



Grand old Mariners' Church reaches conservation milestone

provide recreational activities for sailors in port. The Authority has used the best in conservation practices to retain its heritage significance.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority's CEO, Robert Domm, says that the historic architecture at 100 George Street is a strong reminder of Australia's humble colonial beginnings.

"It's important for all Australians to retain that visible link to the past, providing an opportunity to reflect on how we've come to where we are today.

"The Authority is building on this philosophy to make The Rocks a vibrant place that offers a diversity of experiences for all visitors while protecting and enhancing its heritage."

The Authority's refurbishment works at 100 George Street included repairing the chapel's wainscoting and timber windows, restoring the eastern and southern stone facades and installing lifts and staircases to improve access and services for people with disabilities.

The building's tenant is now fitting it out as a restaurant and bar complex, which is expected to open in 2010.

Other recent heritage works at The Rocks include the reconstruction of a landmark sentry box from Dawes Point Battery. Dating from around 1880, the unique cylindrical stone building, with a dome Muntz metal roof, is located on the seawall at the western side of Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The building was used both as an observation post for defensive purposes and for early communications across the harbour. Telephone cables ran from the box under the harbour to a similar building once standing at Milsons Point.

Again, to keep the stories of the past alive, the Authority will use historic images and signage to tell visitors of a colourful time when people got by without mobile phones and broadband.



Historic stained-glass windows, a 150-year-old streetscape, First Fleet seaman and the world's first strike for an eight-hour day all have ties to one of the most distinguished heritage buildings in The Rocks – the former Mariners' Church at 100 George Street.

Thanks to major refurbishment works by Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, this building is now standing proud once more, offering visitors a glimpse back to Sydney's colonial past.

The building sits above one of the most historic sites in Australia, believed to be where the First Fleet arrivals stepped ashore in 1788.

From 1856 to 1859, the Mariners' Church was built at the site by the Bethel Seaman's Union. Founded in England and later established in Sydney, the Union was born from the widespread evangelical religious revival of the early 19th century, which included missionary activity among seaman.

The building was designed by John Bibb, a notable early Sydney architect, in the Victorian Free Classical style. It was made of well-executed sandstone with a slate roof.

During levelling of the site, the stonemasons union advised that they would reduce their working hours per day from twelve to eight. This was agreed to by the Bethel Union Trustees, making the site the first in the world to employ workers on an eight-hour day basis.

Fast forward to 2009 and Trustees of the present day Sydney Bethel Union have helped put the finishing touches to the restoration, returning the building's original stained-glass windows.

The story of this generosity, along with Bethel Union's long association with 100 George Street, will be captured for future visitors in a series of interpretation panels in and around the building.

Passers-by can also now see the extraordinary remains of a 150-year-old colonial street, which was discovered below the building during the recent refurbishment works.

Bethel Street, complete with a sandstone kerb, footpath and retaining wall is one of Sydney's early streetscapes, and until last year had been buried and forgotten for 100 years. Now it can be seen through a viewing panel along the side of the building.

The Mariner's Church is representative of an important part of Australia's maritime past, originally built for the spiritual health of sailors, and later to

Daniel from Pony Lounge and Dining

The Rocks

**40 RESTAURANTS,
11 PUBS, 12 BARS
EAT HAPPILY
EVER AFTER**

With fine food, fine wine, fine company and eight Chef's Hats, there's something to entice every palate in The Rocks.

THE ROCKS.COM