RUM STORE

Date Built: c1879, Renovated 2000
Architect: Daryl Jackson Robin Dyke
Building: 5 storeys - 13 warehouse style apartments. It is the on site of the CSR boiler house precinct.

The building dates from 1879 as an important part of the CSR operation. It seems never to have stored rum: the name may be a creation of Lend Lease's marketing specialists. Before CSR arrived, the building may have been a hotel. Commercial quantities of rum may never have been stored in the Rum Store, unless the site was a hotel, quenching the thirst of shipwrights and residents. As the site overlooks Elizabeth Macarthur Bay, surrounded by industrial activity and workers' cottages, it would have been well placed as a public house or hotel.

It was restored in 2000 – timber floors, hardwood beams, cast iron windows and sandstone window sills preserve the form of the original building.

Once CSR was established, in the lee of the high pressure boiler house (now The Elizabeth), it was a handy administrative centre for engineers, and acquired facilities as a home-away-from-home for those on standby.

CSR made generous provision for their apprentices, and encouraged all staff to improve their skills. The five-storey, timber-floored Rum Store began to host many activities, educational and social, such as a spacious reading room for quiet study.

Management worked hard to instil a sense of family loyalty: the company hoped that their young female chemists would find husbands among CSR's own engineers, managers and chemists. Works picnics were a regular event, and so were concerts, with performers using a stage in this building. There was space here too, for a cafeteria.

When CSR diversified into distilling (from 1901) and building materials (from the 1930s), the workforce expanded and diversified. So many chemists and engineers were employed, and so many apprentices trained, that the company was second only to BHP. During the Second World War, CSR manufactured armaments as well.

In 1984, as industries quit Pyrmont, the State government resolved to redevelop the area, and in 1987 decided that the peninsula needed its own plan. In the same year CSR asked Lend Lease to study the feasibility of redeveloping the whole industrial site.

Pyrmont residents were deeply divided: some welcomed development, others were forced to leave the area. In 1979 opponents formed UPROAR (Ultimo Pyrmont Residents Opposed to Arbitrary Redevelopment) and endured years of consultation (or, in their view, coercion). In August 1992 a few activists proclaimed the Republic of Pyrmont. In this brilliant protest the republicans issued visas, and publicised their critique of top-down planning, and in particular to Jacksons Landing, and the proposed casino and helipad.

Meanwhile in 1997 Lend Lease bought the CSR site, and by April 1999 Jacksons Landing was under construction. Rum Store is one of a handful of buildings selected to be refurbished as apartments, rather than destroyed.