

Darcy St upgrade

Parramatta

Parramatta City Council engaged Lymesmith to make proposals for the temporary upgrade of seven buildings along Darcy Street in the Parramatta CBD. The buildings' scheduled demolition had been indefinitely postponed (due to the Global Financial Crisis) and the buildings were becoming dilapidated. In addition, some tenants vacated due to the uncertainty of their tenure which exacerbated the run down appearance of the street.

The Council's brief required low cost proposals to maintain the civic standards appropriate for the prominent city gateway adjacent to the Parramatta Transport Interchange. Particular focus was on strategies to activate the street. Lymesmith invited landscape architect Katy Svalbe of Amber Road Design and graphic designer Emma Davidson of Unconundrum to collaborate on the Darcy Street proposals, which initially covered street furniture, lighting, signage and planting alongside the façade repainting.

Situated between the tree-lined historic Church Street pedestrian mall and the huge, highly designed environment of the Westfield Shopping Centre and Cinema Complex, dilapidated Darcy Street needed a makeover to remain viable and attractive to the public. This street activation project creates a memorable identity for Darcy Street, which is unique within the Parramatta CBD.

The temporary nature of the project (less than 10 year lifespan) enabled Parramatta City Council to embrace and implement the bold and colourful approach developed by Lymesmith.

Stage one saw the rear and side lanes

completely decluttered of extraneous structures and repainted. A portion of the landscaping proposals were also implemented.

Stage two tackled the shop facades and street frontage. The old awnings were removed due to structural weakness and replaced with bright yellow, retractable canvas blinds. New hand painted shop and wayfinding signage match the building colours and give the whole street a unified quirky and vibrant facelift.

The design concept was developed and tested using 1:50 painted models of all the building.

The seven buildings in the street present a diversity of architectural form and style. The diagonal lines that cut across each façade work to unify them. The use of colour has caused the mishmash of architecture styles to recede and a new sense of place and identity has emerged.

The colour palette is inspired by both the heritage buildings in Parramatta and by spices purchased in the excellent Asian grocery shops nearby. It develops the common ground between historic paint pigmentation and the spices that have travelled the world and found a home in Parramatta.

The warm toned palette complements 30 Darcy St (which is also facing demolition) and significant heritage buildings nearby. It represents a goodbye gesture to an old fashioned palette as the city becomes more and more dominated by cool tones, steel and glass buildings. However the bold application and juxtaposition of the colours ensures that Darcy St is going out with a bang and not a whimper.





☐ Resene Moscato

Architectural specifier:

Lymesmith www.lymesmith.com.au

Building contractor: SB Design

Client: Parramatta City Council
www.parracity.nsw.gov.au

Landscape design: Katy Svalbe
www.amberroaddesign.com.au

Painting contractor - steel frontage:

Craftwork www.craftwork.com.au

Painting contractor - rear and side lanes:

Dukes www.dukespainting.com.au

Photographer: Giddy Doug Riley,

Giddy Design and Photography
www.giddy.net.au

Sign painter: Roger Robinson

www.artwrx.com.au

Signage design: Ohlogic

www.ohlogic.com.au



Resene colours matched to spice and food colours are: **Resene Dixie Chick** - turmeric, **Resene Twine** - dried ginger, **Resene Dallas** - Chinese 5 spice, **Resene Rocky Road** - garam masala, **Resene Miso** - fennel, **Resene Desert** - cayenne pepper, **Resene Blackout** - peppercorns, **Resene Florentine Pink** - dried squid, **Resene Roxy** - dried squid, **Resene Burnt Sienna** - sumac, **Resene Dynamite** - chilli, **Resene Chamois** - dried chestnut and **Resene Envy** - curry leaf.

Walls, doors and window frames are finished in these hues with signage fascias in Resene Blackout. More Resene colour was added to complete signage and shop numbers using **Resene Lumbersider** for general wall space and **Resene Enamacryl** for window graphics in hues of Resene Envy, **Resene Green Smoke**, **Resene Double**

Alabaster, Resene Golden Dream, Resene Regal Blue and Resene Bianca.

Colour is a powerful agent for change in the urban environment. This project has assisted Parramatta City Council to attract significant new business tenants into shorter term leases while the area is undergoing significant transformation.

The repainted street has attracted new uses with a vibrant laneway café opening and night time food and music events have made use of the decluttered rear lane.

Artist interventions including urban greening experiments in gaps between the buildings and street art commissions are developing. The PopUp Parramatta program has given low cost studio and retail space to artists and new businesses as part of the revitalisation strategy.



