



Australian
Institute of
Architects

NSW

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

NSW Chapter
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Thursday 8 October 2020

The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP

The Hon. Don Harwin, MP

52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ministers

We are writing to you with the knowledge that 105 Miller Street, North Sydney (the MLC building) is currently under consideration for State Heritage listing, and is also the subject of a proposed Development Application for demolition and site redevelopment.

It is the Institute of Architects' firm position that the MLC building should be both listed and retained. North Sydney is a thriving, commercial hub, the home of many large corporations, and second only in size to the Sydney CBD. It's pathway to success began with one building – the MLC building.

Built in 1956, and modelled on Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Lever House (1952) in New York,¹ it was the largest building of its kind in Australia. It heralded the beginning of corporation architecture, an American style of high-rise which saw buildings seek to represent the strength and success of the companies they were built to accommodate, their logos proudly emblazoned on top.

The MLC building is demonstrative of a crucial moment in our State's cultural history. Its innovative curtain-wall and steel-frame construction, a rare example of post-war International Style, became a prototype for other key commercial buildings to follow.

The Institute of Architects understands the building, in its current state, needs significant works to ensure its viability as a commercial entity into the future. We also understand the desire for high-quality public plazas and meeting spaces to be retained and enhanced in this precinct. We perceive the retention of the MLC building is a unique opportunity to demonstrate how a significant and historic building can be integrated with new development to meet both these important aims. We believe, once again, the MLC building can be a precedent for other commercial buildings in NSW.

¹ Jahn, G, "A Guide to Sydney Architecture", Watermark Press, 1997.



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We welcome the opportunity to meet with you both to discuss our position, as raised in this letter, and we offer the Institute's support in providing further information and knowledge to assist in achieving high quality adaptive reuse outcomes for significant buildings in NSW, now and into the future.

Yours sincerely

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We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

cc: Mr Marcus Ray, Group Deputy Secretary Planning and Assessment, DPIE
Ms Alex O'Mara, Deputy Secretary Place Design and Public Space, DPIE
Mr Brett Whitworth, Deputy Secretary Greater Sydney, Place and Infrastructure, DPIE,
Member Heritage Council NSW