

Larries

Newcastle, NSW

Client: Epochal Hotels

Budget: Approx \$1 Million

Role: Principal Design Consultant

Type: Hospitality Fitout

Completed: 2023

Larrie's is a small but sincere fish and chipper / takeaway bottlo that romances the nostalgia of Merewether Beach in the 70's and 80's. It is the first stage of a larger heritage refurbishment – the iconic Beach Hotel - embracing Newcastle's industrious past and enduring identity as a surfer's town.

Thorough historical and contextual research formed the foundation of the design process, enabling a deep understanding of the project's potential for the community. Collaborating closely with an engaged client, their childhood memories of surfing at Merewether shaped the vision for Larrie's and the larger hotel project, ensuring an authentic interpretation in its first stage of completion.

Limited slab-to-slab height, circulation, functionality, and heritage determinations provided sufficient design constraints to generate an optimal outcome for the interior fit out and spatial arrangement. Attention to detail, historical references, community collaboration, the diurnal experience and connection to external landscape were employed to evoke an emotional response and enhance user experience.

Recognising the venue's significance to the community and being the unofficial home to one of Australia's oldest board rider's clubs, our aim was to bring the community back to itself. A fair measure of success in achieving this goal lies in patron feedback, perhaps summed up perfectly in one interaction amongst two seasoned club board riders on their morning surf – "I ran into so and so at Larrie's last night – he's barely spoken a couple of words to me over the years, but I couldn't stop him talking when he walked into Larrie's".

