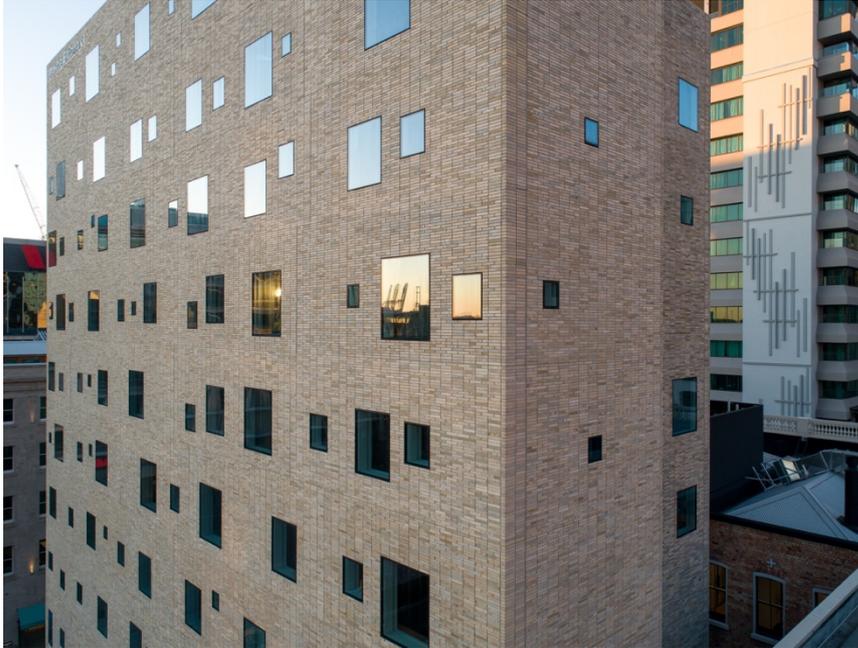


THE HOTEL BRITOMART, AUCKLAND

Brick Inlay crosses the Pacific delivering New Zealand's first full brick façade — Part 3

First impressions are lasting. And on this, The Hotel Britomart more than delivers.



From a technical perspective, faultless teamwork, combined with Brick Inlay, helped Cheshire Architects realise their design for an 11-storey full brick façade: a first for New Zealand, setting a new benchmark in facade design.

From an aesthetic point of view, a well-considered, singular palette pushed the bar even higher, making The Hotel Britomart a clear standout in the Auckland CBD skyline.

A custom, slimline

Krause Grey brick tile blend (supplied by Robertson's Building Products) is paired with glazed, frameless tessellated windows. Setting the scene for what you'll find inside, while giving a nod to the past and the future.

Britomart is a heritage precinct that's undergone significant urban regeneration in the 15 years since its purchase by Cooper and Co. So it's imperative that anything new to the precinct enriches the old.

"Auckland hasn't got a long history, so to have a precinct where surrounded by buildings are all 120 years old is very rare, and we really wanted to respect that. Anything that's added to Britomart must enhance the existing buildings – that relationship is very important," remarks Dajiang Tai, Principal, Cheshire Architects Ltd.

The choice of handcrafted Krause bricks hit the mark, speaking well to the heritage buildings. "We found with the handcrafted Krause brick we could put something in that's contemporary and up there with the design language of now, but still felt like it had a heritage connection," says Tom Webster, Architect, Cheshire Architects.

Krause bricks give the façade multiple layers of detail. From afar, they look monotone, on approach you realise they're bricks and up close you see their imperfect, handcrafted nature. "We like the imperfect quality of the Krause bricks, and the proportion is unique, almost like a Roman brick, not a commercial brick. But, the most attractive thing is that it's hard to replicate that brick," adds Dajiang.

"The fact that it was a handcrafted brick out of the ground in Australia, and was as good as we could ever find in New Zealand was fantastic, and a great sustainability story. Meeting Klynton Krause was great - a brickmaker still on the same site, using the old clay that's been used way back when, with a process that wasn't much different to when it started ... architects love that, we love the craft and the feel," replies Tom.

Cheshire Architect's design intent was to create an abstract façade where you look at the building and can't quite work out how many floors there are. They wanted it to be so singular, it's almost abstract. So, in beautiful contrast to the bricks, frameless glass windows reference the future and reflect the myriad of contemporary glass skyscrapers throughout Auckland.



And, in line with the hotel's custom fit design, these frameless windows aren't off the shelf. Cheshire Architects designed the profile for the windows and extruded it to suit the Brick Inlay system and the building's design intent, creating a beautiful patchwork of windows across the façade.

Together, the custom bricks and windows create a unique, breathtaking display. "The flushed, glazed window system is a

complete contrast to the bricks, it's like handmade and machine made. It's something we play with a lot and it's definitely interesting," says Dajiang.

Custom design continues inside with natural, earthy elements that describe the way staying in a hotel in New Zealand should feel. Think timber panelled walls in each room and in the laneway lobby, a bluestone boulder sits below a dried clay wall, complete with cracks, both sourced from a local beach and mountain.

And, in yet another first, The Hotel Britomart is New Zealand's greenest hotel - the first to achieve a 5 Green Star rating from the New Zealand Green Building Council. A huge feat for the team.

But what really sets The Hotel Britomart apart is the total craft of architecture that's apparent in every detail. "Being a good building in the 21st century, just having good architecture isn't enough – it's the craft of the experience that's most important – and if there is a gap in the experience that makes the experience lacking or deteriorates, the building will feel fake," Dajiang remarks.

The Hotel Britomart is spectacular, both inside and out. There's nothing fake in sight. Simply a definite, unified language that tells a story across the design, from the handcrafted Krause brick tiles, custom made door handles and custom lighting, right down to the uniforms and linen used throughout. Attention to detail is second to none. And the entire team is to be congratulated for delivering a unique design that will no doubt achieve, and rightfully deserve, worldwide acclaim.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Developer: | Cooper & Co |
| Architect: | Cheshire Architects |
| Product: | Brick Inlay with custom slimline Krause Grey brick tile blend |
| Builder: | Bracewell Construction |
| Interior Design: | Lucas Design, in collaboration with Cheshire Architects |
| Engineers: | Mott MacDonald |
| Precaster: | Wilson Group |
| Photographer: | Sam Hartnett and Petra Leary (aerials) |

