PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

POLICY DOCUMENT

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Placemaking and Public Art Policy

Realise the possibilities...

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL
Serving Our Community

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Place Making and Public Art Policy

Introduction

Penrith is recognised as a Regional City and the principal service centre for outer Western Sydney and the Central West. To fully realise Penrith's potential as a Regional City, Council recognises cultural development and creativity as critical to the City's economic vitality, social equity and environmental sustainability.

Council works towards the highest standards of design and sustainability in architecture, urban design and the public domain to contribute to improving and maintaining the character, distinctiveness and quality of the varied urban, rural and natural places across the City.

To maintain and expand its cultural vitality the City requires a collaborative design and implementation approach to integrate place making and public art into the City's urban environment, public domain, buildings and facilities. This will assist in ensuring the City's growth and revitalisation contributes to our evolving identity, economic**,** intellectual and cultural development as well as the wellbeing of the people of Penrith.

The policy also recognises that public art is one tool to support place making. Others include urban design, activation and community projects.

Purpose

This policy aims to promote a greater understanding of the benefits of place making and public art in the development of a sustainable and vibrant city. The policy also complements the sections on public art in Council's Development Control Plan 2010. This section is under C8 Public Domain in the DCP.

In particular the policy provides guidance to assist Council, developers and key stakeholders to integrate quality place making and public art into significant projects and developments.

Significant projects and developments include:

- Green-field developments
- Brown-field developments
- Urban streetscape
- City and town revitalisation
- Neighbourhood renewal
- Public domain enhancement
- Public buildings and facilities.

The policy also provides the foundation for collaboration between a number of professional disciplines, working collaboratively to plan, design and implement place making and public art initiatives in Penrith City.

Council officers will work with developers and their consultants in relation to their development proposals. In relation to selected Council projects there will be an

internal Place Making Project Team to ensure a smooth transition from design to implementation within the parameters of a defined budget and project objectives.

What makes places special

First impressions of a city are important as this influences the views of residents, visitors and business alike. Vibrant destinations that provide a sense of arrival introduce and highlight the city's character, identity and capacity.

Places sometimes have been shaped through a natural or evolutionary process rather than by intentional design. However rather than waiting on the chance evolution of the public domain these special places can be envisioned and established through planning controls, innovative urban design incorporating place making and public art , new technologies and activation.

Today's contemporary public places act as central meeting points for families, friends, the creative and corporate sectors, and can contribute to the establishment of new social, creative and business networks. These special places become valued for their "buzz" and energy which in turn attract and have the potential to revitalise and develop synergies with the knowledge and innovation economy.

Central to the success of creating special places is the process of a range of professional disciplines and partners working collaboratively from the commencement of the development of a project concept through to the completion of the project. This collaboration ensures that the whole equals more than just the sum of its parts, and that in addition where required the necessary maintenance regimes are in place.

What is place making

Place making is not a new idea. In fact place making has been a fundamental part of urban design for generations, from ancient times to today.

The term place making refers to the creation or development of physical and living environments that can provide economic, intellectual, social, cultural, aesthetic, or sensory nourishment for the community. Place making involves the development of places that evoke a sense of "being there", a destination that supports community interaction, exchange, and community pride.

Not all places require "being made". Many natural environments including nature reserves and national and regional parks are places whose uniqueness in large part is due to their minimal human disturbance. However cities and to lesser extent rural areas have undergone significant change due to human impact. Place making through the utilisation of public art and cultural activation provide tools to enable opportunities to enhance identity, community interaction, and a sense of place.

Place making and public art can be found in places such as the central streets of Rome where classic obelisks, horse shape statues and fountains evoke a connection between artistic creation over time and the urban development of a city.
Public Art Summit "Strategies for Urban Public Art" New York, 17-18 February 2005.

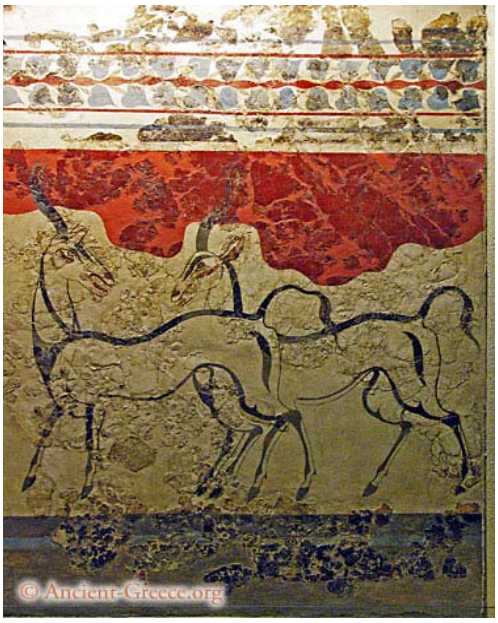
What is public art

Utilising public art as a tool to support the integration of place making in the urban design of a city, town centre or new release area, can enable the unique character of the community to be reflected and can offer an insight into the past, the spirit of the present and dreams for the future.

Creating special places requires a vision that is focused on a strong research base and often involves community engagement. Place making and public art assists in the delivery of environments that nurture their natural assets, build on what we have, inspires and welcomes communities, and strengthens local economies.

This vision offers the opportunity for professional artists to design meaningful artworks and the scope to support community participation to create unique site specific features. These features can be fused within the design of street furniture, tree guards, fencing, the interior and external appearance of buildings, pavement/floors and wall art or as stand alone pieces. Professional public artists have the skills and talents to be the creative voice of the community, adding aesthetic layers which add a depth of expression to community identity, connection and pride in the public domain, infrastructure and facilities.

Place making and public art is not new and has been used for millennia by communities as a way of establishing cultural identity. Public art may also be temporary and ephemeral. What we see today from previous civilisations is only what has survived.



Oryx Fresco – Bronze age
From Akrotiri, Thera/Santorini
C. 1550 -1500 BCE

Place making and public art plays an important role in contemporary cultures, taking many forms and styles. It can involve permanent, temporary or ephemeral works, functional or otherwise, free standing or integrated into the built or natural environments. At the same time public art as a tool in place making needs to be used selectively after careful assessment and review of the context, place and available resources.

Examples include:

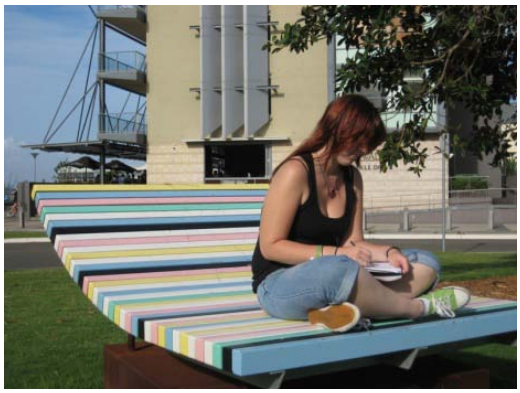
- Sculptures – permanent, temporary or ephemeral
- Creative illuminations
- Soundscapes
- Street furniture and signage
- Sculptural water features
- Interior and external pavement/floors and wall art
- New media and technology
- Environmental art
- Installation art

Blacktown NSW

Wellington, New Zealand

Ropes Crossing NSW

Parramatta NSW



Newcastle NSW

Blacktown NSW

Benefits

This section highlights some of the major benefits of place making and public art.

Socially Sustainable Communities

Engaging the local communities in place making and public art processes assists in creating places that reflect a sense of identity and connection. These are essential qualities that we all seek out, special places where we feel comfortable, safe and connected. Public art enables the community to celebrate their diversity, while at the same time contributing to a sense of community pride that enhances the connection between people and place. A good example of this is Council's Magnetic Places program which has brought together communities and places to activate and enhance the vitality of local neighbourhoods and public places.

Creating a sense of arrival and vibrant destinations

The first impressions of a city create an impact and influence the perceptions of residents, visitors and business alike. This introduction is important as it is an indicator of a city's character, culture, lifestyle and identity. Gateways or arrival points within a city act as a welcome to residents, tourists and the business sector. Place making and public art can enhance this sense of arrival and destination in key locations.

Social expression and identity

Art and design is a creative human response to our physical and social environment. It contributes to the way we explore ideas and is a big part of our everyday life, from the houses we live in, the music we listen to, the films we watch and even the clothes we wear. Public art is an expression of an idea or ideas in a place that can add interest and character and identity. It can also generate debate and discussion, and contribute to the enrichment of the community's civic and cultural experience.

Supporting the local economy

In today's global market place there is increasing pressure on cities to create that point of difference to attract innovative enterprises and entrepreneurs including professionals involved in the knowledge economy. These innovators are attracted by vibrant places with strong networks and civic leadership, and can also generate social connection and economic sustainability. This combination within the urban environment can act as a catalyst in the region's economy with the potential to contribute to the establishment and growth of the local economy through creating employment opportunities, including in the creative industries.

Today's contemporary public places act as central meeting points for family, friends, and the creative and corporate sectors. The utilization of new technologies within the urban public environment is now commonplace, creating new social, creative and business networks for the exchange of knowledge and innovation. These special places become valued for their "buzz" and energy which in turn attract local residents, tourists and investment in the area including cafés, restaurants, private galleries, and digital communication and marketing entrepreneurs.

Implementation of the Place Making and Public Art Policy

The objective of the implementation of this policy is to recognise and build innovative, meaningful and attractive places within the public domain, and contribute to community identity and pride in the public domain, new release areas, public infrastructure and facilities. A strategic approach is required to achieve quality outcomes for the City and community.

Implementation of the policy will promote and support projects and developments that are unique to the City, and that reflect the city's character, culture and identity. Specific focus will be placed on the following initiatives.

New Urban Places

Place making and public art principles have been endorsed by Council for new release areas within the Sustainability Blueprint. The Blueprint has been prepared as a guide for Council, developers and other relevant stakeholders involved in the planning and development of new release areas within the City of Penrith. The Sustainability Blueprint provides the foundation for negotiation and collaboration between developers and Council to achieved place making within new release areas. Council officers will work with developers and their consultants in relation to introducing place making initiatives in their development proposals.

Examples already include working with Delfin on the Jordan Springs development, Landcom on the North Penrith site and Stocklands in relation to Glenmore Park Stage 2.

Established Neighbourhoods

Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Program provides significant focus on place making and in some cases public art in the older established residential areas of the City. Much of this focus is on activating meeting places and the public domain. This work will continue and build on our partnerships with local residents and community organisations. This includes seeking opportunities to continue the award winning Magnetic Places Program.

Centres

Council will look for opportunities for place making and public art in the development of the public domain improvement programs for centres in the City, particularly the Penrith City Centre and St Marys Town Centre. We will also look for opportunities to work with private developers in these centres to similarly contribute to the enhancement of the special character and identity of these places.

Resourcing

Implementation of this policy will largely occur from existing Council resources with key staff assessing the incorporation of place making and public art in specific developments or projects put forward by development proponents. Implementation of the works is undertaken by the developer according to approved specifications.

More significant Council projects might also include place making and public art. These elements are a key consideration for any major project design and tender process. As indicated in the policy, public art as a tool in place making needs to be used selectively after careful assessment and review of the content, place and available resources.

The policy also provides the foundation for collaboration between a number of professional disciplines, working collaboratively to plan, design and implement place making and public art initiatives in Penrith City.

These include Council staff from the broad areas of:

- community and cultural development
- public domain amenity and safety
- parks
- engineering services
- development services
- major projects including design and technical advice
- city works.

An internal Place Making Project Team will be convened to ensure a smooth transition from design to implementation within the parameters of a defined budget and project objectives. This team will also be charged for looking for opportunities for place making initiatives in a wide range of Council projects and in working with the development industry.

Opportunities will also be pursued to source external funding for place making projects.

This policy complements the section on public art in Council's Development Control Plan 2010. Technical guidelines are also being finalised to assist Council officers and proponents of development to implement this policy.

Acknowledgements

This Place Making and Public Art Policy is be based on the draft Public Domain and Public Art Policy and Implementation Plan developed by Deb Mills and Pamille Berg in 2007 and the Penrith City Cultural Framework 2007 - 2011.