



## Case Study 07

### Capitol Apartments

Pymont NSW

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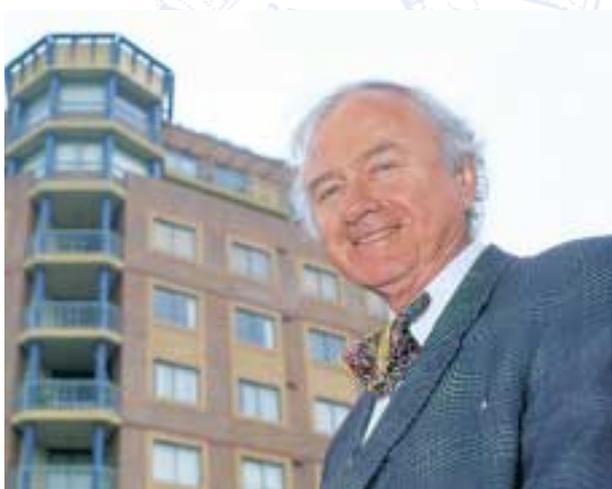


# Capitol

## Apartments

**PYRMONT NSW**

*It's hard to believe that the Pymont Bridge linking Darling Harbour to the city was once slated for demolition. One of the people responsible for its last minute reprieve was architect Darrel Conybeare who pleaded the case for retention to the premier, Neville Wran.*



*Architect Darrel Conybeare describes brick as a "Pymont kind of material". Although Capitol Apartments is a "building of the next century" it pays homage to its heritage context by adapting architectural elements from Pymont's rich past.*

Capitol Apartments is tucked in behind Darling Harbour, on a prominent but awkwardly-shaped site on a bend in Pymont Bridge Road. Darrel Conybeare was project manager and design director with Mark Broadley as project architect.

Conybeare describes it as a "European style development", built up to the front boundary of the 700 m<sup>2</sup> site and backed by a narrow lane. "Our brief was to provide a mixed-use development in that the ground floor would be retail and shops and things that have to do with activating the Pymont Bridge Road streetlife, with varying sized units above."

He describes the approval process as "requiring the resolution of challenging design ideas within the constraints of quite restrictive and inflexible development controls." Oversight and proximity to neighbours were tightly regulated in a way that Conybeare believes was more appropriate to a conventional stepped development. "I think there would be a more sophisticated approach today."

There are 45 apartments from one to three bedrooms over the nine storeys, including two floors of penthouses and 17 ground-level shops. The building is concrete framed with concrete floor slabs and face brick above the second level. "Brick is a Pymont kind of material," he contends. "Brick and sandstone form the fundamental building materials in Pymont."

<b>CLIENT:</b>	Capitol Apartments
<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	Conybeare Morrison & Partners
<b>BUILDER:</b>	Capitol Apartments
<b>BRICKLAYER:</b>	JDR Bricklaying
<b>PROJECT COST:</b>	\$10 million
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY:</b>	Fretwell Photography

*(Left) Capitol Apartments is a mixed-use development on a constricted site adjacent to Darling Harbour and the casino precinct.*

Careful attention was given to brick selection and detailing to articulate the facade of the building and evoke the rich traditional construction to be found in Pyrmont's warehouses.

Red-brown brickwork predominates with tan infill panels linking levels. The window reveals are neatly detailed with soldier courses on three sides and shaped bricks on the sill.

Conybeare uses the term "new urbanity" to describe the building. "This is a building of the next century," he explains. "It has to live in a heritage context and be part of that environment but at the same time it has to look forward. Our design philosophy was to achieve this in a contextual way, to take our cues from other Pyrmont buildings of that scale and adapt their architectural elements to provide appropriate reference to the past.

"We aren't necessarily striving to make a major statement, in fact to some extent we are even looking at a kind of background building approach, to create a timeless development."

All units in Capitol Apartments were sold prior to completion in September 1998.



*Face brickwork features above the second level with tan brick panels linking levels. Note the neatly detailed reveals.*