

2006 - 2007

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

centenary stonework program



sydney observatory

List of Projects

During 2006-07 conservation work was carried out on the following projects and information sheets are available.

- Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
- Sydney Hospital
- Glenmore Road Public School
- Marrickville Public School
- Darlinghurst Firestation
- Bondi Public School
- Darlinghurst Court
- Sydney Observatory
- Former Ultimo Post Office
- Macquarie Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens
- Cleveland Street Intensive English Language High School.
- Singlton Court

Program Summary

Sydney's natural beauty is firmly grounded in its 300 million-year old sandstone bedrock. The character and charm of the early streetscapes originate from blocks hewn from bedrock and fashioned into some of the world's finest colonial and neo-classical sandstone buildings.

In 2006-07 the Centenary Stonework Program continued to provide essential support for the repair and conservation of the State Government's historic sandstone buildings and monuments.

I am proud to have overseen this program of specialised stonework conservation to ensure the safety and longevity of our significant public buildings as they continue to serve their communities and the state well into the future.

This year saw strong working partnerships with the Attorney General's Department, Department of Education and Training and NSW Fire Brigade. These joint ventures and funding arrangements have accommodated the effective use of resources and infrastructure and have resulted in a holistic approach and economically efficient outcomes.

Importantly, 2007 saw the commencement of our partnership with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Extensive stone conservation work has begun on their original building, forming part of the celebrations of the Camperdown hospital's 125th anniversary.

The Centenary Stonework Program has taken the lead in the heritage industry in NSW. Its success is reflected in the conservation of sandstone buildings now occurring across the State, by universities, churches, commerce and industry,



Alan Marsh

Acting Director-General, Office of Public Works and Services
NSW Department of Commerce



Health Department

ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL

The RPA conservation program is a jointly funded project between the Centenary Stonework Program and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. This is the first project to commence in partnership with the South West Sydney Area Health Service. The joint partnership has allowed for additional heritage fabric to be conserved, restored and reconstructed. The Administration Block, both internally and externally, is an item of exceptional significance. It is a major surviving item of the original hospital. This historic core has been in continuous use since 1882.

The first stage of conservation works on the main administration block began in 2006-2007. The portico on the West Elevation was scaffolded in September 2006.

A banner showing the original stonemasons that worked on the Main Administration Block was designed and hung as scaffold interpretive art.

The first stage of works included sandstone replacement, repointing of joints and new protective lead weatherings. The opportunity arose to repair the roof. The damaged terra cotta roof tiles are currently being replaced with slate, the original roof covering. All mouldings and turret coverings were replaced with lead. The timber dormers are being reconstructed in the turrets.

The ceilings to both verandahs have had later ceiling linings removed to reveal the original timber panelled ceiling in the central verandah and an arched plaster ceiling on the top verandah.

The project has offered the opportunity for the Department's stonemasons to recarve ornate elements that had deteriorated such as the acroteria and finial of the pediment. The next stage of works will include the completion of reslating the roof, application of lead weatherings to all cornices and leading edges as well as seismic stabilisation to the chimneys and associated stone repairs. The program on the Main Administration Block is expected to continue for another six financial years in order to complete repairs to all the elevations.



Original acroteria pinned into new apex stone.



RPA pediment prepared for repointing of joints.

SYDNEY HOSPITAL

The 19th century sandstone buildings of Sydney Hospital are significant as part of the important institutional buildings along Macquarie Street. Following a number of makesafes over the years, the cornices, parapets and other vulnerable elements required repair. Conservation works commenced in 2003 and include the Macquarie Street elevation of the Administration Building, the courtyard elevations of the north and centre block and the south elevation of the South Block. McCaffrey's yellow block, quarried from Pymont is the stone used for replacement.

This year, conservation work was completed on the Centre Block and is nearing completion on the south-west tower of the South Block. The Centre Block required replacement or indenting of the entire string course, and protective lead weatherings were installed. Associated works included roofing repairs, rust treatment to cast iron balustrades and repainting to match the historic colour scheme. The South Block required indent replacement of the tower cornices and the string course, lead weatherings to these elements, repairs and protection of the carvings, and windows were painted.

Sydney Hospital, replacing the deteriorated overhanging cornice.



Department of Education and Training

GLENMORE ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

The conservation repair works to the sandstone retaining walls at Glenmore Road Public School, Paddington was a jointly funded project between the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Centenary Stonework Program. The repair to the unstable and degraded retaining walls at this significant school was completed in June 2007.

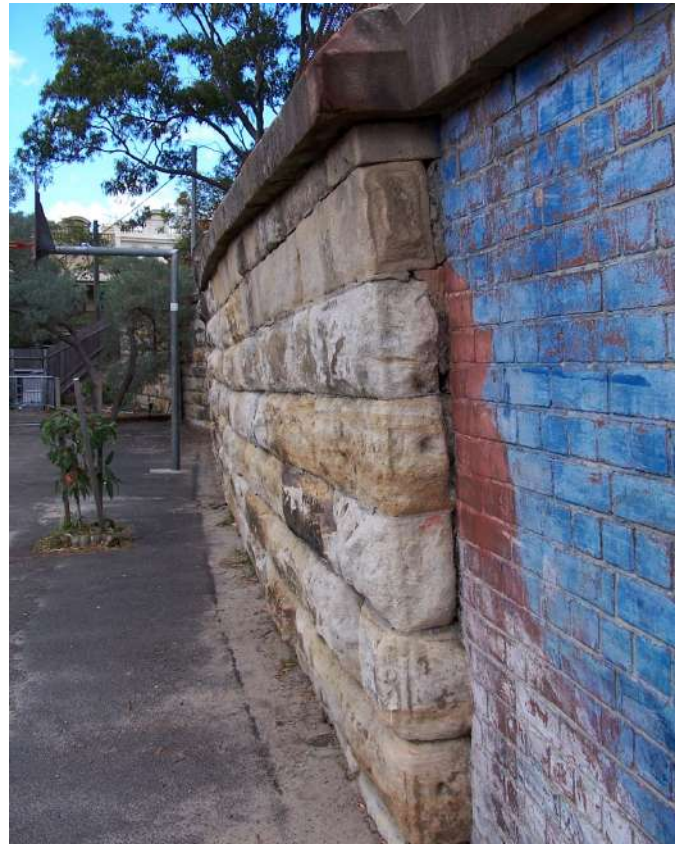
Glenmore Road Public School has social and historical significance as Paddington's second public school. The school which has architectural significance was constructed in 1883 and was designed by Architect William Kemp. The school is listed as a heritage item on Woollahra Council's local environmental Plan. Woollahra Council was consulted and involved throughout the project.

The sandstone retaining wall in the school grounds was identified as being structurally unstable and degraded and required immediate repair. The retaining wall which had a considerable lean was carefully dismantled and re-erected re-using as much original material as possible. Degraded sandstone blocks were replaced with matching sandstone material in size, colour and finish. Necessary structural reinforcement was placed into and behind the wall so as to prevent any visual or material impact on the heritage item.

Associated works such as tree removal, stormwater upgrading and fence repairs were undertaken, which were considered to be contributing factors to the cause of the degradation and instability in the retaining walls.

Repairs to the boundary sandstone retaining wall along Cambridge Street were also undertaken with the replacement of some of the extremely decayed top coping stones. This repair will prevent further damage to the original fabric in this wall.

The conservation team worked closely with the school to overcome issues of site safety and disruption to school activities throughout the project.



Sandstone retaining wall to school yard in unstable condition.



Repaired sandstone retaining wall at completion of works.

BONDI BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Bondi Beach Public School is a fine example of a 1920s public school which features classically inspired elements such as the stone portico over the central entrance. Designed by Government Architect Richard M.S. Wells, the school forms an important component of the Bondi Beach townscape.

A stone safety inspection was carried out in 2004 as part of the assessment of 90 Metropolitan Public Schools. During the inspection it was noted that stone elements of the entrance portico were deteriorated and eroded, exacerbated by the salt laden environment found at Bondi Beach. During the 2006-2007 program, documentation for stone conservation and associated works were completed, and stone processing of the cornice, capital, column and balustrade elements commenced.

MARRICKVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Marrickville Public School is one of the earliest structures of the original village of Marrickville, which was laid out to Victoria Road and Chapel street in 1855. Conservation works have focused on the two storey red brick building, erected in 1899 with moulded brick and sandstone detailing.

The project was selected for conservation works following a 'makesafe' inspection in 2005. It was selected due to the severity of the stone moulding loss to the main entry and date stone.

The works were limited to the South West Elevation of Building 2 and included, stone conservation, lead weatherings, brick repairs, painting of timber joinery, metal vent repairs and bird proofing.



Deterioration of stone elements of the entrance portico at Bondi Beach Public School.



Replacement column stone for Bondi Beach Public School entrance portico.



New stone repairs and lead weatherings to south west elevation (chapel street), Marrickville Public School.

Partnership Projects

DARLINGHURST COURT

The Darlinghurst Court conservation works is a jointly funded project between the Centenary Stonework Program and the Attorney General's Department. In partnership, work commenced in 2004, and eight stages have been completed including work to the highly significant main pediment. The next stage of works programed for 2007-08 continues westward along the front facade to Court 7.

The Darlinghurst Court is a fine architectural example of colonial neoclassical design and the subsequent additions to the courthouse bear witness to the growth of the Criminal High Court legal system in New South Wales. The development of the building complex exhibits the work of four early Colonial Architects (Lewis:1834-49; Blackett:1850, Barnet:1862-90; George McRae:1901-20) each using a different interpretation of neo-classical architecture.

Conservation works for 2006-07 included work to the facade west of the main pediment. The large cornice stones were retained with minor synthetic stone repair. The entire blocking course above the cornice was replaced with Pymont Yellowblock McCafferey's sandstone. Protective lead weatherings were installed on all the cornice stones.

SYDNEY OBSERVATORY

The Sydney Observatory conservation program is a partnership project between the Centenary Stonework Program and the Powerhouse Museum. Conservation of the majority of the facades of the main building have been completed.

The Sydney Observatory was constructed in 1857-1859 and designed by the Colonial Architect Alexander Dawson with later additions by Colonial Architect James Barnet. The Sydney Observatory complex is of exceptional significance and is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register, the City of Sydney LEP Heritage Schedule and the National Trust Register.

The large overhanging cornice stones and blocking course on the Barnet section of the Observatory were deteriorated and replaced. Defective lead weatherings were replaced along the new cornice stones. There was selected stone lintels and window sills replaced on the western facade. Other works completed in partnership included a new copper clip-lock roof between the north and south domes and lightning protection repairs. Investigation, condition assessment and documentation of the dome track on the north dome was completed in 2007 for repair works in the next financial year.





(left to right) Removal of the coping, cutting out the existing deteriorated cornice, completion of the project, Darlinghurst Court.



(left to right) Severely deteriorate cornice stones, new processed cornice stones being fixed, all cornice stones fixed awaiting pointing, Sydney Observatory.

Partnership Projects

DARLINGHURST FIRE STATION

Darlinghurst Fire Station is a significant historic building designed by Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon. It makes an invaluable contribution to the streetscape and is an outstanding example of Vernon's skill in addressing an unusually shaped site, with three street frontages.

The partnership with NSW Fire Brigades has increased the program of works at the Fire Station, allowing internal and external associated repairs to be included in the stone conservation works. The works this financial year were dedicated in programming, stone processing, upgrading of existing rooms on the roof terrace and documenting seismic stabilisation to prepare for the site works next financial year. This preparation will assist in carrying out the construction works as efficiently as possible due to site constraints including restricted access to a narrow street façade.

SINGLETON COURT

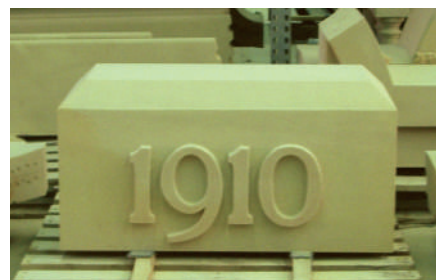
Singleton Court is an elaborate and well crafted country court distinguished by finely dressed and worked sandstone elements designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet and constructed in 1868.

Singleton Court is an example of a successful partnership for a project in a regional centre for the Department of Commerce and Attorney Generals Department. The Department was able to execute an effective and efficient construction program with the constraints of a site located in a regional area. The project involved seismic stabilisation, overall sandstone conservation and lead weatherings. The project continued with Attorney General's directly engaging the Department of Commerce to design and construct disabled access, a sunshade shelter and security access requirements internally and externally.

FORT DENISON

The Government Architect's Office was commissioned by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in March 2007 to develop a stonework conservation strategy for Fort Denison, including a program of stonework repairs for the time frames of 0-3 years, 3-5 years and 5-10 years. The focus of this strategy is on prolonging the life of the stone by means of catch-up, followed by cyclic maintenance, with associated research and investigations to create long term solutions to the causes of deterioration. This strategic document is due to be completed in September 2007.

Over the next three financial years, a program of conservation works based on the stonework conservation strategy will be undertaken through a funding partnership with the Centenary Stonework Program and the DECC.



Replacement date stone for Darlinghurst Fire Station.



Insertion of ramp to recently conserved portico at Singleton Court.



Fort Denison, Sydney Harbour.

FORMER ULTIMO POST OFFICE

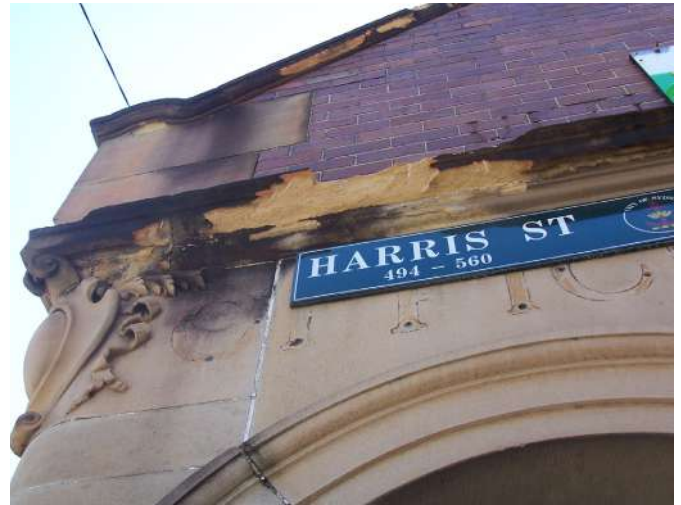
The former Ultimo Post Office is a significant historic building completed in 1901 to a design by Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon, and associated with the development and consolidation of the predominantly industrial warehouse precinct at the turn of the century. Owing to its style and location at the intersection of a major intersection, the former Ultimo Post Office forms an important element in the Ultimo Streetscape, its small stature emphasising the scale of the former Ultimo Powerhouse behind.

At the request of the Powerhouse Museum, a stone safety inspection was conducted of the former Ultimo Post Office by the Department of Commerce Stone Conservation Team in November 2006. The inspection identified both structural and stone works that required immediate attention. A temporary supporting scaffold was erected, documentation prepared for stone and associated conservation works, and important structural stabilisation works commenced to ensure that this building remains a viable asset for the Powerhouse Museum and a significant item in the Ultimo landscape.

MACQUARIE LODGE

Macquarie Lodge, constructed as the Guard House for Government House between 1846-1848 by Colonial Architect Mortimer W. Lewis, has historic, aesthetic and technical significance at a State level. Together with Government House and the former Government Stables (Conservatorium of Music) these three buildings form a rare suite of related Colonial Gothic style buildings constructed for the important task of administering the colony.

A stone safety inspection of Macquarie Lodge was undertaken in April 2006, and identified ineffective repairs from the 1970s, which had reached the end of their life and had the potential to cause further deterioration to other original elements of the building. Documentation for stone conservation and associated works was undertaken by the GAO Heritage Group during 2006-2007. Documentation focussed on the removal of the 1970s work and stone conservation repair work to current standards to ensure the longevity of the extant original building fabric.



Deterioration of stone cornice at former Ultimo Post Office.



Tower element at Macquarie Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens.

Initiatives, Awards & Media

AWARDS

CSP projects have been consistently nominated for the National Trust Heritage Awards. Two prestigious awards were won by the Program at the 2007 Awards ceremony.

Cleveland Street Intensive ‘English’ Language High School

The major award for ‘a built heritage project over \$1 million in the corporate and government sector’, went to the NSW Government Architect’s Office for the conservation of the Cleveland Street Intensive English Public School. The judges commented on the standard of the conservation work, the project’s ownership by the school community, and its enhancement of the neighbourhood streetscapes.

The nomination was made at the culmination of work over 4 years on the site.

The school is located near the southern edge of the CBD and at the intersection of 2 busy thoroughfares.

Prior to commencement of work by CSP, much of the school’s brickwork and stonework was stained from atmospheric pollution, inappropriate concrete roof tiles had fallen in several places and much of the stone mouldings was in advanced state of decay.

A modest first stage of conservation work to one building, funded by the Program, showed quite clearly the benefits of the work.

Department of Education and Training was upgrading the school’s interior as part of the RISS (Revitalisation of Inner Sydney Schools) Program.

Further stages of conservation work followed in an excellent example of joint funding partnership. Work included changing roof material to corrugated iron, cleaning and re pointing of brickwork and stonework. The construction of new boundary fencing, heritage advice and detailing to interiors and heritage fabric.

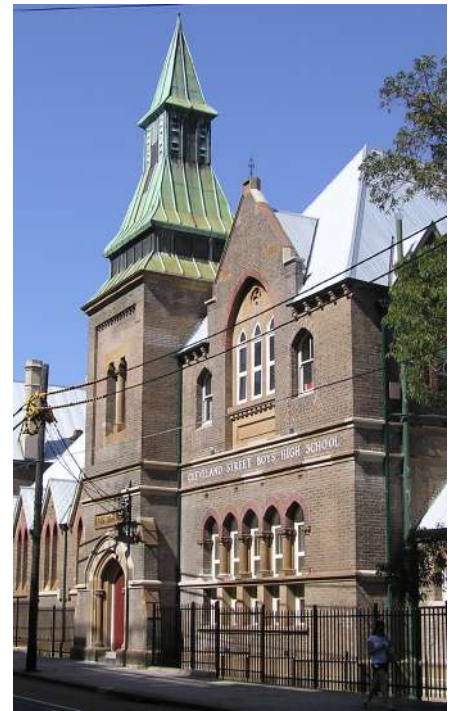
Favourable comments were received from the public, as well as the school, about the strong contribution the work made to improving the quality of public domain.

“Paradise Purgatory Hell Hole, the story of the Saunders quarries, Pymont”

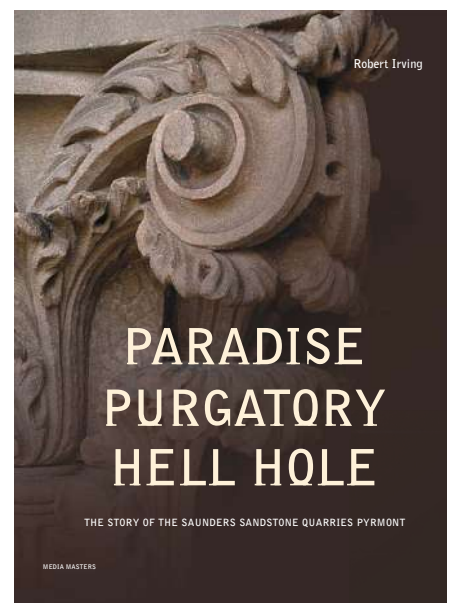
The book was highly commended in the Interpretation and Presentation, Corporate/Government category.

This book by Robert Irving was partly sponsored by the Program. It ‘grew’ from the Engineers Australia Historic Marker Plaque nomination document.

The former Commerce Minister, the Hon. John Della Bosca, wrote in the book about the Program’s role in reviving the craft of stonemasonry so that “buildings like the Australian Museum and Sydney Hospital could be saved for generations to come”.



Cleveland Street Intensive ‘English’ Language High School, (Chalmer Street elevation).



Book Cover

STONE QUALITY

The most significant component of stone conservation is the availability of high quality, durable stone which will offer the best possible match to existing stone.

Most of Sydney's major heritage buildings were constructed from a superior oxidising 'freestone' which the stonemasons called "Yellowblock".

The best yellowblock was quarried at Pyrmont and there were other quarries at Paddington, Bondi and Maroubra, but of a lesser quality.

The CSP obtained over 4,500 cubic metres of Pyrmont Yellowblock in 2000 and 2001.

Being a natural material, sandstone varies in quality, even within a single 15 tonne 'quarry block'.

In 2006 - 07 the CSP conducted tests on a number of samples of stone, both from the Department's Sandy Point stockpile and from possible new sources of sandstone, to increase detailed knowledge of the stone's physical properties.

FUTURE YELLOWBLOCK SOURCES

No new sources of oxidising sandstone similar to Pyrmont Yellowblock are known to exist outside the Sydney Metropolitan area.

The only possible sources of yellowblock come from new building projects within the Metropolitan area, where excavations predominantly for car parking are required.

To this end, Commerce's geologist regularly liaises with companies which carry out geotechnical investigations.

Inspections were undertaken on 3 sites in Pyrmont and Ultimo during this year.

STONE QUANTITY

The quantities of yellowblock acquired in 2000-01 were based on projected needs for government owned buildings as well as significant academic, ecclesiastic and commercial buildings in the public real.

A stone stockpile study was commenced in 2007 to review remaining quantities and foreseeable needs.



Ultimo excavation site, where stone testing was carried out in 2006/07.





CSP PROJECT TEAM 2006 - 2007

Lee Adamou, Mark Adamson, Kico Andonovski, Helen Andronis, Micheal Anello, Matthew Barnes, Lucy Burke-Smith, Paul Connell, Merinda Danks, Desmond Corby, Mathew Devine, Milena Crawford, Peter Dalley, Chris Daniels, Angus Donald, Peter Fatseas, Fernando Ferreira, Glen Fuller, Ben Gardner, James Gardner, Ron Grady, Katie Hicks, Phil Hilder, Billy Hughes, Darren Hurst, Bob Kavanagh, Anita Krivickas, Chris Loughman, Jasper Luckhurst, Catherine Macarthur, Paulo Macchia, Lew McDonnell, Denis Mahboub, Craig Miller, Brad Mills, Jim Narris, Greg Paul, Warren Pearson, Manuel Pereira, Bruce Pettman, Afonso Pires, Ron Powell, David Poyner, Gary Rimmer, Andrew Seeto, Keith Shaw, Paul Sherring, Peter Siktar, Joy Singh, Marietta Sioutas, Vivian Sioutas, Merv Spowart, Mark Stevens, Adam Taylor, Bill Thomas, Paul Thurloe, Tyrone Toby, Peter Trick, Patrick Tunny, Carolyn Van Kints, Ruben Varfi, Bunito Wangsa, Howard West, Chris Williams, Louke Witjes.

(not all team members present in photograph)

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Office of Public Works and Services -

Department of Commerce

McKell Building 2-24 Rawson Place,

Sydney NSW 2000

Tel: 02 9372 8526 Fax: 02 9372 8544

www.commerce.nsw.gov.au

editor - Ron Powell, Joy Singh.

contributors - Ron Powell, Joy Singh, Vivian Sioutas, Catherine Macarthur, Milena Crawford, Angus Donald, Anita Krivickas, Desmond Corby.

graphic designer - Marietta Sioutas.

printing - Salmat.

stock - Monza satin recycled.



Darlinghurst Court