

THE LYRIC, FITZROY

The Lyric's Brick Inlay façade of Ash Grey tiles pays homage to Fitzroy's industrial character



On the site of one of Melbourne's first theatres and a warehouse in Fitzroy comes The Lyric: modern apartments whose new architectural form gives a clear nod to the past while providing a contemporary lifestyle for its residents.

Located on the corner of Johnston and Gore Streets, its 155 apartments afford incredible views over much of Fitzroy and the Melbourne CBD. So its design was all about aspect and orientation, and is largely driven by its character-rich neighbourhood - a vibrant entertainment scene with one of Australia's densest allocations of restaurants, pubs, cafes and galleries attracting trendy millennials, affluent couples and engaged creatives.

Inspired by the industrial roots of the site, and hints of the old Lyric Theatre, this thoughtful and cohesive design by Hayball Architects offers residents inner-city living at its best.

Quiet heritage accents line the ground level of the Gore Street façade, whose retail tenancies,

"have been integrated into retained heritage buildings and provide a fine grain, contextual interface with the street," explains Chris Tzanlis, Project Leader, Hayball.

In contrast, the Johnston Street façade, "is characterised by a recessive singular form with projected bay windows, and the upper levels incorporate varying setbacks, and a less domineering material palette, maintaining the architectural language of solid and void," continues Chris.

Undoubtedly, the mid-tier Brick Inlay façade shapes the modern character of The Lyric. Its Ash Grey brick tiles responding to the surrounding context of brick industrial buildings, and are creatively articulated with a consistent horizontal, interlocking arrangement of solids and voids, adding interest and character to the design. "This varying facade is accented with highlights from timber soffits and projecting fins, the play of shadow, texture and depth providing visual interest to the streetscape, while maintaining appropriate scale to the street and neighbourhood."



"Using Robertson's Brick Inlay system with their Ash Grey tiles meant accelerated installation, allowing the building to be constructed in the most timely and efficient manner, whilst staying true to the aesthetic design intent," comments Chris. Of course close consultation and coordination between Walkers Panels, Robertson Façade Systems, the structural engineers and Hayball made sure that details such as construction joints, drainage outlets and capping profiles were incorporated within the brick tile module pattern within each panel.

And the result is outstanding.

Inside, creative design abounds, singing to the tune of the old Lyric Theatre, with striking modern accents. Most outstanding is the reuse of The Lyric Theatre's pressed metal ceiling panels in the ground floor lobby and incorporating strong lighting contrast to create a sense of drama, paying homage to the building's history. While the red brick and concrete flooring inside responds directly to the existing brickwork façade and Fitzroy's industrial roots.

The use of materials in the apartment corridors reflects the old theatre design, with a dark colour palette, spot lighting, 'red carpet' accents and dark-stained timber entries to each apartment. In contrast, once inside, a light palette, herringbone floors and bronze tapware present a thoroughly sophisticated, modern response.

Representing sophisticated living at its best, The Lyric is of course equipped with high level service and amenities, including a digital butler, a dry cleaning service and private cinema (a perfectly fitting addition to the site of the old Lyric Theatre).

The team at Hayball has delivered once more. This thoroughly delightful, modern development respectfully preserves the site's historical significance, integrating the architectural expression into the retained heritage buildings, and balancing it with a contemporary residential style.

Architect:	Hayball Architects
Product:	Brick Inlay with Ash Grey brick tiles
Developer:	SMA
Builder:	Balmain and Co
Precaster:	Walkers Panels
Photographer:	Dianna Snape