

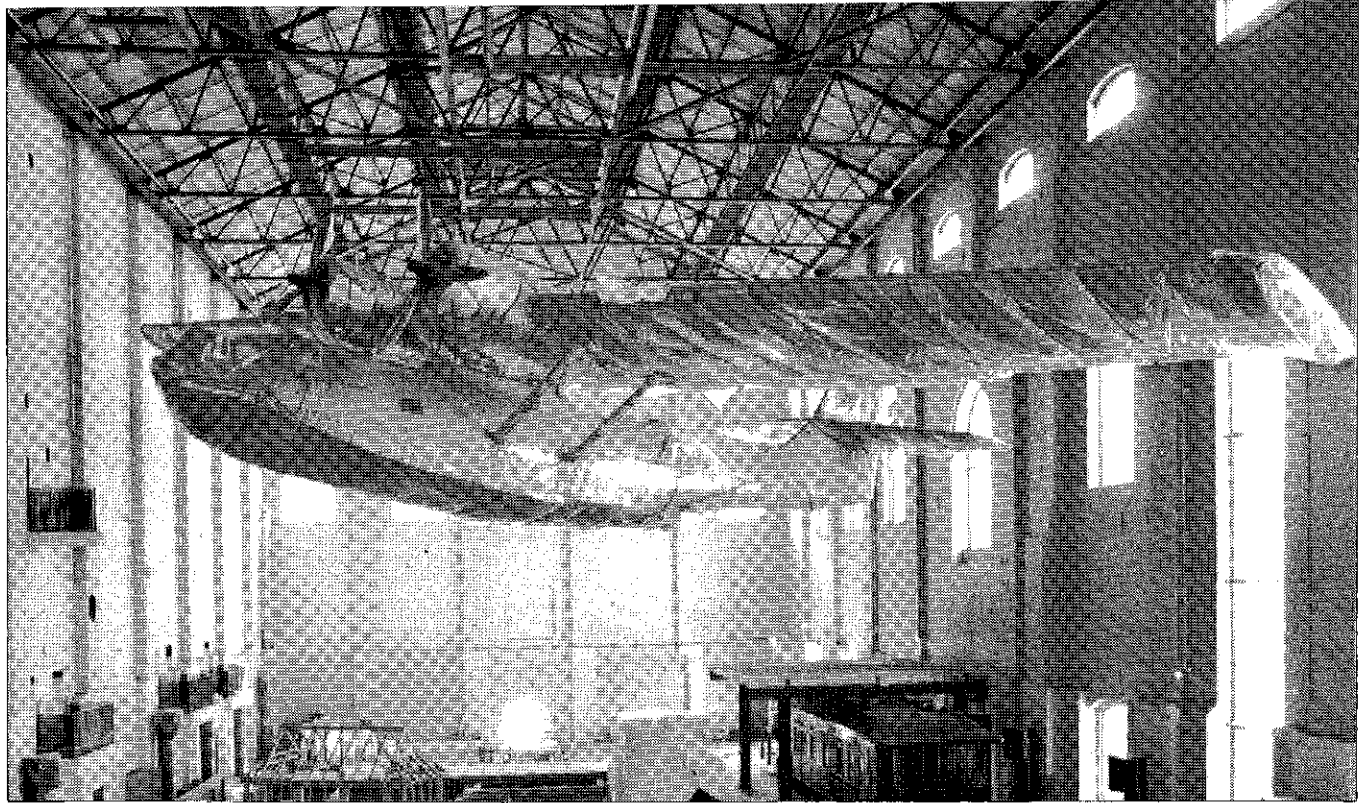


# WORKING

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**The magazine of the  
NSW Public Works  
Department**



The hanging of the Catalina flying boat from the roof of the Boiler Hall recently marked a major milestone in the completion of The Powerhouse Museum. With a wingspan of 32 metres and weighing 8 tonnes the flying boat is the largest and heaviest aircraft suspended in any museum in the world. It was flown by Sir Gordon (P. G.) Taylor on Australia's last great historic flight from Sydney to Valparaiso (Chile) in 1951. Below, locomotive 1243, built in Sydney in 1882, rests after 100 years of service as a passenger, goods, stock and mail train. The Governor's carriage beside it was built in 1891 and was used by the future King George IV and his Duchess during their visit in 1901.

## “POWERHOUSE TO THE PEOPLE”

**The Powerhouse Museum is destined to be Australia's largest and most exciting museum.**

In 1979, the New South Wales Government decided to adapt the old Ultimo Power Station to a spectacular museum of science, technology, history and decorative art.

The Public Works Department has designed and constructed the \$54 million project, with Lionel Glendenning as project architect.

The Department brought together many of its specialised skills for this complex project. Bold and innovative design together with skilled construction techniques will achieve completion on time.

Mr Glendenning saw the project as a great challenge: "I have always been interested in the link between architecture and the contextual environment.

"I believe that an architect is capable of producing much more interesting solutions working within the context — in this case, the 19th century power house buildings — than in isolation."

Mr Glendenning's idea certainly rang true in this instance, with the design of a museum which is definitely one of a kind,

but skilfully related to the old Powerhouse Buildings.

"The Ultimo power station generated electricity for Sydney's trams and trains for much of this century. The buildings, although run down, were of sturdy industrial construction and cavernous spaces," said Mr Glendenning.

"In a unique design, we combined the old brick facades of the building with new vaulted spaces reminiscent of the great exposition buildings of the 19th century."

The first part of the revival took shape in 1981 when the Stage 1 of the museum was completed. The converted tram depot was opened to allow the assembly of a large part of the museum's collection under one roof.

This project will allow the people of New South Wales, the rest of Australia and visitors to see for the first time the marvellous collections of the museum displayed in all their splendour in the new Powerhouse buildings."

"Original walls and soaring arched windows are being restored in the sturdy industrial buildings, while a spectacular

new gallery has been added on the western frontage."

This new building, 90 metres long, has curved roof vaults spanning 16 metres and rising more than 24 metres.

"The redeveloped Boiler Hall is large enough to have six aircraft suspended from the ceiling," said Mr Glendenning. "The entire museum will have 35,000 square metres of space, which is easily large enough to hold the entire Opera House."

The Department also strengthened the floor to a point where it would bear the weight of other exhibits, such as steam locomotives, part of the museum's transportation exhibit.

Among the many other exciting features of the museum are a recreated 1930s picture theatre incorporating art deco fittings rescued from the Queen Victoria building (which will show 30s movies and Movie-tone news clips), and educational rooms for school groups.

During the construction of the Power House project, 250 people have been employed on the site each day, and over 300 buildings contracts have been let.

The project has conserved one of Sydney's most important industrial landmarks, and brings one of the finest museums in the world to the city.