

# A New Beginning – Myer House, Hobart

> Text by Tim Roberts, Photography Design Haus

The new Myer House Building in Liverpool Street, Hobart, was awarded Most Striking Commercial Glazing Project above \$50,000 by the AGGA Tasmania in their 2016 Design Awards. Rising from the ashes of the original building, which was destroyed by a fire in 2007, this project received extensive praise for its light-capturing north-facing design; as well as its inclusion of advanced and innovative components including engineered spider fittings and standoffs.

John Ryan, of Hobart Glass, outlines some of the project's major innovations and challenges. 'We were delighted to initially win the contract – it's such a

landmark site in our city and so professionally rewarding to work with such a talented design team. The façade's four-storey 17.52mm canopy glass is toughened, laminated, and fastened by spider fittings custom-manufactured by Nupress Facades Engineering,' he says. 'These are complemented by a full-height curtain wall with 15mm toughened colour-back fittings, coated finish, and front channel glazing.'

Many other technically innovative features were utilised throughout the Myer House façade. 'All glass was overlaid on CAD prior to steel fabrication, enabling it to be manufactured ahead of the project with impeccable accuracy,'

says John. 'Additional features include 12mm toughened panels with 15mm mechanical fixed stiffening fins, as well as double frameless pivoting doors and floor springs to accommodate large retail displays.'

The project's joinery was also praised by the AGGA Tasmania judging panel, as were the consistently tight clearances between doors, sidelights, and glazing channels, and the minimal deflection evident in the glazed walls. These and other precision characteristics provide strong evidence of Myer House's impeccable build quality. →



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(Myer House, continued)

Installing this complex façade on such a challenging site required intricate footwork. 'One of the major issues we faced when installing the glazing onsite was the very limited access, which required extensive skill and patience,' John remembers. 'At one stage, we had four 60-foot knuckle booms and a crane working in a single confined area. A tower crane lifted the stillages onto the first floor, while a Maeda crane lowered the panels for the entrance canopy. It was a major production – we had a team of workers abseiling inside the structure, installing the ceiling and adjusting the panels.'

Further layers of complexity were involved. 'The Myer Building was a marriage between concrete, steel and glass ... but it wasn't always a marriage made in heaven,' John notes wryly. 'For example, the adjacent curtain wall was constructed from 15mm toughened colour-backed glass, designed to tolerate some 20mm of movement from floor to floor – a huge challenge.'

Given such a difficult task, timelines were extremely tight. 'We had about 10 days to complete the entrance canopy, and finished only one day before the opening,' John remembers. 'We were even working under lights for a large part of that time to get everything done.'

These difficulties were overcome through careful planning. 'With custom fittings and sizes calculated precisely prior to steel fabrication, and with the Hobart Glass team's continued commitment, we were able to complete the job on time within a tight schedule and restricted access.'

As the acclaim suggests, the outcome was worth it. 'The final result is a credit to the entire team who worked on the installation,' John confirms. 'Due to its unique conception by Design Haus Architects, Hobart Glass was particularly keen to be part of this project. Throughout, we worked extensively with Director of Design Haus, Richard Crawford, and Associate at Design Haus, Andrew McCreary.'

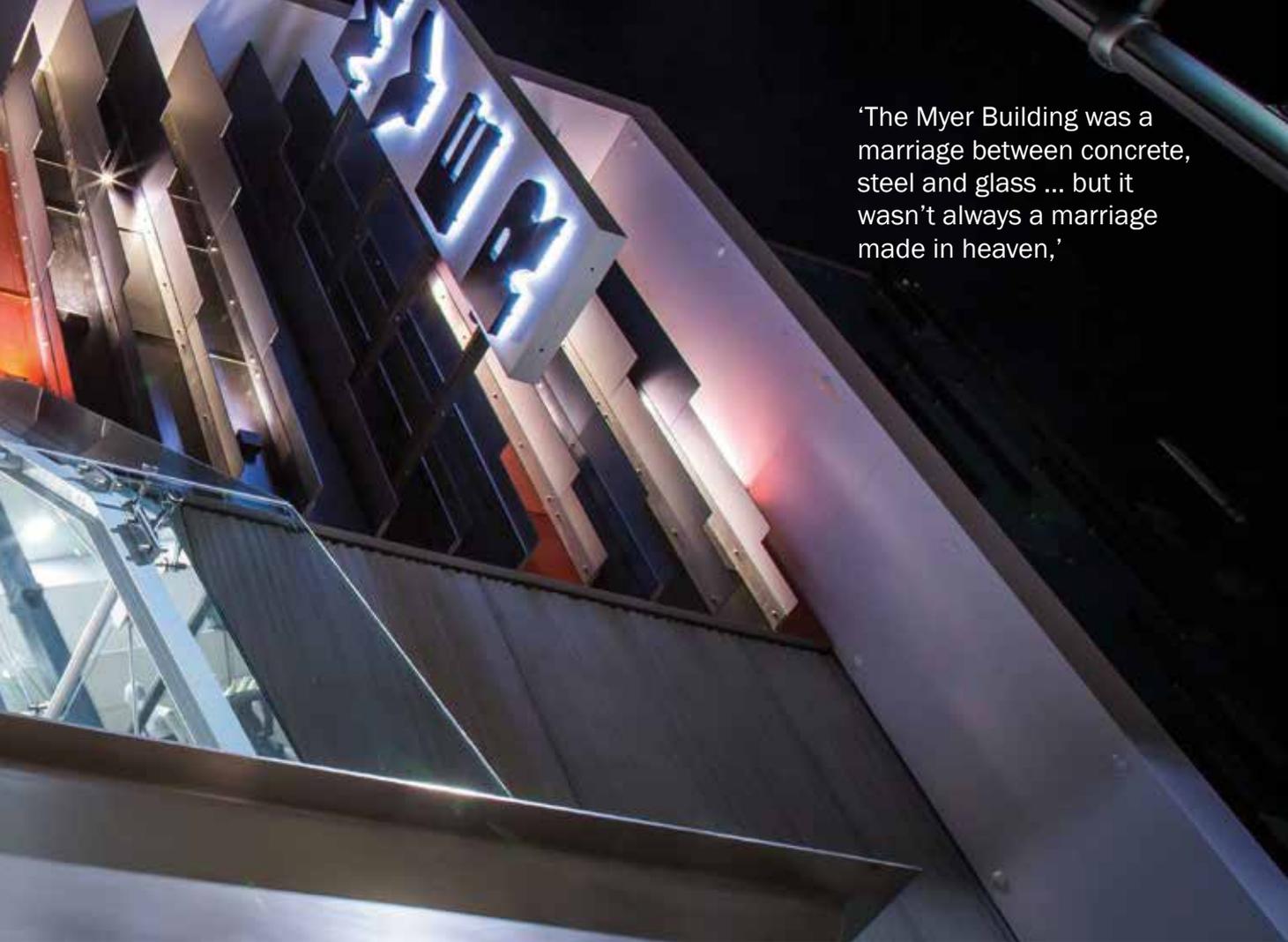
Richard and Andrew explained the philosophy behind the façade. 'Working with a building type that has been traditionally associated with internalised, artificially lit and disorienting spaces, we carved a four-storey vertical slice from the Liverpool Street concrete façade,' Andrew explains. 'This allowed natural light to infiltrate, providing shoppers with a sense of orientation and a relationship with the city beyond.'

The glazing used is integral to the abundant admission of light. 'The generous wall of

glass on the street front helps dissolve the building's mass, as well as drawing attention to the higher levels with visual displays and glimpses of activity,' Richard continues. 'By night, the glazing transforms the building into a lantern, illuminating the street and inviting observers to participate in the rituals of late-night shopping.'

The façade's physical form enables Myer House to achieve a lightness of touch. 'The early sketches for the façade explored a language of weaving, creasing, folding, pleating and draping – notions linked to the creation, display and modelling of fashion attire,' says Richard. 'The articulated draping of the glass entry canopy, the considered shaping of aluminium blades interspersed with panels of colours and directional lighting, and the silky patterns in the concrete panels, explore these ideas while creating a sense of movement as people move past the building.'

This fruitful collaboration has ensured that the new Myer House makes the most of technically advanced building materials, the combined skills of a highly experienced glazing team, while drawing on the unique site's vivid and rich history in the heart of Hobart city's retail centre. **GA**



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## CONGRATULATIONS TO A TASSIE ICON

The Nupress team would like to congratulate Hobart Glass & Aluminium on winning the **Most Striking Commercial Glazing Project above \$50,000** for the new Myer House. It has been an absolute pleasure working with Hobart Glass to deliver such an iconic building to the people of Hobart.

As project partners, Nupress designed, engineered and manufactured the custom components that allowed the designer's vision to become a reality.

Congratulations to John Ryan and the team on your approach and expertise!

To find out more about this project, check out our Facebook page [facebook.com/NupressGroup](https://www.facebook.com/NupressGroup)

