

# HUNTERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL PAVILION PERFORMANCE COMPLEX

**CLIENT:** NSW Department of Education  
**LOCATION:** Hunters Hill, NSW  
**VALUE:** \$4.8 million  
**DURATION:** November 2004 – March 2006

## Project profile

The Hunters Hill High School Pavilion Performance Complex is an inspiring multi-function facility that blends state-of-the-art environmental design with a highly valued community heritage site.

Designed through close collaboration between the local community and the NSW Department of Education and Training and NSW Department of Commerce, the Pavilion Performance Centre incorporates a gymnasium, stage and movement studio.

The complex is built on a riverside site, which was once known as The Avenue Pleasure Grounds. Sandstone blocks recovered from the 100-year-old ruins have been used to build a stone retaining wall and create an adjacent amphitheatre to be used for outdoor performances. A paved courtyard utilises part of the original sandstone footings of the old 'Pavilion' dance hall as a reminder of the historical significance of the site.

The Centre caters for a variety of educational experiences, ranging from dance, gymnastics and drama productions to indoor sporting activities, such as basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball.

Attached to the Centre are the sound and lighting control room, first aid room and storage areas for chairs and PE equipment. Change rooms and toilet facilities have been designed to provide convenient access for out of hours use.

A lift connects the lower level movement studio and change rooms to the main floor of the gymnasium, with its impressive polished timber sprung floor, and elevated stage.

Two large bi-fold doors dramatically improve the functionality of the gymnasium space by opening up the entire area for major school community events.

## Environment features

Environmental responsible design is a major feature of construction. The main features are:

- Two 60,000 litre under floor rainwater tanks (used for toilet flushing and landscape watering)
- Sound dampening
- Graffiti proof exterior stone work
- Extensive use of low and zero maintenance external construction materials
- Sensitive use of sloping ground to allow ease of access to the complex

Passive climate control initiatives, such as roof ventilators, have also been employed while large, airy balcony spaces provide protection from the elements for several hundred people. During construction, the site offered limited access but disruption to the activities of around 500 students and staff was minimal. The Hunters Hill High School Performance Complex has attracted significant praise from all quarters of the school community and has become a showplace in the public education system.

## Construction difficulties

Construction difficulties were numerous:

- Hazardous materials in the existing ground had to be remedied and disposed of off site
- Archaeological and heritage controls were put in place through the engagement of a specialist heritage consultant, as the new building was constructed over the ruins of a building built more than 100 years' ago. No items of archaeological, or heritage significance were discovered.
- Large rock excavation of existing rock face
- During construction, the site offered limited access, but disruption to the activities of around 500 students and staff was minimal.
- Demolition, make good and rectify 100-year-old sandstone retaining wall
- Re – routing entire school's main electrical infrastructure works to allow school to operate during construction.
- Integration of acoustical requirements (in particular in the gymnasium)



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