



A DIFFERENT SPACE

BEST CIVIC PROJECT

Architect Peter Davidson of Lab Architecture Studio reported in *Discovering Stone* issue no. 5 that with Federation Square he had made “a statement that will last”.

Over 500,000 cobbles stones supplied by Meteor Stone, Western Australia cover the Square’s vast expanse. The bewildering array of colours that permeate the stone, decorate the Square like giant thumbprints, none of which are identical.

Ten poetic inscriptions are sandblasted into the face of the cobbles, at various depths, which strongly associate with the indigenous people who lived by the Yarra River and the early days of Federation.

In total 14,500 square metres of Australian natural stone feature in the square and the adjacent National Gallery of Victoria. Much of it was quarried at a remote location in Western Australia and transported 2600km by road to Meteor Stone’s processing plant. Once the product was finished it was transported a further 3500km to Federation Square.

When laying the cobbles Peter Davidson said,

“The intention was to avoid straight lines. The whole piazza is designed to let the eye look at the project as a whole, there is a symmetry, but naturalness of the stone creates a variation of the space.”

The contrasting grey/blue paving of the city sidewalks, stand in stark contrast to the reds, purples, mauves, pinks and rustic tones of the cobbles, which was always Peter Davidson’s intention.

“We wanted to clearly state that visitors were entering a different space - a special space,” added Peter Davidson.

Federation Square has developed into a location where Melburnians gather to celebrate special events, watch live music or sporting carnivals like the World Cup soccer.

On fine days tourist and office workers stroll across the square or sit in the sun and watch the world pass by. Careful observers will spot the remains of Jurassic oysters embedded in the stone, along with other intriguing examples of ancient marine fossils.

Specifications

Project:

Federation Square,
Melbourne, Victoria

Architect:

Peter Davidson, Lab Architecture
Studio, Victoria.
in collaboration with
Bates Smart

Builder:

Multiplex Pty Ltd

Installation:

J A Dodds and Chico Parades

Poetic Inscriptions:

Paul Carter

Stone:

Red sandstone cobbles - Meteor
Stone, Western Australia

Bluestone steps and kerbs -
Melocco Stone, Victoria

Sandstone - Donnybrook
Sandstone, Western Australia

