

THE HOTEL BRITOMART, AUCKLAND

Brick Inlay crosses the Pacific delivering New Zealand's first full brick facade



It's every architect and developer's dream. To lead a project of a lifetime. One that pushes your technical, creative and problem-solving brain past its physical and emotional limits.

The Hotel Britomart in Auckland is that project.

Led by a phenomenal team, The Hotel Britomart delivers a total architectural experience that pushes every boundary, with exceptional results. It's hardly surprising, given the team's exceptional calibre: Cooper and Co (developers), Cheshire Architects, Mott MacDonald (engineers), Holmes Solutions (seismic testing), Lukas Design (interiors) and Bracewell Construction.

Britomart is Auckland's hospitality and retail precinct on the waterfront that's been 10 years in the planning. So, it made sense to include a hotel building within it.

But The Hotel Britomart is not your typical hotel.

It's one of a kind, from the outside in. A technical and aesthetic work of art that will never date. Because its design and construction followed no trends:

"For every project, we try to do something new for the first time. We will always have the feeling that something might not work. However, if you've done enough homework and enough testing, you know it will work," says Dajiang Tai, Principal, Cheshire Architects Ltd.

In fact, the hotel's series of firsts more than worked, setting new benchmarks in architecture and construction.

Firstly, there's no grand entrance and lobby. No huge gym, spa, restaurant or retail outlet. It's simply a place to sleep. Its 99 rooms and five suites offer a calm sanctuary for guests, and a simple laneway serves as its entrance and lobby. Guests experience the hotel as a precinct, encouraged to venture out of the building to its plant-lined streets, historic warehouses, retail shops, restaurants and cafes.

And it's not your typical design, either.

Everything at The Hotel Britomart is custom fit for purpose, beginning with the façade; another first.

The Hotel Britomart has a full brick facade floating on a glass podium – a rare site in New Zealand. Most newly built buildings are full glass, or have a more solid podium on the lower levels. There are no precast brick panel systems in New Zealand, and it's really expensive and difficult to achieve due to Building Code requirements for Seismic Resilience and the engineering involved. A conundrum for the team:



“We knew we wanted to build a brick building to speak to the heritage area of Britomart, but we didn't know how we could build one that's 10 storeys tall. I had some experience with Brick Inlay systems from working in England, so I did some research and talked to Peter Robertson at Robertson Façade Systems about it,” explains Tom Webster, Architect, Cheshire Architects.

What began was a thoughtful collaboration between Cheshire Architects, Holmes Solutions and Mott MacDonald, enabled by Brick Inlay, Robertson Façade Systems' robust and proven façade solution.

Excitingly, it's the first time Brick Inlay has been used in New Zealand, with remarkable results. But behind this unique, almost abstract, façade was a rigorous process to help make it happen, including thorough testing to prove it could meet New Zealand's stringent seismic requirements.

This is a story in itself.

So, stay tuned over the next two

weeks as we bring you further details of that testing and how this dedicated team worked tirelessly to bring their dream for The Hotel Britomart brick façade, and its interior design, to spectacular life.

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