

VISION

ISSUE 49

DIVINE LIGHT

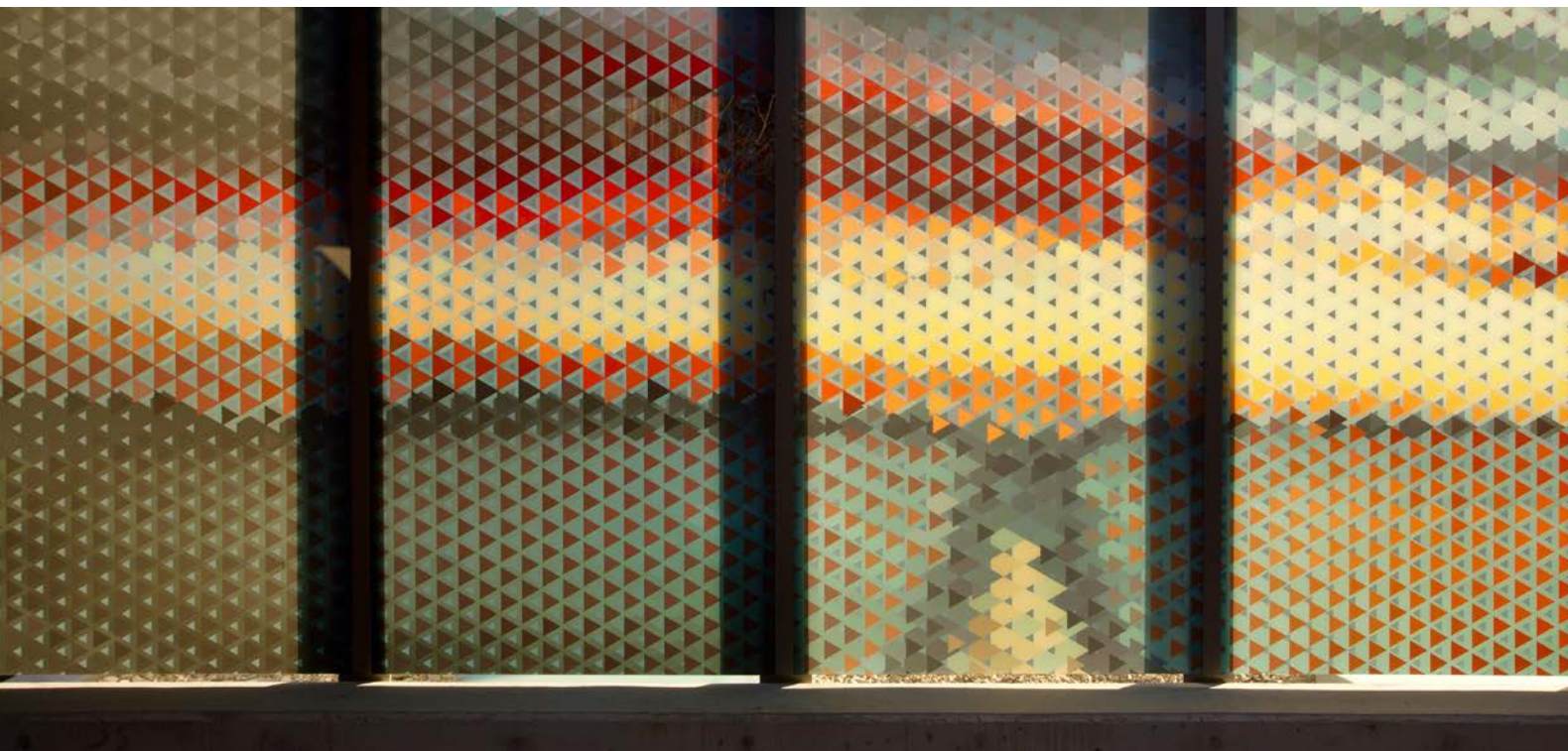
Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra, Sydney

TALL ORDER

Hawthorn Residence, Victoria

Viridian
we ♥ glass

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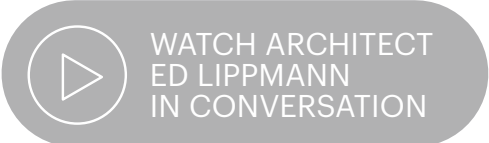
DIVINE LIGHT

Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra, Sydney

The Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney's harbour-side Woollahra is an all-too-rare addition to the suburb's built and spiritual fabric.

This new worship and function centre is much more than a sanctuary of calm for a privileged few. Ed Lippmann is best known for his lauded Chifley Tower, Boy Charlton Pool and numerous residential works. Once again his design conviction shines through for worshippers and wider community alike with a design of real inclusiveness. Contrasting traditional materials of masonry and tile, his branching steelwork and tapestry of Viridian glass denote a new era in the synagogue's grand Australian story.

Overall it's a masterwork of transparency and dynamic form. A forecourt 'umbrella' of clear performance glass shields the elements yet brings in daylight, while delicately patterned religious motifs featured in Viridian's new PixaGraphic™ glazing produces great resonance and further light play.





24 TALL ORDER

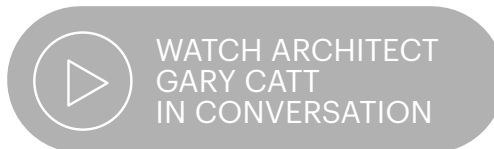
Hawthorn Residence, Victoria

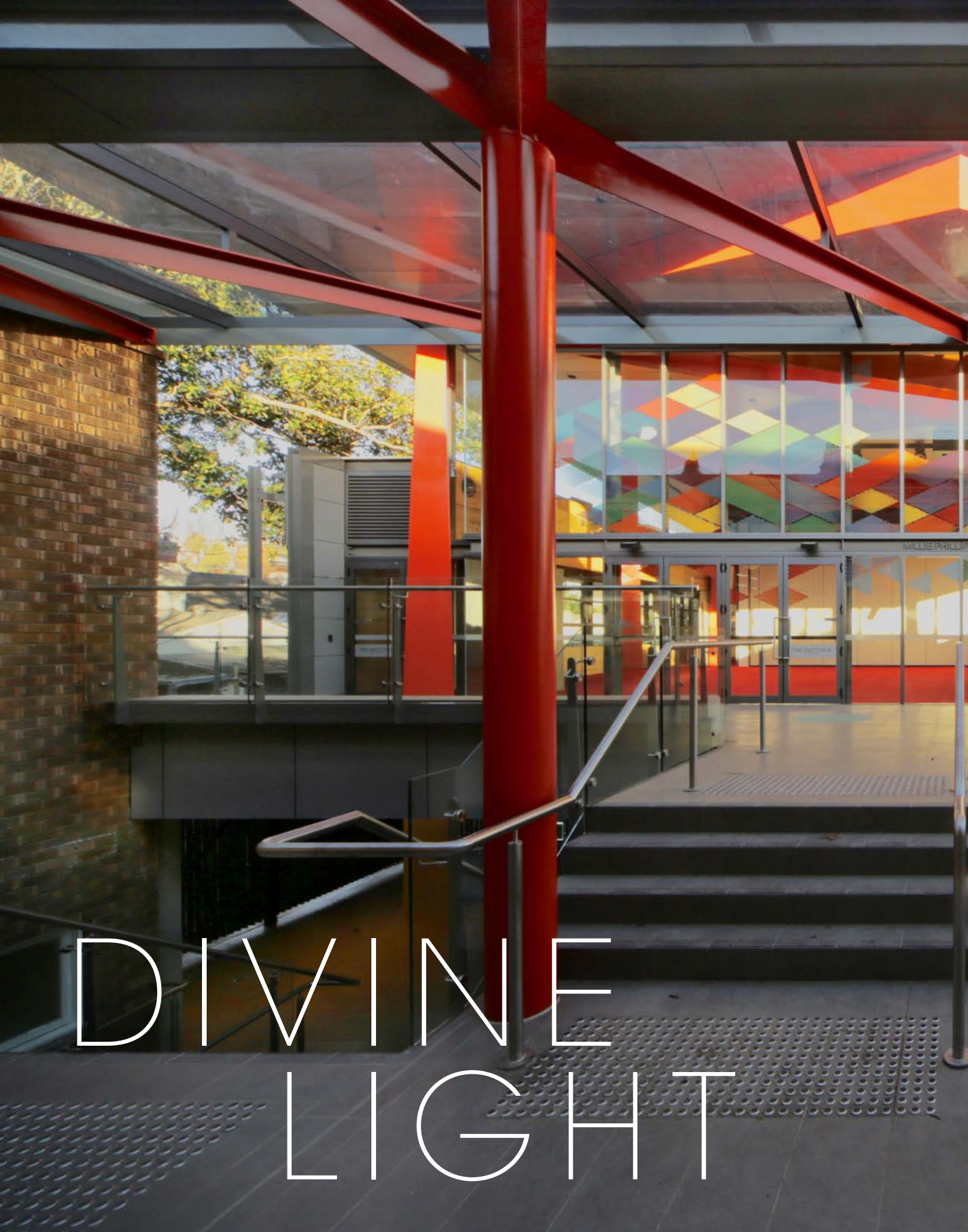
The building boom isn't all repetitive sprawl. New housing in established suburbs is re-defining gentility for better and worse. One of the much better variety in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn brings a construction of transparency and floating planes to its leafy streetscape.

Towering modules of Viridian EnergyTech™ glazing clasped within Paarhammer's charcoal-toned, deep timber window-frames are a highlight in this house of powerful presence.



Gary Catt
Architect






DIVINE
LIGHT





 WATCH ARCHITECT
ED LIPPMANN
IN CONVERSATION



Architecture is now, more than ever, a collaborative art. But it is overlaid and, some would argue, burdened, by a blanket of regulations and planning constraints. Invention in these circumstances is never easy. It takes real alliances to transcend the regulation ho-hum.

Lippmann's synagogue exhibits great bones – he loves the virtual X-Ray – and is complemented by Viridian's new PixaGraphic™ art glass, specially designed to his specifications.

A tracery of structure as high performance chassis delivers a sustainable craft for prayer and social/cultural events. Clad in flexible, permeable planes it offers easy flexibility opening into courtyards, forecourt and within via an operable wall divider system.

And rather than being exclusive to those of the Jewish faith, it's inclusive, with wider community access. The result is a contemporary take on prayer, celebration and community.

PROJECT

Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra, Sydney

ARCHITECTS

Lippmann Partnership Architects, Sydney

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Low-E laminated glass and PixaGraphic™

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt

Ed Lippmann met with Vision's Peter Hyatt to discuss his design for a synagogue as art work, shelter and place of worship:

VISION This synagogue/campus has quite a design pedigree.

ED LIPPMANN The campus includes a heritage-listed synagogue completed in 1941 accommodating 1200 worshippers. A second sanctuary designed by Aaron Bolot was completed in the 1960s and seats 250 people. These buildings constitute a significant legacy of Australian modernist architecture and I hope we've made a contribution to that lineage.

Perhaps already well served. Why another?

The congregation is growing and needed more prayer space so in 2011 the Emanuel board resolved to build a third sanctuary for 700 congregants as well as a pre-school for 60 children to replace the old one.

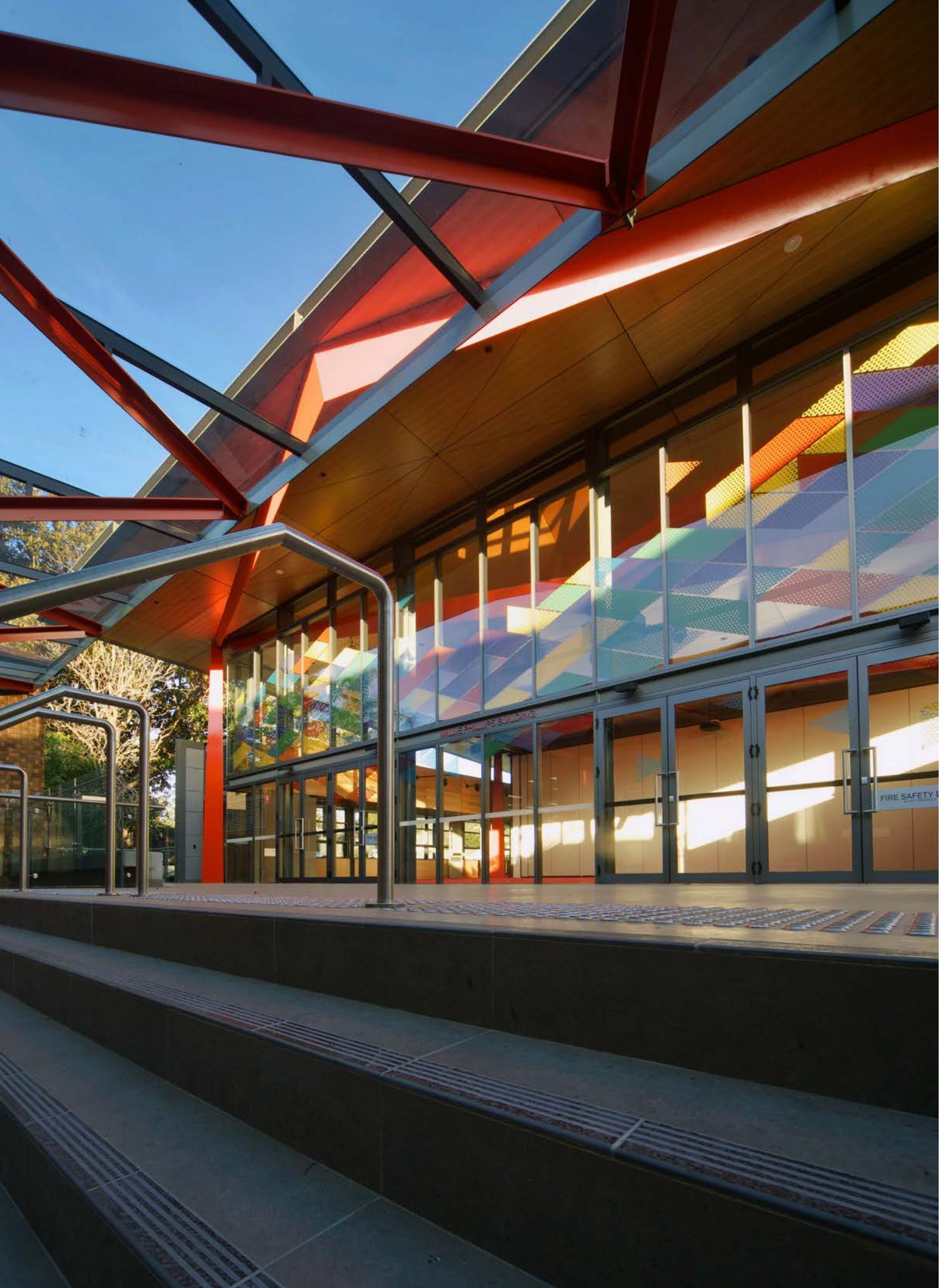
What are the first impressions conveyed by the new structure?

A new glass wall and lift invites access to the new wing. Natural light and views to a landscaped garden are shared with the pre-school at ground level. The pre-school studios extend to outdoor play areas with a shaded breezeway offering access to the outdoor landscaped recreation space.

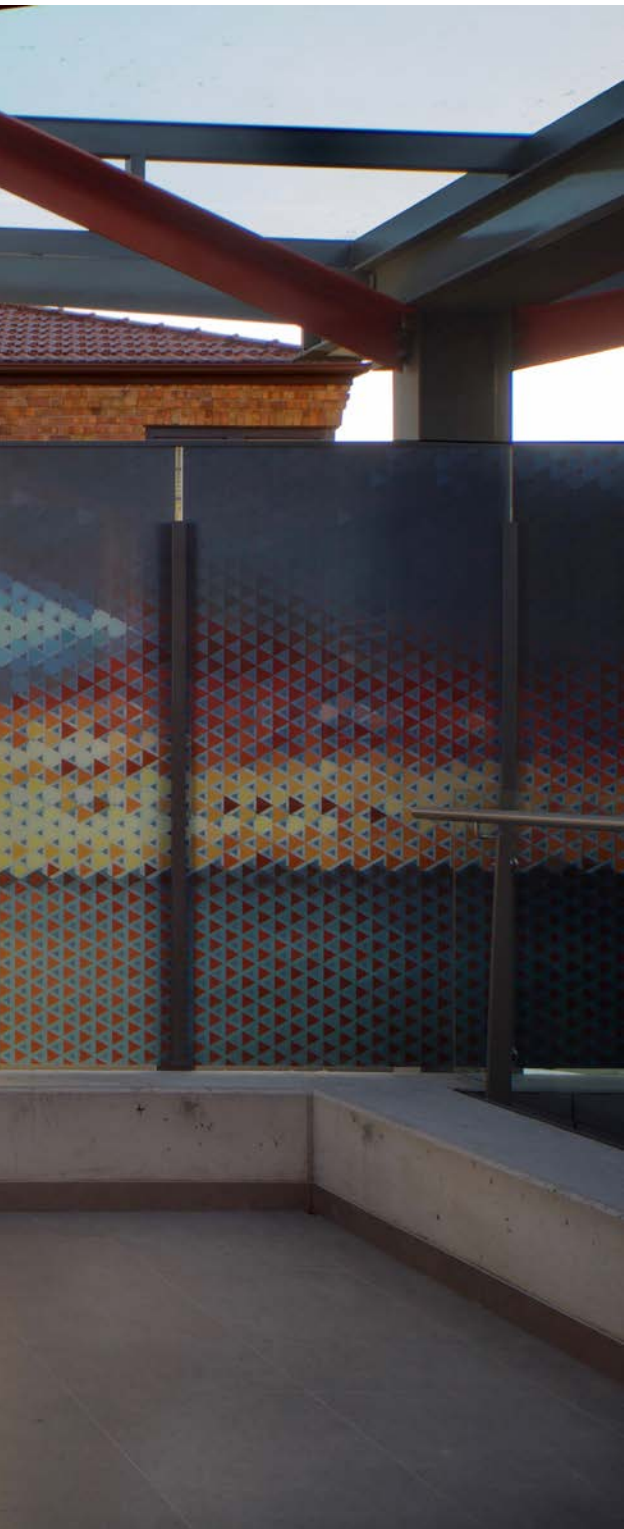
“The triangular columns and ceiling pattern continues through to the artwork on the glass. The artwork and architecture are intentionally integrated.”

ED LIPPMANN, ARCHITECT









There is a parasol lightness to the courtyard glass sails floating from tapered steel masts. They're incredibly elegant.

Ascending from the old foyer, the elevated new sanctuary is reached through the Kiddush Court. The courtyard is protected from rain by a diagrid steel structure roofed with Viridian's 13.52mm Low-E laminated glass. The facade of the old synagogue, including exposed heritage fabric and the new sanctuary building talk to one another, as it were, across the courtyard under this transparent umbrella.

How significant are the decorative motifs?

The use of triangles isn't arbitrary. The shape is derived from the Star of David which is inherent to Jewish iconography. The triangular columns and ceiling pattern continues through to the artwork on the glass. The artwork and architecture are intentionally integrated. It might be subliminal but the shape of the beams and columns, the detailing on the glass all combine to create a greater whole.

Your client clearly wanted a high-end architectural result.

This is a very interesting client who had a very interesting brief, a great brief, catering not just to this community and congregation, but for the wider outside non-Jewish community. I don't know of any other religious community which welcomes people of all faiths to be members of their congregation.







MILNE PHILLIPS BUILDING

FIRE SAFETY DOOR

“We used seven colours which relate to the seven species of trees and fruits found in the Promised Land... In the end it turned out very well and it’s become an integral part of the experience of this precinct.”

ED LIPPMANN, ARCHITECT

The idea of inclusiveness is a great touch.

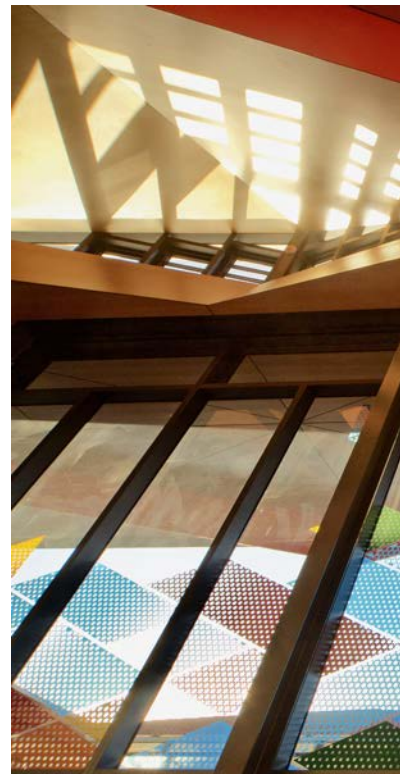
I have a conviction that buildings should perform well beyond their specific brief. That's fundamental to their sustainability. Schools can be designed to serve the wider community and public buildings can serve many purposes. Just as this religious sanctuary will provide a broad range of uses, the pre-school downstairs can and will be used for many different purposes during its life.

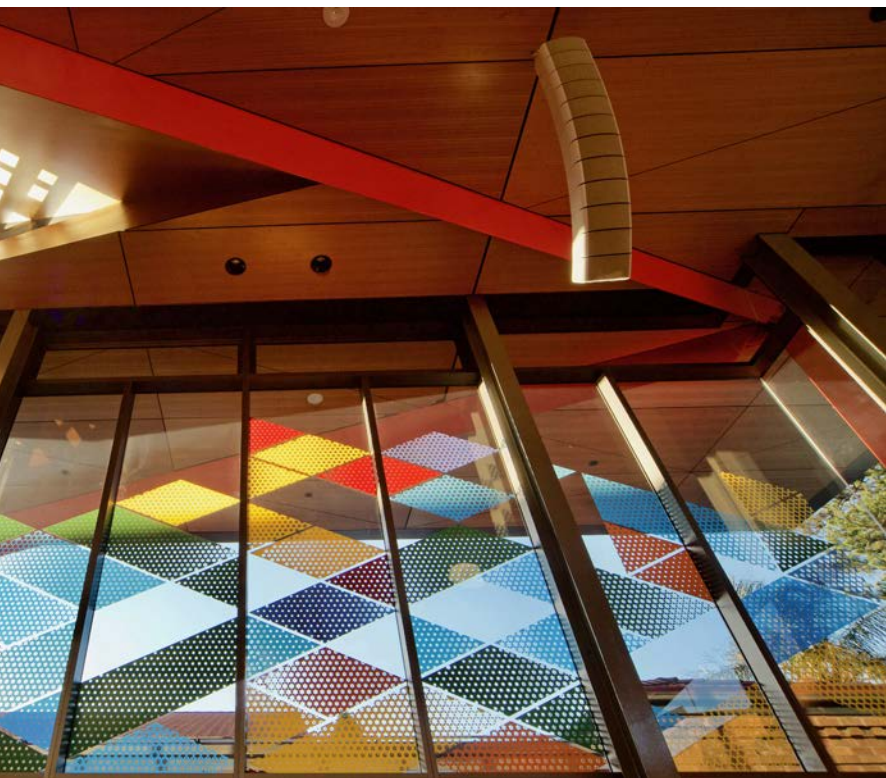
You have steered well clear of anything institutional. It feels warm and the overall impression is one of great generosity.

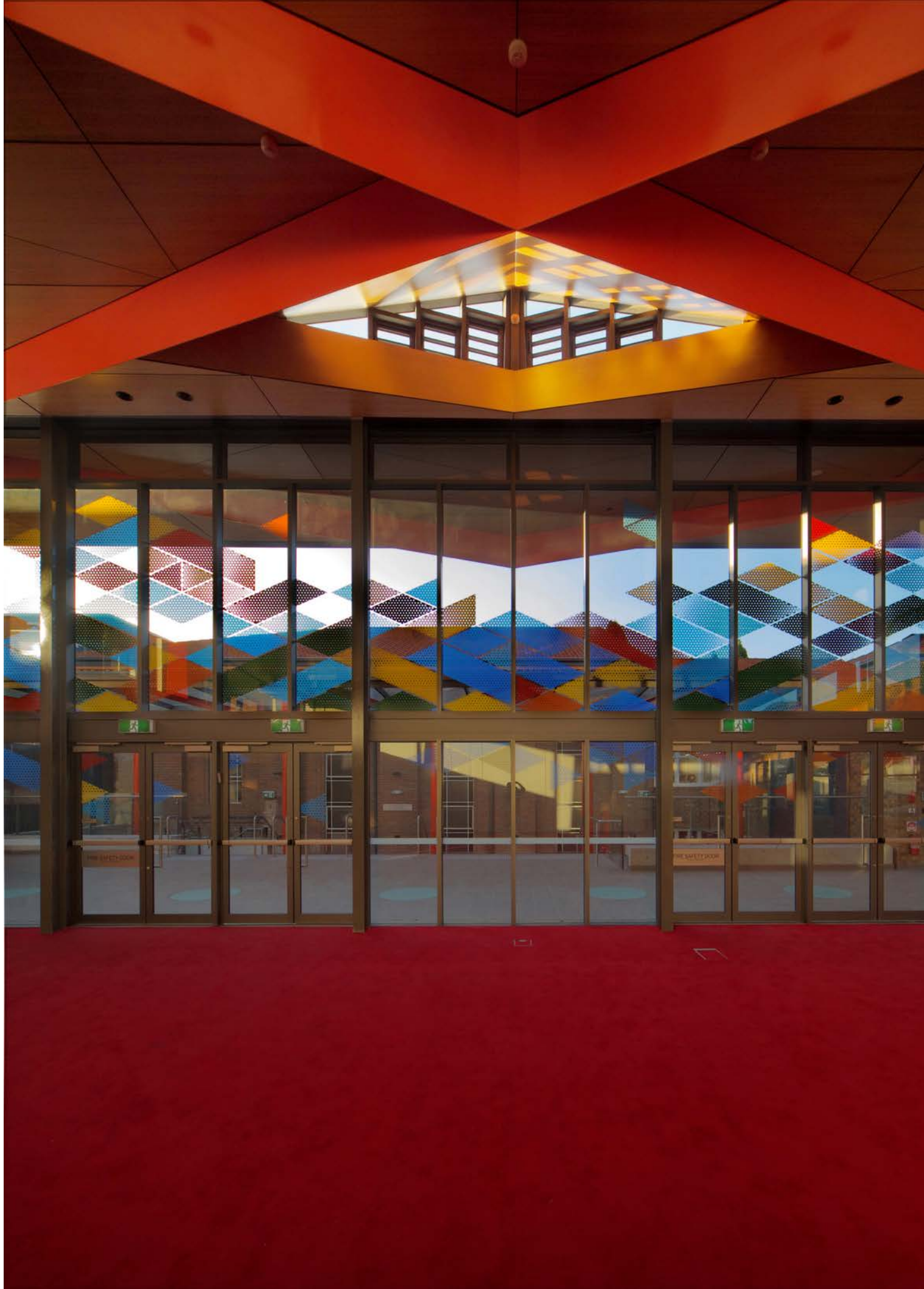
This building is part of a lineage of buildings I have been responsible for over the past 30 years. I like to think they have a human dimension. The idea of transparency, natural light, of structure which celebrates itself, of building services integration. These are all things that continue to inform my architecture.

“The idea of transparency, natural light, of structure which celebrates itself, of building services integration. These are all things that continue to inform my architecture.”

ED LIPPMANN, ARCHITECT







How did the decision arise to develop a design using this new glass printing technology?

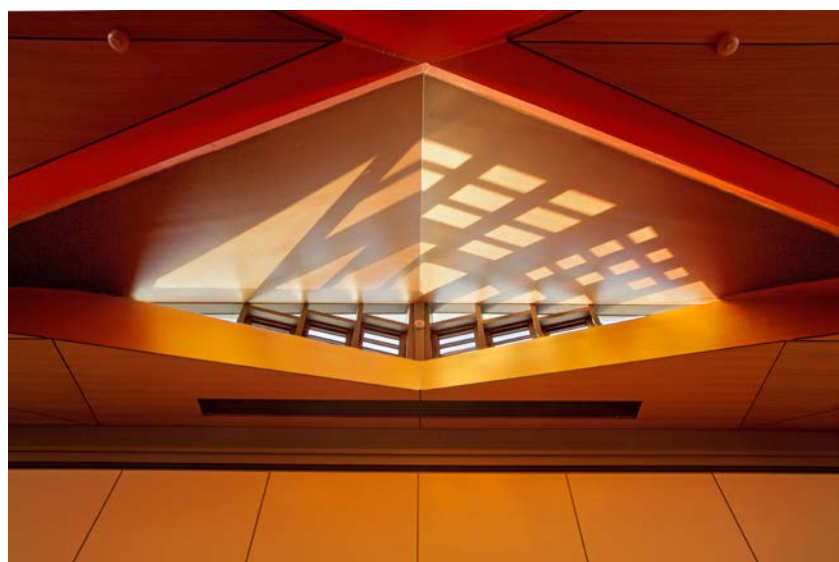
The client had commissioned Janet Laurence to do an artwork in the main entry foyer called *The Tree of Life* and then suggested that I do two more in the new wing, the first being *The Parting of the Seas* and the last being *The Seven Species*, so there was a religious narrative which gave these art works meaning.

When the client asked me to do these artworks, it was a great honour but it was also quite a challenge, not being an artist and not having ever attempted something like this or of this scale. At first I considered a drawing fritted onto the glass but, in the end, the abstract composition was more appropriate.

We approached Viridian, whose new PixaGraphic™ technology embeds colour into the glass. We used seven colours which relate to the seven species of trees and fruits found in the Promised Land. We worked with graphic designers Deuce who were invaluable and helped produce something meaningful and enduring.

How did you decide on Viridian's PixaGraphic™ process?

When we started talking with Viridian, the technology just became available but they hadn't produce a PixaGraphic™ installation of this scale yet, so it was an experiment for all of us. In the end it turned out very well and it's become an integral part of the experience of this precinct.







The glazing throughout appears very strategic and considered, particularly for the sanctuary where sunlight slices in through the clerestory.

I wanted to use the highlight glazing to separate the roof from the walls and give the sense of a floating parasol. I think that idea comes through. But there are times when privacy is important. We are very close to neighbouring properties and the issue of privacy from both sides of the fence are very real.

How mindful were you of the historic significance of your legacy?

Any serious architect strives to find meaning in the work. It's what over time guarantees the value of the investment. There is a lot about this Synagogue that's unique and there's a guiding vision for how the elements come together.

What about flexibility?

There are three days of the year, the so called High holydays, when 700 people will attend religious services here. For those days the operable wall will be opened and this upper floor will become one large sanctuary. The rest of the year it will operate as two spaces split by an operable wall – on one side, at the rear, a small intimate prayer space for 270 people and in front, a flexible space which will be used for functions, lectures, concerts, films and other things. The nice thing is that this space will extend to the external "Kiddush" courtyard to the north which engages with the old Synagogue building.

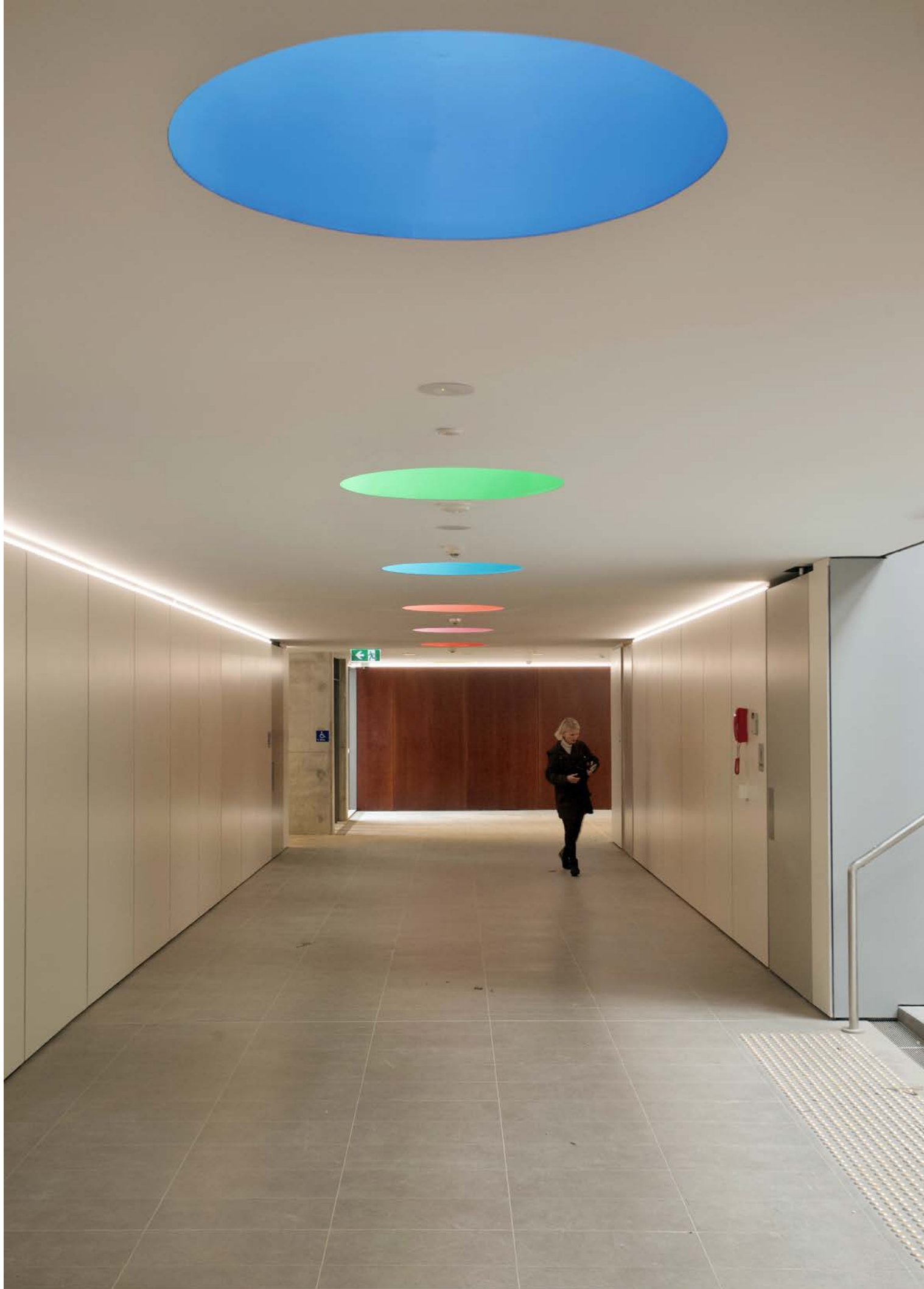
Has it won acceptance?

There was some controversy early on but I worked closely with the community here who were very trusting. It's nice to meet a challenge and succeed with it. It's also nice to walk into the finished space and discover things that you didn't quite anticipate, which give it the sense of magic.

“I wanted to use the highlight glazing to separate the roof from the walls and give the sense of a floating parasol.”







PROJECT

Emanuel Pre-School/Synagogue,
Woollahra, Sydney

CLIENT

Emanuel Synagogue

ARCHITECTS

Lippmann Partnership Architects, Sydney

GRAPHICS

Deuce Graphic Design

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Taylor Thomson Whitting

BUILDER

Belmadar

WINDOW/ROOF FABRICATION & INSTALL

Principal Contractor – AJ Aluminium
Floor Lights & Glass Roof – Ace Glass

GLASS SUPPLIER

Viridian

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Low-E laminated glass (canopy)
and PixaGraphic™ (feature wall and
podium glazing)

SIZE

1500 sqm

BUDGET

\$10 m





TALL ORDER





Gary Catt
Architect



WATCH ARCHITECT
GARY CATT
IN CONVERSATION

Heavyweight housing tends to have a bad name. Many of the blockbuster variety pay scant regard to their neighbours. They stand out for plenty of the wrong reasons. The better variety make a thoughtful, sculptural mark that speaks of musculature elegance rather than bulk and blob.

Melbourne architect Gary Catt has more than a few decades experience honing his design blade to a fine edge. Nowhere is this better exemplified than the firm's mighty windows-as-walls that culminate in an all-round sensation planted, rather than transplanted, into its setting.

Preferring the bespoke to off-the-shelf, Catt steers an altogether different course. In the process his bravura design reveals an architect skilled in the organisation and arrangement of big ideas. Notably it's windows and glazing that herald a house full of design wonder and surprise.

Not least, Paarhammer's windows which are crafted from local materials in the best European traditions. Viridian performance glazing and locally sourced timbers rise in a show-stopping ensemble.

Dressed up and ready to go, his design of soaring volumes, tuned materiality and clever connections produces a home of impact and light-filled delicacy.

High, wide and handsome, it pays full regard to its key elevations ensuring the back door with its heroic port-cochere is every bit as impressive and artful as its street-frontage.

PROJECT

Hawthorn Residence, Melbourne

ARCHITECTS

Gary Catt, CATT Architects

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian EnergyTech™

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt



Gary Catt spoke with Vision about his big picture ambitions for clients wishes for privacy and vista:

VISION Do you have a 'house style'?

GARY CATT It sounds a contradiction in terms, but we pride ourselves on NOT having a style. We interpret our clients' needs. We're there for our client. We've had 30 years or more and we've seen the styles come and styles go. There are certain classic elements about styling. But if you get the massing right and the materiality right, and you can reflect what the client really, really wants – that's the style we're after.

Does this house vary substantially from a house you might design in another suburb?

The street's important. You've got to have context. I don't really like "feature" architecture that stands out like the proverbial on the street. I like the good neighbourly approach. Here however there is quite a mix of styles. We felt quite comfortable in doing a very, very bold home. Our clients wanted some drama. That's what we went for.

This is a house of very emphatic volumes and proportions.

That's part of the drama. This is a family home with family spaces for a biggish family. They've got lots of relatives and lots of friends. It's an entertaining home. It's a house of gathering spaces where you can come and go and retreat from. But the volumes had to be generous to be able to take quite large crowds.

There's also a unique-ness about the topography. We had lovely trees and outlooks. And we had the need to put in the home a very substantial basement. I didn't want to create a basement that was entirely underground. By lifting the home up and then dropping down the back level we could open up the rear of the basement with full width stairs leading up into the back garden. That bottom level now forms a three-level building, and it doesn't feel subterranean.

Throwing that two-storey roof on the back and carrying through that volume helps with the west sun. As the sun moves around the site, there is lots of protection from summer heat but lots of winter sunlight in outdoor areas and into the house. There is a freedom of movement from indoors. Throwing open those massive doors and still not have any chance that the weather can come inside is a fantastic result.













Is this your biggest window wall?

It's the biggest I could get. I wanted it big. The whole thing about the Paarhammer product is this lovely gliding system and the gutsiness of that timber frame. We could have done it in aluminium. There's many ways we could have done it. But the overall effect of that softness of the wood and the matte of the time of years on the wood, plus the big sheets of glazing just gave it breathing space. It's appropriate to the scale. We wanted dramatic. It's thermally brilliant. We just love the whole effect.

What other qualities do you try to engender?

Beyond the usual spatial needs such as bedrooms and bathrooms etc. what does it do to your emotions? Why do you enjoy living there? What is it about coming home to that house that keeps the enjoyment going? It's these surprises, these elements of space that are like lungs. It's like breathing when entering through a lower ceiling and coming out to a higher ceiling. And the effects we can create with the light add to the continual enjoyment and discovery of space. We often get people writing to us years later saying, "Look, I get up and I just love living here." That's our product. That's our style. Someone that loves living in the house. That to me is everything.

Your windows bring alive the surrounding trees and sky.

Yes, I'm absolutely amazed at glass. To take sand and turn it into glass that can also be structural. It's just the most amazing ingredient. When I first went to the United States in the '80s and saw handrails in sheets of glass take on a structural quality, I just knew that the future had to be building bigger and bigger elements of glass. Now we bring in the whole environmental business of thermal qualities. Now we're into double-glazing, triple-glazing. We don't have the extremes of the European climate, but the Europeans have really mastered the use of glass. It's a remarkable technology given all the elements of construction – lifting these sheets, installing them in a high-rise and allowing for wind loads. I just think glass is amazing.

“We felt quite comfortable in doing a very, very bold home. Our clients wanted some drama. That's what we went for.”





“It’s a house of gathering spaces where you can come and go and retreat from. But the volumes had to be generous to be able to take quite large crowds.”

GARY CATT, ARCHITECT

Architects don't always appear to know what glass has been specified or installed. They know the names of their tap-ware and lighting but can't tell you about their glass.

We went through a period of time where we used silicon, butt-jointed glazing. Now we come to a corner with double-glazing where you've got two sheets of glass and a vacuum and you have to have an end seal. How you bring together two sheets of glass that both have sealing so that it looks like a seamless rounding took some time, so you have to understand your glass very thoroughly. The other thing is glass has got a geometry to it. If you go tall, you have to go narrow. There are panes, there are sizes. So you imagine if you're going to design a building, if you don't know what the structural module of the glass that will firmly work, then you can go through a process where they can't build your design.

Where do your designs begin?

We start with: "What are the limitations of the glass panels we have to deal with?" That becomes a module you've got to work into the building. That then translates to control other expressed joints in the job. The whole thing has a harmony, but it starts from really understanding your products and materials to begin with.

“The great quality of glass is the fact that you hardly see it. It's the one thing you want to be invisible. Good specification and good handling means glass can be enhancing and also invisible.”







Perhaps the art of architecture is as much the business of problem-solving.

Well, the definition of design is problem solving. If you are creatively creating problems, then you're going to have to creatively solve them. If you go into a design without enough technical proficiency, you're just into graphics. A lot of people are. They have a lot of trouble about how to make it and it becomes the builder's problem. We've got to be responsible for the sensible and practical use of our designs. If you've got to live with the results it better be something you have affinity for. You won't really like it unless you agree with it. So we've got to find that point of agreement. With our clients we get permission right from the start to stretch them. We design houses for people. They're not our houses. We are a service business and we like to think that we are creative and bring a lot to the table. But at the end of the day it's their money, their lifestyle, our responsibility.

What was your design starting point?

I wanted wow appeal from the street all the way through to the back. I didn't want the back of the house to be second-rate to the front. If you look at that home, you could have put the front of or the back of the house facing the street. It had to be that 360 degrees experience. That was a driving thought to this creative urge I had and, I think, they had, too. And the kids started to get involved. The kids were growing up. The kids had thoughts. They had imagination and it was to give the kids an experience, too, of how it could be. And I'd like to think we achieved that.

“Dressed up and ready to go, [Catt’s] design of soaring volumes, tuned materiality and clever connections produces a home of impact and light-filled delicacy.”



What do Paarhammer windows and Viridian glazing bring to the equation?

We've used Paarhammer and Viridian before. The windows take your eyes vertically. That strong element runs through and takes the eye up. One of the things I've been developing, you might notice, is that whole soffit of that very high second storey, Alfresco, if you like to call it, in the front and back, is black. And the interesting thing about black is that black reflects. And when you get up to the second level and look along the horizontality of it, the black turns to pewter. So it's not overwhelming. It's sort of counter-intuitive, you might think that this sort of heavy blackness would be oppressive. But it isn't. It actually gives you a dimension without feeling oppressive. The window frames had to then be the heavy, black, gutsy frames to talk to it. Because you'll notice that the columns that hold up that external high roof have also got the same sectional impression that the windows give. That's a theme. That's a column theme that runs through the job.

Isn't the task to make it appear as though it was never a task?

I think you've nailed it. The definition to me of a professional is someone who just makes it look easy. They just happen to know, and for us it's been over 30 years of hard won experience, exactly what to do. That's our job. It's not the job of the person living in it to wrestle with it, or come to grips with it. They pay us to do that. It's a hurdle race of an infinite number of hurdles that we don't want our clients to worry about. We'll get you there. In the meantime, you build and build and build and build. And this is why over a history of working you build your relationships with your associates. And so they all understand how to integrate, so we don't have air-conditioning passing through our beams. We go overboard in documenting because we want to work it out on paper rather than working it out with a jackhammer.







**Do you have a philosophy about sourcing materials locally?**

Look, there is. Can I also say, too, that it's been a learning curve working with glass. We need local people like Viridian. We can't work with an overseas supplier and then fix the problem when it lands here. Also, glass is one of those things I can't protect enough throughout the entire job.

The great quality of glass is the fact that you hardly see it. It's the one thing you want to be invisible. Good specification and good handling means glass can be enhancing and also invisible.

PROJECT

Hawthorn Residence, Melbourne

ARCHITECTS

Gary Catt, CATT Architects

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

John Gardner & Associates

BUILDER

Chris Lynch Homes

WINDOW FABRICATION

Paarhammer

GLASS SUPPLIER

One Glass

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian EnergyTech™

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