

CENTREPIECE

A striking wall of ALUSION™ delivers a unique and elegant offering at CENTREPIECE



CENTREPIECE at Melbourne park is one of a kind.

It's a sustainable and flexible event venue in central Melbourne that balances functionality and delight to offer an exceptional patron experience.

Spread across three levels, CENTREPIECE encompasses a pre-function space which leads into a Grand Hall (for events, conferences or exhibitions), a state-of-the-art auditorium, broadcast studios and a slick central logistics hub - the beating heart of the precinct, masterfully hidden from public view.

Renowned for creating outstanding contemporary architecture, NH Architecture has more than delivered.

The design of CENTREPIECE is a clear standout amongst facilities of its kind. In close collaboration with Development Victoria, Melbourne and Olympic Parks, Tennis Australia and Sports and Recreation Victoria, NH Architecture has crafted a seamless experience for patrons, creating a genuine connection between the external public realm and the interior function and event spaces.

This outward-facing, linear building takes full advantage of its sweeping aspect towards the city, the Botanical Gardens and the Yarra River. It sits beautifully within the surrounding park, drawing material texture and palette from its landscape context.

"We wanted to create a civic building that would sit within the landscape and not scream out in the same way that a sporting venue would, and also to connect with its surrounding context ... So, we looked at the earth around Birrarung Mar, and the idea of stratification and layers of earth, and took into account the gum trees and the silvery greens on site, combining those colours together," remarks Laura Courtney, Architect, NH Architecture.

Unique materials are a hallmark of the venue's design.



“The fact that we have tested and used unique materials on this project is a win and sets it apart from other facilities of its type – ALUSION™ wall panels, timber lining in the function room and custom carpets – all of these pieces play into a big picture of a really unique facility that we are so proud of,” remarks Chloe Mikronis, Senior Associate, NH Architecture.

The entrance hall acts as a pre-function event space, with a welcoming and vibrant design. A perforated aluminium ceiling panel, powder-coated in a champagne colour, creates a starry top, which is paired with an elegant silver wall of ALUSION™ panels, and finished with an earthy orange carpet with a pattern that mimics the dappled light of a tree canopy.

On entry, continuous panels of ALUSION™ are not only eye catching, but are a robust solution that can withstand a multitude of activity:

“The durability of the product is one of its major wins because it’s very forgiving. In this high traffic environment, if it does get nicked you won’t notice anything. But we also wanted to have something with an

element of elegance to it, being in a pre-function space. So, when we came across ALUSION™ we realised that this product would do both of those things. And the thought of testing and exploring a new material that we had only used once before (at Cannons House) was also really appealing,” says Laura.

Having used ALUSION™ in the lobby at Cannons House, the building that houses NH Architecture’s studio, and through further testing, detailing and prototyping junctions, the team created the perfect solution for CENTREPIECE.

“At Cannons House we did an expressed joint between the panels - there wasn’t a trim, it was just a gap. But Melbourne Park is a different scale of space, so we introduced an aluminium angle that sat between each of the panels and at the corner junctions, creating a real continuity in terms of the treatment of edges,” comments Chloe.

And the result is spectacular.

In fact, NH Architecture is so delighted with ALUSION™ that they would love to use it again: “There is definitely potential for further experimentation with the material to use it in different ways. Either powder-coating it so we get a coloured version, or anodising the ALUSION™ so you get a slightly different colouration on it,” says Astrid Jenkin, Director, NH Architecture.

A number of external terraces at CENTREPIECE seal the seamless internal/external connection, and make full use of its location. This is a design feature not typical of large event spaces, which traditionally have very deep floorplates and highly internalised programs, adding yet another string to this unique venue’s bow.



“We took enormous advantage in the building’s design to make the most of its aspect towards the city, the Botanical Gardens and the Yarra River. In doing that we’ve created external terraces that are part of the function overlay, which is fairly unique for these types of facilities because most are internal environments. So, we took advantage of the location and the functionality of the growing demand that people have for external spaces and being visually connected to the place where they are,” reflects Astrid.

There aren’t many places in the world where you can walk to a major sporting event from the city, and, once there, find world-class facility and functionality.

Melbourne Park is now the exception.

While it has always been within walking distance to the city, the addition of CENTREPIECE at Melbourne Park offers functionality and facility way beyond its predecessor, setting benchmarks at every turn. For this, the team at NH Architecture should rightfully be proud.

Excitingly, CENTREPIECE has made the shortlist in the 2022 Victorian Architecture Awards for Public Architecture. Winners will be announced on 17 June.

Architect: NH Architecture
Product: ALUSION™ 2440mm x 1220mm x 12.7mm Small Cell 1 sided
Developer: Development Victoria
Builder: Lend Lease
Photographer: Dianna Snape