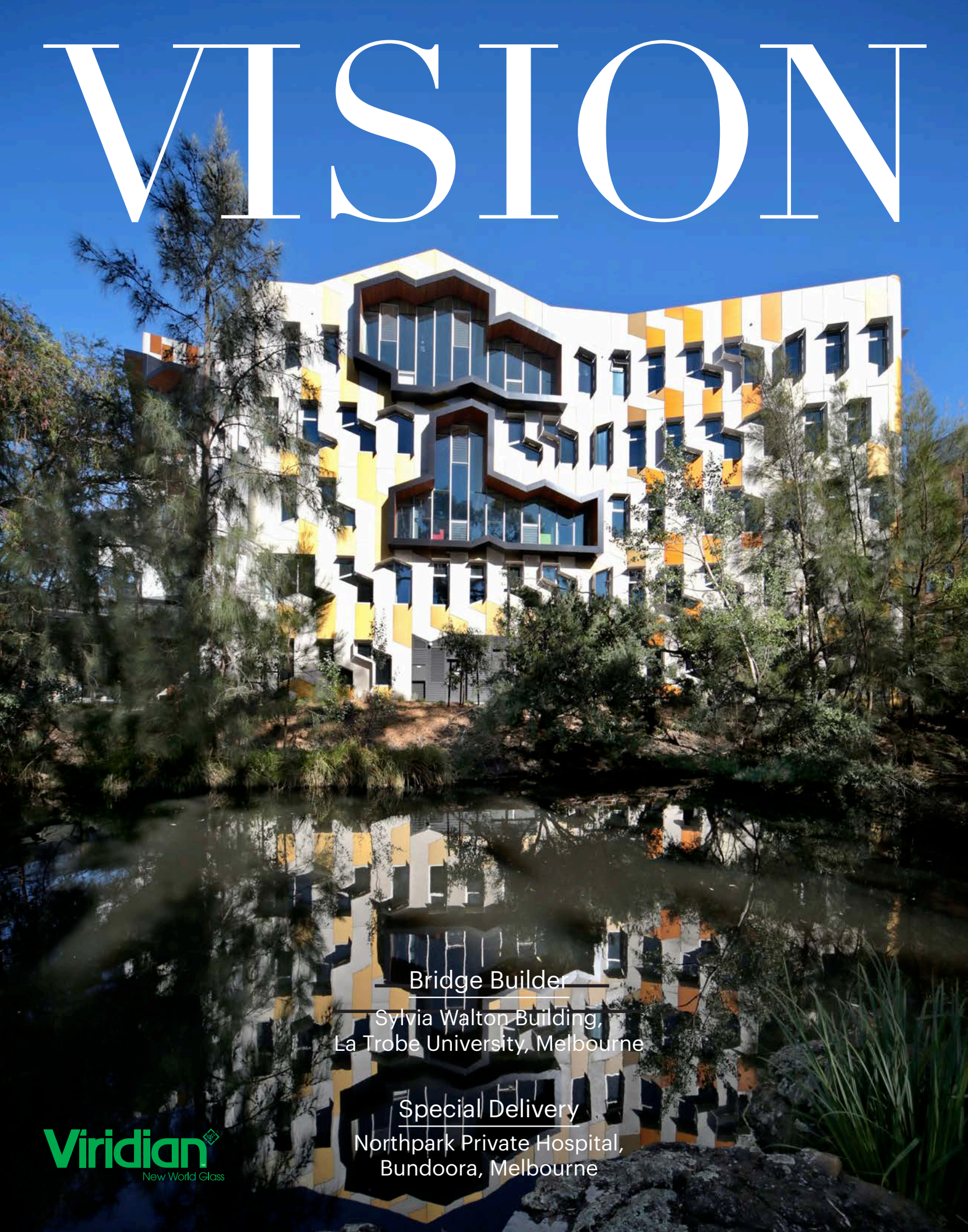


# VISION



Bridge Builder

Sylvia Walton Building,  
La Trobe University, Melbourne

Special Delivery

Northpark Private Hospital,  
Bundoora, Melbourne

**Viridian**  
New World Glass

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## Bridge Builder

A star-quality glazing program is key to the relationship between new building and old landscape. An understanding of light and flexible, adaptable spaces define a building of real magnetism at La Trobe University's Sylvia Walton Building.

# 04



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## Special Delivery

Healthscope's Northpark Private Hospital in Melbourne's leafy Bundoora recently experienced a 'birth' all of its own. While maternity is a critical part of the hospital's range of services, its very own delivery involved a \$35 million expansion that includes stand-out consulting suites.

# 22



VIRIDIAN GLAZING EXPANDED  
THE ARCHITECT'S SCOPE  
TO THINK BEYOND THE  
SQUARE WITH A BEAUTIFULLY  
CONNECTED BUILDING.

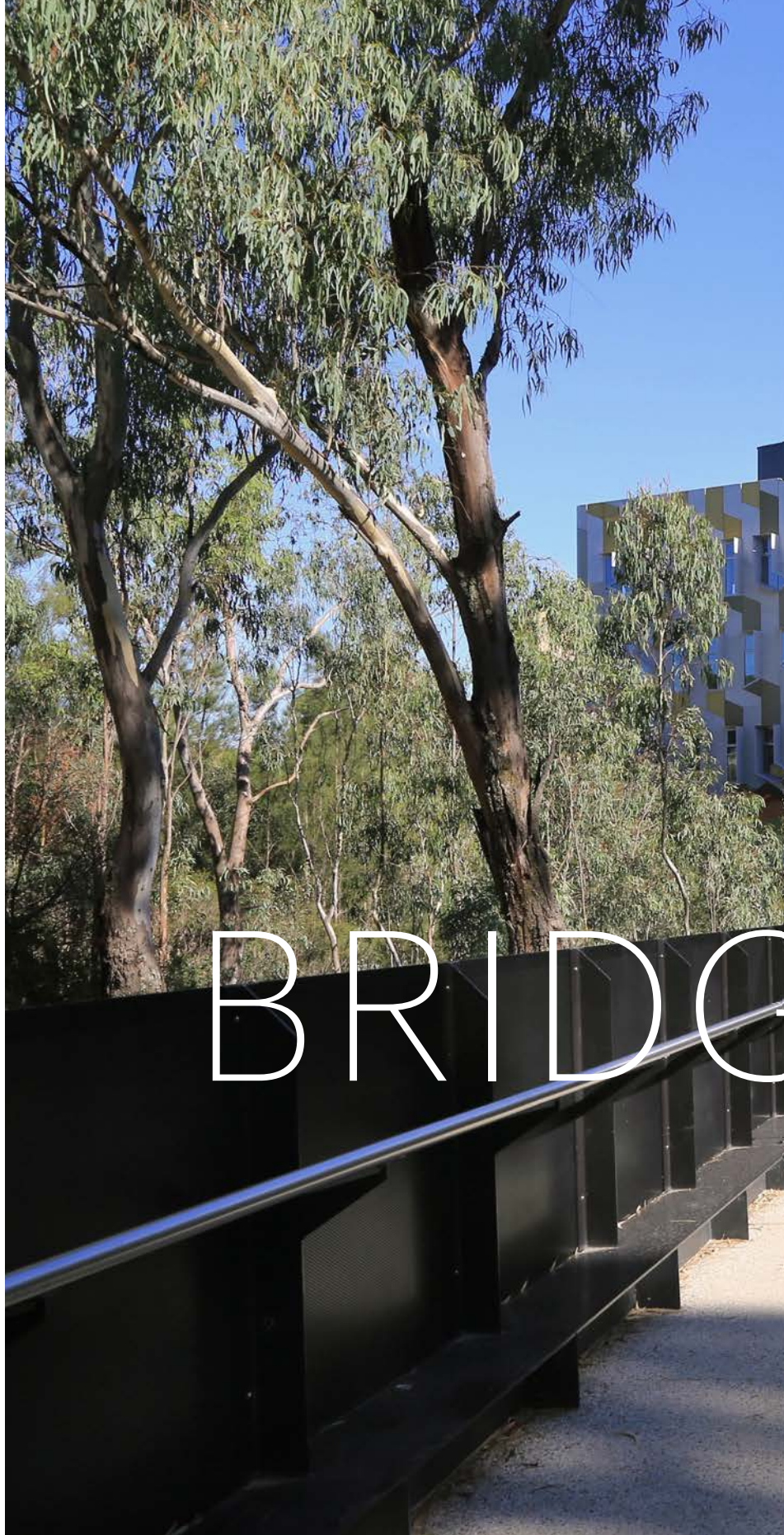
Sylvia Walton Building,  
La Trobe University, Bundoora, Melbourne

Principal glazing resource:  
Viridian ThermoTech™ E Double Glazed  
Units incorporating SolTech™ Neutral,  
Sunergy™ Clear and EVantage™ Clear

Architecture:  
Lyons

Photography:  
Peter and Jennifer Hyatt

Text:  
Peter Hyatt





GE

# BUILDER



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STRUCTURAL



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SECURITY



# THE 'GIFT' OF AN UN-BRIEFED FOOTBRIDGE, GENEROUS PODIUM AND A LIVELY, LIGHT- FILLED ENVELOPE AS DEFT HOMAGE TO ITS SURROUNDS, INFORM THIS STRIKING RESULT

**L**a Trobe University's newest addition – the Sylvia Walton Building – happens to be one of its best. In a campus elegantly stitched into its landscape, it takes a special building to stand out, rather than offend, with a sublime impact statement.

Honoring its former Chancellor, The Sylvia Walton Building may be in the campus epicenter, but the precinct feels distinctly pastoral, predominantly water, bush and low-rise buildings from the 1960s and 70s. The university's master-plan of ring-road and satellite car-parks has led to a pedestrian friendly, botanically driven landscape. Only 14 kms. from Melbourne's CBD and with 19,000 students, such tranquility doesn't occur by accident.

It's a special setting and Lyons has responded with a building of star quality. It is easy to dominate place and stand apart from the neighbours and yet this architecture is of light and play. It celebrates the idea of building as treehouse rather than silo. This is evident with a porous, permeable building that recognizes student movement and informal connections are as important as formal learning.

A difficult site challenged the architects. Their response, a plan resembling a squashed doughnut, might have disqualified it immediately, yet the result defies logic. The 'gift' of an un-briefed footbridge, generous podium and a lively, light-filled envelope as deft homage to its surrounds, inform this striking result.

## **Left**

North-east corner reveals one of five entrances that contribute to the building's easy access.



Bridge Builder





South-east elevation accessed by broad footbridge that spears circulation straight through the building core

Project architect James Wilson, principal at Lyons, discusses the Sylvia Walton Building with Vision.

**How do you know a good university building when you see one?**

That's a good question. I look for something that's engaging and stimulating – which is what universities strive to be as they openly compete for students. They need to stand out as open, connected to student activities and learning, with real life and colour.

**The design bristles with serious quality but also appears quite playful. Given what we know today about the role of play in learning and problem-solving, did this inform or change your design approach?**

Our university buildings try to invite and reflect curiosity, as well as reflect the projects ambitions and the University's culture. We take the theoretical view of learning pedagogies very seriously, but balance this with a more playful design quality that demonstrates an interactive environment – a place that students enjoy being in. In Sylvia Walton, we wanted to generate a building that created anticipation and excitement as a backdrop to better learning.

**Its use of colour and play of light is quite exuberant.**

Highlighting key views and social spaces through uses of formed expanses of glass and highlights of colour help to portray the ambitions and ideas of the building. Hopefully that's how most people will experience it.

**It rises from this authentically Australian landscape established at La Trobe over the past almost 50 years. How important is this environment to your design?**

The whole building responds to the indigenous qualities of place. Most of the key views are about connecting with the bush setting and the building envelope reflects a connection with the trees, bark and water. The bronze tones of the landscape, gold of wattle and colour of eucalypt bark have all been absorbed into the building's anodised aluminium skin.

THE BRONZE TONES  
OF THE LANDSCAPE,  
GOLD OF WATTLE AND  
COLOUR OF EUCALYPT  
BARK HAVE ALL BEEN  
ABSORBED INTO THE  
BUILDING'S ANODISED  
ALUMINIUM SKIN.

James Wilson  
principal, Lyons





**Left and right**

A carefully considered facade is informed by native flora and a desire for crisp daylight transmission with minimal tint.



WE SAID WE WANT TO 'PUSH' THE OUTSIDE OF THIS BUILDING AND SO WE SAT DOWN WITH THE PANELING PRE-CASTERS AND VIRIDIAN AND THEY WERE BOTH ON-BOARD IN THE FIRST PHASE OF DESIGN.

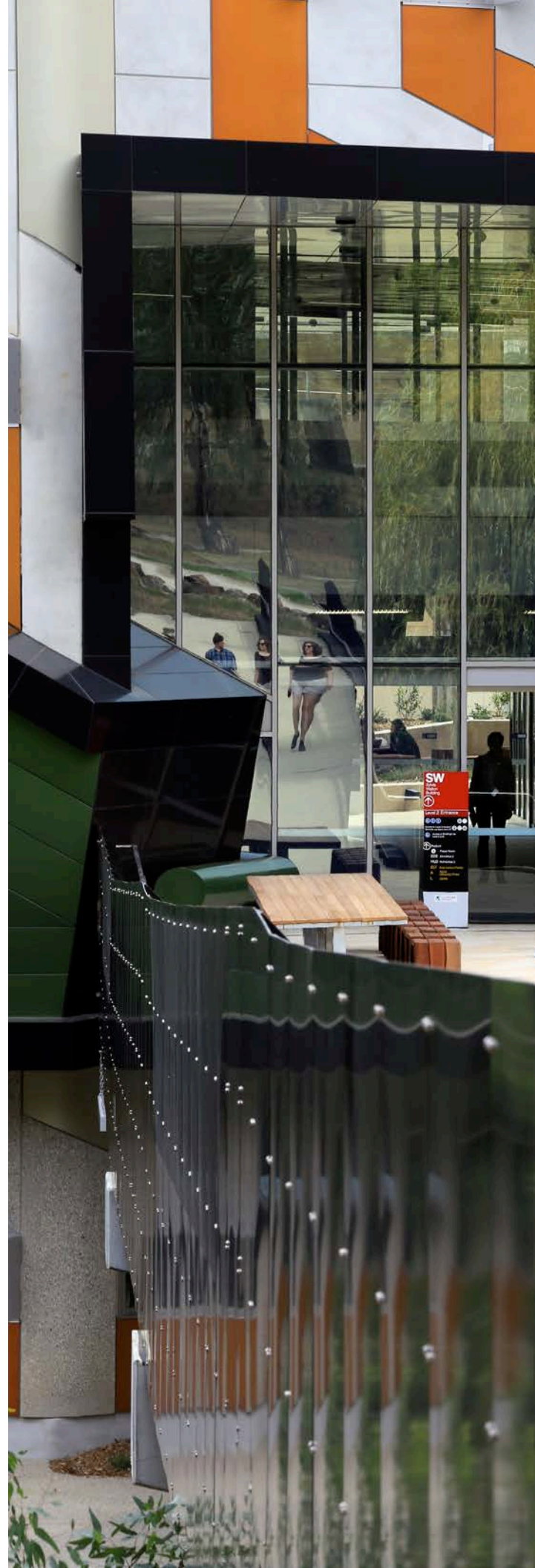
**James Wilson**  
principal, Lyons

**The footbridge has a quite ceremonial quality that directs students right into the heart of the building.**

It has a castellan quality to it, with the moat and the 'turreted' parapet form, so it does have quite a sense of arrival over the bridge. We were quite excited about the opportunities the bridge element afforded the project as it wasn't in the original brief. We did a couple of early design options that connected this building with the La Trobe Research precinct facilities to the south-east, and it evolved from there. We thought it would be fantastic to connect them, and more importantly to bring a campus entry through the centre of the building. Our practice often talks about porous university buildings, so this bridge adds to the five main entrances — three on the lower ground and two on the upper level.

**There seems to be a sense that learning can occur at the edges and this reflects the way society is leaning away from traditional spaces. While the building adapts to that challenge doesn't it illustrate how difficult it is to future-proof buildings?**

Cognitive learning or learning by 'doing' is a much more physically apparent concept in buildings now - so much more than even five years ago. The double height informal spaces through the building act as permanent infrastructure, whilst the learning and office space can be adapted readily to new uses as the University changes. The podium on the western side is a response to diversity by adding another key informal outdoor space. It's probably a 'looser' building than La Trobe initially envisaged and it really reflects a series of informal zones, beautifully lit by natural light. This building draws the eye to passers by and hopefully attracts interest to these significant spaces too. You do have to bring your clients along on the journey with these projects, and re-imagine what their brief could translate to. Future proofing involves a flexibility that will engage and work for diverse users over a long period of time, but needs to clearly work in an inspirational way for the initial inhabitants.





**There is an organic quality that avoids the standard rectangular rigidity we see in a great deal of modern architecture. Your voids and glazing program feel quite liberating.**

There are some references to the existing La Trobe buildings. We looked at the east-west linear buildings around the site, but rather than follow the conventional linear corridor we've wound it around the inside – part in response to the tight site, but also as a more integrated 'social' circulation in the centre. In plan it resembles a squashed doughnut, or an augmented 'O' shape and permits views in all directions.

**One of the problems with ingenuity is that it can prove very expensive. Is that the case here?**

This project had a tight budget so some of the ingenuity was to ensure that the budget went to those areas of maximum benefit. The university was initially challenged when we proposed a series of double-height voids, but despite having a really tight footprint we achieved open circulation around a very efficient core. So we directed more of the money into a few key spaces, so whereas a lot of the floorplate is conventional learning and office spaces, there are those four major voids and a wonderful staircase that joins all five levels.

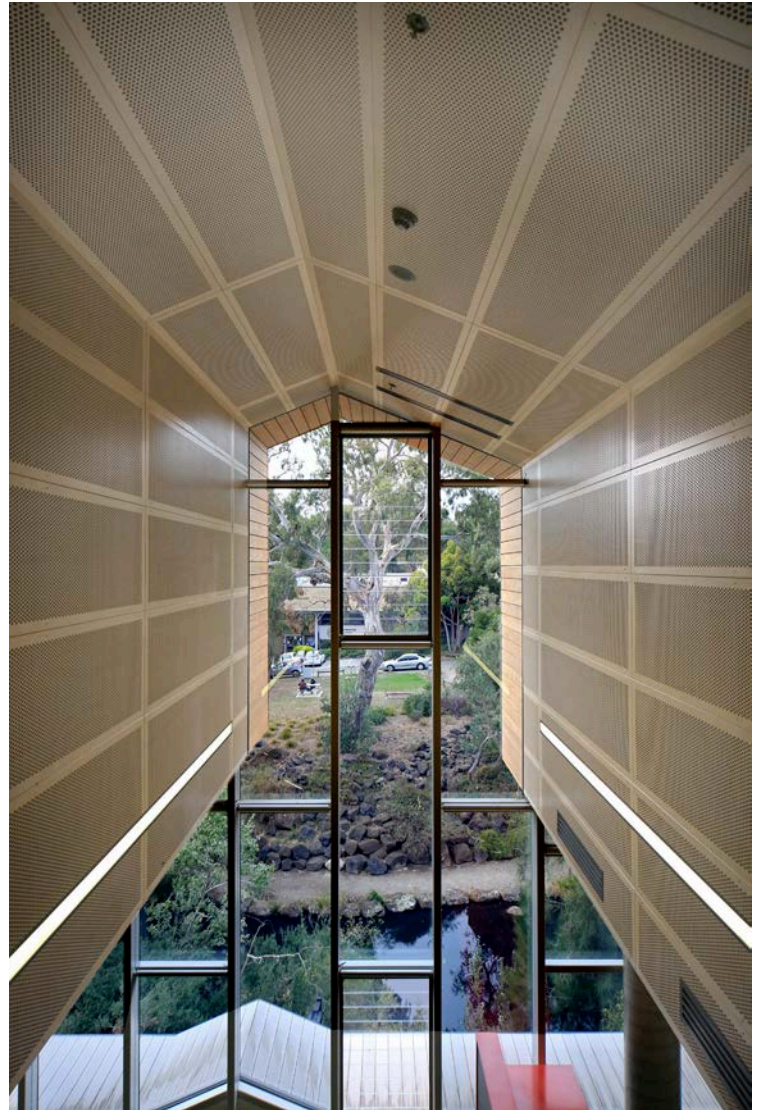
**Some practices assiduously avoid the business card design as recognizable building i.e. Gehry, Calatrava, Hadid. What is your view about the recognizable calling card?**

I think people do recognize a Lyons building, but more our house methodology rather than house 'style'. We think it is important that we approach design quite collaboratively with our clients and that includes referencing literal and organizational cultural values as an expressive basis that comes through in our design outcomes.

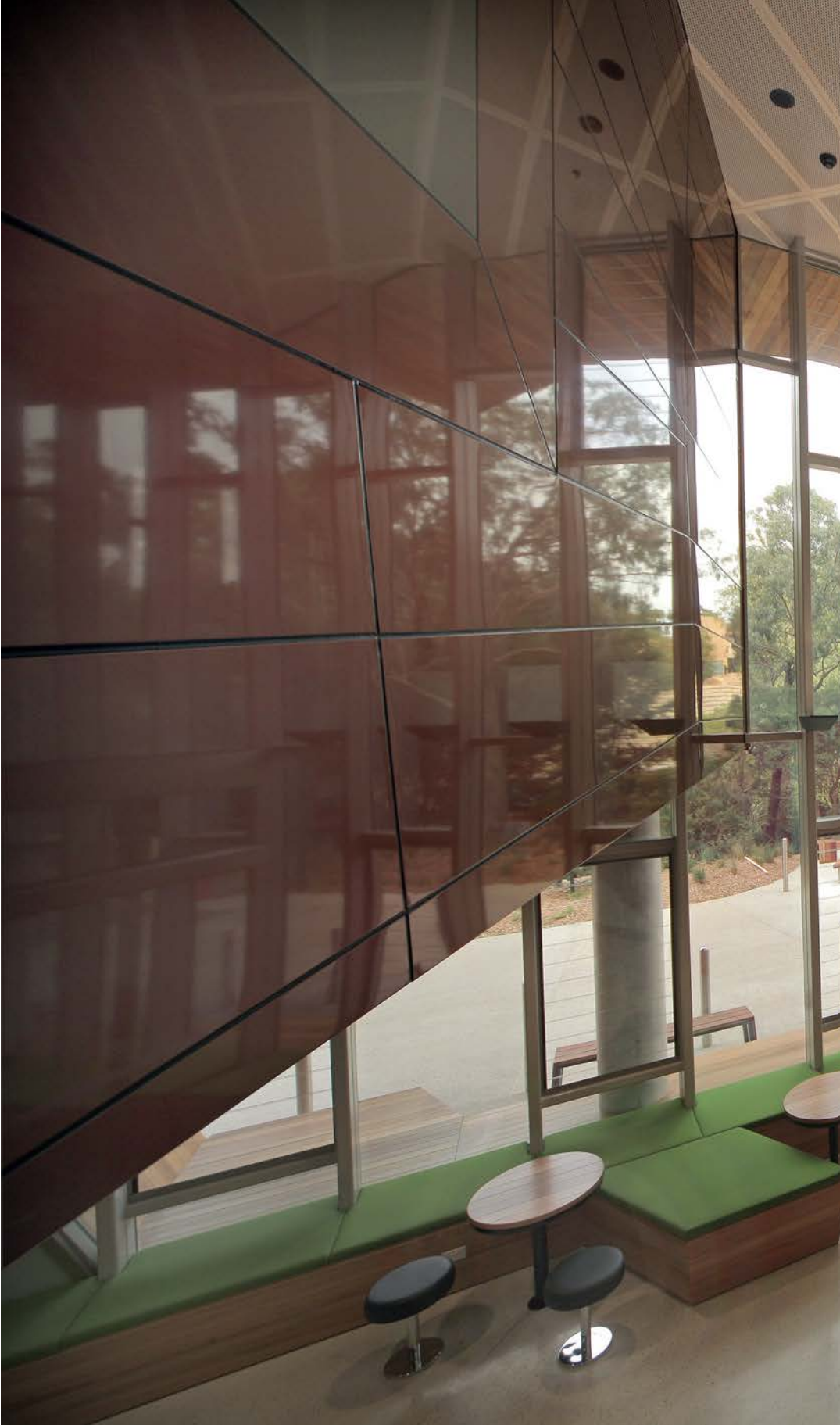


Bridge Builder



**Left and above**

Light-filled meeting/learning spaces are easily accessible. Double-height volumes and mezzanines add appreciable ambience to interiors.





**Above**

Entrance from south-east corner connects immediately to informal meeting areas and landscape.

**Your facades are very activated and operable with a fully three-dimensional quality. How do you typically design these?**

We always make sure we sit down with manufacturers and suppliers very early on in the design stage and involve them and ask what's possible. We always look at involving contractors and then there are fewer surprises with cost or delivery blow-outs. We said we want to 'push' the outside of this building and so we sat down with the paneling pre-casters and Viridian and they were both on-board in the first phase of design. With the glass we definitely wanted to achieve a transparency in the double height spaces, which had varied levels of sun-shading and solar performance. Through this process we gained a lot of confidence that the outcome was what our client was expecting though our design process.

**How intensive does design development need to be with such a project?**

In many ways the profession is under siege and we have seen some practices send design development work offshore. There's a lot of competition for lower fees and the GFC hasn't completely left the profession unscarred. A lot of building – especially in the developed world – is design and construct without the necessary care in allowing the original design team to complete the details. We do all of our documentation right through to the end and that level of detailing is imperative.

**So there's a promise set up externally you maintain internally?**

The key expressive idea was the stairway, designed as a continuous 'street' and international learning 'pathway'. Each time you get to the top of a flight of stairs there's a double height, or an open space, that connects you to the outside. Also the key idea here is very literal – there's no hidden theoretical architectural position. It was an aim to create a fantastic series of linked spaces that connected all the learning floors.

**Your glazing strategy is definitely trying to re-fashion our expectations about the convention for rectangular/square windows.**

It's that expression that sets up a pathway of spaces and big rooms so we consulted Viridian right from the start. We covered the critical points about solar/thermal performance and clarity. It had to be 5-Star GBCA rating and it's incredibly hard nowadays to maintain clear glazing with Section J requirements so we stressed the importance of glass specification from day one.

**Here you have this quite stunning campus to relate to and glass performs a vital role here.**

It's a beautiful campus and a major part of our response is the way in which we open up rather than close down the building. All of the windows are operable. Just as you can walk past all of the old buildings on site and see inside, you can also see into this. While it looks completely different, it actually emulates many of the best elements of the existing campus buildings.

**Did Viridian provide useful technical support?**

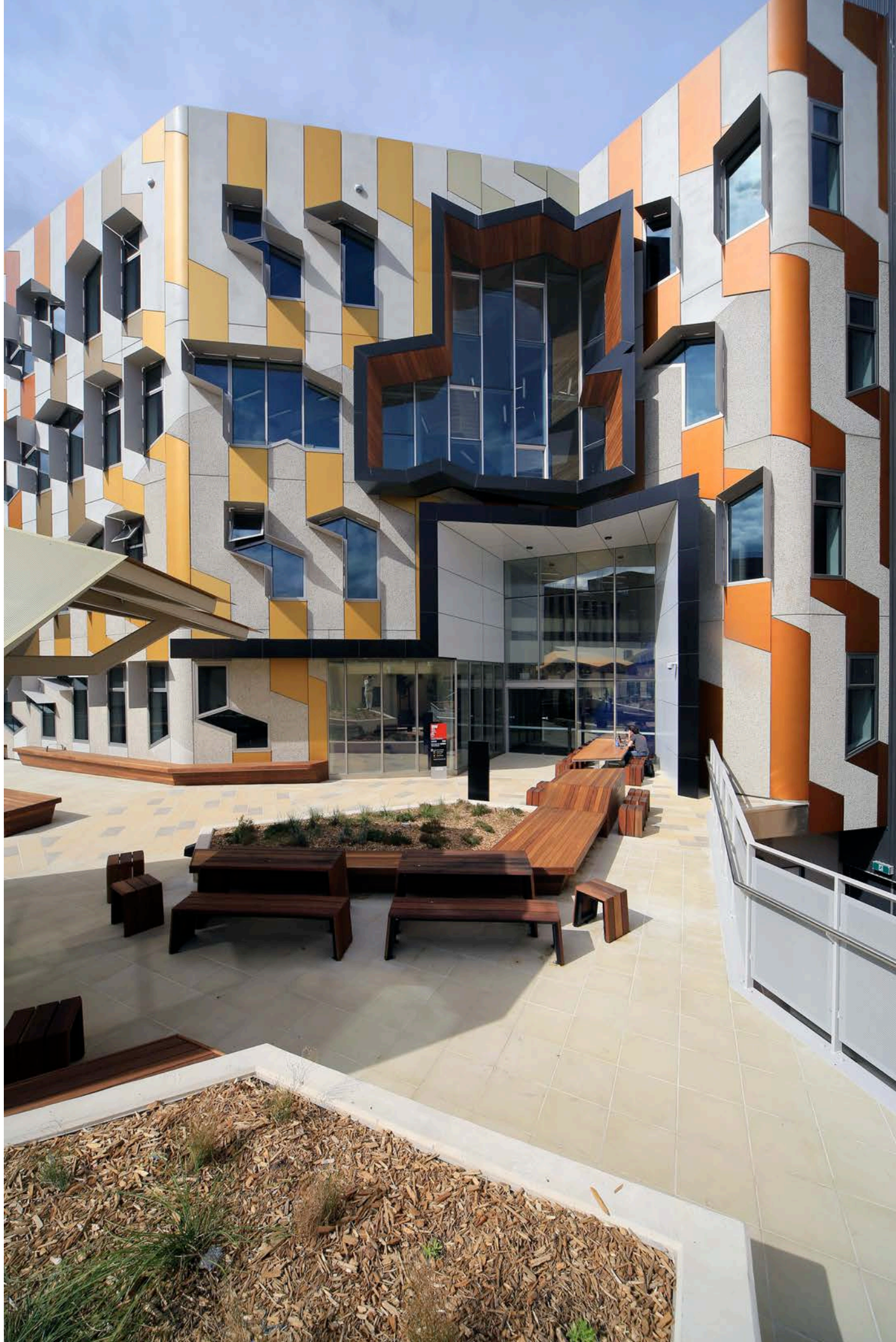
Con Kantis from Viridian was very supportive. He provided a range of glass samples in those early project stages and it gave everyone involved much more confidence and understanding of specific glazing types.

**So how does that scenario typically play out?**

We gave him our design ideas and told him our ideas for this fantastic pathway of spaces and sought his advice on how to best achieve this with glass. We considered issues such as clarity, thermal performance and natural ventilation. Colour tint is incredibly important.

**Right**

Picture window and heroic entrance on west elevation incorporate high performance glazing and slender hoods to deftly manage solar loads.



**Sustainability has been on everyone's lips for a long time. How do you work that here?**

We wanted to make it a breathable building. Every one of the major areas in the building can open up and be naturally ventilated. It's almost like digging back into the past to imagine the future. Operable facades were very big in the '60s and '70s before they became fully sealed by the '80s.

**Did you have a particular ratio of window to wall area in mind with this design?**

We aimed for around 30% and ended up with almost 35% with the larger openings. This was as much a limitation of the pre-cast, as there are only so many holes before it becomes a clip-on system. There are of course huge areas of glass outside of the pre-cast system.

**So how are those windows changing the way occupants and visitors experience that linked experience of environment and education?**

We took specific views. For example, the view towards the specimen eucalypt just beyond the moat has a figurative window that focuses totally upon the vista to the tree rather than copying it as a motif. We use a type of geometric system across the building that really breaks from the standard grid and we hope gives it a generous nature. Glass technology is changing. It seems to be more affordable than ever and allows for very beautiful expanses. The glazed treatments throughout the building elicit a fantastic response for our client.



**Above**

West elevation celebrates the podium for informal meeting/study and effectively expands the building's squashed doughnut footprint.



## Credits

### Project

Sylvia Walton Building,  
La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Melbourne

### Architecture

Lyons

### Design Team

Carey Lyon  
James Wilson  
Christina Bozsán

### Builder

Kane Constructions

### Principal Glass Provider

Viridian

### Site Glazing and Installation

Viridian

### Glazing Consultant

Con Kantis, Viridian

### Glass Installation

Viridian

### Project Budget

\$32 million

### Principal Glazing

Viridian ThermoTech™  
E Double Glazed Units  
incorporating SolTech™  
Neutral, Sunergy™ Clear and  
EVantage™ Clear



CORE PRODUCTS



ENERGY



NOISE



CLEAR VISION



DECORATIVE



BUSHFIRE



STRUCTURAL



STORM



SECURITY





# SPECIAL DELIVERY

THIS NEW FACILITY COULD HAVE EASILY ENDED UP AS ANOTHER BUILT-BY-NUMBERS BOX, BUT HEALTH SCIENCE PLANNING CONSULTANTS (HSPC) ARCHITECTS PLAYED SKILFUL MIDWIFE. THE DESIGN VISION FOR A MORE HUMAN, USER-FRIENDLY CLINIC RESULTS.

Northpark Private Hospital, Bundoora, Melbourne

Architect:

Health Science Planning Consultants (HSPC) Melbourne

Principal Glass Provider:

Viridian

Principal Glazing Resource:

Viridian EVantage™ SuperBlue toughened and toughened laminate, EVantage™ SuperGreen toughened and toughened laminate, Seraphic™ Standard

Photography:

Peter Hyatt & Jennifer Hyatt

Text:

Peter Hyatt



**Right**  
Main road east elevation reveals landscaping as transitional element reflected in a dynamic facade.





**Left**

Originally conceived as a rectangular box, imaginative re-working by the architects reveals a far subtler reading of the landscape and friendlier health-care delivery.

**H**SPC Architects solution goes well beyond mere geometry with a deftly cranked and folded envelope of Viridian EVantage™ SuperBlue and SuperGreen performance glazing. The result exhibits a real awareness of natural light and outlook as partner to modern medical practice.

The hospital now has 153-bed capacity – boosted by 42 beds – five new operating theatres and new consulting suites with capacity for more than 100 healthcare specialists. A striking, curtain glazed façade contrasts the straight-forward, regular geometry of the existing hospital. Aged river red gums reflect in the fractured angles of its azure hued glass.

HSPC associate director and designer Askolds Peterson spoke with Vision about the designer's role in shaping an ultra-cool aesthetic attuned to medical care and modern ideas about 'wellness'.

**What was the greatest design challenge?**

Most architecture, and healthcare projects in particular, work off the rectangular, or square grid. Any variation of this approach risks upsetting the efficiencies of the standard building module. We felt delivery of a more iconic form was worth investigation. Had we followed the familiar grid we would have produced another boxy building.

**What were your alternatives?**

It was originally conceived as a simple, rectangular box. Through the evaluation process the building lost a floor and with that lost a lot of its presence and performance and became somewhat banal. That initial design resembled a fairly featureless 1980s box. Our client agreed we should do better on this site. The hospital really understood that opportunity to break the mold.

WE FELT DELIVERY OF A MORE ICONIC FORM  
WAS WORTH INVESTIGATION. HAD WE FOLLOWED  
THE FAMILIAR GRID WE WOULD HAVE PRODUCED  
ANOTHER BOXY BUILDING.

Askolds Peterson,  
associate director, HSPC Architects

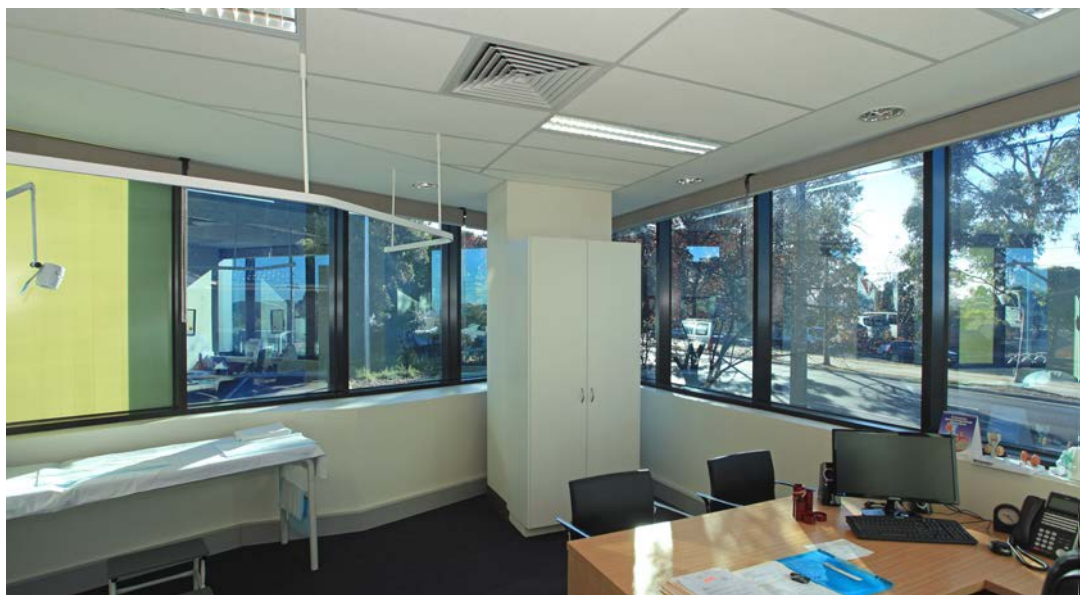


Angled, cranked glazing on the south elevation ensures a constant link for staff and patients to reflect upon the natural.



**Left, right and below**

Consulting suites rely predominantly on natural light and outlook to contribute to patient and staff wellness.







**Isn't design outside the square that much more expensive?**

If everything is non-standard materials and shapes that is certainly true. There are definitely economies by following the tried and true patterns. Here we wanted to ensure a lively, really welcoming building and if it meant breaking with convention and it could meet budget, which we did, then that was well worth the extra effort.

**What were the keys to that?**

The high visibility site and spectacular river red gums were pretty central to our ideas. The corners are tapered to reduce its bulk. And it has a lively presence and surface which glass delivered.

**That mapping of its 'skin' with a banded, folded glass facade really responds to the bark pattern of the trees.**

That unbroken link to the tree trunks, canopies and beyond plays a big part. We experimented with surfaces and tried to create a really responsive form to the site and also to staff/patient use. There is a diagonal cut across the building on the east and north elevation where it appears to cascade out while the eastern facade has subtle banding.

**What does the project say to patients, staff and passers-by?**

That hospitals and clinics don't have to be ponderous, maze-like buildings. Statement buildings can be quite modest in size and quiet in expression yet still command respect. This one occupies a prominent corner site and realizes that opportunity to provide a human scale and experience rather than the dread commonly associated with such places.

**What about practicality and ease of fit-out with its irregular floorplan?**

The interiors don't jump around all over the place, or appear in any way awkward. The effect is of subtle shifts in geometry and that actually promotes quite calm, flexible spaces. In reality the interiors are mostly rectangular.

**Passing value management can be like running the gauntlet. Was that your experience here?**

It had to survive that process or disappear. Thankfully we didn't need to apply external screens or some of the usual ESD entourage because ESD is already intrinsically within the building so we didn't have to hang anything off it. That saved a lot of headaches with compromising its expression.

**Were there any fears or concerns in acceptance of your concept?**

Our biggest fear was that through the value management process we were restricted to a single skin building. Most are double-skinned but with the shapes we imagined, it would have been very difficult. That was probably our saviour. We worried about traffic noise, but really there is very little traffic noise and the acoustic performance is surprisingly good.

**Was there any client concern about the ambitious use and expression of the glass envelope?**

Yes, initially. Builders occasionally want to cut-corners and it would have been easy for them to say 'look, we don't have the funds to do such complex glazing,' and for the design to be simplified. Fortunately the glazing contractor wanted to work with our design. By the time we had prepared our documentation and it hit the shop-drawing stage it was pretty well worked out.

**Yet you never know whether a building really works until it's completed. There's that unpredictable, invisible quality that no amount of 3D software can fully predict.**

That's absolutely true. You can use software to model and climb into your buildings and it's never 100 percent as to how it will really be experienced.

**A lot of public health care facilities resemble the Brave New World of Aldous Huxley. Keeping them human isn't always easy.**

We're mindful of keeping our buildings real rather than artificial. Despite facing a main road we actually have a terrific site. We worked around the eucalyptus trees and they form an important part of that response and dialogue. Patients and staff never feel shut away. It's a building that connects with the trees, sky and surroundings rather than distancing itself.



**Top**

West elevation reveals main entrance and streamlined, uncluttered appearance carried throughout the entire faceted, prismatic solution.

**Above**

Building winds around established trees and folds, origami-like to embrace the eucalyptus foliage.

**Your use of glass as a subtly patterned envelope is a real key as expression and experience from within.**

It's first and foremost a glass building that has a certain scale, form and interest. Like any material, glass needs to be specifically interpreted for the task and that is what occurred here. That envelope uses a coloured band on the western elevation which facets the building's scale, links the sky and sunset and helps to make the most of its site.

**What about thermal loads given it is such a stand-alone, exposed building?**

Our facade engineers determined Viridian's EVantage™ met and exceeded section J requirements. In the end there's nothing especially complicated about the product. It was economical and handled all of the key performance criteria. The building's orientation to the north-east means that the main thermal loads are restricted to the afternoon.

**Was there a best and worst project moment?**

We were asked to consider removal of a whole floor to make more of a podium type building. There was some uncertainty about leasing but we argued to retain that floor-space and form. Value management is something we often need to work through. We have to satisfy the needs of the Department of Health and many other groups. It can be a very complicated process to realize the actual building. The best part is coming out the other end of that maze with a building that can hold its head high.

**How does glass help achieve your design aims?**

It is critical to the chameleon affect you see. Of an evening it reads as a very horizontal object, while during the day the roof-top ribs lend a more vertical expression. There are other abstracted elements that contribute a certain sculptural quality. Our choice of glazing also offers this very deep contrast of blue and a subtle yellow tone.

**Is there a simple test you apply to these projects to establish if they're a success or failure?**

Every project and client is different. You can't formularize design and we would never try and repeat any of our projects.

**And client reaction?**

They're over the moon. It justifies their willingness to take an informed risk and the result is an all-round win – most of all for staff, patients and visitors.



## Credits

### Project

Northpark  
Private Hospital,  
Bundoora, Melbourne

### Architect

Health Science  
Planning Consultants  
(HSPC) Melbourne

### Design Team

Chris Doufas  
Askolds Peterson  
Bob Maple  
Steven McLean  
John Dardaganis  
Jeremy Schluter

### Builder

Built Constructions

### Windows

ASK Aluminium  
Fabrications Pty. Ltd.

**Principal Glass Provider**  
Viridian

### Principal Glazing

Viridian EVantage™  
SuperBlue toughened  
and toughened  
laminate, EVantage™  
SuperGreen toughened  
and toughened laminate,  
Seraphic™ Standard



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Peter Hyatt, Jennifer Hyatt  
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#### **Graphic Design**

Nexus Designs  
[www.nexusdesigns.com.au](http://www.nexusdesigns.com.au)

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