

VISION

BLACK DIAMOND

THE GLASSHOUSE, MELBOURNE, VIC

HOME TOWN HERO

GHD OFFICES, TRARALGON, VIC

CONTENTS



04

BLACK DIAMOND

The Glasshouse, Melbourne VIC

Architecture distinguishes itself from the mere act of building by hard won refinement. One offers polish where the other simply meets obligations. There is a thoughtful quality to good design contributing to more efficient operation and enjoyable experience.

In this regard the new Glasshouse centre, created principally as support operations and Headquarters L.C. of the AFL's Collingwood Football Club is a robust example of the sports genre: a lightweight, slenderized envelope and large, clutter-free interiors are connected by clear planning and the kind of assured window program only some architects and few builders seem to get.

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26

HOME TOWN HERO

GHD Offices, Traralgon, VIC

Glass is often one of the most unobtrusive of all building materials, but in the thriving regional centre of Traralgon, a new office of colour and confidence presents a bold face.

Viridian SuperBlue, SuperGreen and Bronze are only the beginning. Inside it's an equally intriguing story with the tenant architect installing acoustic, clear and translucent glazing. The result? Connected workspaces with priority on daylight. Here's how a very small architecture firm created a handsome home for a vastly bigger design practice.

BLACK



DIAMOND



Melbourne's green wedge parkland on the eastern flank of the CBD has undergone astonishing rejuvenation in the past decade. A flurry of development of enclosed stadia—most with whizz-bang operable roofs, has created possibly Australia's grandest sports and entertainment precinct.

The latest addition sits right next door to the grand-daddy of them all—the original 1956 Olympic Swimming Stadium by Peter McIntyre and Kevin Borland. Unlike its larger and sometimes louder siblings, this charcoal clad sports and function centre is a model of such understatement that it's possible to drive by, blink, and miss it entirely.

But the news isn't all about hide and seek with its faceted façade—much like a black diamond setting in a green landscape viewed from above. A variety of Viridian double-glazing makes a distinguished design contribution: to the east a vast cranked glass wall with views across the oval towards the sports mecca, to the west a glass surround invites the mighty swim stadium and south, more tall glass brings the Yarra River and Botanical Gardens even closer.



PROJECT
The Glasshouse
Melbourne VIC

ARCHITECT
Croxon Ramsay Architects

PRINCIPAL GLAZING
Viridian Thermotech™ &
Viridian VFLoat™

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM
Peter & Jenny Hyatt



CORE PRODUCTS



ENERGY



NOISE



CLEAR VISION



DECORATIVE



BUSHFIRE



STRUCTURAL



STORM



SECURITY

Croxon Ramsay Architects has a long association with Collingwood. The Glasshouse is the culmination of a long collaboration between architect and client. An evolving brief and tight, difficult site made life difficult, but the architects remained true to their design concept.

The result is a dark star combining reception space, gymnasium, boardroom and café amongst others, informed by a setting both historic and contemporary. As virtual secret agent, Viridian glazing performs a starring role in the process delivering architecture fully grounded and yet wide open to the possibilities.

Peter Hyatt spoke with Andrew Croxon about a project about to take centre stage:

PH Projects must often feel like family members. You invest so much time and energy and then release them and hope that they perform well in life.

AC That's true, especially on projects of long duration. You see them at their worst and best.

The sports/athletic metaphor is often invoked with sports buildings and facilities. We see the analogy with flight also in a lot of airport terminal design. This building is less obvious in the direction of stating: "Here is a sporting facility look at me!"

I would agree. It is not so much an obvious sports building and yet it certainly sits within a sports precinct and

engages heavily with that context. It speaks to the oval and to the neighbouring buildings. The centre's function is to bring other events into the precinct. The focus has been on comfortably combining the function centre and café with the sports operations, such as the gymnasium and meeting rooms. You could say it's not overtly a sports building, but it's a very dynamic building in how it reflects and works with the oval.

The other quality about this is that it's a very lean building. Good architecture involves sustainable material usage to best bare necessity, and that's the feeling of this project to the point that it appears so slender and resolved.

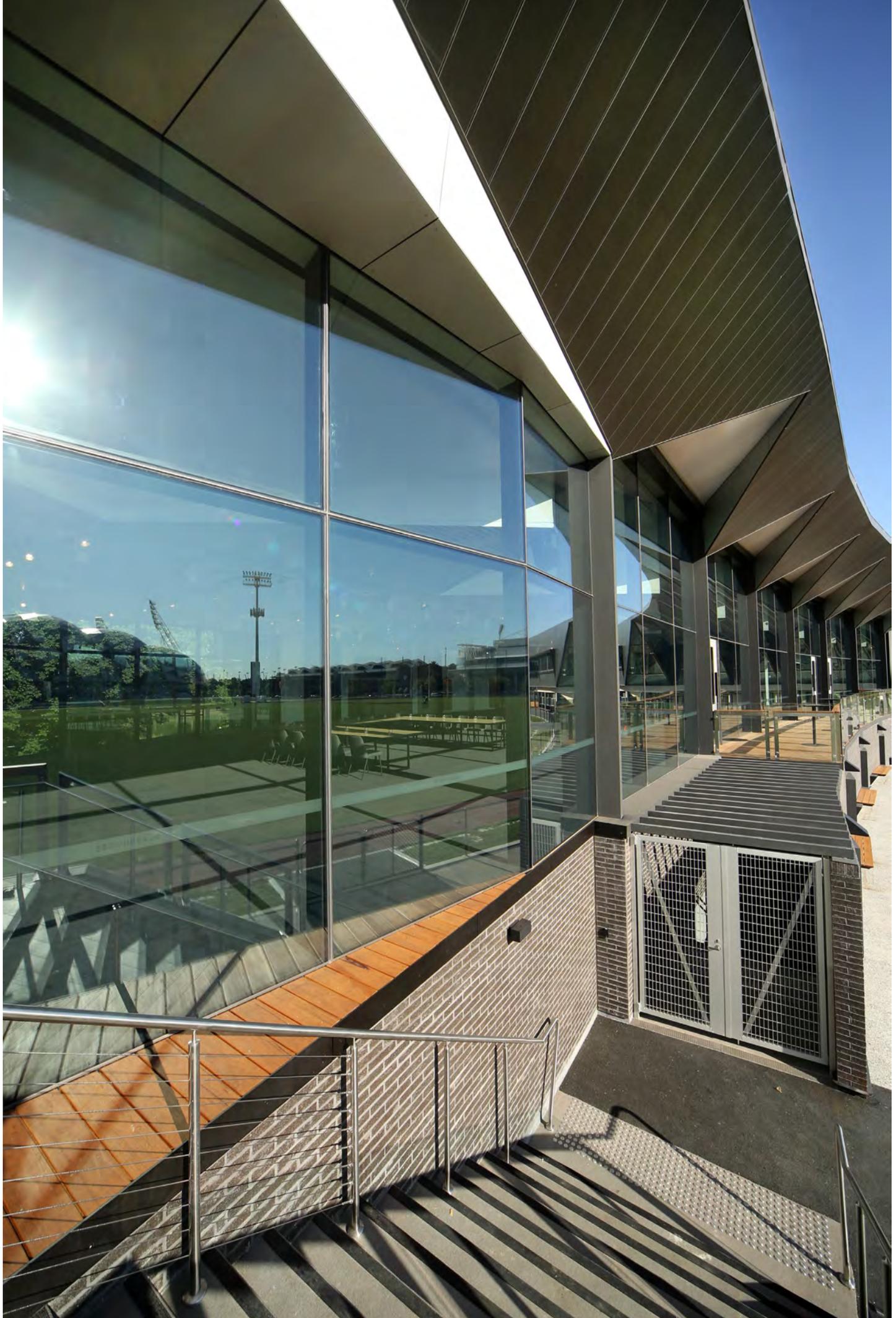
We definitely wanted that outcome, and that's driven, I suppose, by the level of design resolution and sophistication. It's also responding to the very, very lean building adjacent to ours—the 1956 Olympic Swimming stadium by Kevin Borland and Peter McIntyre. That's such a bare-bones, lovely structure that's so dynamic. We were trying to pick up some of that in this building.

Your work is actually quite subdued. The colour palette, the steelwork, glass and form is really quite restrained and certainly not competing with theirs is it?

No, no. That subtlety has come from the client to some degree and that monochrome palette of black and white reflects Collingwood of course.

Right The east facing main banquet space provides an elevated viewing platform. Structural steel and large glass sections contribute to a decisive, virtually obstruction-free sight-line for occupants.







CLICK TO VISIT
THE GLASSHOUSE





There are belligerent buildings and the courteous variety. This one is well-mannered and that's a strength because it retains and expresses a design viewpoint.

Working within this context was very interesting. Many of the surrounding buildings are quite expressive, however we were looking for that balance between dynamic expression and yet respecting the former Olympic swimming pool.

So your aim was to honour that project without submitting to, or being knocked off by it?

That's right, we didn't want to mimic it. We aimed to echo the ideas it was searching for, but interpret them through the filter of today's architecture. We have the contemporary advantage of a certain freedom with our expression because we have tools that allow a complexity not as easily achieved back then. However, we also had to work within the nature of the site. We were constrained within a curved triangle on one side, and it really shaped the design outcomes significantly.

It's a challenging site to say the least—a very tight wedge shaped site is hardly ideal.

It's the kind of site that plays havoc with the best of intentions. That's why we embraced a radial grid through the building. There's a lot of work making such a building work because it's not formed from a perfect curve. The grid grew as it went around. We had to be that honest with the set out, otherwise it would never have sat comfortably between the old Glass House swimming pool and the oval.

Apart from that most immediate side facing the Glass House, in what way does the building reflect the client requirements?

It was a very interesting client relationship because we didn't get a formal briefing to begin with. We were designing as the brief developed, essentially. We started with a very small pavilion, to replace an existing building removed, as part of the rectangular stadium development, and then as the client started to explore the project and look to engage with various stakeholders, the project grew. We were drawing in parallel to that, through a very prolonged schematic design process. It was very much an organic process, constantly picking up new ideas to meet client aspirations.





Did you or the client have a sense of posterity about this? Clearly the building next to you has a heroic post-war form as a remarkable statement. Is this something you're mindful of?

Very much so. Whenever you do a building in a high-profile precinct, you want to make sure that the outcome is worthy of that, particularly sitting next to such a building, which I happen to think is a great building. It really puts a lot of pressure on you to push as hard as possible to ensure the outcome works really well and compliments it as much as possible.

Viridian is particularly pleased and impressed by this one because, from a glazing viewpoint there is such complexity and challenges to arrive at the appearance of simplicity.

The client wanted glazing to embrace the oval and engage with the precinct. We had to ensure the glazing could perform in terms of size, support structure and appearances but also from an energy performance viewpoint. Those were critical issues with this sweeping facade. We worked with Viridian on many of the subtler glazing elements such as the bespoke, inclined triangular window. On the northern facade, facing the old Glass House we specified a dark tinted glazing to deal with the solar demands, but also reflect much of the old building in the new.

What parts of the project are you really pleased with and most proud of?

The way it makes the transition between the old building, the oval and actually pulls these two buildings together. Inserting a building between the oval and Glass House has been a really successful outcome. Hopefully it will activate social connections and draw people from all parts of the precinct. The landscaped forecourt is a big part of that. Moving away from big stadium-type architecture to a more human-scale was an aim from the outset.

Left Delta-shaped floor-plan of boardroom benefits from the use of extensive glazing to emphasise relationship of parkland and the adjacent 1956 Olympic pool.

WE HAD TO ENSURE
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ENERGY PERFORMANCE
VIEWPOINT.

Andrew Croxon, Architect

It's interesting that the client should request something with such a glassy result, virtually pulling you along rather than needing the big shove in that direction. Having done so, the question arises, "Well yes, we'd love to provide a lot of glass," but how do you do so in a way that feels right and actually is right for all of the roles that this building must perform?

Well, for example the building offers a unique function space for the very reason that it is so open internally and so connected to the outside. Many function spaces have limited viewing opportunities from within and focus solely on events. This building really connects to the river, the oval and back to the MCG.

Your windows certainly guide occupants to experience space as merging with the outside rather than confining or blinkering the eye.

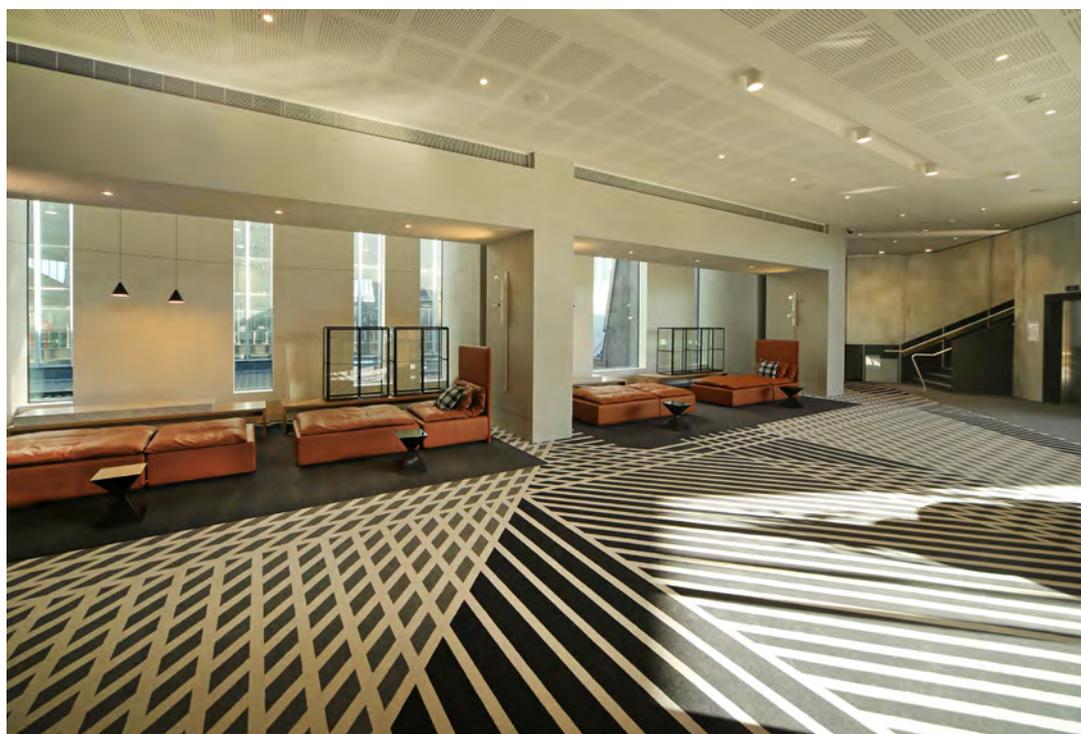
Visitors can now walk in the front door, up the main staircase and look from the new building immediately into the old building. There are two large sheets of glass that allow that view straight into the Collingwood Training Headquarters providing an unexpected connection between the old and new. We also feel that the views from the function centre towards the Botanical Gardens and Yarra River provide a pleasant surprise. Views from the top level towards the MCG from the main boardroom and that large triangular inclined window creates some wow in its own right. The opportunities for glazing placed the project beautifully in its context.

These lofty volumes really reward the investment of full-height windows and soaring glass. There's a generosity in that, like the old piano accordion at full stretch. Interior volumes really open up.

We definitely wanted to maximize the site opportunities. Glass runs up above the ceiling lines where we've been able to give that impression of continuity beyond and opening up to the skies. That's reflected from the outside of the building too, especially along that main facade.

What are some of the techniques and strategies you employ to ensure this functions in a more sustainable sense without simply meeting code?

We had an environmental engineer on the team and followed a sustainable management plan throughout the design process. Benchmarks were set very early on. Function centres demand very efficient mechanical systems. Energy modelling was undertaken on the building to assess the impact of the glazing—which is significant in the area, and ensure that the optimum performance was achieved through the glazing specification and envelope around the balance of the building.



Left & Above An emphasis on daylight informs interiors throughout. A broad, split staircase and generous lobby are significant for their lofty ceilings and capacity to deal with anticipated visitor numbers.

MANY OF THE ONSITE TEAM FOUND IT VERY CHALLENGING TO BUILD, BUT IT'S OFTEN UNDERESTIMATED HOW PEOPLE CAN RESPOND WELL TO THESE CHALLENGES, AND LOVE TO BE PART OF SOMETHING THEY EVENTUALLY TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN.

Andrew Croxon, Architect

How did Viridian contribute to this process?

With glass as such a prime design element we were conscious from the outset of the need to determine the correct type of glass to maintain the visible light transmission while ensuring a high performing envelope. Viridian contributed to these discussions very early with recommendations, samples and so on and we were able to consider options on how to actually make this building work to its optimum.

So each elevation is really a subtly distinct skin by virtue of that glazing choice?

It is. We needed the correct glazing for the correct application. There are different glazing combinations for different elevations and applications. For example, we needed much heavier interlayers than the standard thickness type for change-rooms to achieve complete privacy without noticeable light loss. Rather than identical glass throughout the project, the approach was specific and very targeted.

What is the major glass type used on the main east and west elevations?

Sunergy insulated ThermoTech™ glass units on the east while the darker more reflective glass reflecting the 1956 building is ThermoTech™ with a SuperGrey™ outer-layer.



GLASSHOUSE



Left Venue space and balcony provide a brilliant perch for guests. Viridian Sunergy insulated ThermoTech™ panels are on this east-facing elevation with a darker SuperGrey™ on the west which mirrors the Olympic Pool.



Custom glazing includes this large, triangular feature window to the main meeting room. Passing rower and river views to south.





You've mentioned some of the obvious benefits of glazing, but what about surprises? Anything you didn't expect?

Not really. It went together very, very smoothly. We imagined there were bound to be more surprises and a lot more resolution issues with contractors, but basically they took our detailed drawings and essentially just installed the windows and frames without any complications.

How important is the fabrication team on such complex projects?

We consulted with contractors on how we might actually build and assemble this, how we would ensure correct specification; those sorts of things. That upfront work paid off. The window contractor did a great job with a relatively straightforward installation. Many of the onsite team found it very challenging to build, but it's often underestimated how people can respond well to these challenges, and



Café to forecourt at northern end is designed to cater for the sports precinct.

love to be part of something they eventually take great pride in. It's a very non-standard building. Almost every aspect of that building is non-standard.

Post-war modernism produced more than its share of sterile, soul-less buildings, but there is now a more human modernity that sees amenity shaped by ergonomics.

That's true. It's interesting to see the progression of architecture from the modernist ideals through to where we are now. You could say the modernists were lucky, in that they didn't have to worry too much about safety and performance standards in their design. Many of the projects of that Modernist era would feel and operate in a totally different way just with, for instance, the kind of glass now available.



GLASSHOUSE







At what stage do you involve the glass manufacturer, glass and window suppliers?

Viridian is pretty much the first supplier we talk to in the building process. Then we talk with consultants to make sure the building fabric will work as we progress the design. Before we submit a planning permit, before we complete a schematic design, we have to pretty much know what type of glass will be used. That's why we're regularly talking to Viridian.

Is there a biggest single lesson to take from this project?

We learned many lessons along the way... No single thing stands out, but the next challenge we move onto will be a totally different proposition, and the history of your projects come with you. It's not always obvious or evident, rather an accumulation of experience and better ways of problem-solving.

Any final thoughts about the glass experience?

We need to be involved with the selection of glass very early on in the design process. It's imperative to understand the implications of window sizes and glazing performance, because it literally impacts the shape and the form of your building. You can easily get yourself in a position where you have a building you can't build, or you're failing to make the most of the opportunities. We don't want to be in that position. We analyse the performance of the glazing as we develop the design concept. That way we have confidence in the outcomes.

PROJECT

The Glasshouse

ARCHITECT

Croxon Ramsay Architects

INTERIORS

Hecker Guthrie

WINDOW INSTALLERS

Mills Glass

GLAZIER

Mills Glass

PRINCIPAL GLASS PROVIDER

Viridian

VRIDIAN TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Con Kantis,
Technical Specification Manager

Anthony Delaney,
Project Manager

Sheree Thorn,
Customer Service

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian ThermoTech™ IGU's
Sunergy Clear heat-strengthened
laminated with Argon gap

Viridian VFloa™ Clear toughened

Viridian ThermoTech™ IGU
SuperGrey™ Toughened with
Argon gap

Viridian VFLoat™ Clear toughened

BUILDER

ADCO Constructions

BUDGET

\$22 Million



GHD

1-3



HOME
TOWN
HERO



Suburban offices are the lifeblood for many builders, but much less so architects. This absence of design shows. Good architectural DNA is never accidental, so much as a deliberate effort to rise above mediocrity.

The special effort to create workplaces that transcend the banal and dreary is rewarded in so many ways. Not least for passers-by who quickly discern the difference between trash and treasure. Employees deserve better and the interest in sustainability is no longer just energy ratings and operating costs, but workplace culture and the ergonomics of well-being.

PROJECT
Offices, Traralgon, VIC

ARCHITECT
Gerhard Giedrojc

**INTERIOR FITOUT
(GROUND FLOOR & LEVEL 1)**
GHD

PRINCIPAL GLAZING
Viridian Bronze, SuperBlue,
SuperGreen™ DGU's,
ComfortPlus™

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM
Peter & Jenny Hyatt

Suburban and commercial shopping strips are realising the benefits where the legacy of built form is an inheritance rather than penalty. A few hours drive east of Melbourne, Traralgon is a thriving regional town with a population of 24,000 and spread of Victorian-era civic highlights—its 130 year-old Post Office for instance is a show-stopper.

Much more recent development however, is nothing if not pragmatic. This makes the addition of new offices by local architect, Gerhard Giedrojc all the more notable and the result of the considered, rather than hurried, discounted hand.

The result blends aesthetics and function and returns to the street, rather than drain it of interest. A multi-hued Viridian sourced glass façade has nothing to do with the one-trick, 1980s mirrored boxes. Instead the coloured performance glazing, central set-back and pavement connections all speak of a lively interaction. If only the metal entrance canopy was a more sympathetic fit—a fritted glass projection perhaps?



CORE PRODUCTS



ENERGY



NOISE



CLEAR VISION



DECORATIVE



BUSHFIRE



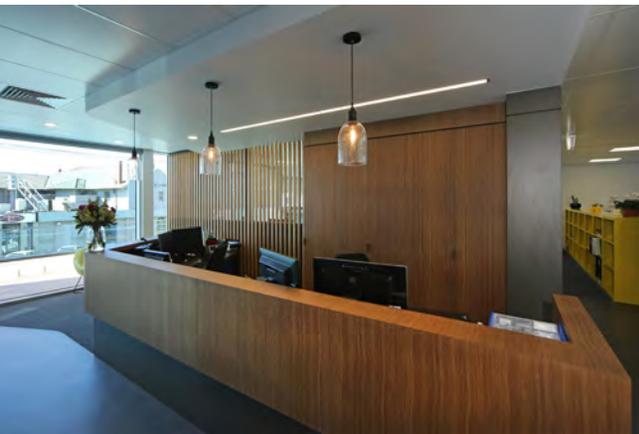
STRUCTURAL



STORM



SECURITY



East facing first level reception uses Viridian performance glazing to maintain a strong streetscape and sky linkage.

Global architects GHD were in need of a new regional home and went with this high-visibility low-rise to craft and office fit-out of transparency and vibrancy.

The firm required an energy efficient tenancy to reduce operating costs and also allow GHD to structure more functional staff workspaces. The developer worked with GHD to ensure that the building was the best fit possible.

Project architect Gerhard Giedrojc spoke with Peter Hyatt about a design that adds to the community's sense of self.

PH What did your client want when they approached you?

GG The basic brief for this building was to construct the building on a budget commensurate with the leasing rates available for other office buildings in Traralgon. That's the first criteria. After that the developer/client wants what looks reasonably attractive to the market. My job is to be as persuasive as possible and to say, "Look, we can make it better than reasonable. You can value add to that building." The whole role of an architect in these processes is to value add for the client while considering the building, its context and surroundings, to deliver the client something unexpectedly good and better than their baseline.

So you're helping them to re-imagine the possibilities?

Exactly, and it's an educative process, as well. The more you work with certain people, the more comfortable they become with you and your visions for them.

A comfortable, easy solution isn't necessarily the best solution?

When you consider the longevity of the buildings, people spend more on servicing their cars and consumables. In some instances, they don't consider cost in use in the longer term, whether that's simply cleaning, maintenance, materials or retrofitting. That's often quite strange, and I try and convey that to them. My advice is that they should care, because it value-adds to their building. The bottom line is increased goodwill and community benefit, a well designed and maintained building delivers. It can be a juggling act to convince people that this is actually good for them.

GHD has produced very pleasing, functional interiors for its offices and laboratory and coincidentally complements the spirit of your glass streetscape elevation.

Yes. GHD looked to create a workshop and offices that reflects the group's philosophy. The most important building element is the street façade and as such that front



GHD's interiors fit-out includes translucent glazing for meeting room privacy without compromise of daylight.



CLICK TO VISIT
THE GHD OFFICES





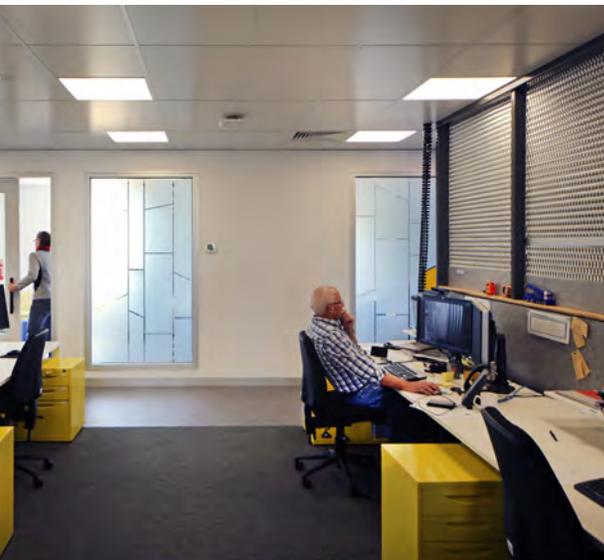
envelope went through quite a few iterations, but the basic objective was to avoid a linear shopfront streetscape. There is a bigger set-back than most neighbouring frontages. In other words a simple U-shape was created. Rather than to continue the facade as a horizontal skin, those corner elements create opportunity and excitement inside. Staff in those corner areas, transitioning from the lobbies and office spaces obtain fractured views, using different directions, rather than just one view straight out of a window. Those are the subtle opportunities.

It's a strong glass façade not at all contextual or a reflection of the streetscape. It's mural-like or a mosaic with jigsaw glass panels.

Yes. It's asking about the focus. Obviously the focus from cars travelling by at say 60 kilometres an hour on that road, requires that the eye captures something instantly. It doesn't have time to stop and look. That's the reason for yellow and some of the stronger horizontal banding. From the pedestrian viewpoint traveling at 4 to 6 kilometres an hour there is more time to appreciate the building skin and your eye can then work its way around that. As the light changes during the day it offers up different perspectives. When you visit many cities and towns a lot of modern buildings are so dark, they're almost like prisons, and reflect, I suppose, the economic mind-set at the time. People aren't scared of colour in buildings, especially after any initial surprise wears off.

How comfortable was your client with your proposal?

The design is probably about 80 to 90% of the original intent externally. Our developer/client was welcoming of that because he understood the need to attract a blue-chip tenant such as a GHD. The client also believes in and wished to develop an attractive building for prospective tenants. One that said: "This is a good building and you should be there." This gives the tenant an image by which they can be recognized and associated with.



What aspect of the building are you most pleased with?

One area is the foyer/lift space. We didn't have the money for a whole range of architectural details, but it's just the space for people upon entry to have this lovely breathing space. They're not crunched into a narrow stairway, or just straight to the front of a lift door where there's no room to move. It just adds to the feeling that the building's a nice place to be. The other element is that we were able to use the three types of Viridian coloured glass, rather than just clear glass or one colour. It needed the three—bronze, green and blue. They work beautifully together.

There's a highly complimentary aspect in GHD's fit out that maintains that very free flowing form with discrete, private spaces too. There's some cool glass interiors that fulfil the external promise. So often not the case.

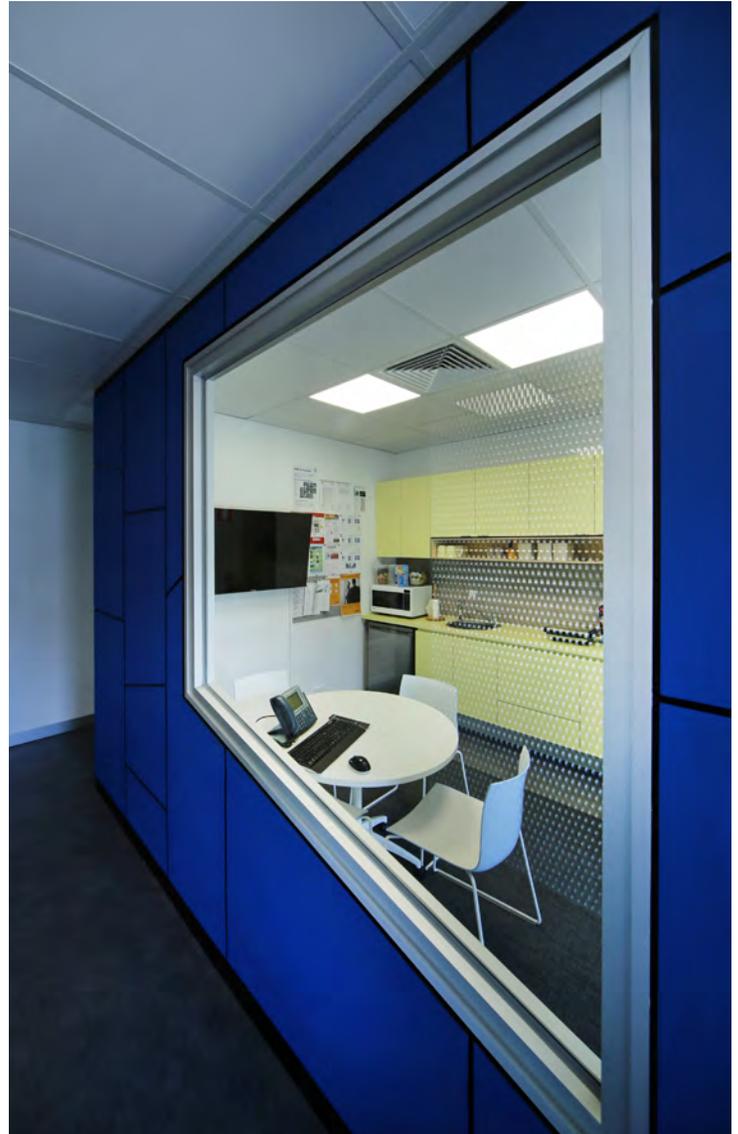
You're right. That's exactly what happens and is definitely to GHD's credit and speaks of the professionalism GHD brings to the Latrobe Valley. If you have something that works, don't try and overpower it, don't try and destroy it but rather enhance it. And they have done just that. There is a synergy between the exterior and their fit-out.

What research went into settling on the colors and understanding the glass you were installing?

The colours come from Viridian's standard range of Super Blue, the Super Green, and Bronze. They needed a certain energy rating and are a double-glazed system. Once those three colours were selected I had to be sure I could make them work in combination and at a scale that reads well. Glass is the key to this building, bar none. It determines the building. It wasn't the other way around. The building was constructed and then the glass was selected to suit.

Did you require Viridian's technical assistance?

No, in most cases, these buildings are small enough to not require technical assistance. They did cut the glass, of course, and the builder had to make a pattern for those shapes, so that they could be cut by Viridian, because the normal shopfitters would have a lot more trouble doing that.





Ground floor meeting rooms and research/testing laboratory use Viridian performance Vlam Hush™ glazing.

GLASS IS THE KEY TO THIS
BUILDING, BAR NONE.
IT DETERMINES THE BUILDING.
IT WASN'T THE OTHER
WAY AROUND.

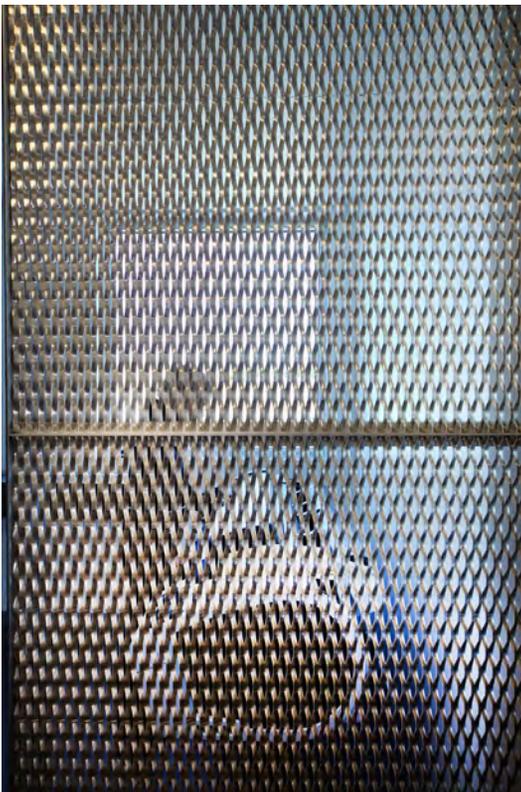
Gerhard Giedrojć, Architect

Has there been anything about the project less, or more, pleasing in its realization than you planned on the drawing board?

That's a two-fold question in the sense that I'm never satisfied with the result, because your vision is always different to the reality. You can always learn and do better. You can only achieve a certain amount of that in the realistic sense, but what is pleasing is that when people see something that they don't expect they tend to like it, even though it may not be that radically different. I think that's the most pleasing aspect of the whole process. All of the hassles and tribulations and trials that go into something like this, and the arguments that ensue, when in the end, other people are happy, then of course, the designer is happy, as well.

What do you hope that the architecture fraternity and wider community can learn from this building?

Just a sense that we can do something a little bit nicer and better, even if by small steps. That if you have an architect on board, they will almost certainly attempt to elevate the project and raise the standards, not to mention the whole experience of it and add to the longer term value of the project. And remember, it doesn't cost any more to do something right. It's the same cost if not more, to get it wrong, as it is to get it right.









Anything else you've learned from this project?

To ensure that the shopfitters and builders understand it takes time getting the fit and shape of these glass units correct when it's not a standard curtain wall. That will avoid the need to go back and deal with issues. When something is a little different with say, the incline, or cut of glass and setting into the frame, they need to ensure they understand what they're doing and that they are patient.

Was it a priority to source local materials where possible as part of quality assurance and sustainability?

Definitely. Most professional developers recognize that no matter where the building is constructed, you need to try and use local people and materials where possible. The community needs to get the maximum benefit from the use of local technologies. Anyone can just go and put something somewhere, freight in components and set it up. This may save some costs but deprives the local community. They deserve to be serviced and we try to reinforce the role of local manufacturing, services and trades. This project was the perfect opportunity to demonstrate that.

PROJECT
Offices. Traralgon, VIC

ARCHITECT
Gerhard Giedrojc

**INTERIOR FIT-OUT
(GROUND FLOOR & LEVEL 1)**
GHD

BUILDER
Tyler

GLASS SUPPLIER & SPECIALIST SUPPORT
Viridian

PRINCIPAL GLAZING
Viridian Bronze, SuperBlue™,
SuperGreen™ DGU's,
ComfortPlus™ Clear
Viridian VLam™ Hush

SIZE
1300 sqm

BUDGET
\$1.7 million (excluding fit-out)

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