

Convention Center Architects Series Part IV: Upcoming Overseas Venues

Posted on [November 3, 2015](#) by [Kristan Obeng](#)

This feature is included in a four-part series on architecture firms that design convention centers. This article is part four of four. See part [one](#), [two](#) and [three](#) in the series.

Convention center design trends seen in North America have also made their way to locales as far as Australia and the Arabian Peninsula. Two AEG Ogden-managed venues coming in 2016 were designed by firms that emphasized the importance of the destinations.

International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney)



ICC Sydney rendering by HASSELL and Populous

The design of the AU\$1.1 billion ICC Sydney is a partnership between two architecture firms: the Australia-based office of HASSELL and Populous, which brought Australian and U.S. architects to the team.

In 2011, Lendlease, a part of Darling Harbour Live – the group of companies bringing ICC Sydney to life, approached HASSELL as the lead architect long before the New South Wales government sent out an RFP. HASSELL then brought on Populous because of its international convention center expertise.

Together, the two firms delivered a design that met the local government's requirements, such as delivering a world-class venue that surpassed the convention center that was previously onsite. This creation also needed to be larger than the old Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, but the design couldn't eliminate public land in Darling Harbour at Sydney Harbour, which is a precinct visited by 27 million annually.



Premier Mike Baird, Minister Andrew Constance, Lyn Lewis-Smith and ICC Sydney CEO Geoff Donaghy

"The urban and social importance of the precinct was a critical factor in the development of the design. The scheme we proposed doubled the floor area that was previously on site, so we had to be sure that we could achieve this and provide more publicly accessible open space to provide a great outcome for the people of Sydney. It was the combination of the experience and skills of the HASSELL + Populous JV team that really worked well to achieve this balanced outcome," explained the HASSELL design team.

ICC Sydney will include 70 meeting rooms, four plenary theatres and 35,000 square meters of exhibition space.

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC)



Rendering byWATG

WATG is a global architecture firm known mostly for its conference center designs at hotels, but it also has convention centers in its portfolio. The company's work on the Royal Opera House and the Grand Mosque in Muscat, Oman, earned it an invitation to a design competition for the billion-dollar OCEC.

After winning the competition, WATG architects asked themselves, "What's symbolic to Oman?" and then proceeded to have an in-house design competition to challenge each other to produce the best results.

"Being close to the airport, the building had to be low-rise, and yet iconic as well. Local references were very important to the design team. As the design developed, the auditorium became the "anchor" of the whole scheme, with its most visual component, the roof, inspired by the shape of Oman's desert rose. The scheme is set within a public park. Retaining that feature of the local area was crucial for the team, and the intention was to have water activities and other facilities that could provide amenity for local residents, alongside the convention centre, business park and hotels that the site houses," stated the WATG design team.



Opening in 2016, Oman Convention Exhibition Centre is already attracting events from Australia and New Zealand.

OCEC will be home to a 3,200-seat theater, 14 meeting rooms and 22,000 square meters of exhibition space.