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Editorial feature in association
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MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION CONSTRUCTION AWARDS

Eyesore's new life stacks up

A 19th-century boiler house has been reimagined as a restaurant, writes **Melinda Ham**.

ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF AN HISTORIC BUILDING DIVISION (UNDER \$5 MILLION)

Gledhill Constructions
University of Western Sydney boiler house

IF ONLY the walls could speak. From an asylum built more than a century ago to a contemporary restaurant, the boiler house, with its distinctive chimney stack at the University of Western Sydney's Rydalmere campus, has just gone through a reconstruction.

The building is the university's first elegant table-service restaurant, serving modern Asian cuisine, and has an additional outdoor pavilion for more informal student dining.

For its workmanship on the project, Gledhill Constructions won the Adaptive Re-use of an Historic Building (under \$5 million) division in the Master Builders Association construction awards.

"It's been great to turn an eyesore and derelict building into a functioning restaurant and cafe; a good alternative to demolishing the whole thing," the managing director of Gledhill, Derek Sidey, says.

"We've kind of made a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but it worked."

The boiler house was built in 1894 as a laundry for the

Rydalmere Hospital for the Insane, using sandstock bricks and Australian hardwood.

When the hospital closed eight decades later, the building fell into disrepair, despite its heritage listing. Then, in 1996, a fire caused further damage.

The first task for Sidey's team was to clear out industrial rubbish and rubble from the building while keeping the original coal-fired boilers.

"They were taken away to Lithgow, where a sculptor sandblasted and refashioned them, and now they're back out front of the restaurant on plinths, reminding people of the place's history," Sidey says.

Other boiler components, such as gauges, auto stokers, ducts and steam valves, now feature inside the restaurant.

Rather than gut the interior, the team reused and replaced hardwood trusses and rafters, and added a lantern roof to let in light.

They repaired brickwork and underpinned the roof where necessary, ensuring the building's structural stability.

As well as retaining much of the brickwork, they added a new timber floor and outfitted a commercial-grade kitchen.

The new outdoor eating area has a composite-resin panelled cathedral ceiling and timber-



Transformation ... an elegant table-service restaurant serving modern Asian cuisine has emerged from the rubble. Photo: Michael Nicholson

veneer finish over a combination of concrete columns and ironbark timber-clad steel columns and beams.

The towering brick chimney

was also retained and repaired and, although no longer functioning, remains a focal point for the central plaza of the UWS campus.

"We were very impressed that the university valued the architecture and design of the boiler house and that instead of knocking it down, put it to use, a

wonderful reuse of a once-dilapidated building," the judges said.

"The project was well designed and well carried out."



Solid appeal ... Austral Bricks Design Studio by Evolve Constructions.

Beyond bricks and mortar

SHOP FITOUTS UP TO \$500,000

Evolve Constructions
Austral Bricks Design Studio, 50 Carrington Street, Sydney

A SPACE that can be a retail area, a creative zone and a cocktail bar is a tough brief for any designer.

And that's without factoring in a tight six-week construction schedule that included installing a complex three-dimensional feature wall and a decorative masonry and plasterboard boardroom wall.

Evolve Constructions overcame these challenges, and more, when designing and building Austral Bricks Design Studio in Sydney's city centre.

bricks, masonry blocks and roof tiles, and see examples of Austral's paver ranges and how they can be laid.

Evolve Constructions gave a nod to the long history of Austral Bricks by creating a 100-year-old masonry and plaster feature wall in the boardroom.

In contrast, a 3D masonry mural wall is used to show how bricks can be an element in

The judges say the 3D wall added to the aesthetic appeal.

modern design. White bricks jut