

Governor Phillip Tower, Museum of Sydney and First Government House Place

Address 1 Farrer Place and 41 Bridge Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Practice Denton Corker Marshall

Designed 1989 Completed 1993 (GPT) 1995 (MoS)

History & Description

The site of Governor Phillip Tower, Museum of Sydney & First Government House Place are located on a city block bounded by Bridge, Phillip, Bent & Young Streets in Sydney's CBD. Together with the Governor Macquarie Tower & the heritage listed terraces fronting Young & Phillip Streets the site was the subject of an international design competition held in 1988, of which the primary aim was to conserve the archaeological resource of the First Government House which investigations of 1983-85 had revealed to lie beneath the northern portion of the block & extending into the road reserves of Young, Bridge & Phillip Streets. The cultural significance of the place shaped the development for the site: the conservation of the archaeological site of First Government House & the Victorian terrace housing.

To satisfy this & the commercial imperatives of maximising tower floor plate areas, the scheme incorporated several innovative approaches. Firstly in the urban design: the conception of First Government House Place as an 'urban room', achieved by setting back the Governor Phillip Tower from Bridge Street, enabled the archaeological site to be conserved, interpreted & celebrated, & served to enoble the space with the presence of the imposing colonial sandstone buildings to either side; the public link from Phillip Street to Farrer Place, & the setbacks provided to the terraces. Secondly in the structure: to regain floor space lost in this initiative, the design for Governor Phillip Tower incorporated a composite steel & post-tensioned concrete transfer truss system to cantilever 7m over the rear yards of the Phillip Street terraces. The tower podium design synthesised a new urban design approach by creating a lower scale podium that respected Sydney's historic buildings & reinforced the historic street pattern, as distinct from the tower form seen from afar in the broader context of contemporary towers of the city. The 16m high sandstone podium was made possible by lifting the undercroft of the tower 24m above the podium, & through the use of SS cable trusses supporting the glass roof of the podium. The transfer zone, clad in weathered zinc, visually separates the podium from the tower. The tower, 227m tall & 64 levels, was constructed of reinforced concrete clad with polished Paradiso granite with ribs of stainless steel (SS) in a three-storey square grid pattern with the SS ribs extending above the tower as intersecting blades. The 'yellowblock' sandstone wall of the museum provides a reference to its historic context.

The Governor Phillip Tower complex was awarded The Sulman Award in 1994 & the 1995 Lloyd Rees Award for Civic Design for First Government House Place & is an important project in Denton Corker Marshall's work & is their most important in Sydney. They are one of Australia's notable architecture firms & their work is recognised internationally. John Denton, Bill Corker & Barrie Marshall were jointly awarded the RIAA Gold Medal in 1996. The Project Architect, Richard Johnson, was awarded the RIAA Gold Medal in 2008.

Statement of Significance

Governor Phillip Tower, Museum of Sydney & First Government House Place is an outstanding example of modern architecture & urban design. It is significant for the creation of First Government House Place that symbolises the foundation of the colony of New South Wales. The use of post tensioned concrete filled steel truss transfer system to cantilever the tower above the Phillip St terrace yards was technically innovative. The design initiative of the podium form that recognised Sydney's early period of colonial settlement as distinctly separate from the tower form forged a new urban design approach in Australia.

Criteria Applicable

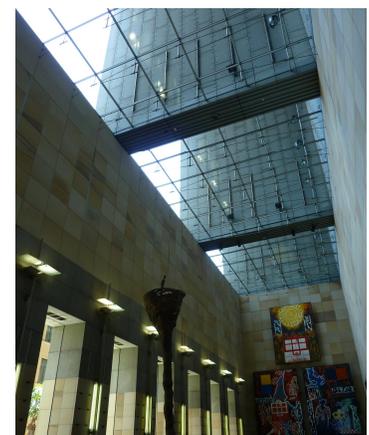
N2. Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
N3. Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement.
N5. Having a special association with the life or works of an architect of significant importance in our history



First Government House Place with Museum of Sydney & Governor Phillip Tower behind, terraces to either side. Source: City of Sydney Model Makers.



Governor Phillip Tower, view from Farrer Place. Source: M Desgrand 2010.



Interior of Governor Phillip Tower podium. Source: M Desgrand 2010.