



DESIGN
REVIEW
PANELS
ANOTHER
SET OF EYES

PETER CIEMITIS
Principal, Robertsday

- Why Panels?
- Matters Considered by Panels
- The need for rigor (especially on aesthetics)
- Representation of projects
- Effective Panel meetings
- The City Architect

Can design quality
be prescribed in
policy or guidelines?



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Sydney's planning rules 'blocking' apartment design

Ingrid Fuary-Wagner

Dull and uninspiring apartment buildings are cropping up across Sydney because NSW's planning regulations implemented to uphold design standards are in fact achieving the opposite, according to Burwood mayor John Faker.

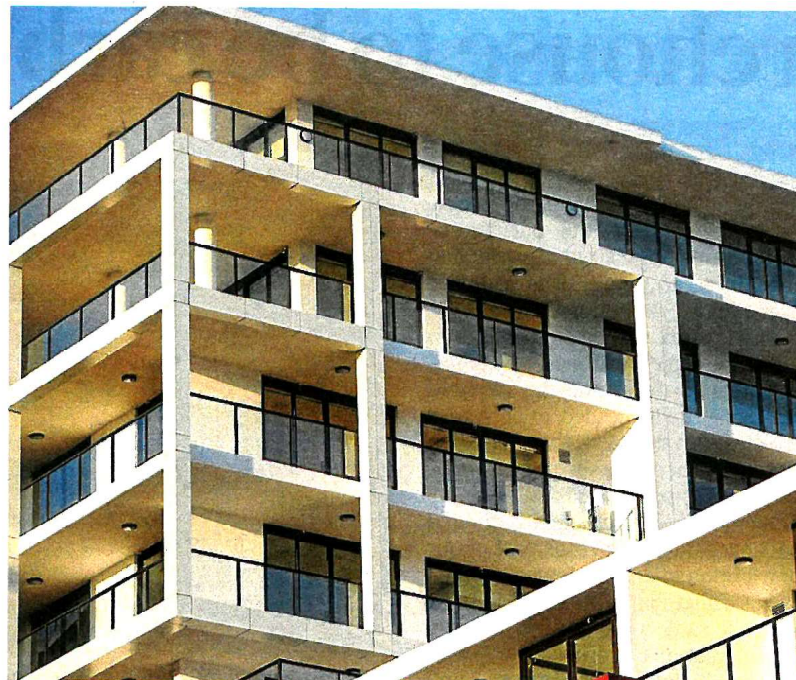
Burwood Council area, in Sydney's inner west, has seen a surge in development as the region prepares for more than a 50 per cent increase in its population from 37,000 to about 55,000 by 2021.

"We're building 500 new dwellings per year for the next five years," Cr Faker said. "No lot in Sydney is identical

to the one next door, yet they are all starting to look the same. These buildings are all tall, square and just painted different colours."

The Apartment Design Guide, which was implemented by the NSW government in mid-2015 and provides rules about design elements such as floor space and street setbacks, establishes "a consistent approach to the design and assessment of apartments" across the state.

However, that "consistent approach", while having the right intention, meant design guidelines were rigid and had become the rule of thumb among developers trying to get projects across the line quickly, Cr Faker said. "There



Uninspiring apartment buildings have come under attack. PHOTO: JAMES ALCOCK

are a lot of holding costs with these type of developments so everyone is saying 'what do I need to get an approval?' and that's stifling design." The chief execut-

ive officer of developer lobby group Urban Taskforce, Chris Johnston, said the government should allow for a merit-based approval system that

worked in tandem with the current process. "Part of the incentive [for innovative design] might be that a developer who could find a whiz-bang architect to design something really special gets much quicker approval, so instead the project might be approved in one month instead of eight months," he said.

"While it wouldn't work for every project, it would be based on merit, not based on rule books.

"A classic example is the design of the Sydney Opera House.

"Most of the entries were a box.

"Jorn Utzon broke all the rules.

"The planners [by today's standards] would not have let it go ahead.

"Yet it's the most amazing building we've got."

Cr Faker said the local community had largely accepted that bigger, taller towers in the town centre were becoming part of the norm.

"The complaints I'm getting aren't so much about the size of towers but the poor design of them.

"I think we need to go back to the start of the process and look at what will actually fit into a space and not look so much at the setbacks and regulations and heights," he said.



Why Design Review Panels?

For expert input where an LGA needs specialised skills and knowledge for specific proposals

Matters Considered by Panels

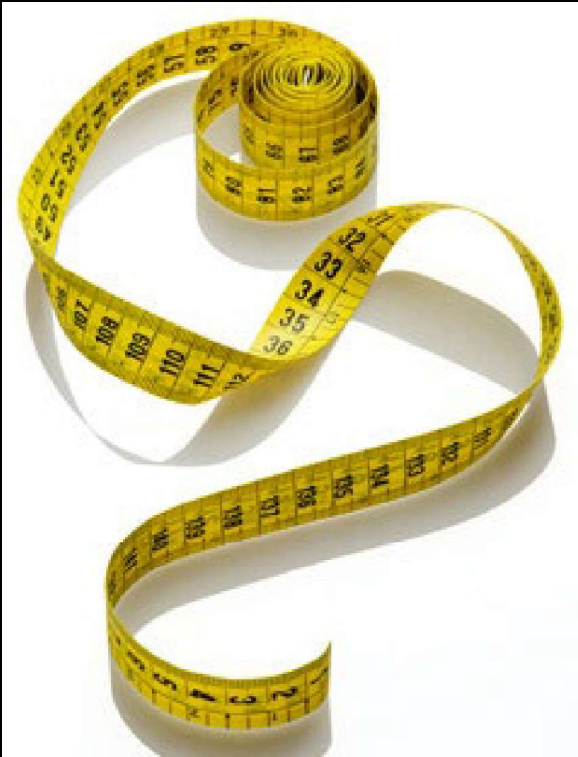


- Height, bulk, disposition
- Internal arrangements
- Public realm
- Activation
- Aesthetics



The need for Panels
is therefore **expertise** driven
rather than **resource** driven.

Use them well



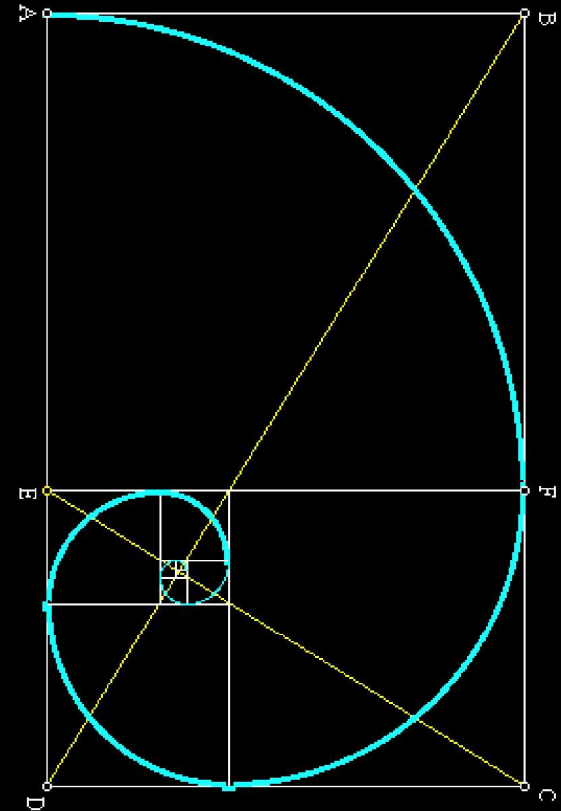
measurable aspects of a proposal should be assessed and recommendations made by officers, whereas a Panel is best used to advise on **qualitative** aspects (design excellence).

The Panel should have the capacity to **argue/defend** a recommendation, even for aesthetic decisions

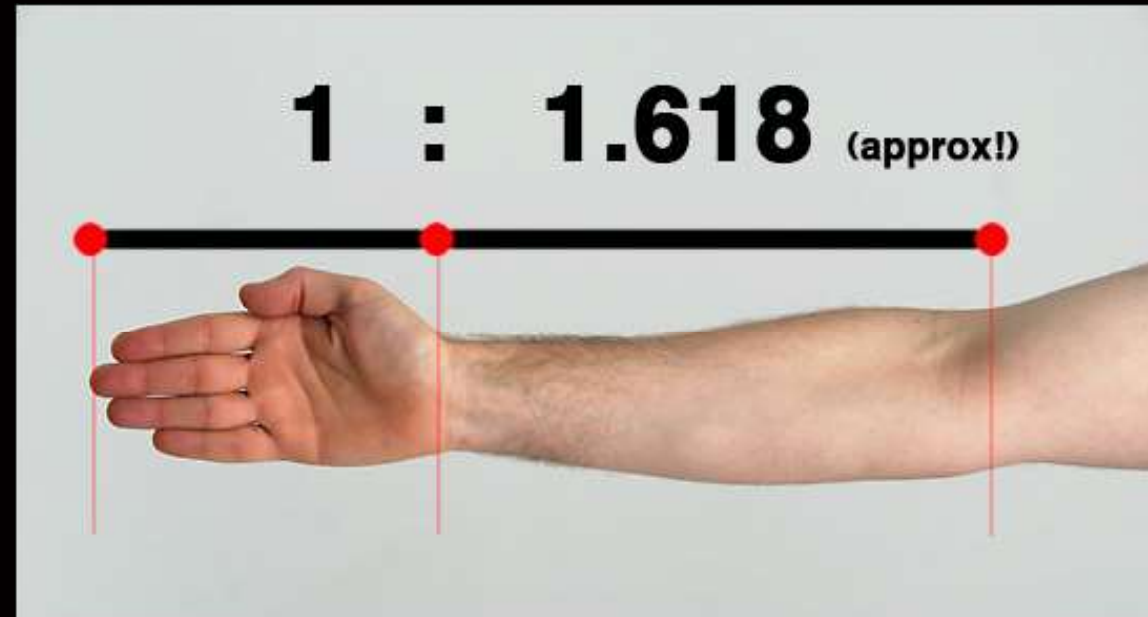


A Panel should have the capacity to **apply rigor** in making aesthetic determinations.

Visual design excellence is more than being in the 'eye of the beholder'

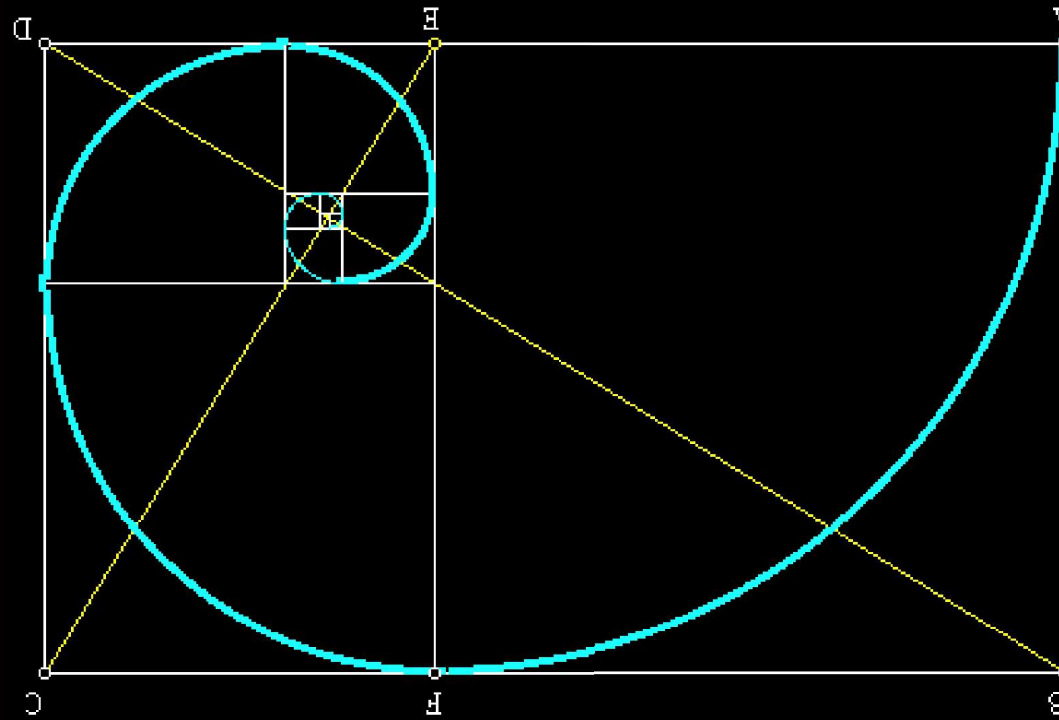


Some principles of visual design



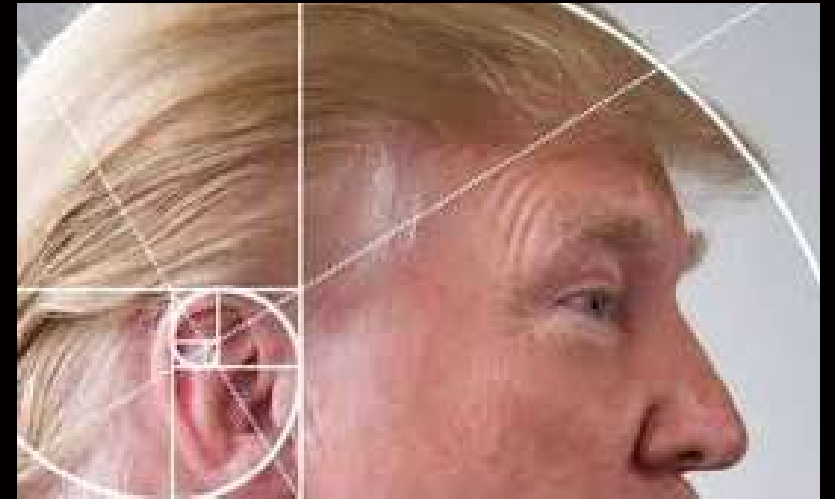
“Golden Ratio”

Some principles of visual design



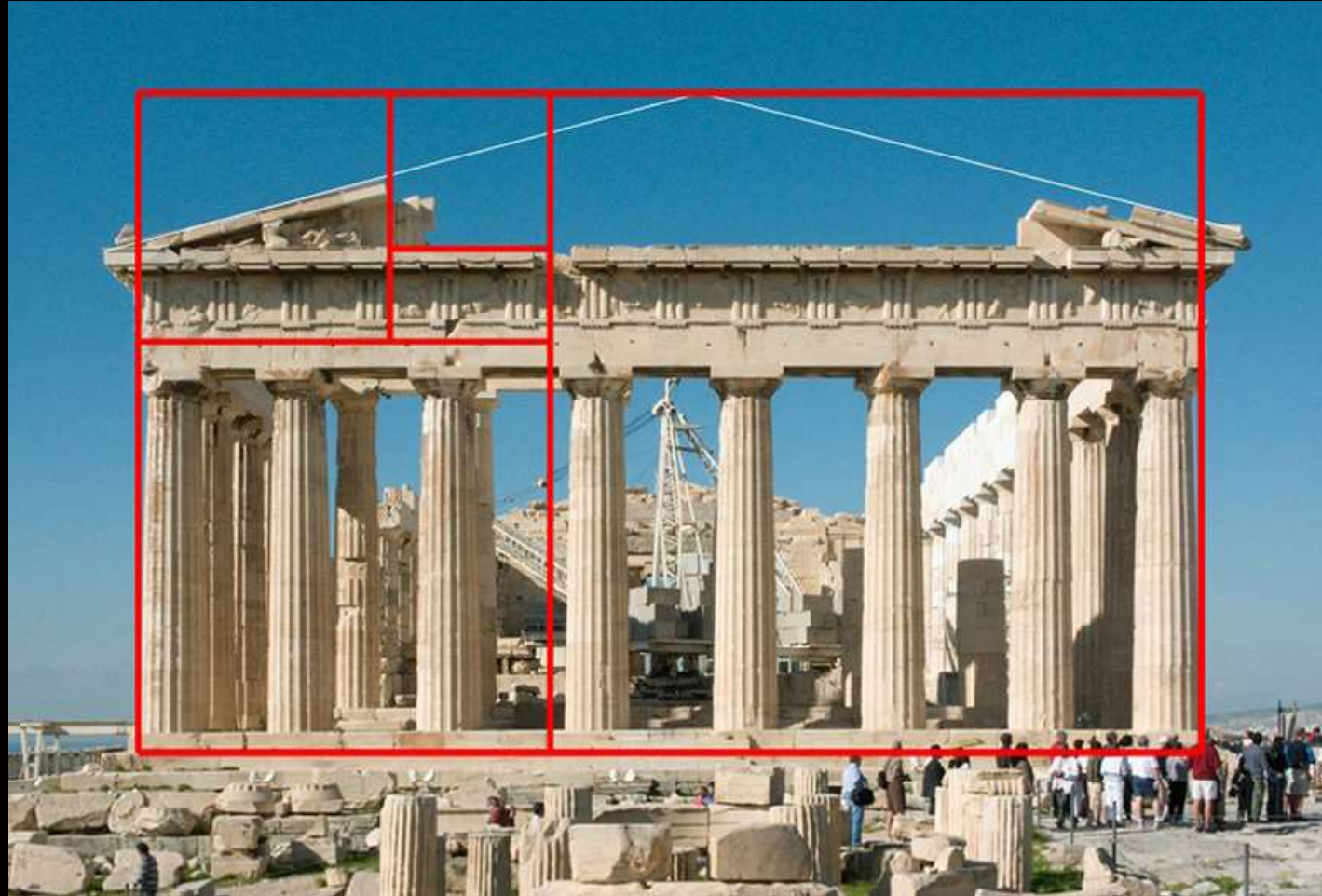
“Fibonacci sequence”

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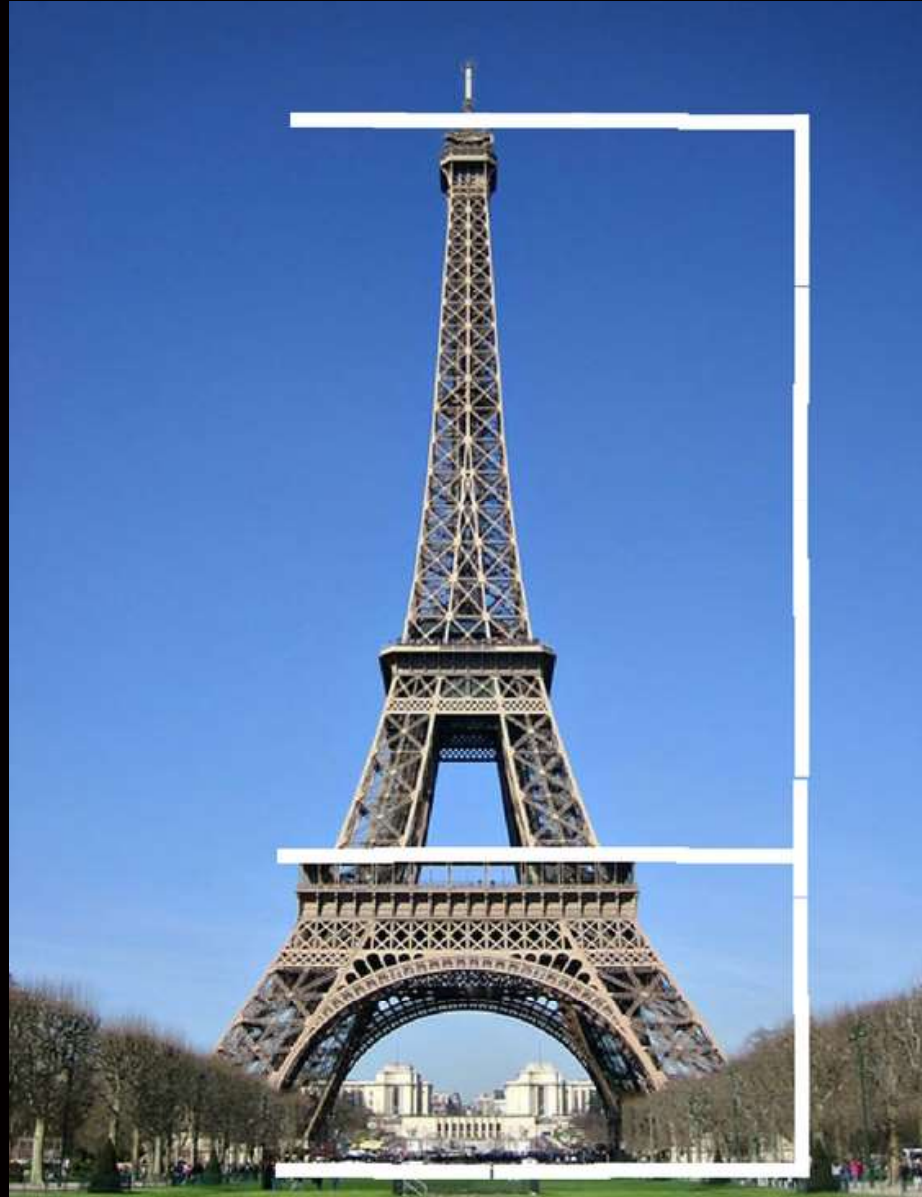


“Fibonacci sequence”

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“Rule of Thirds”

Some principles of visual design



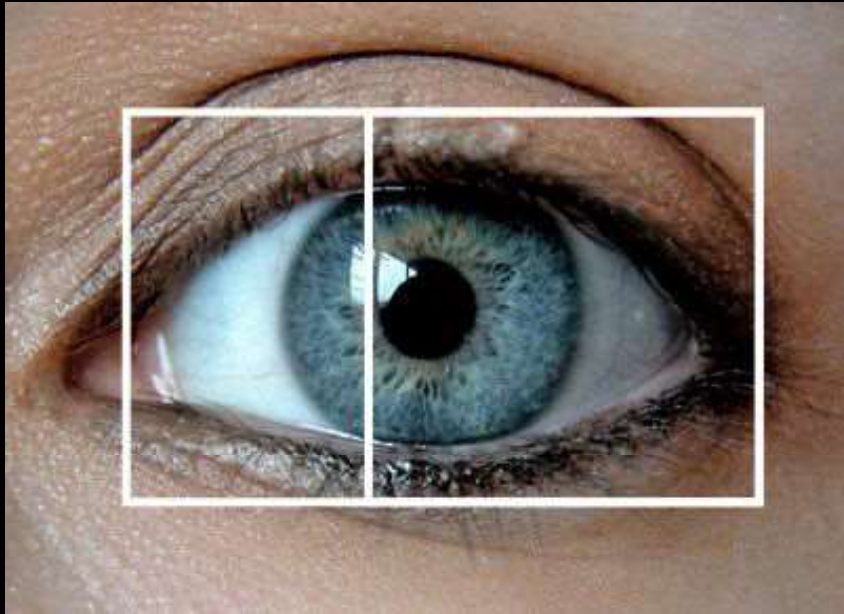
“Rule of Thirds”

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“Rule of Thirds”

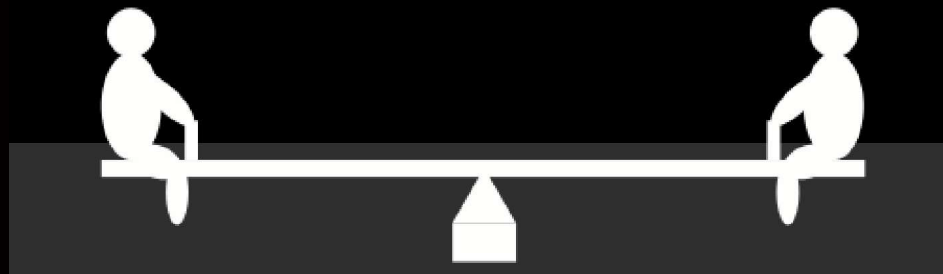
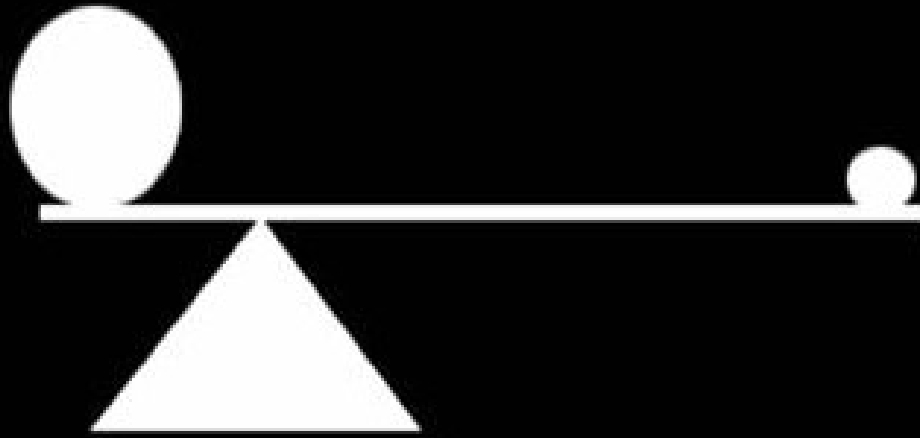
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COGNITION THEORY

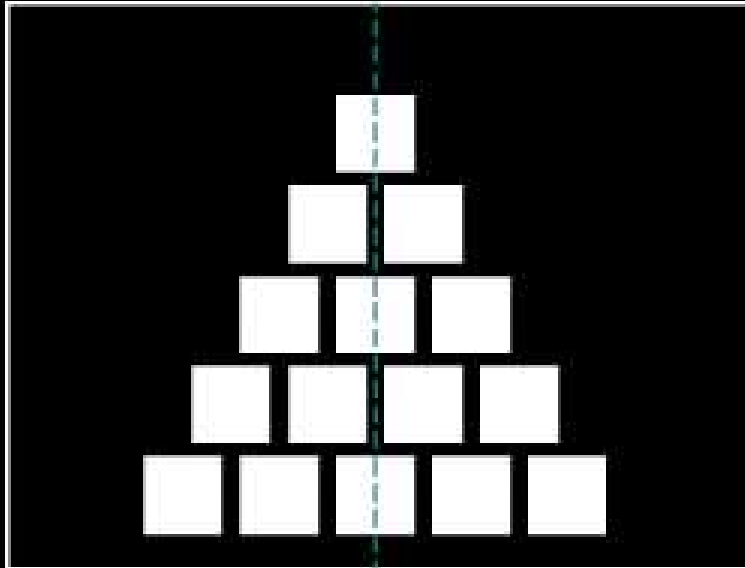
the golden ratio is the best flowing configuration for images from plane to brain and therefore is frequently used in human-made shapes to aid easier (more pleasurable) recognition.

Some principles of visual design



Balance

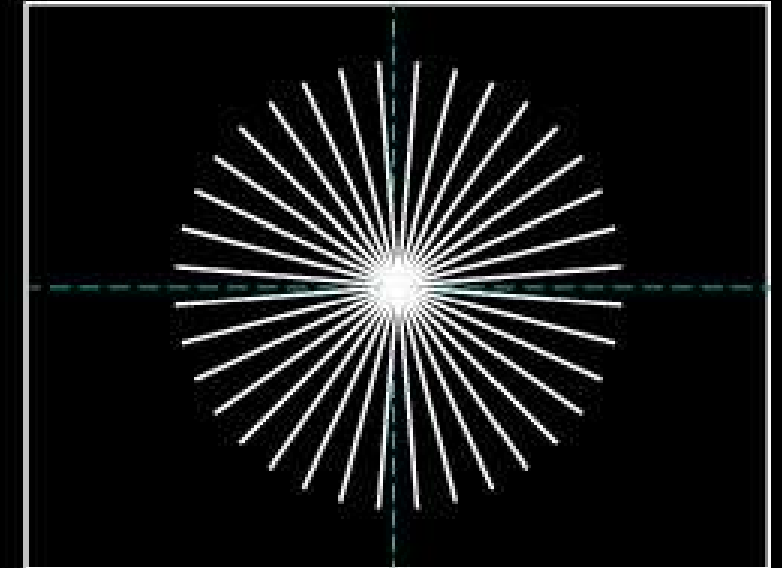
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SYMMETRICAL BALANCE



ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE



RADIAL BALANCE

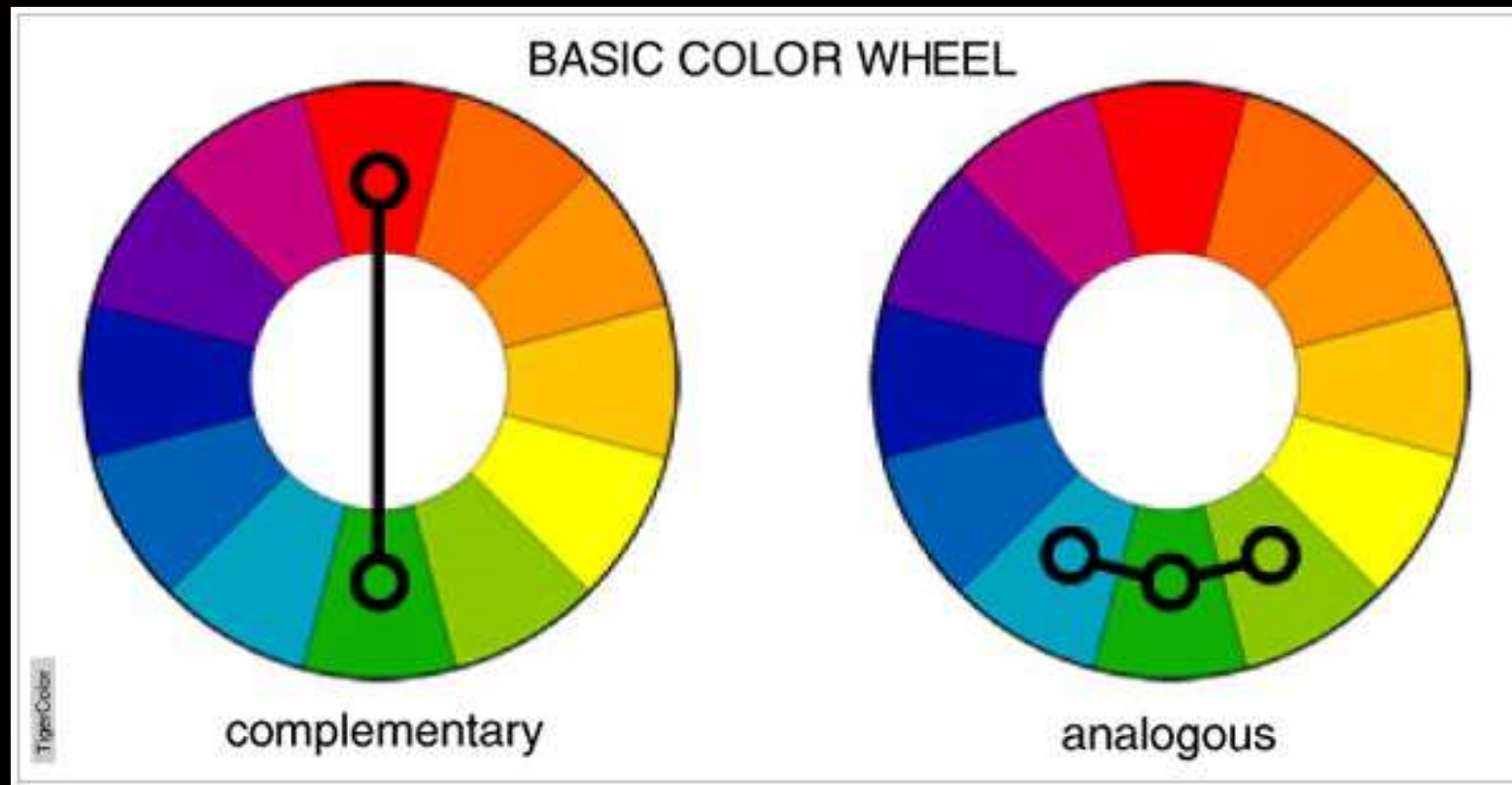
Balance

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Balance

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Colour Theory

Some principles of visual design



Colour Theory

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Colour Theory

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The subjectivity
of visual design
principles?

Qualitative place considerations



Qualitative
guidance on
the public
realm

Qualitative place considerations



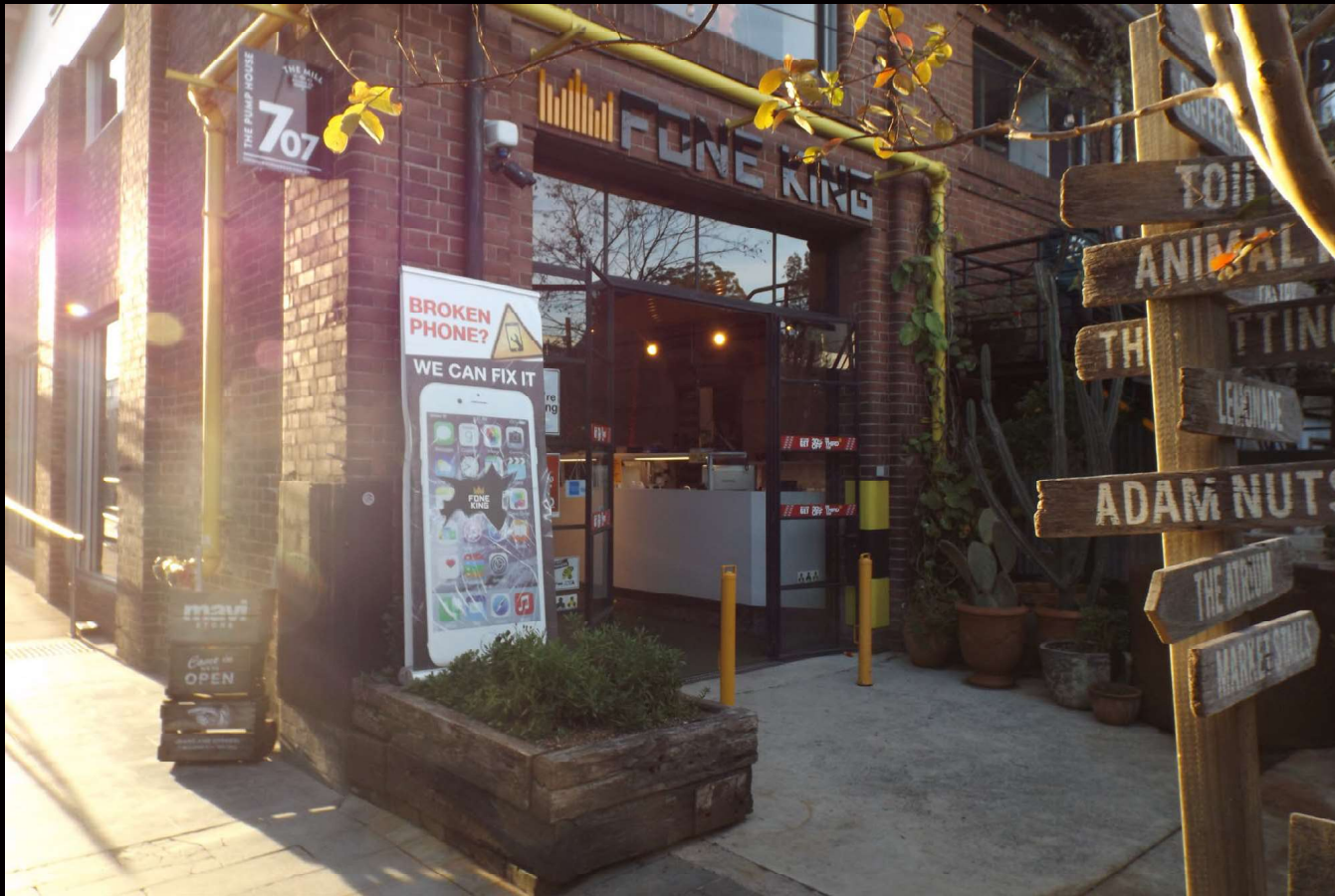
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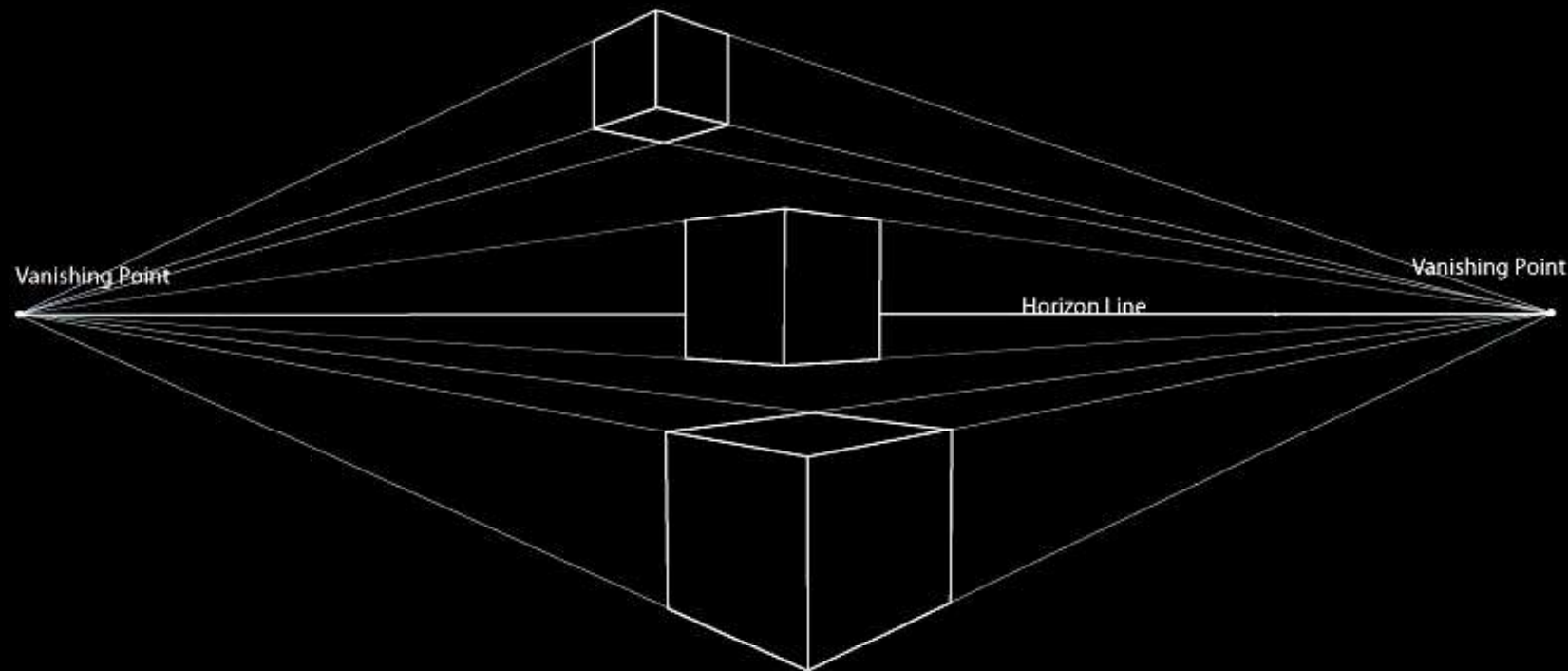
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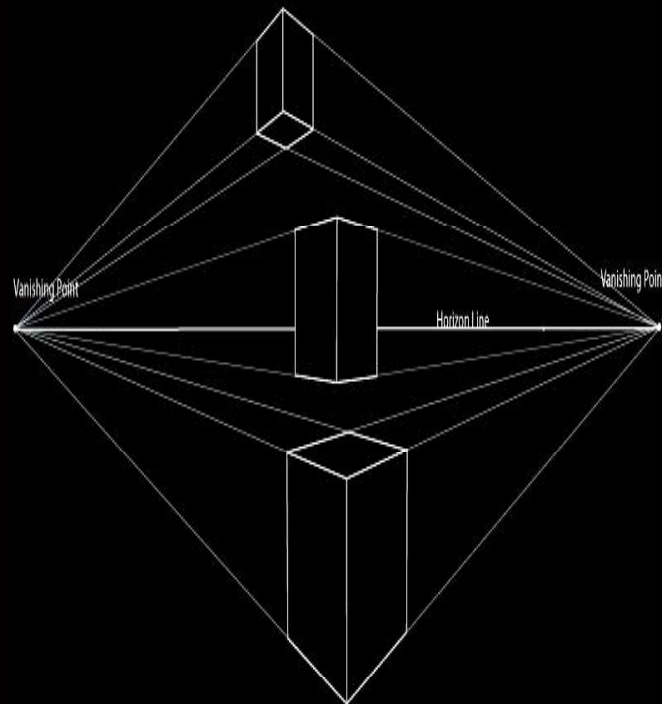
Qualitative
guidance on
the public
realm

Representation of Projects



Beware the
perspective
field!

Representation of Projects



Beware the
perspective
field!

Representation of Projects



Beware the
perspective
field!

Representation of Projects



Beware the
light condition!

Representation of Projects



Beware the
light condition!

Effective Panel Meetings



Agenda
Material
Time

Effective Design Negotiation



The value of a
City Architect

early engagement,
meaningful feedback

thankyou

