

PONTIAC LAND GROUP

**The Sandstone Buildings
Public Art Strategy**

October 2016



Preface:

One constant in Pontiac Land Group, amid rapid and pervasive changes in the business world, is its perseverance in the creation of fresh built environments with exceptional architecture and fine art. This is a value that the Company takes to the generations beyond. The Company's internal art collection is showcased across its international luxury hotel portfolio. The collection, a selection of which is depicted below, reflects a desire to inspire a creative vision in each individual through an artistic environment.

The Sandstones Buildings precinct offers a unique opportunity to incorporate both a diverse private art collection with that of an engaging public art strategy and delivery. These will connect and engage with the history of New South Wales, with the heritage and significance of the Sandstone Buildings, and with present-day Sydney. This approach will drive an authentic sense of place for hotel and precinct visitors, as well as the local community.



This document addresses how the public art strategy for the Sandstones Buildings and surrounds will form and deliver artwork harmoniously with the built and urban domain works.

1. Introduction:

This Public Art Strategy has been prepared for the State Significant Development Stage 2 application (Application Number SSD 7484), being the adaptive reuse of the New South Wales Department of Lands Building (Lands Building), at 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney, and the New South Wales Department of Education Building (Education Building), at 35-39 Bridge Street, Sydney. Both buildings and their surrounds are collectively described as the “Sandstone Precinct”.

The City of Sydney Council has its own public art strategy to create a rich fabric of creative and cultural life within Sydney. This innovative strategy is excelling in improving the integration of both the natural and built environment. The Sandstone Precinct aims to contribute to this growing vision.

The Sandstones Precinct Public Art Strategy is an evolving and developing document, enhanced and refined as built and urban design develops. Site-specific commissions will reflect the essence of the site and creative interpretations developed from the guiding principles of the brief. The Strategy reflects the interest in, and importance of, the Precinct in a regenerated part of the city.

2. Site:

The site encompasses two existing heritage-listed buildings, housing offices of the Department of Planning and Environment NSW and the Department of Education, being respectively:

- The Lands Building, 23-33 Bridge Street; and
- The Department of Education Building, 35-39 Bridge Street.

The Lands and Education Buildings are both steeped in rich, colourful history, with excavation for the first stage of the Lands Building commencing in 1876 and building completion in 1893. The Education Building was built in two stages and fully completed by 1930.

The Precinct is bordered/intersected by the following streets and properties:

Adjacent Streets	Surrounding Property	
Bridge	Macquarie Place Park	1 Bligh Street
Young	1 O’Connell Street Tower	50 Bridge St (AMP Quay Quarter site)
Bent	Governor Phillip Tower	AR Connolly & Company Building (Young St)
Gresham	Governor Macquarie Tower	38-42 Bridge St (Bridgeport Apartments)
Loftus	3 Spring St (Christie Corporate)	56 Pitt St (including Gresham St frontage)

3. Guiding Principles

In generating this Public Art Strategy, there has been consideration of numerous reports including:

- City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney 2030 Plan;
- Government Property Stage 1 DA submission and approval for the Sandstones Buildings;
- City of Sydney's 'Interim Guidelines - Public Art in Private Developments';
- City Art - Public Art Strategy 2013; and
- Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

Further, it was necessary to ensure that the Sandstones Precinct Strategy referenced the eight guiding principles espoused in the City Art - Public Art Strategy, being:

1. Align significant City Art projects with major Sustainable Sydney 2030 urban design projects;
2. Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal stories and heritage in public spaces;
3. Support local artists and activate city sites with temporary art projects;
4. Support vibrant places in village centres with community art and City Art projects;
5. Promote high quality public art in new development;
6. Support stakeholder and government partners to facilitate public art opportunities;
7. Manage and maintain the City's collection of permanent art works, monuments and memorials; and
8. Initiate and implement programs to communicate, educate and engage the public about City Art projects.

The guiding principles outlined below enable a detailed public art plan to be prepared, briefs to be structured, projects to be contemplated and formed, artists selected, and works delivered such that great places are created.

3.1 Historical Interpretation

An overarching principle is to leverage off the abundance of history on and around the site. Artwork will assist in the community's understanding of the site's history and its environs, and enhance the everyday experience for hotel patrons, city dwellers and workers, and visitors alike. This approach should identify opportunities for integrated heritage exposure and interpretation, recognition of historical timelines, and site-specific public art. There is the potential to integrate existing heritage artifacts or archaeological relics within the Precinct into visible showcases within the public domain design. The EY tower on George Street is one similar example.

Showcasing the building's heritage will prove an attractor for both tourists and locals. Public art is a key to the success of creating a vibrant welcoming atmosphere in the Precinct that is mutually beneficial to the City of Sydney, Sydney residents and the operators of the hotel, retail and hospitality functions in the Lands and Education Buildings.

3.2 Integrated Excellence

Integration means that any selected art work must not take away from the buildings' heritage, but instead complement their history and natural beauty while evoking a sense of place and connection with early Sydney and its antiquity. The art must fit the place. A rich mix of historical, geographical and social influences have shaped the Sandstone Precinct, and it is of crucial importance that these influences are promoted and their presence and growth is encouraged. In order to do so, public art must be site-responsive, be of itself a high standard of excellence, and generate interest and intrigue for the area amongst observers and passers-by. This will connect the public with the newly developed Precinct and re-confirm the Precinct as a site of significance in Sydney's past, presence and future.

3.3 Collaboration

Selected art should be appropriate and correctly integrated by ensuring close collaboration with public artists, landscape architects, architects and the broader consultancy team. Art will reinforce the experience of the place and invite rest, recreation and enjoyment. Works of art will enrich the experience of visitors, invite curiosity about the area's history from pre-settlement times, and encourage the wider public to enjoy the newly enhanced spaces.

Collaboration will occur with the Council's art team, external influencers such as Vivid, NSW Art Gallery and Sydney Living Museums, and art programmes developed by nearby emerging developments such as Quay Quarter. A collaborative approach will embrace new technologies and art-making practices.

3.4. Aboriginal heritage

The history of the site commences with the Cadigal people of the Eora nation prior to European settlement. Artwork should assist in the community's understanding of this history, and give consideration to the larger Eora Dreaming project. The site is also significant in the transition from Aboriginal to European settlement and the displacement of communities, and may be able to meaningfully contribute to the ongoing discussion on reconciliation.

3.5 Public Accessibility

While the Sandstone Buildings have been in public ownership since their inception, there has been a distinct lack of public accessibility through the buildings. A guiding principle for enhancing the public thoroughfares, accessways and spaces created in the renewal of the Precinct will be the need for messaging and story telling, using public art, which reflects the opening and exploration of the buildings and their curtilage.

3.6 Diversity of Audience

The delivery of excellent art and architectural outcomes will appeal to a diverse range of ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and interest groups. Audiences such as workers, families, international visitors and people of all ages will be engaged in different ways with a range of spaces and pieces. Some projects may be interactive, whereas others appeal to the need for passive contemplation. Public art that is rich and multi-faceted will speak to the various communities with many voices, promoting questioning, debate and interpretation.

3.7 Landmark Outcomes

Artists and urban designers should develop landmark projects and temporary/ephemeral works within the Precinct that aim to improve understanding, legibility of the place and a greater sense of belonging and empowerment into the story of the Precinct. The artwork will integrate and provide a linkage to the built and operational forms of the Precinct.

3.8 Sustainable Framework

An inherent principle will be to use art to create a sense of place and community, and which addresses sustainability in a variety of different ways including environmental, cultural, economic and social sustainability. Sustainable practices and the lifecycle of artworks can be showcased in terms of composition, resource usage, processes and their underlying messages. Materials used will reflect a precinct-based approach whilst adopting different characters for the different uses contemplated by the artists, and may reflect the importance of ecological sustainability across the site.

4. Public Art Strategy:

The integration of art and architecture will create a distinctive energy and vitality, aid knowledge transfer, and assist in the messaging and importance of spaces in bringing together the sense of place. Works of art will respond to specific locations, and consider themes that reflect the nature and history of the site.

This Strategy contemplates that the developing building and urban domain design will inform and identify locations and themes for new works, and opportunities to showcase some of the Lands and Education conserved pieces as identified in the Conservation Management Plan.

The initial engagement will be an eminent Art Consultant, to guide the development and realisation of the Public Art Strategy into completed works. A list of tenderers for this position has been agreed with the City of Sydney's Design Director, and this process will proceed as the definition and acceptance of the Precinct becomes clear in early 2017. Thereafter, there will be staged processes, where lists of artists will be assembled for consideration in regard to specific opportunities and sites.

Artists considered for works on the Sandstones Precinct will be able to demonstrate the potential for creative interpretation of the site's history and understanding of how their artwork would improve place making and the visitor experience. They would work collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team and to agreed budgets and timeframes.

The commissioning process will involve consultation with the City of Sydney in relation to public art programmes in neighbouring areas of the city, including the Rocks, City North Urban Domain, and other locations of cultural significance. Artists may be commissioned by direct approach, selection from a competitive process or by other means such as interviews or by third-party grants.