

# Sydney & Melbourne Buildings

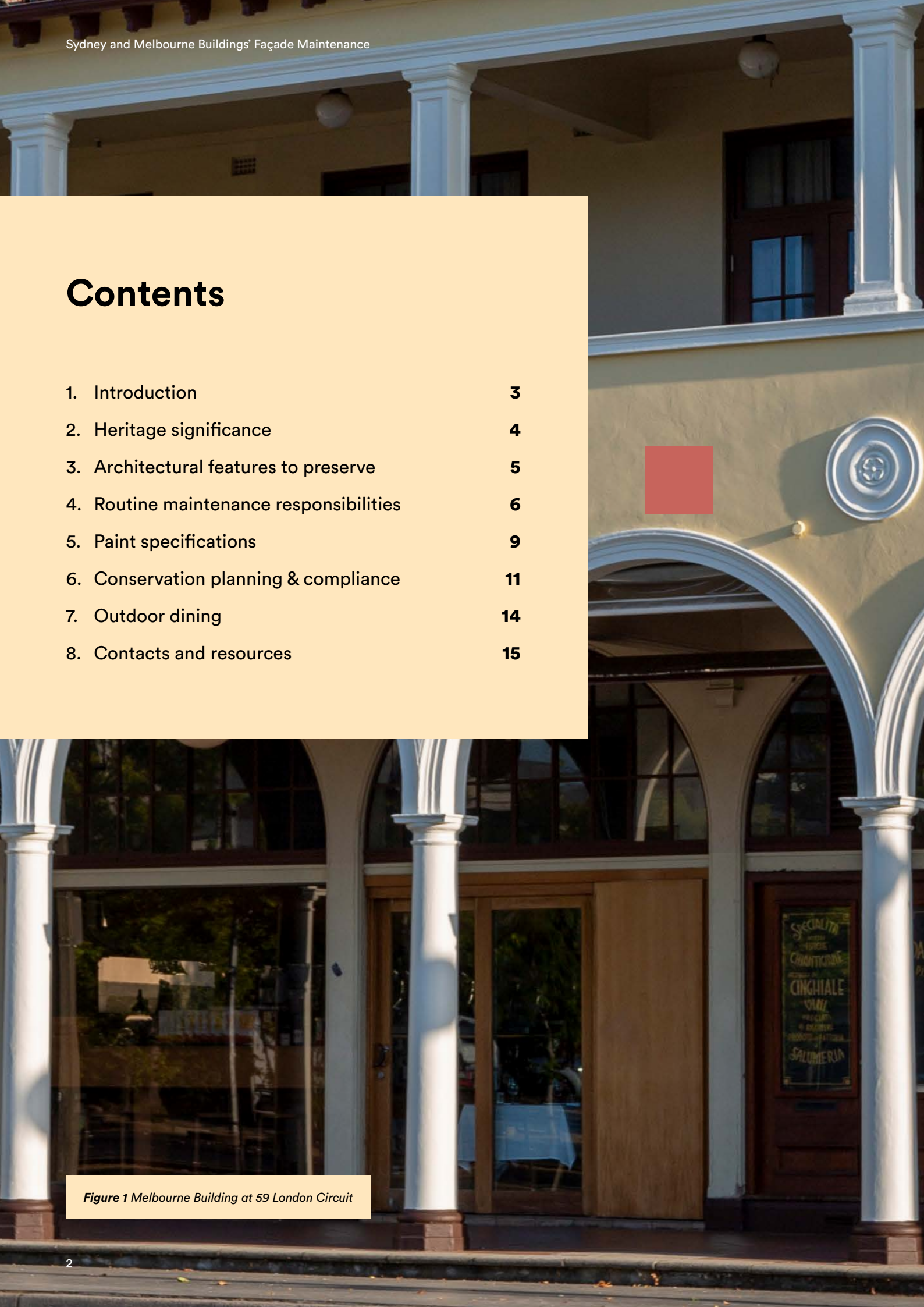
Facade maintenance guide.

May 2026



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*Figure 1 Melbourne Building at 59 London Circuit*



# 1. Introduction

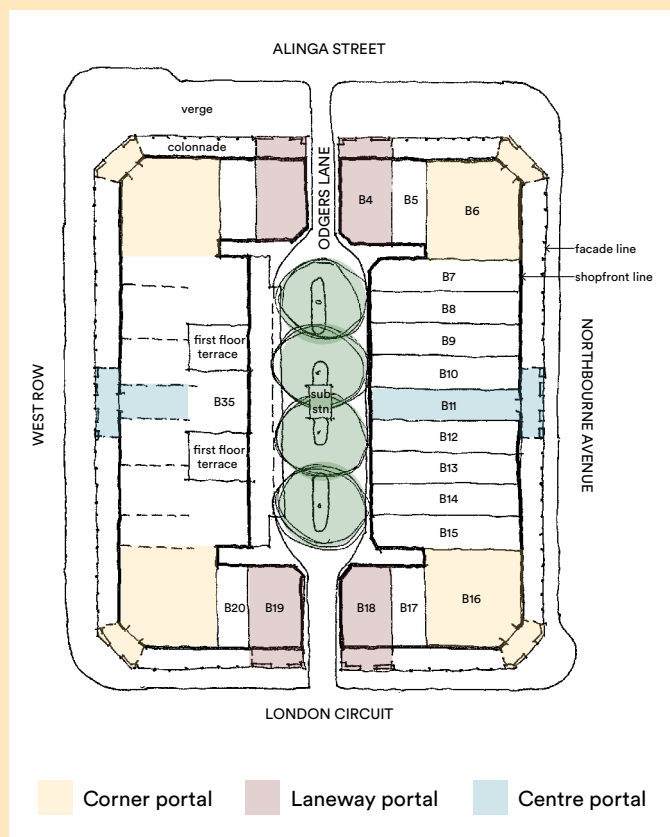


Figure 2 General layout plan of the Melbourne Building (CMP, p.29)

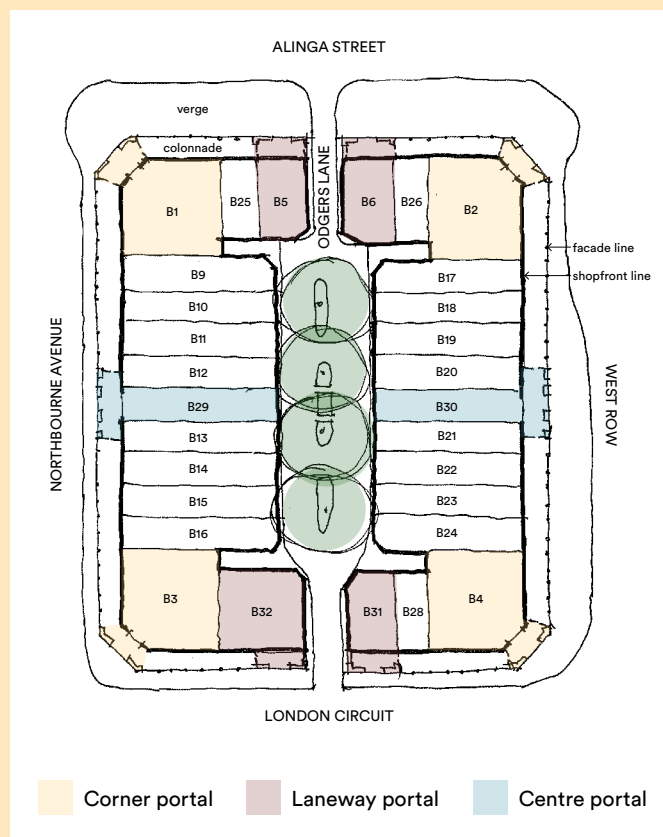


Figure 3 General layout plan of the Sydney Building (CMP, p. 30)

The Sydney and Melbourne Buildings are a significant part of Canberra’s commercial and architectural history, and their upkeep assists these iconic landmarks to remain vibrant and enduring. As a building owner, you play a key role in conserving their character and protecting the investment you’ve made.

The buildings’ approved Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and your lease agreement outline your obligations to maintain the condition of your building(s), in line with standards for heritage structures and commercial buildings within the City Centre. This includes a requirement for building owners and property managers to conserve the ‘intrinsic features’ of the buildings, such as the architectural style, original materials and decorative elements.

Under Division 2.9 of the [City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017 \(CRASLA Act\)](#), the **Draft Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting** was endorsed by the Chief Minister in October 2023 to guide painting works to restore the façades of the Sydney and Melbourne buildings. Following this, a [Disallowable Instrument](#) was passed in March 2025 which requires owners of the Sydney and Melbourne buildings to maintain their façades in accordance with the approved Revitalisation Plan. The final approved version of the Revitalisation Plan (February 2025) is available on the [City Renewal Authority website](#).

This guide is your practical reference for routine care, graffiti removal, approved colour scheme, and compliance with heritage requirements for maintaining the Sydney and Melbourne buildings’ exterior façades. Use it to plan maintenance confidently and keep your building looking its best for years to come.

## 2. Heritage significance



**Figure 4** Part of the Sydney Building under construction in 1928. Photo: Archives ACT.

The Sydney and Melbourne Buildings are among Canberra's most iconic heritage-listed structures, recognised for their distinctive architectural style and historical significance. Designed in the 1920s by renowned architect Sir John Sulman, these buildings exemplify the Inter-War Mediterranean style, a rare architectural expression in Australian commercial development. Characterised by smooth rendered façades, arched colonnades, and terracotta tiled roofs, the buildings reflect Sulman's vision of a cohesive civic identity inspired by classical European influences.

What makes these buildings particularly unique is their development model: constructed block-by-block by individual leaseholders to a single plan. Overall, this creates a unified aesthetic. Today, the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings hold landmark status in Canberra City, framing the entrance to Civic along Northbourne Avenue and serving as enduring symbols of the city's planned origins.



### 3. Architectural features to preserve

The Sydney and Melbourne Buildings are distinguished by their finely crafted architectural features, which contribute significantly to their heritage value and visual appeal. **The Sydney and Melbourne Buildings (SMB) Façade Restoration Program** aims to conserve the external rendered façades, including arched colonnades and decorative mouldings. The purpose of the Program was to reinstate a consistent finish across the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, improving the presentation in a way that is befitting of their significance and sympathetic to the design principles established in the 1920s.

Internally, the buildings feature central courtyards and lightwells that provide natural ventilation and daylight to surrounding rooms — a thoughtful design approach that supports both comfort and sustainability.

In 2022-23, City Renewal Authority upgraded Odgers and Verity Lanes with new lighting, paving, planting, waste enclosures and event infrastructure to support daytime and night-time activities. The upgrades provide opportunities for businesses to trade in the lanes, host events and spaces for community to enjoy.

With the Façade Restoration Program concluding in December 2025, the purpose of this booklet is to provide information that assists building owners, tenants and property managers with maintaining their façades to improve the longevity of the painting works and their enhanced visual appearance for many years to come.



**Figure 5** Melbourne Building at Odgers Lane entrance on London Circuit, before and after painting works

## 4. Routine maintenance responsibilities

Regular façade care is essential to maintaining the buildings' appearance and heritage character. Maintenance, cleaning and timely removal of graffiti from the external façades, within the colonnades and shopfronts will assist with keeping the buildings well presented.

### Rendered surfaces

Rendered façade surfaces should be regularly inspected for peeling paint, cracks, or discolouration. Damaged paint finish or surfaces should be repaired and repainted as soon as practicable using the approved colours in the **Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting**. The colour scheme is also provided in Section 5 of this resource.

Damaged and cracked render has the potential to allow water to enter the masonry walls which can cause premature deterioration of the paint finish and more serious damage to the façades. Water is most likely to enter masonry on horizontal surfaces, such as windowsills. Maintaining the render and paint finish in good condition in these locations should be prioritised. Cracked render should be repaired in a timely manner to limit potential damage to the façades.



**Figure 6** Cracked render on Melbourne building prior to painting works



**Figure 7** Peeling paint on Sydney building prior to painting works



## **Graffiti removal**

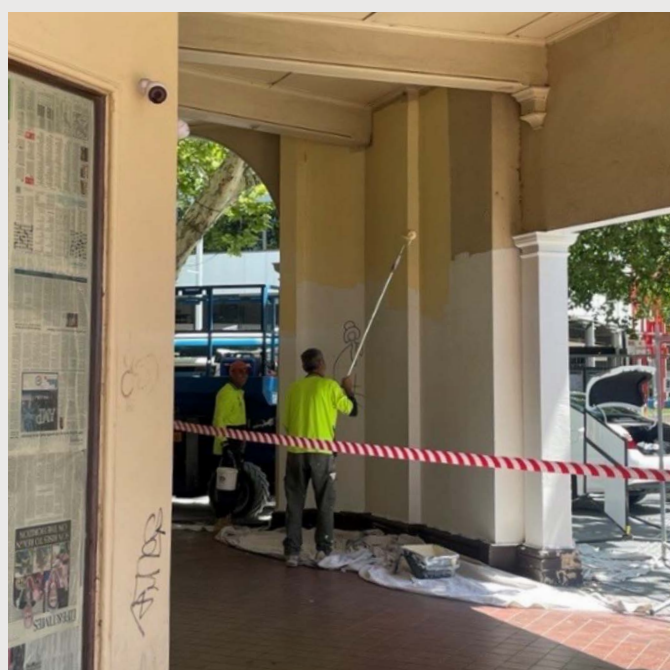
Timely graffiti removal helps to deter graffiti over time. In line with your lease agreement and the requirements of the CRASLA Act to maintain your facades (see Section 1), graffiti must be removed within two weeks.

Dulux advises that the most effective graffiti removal without damaging the paint finish is to paint over the graffiti with the same paint product and colour.

All rendered façades are to be re-painted in **two (2) coats of Emer-Clad Façade Matt**, in the same colour as the surrounding surface (typically Dulux Tangent or Dulux White Dune). A single coat does not provide enough coverage for removing graffiti.

All other areas – shopfronts, ceilings underneath colonnades and timber elements – can be repainted in Dulux Weathershield External Low Sheen.

The approved colours to be used for painting over graffiti are specified in Section 5 and the Revitalisation Plan.



**Figure 8** Graffiti removal on Sydney Building at 122 Alinga St

## **Repairs**

Before undertaking repairs to rendered surfaces, ensure the underlying cause of the damage has been identified and addressed (for example, leaking pipes). Building and render repairs and maintenance should be carried out as soon as practicable by a suitably qualified contractor.

Waterproofing membranes (for example to balconies) should be regularly inspected for signs of deterioration. Where water damage is evident, in particular to the colonnade ceiling, soffits/eaves, or the walls adjacent to the first-floor balcony decks, the efficacy of waterproofing should be verified and resolved where necessary.

All joint sealants should be checked regularly to ensure no cracking is evident and allowing water ingress. Particular attention should be given to critical areas and where different substrates meet, e.g. above door openings and windows, where walls meet soffit lines and where light fittings have been attached to walls. Any deteriorated or damaged sealant should be removed and replaced as soon as it is apparent.

## **Cleaning**

Use a soft bristle broom with a neutral pH cleaner or detergent in warm water to clean the painted façades. Rinse off thoroughly with clean water under a low-pressure spray.

Dulux provides a recommended approach to cleaning exterior surfaces coated in matt paint finish on their [website](#).

## Roofing, drainage and fixtures

Effective drainage is critical to protecting the building's exterior. Any leaks from roofing, gutters, downpipes or fixtures should be rectified as soon as possible to limit damage to the paint finish and rendered façades.

Roofing should be inspected routinely for broken tiles, deteriorated flashings, and compromised waterproofing membranes to prevent water ingress and structural issues. Where water damage is evident to the soffits/eaves, the roof tiles should be checked and repaired to prevent ongoing damage.

Gutters and downpipes must be regularly cleared of debris to avoid overflow and staining; and routinely checked for deterioration and leaks. If any gutters require replacement, the original Ogee profile should be used.

Water leaks have been observed from some light fixtures, causing damage to the paint and rendered surface below them. Light shades on the external façades are white glass 'ball' fittings (typically 400mm) with white metal collars fixed onto the flat rendered surface or at the centre of a roundel. If the roof tiles, gutters or light fixtures need to be replaced, refer to the CMP or contact ACT Heritage for sourcing suitable replacements.



**Figure 9** Gutters, downpipes and light fixtures on the Melbourne Building facade at 76-78 Alinga St

The **Façade Condition Report** provides additional advice for render and drainage repairs on the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings.



# 5. Paint specifications

## Paint product

The paint specification was developed in consultation with the paint manufacturer Dulux. **Emer-Clad Façade Matt** was selected for the SMB Façade Restoration Program to improve the longevity of painting works, based on the following recommendations:

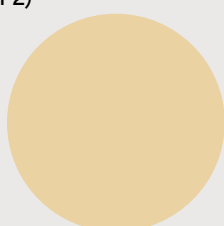
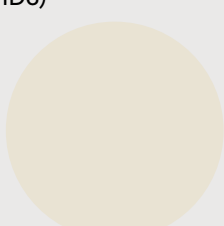
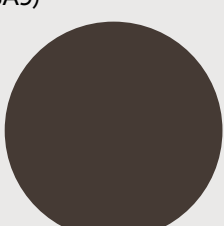
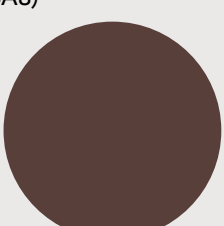
- Emer-Clad Façade is more durable for painting rendered surfaces than other external paint products, such as Dulux Weathershield.
- Emer-Clad Façade is moisture resistant and designed to have some breathability. This is particularly important for horizontal surfaces such as window and balcony sills, cornices, etc which are likely to be the most susceptible to water ingress.

- Emer-Clad Façade is a thick, flexible coating with good crack-bridging properties suitable for applying to rendered surfaces that display cracking and conditions consistent with buildings of this age and type.
- The Matt finish achieves a granular, non-shiny painted surface which reflects the original appearance and honours the buildings' heritage.

The **Dulux Paint Specifications** and **Façade Condition Report** provide specifications and advice for repainting the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings and are available on the [City Renewal Authority website](#).

## Approved colour scheme

The **Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting** specifies the approved colour scheme for painting works on the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings. These colours are aligned with the colours endorsed by ACT Heritage in the buildings' [CMP](#).

Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour
Dulux Tangent (S14F2)	Dulux White Dune (SW1D6)	Dulux Leather Case (S03A9)	Dulux Vixen (P05A8)
			
Element	Element	Element	Element
<p><b>Rendered elements:</b> external walls (excluding items identified separately below)</p> <p><b>Timber/fiber cement elements:</b> sheeted over windows to laneway returns</p> <p><b>Metal elements:</b> downpipes</p>	<p><b>Rendered elements:</b> columns (including capitals), portal pilasters (including capitals), portal friezes, reveals to portals, portal nameplates, mouldings, capitals, spandrels, bulls-eye</p> <p><b>Timber/fiber cement elements:</b> eaves linings (soffits)</p>	<p><b>Rendered elements:</b> column bases and rendered skirting to portals</p>	<p><b>Rendered elements:</b> rafters</p> <p><b>Metal elements:</b> eaves gutters</p>

**Figure 10** The approved colour scheme for the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings (p. 12, Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting)



Figure 11 Typical elevation of part of the external street façade showing the approved paint colours (p. 13, Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting)

## 6. Conservation planning & compliance

### Sydney and Melbourne Buildings CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Figure 12 Cover page of the CMP

Building owners of the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings are encouraged to refer to the approved Conservation Management Plan (CMP) a foundational resource for all maintenance and repair activities. The CMP outlines the heritage significance of the buildings and provides clear guidance on appropriate conservation methods, materials, and priorities. It helps ensure that any work undertaken supports the long-term conservation of the buildings' architectural and historical values.

In addition to consulting the CMP, owners must coordinate with **ACT Heritage** for any proposed

changes or significant works. This includes alterations to façades, structural upgrades, or modifications that may affect the heritage fabric. ACT Heritage provides advice and approvals to ensure compliance with the CMP, heritage legislation and best practice conservation standards. Further information, including access to the CMP and approval processes, is available on the [City Renewal Authority](#) and [ACT Heritage](#) websites.

For further advice on heritage conservation and compliance, contact ACT Heritage at [heritage@act.gov.au](mailto:heritage@act.gov.au).

## Maintenance records

Documentation is key to tracking maintenance and ensuring compliance with the CMP and any repairs or works approved by ACT Heritage and the City and Environment Directorate. This will help to make maintenance activities easier over time, and support outcomes that are compliant with the heritage requirements for the buildings.

An inspection and maintenance schedule should be determined in accordance with **AS4654.2 2012**. All observations and actions taken should be recorded in a maintenance logbook, including date of first detection, severity of issue, location, percentage of area affected and photographs. The steps and methods undertaken and materials used to rectify the identified issue should be recorded, along with details of the contractor who did the work.

## Key Maintenance steps for Sydney & Melbourne buildings

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|----------|--|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b><i>Render repairs</i></b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspect rendered surfaces regularly for peeling paint, cracks or discolouration</li><li>• Prioritise horizontal surfaces (e.g. window/balcony sills) and address the cause (e.g. leaking pipes) before undertaking render repairs</li><li>• Repair and repaint using approved colours from the Revitalisation Plan – Façade Painting (see page 9)</li></ul> |
| <hr/>    |  |   |
| <b>2</b> | <b><i>Routine cleaning</i></b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean painted surfaces using a soft bristle broom and warm water with a neutral pH cleaner or detergent</li><li>• Rinse with clean water using a low-pressure spray</li></ul>   |
| <hr/>    |  |   |
| <b>3</b> | <b><i>Graffiti removal</i></b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do NOT use harsh chemicals; paint over graffiti with the same paint product and colour</li><li>• Apply two coats of Emer-Clad Façade Matt for rendered surfaces</li><li>• Remove graffiti within 2 weeks</li></ul>  |
| <hr/>    |  |   |
| <b>4</b> | <b><i>Roofing, gutters and downpipes</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check roof tiles, flashings and waterproofing membranes regularly</li><li>• Clear gutters and downpipes of debris; repair leaks immediately</li></ul>   |
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## Permits and approvals

As the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings are situated within a public space setting, approvals are required to undertake repairs and painting works on the façades. Contractors will need to obtain the following approvals prior to undertaking any works on the buildings.



*Figure 13 Use of work platforms on public land and temporary traffic management for painting works on Melbourne Building at Odgers Lane entrance*

### **Temporary Traffic Management Plan (TTMP)**

A TTMP will need to be prepared to:

- direct pedestrians around infrastructure (e.g. work platforms) placed on public footpaths; and
- direct vehicular traffic at the entrances of Odgers or Verity Lanes, if applicable to your property.

The TTMP will need to be submitted to **City Services – Roads ACT** for approval.

### **Permit to place an object on public land**

A temporary permit to place an object on public land, e.g. fencing, scissor lift or elevated work platform, will be required prior to undertaking painting works.

When applying for this permit, you may need to include your approved TTMP.

The application will need to be submitted to **City Services – Licensing and Compliance** for approval.

### **Who to contact**

If you require further advice or assistance regarding approvals, licenses and permits, please contact the **Access Canberra Business Assist Team** on (02) 6205 4400 or via email [ACBusinessTeam@act.gov.au](mailto:ACBusinessTeam@act.gov.au).

## 7. Outdoor dining



**Figure 15** Outdoor dining at Brew Nation in Sydney Building

City Renewal encourages hospitality venues to consider the heritage context of the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings when planning for outdoor dining. Structures such as pergolas detract from the visual aesthetic of the facades. City Renewal supports the use of umbrellas and awnings to shelter outdoor dining areas that complement the buildings and create safe and welcoming public spaces.

Outdoor dining is not permitted under the colonnades (unless exempt due to adjacent construction or maintenance activities), as these areas need to be maintained as a public thoroughfare.





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