

## SUGAR DOCK

**Date Built:** 2010

**Architect:** Frances-Jones Morehen Thorp

**Building:** 21 storeys - 132 apartments, four level boutique building.

It overlooks Waterfront Park and The Knoll. It is the site of CSR storage tanks.



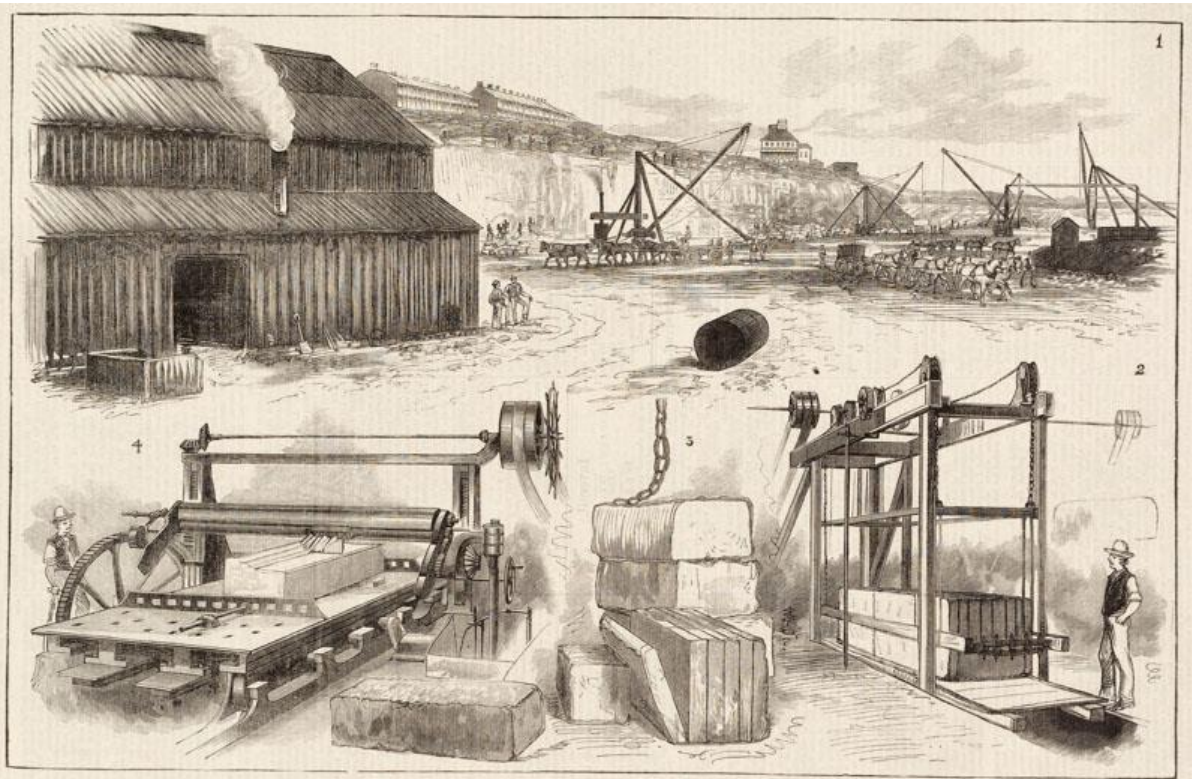


The building soars up from the north-western shoulder of Distillery Hill, on a site once occupied by distillery storage tanks, and looking across Bowman Street to the CSR's caneite factory.

The present land form was shaped by colonial industry: from the 1820s onwards, quarrymen demolished a rocky outcrop. At first, the stone was hewn as ballast for the sailing ships that anchored nearby; later it was carried by barges to city building sites.

Stone masons and architects delighted in the yellowblock sandstone that was so easily quarried and gained a warm, golden colour when exposed to the air. They remembered these qualities in the 1850s, when the gold rushes made Sydney a wealthy town, needing impressive public buildings.

To meet this increased demand, quarrying was mechanised and conducted on a large scale. Roads were built and Clydesdale horses replaced the barges. Saunders's quarries employed many of the masons who formed Australia's first successful trade union.



THE FREESTONE QUARRIES AT PYRMONT, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

1. The North Quarries of Mr. Robert Saunders, from the Side of the Machinery House. 2. Stone Sawing Machine. 3. Stone in the Rough, and Sawn for Flagging, &c. 4. Finishing and Moulding Stone. (See Page 1093.)

While the major quarries (Paradise, Purgatory, Hellhole) were developed further south, the flattened landscape at the point drew the City Iron Works which operated on the shoreline from 1865 until the 1930s. The foundry adjoined an arterial road, which became busier in 1903, as swing bridges carried cars and trams from Balmain through the peninsula to the city. Commuters crossing Glebe Island Bridge tried to ignore the Iron Works and (from 1910) the new incinerator on Abattoir Road (now renamed Bank Street). The incinerator put an end to the furtive dumping of rubbish in abandoned quarries: but smoke from its high tower continued the tradition of air pollution on this site.





**Pymont Refuse Destructor 1930s**



**newly built Burley Griffin incinerator on right**

By 1900 CSR's sugar refinery dominated the landscape, and CSR had little interest in the hill above the refinery. That changed abruptly in 1900. Many sugar mills, including CSR's mill at Nausori in Fiji, distilled alcohol by adding yeast to molasses. Australian Federation, the White Australia policy and tariff preference for sugar produced by white labour raised the risk that Fiji spirits might be barred from Australia. The Nausori distillery closed, and a new facility was built at Pyrmont.

The distillery produced industrial spirits as well as rum, helped by a carbon dioxide plant (1905) and a char plant (1910). Down the hill (now Distillery Hill) marched rows of vats, first to ferment molasses, and later to store a range of industrial chemicals.







Across Bowman Street, another industry took shape in the 1940s, replacing the Iron Works which was closed and sold to CSR in 1937. CSR had the engineers and the capital to grasp new opportunities. As the Depression lifted and demand revived for building material, CSR built a caneite factory on the foreshore from Glebe Island Bridge to the refinery. As caneite is made by pulping megass (cane after sugar is extracted) and adding paper and eucalypt, this complemented sugar production. By 1939 caneite production was ten million square feet each year: by the 1950s it had grown to forty million. Encouraged by the success of caneite, CSR expanded into other materials including gyprock and – fatefully – asbestos.



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 industrial site.

Pyrmont residents were deeply divided: some were forced to leave the area, others welcomed development, but in 1979 opponents formed UPROAR (Ultimo Pyrmont 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 Pyrmont. 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. Lend Lease removed the tanks and the factory, Bowman Street was widened, and planners had a clean sheet on which to design Sugar Dock and other apartment blocks.

Sugar Dock and Silk were among the last three buildings completed. The demolition of the caneite factory and the storage tanks allowed the architects to take advantage of wide views across the water to Balmain, White Bay and Glebe.

