located at either end of the ambulatory and a one-bedroom unit located along it. The westernmost apartment is a one-bedroom unit. Units on level 3 at the western end have been amalgamated into a single unit and unit 15 on the ground floor, adjacent to the lobby, is a studio. The units are planned such that the bedrooms and living rooms have floor-to-ceiling fenestration, maximising views, light and ventilation. The bathrooms and kitchens are located along either the corridors or the lesser façades.

Unit 17, which was inspected during the site visit, has a contemporary bathroom and kitchen fitout. Photographs on real estate websites show that some internal units have original pastel shade bathrooms and parquet flooring.

Landscaping

The site is highly constrained and all areas are hard landscaped with very little planting.

Modifications/integrity

Council records after 2001 indicate the following:

D/2008/1532 was approved in 2008 for internal modifications and layout changes to Unit 74.

DA/2004/846, lodged in 2004, proposed the replacement of the existing balustrade with BCA compliant balustrades and associated waterproofing to balconies.

D/2001/528/A was lodged in 2001 for internal alterations to a unit.

Condition

Overall, the building is in good condition but there are water ingress issues in several areas related to the projecting slabs and failing Alcor flashing and mastic seals.

Galvanised steel downpipes require replacement and re-lining.

Wiring is generally not located within the brick cavity and requires replacement.

Some timber windows require replacement.

Comparative analysis

The Gateway can be compared with other major apartment designs by Douglas Forsyth Evans including The Chilterns, Rose Bay (1953—item I320 under Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014); Seven Seas, Kirribilli (1958); and Glenhurst Gardens, Darling Point (1959).

The Chilterns was designed in partnership with engineer Peter Miller (who also worked on several Harry Seidler buildings and The Gateway) to incorporate new construction techniques employing reinforced concrete with lightweight infill walls supported on pilotis, and is now considered a benchmark site in the introduction of this new construction form. The Gateway, being an early and large-scale use of lift-slab building technology, can be seen to have been innovative.

The Gateway also shares characteristics with two other large apartment projects designed by Forsyth Evans in this period: Seven Seas and Glenhurst Gardens. Both are located on elevated sites with views to the harbour. In both projects Forsyth Evans utilised linear planning with open gallery circulation located away from the main elevation. The units in both apartment complexes

Comparative analysis

have long rows of aluminium-framed windows—transom and fixed pane—and balconies that allow light, ventilation and direct views to the harbour.

Glenhurst Gardens, constructed a year later than The Gateway, was also a lift-slab construction. Externally, both buildings feature face brickwork, projecting concrete floor slabs, and large areas of glazing with fixed and transom windows and balconies along the elevations facing the harbour, and a vertically expressed projecting bay that houses the stairwell. At the time of its construction Glenhurst Gardens was one of the largest apartment buildings completed in Australia. Marketed as offering luxury apartments and located within established gardens it can be seen as a more prominent project, without the structural and site issues faced by The Gateway.

The entryway sequence of Gateway is considered particularly noteworthy with angled concrete hood, cast concrete lettering, stone crazy paving, and distinctive Kurt Norden mural etched into sandstone blocks. There are very few similar lobby entry designs remaining intact in the City of Sydney and it is considered rare.

When compared to other buildings by architect Douglas Forsyth Evans, The Gateway is notable for its period of construction, a time when the architect was designing the major projects of his career; it was at the forefront of experimental construction techniques. It is not as good an example of early innovation as The Chilterns and is not of the finish and scale of Glenhurst Gardens; however, it is considered a good representative example of the work of Douglas Forsyth Evans in this period with aesthetic and technical significance.



Figure 1 The Seven Seas, Kirribilli, completed 1958. (Source: Vintage, Arts, Architecture (1900–1980 <https://danismm.tumblr.com/post/177038226846/the-seven-seas-kirribilli-nsw-austalia-1959>))



Figure 2 Glenhurst Gardens, Darling Point, completed just one year after The Gateway, was also a notable early project that utilised the lift-slab construction methodology. (Source: GML 2024)

Assessment of significance

Criterion A (Historic significance)	The Gateway is an example of a modern mid-rise residential flat building and reflects the changing development, built environment and demographics of the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay areas through the mid-twentieth century along with others of its type in the area. However, independently, the building is not a key example of these changes. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.
Criterion B (Historical association)	The Gateway has strong associations with Douglas Forsyth Evans, an accomplished architect who designed several noteworthy apartment projects in the postwar period. The Gateway is a good example of Forsyth Evans' work and provides evidence of his design principles, response to context and willingness to experiment with new technological advances of the period. The Gateway also has some significance for its association with Sydney Fischer, a prominent property developer of the period. The Gateway has cultural significance at a local level under this criterion. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a state level under this criterion.
Criterion C (Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement)	The Gateway is aesthetically distinct and of high design quality. The design of the building—its siting on a narrow site, its irregular form and planning of corridors and units, the configuration of the internal layouts and its fenestration—demonstrates Forsyth Evans' inventiveness in planning and ability to engage with challenging sites. The external elevations have a unique presentation with projecting slabs painted white, red textured face brickwork, and a regular fenestration pattern with blue spandrel panels. Combined with its distinctive entrance hood, mural and foyer the building contributes positively to the streetscape of the Potts Point peninsula. The entryway sequence with angled concrete hood, cast concrete lettering, stone crazy paving, and distinctive Kurt Norden mural etched into sandstone, is considered to have particular aesthetic significance. The Gateway also has some technical significance as an early example of the use of lift-slab construction techniques in Australia. The Gateway has cultural significance at a local level under this criterion. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a state level under this criterion.
Criterion D (Social, cultural and spiritual significance)	The Gateway is not known to have special associations with a particular group or to have contemporary esteem within the local community beyond housing amenity. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.
Criterion E (Research potential)	The Gateway is not considered to have the potential to yield significant further or new information not available elsewhere. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Assessment of significance

Criterion F (Rare)	The Gateway is not considered a rare example of a mid-twentieth century modernist apartment building in Sydney or a rare example of the work of Forsyth Evans. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.
Criterion G (Representative)	The Gateway is a good and intact representative example of the work of Douglas Forsyth Evans and of 1960s apartment buildings in the Potts Point area more generally. It is one of a group of significant apartments designed by Forsyth Evans during the 1950s and 1960s. The Gateway is important in demonstrating principal characteristics of Forsyth Evans' designs, including an individual response to the site, innovation in construction technologies, linear planning with a single-sided gallery circulation and façade treatments utilising projecting slabs, large areas of glazing and red textured brick walling. Developed on a difficult site with expansive harbour views, The Gateway also represents the increase in harbourside apartment developments in the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay areas during the 1950s and 1960s. Largely intact, The Gateway, particularly its entrance features, mural and foyer, is able to demonstrate this significant period in the evolution of the local area. The Gateway has cultural significance at a local level under this criterion. The Gateway does not have cultural significance at a state level under this criterion.

Statement of significance

The Gateway is a good example of the work of Douglas Forsyth Evans, a significant and highly regarded architect of the mid-twentieth century working in Sydney and has historical significance for its association with him.

The Gateway is aesthetically distinct due to its prominent setting on a narrow site on Wylde Street, its irregular elongated form, distinctive façade and intact entry elements, and as a consequence contributes positively to the streetscape of the Potts Point peninsula.

The Gateway is a good representative example of the work of Douglas Forsyth Evans and of 1960s apartment buildings in the Potts Point area more generally. The building was among the first in Australia to implement the lift-slab construction technique to increase efficiency. This demonstrates Forsyth Evans' willingness to experiment and incorporate new technological advancements of the postwar period. Substantially intact, the fabric of The Gateway is able to demonstrate the principal characteristics of mid-twentieth century modernist apartment buildings in the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay areas more generally.

Recommendations

The Gateway meets the threshold for local listing for its historical association, aesthetic and representative values.

It is recommended for heritage listing on the Sydney Local Environmental Plan. Individual apartment interiors should be excluded from the listing.

The building should be retained and conserved. A heritage impact statement should outline any original features and their proposed management prior to any major works being undertaken.

Recommendations

A comprehensive conservation management plan for the site could be prepared to guide future uses and development and ensure its heritage values are conserved.

Information sources

Type	Author	Title	Year	Repository
Site inspection (external)	GML		2024	GML
Written				City of Sydney Archives
Publication	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	'Harbour home units completed'	18 November 1958	Sydney Morning Herald Archives 1955–1995 (State Library of NSW)
Publication	<i>Cross-Section</i>		Issue No. 76, 1 February 1959	University of Melbourne
Publication	<i>Building Lighting and Engineering</i>		24 April 1958, p 77	National Library of Australia

Image caption	Perspective view of The Gateway (design altered since), BA 908/1957.				
Image year	1957	Image by	D Forsyth Evans and Associates	Image copyright holder	City of Sydney

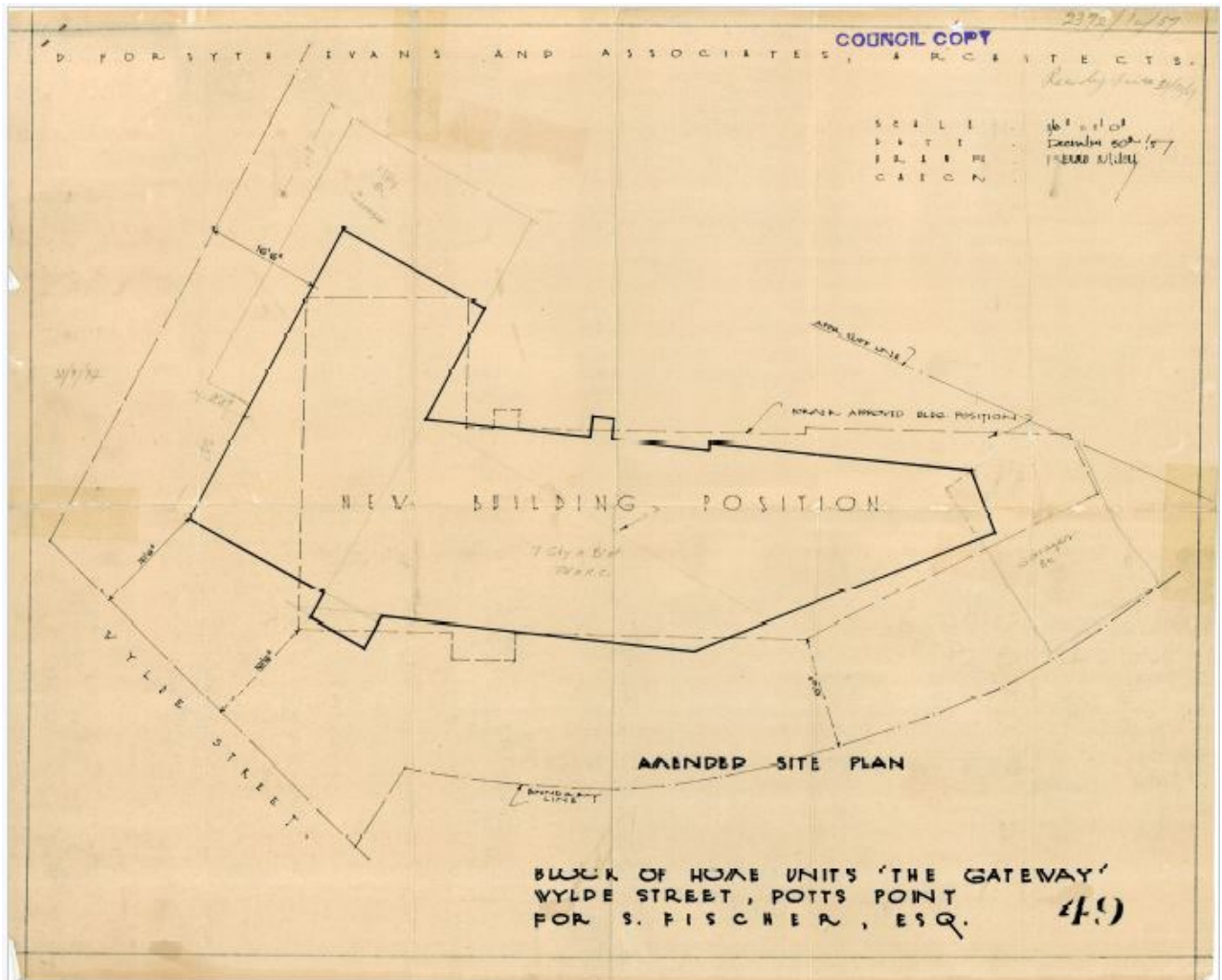


Image caption	Typical section of The Gateway (design altered since), BA 908/1957.				
Image year	1957	Image by	D Forsyth Evans and Associates	Image copyright holder	City of Sydney

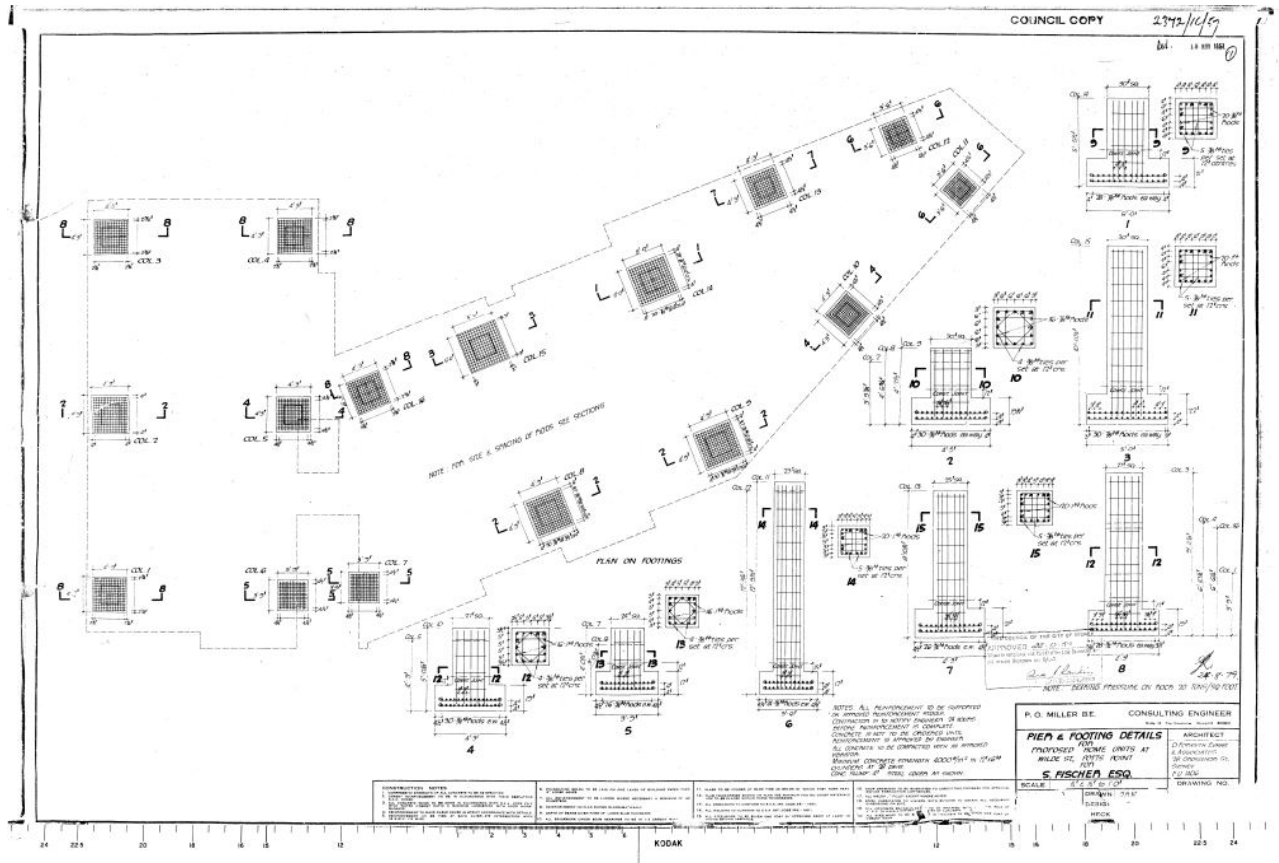


Image caption	Prospective design for a development of studio apartments on site (not built), BA 908/1957.				
Image year	1957	Image by	D Forsyth Evans and Associates (signed Nado Milat)	Image copyright holder	City of Sydney

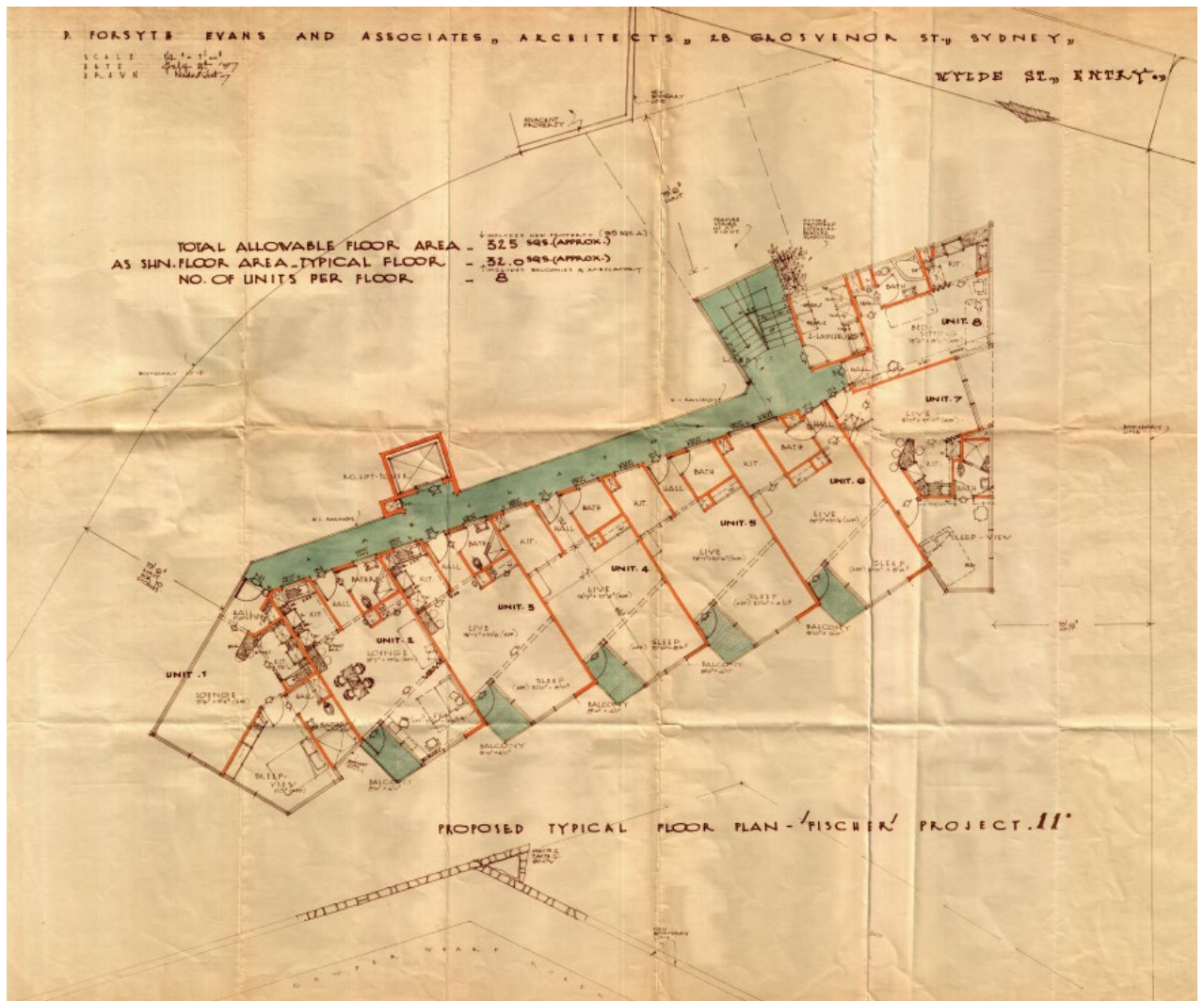


Image caption	Gateway Apartments, Potts Point, c1960, under construction.				
Image year	c1960	Image by	Max Dupain & Associates	Image copyright holder	State Library of NSW



Image caption	Exterior view taken from Wylde Street showing the vertical circular core set off the main façade.				
Image year	2024	Image by	Realestate.com.au	Copyright	Realestate.com.au



Image caption	Eastern elevation of The Gateway from Wylde Street.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Entryway along the eastern elevation of The Gateway.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	The projecting bay with stairwell along the eastern elevation of The Gateway.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	View of the rear elevation.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Typical Y-profile structural steel frame along the rear elevation.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Entry mural designed by Kurt Norden in the lobby.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Northernmost (two-bedroom) unit on the floor.				
Image year	2024	Image by	Realestate.com.au	Image copyright holder	Realestate.com.au



Image caption	Bathroom in apartment 25.				
Image year	2024	Image by	Realestate.com.au	Image copyright holder	Realestate.com.au

