

Fitout of the Future – Powersports Building

> Text by Tim Roberts, Photography Kevin Austin Visual Expression

The Powersports building, for which JH Glass Innovation Pty Ltd. won the AGGA Queensland, 2016 Commercial Under \$50K Award, impressively showcases modern framing and glazing technology. CEO John Hyde outlines the genesis of this gleaming renovation.

The new glazing system installed gives the business an instant identity boost. Featuring full-height frameless glazing with stainless steel spider clamps, these sensitive modern additions complement this renovated building's contemporary style. The company's branding is highlighted against the elegant minimalist backdrop.

Incorporating advanced technology into an antique shell was an irresistible challenge for JH Glass Innovation. 'This was a refurbishment of a 50-year-old building, which had fallen into a state of dilapidation,' John says. 'As the main foundations were solid, the owners asked us to bring it into the modern age.'

The team at JH Glass Innovation provided the client with several ideas about the project's possibilities. 'The client's original idea was to go with a standard shopfront,' John says. 'However, we quickly realised that the project had significantly greater potential.'

'We soon convinced the clients to go with something more elaborate – a curtain wall frame with spider fittings and frameless wall panels, aiming to present the building's interior in a far more striking light,' he continues. 'Due to the extent of the renovation, the showroom as you see it today is barely recognisable from the original building.'

The immense size of the glazing sheets used in the front entrance made for a highly demanding construction process. 'We used 4.5 metre glazed panels for the large frameless automatic door entry,' says John. 'The expanses of glazing really lift the entrance and interior, giving them a luminous look.'

During construction, the team had to overcome a taxing challenge with the entrance area. 'The way in which we had constructed the steel support beams initially obstructed the front door portal,' says John. 'To solve this issue, we created a glass portal to be fitted internally to the steel frame, a solution which involved securing the front glazing sections to the frames with stainless steel pins.'

The glazing used on the front wall is highly specialised. 'We used custom 17.52mm single-glazed clear laminate, with all materials supplied by Polytron,' John notes. 'The glazed sheets are fastened with 250mm 4-way stainless spider fittings, and the doors are constructed of 19mm clear toughened frameless glass.'

JH Glass Innovation pulled out all the stops to ensure that the streamlined appearance of the entrance continued throughout the interior. 'We painted the portal panels in the same colours as the

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(Trinity Powersports, continued)

steel framing, so that people could see right through to the rear of the building,' John explains. 'We've replicated that successful aesthetic decision in our latest collaborations with the builders – a Lexus showroom and a Hyundai dealership, the latter featuring 9-metre curtain walls on spider fittings.'

The JH Glass Innovation team went to great lengths to ensure a uniformly sleek appearance, to the extent of hiding all componentry that threatened to break the clean lines. 'Because we incorporated a frameless overpanel, we initially had nowhere to conceal the wires from the external doors,' says John. 'To solve this problem, we drilled the centre out of the spider point fixings and threaded the wiring through that cavity, a technique which worked beautifully.'

One existing feature of the building made the company's task easier. 'The building's entrance has a large awning shading the interior, which was installed relatively recently,' John says. 'While the interior originally received a high degree of light and sun, the awning's effective elimination of direct sunlight prevented us from having to use tinted glass in the entrance.'

Ensuring the window system gelled with the building's rustic shell was difficult. 'Much of the challenge when working on old buildings like this one is coordinating the desired result with the builders,' says John. 'We had to be very clear regarding how we wanted to use the structural steel framing, because everything works best when it's level, plumb and square ... but that was hard to achieve in a 50-year-old building that originally looked like the Ettamogha Pub!'

JH Innovation Pty Ltd. was responsible for many other notable elements of the new fitout, including all aluminium composite cladding. 'Because the external walls and cladding levels had sunk substantially over time, there was substantial variation over the course of the length of the batons,' John points out. 'To address this, we had to bash all the batons out from 80mm to nothing over a 30-metre run. By precisely evening these out, we ensured they would marry perfectly with our glazing channels to achieve that nice sharp line of vision we were seeking.'

The project had to be completed to a tight timeframe. 'We worked on the Powersports building for about five weeks, from the time we began stripping everything back to when we signed off on it,' says John. 'It took us a little bit longer than usual – although there wasn't a huge volume of glazing in comparison to a couple of our other projects, making the entire building look sharp and straight was a lot of work!'

The feedback has been amazing. 'The clients couldn't believe the difference,' John recalls. 'They told us that they wanted to have



Before



After

everything done before Christmas, and were rapt that we were able to get everything over the line in the allotted time to such a high standard. Of course, this was aided by the fact that we were able to work so closely with the builders.'

This job will remain in John's mind as a unique challenge. 'While it wasn't one of the most intricate projects we've ever done, the sheer extent of the transformation makes our achievement quite special in my view,' John reflects. 'Incorporating the glass and the portal gives everything a really sharp, clean line. We've used that as an effective selling point on several projects since, as more and more people seek this futuristic finish.'

With such spectacular results, it's not hard to see why the company's sleek aesthetic is setting the standard for others to follow. **GA**