

Treasury Brisbane wins gold for preserving the past

30 October 2019

As The Star Entertainment Group – along with its consortium partners – continues building the future Queen’s Wharf Brisbane precinct, the company’s Treasury Brisbane property has won ‘gold’ for its preservation of the past at a state heritage awards last night.

A four-year project to conserve the external sandstone facades on the stunning heritage-listed former Treasury Building in Brisbane’s CBD took home the ‘Gold’ award in the ‘Conservation Works’ category at the 2019 National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Heritage Awards.

Currently home to Treasury Brisbane, more than \$7 million was invested from 2014 to 2018 in conserving the building’s upper three levels on three of its four external facades – Elizabeth Street, George Street, and Queen Street – and all lower levels on all four external facades including William Street.

The work followed the completion of the conservation works on the upper three levels of the William Street external façade in 2007.

As the steward of the building, the project was commissioned by Treasury Brisbane.

The awards, facilitated by The National Trust of Australia (Queensland), are a prestigious acknowledgment of the quality of heritage work carried out across Queensland in 2018-2019.

The Star’s Group Executive External Affairs Alison Smith said the company was proud to be the ‘Platinum Partner’ of the awards, with the win a testament to the company’s ongoing efforts to preserve the culturally significant heritage-listed buildings it currently occupies for future generations.

“We’re proud of our long-standing relationship with The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) and are pleased to support these awards as Platinum Partner, and take home this prestigious award,” Ms Smith said.

“The former Treasury Building sits within the Queen’s Wharf Brisbane precinct – the birthplace of Brisbane’s European history dating back to the early 1800s.

“It was beautifully built over three stages from 1886 to 1928, predominantly from local sandstone.

“As steward of the building for more than 20 years now, we have a highly dedicated projects team that took on this culturally significant project, and we are very proud of the passion and attention to detail they showed to ensure the facades would not require further conservation of the same scale for many years to come.”

Treasury Brisbane Project Manager Glen Hutchison said his team undertook the meticulous project based on the principle of ‘doing as much as necessary and as little as possible’, while also engaging a heritage architect and specialist stonemasonry provider to help support the delivery.

“This project has been a four-year labor of love from our projects team who all share a huge appreciation for protecting and preserving our beautiful and unique heritage buildings,” Mr Hutchison said.

“Some unique highlights of the work involved purchasing almost 100 tonnes of Helidon stone used for indent repairs – Helidon is the place where the original sandstone for the building came from.

“Further, porphyry stone, which is a much harder and waterproof stone, was used for the lower level stonework.

“In areas where the porphyry had to be removed and replaced, the replacement stone was salvaged from various stockpiles across Brisbane and recycled.

“For example, the larger blocks came from the stock cut to build St John's Cathedral and were originally quarried from the O'Connell town quarry, Windsor.

“The replacement cast iron fence spear tops were also a highlight of the conservation project – they were manufactured by the Wagga Iron Foundry – and an original spear was used as a pattern.

“All the original spear shafts were re-used – with the corroded sections cut off (average 50mm) and new sections brazed on.

“The missing shafts were replaced with the same grade of material as the original, and the spear shafts were stamped with the manufacturer's name, *Harrison*.”

Ms Smith said the conclusion of stonework conservation to the building marked a 10-plus year dedicated program of conservation works to two of Brisbane's most iconic heritage buildings – the other being the former Land Administration Building, which currently houses Treasury Brisbane's five-star hotel.

“In September 2007, we completed stonework conservation on the upper three levels of the former Treasury Building's external William Street façade – a project that received a Queensland Heritage Council 'Gold' Award in the 2008 National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Heritage Awards,” Ms Smith said.

“We have also since invested \$4 million into the stonework conservation of three external facades on the adjacent former Land Administration Building – a project that also won 'Gold' in the 2014 National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Heritage Awards.

“Our strong commitment to preserving heritage will continue through our future Queen's Wharf Brisbane integrated resort currently being developed with our consortium partners, Chow Tai Fook Enterprises and Far East Consortium.”

Expected to open in 2022, Queen's Wharf Brisbane will see the sensitive revitalisation of nine heritage-listed buildings in the precinct – possibly the greatest collection of heritage buildings in Australia.

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