Designed to 21st century standards

Over and out

Game, Set & Match
2011 was a challenging year in construction and there is every indication that 2012 will be at least as tight, if not tougher for everyone associated with the industry. While there is a constant flow of work in the pipeline, quantity surveyors believe tender prices are being slashed as companies face fierce competition to win contracts: a situation that cannot be sustained. With slim budgets comes the temptation for builders to cut corners, reduce labour costs and use inferior materials, which must ultimately impact on the quality of the finished product. But it’s not only builders who are finding the going tough: sub-contractors, suppliers and manufacturers are all being squeezed.

On one hand the higher wage costs resulting from the new EBA and the escalating price of materials have increased the cost of doing business for sub-contractors, while on the other, margins and budgets are coming under severe pressure. Manufacturers are also feeling the pinch as products are increasingly being sourced from off-shore, especially from China. It has become common practice for containers of tiles and carpets to find their way on to building sites throughout Australia. But no matter how great the challenges, solutions can always be found.

At Buxton Construction we’re constantly looking at systems and operations to find innovative ways to do things at a lower cost to ensure that we remain highly competitive without compromising what I consider to be the three basic tenets of good building: time, quality and price. As we embark on another year I’d like to thank all those people and companies who have supported us and extend sincere best wishes on behalf of the Buxton team to our readers for health, happiness and success throughout 2012.

Andrew Briggs
Managing Director

A current affair

According to Buxton Construction site manager, Tony Scott, the refurbishment of Powercor’s BQ substation in Bouvrie Street Carlton was one of the more challenging projects of his career.

“We knew there would be a number of issues confronting us especially as the substation, which is an integral part of the CBD power grid, remained operational throughout the entire construction period but there were some unforeseen challenges that tested our ingenuity.”

Shortly after excavation commenced in the basement it was discovered the walls were covered with asbestos which had to be progressively removed as the soil was excavated.

Because of the care that had to be taken with removal of the asbestos and limited access to the site, it was necessary to remove 1,100 cubic metres of soil by hand; a task which took a team of 16 workers more than three months to complete. Replacing the existing metal roof with a concrete slab required the installation of a marquee to ensure the site remained completely watertight.

“On fine days the marquee was rolled back to enable steel and other materials to be lifted in and reinstated after work had ceased regardless of the weather forecast.” As the substation provides power to a large part of the CBD and essential services such as the Royal Melbourne and Royal Children’s Hospitals, it was critical to ensure that no water entered the site and caused disruption to supply.

“The constant flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in Bouvrie Street throughout working hours and the inaccessibility of the site meant we had to pay particular attention to public safety issues from day one,” Tony added.

Stop press: Buxton preferred builder for Portsea Golf Club project

Buxton Construction has been awarded preferred builder status for the new clubhouse at Portsea Golf Club. Designed by Perrott Lyon Mathieson, the two-level concrete structure comprises members’ bar and amenities, kitchen, lounge and dining facilities, pro shop, locker room, buggy store, terrace and guest accommodation. The $9.2 million contract includes extensive new infrastructure and car parking. Full details of the project will be featured in the next edition of Insite.
The brief given to Bamford-Dash Architecture – designer of the striking new $18.5 million RSPCA facility in East Burwood – was to consolidate the existing facilities of the disparate campus site into a single purpose-designed building with a central entry point. The four-level centre accommodates administrative offices and clinical and welfare functions as well as the RSPCA’s extensive pool of volunteers and a range of public facilities including a café.

“When developing the design we were mindful that community buildings need to have a strong presence in addition to being functional and provided an architectural solution that achieved this objective within the RSCPA’s budgetary constraints,” Bamford-Dash director Barbara Bamford said.

The result is a state-of-the-art animal welfare centre designed to 21st century standards that exceed the Code of Practice. “Meeting the various applications for the building was challenging: one example of this is the stair wells which had to be specially designed for use by both humans and dogs, but at the same time be fully compliant with regulations.”

A boutique practice with a staff of six, Bamford-Dash focuses on community buildings but also designs residential dwellings and multi-unit developments. “We particularly enjoy resolving complex design challenges around the tight budgets that are generally associated with community projects,” Barbara explained.

The firm played a significant role in the aftermath of the fires that devastated Kinglake and Marysville, designing rebuilding advisory centres in both areas on a pro bono basis for the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority. Bamford-Dash’s design of the Rebuilding Advisory Centre built in Marysville was recognised by a prestigious Australian Institute of Architects’ Regional Architecture (Victoria) Award in 2011.
Introducing
Tim Hope-Johnstone
Buxton Construction, Contract Administrator

Tim, who completed his Construction Management degree at RMIT in 2010, is becoming well versed in all aspects of building techniques. A member of the Buxton team since 2006, Tim had the advantage of combining his university studies with on-the-job experience, enabling him to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the theory and practical aspects of construction.

Tim commenced in Buxton’s estimating division then gained on-site experience at Rylands of Hawthorn and a multi-storey mixed use development in Camberwell Road Hawthorn. He subsequently returned to the company’s corporate headquarters and took up the role of contract administrator in mid-2010.

As part of his training Tim was involved in design meetings with architects and company start-up meetings to provide him with an overview of the various facets of construction industry administration. Computer literate, Tim is thoroughly conversant with the key construction industry software programs.

Recently Tim was involved with major refurbishments of Powercor substations in Carlton and West Melbourne and is currently contract administrator for the $8.1 million science and technology centre at St Kevin’s College Toorak.
The major renovation and expansion of facilities at Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club – one of Australia’s leading sporting and social clubs – included new and expanded dining, bar, lounge and gymnasium facilities as well as an upgrade of amenities for members and improved accessibility from the car park, including the installation of a lift. Incorporating a lift into the existing building was pivotal to the development of the overall design as the view to the courts from levels 1 and 2 was a key trigger to both positioning the lift and planning of required spaces for the $3.8 million refurbishment. When preparing its design concept, Melbourne-based architectural practice, Carr Design, drew upon the original clubhouse works carried out during the early 1970s by highly-regarded Melbourne architect Graham Gunn. Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club’s overriding plan was to provide facilities that accommodate the needs of current members of all ages, while remaining relevant for the next generation. The reinstatement of the southern balcony is a prime example of the club’s objective, providing alfresco facilities that reflect today’s café society.
Melbourne Grammar School

The $3 million project, designed by Peter Elliott Architects, required stripping out the top floor of the two-storey building and demolishing a concrete stairway within the courtyard which was replaced by a steel structure with a glazed canopy. Interior work involved the fit-out of six classrooms, drama room, staff work area and amenities, and a fully-fitted kitchen. Historical exposed roof trusses were returned to their original condition.

Aluminium windows and louvres were installed to the Domain Road facade, existing timber-framed windows were made good and the structure’s bluestone walls and slate roof upgraded. These external works were particularly challenging due to the close proximity of overhead power and tram lines.

A solar powered air-conditioning and heating system, together with new toilets, sewer drain, storm water system, electrical switchboard and lighting comprised the upgrade of services.

Ikos Apartments

The four-level development comprising 19 spacious apartments over a secured basement car park is a creative use of space which graphically illustrates what can be achieved on an average suburban allotment of approximately 700 square-metres with careful design.

Constructed of pre-cast concrete panels and brickwork, the development has a soldier pile and shotcrete (sprayed concrete) retaining wall to the basement and post-tensioned concrete slabs on the ground and upper floors. The building has a metal deck roof while the facade features a combination of aluminium windows, precast, alucobond, timber and stone finishes. Ikos Apartments, which is air-conditioned throughout, has been designed to take advantage of natural ventilation to apartments with window orientation minimising heat gain and loss without compromising on the entry of light.

Meticulous attention was paid to interior design by CH Architects to ensure the apartments are appealing and, at the same time, their quality and appearance reflect the building’s market niche. Developer Theo Krambias says he is impressed with the way Buxton Construction handled the project and the quality of the finished product. “No major project is ever completely free of challenges but Buxton’s management was across all aspects of the construction and were exceptionally flexible, providing solutions to any issue we faced.”

Powercor BQ substation

The $3.8 million Bouvrie Street project included demolishing sections of the building, excavating to a depth of five
Community focus at Assisi Centre

A strong focus on community and social activity was a prime consideration for architectural firm Thomson Adsett’s design of the refurbishment and construction of resident accommodation at Assisi Centre Aged Care in Rosanna which serves the Italian community. The three-stage, $16.8 million project consists of constructing a new two-storey wing comprising 45 bedrooms with bathrooms and an undercover car park to a section of the ground floor level, and refurbishing the existing resident accommodation over two stages.

Featuring the “internal street” concept with a number of courtyards, the design provides access to a communal activities hub for use by residents and their guests. The facility is divided into three 15-bedroom blocks, each with a lounge, dining room and food serving area serviced by the central kitchen. The new building, which has been designed to complement the existing architectural style, is constructed of concrete floor slabs to the ground and first floor levels with a brick veneer facade and corrugated colorbond roof. Approximately half of the 90 residents occupying the original building will be relocated when the new wing is finished to allow the second stage – refurbishment of half the existing building – to commence.

The refurbishment includes upgrading bedrooms and adding individual ensuites as well as construction of a hall, chapel, hairdressing salon and doctor’s consulting suite in a tasteful contemporary style.

The relocation process will be repeated upon completion of stage two with residents moving into the newly refurbished section to allow the remaining section of the original building to be upgraded. “It’s a complex task, firstly because it’s a heritage-listed site and secondly because we have to ensure the comfort and safety of residents while keeping the disruption to daily routine to a minimum throughout the construction period,” said project architect, Tieran Kimber, Melbourne principal of Thomson Adsett.

Social orientation the focus at Thomson Adsett

Brisbane-headquartered, Thomson Adsett was established in the early 1970s by Ian Thomson and Rob Adsett who remains with the firm today as its chairman.

The practice boasts a group of talented designers united in a common goal: to deliver world-leading advice backed by the highest quality of design and service. Through its locations in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Lismore, Rockhampton and Cairns, the firm delivers architecture, urban design and interior architecture to clients in a broad range of market sectors including seniors’ living, commercial, retail, health and education.

“We have an exceptionally strong social orientation and, together with the practice’s focus on seniors living, were able to demonstrate this commitment with the design of the Assisi Centre Aged Care facility which combines care with social and community activities,” said Tieran Kimber, principal of Thomson Adsett’s Melbourne office and project architect for Assisi Centre.
Current Projects

St Kevin’s College
$8.1m 4-level new science and technology centre
Client: St Kevin’s College
Project Manager: Montlaur Project Services
Architect: Baldasso Cortese
Structural: Cardno Grogan Richards
Services: Norman Disney Young
Landscape: Formium
Acoustic: Accom
Building Surveyor: Philip Chun & Associates
Quantity Surveyor: W T Partnership

Assisi Aged Care Redevelopment
$16.8m additions and alterations to an existing aged care facility in Rosanna
Client: Assisi Centre Inc
Project Manager: Sweett Group
Architect: Thomson Adsett
Services: Waterman AHW
Structural/Civil: Barry Gale Engineering
Quantity Surveyor: Sweett Group
Building Surveyor: Approval Systems

RSPCA
$18.4m additions and alterations to existing administration building in Burwood
Client: RSPCA (Victoria)
Project Manager: Sweett Group
Architect: Bamford-Dash Architects
Structural: Robert Bird Group
Hydraulics: C J Arms & Associates
Services: BRT Consulting Engineers
Building Surveyor: Approval Systems
Quantity Surveyor: W T Partnership
Landscape: Rush Wright & Associates
Water Management: Eco Harvest
Acoustic: Marshall Day

CaSPA Care Development (Design Phase)
$23.4m construction of a 146 bed aged care facility in South Melbourne
Client: Claremont and SouthPort Aged Care Ltd
Project Manager: Care Capital
Architect: Smith & Tracey Architects
Land Surveyor: Nilsson, Noel & Homes
Traffic Consultant: GTA
Heritage: Bryce Raworth
Town Planning: Glossop

Sandy Hill Apartments
$55m construction of 187 apartments over a three level basement, including 2,000 square-metres of retail in Sandringham
Client: Blueprint Development Group
Architect: Watson Young Architects
Structural/Civil: Adams Consulting Engineers
Services: ALA Consulting Engineers
Building Surveyor: McKenzie Group Consulting

Portsea Golf Clubhouse
$9.2m construction of a new golf clubhouse
Client: Portsea Golf Club
Project Manager: Montlaur Project Services
Architect: Perrott Lyon Mathieson
Structural/Civil: Adams Consulting Engineers
Services: JBA Consulting Engineers