

Item name: William Bland Centre including significant interiors**Location:** 229-231 Macquarie Street Sydney 2000

Sydney

Address: 229-231 Macquarie Street**Planning:** Sydney South**Suburb/nearest town:** Sydney 2000**Local govt area:** Sydney**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:****Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:****Curtilage/boundary:****Item type:** Built**Group:** Health Services**Category:** Other - Health Services**Owner:** Multiple Owners**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** Medical consulting and professional offices**Former uses:** Medical consulting offices**Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:** Local

Statement of significance: The William Bland Centre at 229-231 Macquarie is a representative example of the of Modernist-influenced office and professional buildings constructed in the City of Sydney in the first decade and a half after the end of World War II. Designed in the office of Hans Peter Oser, a respected Austrian born and trained Modernist architect who migrated to Australia before World War II, the William Bland Centre is a significant example of the Post War International style that clearly demonstrates key elements of the style and is distinguished by unusual patterning across its curtain wall façade. The William Bland Centre is a rare example of a building that was constructed using the lift slab method in Central Sydney and is understood to be the oldest surviving office building in Central Sydney constructed with this system.

The site has some historical significance because of its intermittent and then continuous associations with the medical profession and provides evidence of the importance of the locality to the profession because of its proximity to Sydney Hospital.

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Historical notes of provenance: This site forms part of the land of the Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of land within the City of Sydney council boundaries. For information about the Aboriginal history of the local area see the City's Barani website: <http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/>

The site of the William Bland Centre is part of Allotment 3 of Section 41 of the City of Sydney, granted to Benjamin Carvosso, Walter Lawry and Ralph Mansfield on 9 January 1821. Carvosso, Lawry and Mansfield were Methodist clergymen and the land was in effect granted to the Conference of the Methodist Church for the erection of a chapel that was subsequently built on part of it. At the beginning of 1842 the land remained vested in three Methodist ministers plus several other trustees.

However, in April 1843 the property was advertised for sale. It included the chapel, a school house, several other buildings and the extensive grounds on which they all stood. The following September part of the property, the future site of the William Bland Centre, was conveyed to English born architect John Bibb (1810-1862). Bibb and his family arrived in Sydney in 1832. He became assistant to John Vege, then Sydney's leading architect. After Vege retired from practice in 1837 Bibb became a successful architect in his own right. Although most of his work has been demolished he was an important designer whose use of classical architecture superseded the simple Georgian idioms of the colonial era. It is possible Bibb developed his newly acquired property on Macquarie Street. He is known to have had a Macquarie Street address so may have occupied part if not all of the site.

In August 1866, 231 Macquarie Street was settled on Bibb's son William and his wife Ellen, who he had recently married. About two years later 229 Macquarie Street was settled on Bibb's daughter Sarah and her husband, John Lusby, who she had recently married. Both properties were occupied by tenants over the coming years and were eventually sold, but at different times.

231 Macquarie Street was the first to be sold, with the transfer of title to government medical officer Dr Louis Foucart taking place in January 1883. He subsequently settled the property on his daughter Alice in October 1893. The house experienced a diverse array of occupants – at the end of the 1880s it was occupied by a surgeon, in the middle of the 1890s by the Forest Department and at the turn of the century by a boarding house. By 1902 the building had been adapted as professional chambers, occupied by dentists, surgeons and other medical practitioners. Amongst them was Dr Thomas Speirs Kirkland, who ultimately purchased the property during February 1920 and in 1931 converted it to Torrens Title. Kirkland continued to occupy part of the building, which he named Kirkland Chambers, and let the rest.

Jurisdiction over 229 Macquarie Street was transferred to trustees in in September 1875. The building served as a boarding house for some years, but from the beginning of the twentieth century it was occupied by medical practitioners. On 7 December 1909 the title to the property was conveyed to Dr Herbert Russell Nolan, who had been leasing space in the building since December 1905. He subsequently transferred the property's title to a Company called Richmond Limited, which in turn transferred it to Eleanore Susannah Dickson in May 1922. She was married to Thomas Charles Dickson, described on title documents as a grazier. He died in November 1927 and she died a few years later, in September 1930. 229 Macquarie Street then came under the control of the Permanent Trustee Company of New South Wales as trustees of Mrs Dickson's estate.

229-231 Macquarie Street was purchased by Queens Club in September 1937, the transfer of title taking place in August 1938. The buildings were acquired in readiness for relocation of the Club after the anticipated resumption of their existing premises by the Government for works associated with proposed new law courts on Macquarie Street. The law courts did not eventuate in this location. At some period the building became known as Lachlan House. During the 1950s there were several proposals for redevelopment of the site. A development application was lodged in January 1952 for a private hotel with shops on the ground floor, followed by a development application for a building devoted to the use of doctors' surgeries in April 1956. Queens Club Pty Limited transferred the property title to Medical Dental Building Pty Limited the following month.

The development application for the building that was to finally rise on the site was lodged by its architect, H P Oser & Associates, at the end of July 1958. A building application was lodged the next month for a building to

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cost £400,000. It was intended to contain 140 standardised suites for medical practitioners and allied professionals. There were also two commercial floors for medical supplies and a café. At the top of the building it was intended to have three apartments. The Macquarie Street façade of the building was to be clad with an aluminium-framed curtain wall finished with vitreous enamel spandrel panels and glare-proof glazing. The property title was transferred to Lachlan Macquarie Building Limited in June 1959.

The building was constructed by the lift slab method, an American system developed in the early 1950s and introduced into Australia during 1956. In this form of construction structural columns were erected first. Floor slabs were cast on the ground floor level then raised into place and fixed to the columns. The first example in Australia was a three storey office building at Lidcombe, constructed in the first half of 1957. In the City of Sydney the earliest example is understood to have been another building designed in the office of H P Oser & Associates. This was Gibb & Beeman House at 383-385 George Street (since demolished), for which applications were lodged with the City Council in May 1957. The system was also used in the building erected for Royal Exchange Assurance in O'Connell Street, designed by the architectural firm of McConnel Smith & Johnson and known as Kindersley House (since demolished). Construction commenced in the first half of 1959. Kindersley House was said to have been the tallest lift slab building in the world at this time.

The foundation stone of 229-231 Macquarie Street was laid by Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn, Chancellor of the University of Sydney. He was followed by L F McInness, the chairman of Lachlan Macquarie Building Ltd, who pressed the button to set the machinery in motion to raise the first floor slab.

As originally designed the basement level was intended to house medical suites and x-ray therapy rooms but in 1960 it was replanned to suit the needs of the New Zealand Club. The ground floor level included three shops and upper levels were devoted to professional suites.

The building was named after William Bland (1789-1868), a naval surgeon who was sentenced to transportation after mortally wounding a naval officer in a duel. He reached Sydney in July 1814 and was sent as a convict surgeon to the mental asylum at Castle Hill but was pardoned in 1815 and established a private medical practice. He was jailed in 1818 for criticising Governor Macquarie and after release resumed his successful practice. In 1835 he became Secretary of the Australian Patriotic Association. Bland helped draft Bills for the Constitution and, in June 1843, he was elected to the new representative government. He later served in the Legislative Council and was associated for many years with the Benevolent Society. In 1859 he became the first president of the Australian Medical Association, which was later superseded by the NSW branch of the British Medical Association.

The building was converted to strata title in 1975.

H P Oser & Associates:

H P Oser & Associates was formed in March 1956 when architect Hans Peter Oser formed an associateship with Robert Francis Louis Mugdan and Jean Georges Henri Fombertaux

Hans Peter Oser (1913-1967) was born in Vienna. He studied architecture at the University of Vienna, graduating in 1936. During university holidays he worked in a number of different architects' offices, amongst them that of significant and influential architect Peter Behrens. After university he worked in the office of Joseph Hoffmann and Oswald Haerdtl, supervising projects in Budapest and Paris. With the rise of Nazism Oser migrated to Australia, arriving in December 1938. He worked for a number of different firms and companies before registering as an architect in February 1945. Oser established his own practice in 1946, initially designing Modernist houses, flats and industrial buildings.

The associateship underwent some change after Mugdan left the practice in 1957. In 1960 the firm became H P Oser Fombertaux & Associates after the two principals entered into partnership. Jean Fombertaux (1920-1975) was born in Nice, France, and spent many years of his childhood and youth in Japan and Southeast Asia. He migrated with his family to Australia in 1937 and studied architecture at Sydney Technical College. He also

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worked for the established architectural firm of Lipson & Kaad and registered as an architect in 1948. Fombertaux first met Oser in 1952.

Buildings that H P Oser & Associates are known to have complied in the City of Sydney include Gibb & Beeman at 383-385 George Street, Sydney (1957; demolished), flats at 10 Wylde Street, Potts Point (1958; demolished), a small office building for Toohey's Brewery at 72 Mary Street, Surry Hills (1960-1961) and blocks of flats at 40 Bayswater Road, Rushcutters Bay (1960) and 51-57 Bayswater Road, Rushcutters Bay (1959). Buildings in Central Sydney known to have been designed by Oser Fombertaux & Associates include the major refurbishment of 64-68 Castlereagh Street, which included a stylish Modernist ground floor travel centre of the British Overseas Airways Corporation (1961-1963; since extensively altered), Citisite House at 155-159 Castlereagh street (1961-1963) and Mena House, 225-227 Macquarie Street, in association with Peter Smith (1960; altered). The William Bland Centre is considered in several publications to be a notable example of Oser's work.

After Oser died in 1967 the firm continued to operate but was re-formed as Fombertaux Rice & Hanly. Fombertaux died in 1975.

Themes:	National theme	State theme	Local theme
	8. Culture	Creative endeavour	Modern architecture & art
	3. Economy	Health	(none)
	9. Phases of Life	Persons	Hans Peter Oser & Associates,

Designer: H P Oser & Associates (architect); P O Miller, Milston & Ferris (structural engineer)

Builder: James Wallace & Co Pty Ltd

Year started: 1958

Year completed: 1960

Circa: No

Physical description: The William Bland Centre is an eleven-storey building with a basement level located on the western side of Macquarie Street in the block between Martin Place and Queen's Square. The exterior of the building demonstrates characteristics of the Post War International style. It is distinguished externally by an apparently intact proprietary aluminium-framed curtain wall system, where a repetitive pattern is established by alternating pairs of window bays and single window bays, and alternating light and dark spandrel panels across the façade. Window bays are subdivided into a series of panels. Two panels in the pairs of window bays are operable, with top hinged sashes.

The building's structure consists of steel columns encased in concrete, reinforced concrete floor slabs that were positioned using the lift slab method, and brick external walls. Walls around stairs, lifts and service ducts are also of brick. Light wells are located in the centre of the building on its north and south sides and at its rear.

Retail shops are located on either side of the main entrance to the building. A shallow fabric awning extends over the shopfronts and entrance. The building entrance and the northern retail space are protected by roller shutters when not in use. The ground floor common area, accessing lifts and stairs to other levels, has retained original marble wall linings and a stainless steel panel at the fire hydrant. A foundation stone and plaque commemorating the architect and builder are integrated into the wall linings at the north-western end of the common area. A photographic mural (not thought to be original building fabric) is mounted on the northern wall of the common area. A kiosk on the southern side of the space, which is shown on original plans, has been retained.

Physical condition level: Good

Physical condition:
Archaeological potential level: Little

Archaeological potential Detail:

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Modification dates: The City of Sydney's development and building application records indicate that there has been continuous refitting of upper level interiors since the early 1960s.

c.1982: An awning was installed at ground floor level.

c.1992: Alterations to ground floor pharmacy shopfront and reconfiguration of the entrance to the building.

The dropped panel extended over the ground floor common area and external lobby and timber board ceiling linings have been removed, and a false ceiling installed.

Recommended management: The William Bland Centre should be retained and conserved. All original fabric on the building exterior should be retained. Surfaces never intended to be painted should remain unpainted and be appropriately maintained. Remaining intact original internal fabric should be retained and conserved.

Encourage reconstruction or interpretation of original elements that have been removed in the entrance lobby and ground floor common area. The design of future shopfronts should interpret original shopfronts and be sympathetically detailed.

Encourage removal of the awning. The necessity for sun control should be addressed by an appropriately designed canopy that complements and enhances the architectural style of the building.

A conservation management plan should be prepared to guide future use and management of significant fabric. Any application for future works involving structural changes and/or modification of original and significant building fabric should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement.

Management:	Management category	Management name
	Statutory Instrument	List on a Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

Further comments: Publically-accessible parts of the building's interior were inspected by the author.

Heritage inventory sheets are often not comprehensive, and should be regarded as a general guide only. Inventory sheets are based on information available, and often do not include the social history of sites and buildings. Inventory sheets are constantly updated by the City as further information becomes available. An inventory sheet with little information may simply indicate that there has been no building work done to the item recently: it does not mean that items are not significant. Further research is always recommended as part of preparation of development proposals for heritage items, and is necessary in preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments and Conservation Management Plans, so that the significance of heritage items can be fully assessed prior to submitting development applications.

Significant interiors for modern office or community buildings generally include interiors with original design quality or fabric, such as entrance foyers, halls, lift lobbies, stairs, meeting or event rooms, and gathering spaces, including original art installations and exposed structural features. It excludes interiors with no significance, such as non-original office or service room fit-outs. Significant interiors can be identified in more detail for each item through preparation of a heritage assessment or conservation management plan.

Criteria a): The site has some historical significance because of its intermittent and then continuous associations with the medical profession and provides evidence of the importance of the locality to the profession because of its proximity to Sydney Hospital.
[Historical significance]

Criteria b): Although the site of 229-231 Macquarie Street was owned by prominent and significant nineteenth century architect John Bibb from 1843 to 1862, it has not been confirmed if he occupied it at any time.
[Historical association]

significance] The William Bland Centre was designed in the office of Hans Peter Oser, an Austrian architect who migrated to Australia in 1938 and established a successful architectural practice in 1945. He was one of a number of migrant architects who helped to popularise Modernist architecture in NSW and his office was responsible for a number of notable buildings in Sydney.

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Criteria c): The William Bland Centre is a significant example of the Post War International style that clearly demonstrates key elements of the style as applied to commercial architecture. These include the aluminium framed and glazed curtain wall, planar façade surface, extensive areas of glazing, and colour (and pattern) achieved through spandrel panels. The patterning across the façade is unusual and distinctive.

**[Aesthetic/
Technical
significance]**

It is one of four similarly scaled contemporary International style buildings along Macquarie Street (the others are Mena House at 225-227 Macquarie Street, Agriculture House at 195 Macquarie Street and Park House at 187-189 Macquarie Street), two of which have been modified externally (225-227 and 195 Macquarie Street).

Criteria d):
**[Social/Cultural
significance]**

The building's social significance has not been ascertained and requires further assessment.

Criteria e): The William Bland Centre is understood to be the oldest surviving office building in Central Sydney constructed using the lift slab method.

**[Research
significance]**

Criteria f): The William Bland Centre is a rare example of a building that was constructed using the lift slab method in Central Sydney. It is also an uncommon example of a building with a proprietary aluminium framed curtain wall facade that was constructed in the 1950s in Central Sydney.

[Rarity]

Criteria g): The William Bland Centre is representative of Modernist-influenced office and professional buildings constructed in the City of Sydney in the first decade and a half after the end of World War II.

[Representative]

Intactness/Integrity: High integrity externally

References:	Author	Title	Year
		Building, Lighting and Engineering, April 1958	1958
		Construction and Real Estate Journal September 1937	1937
		Building, Lighting and Engineering, January 1960	1960
	Miles Lewis	Australian Building: a cultural investigation Section 7.08 Form	
	Philip Goad and Julie Willis editors	Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture	2012
		Old Systems Title Book 897 Number 584	1909
		Primary Application No 30727	1929
		Certificate of Title Volume 2213 Folio 250	1911
		Certificate of Title Volume 12887 Folio 41	1975
	Rebecca Hawcroft	Migration and Modernism: Migrant Architects Practising Mode	2009
		Constructional Review, December 1960	1960
		Old Systems Title Book 109 Number 321	1868
		Primary Application No 16747	1910
	H P Oser	Building Application 1621/58	1958

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Tanner Kibble Denton Ar	Modern Movement Architecture in Central Sydney - Heritag		2018

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
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Latitude:

Longitude:

Location validity:

Spatial accuracy:

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Map name:

Map scale:

AMG zone:

Easting:

Northing:

Listing: Name

Title

Number

ListingDate

Modern Movement Architecture in Heritage study

01/01/2018

Data entry: Data first entered: 02/02/2018

Data updated: 10/05/2018

Status: Completed

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Image:



Caption: William Bland Centre street facade

Copy right: City of Sydney

Image by: Claudine Loffi

Image date: 23/03/2016

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345892de4056c9e4b3599797b28b89c1512.jpg>

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Item name: William Bland Centre including significant interiors

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Image:



Caption: Streetscape view of William Bland Centre

Copy right: City of Sydney

Image by: Claudine Loffi

Image date: 23/03/2016

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345d2320a939a244c9686a2797e29a58ba8.jpg>

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Image:



Caption: William Bland Centre upper levels viewed from Sydney Hospital

Copy right: Roy Lumby

Image by: Roy Lumby

Image date: 24/02/2013

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345a0d5d73771af44fc9153e754f1c34916.JPG>

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Caption: Ground floor detail

Copy right: City of Sydney

Image by: Claudine Loffi

Image date: 23/03/2016

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345f717acd8ff2a42ef8cf0dbdf3cd0f311.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/Thumb_test345f717acd8ff2a42ef8cf0dbdf3cd0f311.jpg

Image:

Item name: William Bland Centre including significant interiors

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Caption: William Bland Centre entrance

Copy right: City of Sydney

Image by: Claudine Loffi

Image date: 23/03/2016

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/3455a38d50be2024935bd77c803ddb1b4d2.jpg>

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Image:

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Caption: Curtain wall detail

Copy right: City of Sydney

Image by: Claudine Loffi

Image date: 23/03/2016

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345b9099cc7f2bd4a2bbe72f0ae7321a687.jpg>

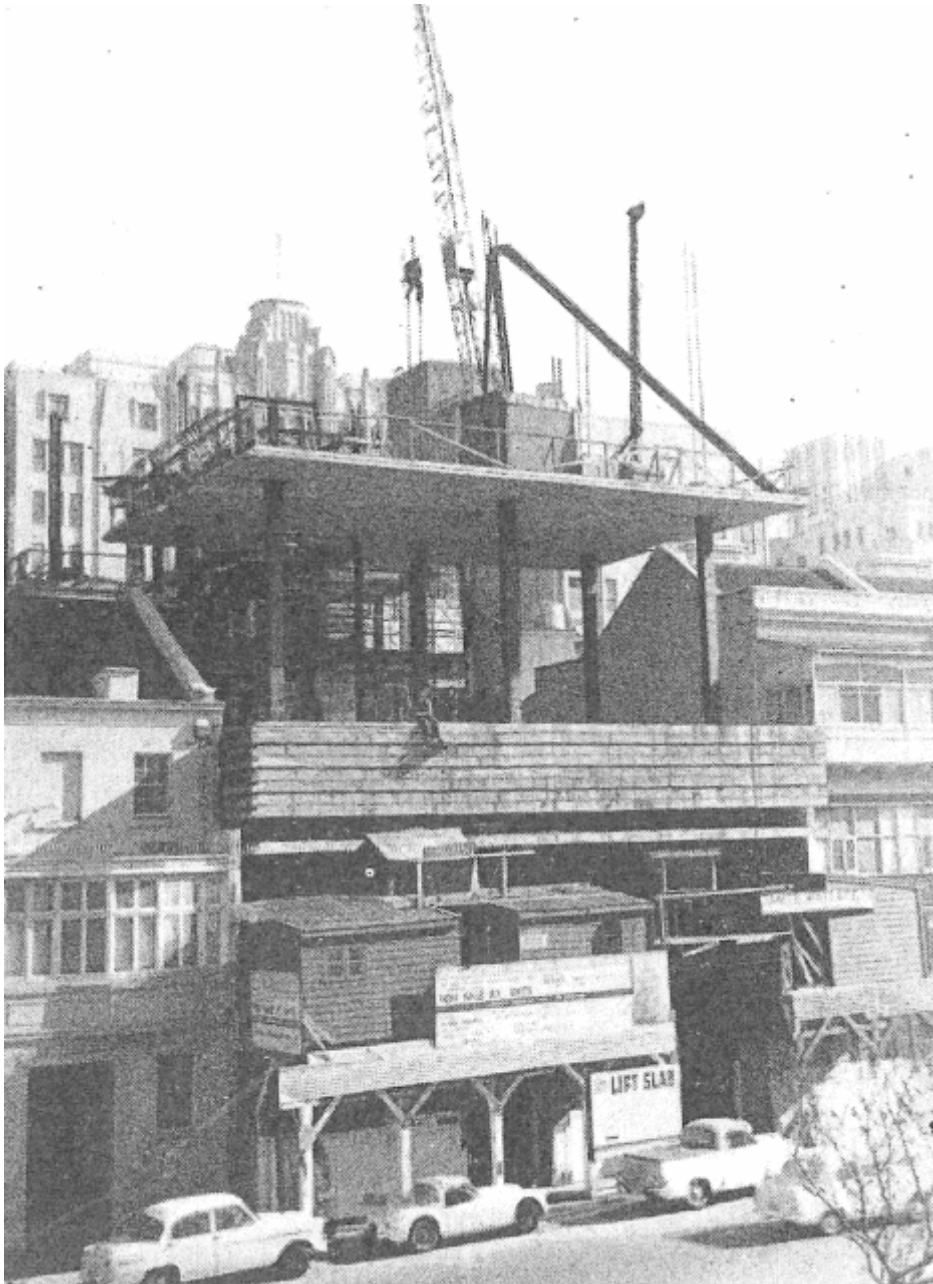
Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/Thumb_test345b9099cc7f2bd4a2bbe72f0ae7321a687.jpg

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Caption: Photograph published in Constructional Review in 1960 showing the building under construction

Copy right: Constructional Review

Image by: Constructional Review

Image date: 01/12/1960

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/345e85a0e04ed2048aabe5930fce50b427b.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/Thumb_test345e85a0e04ed2048aabe5930fce50b427b.jpg

Image:

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Caption: Photograph held at National Archives of Australia showing the building under construction

Copy right: National Archives of Australia

Image by:

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3453d71600a4c4544a09afef44dd9451c1e.jpg>

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