

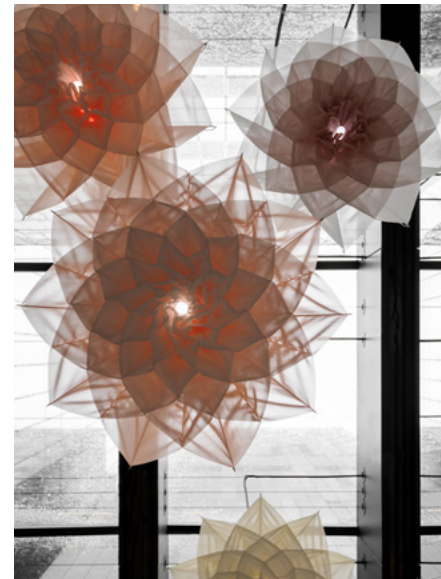
Capella Sydney by Make Architects

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Words by James Lyall Smith • Photography by Timothy Kaye



The recently opened Capella Sydney sees a historic sandstone building in the heart of Sydney's resurgent Sandstone Precinct reimaged as a world-class luxury hotel. Designed by Make Architects, the hotel includes 192 generous guestrooms along with a range of amenities and dining destinations; each space thoughtfully preserving the architectural heritage of the building and the city, which is entering a new era of design prosperity.



Capella Sydney transforms a heritage-listed building into a luxury destination.

The transformation of the 1915 Department of Education building into its current incarnation as Capella Sydney represents the culmination of a seven-year quest to bring a truly world-class luxury accommodation offering to Sydney's Sandstone Precinct. This newest chapter offers guestrooms, the apartment-sized Capella Suite, unique food and beverage options – in the form of McRae Bar, Brasserie 1930 and Aperture – a guest-only pool, eye-catching art installations and the Auriga Spa.

Architect Michelle Evans of the Make Architects Sydney office reflects that “beyond designing the best hotel in the world, bringing the Capella touch to this site was always about opening the historic building up to the public for the first time. We wanted to take it from being a closed-off government site to an open place for Sydneysiders and people from all over the world to enjoy.”

Make Architects collaborated with Melbourne and Madrid-based interior designers BAR Studio for the hotel interiors, including the common spaces and restaurant areas, allowing the food and beverage options to adopt an identity of their own. This design dream team was further heightened through the addition of Melbourne-based stylist Simone Haag, who curated a layer of intriguing objects that add to the sense of grandeur experienced by all who pierce the threshold of the building's sandstone walls. “We've gone to vintage markets, op-shops and Australian makers to collect pieces to build on the design story,” Simone says. “There's Murano glass, vintage cocktail sets and one-off ceramics. The books we're including were all hand-picked – we hope guests pick them up and flick through the pages.”

Developing a defined narrative between old and new was integral to the architectural transformation of the building. Through each considered intervention, the design team strived to not only maintain but celebrate a building whose very function helped to form Sydney into the city it is today. With hand-carved details and its Edwardian baroque-style façade, Capella Sydney is the living embodiment of the past and present colliding. This ethos of heritage renewal was a key driving factor for the Capella Hotel Group, a company with a strong track record in the heritage space. “Capella as a brand is very young,” says Marc von Arnim, Capella Sydney's General Manager. “What sets us apart, however, is our delivery of service. No matter which Capella you go to, we always try to do things a little bit differently.”

The Capella Hotel Group's desire to create a truly memorable experience for guests extends beyond the realms of design and is exemplified in all aspects of the hotel, from unique dining experiences curated by the Bentley Group to the selection of staff members fully committed to the overall vision for the building. “For Sydney, we've chosen personalities who are going to bring the heritage building to life,” Marc says. “They'll deliver an authentic experience in every place they are with guests.”

A luxury hotel fused with intriguing architectural interventions, engaging art installations and inimitable dining experiences, Capella Sydney expands the definition of luxury. Much like the area in which it resides, the accommodation offering represents a new dawn for Sydney's hospitality scene while celebrating the historical beauty of the harbour city.