

# VISION

ISSUE 33



## THE ROSSETTI STONE

Hawthorn House, Melbourne

## OFF THE GRID

Ballarat Construction Management  
Headquarters, Victoria

**Viridian**  
we ♥ glass

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## 04

### THE ROSSETTI STONE

Hawthorn House, Melbourne

The cracked, lustrous glazing of pottery fired architect Craig Rossetti's imagination in this house as up-scaled artwork for living. Consolidating the former backyard of a pair of attached Victorian dwellings, the house offers an enriched suburban adaptation. A highlight structural window-as-wall of Viridian SuperClear™ further advances the originality of this house.



CLICK TO VISIT THE  
HAWTHORN HOUSE



# 28

## OFF THE GRID

Ballarat Construction Management Headquarters, Victoria

Industrial estates are rarely inspiring or uplifting.

A project as solo-flyer can hardly be expected to redeem a whole precinct but the demonstration by example is surely one way to influence the future neighbourhood. Ballarat Construction Management's (BCM) new headquarters converts one of the dullest of building types into an intelligent supermodel. A prismatic, fractured façade of polished concrete aggregate and Viridian SuperGrey™ glass is key to a mindset of workplace as pleasure rather than pain.

Wrap around windows and thatch-style glass skylights deliver a hugely enjoyable geometric sweep taking in sky and tree-line.



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BCM'S HEADQUARTERS





THE  
ROSSETTI  
STONE

The architect's own house design can be fraught. Many find themselves facing blind-spots similar to the self-healing physician. Ego, ambition and budget are all central to the tables and mirror turned. How to multi task as client and provider? Numerous books of architects' own homes suggest it's the dream intersection of talent and opportunity. Gorgeous images rarely tell the whole story. It can be a lure to go broke, crazy or worse. Success stories are worth the telling because even these rarely come without struggle.

**PROJECT**  
Hawthorn House, Melbourne

**ARCHITECT**  
Craig Rossetti

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**  
Viridian SuperClear™

**TEXT, IMAGES & FILM**  
Peter & Jenny Hyatt

**M**elbourne-based Rossetti ran the gauntlet and emerged at the other end with a striking home to show for his efforts. Inspired by the irregularities of nature, Rossetti cast widely for ideas to inform a design of quirky and ingenious delight realised in floating roof planes and a towering window as wall.

Rossetti says the project is concerned with urban consolidation and highlights the opportunity to use limited resources. The allotment was created by subdividing a substantial Victorian property. It's a practice Rossetti describes as becoming more problematic in certain municipalities.





A 'cracked', glazed structural feature wall and lightweight stepped roof impart a suitably organic quality.

Left: A relatively anonymous laneway elevation conceals the interior surprises. Tunnel-like entrance foyer provides a counterpoint to the more expansive, light-filled interiors.

What began as a sketch of left over rubbish stacked against a backyard fence, emerges as an artful assembly of lightweight polystyrene panels and Viridian glazing. The panel-system's high insulation values and lateral strength contribute to passive solar heating of the house. The roof comprises these panels supported by a structural steel curtain wall comprised of Viridian SuperClear™. The curtain-wall and glazing pattern is derived from the surface effects found in pottery. Rossetti explains that these etched 'fault lines' define the form and create a very rigid structure.

After much to do and form reversal by council, Rossetti was recently recognised in a council-run competition for benchmark urban design. He met with Vision's Peter Hyatt to discuss the challenges of architect as self-healer and designer:

VISION **Are you the better client, or architect?**

CRAIG ROSSETTI This is a classic scenario. Really, the majority of the time the problem is not with the architect. If I've been told once I've been told a thousand times by both my wife and my children, extremely directly, what I've done right and wrong. That's always the issue.

**What about the architect in you that said 'spend more' and the client in you that said 'spend less'?**

It's a hard one because I've got to live in whatever I make a decision on. Sometimes you've got to make a decision and be the real architect, rather than be the corporate architect where you do the right thing by everyone. You've got to just sit back there because at times, what happens is you make a decision to get it right for everyone, and yes, they need to live with it. You're more frustrated than anything and you're told about what went wrong, which was their decision. It's hard work.

**There's a certain extroverted and fearless quality to this design. When you do a glass wall you really do a glass wall. It's not half-hearted or half-baked. You've had a real go. That's so admirable that you've said, "Let's paint a big canvas of glass on this wall. It's a strong idea. Let's not go in half-cocked with a window of say two by one and a half metres. Let's do big" That's one reason why this works as the good idea magnified with an expanded power and energy.** That's an important part of the architect's role: to assess what needs emphasising, what needs shielding or fewer funds directed at. The feature window is really critical to the success of this house. I can't imagine it without it and while there are plenty of other contributing elements in that hierarchy of special moments that is probably the one that leads the way here.



Ground floor living spaces intersect with the swimming pool for a direct interplay of water and reflections.



The feature window is really critical to the success of this house. I can't imagine it without it and while there are plenty of other contributing elements in that hierarchy of special moments, that is probably the one that leads the way here.

What about the architect  
in you that said 'spend more'  
and the client in you that  
said 'spend less'?

PETER HYATT, VISION



CLICK TO VISIT THE  
HAWTHORN HOUSE







Previous page: The mezzanine view takes in the gently reflective light through clerestory glazing with ceiling as light baffle.

Left: The upstairs family room leads to two bedrooms and bathroom.

**Can being open to every piece of well-meaning advice make you vulnerable and compromise your design?**

Yes, it's very problematic. Having said that, if you're not a good listener you will be brought undone as well.

**Don't architects need to have something of the Little Dictator about them. If not, then there is design by consensus that creates the camel instead of the racehorse.**

Yes that's true. You can easily end up with an ocean of conflicting opinions "Why would you do that? No, get out of here." "It's what you wanted." "Oh really? I didn't want that," It becomes very muddy, very scrambled, very quickly.

**What distinguishes this house from most of its neighbours?**

This was epic to get through local planning. Neighbours objected to the greenscapes of the back yards being built on. We wanted our house to be identified as a separate building, with its own lane-way address, but Booroondara Council objected. It said we needed 67 percent of all neighbours with houses backing onto the lane to agree and the laneway could have the delightful name Railway Lane despite the fact that no railways are nearby.

After two years council said no, we couldn't name the lane. We had to keep all this extra land to access at the front. It was all about urban consolidation the wrong way. It should have been, "Yes, use the back lane." We don't have to have huge buildings. We can keep the Victorian buildings. We can do all this to consolidate, without having to do big tall buildings. The irony is I submitted it in the Booroondara Urban Design Awards and was awarded second place in the multi-units category.

**Who or what provides your design inspirations?**

Modernism is a fantastic starting point. Then there's everything around us that is probably the greater inspiration. This is a small house in a big world. It's about the flow of spaces and a response to all of those influences that exist in the everyday and which you try to translate efficiently and beautifully.

**There is an organic quality here, being stepped and feathered in the way nature works where skins and surfaces often exist as layers.**

The feature window wall and stepped roof shapes the way the daylight enters. The window patterning is taken directly from crazed pottery glazing. It was very hard that it not appear as resembling a spider's web or giraffe's skin. The panels incorporate clerestories with water washing over it and this brings interest to the whole building.



**There is considerable discontent about new houses maxing out their allotments. You have put quite some value in the negative space of the garden and the pool, rather than building wall to wall.**

Well, that's the whole point. It's a 500 square metres allotment. It's not small, yet it's not enormous. It's about 30 squares, including the garage. Most of the house opens to the garden and light. Out of one house are three houses. Three families now live here, which to me is serious urban consolidation.

**Resolving the glazing appears to be the defining artistic or aesthetic element within your design?**

As a sequence of spaces, it is important, but it needs a full stop at the end to make it a decent sentence. It's also about opening and closing up vistas as you travel through. When you enter the front door, you enter a tight space and view a blank wall, rather than looking right through to the other side of the block. You don't want to give everything away right at

The contrast between muted, light and mirrored surfaces is most apparent in the kitchen and meals area. Bedrooms and adjacent bathrooms all enjoy direct relationship to courtyard gardens.

This is a small house in a big world. It's about the flow of spaces and a response to all of those influences that exist in the everyday and which you try to translate efficiently and beautifully.

CRAIG ROSSETTI, ARCHITECT

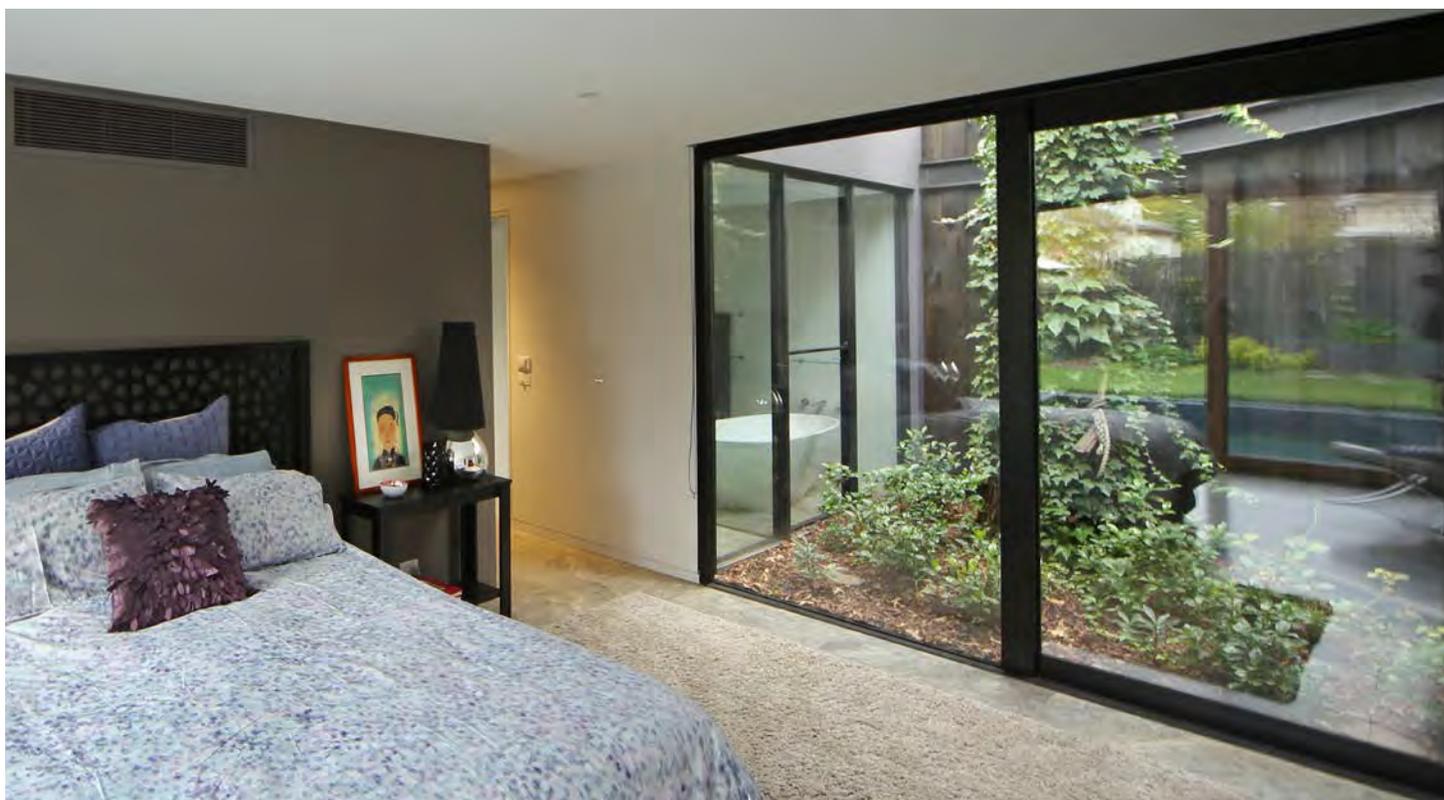
the start. You close it up so that when they come in they turn around, look at the glazed walls at each end of the curved wall, and then turn around and go, "Oh, there's more around the corner." It just keeps expanding as you go around these secret doors and through that main entry space. You are then taken back around with access through the master bedroom and all of these other elements.

**Does such a daylight responsive house introduce thermal management and glare issues?**

There's no problem with glare or uncontrolled daylight because the stack panels of the roof cantilever offering plenty of protection. Their design is calculated largely around solar gain, but I then tuned its edges for additional interest. The heat load is mainly throughout winter. The pool is located to the north of the curtain wall so that you then get patterns bouncing off the water onto the interior walls and ceilings.

**Do you have an overall attitude towards the role of glass in your architecture?**

We try and use clear glass wherever possible purely for the transition between inside and out. There are times when reflective and other glass types will work. With Section J energy regulations as they stand, architects need to be very smart using glass.



**And your feature window makes quite the statement?**

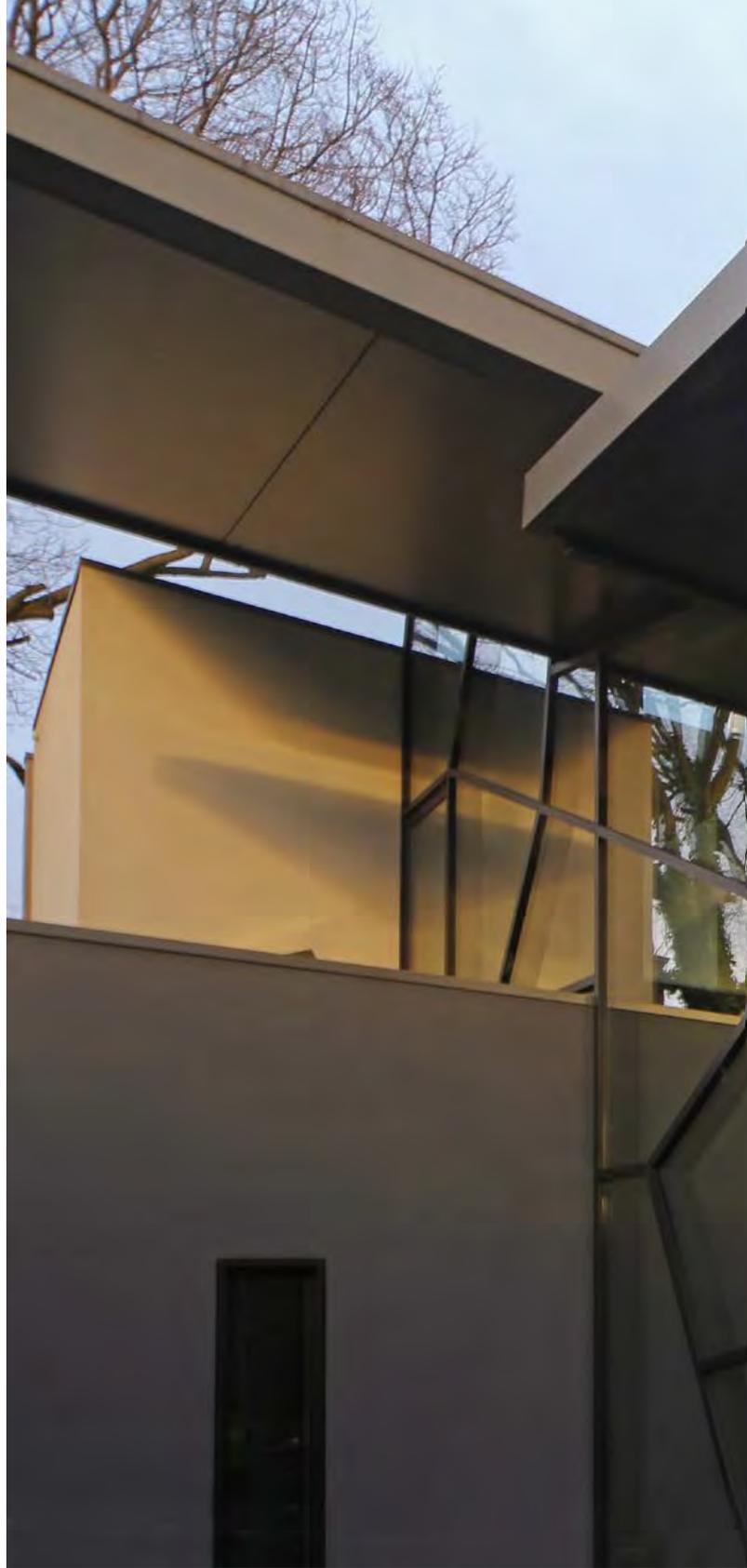
Yes, it does, and obviously being structural as well, it means that it has to have a logic to it to hold the roof up as well. Everything is relying on it. It's that the house is not a one-act event, but it is a pretty big act, the one that's in there.

**You must have caused your glazier and builder sleepless nights.**

No, it was my wife and myself. The glazier was fantastic. The structural engineer was great as was the steelworker who got that complex frame pretty much in one. He snuck in at 4am in the morning on the freeway with the frame in two parts on the back of the truck. CAD helps hugely, but the reality of the CAD drawings compared to the structural steel frame is that it's just taped with templates in place. The glazier did a first round of templates and individual templates for everything on the ground.

**Do you feel glass has kept pace with other building materials?**

Definitely. It's leading the way with technology that isn't always highly visible. This framing system had glass taped to the front for precise fit and then adjusted; it was just fantastic. It's the classic glazing system but it still works like a champion.



**PROJECT**  
Hawthorn House, Melbourne

**ARCHITECT**  
Craig Rossetti

**ENGINEER**  
Keith Patrick

**BUILDER**  
Finley Constructions

**WINDOW INSTALLER/GLAZIER**  
Green Haus – Andreas Kiel

**GLASS SUPPLIER AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT**  
Viridian

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**  
Viridian SuperClear™

**SIZE**  
30 sq.

**BUDGET**  
\$900,000 (inc. pool)





OFF  
THE  
GRID



BCM



By night a Rubik's Cube on steroids.  
The reception with a difference.



Being a stand-out shouldn't be that difficult an achievement when most suburban warehouse estates are soulless and dreary. But apparently the task is monumental because the status quo is rarely, if ever, challenged. Enter BCM stage left. And there will be many who thank the firm for opening more than a few minds to the possibility of a building type, less as man-cave than as tree-house and show-stopper.

Just to prove not all builders – and clients – are created equal, BCM were determined to illustrate how a skilled builder and fine architect could team to break the accepted wisdom of what constitutes an office warehouse. Also enter stage-left Viridian who had to manufacture complex glass shards to extremely tight tolerances determined by surveyor's laser measurements.

The resulting facade demanded millimetre-fit, bespoke panels and a kaleidoscopic imagination. Architects Crosier Scott & Associates' vision reinterprets a typical warehouse/office as exemplary work-space, light-filled and technologically advanced building with uplifting spatial experiences and facilities. Staff and clients are central rather than incidental.

**PROJECT**

Ballarat Construction Management  
Headquarters, Victoria

**ARCHITECT**

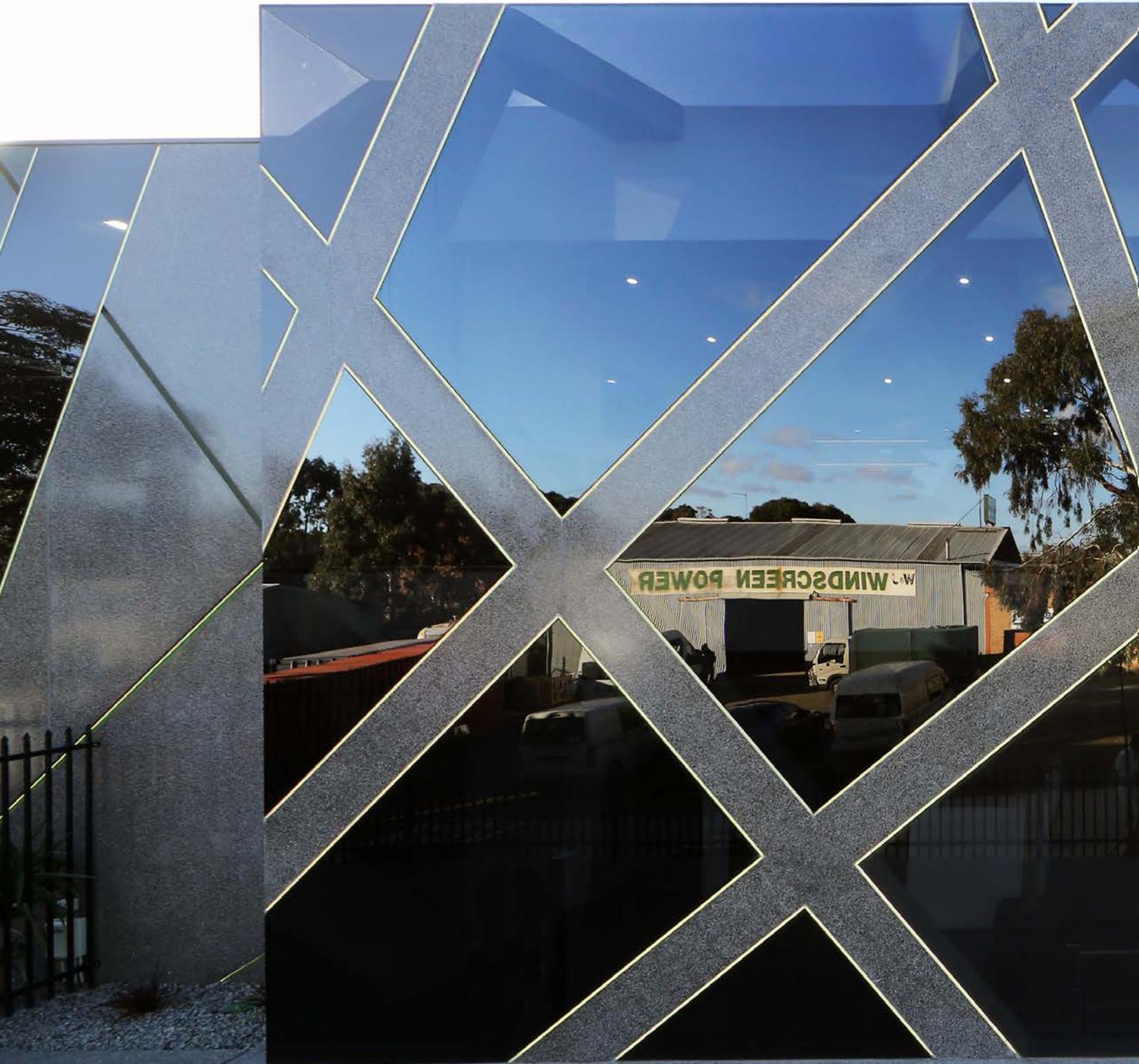
Crosier Scott Architects, Melbourne

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**

Viridian SuperGrey™  
Toughened, custom cut and fitted

**TEXT, IMAGES & FILM**

Peter & Jenny Hyatt



CLICK TO VISIT  
BCM'S HEADQUARTERS



A series of individual laser measured 'window' gaps required millimetre perfect fit with bespoke Viridian glazing.



BCM's flawless build included polished concrete aggregate wall panels bisected diagonally here with glass to illuminate the rear storage and assembly area.



Instead of slot windows and porridge like tilt-slab walls, BCM and CSA chose grandeur rather than 'bland-ur' in their quest to enliven a neglected building type. The office/warehouse features pinwheel style glazed fractals reminiscent of the central glazed vault in Melbourne's Federation Square.

The design employs a refined material and patterning language to unify the project, inside and out. This language is represented through the punctuated façade by a cross-hatch of Viridian glazing, concrete and Corten steel accents.

A particular challenge is the tension between the design intent and functional constraints. These were overcome through creative design-build solutions between designer and client, such as the silicon glass panels rebated into concrete frames without channels or framing, pushing sheet size beyond conventional measures. Formed on the ground slab, formwork had to be built in reverse, poured and craned into position. The concrete is polished from the band beams right through to the warehouse tilt-up panels, to highlight the natural aggregates. Pushing the impact further, channels in the concrete house are recessed and coloured with LED strip lighting to create a stunning effect at night.

Continuing the language of the external facade, the light-filled double-height entrance foyer features a suspended triple pendant, polished concrete cantilevered staircase and the confident form of a sculptured Corian reception desk. To the rear a slatted timber screen softens the space visually and acoustically, concealing storage, workshop, staff amenities and access to the warehouse. Upstairs a generous director's office, boardroom and a combination of cellular and open-plan office space promote a creative, flexible workplace.



I recall saying to David Moyle:  
“This is going to be a monster  
to build. I don't know how  
you're going to actually build it.”  
He said, “Don't worry. You  
design it, and we'll build it.”

ALAN CUBBIN, ARCHITECT





Vision's Peter Hyatt spoke with project architect Alan Cubbon, Director of Crosier Scott and Associates to learn of the trials and tribulations of a design that has won worldwide plaudits:

**VISION**      **It's a project off to an auspicious start winning New York's Architizer's A+ 2016 People's Choice Award for world's best building facade.**

**ALAN CUBBON**    It's a fantastic result and despite believing in it, of course, there is that surprise of winning. All up there were around 1.6 million votes across all categories. That is pretty gratifying and recognition of the efforts of so many people who have contributed to this result.

**How do you hope this project will assist your client?**

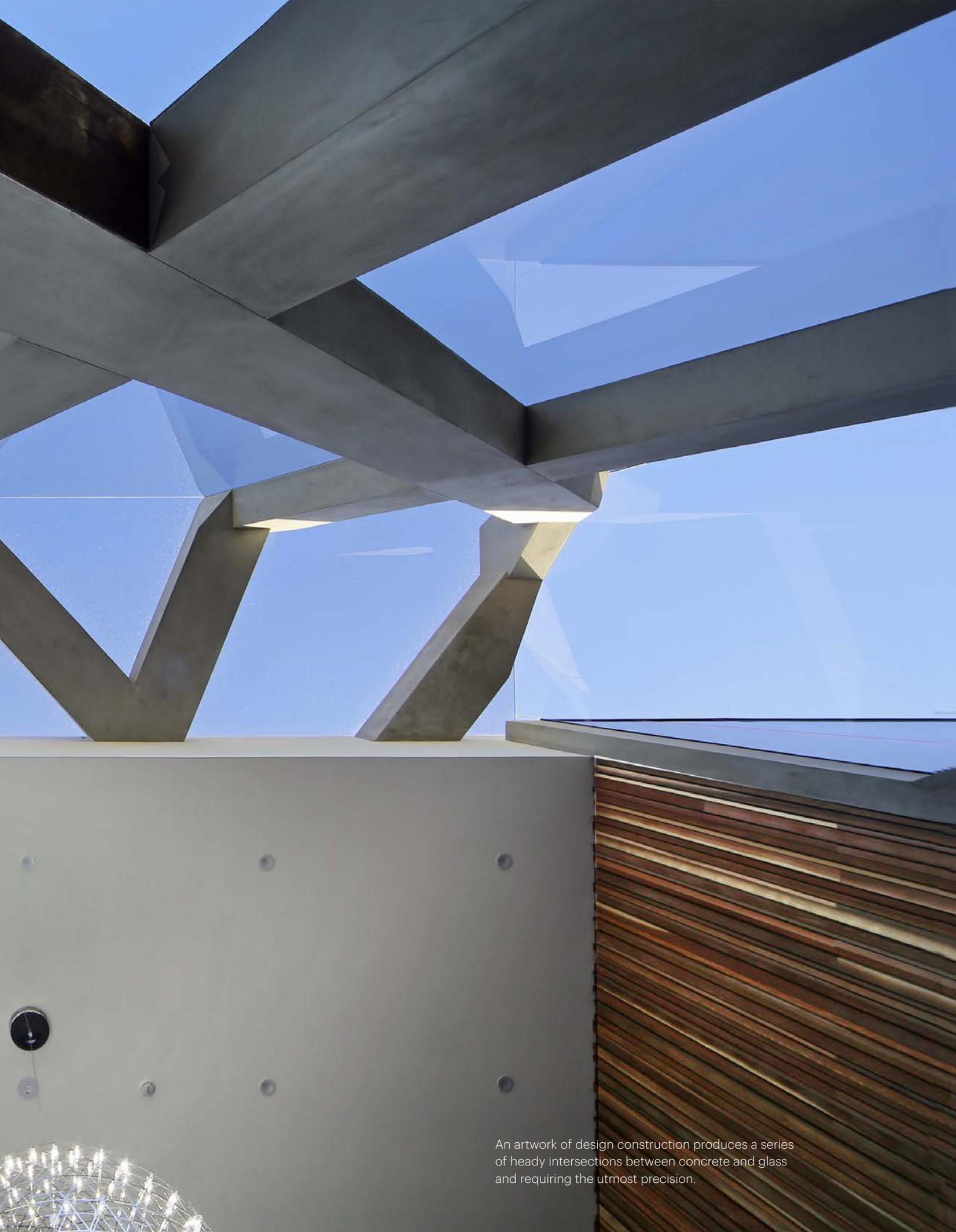
It helps to put them on the map regionally and provide a great business base. It's also a building that reflects BCM's very high level of professionalism and capabilities in regard to craftsmanship.

**Given the relatively barren nature of most warehouse strips and estates BCM's headquarters, presents a pretty bold point of difference.**

Our intention was to create a real presence beyond the standard facade. BCM's David Moyle wanted this to really stand out in its environment. The challenge was this difficult, un-wanted site. Nobody went near the area because of the complexities as a flood-prone zone from the creek to the property's rear. The site was a wasteland and yet BCM has been able to turn that all around with significant site reclamation – and of course this design.

Front-of-house includes an ingeniously located boardroom to reveal work in progress and connection to the world at large.





An artwork of design construction produces a series of heady intersections between concrete and glass and requiring the utmost precision.

**You don't end up with such a result with the simple click of a button.**

We originally struggled to come up with the final built form, during the early days we played with a complex extruded form through our fairly fine 3D technical software programs. I recall saying to David Moyle: "This is going to be a monster to build. I don't know how you're going to actually build it." He said, "Don't worry. You design it, and we'll build it."

**How quickly did the idea come about?**

At one stage, it was very much a confused origami type structure. Personally I think it was a little too over the top. It metamorphosed into what you see today essentially, which is a simplified form, nevertheless with a number of challenging construction issues.

**It's a kaleidoscopic result with plenty of geometry in the glass. Were you concerned the result might all end up a confusing patchwork?**

At one stage we were pushing the boundaries too far. It wasn't hitting the mark because we were trying too hard. There were too many materials, different shapes and angles and it lost its effect. Your eye didn't sit comfortably with it.

**What were some of the practical construction realities?**

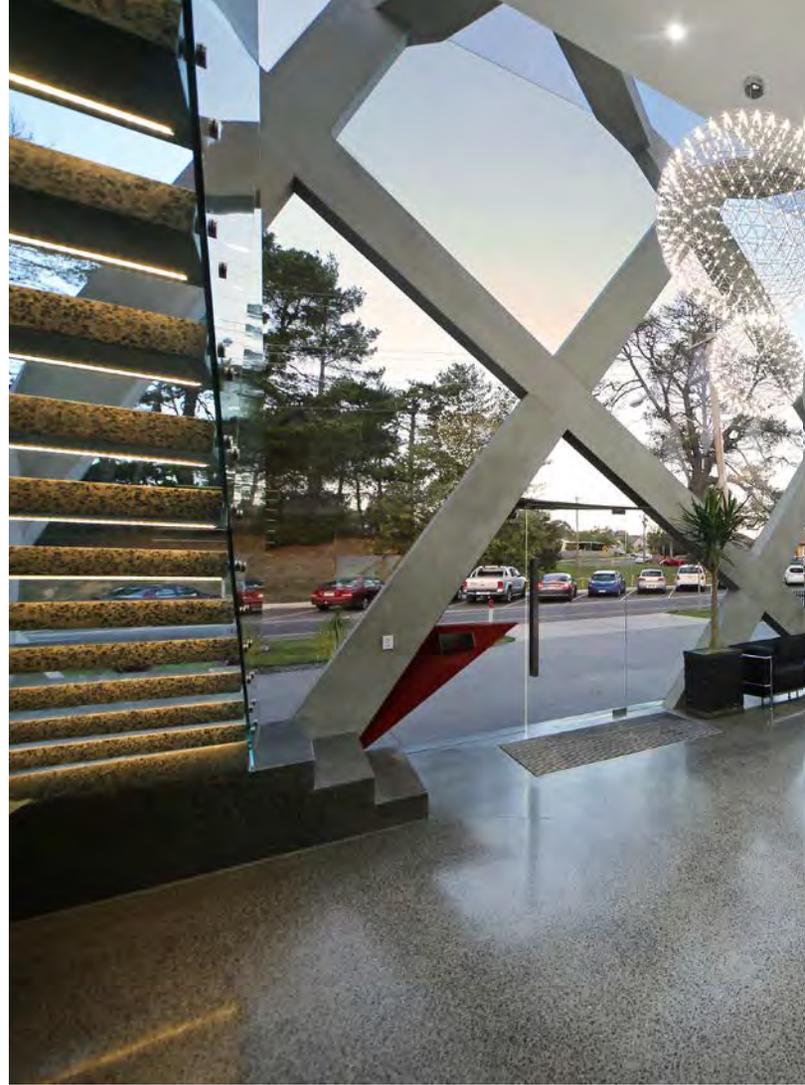
Working up so many angles and handling the difficulty of so much complicated form-work. Then there is the complexity of the detailing. Much of the glass, while large, is very simply rebated into the concrete form-work. What should be easy is made harder by the fact that concrete is so unforgiving. Anyone who works with concrete will know how difficult it is to achieve that precision of sharp edges and exposed aggregate.

**What about the glazing fabricators and window-makers?**

David Moyle of BCM investigated and invested a significant effort to see what was possible with glass. Mostly suppliers said, "No, not interested. It's too hard." He ended up at Viridian, Sydney, who could meet his needs and deliver glass to his demanding specifications. It was an absolute challenge to get the glass to its maximum spans to fit the style and design we came up with. I'm glad he got the answers.

**How did you arrive at a fit whereby the glass appears millimetre perfect?**

We began with the idea of templates to be sent to the glazing fabricator. David decided to interactively survey the facades and provide a digital format with accurate dimensions for each 'window' surveyed on site and in situ once the concrete was formed. Once the key elevations were surveyed, the precise specifications were sent to the glaziers.



Anyone who works with concrete will know how difficult it is to achieve that precision of sharp edges and exposed aggregate.

ALAN CUBBON, ARCHITECT

Left: Polished concrete flooring reflects the overall ambition to dramatically draw daylight into the reception area.

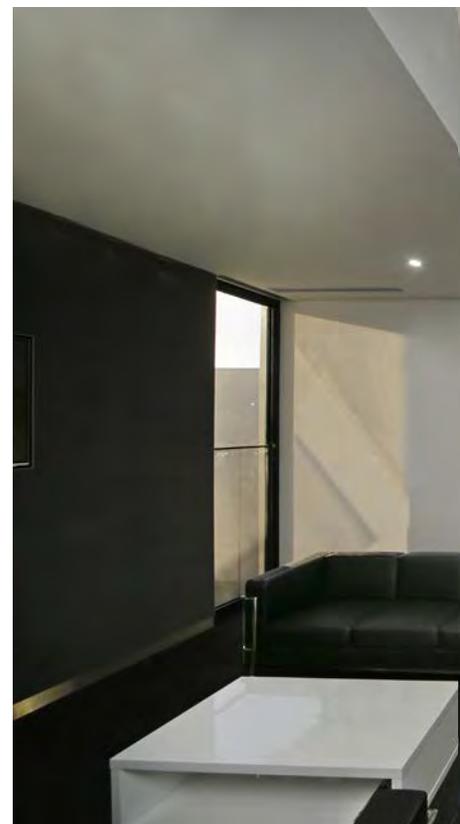
Below: View from boardroom as mezzanine with frameless glazing of walls to ceiling.





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“No, not interested. It's too  
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needs and deliver glass to his  
demanding specifications.

ALAN CUBBON, ARCHITECT



An office of skylight and highlight and screen to provide the perfect position for 'master control'.



**It's an unconventional solution.**

It really demonstrates BCM's capabilities. It was demanding and BCM was a match for that. The coloured LED lighting highlights it as unique statement.

It gives the building an impact around the clock, but most obviously of an evening. There's full control over that to change, select and rotate colours. The LEDs are a fairly cost effective element to source and very cost effective to run.

**You achieve a result that stands out for all of the right reasons in an otherwise dreary estate.**

The hope is that the area will regenerate and hopefully this will be a catalyst. What we simplified in the building form itself is carried throughout. Internally for instance, you find an awful lot of detailing within the joinery and many of the fixtures and fittings, which compliment the overall architectural language. It's really a holistic approach to an old school building form.

**The overall build cost appears staggeringly economical.**

Some of that has been absorbed and incorporated in BCM's labour. They also worked with many tried and tested local contractors keen to participate in a project they realised would set a benchmark. David Moyle was very selective with materials and finishes and sourced cost-effective alternative materials.

**Does this type of project reset the agenda from the production-line mentality of the warehouse as rather chilly, fluorescent-lit boxes?**

Well it certainly demonstrates that there are alternatives. The main entry foyer is really a feature sculptural element. Obviously in winter months there's a requirement to also illuminate/heat the larger back-of-house spaces. The change from the former offices has left everyone pretty gob-smacked about how good their new workplace, offices and storage areas are.

**It's a reward for rolling the dice and trying the unconventional, yet there's more effort required to get this kind of result, isn't there?**

Yes, absolutely. I have to take my hat off for these considerable investments, not just financially, but perhaps more so for the client's time and effort. When you're a sole director like David Moyle trying to concentrate on an emerging business it takes a huge commitment, and a huge effort to actually pull something like this together while maintaining business operations.





**As an architect you found a client who's prepared to push you, and you push them. 'Visionary' is overused, but here was somebody willing to explore well outside the square – and rectangle.**

Those clients are far or few between. It has been very much a team effort. We like to think we've played our part in that, but BCM really revealed an ability to back-up the talk of a special project and realise headquarters that demonstrate an absolutely genuine commitment to think and build creatively.

**Is there a project highlight moment?**

One very pleasing aspect for me is that the finishing touches on the fixtures and fittings resemble the original architectural vision and entire architectural intent. The ambition to create something unique and which really pushed the boundaries of its craftsmanship is incredibly pleasing.

**That idea of infusing a building with such a degree of craft is uncommon. As an architect you might hope for that, but it rarely happens. Budgets, cutting corners and a raft of issues conspire against that.**

I think society is inclined that way. So much is disposable rather than enduring.

**We are committed to the fact that design can stimulate healthy and active habits in the workplace. Glass provides the ability to create a highly permeable building envelope which allows people to connect with and be aware of their environment.**

**Can you tell me how glass became such an important coat-of-arms here?**

We are committed to the fact that design can stimulate healthy and active habits in the workplace. Glass provides the ability to create a highly permeable building envelope which allows people to connect with and be aware of their environment. This is recognised as a major contributor to one's health and well-being.

**Were there concerns about cleaning and maintenance?**

We were concerned with the expense of cleaning the glass, but that hasn't really shown itself to be an issue. David was obviously keen to use expanses of glass and it's just beautiful. It's a really tremendous combination of the exposed aggregate, polished concrete and the glass, which is completely different in nature, but have a similar characteristic in their uniform polish.

**Any other value in building this way?**

Fewer materials can be incredibly effective. So much better than a wide variety of surfaces and finishes. There's something very honest and revealing about glass and concrete. David was also keen on an environmental agenda, so the whole building can eventually be recycled. The structural steel framework, concrete and glass can be recycled at the end of their life cycle.

**Is there anything that you hope to take away from this project or that will inform future work?**

Everything we do is set to context and clients. We don't have an out of the box, cookie-cutter solution. Every project is different. This project was a really rewarding experience. Every project is completely different no doubt.



**PROJECT**  
Ballarat Construction  
Management Headquarters,  
Victoria

**ARCHITECT**  
Crosier Scott Architects,  
Melbourne

**BUILDER**  
BCM

**INTERIOR FIT-OUT**  
BCM

**WINDOW INSTALLER/GLAZIER**  
The Edge Glass

**GLASS SUPPLIER AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT**  
Viridian

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**  
Viridian SuperGrey™  
Toughened, custom cut and fitted

**SIZE**  
986 sq.

**BUDGET**  
\$1.43 million (ex. fit-out)

**AWARDS**  
Winner Architizer 2016  
for Architecture +Facade



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