



WORDS STEPHEN CRAFT
PHOTOGRAPHY MARCUS CLINTON,
EMMA CROSS

ARCHITECT LEND LEASE DESIGN,
HECKER PHELAN & GUTHRIE,
WHO DESIGN
LOCATION MELBOURNE | AUS
PROJECT THE GAUGE

CITY METAPHORS

No. 825 Bourke Street, Melbourne is the new Victorian headquarters of Lend Lease. Away from the bustle of the CBD, the new building offers respite at the end of a short tram ride. Like 30 The Bond in Millers Point, Sydney (global headquarters for Lend Lease), The Gauge in Melbourne follows a new approach to office building design. “There are open-plan work spaces, but there’s also a balance of private areas,” says David Whittaker, Principal, WHO Design. “We responded to Melbourne’s laneways and the textures unique to this city,” explains Hamish Guthrie, Director, Hecker Phelan & Guthrie who, along with WHO Design, worked closely with Darren Kindrachuk, Principal Architect, Lend Lease design.

“Lend Lease always approaches a building from the inside out. It’s not just a matter of what a building looks like, but also creating the right workplace environment for staff – in this case, 180 people,” says Kindrachuk. While the concrete, steel and glass building offers a striking silhouette, the design follows the principles of the 20th Century modernists, for whom form followed function. When elements are expressed, they are functional. “The opening at the top of a curved steel wall [eastern façade] expels hot air during summer and draws hot air into the building in winter,” explains Kindrachuk. And while the steel-covered concrete Y-shaped columns in the foyer are structural, they are also evocative of Harry Seidler’s Australia Square in Sydney, once home to Lend Lease.

The foyer in The Gauge is more akin to a hotel than a corporate headquarters. Complete with café, lounges and a large table, it is difficult to distinguish staff from visitors. And while the building isn’t surrounded by established trees, the foyer features a double height ‘green wall’. One of a handful of buildings in Australia to be awarded a 6-Star Green Star Office Design rating, and the first to achieve a 6-Star Green Star Office As Built rating, The Gauge allows people to breathe in clean, rather than re-cycled air. “It’s like creating a lung for the building,” says Whittaker. “We also wanted to cre-

ate something that instantly denoted a green building.”

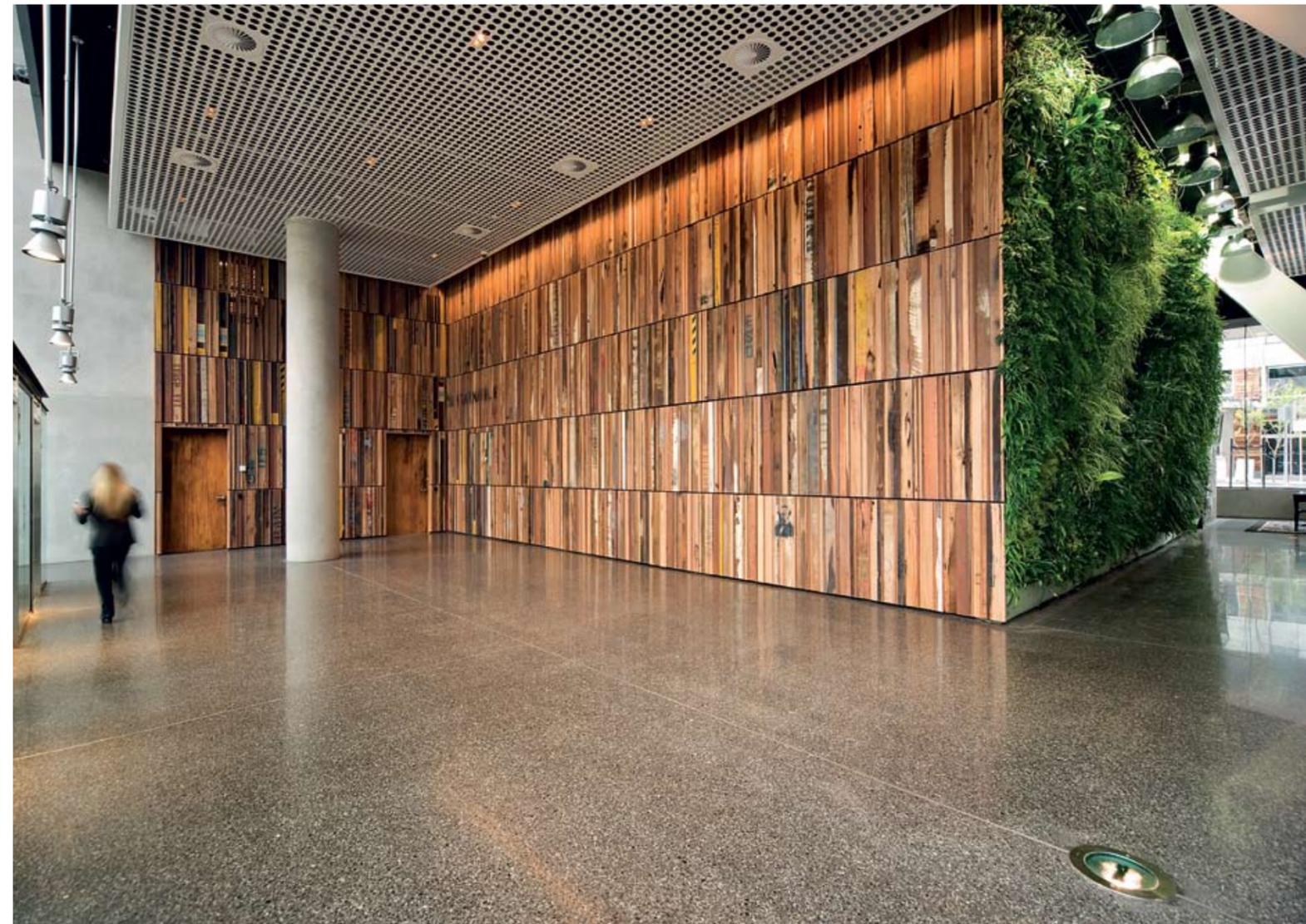
While the foyer might appear completely new, elements within the space are re-cycled. Many of the chairs around the conference table were found on e-Bay, though they could easily have been found in designer showrooms. “Lend Lease design have always been focussed on quality, rather than constant replacement,” says Whittaker, pointing out the Alvar Aalto stools and Hans Wegner chairs.

The foyer features colourful timber walls constructed from pre-loved materials created by artist, Vashti Gonda. Found in re-cycled timber yards, railway yards and industrial sites around Melbourne, the worn patina adds texture to the new building. “Lend Lease design were keen to create an office that was engaging, rather than stand-offish,” comments Whittaker, who enjoys seeing people come up to the café counter, thinking they’re at reception. “They didn’t want people to feel intimidated. It should feel relaxed, while still being professional.”

Instead of reporting to security, staff and guests make their way to the glass lifts in the 7-storey atrium. Although there is a reception area on each level, this is low key. An Oak veneer wall behind reception with a small script saying Lend Lease acts as a signpost rather than announcing a theatrical event. “It’s understated, like Melbourne,” says Guthrie. Pointing out the concrete floors and off-form concrete walls, he adds, “Our first meetings centred on a grey colour palette, emphasising the underlying textures”. One of the few highlight colours used in the building is the vivid yellow, seen in the steel structure. “Yellow doesn’t fade in the sun,” Kindrachuk points out. “It also has an industrial link to safety and plant equipment.”

Unlike most offices, which have a ‘front’ and ‘back of house’, the Lend Lease offices (spread over Levels 1 and 2) have an east and west side, with the meeting areas at the eastern portion of the 80 metre long building.

Like Melbourne’s laneways, each meeting ‘pod’ is identified by one of the many laneways: Banana,



“It’s not just a matter of what a building looks like, but also creating the right workplace environment for staff”

DARREN KINDRACHUK

PREVIOUS PAGE The Gauge reception
ABOVE Foyer wall designed from re-cycled timber by artist, Vashti Gonda
OPPOSITE LEFT Exterior view of The Gauge building
OPPOSITE RIGHT Smooth concrete finishes of the Level 1 ‘street’

Degraves, Bennett. “We treated each pod more like a dining room at home. The technology is still there [concealed behind Oak veneer joinery]. But it’s more relaxed,” says Guthrie, who used Tom Dixon’s pendant lights over tables and lamps rather than fluorescents and spotlight.

To accentuate the sense of exploring Melbourne’s laneways, one of Australia’s leading artists, David Bromley, was commissioned to create a mural. While Bromley was given an open brief, his work centres on creativity and innovation – words at the core of Lend Lease’s modus operandi. Bromley’s framed painting at reception is of a boy pondering. The painting unfolds on the corridor wall, showing how dreams are turned into reality. While Bromley’s art could be seen as high-end graffiti, his graphic work also alludes to Le Corbusier’s abstract style.

“On my first visit to The Gauge, I was taken aback by the honesty and pared-back nature of the building,” explains Bromley. “There seemed to be a desire for transparency. I wanted the mural not to undermine this sentiment, yet also bring some playfulness, movement and colour.”

Following the ‘home’ theme, one of the break-out areas is more like a living room than an office. Complete with fireplace and easy chairs, the Oak shelving is lined with books, games and objects that could be found in people’s homes. A rocking chair, placed casually in front of an open fire, says it all. “People need a

variety of spaces to work in. Creating options is essential,” says Whittaker. One of these is a pod-like room-within-a-room created by the high-backed ‘Alcove’ seat from Vitra, which is padded to for comfort as well as acoustic control. “Lend Lease often have interstate colleagues and consultants. They can plug in their computers and use one of the desks, or they can gather around the table,” says Whittaker.

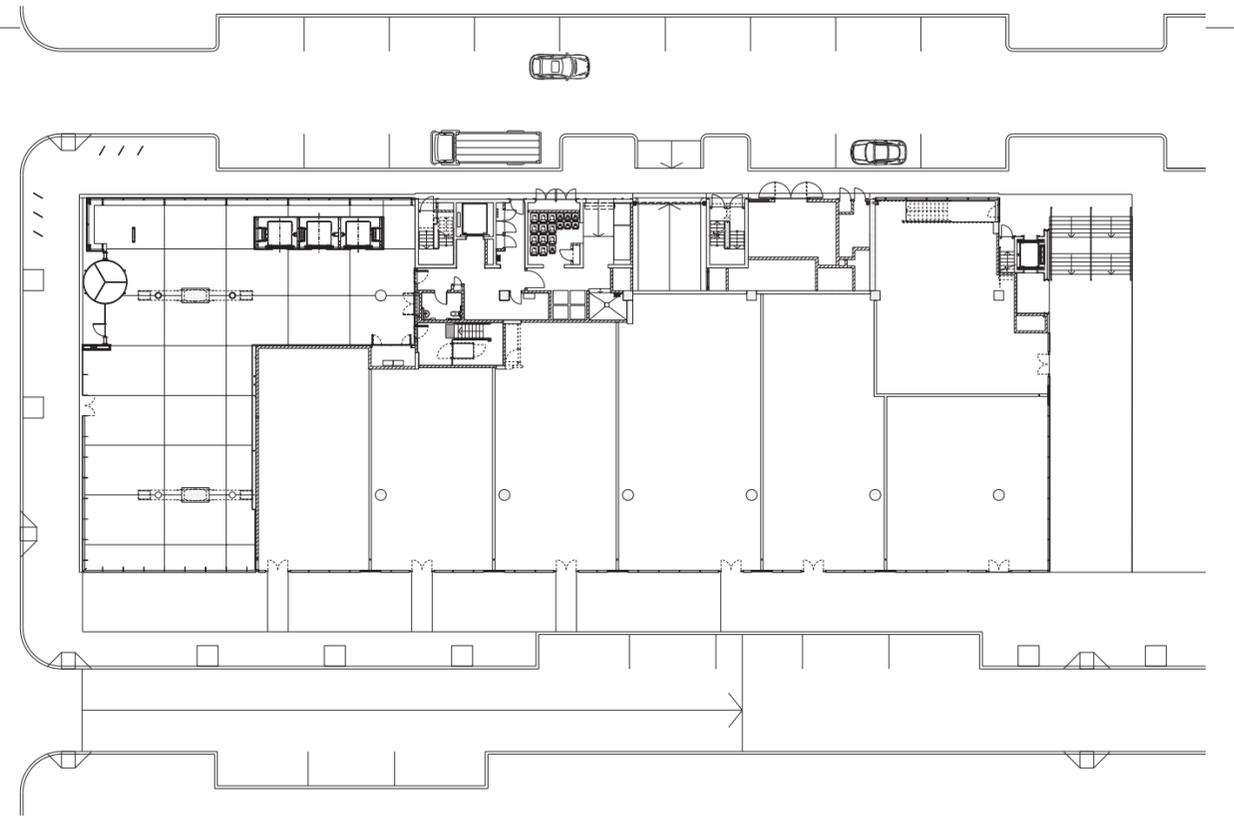
While there isn’t a back-of-house, there is a side-of-house, with open-plan offices extending the entire length of the building. Staff enjoy larger desks (2.7 metres in width), with ample leg space. Personal storage was essential to the design, Oak cupboards divide the work areas from the meeting areas. Although the work spaces are open-plan, there are subtle divisions within the space that create a sense of privacy. “These capsules [at the core] can also be demounted and placed in other parts of the building,” says Whittaker.

The Gauge offers a subtle paradigm shift in office design as it also showcases what happens when artists and designers collaborate. Like Bromley’s pondering boy, dreams can become a reality.

Stephen Crafti is Indesign’s Melbourne correspondent.



TOP David Bromley’s mural of ‘The Pondering Boy’
ABOVE Snowflakes screens supplied by KFive add colour to the floorplate
LEFT Break-out area, designed for individual contemplation
OPPOSITE Typical floor plan



THE GAUGE

ARCHITECT (BASE BUILDING) Lend Lease design
PROJECT TEAM Darren Kindrachuk, Kevin Ellis, Mark Baker, Todor Spasovski, Dwight Torre Villas, John Dundovic, Grand Cheng, Bob Gonano
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Lend Lease design, Rocco Bressi, Mark Stanbrook, Danny Gartzionis, Michael McGlinn, Richard Mulberry
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT Lend Lease design, Graham Carter, Dan Grunbaum, Jon Collinge
WIND CONSULTANT Mel Consultants, Bill Melbourne
FIRE ENGINEERING Hyder Consulting, Barry Miller
MECHANICAL ENGINEER Lend Lease design, Asar Younes, Thomas Casson, Chai Tan and Cundall Johnson Partners, James Werner, Garritt Schot
ELECTRICAL & COMMUNICATIONS Lend Lease design, Matthew Yates, Alex McBurney, Alex Jardine, Ian Robinson, Mike Sparrow, Greg Philpott
FIRE SERVICES Lend Lease design
ACOUSTICS AND AV Bassett Acoustics, Danny Boglev
COMMISSIONING Commtech
BLACKWATER Hydratech
CO-GENERATION Lend Lease design, Ian Clark
FAÇADE Connell Wagner, Weng Chan
INTERIOR DESIGN (FIT-OUT) Hecker Phelan & Guthrie and WHO Design
PROJECT TEAM Hamish Guthrie, Paul Hecker,

Kerry Phelan, Chloe Senior, David Whittaker, Graeme Hadenham, Tamaryn Ghavalas
DISABILITY MANAGEMENT Blythe Sanderson Disability Management, Claire Bernadou, Kara Chung
MECHANICAL Bassetts, Andrew Ostrowski, Russell Evans
ELECTRICAL AND COMMUNICATIONS Bassetts, Lani Tan, Andrew Tall
IT Frame Group, Ben Fife
HYDRAULICS CLG Design, Stephen Godfrey
ACOUSTICS AND AUDIO VISUAL Bassetts, Danny Boglev, Matthew Vance
JOINERY Design Sense and Jacaranda Industries
LANDSCAPING The Frenchams Group
BUDGET \$5 million
TIME TO COMPLETE 6 months (design and documentation), 6 months (construction)
TOTAL FLOOR AREA 10,494m² over six levels
LEND LEASE (61 2) 9236 6111 lendlease.com.au
HECKER PHELAN & GUTHRIE (61 3) 9421 1644 hpg.net.au
WHO DESIGN (61 2) 9211 6969 whodesign.net
FURNITURE General workplace, ‘Aeron’ task chairs by Herman Miller from Living Edge and ‘e60’ low stools by Artek from Anibou. In the workspace, ‘Grand Prix’ visitor/team meeting chairs by Arne Jacobsen from Corporate Culture and Eames ‘Universal Base’ visitor table from Living Edge. In the

meeting areas, Eames meeting table and Eames ‘Segmented Base’ from Living Edge. Team meeting room Eames meeting table from Living Edge. Casual meeting area, ‘Bovist Dove’ and ‘Cork’ low stools by Vitra from Unifor. In the boardroom ‘Aluminium Group’ chair by Herman Miller from Living Edge. Training room chairs, re-use existing ‘Aeron’ chair and ‘Naos’ training table from Unifor and Eames training tables from Living Edge. In the video conferencing room re-use existing ‘Modus’ chair. In the green room ‘Teti’ low stools from Space Furniture. On the balcony ‘Zeus’ chair by Zanotta also from Space Furniture. Level two meeting rooms ‘CH20’ chairs by Carl Hansen from Corporate Culture. In the first aid room re-cycled Oak dining chair. In the welcome area and business lounge ‘The Worker’ by Vitra from Unifor. Meeting and first aid room ‘Nelson Swag Leg Table’ by Herman Miller from Living Edge. Business lounge, secondhand Eames chair. In the green room and mail room ‘66’ café chair by Artek available from Anibou in Sydney. In the green room and welcome area ‘Uccio’ high stool from Barbera Design, ‘Oblong’ comfy arm chairs and ottomans by Cappellini from dedece. In the business lounge, ‘Alcove’ highback by Vitra from Unifor. In the welcome area, ‘Favela’ chair by Edra from Space Furniture. In the first aid room, Eames ‘Soft Pad’ chaise from Living Edge. Bid room and in the touchdown space ‘Double You Desk’ by Bulo from Space Furniture. In the boardroom ‘Naos’ table from Unifor. In the business lounge ‘Diana A’ table by ClassiCon

from Anibou. Hot desking ‘VIP Chair’ by Moooi from Space Furniture and tables ‘Nelson Swag’ leg desk by Herman Miller from Living Edge. ‘Adhoc’ storage units by Vitra from Unifor. In the general workspace ‘Clothes Tree’ coat rack by Artek from Anibou. In the business lounge ‘Oblique’ magazine rack by Moooi from Space Furniture.
LIGHTING Lighting from light2, Format Furniture, dedece, Euroluce.
FINISHES Raised access floor finished in InterfaceFLOR ‘Excel Plus RE’ carpet tile. In the meeting rooms, workspaces FOH meeting rooms and first aid room ‘Paper Yarn’ rug by Woodnotes from Anibou. Custom made rug from dedece used in the welcome area. In the training/video conferencing room and business lounge ‘Line’ rug by Woodnotes from Anibou.
FIXED AND FITTED Aluminium framed doors to the balcony by AGFS. Custom-designed blackened steel recessed door handles. In reception TV by Brionvega from FY2K.
ARTWORK Art wall mural by David Bromley. Foyer feature walls by Vashti Gonda with Timber from Australian Recycled Timber.

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