



CASE STUDY

STRATACELL ENABLES TREES TO FLOURISH IN CHINATOWN'S NEW CENTURY GARDEN

A new streetscape in Haymarket has combined traditional and contemporary culture to reinvigorate the popular centre of Chinatown. Transforming the Thomas Street precinct, the streetscape works feature widened verges and a shared zone to improve pedestrian amenity, with new trees, light, seating, and artwork from award-winning artist, Lindy Lee.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, said, "The City is creating a more interesting public space and improving pedestrian amenities to further enhance Chinatown's appeal. The plan for Thomas Street will ensure Haymarket remains an attractive and enjoyable place for tourists and visitors, reinforcing our Chinatown's place as one of the best in the world. By making it easier to explore the area on foot and creating more lively public spaces, we will attract even more people to the area and further support business in and around Haymarket."

Jon Kane, of Jane Irwin Landscape Architects, said, "Chinatown is one of Sydney's unique and well-loved

destinations. It is a significant cultural and social hub for residents, workers and visitors to the area. The new public domain has been developed in consultation with the community and celebrates the unique character and heritage of Chinatown and creates more space for pedestrians, public art, outdoor markets and events. The curatorial theme for this space is "New Century Garden" – a garden for the new century, shaped by Chinese Buddhist and Taoist philosophy invoking the elements of fire and water."

With new trees, green canopy, and shade central to the design, a challenge emerged – how to enable trees to thrive in a complex urban environment. Trevor Potts, of CA&I Pty Ltd, said, "This area was designed to create some respite in the heart of busy Chinatown. Trees and green canopy were essential to generate a feeling of enclosure and intimacy from the street. The challenge was planting new trees in an environment unfavourable to new tree growth due to centuries of various uses in the area. We realised the trees needed a dedicated environment for the roots to grow and flourish."

Jon Kane said, “One of the main obstacles to be overcome by Citygreen was accommodating the existing services with tree planting. The transformation of Thomas Street, South of Ultimo Road to a shared zone required extensive civil work to the existing site to allow for street tree planting. The main challenge was providing street trees with enough viable root space to allow the plantings to establish and perform in the Thomas Street Shared Zone. This required accommodating the existing site services whilst providing structural support to allow vehicular access.

“Citygreen’s Stratacell was chosen as the best option to accommodate the needs of the project. The Stratacell system accommodated the existing services and provided structural support for vehicular movement. It also provided viable soil and root space for the street trees and avoided soil compaction caused by vehicular traffic. Today, the street trees are performing very well, and Citygreen have been great to work with on this project. They have provided a quick response to queries regarding all aspects in the documentation and construction stages of the project.”



Trevor Potts concluded by saying, “Citygreen worked with the initial designers to develop a package that would work, then supported the contractor by answering queries and attending site during the initial installation to ensure any issues could be resolved immediately without delay to the programme. The trees have taken off and are flourishing in their new environment in the centre of one of the CBD’s busiest pedestrian areas.”

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