



Corm was presented by BHP Pty Ltd to Newcastle City Council to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of City Hall in December 1979. The 1.5m tall bronze sculpture was inspired in both title and form by the fleshy stem found in plants. The sculpture was created by artist Marilyn McGrath who has described the work as an organic sculpture designed to provide a link between the constructed environment and nature. McGrath was born in Sydney in 1939. She was training to be a registered nurse at the Royal Newcastle Hospital when she began attending evening classes in Sculpture and Drawing. McGrath went on to teach at the Newcastle Technical College Art School, and her work can be found in both public and private collections across Australia, including The Art Gallery of NSW.



Newcastle City Hall has been at the centre of Newcastle's cultural and political life since it was completed in 1929. The first actions to establish a new town hall were recorded in 1888 but a final site and design for the hall was not agreed upon until 1925. Newcastle City Hall was designed by acclaimed architect Henry Eli White. The building contains a concert hall that seats 844 people, a dining room and server, office spaces and the Council Chambers. The Hall is constructed of Sydney sandstone, adorned with Roman Doric and Ionic columns and dominated by its tower and four sided three metre diameter clock. City Hall has performed a variety of roles in the decades since its construction. During the Second World War it was the nerve centre for the civilian response to an attack on the city and hosted free concerts to international and local troops seeking entertainment. During the 1970s Newcastle City Council Offices were moved off site and replaced with conference spaces. The City Hall continues to host concerts, ceremonies and meetings of the elected Newcastle City Council today.



3 City Administration Centre
Known by many Novocastrians as The Roundhouse or The Champagne Cork, this building was constructed to accommodate the various departments of Newcastle City Council in 1977 as the City Hall could no longer accommodate the growing workforce. A roughly triangular parcel of land next to the City Hall was chosen to construct a purpose built administration centre. With deep recessed windows to cut down on heat from the sun, the building's precast concrete columns were finished to match the colour and texture of the City Hall stone work. The basement carpark spirals down from street level and had to be constructed like an underground dam, due to its proximity to the harbour. The water table beneath the building is very high and special construction techniques had to be used to prevent the water logged earth from collapsing into the excavation. It continues to support the city as Newcastle City Council City Administration Centre.

4 Newcastle Art Gallery
Newcastle Art Gallery was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Friday 11 March 1977. It was the culmination of decades of work to realise the belief that Newcastle, a city known for industry, could also be famous for having the best art gallery in the country. Newcastle Art Gallery is a pioneer. It was the first purpose built regional art gallery in Australia. With its sharp geometric shapes and exposed concrete walls the gallery reflects the Brutalist aesthetic that flourished in the decades after the Second World War. The Gallery has collected over 6000 works since its inception, and is considered one of the most significant public collections in the country. Today the gallery hosts a variety of exhibitions drawn both from its own collection and from other institutions via travelling exhibitions.

Newcastle Architecture

The architecture of Newcastle is defined by a rich diversity of styles that reflect the city's prosperity and growth throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Explore buildings that have acted as cultural, political and economic icons for the people of Newcastle. Discover the works by architects not just of local, but national and international significance.

This walking tour begins at City Hall, which has been at the centre of Newcastle cultural and political life since it was completed in 1929. It ends at the Civic Theatre, Newcastle's premier live theatre venue and one of the last great remaining examples of picture palace architecture in the state.

Newcastle City Hall
290 King Street, Newcastle
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, closed public holidays
www.newcastlecityhall.com.au

Newcastle Art Gallery
Laman Street, Cooks Hill
Tuesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm, closed Monday
www.nag.org.au

Newcastle Region Library
Ground Floor, 15 Laman Street, Newcastle
Monday to Friday 9.30am – 8pm
Saturday 9.30am – 2pm
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/services/newcastle_library



WALKING TOUR

Newcastle Architecture

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www.visitnewcastle.com.au/attractions/walks-and-rides



Music, Literature and Art 1957, Paul Beadle, carved sandstone, 2 panels, 270.0 x 75.0cm (each) Newcastle City Council collection

5 Music, Literature and Art

Paul Beadle's relief sculptures adorn the entrance to the Newcastle War Memorial Cultural Centre. His heavily stylised work is designed to fit into tight spaces. The two reliefs show aspects of music, literature and art. Beadle included a unique self-portrait carving a male bust in the top of the right entry. The works reflect the community's desire to be a place of creativity and learning.

English born Beadle was the head of the Art School at Newcastle Technical College from 1951 until 1957. He taught and exhibited widely in Australia before migrating to New Zealand in 1961.



Baptist Tabernacle, Laman St, Newcastle

Photograph courtesy of Newcastle Region Library collection 163 000108

6 Baptist Tabernacle

The Baptist Tabernacle was designed by one of Newcastle's most prominent and popular architects of the late 19th and early 20th century, Frederick Menkens.

Constructed from 1889 to 1890, the buildings elaborate painted plaster neo-classical Corinthian façade was inspired by the Spurgeon Metropolitan Tabernacle in London.

It was threatened with compulsory demolition during the planning of the neighbouring Newcastle War Memorial Cultural Centre in the 1940s but both legal arrangements and the Tabernacle's trustees prevented the building's destruction.



Demolition of the Worker Club, December 1989

Courtesy of the Newcastle Herald

The Earthquake

The Earthquake that struck Newcastle at 10.27am on Thursday, 28 December, 1989 was one of the most serious natural disasters in Australia's history.

Registering 5.5 on the Richter scale, the earthquake claimed 13 lives in total. In addition to the nine people killed at the Newcastle Worker's Club three people were killed in Beaumont Street, Hamilton and one person died of shock. A further 160 people were hospitalised. The death toll could have been far worse. At this time Newcastle's CBD was a dominant commercial and retail hub. Thousands of people would normally flock to the CBD to take advantage of

post-Christmas sales, but a public transport strike meant that fewer people were in town than usual.

50,000 buildings were damaged and approximately 40,000 of these were homes.

300 buildings had to be demolished. 1,000 people lost their homes and the damage bill was estimated to be about four billion Australian dollars.

Novocastrians found that the earthquake altered not only the built environment but also their sense of community identity. The Earthquake, and the devastation it brought to Newcastle's CBD became a catalyst for decay, change and rebirth that continues to influence the city today.



Frederick B. Menkens

Photograph courtesy of Newcastle Region Library collection 104 000009

Menkens

Frederick B. Menkens was born in Germany in 1855. Few could claim to have had as diverse and striking an impact on the look and character of Newcastle as this creative and versatile architect.

His first trade was bricklaying but he went on to study Architecture at the Royal Polytechnicum at Hanover. He migrated to Australia in 1878. In 1881 he set up an architectural practice in Maitland for a year before moving to Newcastle. Here his practice flourished, and Menkens would go on to design over 100 buildings in the city and throughout the Hunter.

Menkens developed a reputation amongst local builders as uncompromising and demanding. Having learnt bricklaying as a trade, it is said he would remove his hat and coat, snatch the trowel from a bricklayer and proceed

to demonstrate the proper technique for laying bricks if what was being produced did not meet his standards. Menkens even spent time in prison due to his relationship with one builder, sued in the Supreme Court over a dispute with the contractor regarding the quality of their product.

Menkens died aged 55 from cirrhosis on 10 March 1910. His legacy can be seen across Newcastle in the buildings he designed.

His skills as an architect and his ability to adapt his style to meet the needs of his clients are well demonstrated here on Laman Street. Menkens not only designed the Baptist Tabernacle, but in the very same year designed the very different Gothic influenced St Andrews Presbyterian Church on the corner of Laman and Auckland Street.

7 NESCA House

Newcastle City Council began to generate electricity for street lighting in 1890. Within two years it was increasing electrification and a district supply was established. By 1937, the Newcastle Electricity Supply Council Administration was providing over 87 million Kilowatt hours of power and had outgrown its office space in City Hall.

The Council decided to construct an administration centre for the electricity department on the parcel of land next to the City Hall. Emil Sodersteen, the architect responsible for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, was chosen to produce the design.

Sodersteen's new building was designed to complement the City Hall, and was constructed from similar sandstone. Despite its consideration of the grand and traditional building next door, NESCA House demonstrates strong influence from Art Deco and European Modernist styling.

The building housed a demonstration theatre, showroom, administrative and business offices and staff accommodation. It opened in 1938 and performed a variety of roles until The University of Newcastle took over the site in 1995 and it became known as University House.

8 The Workers Club

The Workers Club forms the legacy of one of the most prominent cultural, political and social hubs in Newcastle, as well as being the site of one of the city's greatest tragedies.

The Newcastle Trades Hall Council Workers Club otherwise known as the 'Red Inn' and 'The Newcastle Workers Club' opened on this site on the 8th of October 1948, to prepare and teach skills for workers in preparation for the revolution.

During the 1950s and 60s the club played an important role in the local Labour movement, and acted as a platform for organising and staging community events.

By the 1980s it was a popular live music venue. On December 28th, 1989, the Workers Club was due to host a performance by popular band Crowded House, with thousands expected to attend. Hours before, however, at 10.27 am, the city was devastated by an earthquake. Parts of the Workers Club collapsed resulting in nine deaths.

The new Workers Club building was officially opened in 1992 by Prime Minister Paul Keating.

12 Steggas Emporium

Built in 1886, this row of seven shops represents one of Frederick Menkens' earliest designs in Newcastle.

The shops are typical of Victorian commercial street architecture of the period. Menkens added a touch of flair by putting a dramatic stress on one of the central bays by giving it a crowning triangular pediment surmounted by a raised parapet and broken segmental pediment. Unfortunately this feature has been removed, along with the original single story veranda.

Steggas, with seven separate businesses occupying the same building, was a forerunner of today's department stores. The shopping habits of Novocastrians changed in the 1880s due to the introduction of efficient public transport networks, including the city's tramways and the Great Northern Railway, which allowed people from outlying areas to travel with ease into the city centre for shopping and recreation.



Miss Porter's House

9 Miss Porter's House

'Miss Porter's House', a distinctive Edwardian Terrace, was the lifelong home of Ella and Hazel Porter.

The Porter family built this house in 1910. The building and its contents are representative of the middle-class urban lifestyle of the early twentieth century. It retains Edwardian and 1940s period furnishings, unique stencilled ceilings and a collection of thousands of objects acquired by the sisters over the decades.

Before she passed away in the mid-1990s Hazel bequeathed the house and its contents to the National Trust of Australia (NSW) who now maintain the property and open its doors to the public.

10 Bank Corner

The acutely angled intersection of Hunter and Hannel Streets was occupied by a bank for over 100 years. The previous building stood for 50 years before being replaced by the one before you in 1940.

Described in the press at the time of its opening as a simple modernised version of the Classical Traditional, the building also has Art Deco influences in the detail and decorative elements.

The building was a branch of the Bank of New South Wales.

11 Art School and Trades Hall

This building was opened in 1896. Generations of Novocastrians enrolled here to learn trades and skills, as it hosted courses on everything from free hand drawing to steam engine maintenance.

The building was designed by W.E. Kemp, who also designed the Sydney Technical College in Ultimo. Federation Romanesque in style, the College's frame is constructed from Red Cedar. The building is asymmetrical, with the right side being larger than the left.

The tradition of training on this site continues today. The TAFE Hunter Institute Newcastle Art School is a combination of the 1896 Art School building, the 1895 Trades Hall building and a 1997 extension that joins the two architectural highlights into one.



Inside the Civic Theatre

13 Civic Theatre

Dominating Newcastle's Civic Precinct is the Civic Theatre, built in 1929.

The theatre was designed by Henry Eli White, the same architect responsible for the City Hall. White was one of the most successful theatre architects in the country with Sydney's Capitol and State Theatres also to his name.

Originally designed internally in a dramatic Spanish Baroque style for both cinema and live theatre, the building went through many modifications and operators. By the 1960s the Civic was in decline, due to competition from television, and its patronage fell by 63%. It closed in 1973 and Newcastle Council made the decision to transform the Civic into a dedicated live theatre venue. This decision saved one of the last great remaining examples of picture palace architecture in the state.

Today the theatre is Newcastle's premier performance venue, hosting a diverse program of shows including dance, drama, comedy, cabaret, film and children's shows.