

## STONECUTTERS

**Date Built:** 2009

**Architect:** Tzannes Associates

**Building:** 20 storeys - 107 apartments.

It is the site of CSR storage tanks.

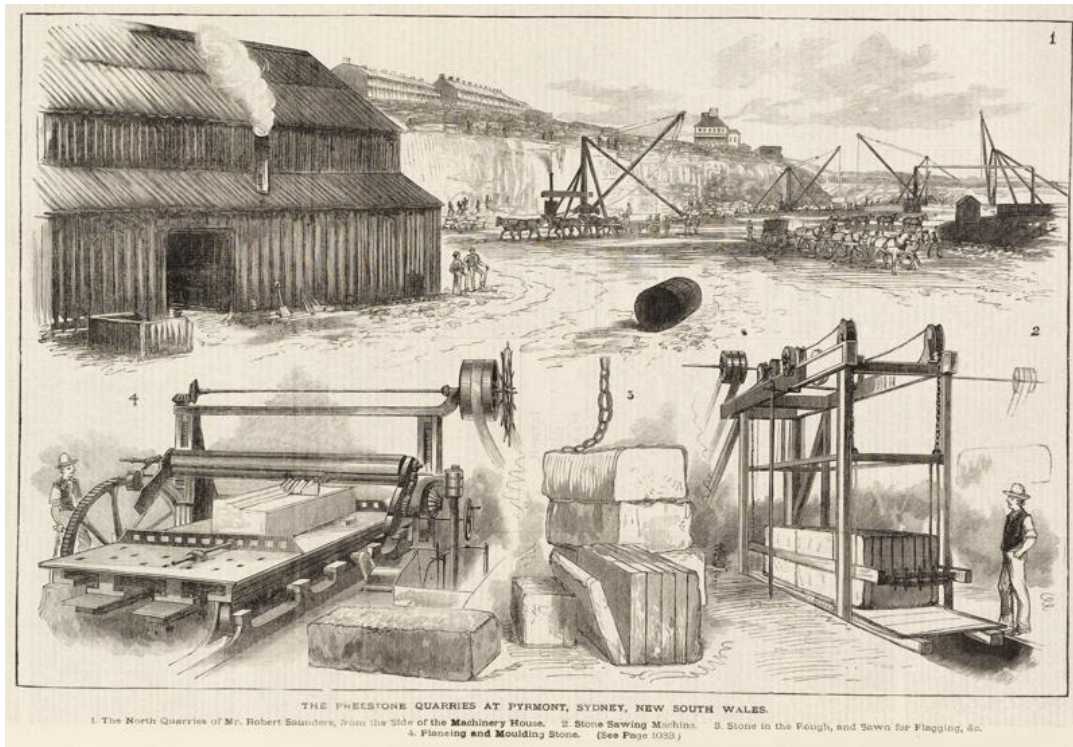


The building's name and decor evoke the quarrying that transformed the Jacksons Landing area before CSR moved here in the 1870s.

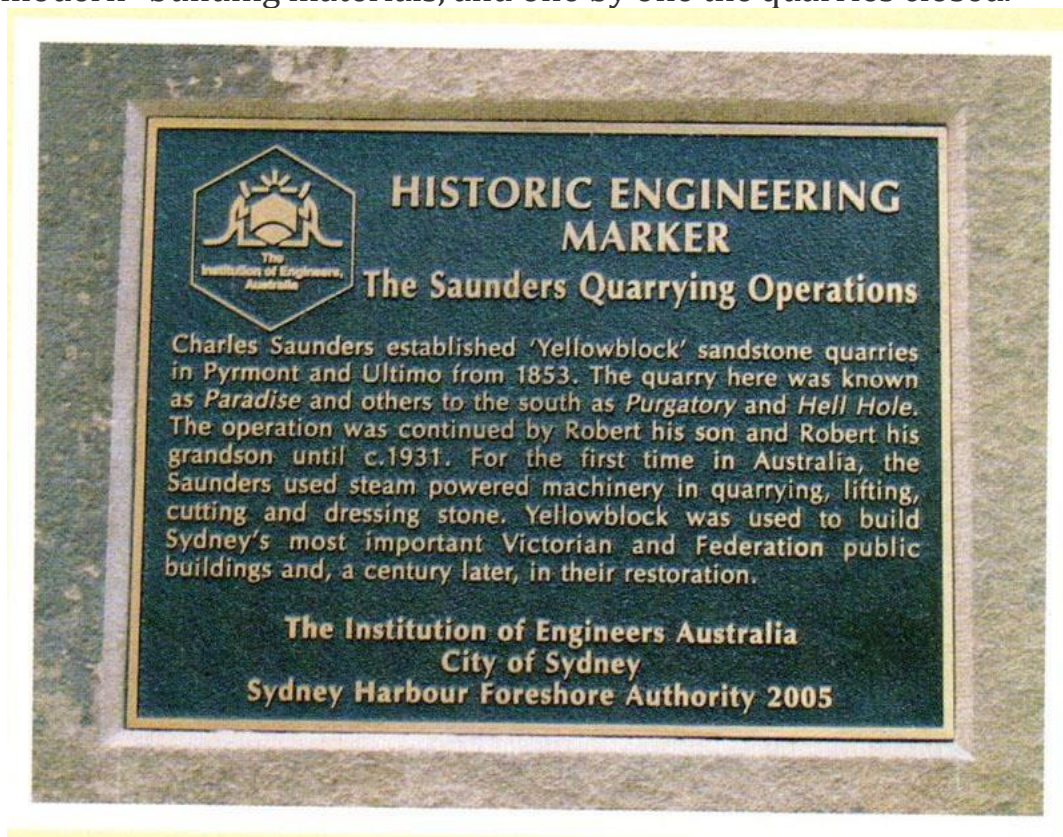
As early as the 1820s, small-scale quarrying began in the north-west end of the peninsula, where easily accessible stone cropped up near the water, sailing ships could load it as ballast, and barges could carry it to building sites. Masons came to enjoy the soft texture of the distinctive yellowblock sandstone, and architects recognised its fine qualities just when gold rushes funded the construction of many great public buildings in Sydney.

Demand soared, and this encouraged entrepreneurs to import and employ skilled masons, to adopt mechanised extraction, and to consolidate the industry. They also imported giant Clydesdale horses to haul huge blocks through the peninsula on newly made roads. One such enterprise was the Saunders family company which developed Paradise, Purgatory and Hellhole quarries on the

western side of the peninsula where the sandstone was finer. The skilled masons of Pymont used their industrial muscle to form Australia's first successful trade union.



The industry flourished until the 1920s, when architects began to prefer lighter, more “modern” building materials, and one by one the quarries closed.





CSR had little interest in the hill above the refinery. The small quarries had long been worked out, and some became illicit rubbish dumps. South of the hill, the Saunders Paradise quarry kept going until the 1920s, creating the escarpment which many Stonecutters residents now overlook.

Everything changed in 1900. Many of the sugar mills that sent raw sugar to Pymont (such as Harwood Mill on the Clarence River and Nausori in Fiji) also distilled alcohol by adding yeast to molasses. Australian Federation, the White Australia policy and the tariff preference for sugar produced by white labour, raised the risk that Fiji spirits might be barred from Australia. The Nausori distillery was promptly closed, and a new facility built at Pymont, sharing the power and steam generated in the refinery, and the deep water berths.

Once established, the distillery produced a widening range of industrial spirits as well as rum. As the complex expanded, rows of vats, first to ferment the molasses, and later to store a range of industrial chemicals, marched across the Stonecutters site down the hill (now known as Distillery Hill) towards Glebe Island Bridge.

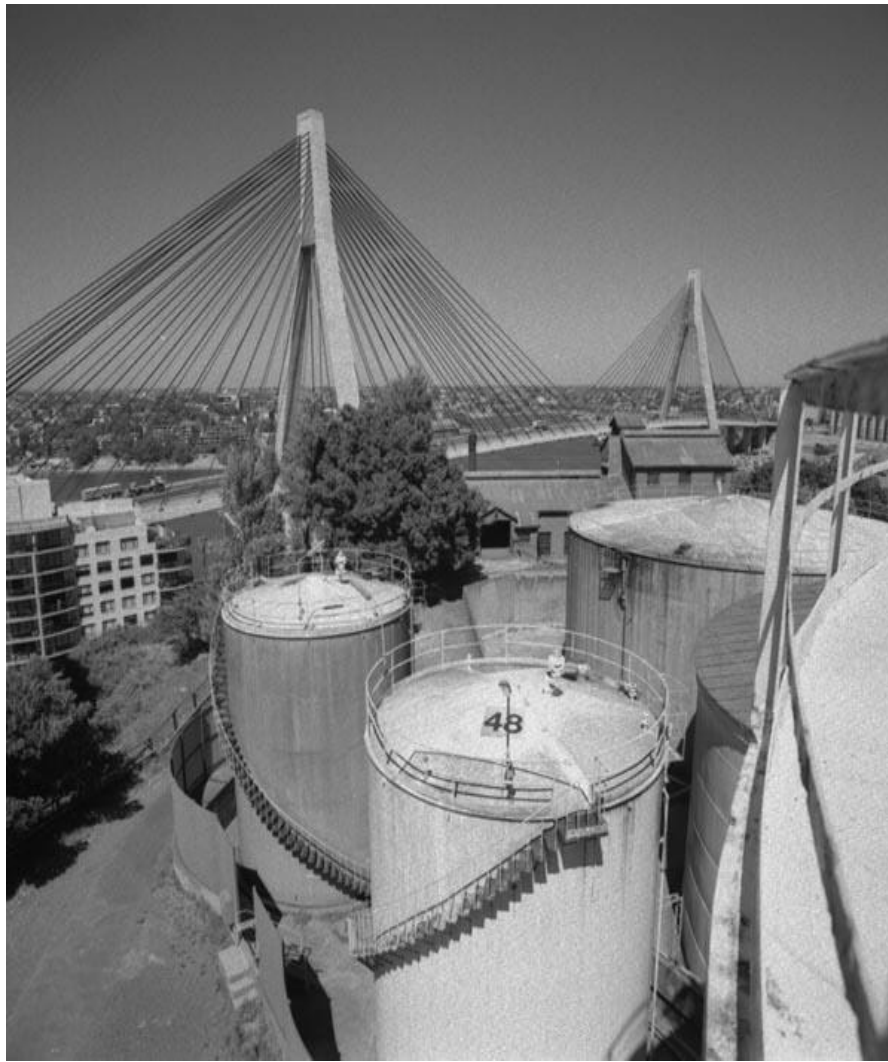
Like its neighbours, Stonecutters occupies a site dominated (after 1900) by the tanks which stored molasses as part of CSR distilling and industrial chemicals operations.











In 1984, as industries quit Pymont, 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 industrial site.

Pymont residents were deeply divided: some were forced to leave the area, others welcomed development, but in 1979 opponents formed UPROAR (Ultimo Pymont Residents Opposed to Arbitrary Redevelopment) and endured years of being consulted (or, in their view, coerced). In August 1992 a few activists proclaimed the Republic of Pymont.

In this brilliant but forlorn gesture the republicans issued visas, and publicised their critique of top-down planning, and in particular to Jacksons Landing, the casino and the helipad.

Meanwhile in 1997 Lend Lease bought the CSR site, and by April 1999 Jacksons Landing was under construction: plans were devised to remove the storage tanks, so that Stonecutters could soar up from Distillery Hill.



