

# Men at Work

Multiplex's Urban Workshop is transforming inner-city work environments

The Urban Workshop Project is a commercial high-rise comprising 52 000 sqm of Net Lettable Area (NLA). It consists of a five level underground car park, and a thirty-three level office tower.

Five of the thirty-three levels are integrated into a five-storey atrium-shaped lobby, while the majority of the other twenty-seven floors are designated for offices occupied by a government department - the Department of Human Services. There are also sixteen retail tenancies on the ground floor.

Unusual in its architecture, the development incorporates the conservation of two heritage-listed buildings, and the retention of two other existing buildings. Prior to construction, an archaeological dig was carried out to research the 'Little Lon' city precinct. Artefacts that were found have been incorporated into the new project via lobby showcases, preserving a slice of Melbourne history.

Diversified property group, Multiplex, led the Urban Workshop development. The international organisation specialises in a wide range of large-scale developments, particularly significant projects in the commercial, residential and retail sectors, along with specialist design and construction projects such as multiuser government facilities, hospitals etc.

Some recent examples include the Victorian County Court, World Square in Sydney, the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the Melbourne Convention Centre, which is currently under construction.

Multiplex has been in business for nearly fifty years and has earned a solid reputation for delivering quality projects. Its integrated business covers all areas of the property lifecycle, including design, development, construction and infrastructure management. They have won numerous awards for their works in the last three years, for projects such as the Federation Square in Melbourne and Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane.

Multiplex is not the only company to receive awards in their field of specialty. Architects who worked on the Urban Workshop Project, John Wardle Architects, HASSELL and NHA Architecture received four major awards for this project, the Sir Osborn McCutcheon Award for Commercial Architecture, the Marion Mahony Award for Interior Architecture, an Urban Design Award and the joint Melbourne Prize.

The jury for the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) 2006 Victorian Architecture Awards said the project between Lonsdale and Little Lonsdale Streets represented a "significant new approach to melding site heritage with new urban forms".

They also claimed "this building challenged the restrictive brief of a commercial office tower. While remaining in the modernist tradition of streamlined elegance and utilitarianism, the Urban Workshop represents a subtle shift away from the vertical glass tunnel... With its kinks and folds, the building hovers above a collection of small scale historical buildings and gently works itself into the urban context".

Not only did Multiplex manage entire construction of the Urban Workshop project, they allocated subcontractors such as The Schiavello Group to furnish twenty six levels with office workstations, partitioning and furniture.

During the peak of construction there was approximately seven hundred people working on site, including Multiplex staff and subcontractors. Construction took twenty-two months to complete, excluding excavation.

There were a couple of unique aspects in the design of The Urban Workshop Project. Firstly, unusual for Melbourne architecture, the tower is a steel building with a concrete core. Normally, reinforced concrete is used. Mr Thomas explained the steel structure to be advantageous as it enables faster construction as the steel form required less resources and manpower.

Another unique design aspect of the project is that the podium construction methodol-



ogy uses a jump start steel structure, that is the structure construction jumps directly from ground level to level five, meaning the project does not take on a typical footprint nature until level five. Level five downwards consists of an atrium space, so construction from level five to the ground floor was built in a top down construction form. The rest of the building, from level five to level thirty-three was a top up construction.

The curtain wall façade which is hung on the structure, and the large bridge filled atrium space are two notable design components of this project, and were architectural highlights of the building, earning architectural awards.

And finally, as the Urban Workshop Project was constructed on a historical cesspit, the Heritage Planning Requirement called for artefacts found in the archaeological dig to be reinstated in the building. Display cases and a large transparent mock cesspit are set up in the lobby, depicting the history of the Little Lon city precinct. In keeping with the theme of restoration, careful design and construction ensured the historical pubs on the perimeter of the project remained intact.

It is not surprising then that Multiplex, with their decades of experience and unique focus on large-scale projects, were capable of managing a task as complex and vast as the Urban Workshop Project, turning an architectural dream into reality.

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## Displaying great prowess

**H**ow do you transform a cesspit into an attractive, informative historical monument?

Display exhibition company ADS Solutions knew how, demonstrated by their involvement in the Urban Workshop Project.

ADS Solutions specialise in display exhibitions and shop fittings, especially for Melbourne museums and other museums around Australia. They create showcases for travelling shows that present information, art and objects to the public. Exhibitions involve large glass cases, timber and joinery work. Some showcases are made from scratch, other times items may be bought off a supplier, then constructed and installed by the company.

In the case of the Urban Workshop Project, ADS Solutions have created custom-built display cases to exhibit items found from the archaeological dig of the historically significant 'Little Lon' city precinct. According to Richard Lee-Porcher who worked on the project along with seven other employees, the displays "Involved a lot of interpretive work. When they did the excavation for the foundation they found a lot of artefacts dating back to early Melbourne, things like handcuffs, China crockery, marble, things you'd find in a cesspit going back to the seventeen and eighteen hundreds". ADS Solutions, with well over twenty five years experience in the industry used their know how through a couple of inventive ways to showcase a slice of Melbourne history.

Firstly, and most notably, ADS Solutions created a dummy model of the cesspit found at the Urban Workshop construction site. Up to three hundred kilograms of clear casting resin was poured into a mould to create a transparent cast resembling a cesspit. Artefacts found in the original cesspit were embedded at different levels in the resin, resulting in a clear model cesspit



with floating artefacts.

Another unique construct is the curved glass showcase that fits around a column, the first of its kind according to Mr Lee-Porcher. Unique product low iron star fired glass; a clear form of glass designed for display, was used to combat green tinge and fish bowl effects given by other glass, enabling displays to be seen with more clarity. To make the curved showcase, glass was heated up to a temperature to make it pliable, then layed over a mould and pressed into shape then left to harden or "toughen". Delays occurred when radii became distorted due to this process and did not match with the initial design. Also, there is only one glass supplier in Australia that was able to make curved glass.

The overall sizes of the showcases are a lot larger than showcases usually used in museums. One in particular is nearly five meters long and extends out to nine metres long when the draws are pulled out, drawers that can slide in and out as to allow displays to be changed, the first of its kind.

Unlike other shop fitting companies ADS Solutions have the ability to handle most projects in house with their own resources. One can assume construction is more accurate this way, resulting in a better display of Melbourne history.

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## Making a grand entrance

**G**rand Entrance Control (Grand) was established three years ago to maximise a market that is presently expanding rapidly throughout Australia. That is, the supply and provision of secure access and entry control systems. They are a member of the Australian Security Industry Association, and hold a master licence issued under the Security Industry Act of 1997.

Grand provide a complete capability from initial consultation, and analysis of requirements, right through to installation, service, the provision of as-built drawings, and security interface and maintenance. With over forty years of experience between the management team of the company, they are able to offer absolute solution packages that are tailored to security needs, aesthetic appeal, efficiency, and integration with building management control systems.

Grand specialises in the importation, supply, installation and maintenance of Gunnebo Entrance Control products. Manufactured in the UK, this extensive range of systems is at the forefront of global technology, and the Gunnebo Group is one of the largest providers of entry control systems worldwide.

Grand concentrate on the provision of Gunnebo systems for corporate buildings, airports, mass transit systems, sports stadiums, leisure and entertainment venues, supermarkets, and retail outlets. They have a wide range of product packages to suit every situation and security requirement. Recently they have completed projects for Westpac on the KENS project in Sydney, BHP Billiton, NAB, Holden, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry to name a few.

On the Urban Workshop Project, and after careful consultation with the de-

velopers, Grand selected the Gunnebo SpeedStile EFF. This system incorporates motorised bi-parting gates 1800mm high, with elliptical casework, and glass panels. The sophisticated technology of the SpeedStile system, allows for ease of access, security monitoring and the stopping of unauthorised access, the system also has the ability to control tailgating. SpeedStile gates are very adaptable, and they can be tailored to the desired level of security and 'shut speed' required on any given project, taking into account safety factors and the protection level necessary. They can be housed in a range of cabinet styles; including painted polyurethane. Colour schemes and glass height can be matched to suit the environment, décor, and level of security. On the Urban Workshop Project, stainless steel cabinets were chosen.

To provide the very best in technology, service and maintenance, requires an in depth understanding of all the facets of the industry, and without this understanding, the technology becomes ineffective, and even a hindrance. Grand Entrance Control prides themselves on their knowledge and expertise, and it is this thorough, in depth approach to their work, that has seen them develop into a significant force within the market. In today's world, unfortunately, security has become an integral aspect of any major development, and there is no option but to choose the best available. Grand can provide this, efficiently, professionally and precisely.

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