

# moore park rotunda

## A history of the Moore Park Rotunda

Rotundas, bandstands and kiosks are varieties of garden pavilions that were popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They served a practical purpose providing shelter and a focal point within a landscaped space. They are derived from the picturesque tradition that located small buildings or objects within the landscape to create views. Generally garden pavilions and rotundas draw on oriental traditions in their built form; the word 'kiosk' itself is Turkish. The hexagonal roof form that characterises these structures derives from the pagoda, a temple form which spread with Buddhism throughout India, China and Japan.

In the west, images of Chinese gardens led to the installation of an extravagant Chinese pagoda in Kew Gardens in London. This marked the beginning of their popularity during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The increase of leisure time in the Victorian period led to a growth in the use of public parks and the tradition of these buildings within public spaces became firmly entrenched.



In the early 1900s, Sydney's city parks were important and highly valued spaces. Between 1904 and 1911 the City Council erected a number of rotundas in city parks. In 1907, the City Council decided to erect a bandstand in Moore Park. The plans were prepared by the Government Architect in 1908 with an estimated cost of 355 pounds. The lowest tender of 338 pounds by W. J. Henley was accepted. The Rotunda was completed in 1909 and is a close contemporary of similar structures in other Sydney parks, such as Observatory Hill, Belmore Park, Hyde Park and the Wynyard Reserve.

By 1929 the building had fallen into a state of disrepair. It was enclosed and expanded in 1936 to serve functions related to the adjacent sports field added to Moore Park West. During this development, much of the original building design was removed or obscured. The aim of the reconstruction has been to return the rotunda to its original open air bandstand form and keep as much of its original character as possible.

Elements of the building that contribute to its historical significance, such as the original sandstone base, lined timber ceiling, and its general form, have been retained.

A significant part of the project involved removing the enclosing brick walls of the upper levels of the rotunda and reconstructing the original heritage bandstand as an area for use by visitors to the Parklands. This space has not been open to the public for some time. The toilet facilities which were attached to the Rotunda have been removed as they were a later addition to the building and were in poor condition. The sandstone from these walls has been restored and reused elsewhere in the project.

The lower level has been developed for potential future use as a café, bike hire or similar facility. The space also has an accessible toilet. The surrounding landscape has been upgraded, including a forecourt area and garden surrounds.

The refurbishment and possible inclusion of a business in the Rotunda was an improvement visitors rated as important in the most recent survey undertaken by Centennial Parklands. The development has restored a significant heritage element to Moore Park West and is in line with the Centennial Parklands Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

Reopened on 17 October 2004 by the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Chairman Professor John Niland AC with fanfare from the Australian Army Band based at Victoria Barracks.



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