



Case Study 26

Pymble Ladies College

Pymble NSW

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Pymble Ladies' College Pymble, NSW

Client: Pymble Ladies' College

Architect: PMDL Architecture + Design

Construction: Gledhill Constructions

Bricklayer: Kevin Kilbridge

Construction cost: \$1.5 million

Photographer: Jackie Dean



“To their credit the bricklayers worked th

This page:

A new gable with neatly detailed reveals and two string courses assists the transition from the 1916 building to its nondescript 1960's neighbour. The project required more than 20 special brick shapes to replicate the detailing of the foundation building.

Opposite page from top:

The Sydney climate lends itself to colonnades rather than internal walkways. As well as linking the three buildings, the walkways resolve circulation problems and provide level access.

The shadow-play created by fluted cants and cant stops on the exterior trim softens the arches. The cap is made from inverted scotia header bricks.

The single-storey arches in the link from the 1916 building to the new administration centre required a different treatment to the existing two-storey arches with a balustrade spandrel.

The colours of the new brickwork are remarkably close to those of the 1916 building (left).

Pymble Ladies College

Coming up the semi-circular drive to Pymble Ladies' College, one cannot but be impressed by the mellow beauty of the setting and the buildings on display. In particular the foundation building, dating back to 1916, has a stunning level of detail.

Like all campuses, the building stock has evolved over the years, sometimes more successfully than others. Andrew Pender (the "P" of PMDL Architecture + Design) was given the task of creating an appropriate public entrance, resolving circulation problems and linking three very disparate buildings.

The long-term process required the shuffling of resources, beginning with the construction of the Conde Library (Hod 19) which freed up the Isabel McKinney Harrison Centre, a low-set 1970s building. This in turn allowed the transfer of administrative functions from the 1916 building and its return to classroom use. Separating the two buildings was the blank gable of a functional but nondescript 1960's building, Dorothy Knox House.

Part of the end of the 1916 building was demolished and rebuilt and the gable of the 1960's building was also rebuilt prior to creating a two-level link between the two buildings. This link continues at a single level to the 1970's building, which is the first point-of-call for visitors.

"Replicating the (1916) architecture was the biggest challenge," says Andrew Pender, "that and marrying the levels of the various buildings and ground levels to make the

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circulation work." Replication wasn't possible in terms of the heights and proportions so "tricks" were played with the proportions of arch bays and their set-outs to fool the eye into reading it as a continuation.

"We tried as much as possible to pick up the existing brick detailing. We worked very closely with the brick manufacturer to make sure all the brick shapes were achievable. The richness of the brick detailing is what ties it in with the existing (1916) building."

Brickwork on the older building was laid to a tighter rod (that is, with reduced mortar joint thickness) and this was continued in the new work, even though the 1960's building was different again! "To their credit the bricklayers worked through most of the issues carefully and we did a lot of set outs before we committed to laying mortar."

Working around the school's requirements and timetable, the 11-month project was completed in October 2002.

