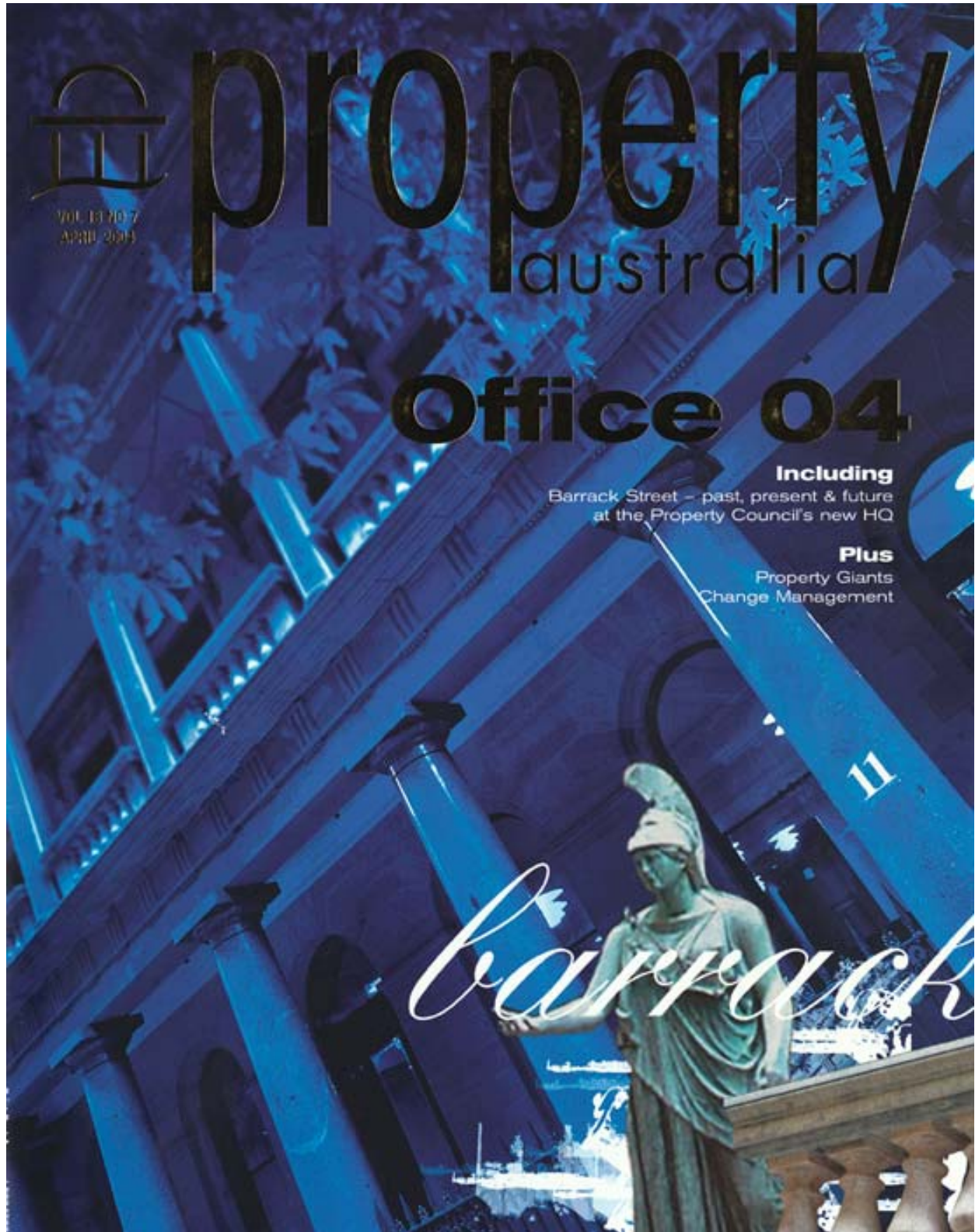


PROPERTY AUSTRALIA - April 2004





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Property Council of Australia House transforming an urban

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY, THE PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA HAS A HOME OF ITS OWN. CHRIS LARSEN REPORTS ON HOW A HERITAGE BUILDING WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THE HUB OF THE PROPERTY INDUSTRY.

A lot of history has passed through the front doors of the Property Council's new home, 11 Barrack Street has a prominent, if chequered, history. Perhaps best known as the Cricketers Club, the building was also the Imperial Service Club and New South Wales' first savings bank.

Its latest incarnation is the fruition of a two-year project to redevelop the building into modern office accommodation.

Architects Nettleton Tribe have been on the project since 2001 – appointed by the building owner, Gwynville Pty Ltd, to remodel the property.

Its transformation has involved the demolition of portions of the building's rear, the addition of a new structure in its place, and the refurbishment of the remaining heritage spaces.

But the process of creation and addition was as much about unearthing the past as design and redesign.

"It was just a rabbit warren of little rooms over the levels. It took us three

months just to work out what we had here," says Nettleton Tribe director Trevor Hamilton.

"Over 150 years or so it had been added to and demolished over its various roles.

"The biggest exercise was the discovery of it. There were little rooms we couldn't find (on plans). We know they were here ... but it was just layer upon layer of confusion. There was all sorts of tack added on."

Hamilton says a key objective in the process was to bring together the modern and the old so they would 'respect each other'.

"We chose to demolish everything beyond the bank above the ground floor," Hamilton says.

"The view is to recognise what's old but not copy it ... make it an expression in its own right.

The building's new rear portions were prefabricated, and then lifted into place.

11 BARRACK STREET – TIMELINE



- 1850** New two-storey premises for Savings Bank of NSW opened for business on Barrack Street
- 1888** Current level 2 constructed, balconies added
- 1897** Western carriageway developed, building 'grew' by one column length up Barrack Street. Current entrance and foyer built, balconies extended
- 1914** Savings Bank merged with Government Savings Bank of NSW, Barrack Street becomes a branch office
- 1915** Building linked to David Jones George Street store through levels 1 and 2, used by David Jones for administration until lease lapsed in 1928
- 1931** Government Savings Bank of NSW merged with Commonwealth Bank (CBA). CBA branch operated out of ground floor
- 1932** Pharoah Club leased levels 1 and 2, folds in 1933

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"From that time on the owners took the view they weren't going to renovate the building (but) create a new one," Hamilton says.

"The whole infrastructure of the building is new. Essentially it's a new building."

The Property Council now occupies all of levels 1 and 2 of 11 Barrack Street. Recruitment firm Manpower occupies level 3, while the ground level will become a restaurant.

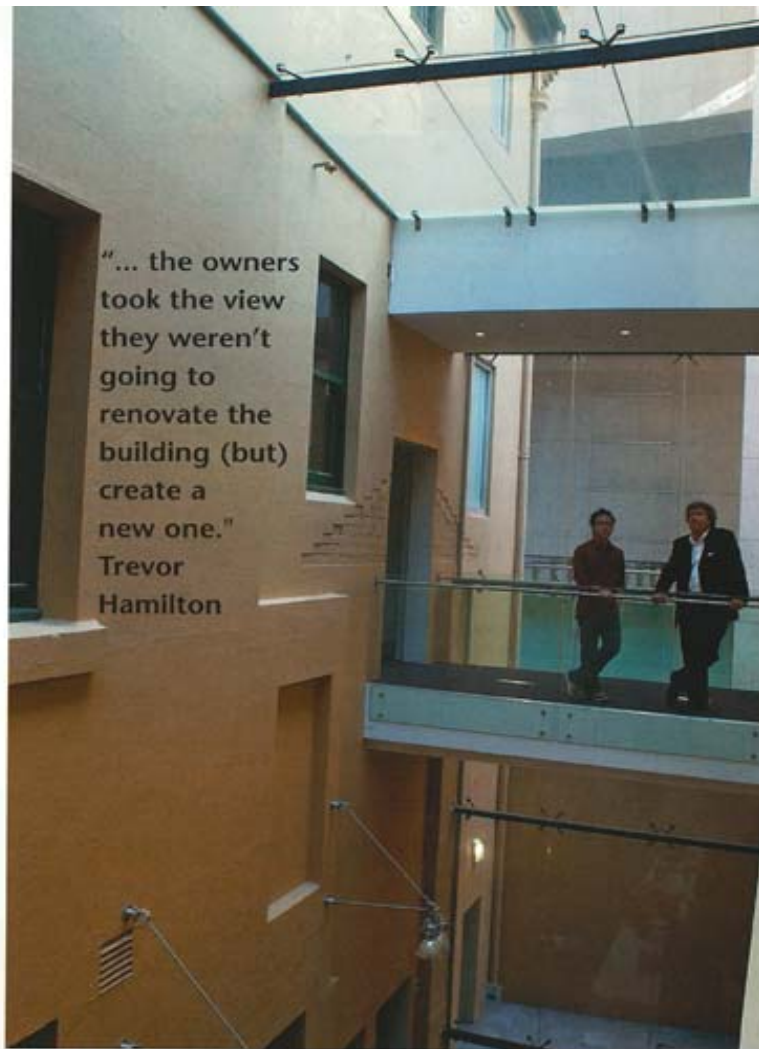
Hamilton says the Property Council is a perfect fit for the building. Its needs aligned with the original concepts for the building's interior.

"It was definitely to demonstrate a new direction for the Property Council, one of openness and member participation. Nothing's hidden. It's all there to see," he says. "It's a much more open relationship with the city."

The Property Council's CEO Peter Verwer, agrees.

"While the Property Council has long ►

"... the owners took the view they weren't going to renovate the building (but) create a new one."
Trevor Hamilton



Ken Ng and Trevor Hamilton

- 1933** Imperial Service Club remodels levels 1 and 2, adding level 3 as accommodation and occupying the building until 1973
- 1973-1980** Ground floor retained as bank branch, levels 1 and 2 empty
- 1980** Cricketers Club occupies levels 1 and 2; sub-leasing level 3 to a construction company
- 1995** CBA sells building for \$5.3 million, leasing back the ground floor until October 2000
- 2000** Cricketers Club ceases trading
- 2001/2** Building refurbished by current owner, Gwynville Pty Ltd
- 2004** **Property Council occupies levels 1 and 2**



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Project Partners

Architect /interior designer
Nettleon Tribe

Real estate advisor
Ernst & Young

Legal counsel
Blake Dawson Waldron

Builder
Built

Heritage consultant
Jackson Teece Chesterman Wills

Quantity surveyor
Rider Hunt

Structural / civil engineer
M&G Consulting

Mechanical, electrical, hydraulic &
fire protection engineer
VOS Group

Acoustics
Arup Acoustics

Certifier
McKenzie Group

been the voice of the property industry, for the first time in its history the organisation has a building to call its own – and a heritage building at that," Verwer says.

"The move to 11 Barrack Street is more than just a change of premises. It represents a huge shift in our profile.

"11 Barrack Street will now be known as Property Council of Australia House. It is a fitting tribute to the property industry's peak organisation in this Year of the Built Environment.

"Obviously the building itself is fantastic, but as Property Council of Australia House it also sends a powerful message to the key stakeholders we communicate with every day, such as politicians, the media, the public and members.

"But our new building is not just about profile. There will be tangible benefits to members also.

"Members can access our property library in the new Club Room, grab a

coffee, hold meetings, read the papers or surf the internet."

Nettleon Tribe senior architect Ken Ng says a key concept for the building's interior design was to embrace its heritage.

"We had some pretty robust concepts on how the new would meet the old," Ng says. "We had a hierarchy of what was critical in terms of being retained."

Glass was used extensively, "... so you can clearly see where the old structure used to be," Ng says. "We decided to expose it and not cover it up."

Hamilton says he is satisfied the original concept for the hulk of the building's interior was retained.

"Other tenants wanted to look at quite significant changes that were not appropriate," he says.

"We had looked at fit-outs for the building that we'll call 'heritage fit-outs' – Chesterfields all over the place. To us,



**"Members can access our property library in the new Club Room, grab a coffee, hold meetings, read the papers or surf the internet."
Peter Verwer**


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that's not what the building was about." He says the Property Council's space uses the fabric of the building to make its own statement.

"The grand spaces of the old and the new would be significantly changed by the introduction of offices. The old ball-room became ... one of the great work-spaces in the building. The Invincibles Room is now the library and club room."

And he's glad there's still some discovery left in the building.

"A lot of history is still left there. It's covered, but in such a way that it's protected so that in the future somebody can discover it again," Hamilton says.

"The building now gets a new lease of life that will see it through another 50 to 100 years. There's many more to come." 



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- Dr Jack Bacon, Futurist and Technological Historian, USA

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