

8 FEBRUARY 2010

Woods Bagot Design 'Healthy Architecture' for ACU

Woods Bagot's latest design for the Australian Catholic University's new Centre for Health and Wellbeing aims to create new standards in energy efficiency whilst providing an attractive social and working environment



Designed to reflect its primary purpose of operation, the Australian Catholic University's new Centre for Health and Wellbeing is Woods Bagot's latest energy efficient building concept – adopting active mass cooling concrete slabs, rainwater harvesting, solar hot water heating panels, six wind turbines and a roof top garden terrace.

The proposed research and teaching facility is considered a positive development in 'Healthy Architecture' as the building is set to create new standards in energy efficient design without compromising on an attractive social and working environment for faculty members.

The building's section plan reflects its programmatic organization as faculty offices are accommodated within the northern component on a level by level basis.

"This has allowed for a light filled atria and circulation core, which means better air flow, more sunlight and a happier, healthier workplace," said Woods Bagot Director Mark Kelly.

Seeking to enhance collaboration and creativity, the workspaces for general teaching and high level research staff alike are well-integrated in the southern component of the Centre.

"The eco-conscious spirit of the design also extends to level six, where a landscaped rooftop terrace overlooks picturesque Fitzroy to the North. The roof's stark jagged profile pays homage to the Melbourne suburb's industrial past, whilst creating a weather protected amenity for staff, students and friends to enjoy," Mark Kelly said.

Well embedded within its urban context, the project site informs the design: mediating between the contrasting urban conditions to create a strong visual connection between the Centre and its surrounds. The building mass and height interprets the qualities inherent in both the brief and the location as staggered volumes step up toward the south to reveal a changing asymmetric silhouette when viewed from differing street vantage points.

The Centre's architectural presence is further defined by a natural palette of materials including concrete, brick, zinc and glass. The simplicity and direct usage of these materials reference Fitzroy's historic and modern fabric as they are articulated in an honest and authentic manner.

The ground and mezzanine floors overlooking Young and Duke Street are occupied by a cafe bookshop and lecture theatre, whilst the Chapel and Centre clinics will face Brunswick Street. The building's main approach engages with the pedestrian community with access links to Little Victoria Street via Young Street and through to Brunswick.

"Woods Bagot is committed to the pursuit and integration of environmentally sustainable principles throughout our work. We aim to lead the industry in the pursuit of sustainable design practices. Our objective is to provide our clients with products of high performance standards which respond appropriately to their needs, while reducing the impact on the environment," Mark Kelly said.

Woods Bagot (in conjunction with NHArchitecture) was recently awarded the world's first 6 Star Green Star Convention Centre Design PILOT Certified Rating for the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Client: Australian Catholic University
Architect: Woods Bagot
Structural Engineer: Winward Structures
Consulting Engineer: Umow Lai
Approximate Cost (AUD): 49.5 million
Projected Completion Date: December 2011

ABOUT WOODS BAGOT

Woods Bagot's commitment to global excellence has resulted in a workforce of 600 staff based in five regions, in cities such as Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Sydney, Beijing, Hong Kong, London and most recently San Francisco, New York and Shanghai. It has also announced planning permission for what will be one of the world's most luxurious hotels at 10 Trinity Square, London and unveiled plans for the Middle East's tallest tower – at more than 1km high – in Dubai. Woods Bagot's Australian studios have recently completed several flagship projects, including the Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre (Joint Venture Architects Woods Bagot and NH Architecture) and ivy, Sydney (with collaborative partners HPG and Merivale).

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