

MERIVALE SAVES 'THE ALEX'

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Merivale has saved the **Alexandria Hotel** from the wrecking ball and will reopen the doors to one of Sydney's most beloved pubs.

Known affectionately as 'The Alex', the Sydney icon faced redevelopment as a residential block after developers snapped it up in 2015 - plans that were met by an unprecedented campaign by local supporters desperate to save the historic venue.

Now following Merivale's purchase, the future of the Alexandria Hotel as a local hero and treasured meeting place is assured.

Justin Hemmes, Merivale CEO, said: "Institutions like this must be preserved, they reflect our history and help shape our culture - especially when they mean as much to their local community as The Alex does. This outcome is a great reward for the passion and character of the community who fought so hard to save this property where a hotel has stood for almost 150 years".

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said: "When plans to destroy The Alex were first put on public exhibition, there was a real groundswell of support for its conservation. This is a huge win for the community, and for City staff who were in court fighting for the 80-year-old building to be heritage-listed".

"Historic buildings like this one maintain links to Sydney's past, and fill our streetscapes with unique character. I'm thrilled Mr Hemmes plans to restore and re-open this fantastic building and involve our residents and creatives in shaping its future use".

LOCAL CREATIVES WANTED

Merivale's vision for the hotel includes preserving the iconic 1930s front bar, while transforming the expansive courtyard into a vibrant space to eat, drink and socialise.

Merivale now wants to tap into the rich vein of creativity in the area and is calling on locals to contribute their ideas for the design and feel of the courtyard. A diverse line-up of home-grown talent will then be selected to work closely with Justin and architect Kelvin Ho to develop the final design concept.

Justin Hemmes said: "This hotel has and will always be Alexandria's pub so I want the community to help create the next stage in its vibrant life. Whether you're an artist or architect, a sculptor or builder, if you're passionate about design and creating amazing spaces, we want to hear from you."

Budding creatives are invited to register their interest at www.ouralex.com.au with further details and design brief to be announced very soon.

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Background: *The Alexandria Hotel is one of the longest-established pubs in the City of Sydney. From the 1870s, the site was home to the Alexandria Family Hotel - a slate-roofed brick building originally owned by Catherine Goodfellow, an early Alexandria resident and property developer. The Victorian-era hotel was demolished in the late 1920s and rebuilt as the present Alexandria Hotel in 1934.*

Last year, the pub faced demolition, with plans lodged for a four-story residential block on the site. There was much community opposition to the site's redevelopment, which resulted in the City of Sydney Council overturning the development application. Subsequently, the developers submitted a revised application to build an apartment block around the hotel building, which was again refused by Council, resulting in the developers lodging an appeal in the Land & Environment Court. Merivale's purchase of the now heritage-listed property ensures that the redevelopment plans and Land & Environment Court appeal are dropped, with the doors of one of Sydney's most beloved pubs set to re-open in the near future.