

THE HOTEL BRITOMART, AUCKLAND

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



It's every architect and developer's dream: To lead a project of a lifetime 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.

It's a technical and aesthetic work of art that will never date. Because its design and construction followed no trends. Everything is custom fit for purpose, beginning with the façade.

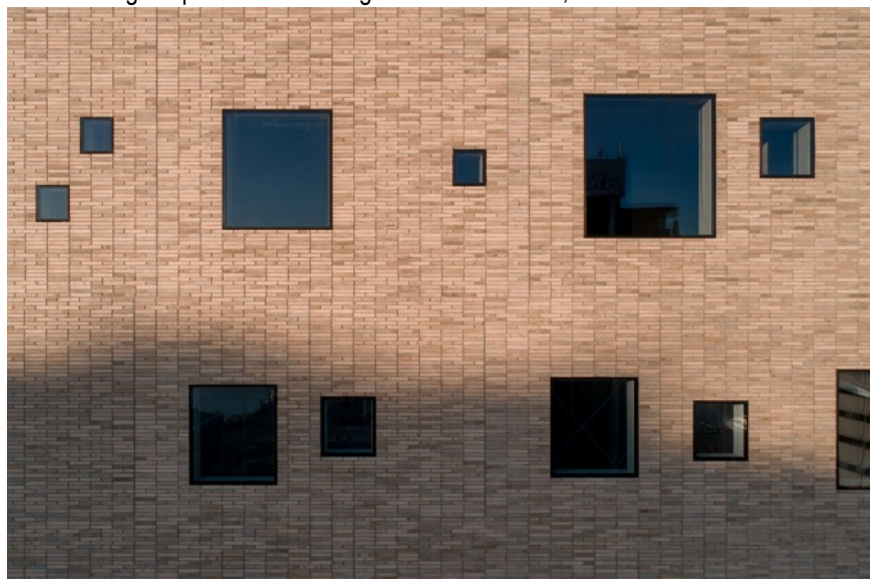
How do you build a full brick façade in New Zealand?

The Hotel Britomart has a full brick façade floating on a glass podium – a rare site in New Zealand. Most are full glass, or have a solid podium on the lower levels. This is because 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.

Fortunately, Cheshire Architects discovered Robertson Façade Systems' Brick Inlay.

"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.

So began a thoughtful collaboration between Cheshire Architects, Holmes Solutions, Mott MacDonald and Robertson Façade Systems.





Because behind this unique façade was a rigorous process involving checking Brick Inlay's performance in key earthquakes zones of Los Angeles and San Francisco (a strong tick), six months of thorough compliance testing using mock-up panels, and refining the design and construction based on those results.

This process, though lengthy, reaped rewards: Brick Inlay's

innovative and proven system could construct a full brick façade, speak to Britomart's heritage area and withstand New Zealand's stringent earthquake requirements.

What set Brick Inlay apart?

Cheshire Architects is ecstatic:

"We knew we'd found a robust system. Robertson Façade Systems was more willing than some companies to get in and help us test, prototype and generally support us with our process ... The fact you could put the Krause bricks we chose, which Robertson's supplied, in the Brick Inlay system that Robertson's could warranty, and was practical in the time we had, was really good."

"And we're really pleased with the way it turned out – you don't see where the panels are in the building, which was helped by the variability of colour in the bricks. You read it as a single object with lots of texture, pattern and interest in it, and definitely not as an individual panel."

To emphasise the monolithic structure, the building cantilevers out beyond the glass podium and the brick tiles wrap underneath the facade in a soffit. This is the first thing you see at street level, so it was important to get it right.

Cheshire Architects worked with Peter Robertson and Holmes Solutions to test four different conditions of brick that were placed onto the soffit – hung on high beams, stuck to the concrete beam behind or placed on anchor pins bonded into the bricks.

"The placement of those bricks and how they all fit together and how they're arranged was something we spent a lot of time getting right. It's one of those architectural details that if you got it wrong, you'd see it. Peter was really





helpful; Robertson's were much more willing than some companies you come across to get in and help us to prototype and generally help us along with that process," Tom concludes.

What made all the difference to the process?

Teamwork made all the difference. Determination and persistence, combined with the flexibility and robust capabilities of Brick Inlay enabled Cheshire Architects to realise its spectacular design.

And the result is exceptional.

Excitingly for Robertson Façade Systems, it's the first time Brick Inlay has been used in New Zealand:

"Our team was thrilled to be involved in this challenging and rewarding project and to work with Cheshire Architects' to help achieve their vision. It's wonderful to see Brick Inlay used in New Zealand, and we look forward to working with them again," says Peter Robertson.

Perhaps this won't be long, as Cheshire Architects' Dajiang Tai concludes, "Brick Inlay is a maturely developed system. We needed a robust system to make our design work, and we wanted to use Robertson's bricks. It all worked really well, so we'd definitely use Brick Inlay again."

There is no doubt that The Hotel Britomart is spectacular, 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.

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| 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) |