



# LEICHHARDT HOTEL

SEPT 2023 - JUN 2024  
HOTEL PROPERTY INVESTMENTS PTY LTD  
\$10 M

DEMEX was contracted to take over as principal contractor to demolish the Leichhardt Hotel in Rockhampton CBD following a Prohibition Notice issued on the previous contractor by WorkSafe Queensland.

Prior to acceptance, DEMEX was required to prepare an Asbestos Removal Control Plan as well as a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) to satisfy WorkSafe Queensland that DEMEX's proposed methodology was appropriate to lift site prohibition.

The Leichhardt Hotel owned by Hotel Property Investments Pty Ltd (HPI) and managed by Australian Venue Co, comprised four buildings spanning a 3,100m<sup>2</sup> site. Significant asbestos materials were in the main hotel constructed in the Seventies.

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Playing a major factor in determining the sequence and method of demolition works was the location, with the hotel complex sitting on the corner of two live streets in the city centre, a narrow lane on a third side and carpark on the fourth.

Close liaison between DEMEX and HPI proved a standout benefit to success of the project as works discovered ever more complex hazards in progress.

DEMEX engaged an independent specialist contractor to conduct an intrusive hazmat survey prior to commencing removal of hazardous materials, which confirmed friable asbestos insulation throughout all four aged structures. The highest standard of safety protection measures had to be implemented.

All buildings were restricted from access without the correct PPE and all friable work areas enclosed under negative pressure. Decontamination chambers were established in the work zone to facilitate friable asbestos removal.

The main tower structure was the most challenging of all four structures. Demolished last in the sequence of four, its unique construction with concrete encased steel beams and absence of any lateral supports severely reduced the pace of works.

Using a 62-tonne highreach excavator, external blockwork was gradually removed, exposing the full southwest side of the building and enabling the internal structural demolition to commence. Works followed a tight sequence of pulverizing two to three bays of concrete slab two levels at a time, followed by oxy cutting of the beams, then removal of beams to ground.



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|----------------------|------------|
| SCRAP STEEL RECYCLED | 500 TONNES |
| BRICKS RECYCLED      | 200 TONNES |
| MIXED WASTE          | 300 TONNES |
| ASBESTOS REMOVED     | 550 TONNES |

### PROJECT CHALLENGES

Multiple unexpected finds impacted the program and preparation for demolition. Spray coating of 45 16-metre load-bearing beams and 12 truss beams; vermiculite overspray on internal blockwork; sprayed asbestos insulation in the accommodation block; and 90 moulded fibre cement external spandrel panels on the tower block.

Asbestos removal works were conducted over seven months, the peak occurring during the hot, humid summer period when Rockhampton temperatures ranged between 22 and 32 degrees, and humidity above 70 percent.

Without engineering drawings there was uncertainty about structural integrity given unknown levels of degradation. Preserving two aged, brittle heritage facades at ground level, required skilful manipulation of machinery

A painstaking cadence of works involving multiple machinery movements safely demolished the tower structure and removed beams intact for reuse.

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Timely and transparent communication with HPI regarding all emerging issues. Approaching challenges as an opportunity to educate and inform the HPI project team allowed HPI to make confident decisions about the pathway forward on each challenge.
- Adjusting the demolition method safely and quickly to accommodate unexpected finds and ensure project continuation.
- At project peak, 52 workers were onsite, mostly engaged in the hazardous material removal work as the balance prepared for the demolition.
- 98% of materials were recycled.

