



CLIENT : Muswellbrook Shire Council
MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY : North Construction & Building
ARCHITECT : Collins and Turner Architects
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER : Partridge Engineering Consultancy
CONSTRUCTION VALUE : \$6.3 million

NORTH RAISING THE BAR FOR INNOVATION IN EDUCATION IN MUSWELLBROOK

North Construction & Building is a trusted regional construction company with an award-winning reputation for excellence. North won the construction tender for the Upper Hunter Innovation Centre, which is the second stage of the Tertiary Education Centre in Muswellbrook, New South Wales.

Designed by Collins and Turner Architects, North constructed a new 3-storey education building (MTECC2) featuring office pods, shared meeting facilities and the latest technology in audio-visual services. The scope of works included adapting the heritage-listed ‘Loxton House’ by converting the upper level into an innovation hub. The two buildings are linked via a glazed footbridge.

There were a variety of unique construction details incorporated into this project, including:

- traditional reinforced concrete construction to the foundations and structure
- structural steel to the roof framing and façade support
- structural steel to the front portico supporting the glazed roofing
- structural glass to the link bridge between Loxton House and the MTECC2 building
- automatically operated glazed louvres as part of the façade system to allow for natural ventilation
- aluminium batten feature screens to the façade
- aluminium folded and perforated sheet façade panelling
- extensive sandstone paving to the hard landscaping

“The highlight of the project was successfully achieving the feature front canopy awning,” said North Senior Project Manager, Shane Prior.

This architecturally intricate feature was designed to mimic a tree. The ‘tree’ is made out of a complex geometry of structural steel and supports a full glass roof. The cladding of the structural steel is in aluminium tubes arranged in a wavy pattern to mimic the leafy canopy of a tree. The ‘trunk’ of the tree was achieved by thick aluminium plates attached as closely to the structural steel main support post as possible.

“The process from shop drawing to onsite erection took approximately a year to meticulously draw, coordinate, fabricate, pre-assemble and plan,” said Shane. “The end result is one of the most unique features of any building you could find in Australia.”

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