

## EVOLVE\*

**Date Built:** 2008

**Architect:** Jahn Associates

**Building:** Waterfront tower - 13 storeys, 47 apartments. It faces Waterfront Park, and was the winner of the 2009 UDIA High-density Housing Award. It is the site of the CSR caneite factory.

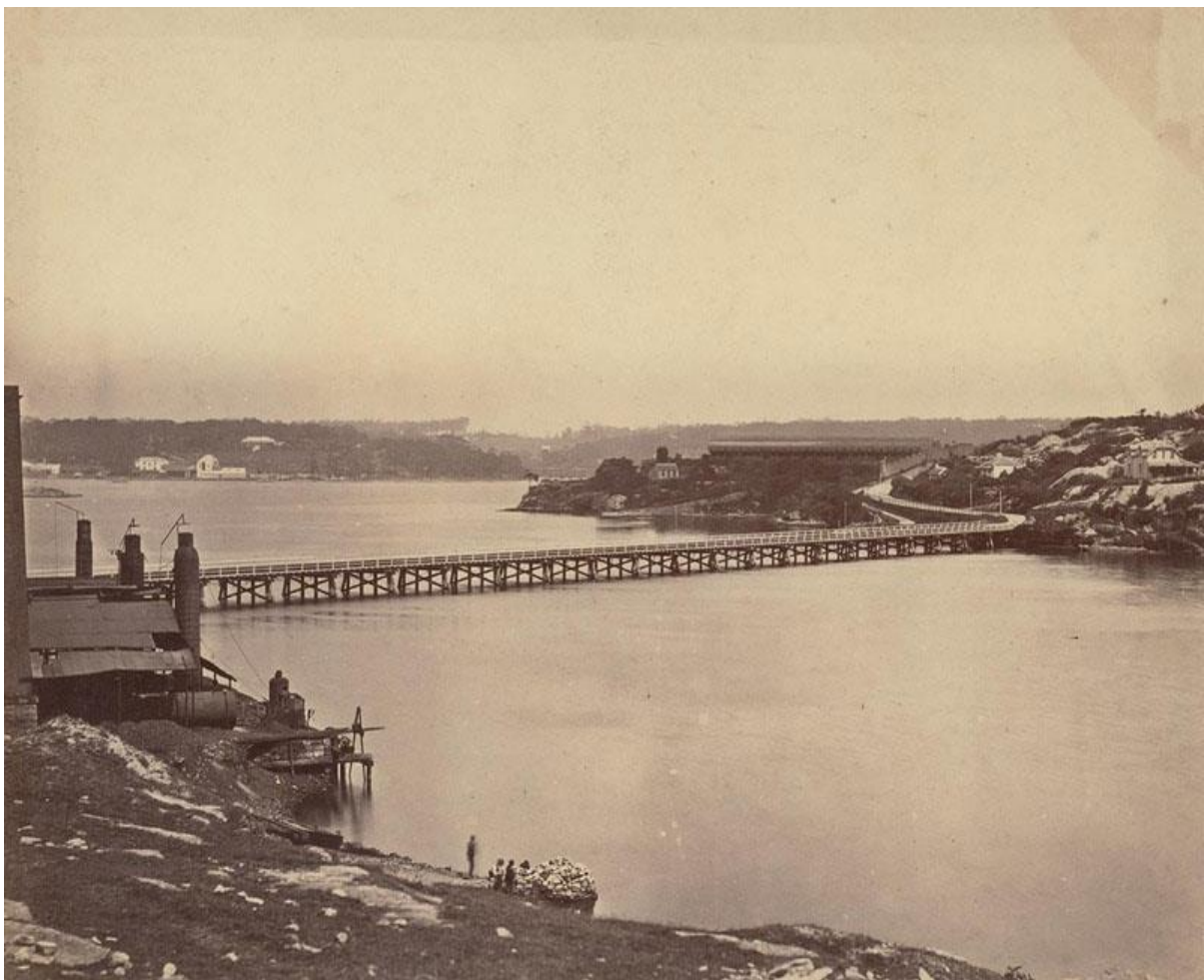


Small-scale quarries were reshaping Pyrmont by the 1840s, to supply ships' ballast, and for buildings: barges and ships loaded ballast and cargo at the western tip of the peninsula, near the evolve\* site. After the 1850s gold rush, Pyrmont yellowblock sandstone was in huge demand for the impressive public buildings that transformed the face of Sydney.

Teams of horses dragged great blocks of sandstone through Pyrmont and Ultimo to building sites.

Other activities sprang up on the shore. Thomas Chowne bought land at Elizabeth Macarthur Bay in 1840, and built ships. This initiative attracted other processes that were necessary but noxious.

After 1857 a wooden bridge from the evolve\* site to Glebe Island – where the later swing bridge stands – carried cattle to (and carcasses from) Glebe Island abattoirs.







*Glebe Island Bridge, Johnson's Bay.*



GLEBE ISLAND, PORT JACKSON.



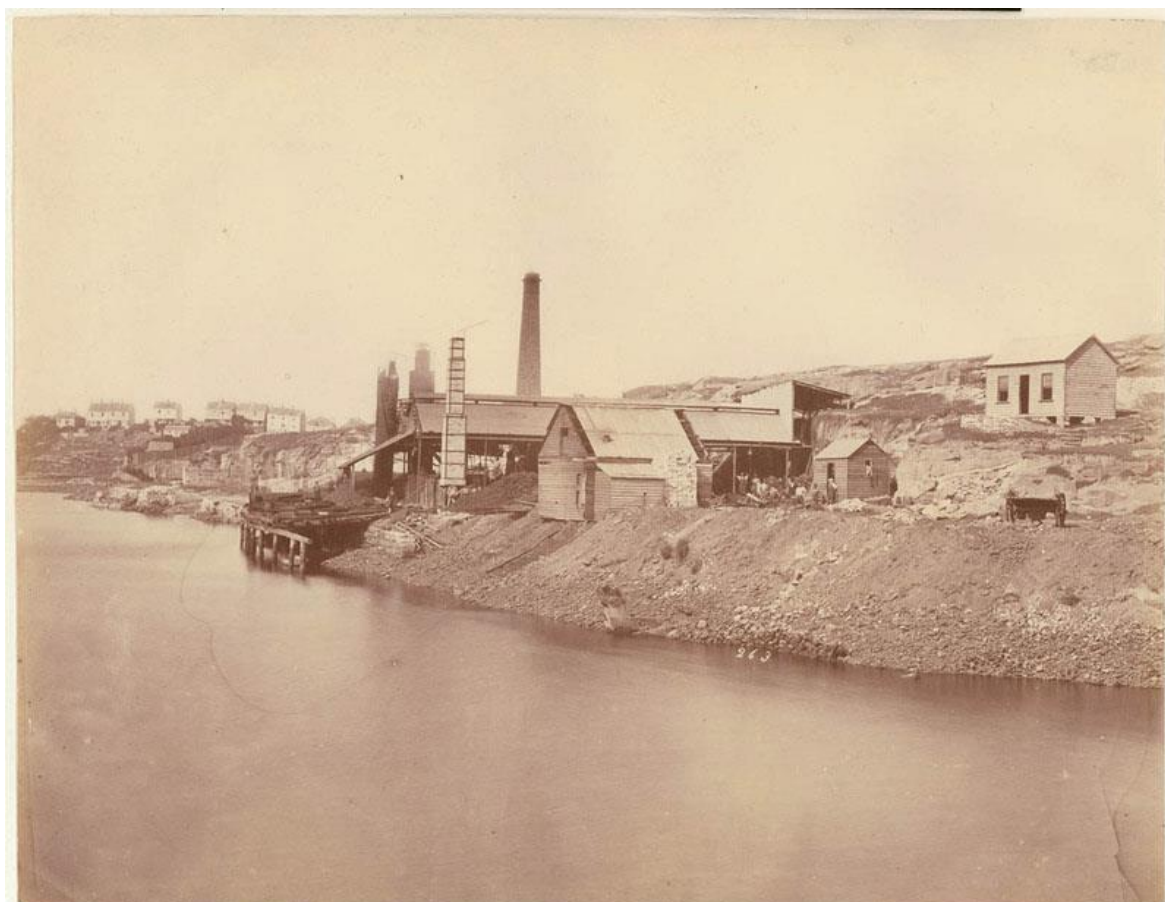
*Sydney from Glebe Point*



Shipyards on the eastern side of the peninsula attracted Fyfes Iron Foundry in 1855, and City Iron Works in 1865. By 1871:

*The City Iron Works employ sixty men. Scrap iron is worked up here and pig iron is puddled [in furnaces, to produce wrought iron]. About 100 tons a month is rolled here, and railway wheels and tires for contractors' locomotives have also been turned out.*

This great enterprise burned 2,500 tons of coal each year, and produced (among many other things) angle iron for Louisa, the first iron ship built in Australia. Until the arrival of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the City Iron Works dominated the Pyrmont shoreline.



The City Iron Works adjoined a busy arterial road which became even busier in 1903, as modern swing bridges carried traffic from Balmain to the city via Abattoir Street (now renamed Bank Street). In cars, or on the trams from 1910, commuters tried to ignore the Iron Works, the Char House on the hill above, and the abattoirs.

Sydneysiders' practice of throwing refuse into disused quarries added another reason for living elsewhere. In 1910 this issue was addressed by a City Incinerator on Bank Street: but abattoirs, quarries and a fish market reinforced Pyrmont's poor reputation.



Pymont was steadily integrated into Sydney. Roads were built, and in 1856 the railway reached Darling Harbour. In 1864 a police station protected a precinct that had been incorporated into Sydney since 1844.

The earlier incinerator was replaced by a new incinerator, designed by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahoney Griffin and commissioned in 1938. This was a cubist-inspired building with richly decorative detailed work based on Aztec motifs. It certainly improved rubbish disposal, but smoke from its high tower continued the local tradition of air pollution.

Aztec designs on evolve\* and three rusty balls (defibrators) in Waterfront Park evoke Griffin's lofty vision, and CSR's restless ambition.





The traffic that struggled along Bank Street could not use Bowman Street which snaked between buildings in an industrial complex. Once CSR built a distillery in 1900, and began producing industrial chemicals, the whole area was reorganised: “Distillery Hill”, stretching west from the summit, was gradually taken over by the steel vats in which molasses and chemicals were stored. The whole complex was off-limits to the public.

Bypassed by traffic, overlooked by the Char House and chemical vats, the site of evolve\* and Waterfront Park awaited acquisition by an expanding CSR. The Iron Works were bought in 1937, and stood derelict for some years before that.

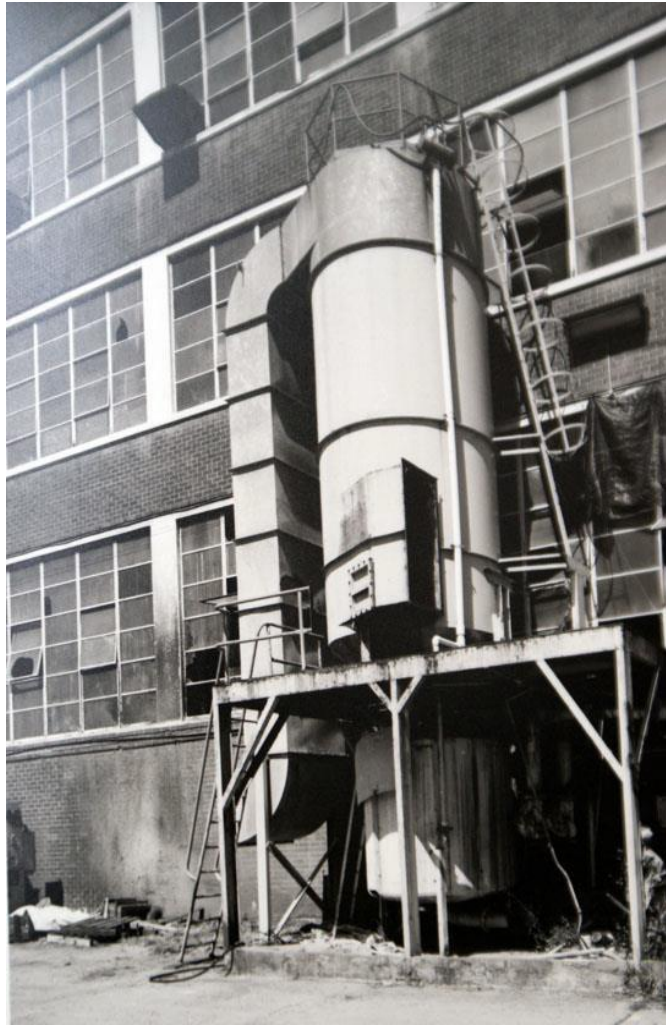
However, after a century of industrial pollution, matters now took a happier turn. CSR was always alert to opportunities, and had the skilled engineers and the capital to grasp them. As well as sugar and industrial spirits, the company added a third string to its bow.

As the Depression lifted, demand grew for building material. After exhaustive research, CSR built a caneite factory. As caneite is made by pulping megass (cane after the sucrose is removed) and adding paper and eucalypt, this complemented sugar production. By 1939 production reached ten million square feet each year. Encouraged by this result, CSR spread into other building material including gyprock and – fatefully – asbestos.

To supply enough caneite for the market, CSR built a new factory: the present Waterfront Park and evolve\* provided a perfect site. Ships could unload outside the factory, and trucks drove the finished product out of Bowman Street to Bank Street and the world.













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 out of 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.

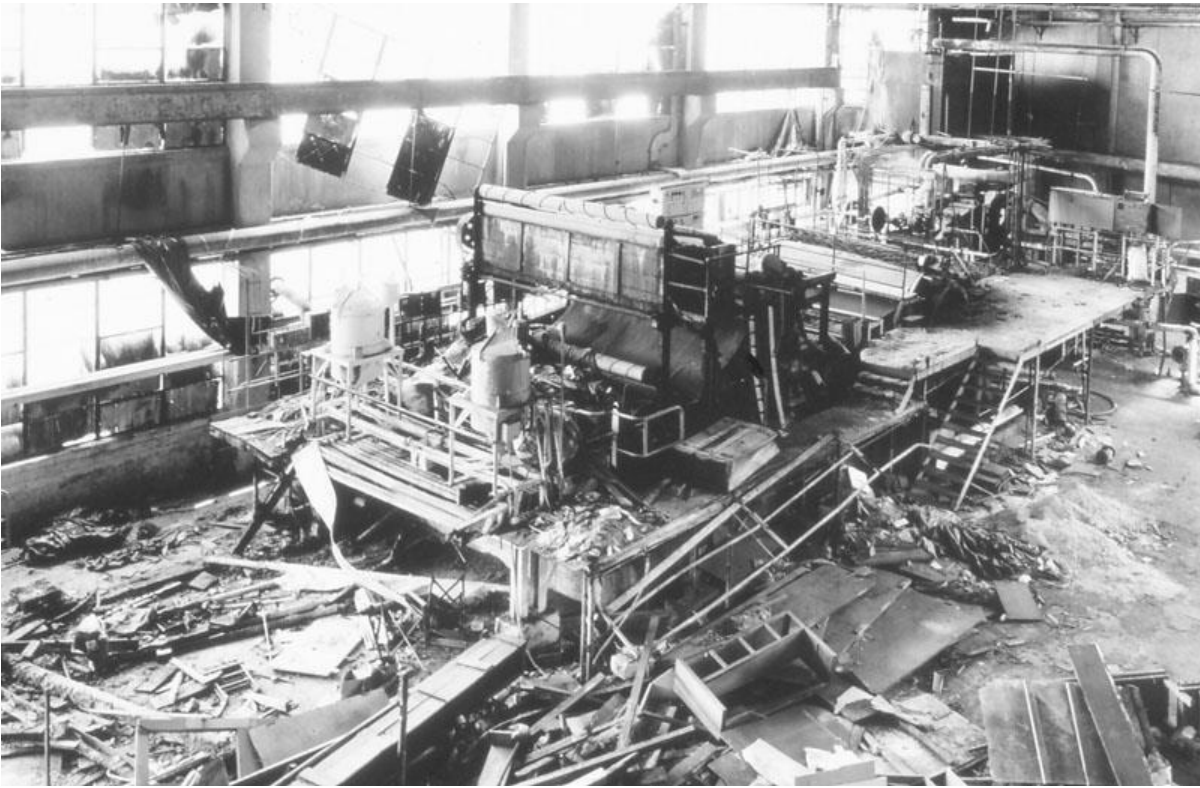
Meanwhile in 1997 Lend Lease bought the CSR site, and by April 1999 Jacksons Landing was under construction. Burley Griffin's elegant incinerator had closed in 1971, and after twenty years of indecision, was demolished in 1992. The same fate overcame the Char House, which then stopped fouling the air. Lend Lease chose to demolish the factory rather than try to refurbish it.

By now the Glebe Island swing bridge was obsolete. Too narrow for road traffic, it would open at inconvenient times to allow fishing boats to pass in and out of Blackwattle Cove. ANZAC bridge, built by Baulderstone, opened in late 1995, carrying six lanes of traffic high above the site, instead of four lanes right through it.





The end of caneite production and the demolition of the factory cleared a wide space on the shoreline, and allowed Bowman Street to be opened, widened, and made into a thoroughfare.



Three rusty balls in Waterfront Park recall the caneite factory: the great wheels that rotated them are exhibited across the road in Knox on Bowman. And Metamorphosis asks passers-by to reflect on the transformation of an industrial complex into upmarket apartments and a landscaped park.





Waterfront Park itself is the outcome of negotiations between residents and Lend Lease, who had intended a much simpler, less landscaped expanse.

