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Belinda Falsone
Matthew McNeil
Sue Melosu
Scott Norton
Richard Terry
John Whittingham

SYDNEY OFFICE

79 Myrtle Street
Chippendale NSW 2008
AUSTRALIA
ph +61 2 9311 8222
fx +61 2 9311 8200

BRISBANE OFFICE

Lv3 Old Mineral House
2 Edward Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
AUSTRALIA
ph +61 7 300 42 300
fx +61 7 300 42 333

www.architectsajc.com

ALLEN JACK+COTTIER
Architects Pty Ltd
ABN 53 003 782 250



Flourmill Studios, Display suite

Flour Power: Former Mill Converts to Studio Strata

Sydney, 8 May, 2007

Adaptive re-use is taking a creative turn in Sydney's inner-city suburb of Newtown. The Crago Flour Mill, located at Gladstone Street, will be rejuvenated as 47 individual studios for creative professionals under the name of Flourmill Studios. The studios will range in size from 25m² to over 250m², amassing a total of 3000m² of strata studios.

The brainchild of property developer, Andrew Podgornik, Flourmill Studios are pitched to creative small-business people who identify with the building's intriguing conversion.

An industrial spirit is retained and playfully fused with inner-city pragmatism and environmental sustainability. There are numerous forward-thinking initiatives: carpets made from recycled PET plastic bottles, secure bike and personal lockers, and a shared "Go Get" car available to occupants through an internet booking system.

"Many creative small businesses want a work environment that better reflects their culture and prefer to be in a location that's outside the immediate CBD and easier to access," says Podgornik.

Project architect, Kate Mountstephens, believes the studios are intimate environments fuelled by the warmth of history. "Some studios will feature warehouse-style timber columns and beams, original timber loading bay doors, historic sliding fire doors and the remnants of the drive shafts, wheels and belts that once powered the mill."

Other studios will take advantage of soaring double-height spaces with concrete ceilings, steel beams and an overhead soda hopper once used to produce flour. Slicing vertically through the building, the original pulley room, with its massive wheels and leather belts will be glimpsed from central hallways and foyers.

Common 'break out' areas will incorporate double-height spaces, balconies and tea stations, which will all function as informal meeting places for the building's users.

“Our design has substantially increased the level of natural light penetrating the building interiors,” says Mountstephens. “The notion of community within the building is also nurtured through break-out spaces, balconies, and the inclusion of a café, which creates a focal point on the ground floor.”

Built in the 1890s, the mill boasted new technology which enabled it to run 24 hours a day. Eventual closure in 1984 led to the mill’s use as a series of workshops for painters, sculptors and musicians over a 20-year period.

Construction on Fourmill Studios is scheduled to start by June, with completion expected in May next year.

Contact Details:

Ashley Penny
Communications Coordinator
Telephone: +61 2 9311 8222
Email: communications@architectsajc.com



Main courtyard entrance (artist impression only)