



Architects to fix hospital ailments

■ ARCHITECTURE CAN INFLUENCE HEALTH, SAYS LEADING FIRM

BY KATE GIBBS

ADRIVE to expedite patient recovery in hospitals is creating a boon for architects, who are being called in to design health inspiring buildings.

Architect Ron Billard, director at Melbourne firm **Billard Leece Partnership**, said that US research has inspired some of his health clients to see design as potentially impacting upon the care provided.

Billard Leece has just finished work on the Alfred ICU, opened yesterday by Victorian Minister of Health, Daniel Andrews MP. Jammed between a helipad and some existing buildings, the priority and challenge of the job was to get light into the building, in part to help with patient care.

"It's important to bring light in to a hospital because when you wake up after an operation, to see there is light and a world out there is important for your recovery," Billard said.

"We introduced highlights. Through the middle of the buildings we have a higher ceiling space and



light from each side," he said.

Billard said there is a growing belief in health architecture that if the patients have a positive environment, there is a faster recovery time. "This is evidence-based design. When they wake up they look out and see light or a park they recover more quickly," he said.

Gary Hall, architect and project manager for The Troyer Group, said the move towards patient-centred environments and evidence-based design has gained wide acceptance because of its success at improving patient outcomes.

The Royal Children's Hospital,

another project on which Billard Leece is working, involved putting the hospital in a local park. "We did the master plan and convinced the government to put it there," Billard said. Other health projects using the same mentality have included the new Royal Hobart Hospital, the now St John of God hospital in Berwick, a master plan for Bendigo Hospital, Geelong Hospital and the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Billard said clients are impressed by the idea that architecture can influence health, and are keen to commission work on that basis.

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Demand for green building rockets

A GLOBAL survey has revealed a massive increase in clients requesting and implementing green design, with 42 per cent of architects reporting requests for green building elements on the majority of their projects. Importantly, 47 per cent of clients are actually implementing those green elements, an increase of 15 per cent on 2007 figures.

Client demand is a leading driver in green design, the survey by the **American Institute of Architects**

(AIA) found, with 66 per cent of architects citing it as the primary influence on their practice of green building. Architects believe that the primary reasons their clients are asking for green buildings are reduced operating costs (60 per cent), marketing (52 per cent) and market demand (21 per cent, up from 10 per cent in the 2007 survey).

The most popular element was a green or vegetated roof covering, with 34 per cent of architects

implementing them on more than half of their new projects, compared with seven per cent of architects in 2007. Renewable on-site energy sources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, low-impact hydro, biomass or bio-gas, also scored highly with 39 per cent of architects using them on more than half of new designs – that's compared with just six per cent last year.

The full report is available at www.autodesk.com/green

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Seidler, Utzon, Bradfield make 'trailblazer' list

SYDNEY HARBOUR Bridge engineer **John Bradfield** and Opera House architect **Jørn Utzon**, as well as architect **Harry Seidler**, have made it on a hotly debated list of Sydney's top visionaries.

The Museum of Sydney exhibition is aimed at stimulating debate for both Sydneysiders and visitors.

The list of ten "trailblazers" for the natural and built environment includes people who have had a lasting and dramatic effect on Sydney. The compilation of the list apparently drew considerable debate, but demanded reference to many political, social and cultural climates.

"It's a list no two people will ever agree on, and people won't be surprised to see the great men behind the Harbour Bridge and Opera House included," Caroline Butler-Bowden, head curator at the

Museum of Sydney said.

"They are credited with two of the most defining landmarks for Sydney, recognised not just here, but right around the world."

All but one individual on the list is no longer living, a decision the Museum said was "a tough call".

"Only time tells us the real visionaries. It won't be for several decades that we can make a list of the 2008 visionaries," Butler-Bowden said.

Just falling short of the final list was **Marion Mahony** and **Walter Burley Griffin**, who designed Canberra as well as Sydney suburb Castlecrag.

Also making the top-ten were politician Sir Henry Parkes, publisher Florence Taylor, environmentalist Annie Wyatt, and heritage crusader Jack Munday (living). Visit www.hht.net.au

inbrief

UNION BOSS KEEPS JOB

Kevin Reynolds is still top dog at Western Australia's most powerful construction union, **Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union (CFMEU)**, after a serious six-month battle with his former protégé, Darren Kavanagh, for the role. The battle commenced after Kavanagh announced his candidacy in May but was promptly fired as safety officer after allegedly stealing a union membership list for electoral purposes.

BRITISH UNIS TO BUILD ABROAD

British universities will fare better if they consider building internationally, Drummond Bone, vice-chancellor of the University of Liverpool has said. In a report prepared for the Labour government, Bone proposed that British universities needed structures and systems that suited the student first, rather than the university, which may include international campuses and increased online learning.

50 STRANGEST BUILDINGS

From gherkins and eggs to pickle barrels, buildings can take on the most usual shapes... Indulge your curiosity by checking out the 50 strangest buildings of the world [here](#).

DUBAI MARKET STALLS

State-owned developer **Nakheel** has announced it is to scale back projects in Dubai, in a signal that the market is struggling. A spokesperson for Nakheel, developer of both **Woods Bagot's** 1,000m-tall tower in Dubai and the Palm developments, said: "The next few months will see a scaling-back of activity around some of our projects. This will not affect our long-term business objectives, and is a responsible approach in line with current global economic conditions."

[YOUR COMMENT...](#)

Sydneysiders hit with \$736m useless rail fees

SYDNEY'S NEW home buyers will be hit with \$736 million in levies for rail lines that no longer exist. The state government scrapped plans for a long-awaited North West Metro and South West Link but has refused to cancel or reduce the levies that are charged to developers – and passed on to buyers.

The levies will add more than \$4,000 to the cost of each of the city's planned 181,000 new homes.

Planning Minister Kristina Keneally said the levies and other charges will be reviewed by Treasury again in 2009.

"What this review's doing is looking at how we calculate the charge, and looking at how we can set those charges so that we can stimulate new construction in NSW."

The **Urban Taskforce**, a property development industry group, has said that strategies to create construction jobs in Sydney won't work unless local council development levies are "radically reduced".

"These levies can easily add between \$70,000 and \$90,000 to the cost of a home," Aaron Gadiel, CEO, said. "This kind of impost is not sustainable."

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MARKETING TERRITORY

IDEAS ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE CURRENCY IN THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES AND ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS CAN WEATHER THE STORM BY CHANGING THE WAY THEY MARKET THEMSELVES, SAYS PAUL BENNETT, CEO OF MARKETING HEAVYWEIGHTS EURO RSCG.

Can architectural firms change their marketing strategy turn the economic crisis into an advantage?

Honestly, yes. The firms that succeed will do so by giving more value for money. That means developing more value-added services, which may not cost revenue, such as additional consulting. Firms should ask: What buying advice can they give in the context of interior design and furnishing? What additional services based on their current intellectual property can they better leverage? Could they partner with another firm to add value by becoming a 'one stop shop'? It's not usually a question of being cheaper, but offering a wider range of services in one place.

One thing a lot of organisations forget to consider is the additional intellectual capacity they've got in their business. They may have someone who's job it is to do X, but in a previous life they may have done X and Y. You need to be clear about what resources you've got internally and how they can be applied to add value.

What is important marketing to another business?

Relevancy is more important than anything else. You have to be much smarter about the kind of content you provide to a particular vertical market. A doctor's practice is not going to be interested in how an architectural firm redesigned an industrial park. They would, however, be interested in a redesign of a dental surgery down the road.

Anyone will have a conversation with you if you can give them something for nothing. And usually information is the most valu-

able currency. So if you're able to give potential customers some consulting advice about how you can make their existing environment more appropriate, more user friendly or better for employee retention and happiness, then they'll almost certainly have a conversation with you.

Businesses should be segmenting their contact databases with some rigour and only contacting prospects with relevant information. Time is a currency that is incredibly valuable these days.

How can architectural firms communicate with potential clients in the best-value way?

Email is the best value, from a return-on-investment point of view. The cost of producing a really interesting email that will link directly to your brand's 'shop window' or website homepage is probably the most cost-effective way of reaching the right people. Business to business marketing has yet to become as clever as business to consumer marketing at using search engine optimization, using keyword sponsorship and ownership cleverly and using specially-targeted online advertising.

Do you have any advice for small firms that may do their own marketing in house?

They should try and partner with another company that might have a database that they could use or share. They should look at creating some interesting and engaging direct marketing, whether it's an email or a direct mail pack. It needs to be a two-way value conversation.

What is the most innovative low-budget piece of work you've seen recently?

There's a really innovative technology called QRcode, which is basically a square bar code that you photograph or scan with your mobile phone. It links to a WAP-enabled website where it downloads automatically onto your phone some interesting content. It's not an expensive thing to set up and the interesting content can be anything from an SMS to a photo to a full blown three-minute video. It's a relatively new technology and Sony, our client, were ones of the first in Australia to use it.

How can firms market themselves to the public sector?

They should speak to the consumers, the constituents. If there's a project they want to tender for there's an interesting opportunity to talk to, engage, get on board the community and interest groups. I'd include that advice, feedback in my tender proactively.



Business marketing has yet to become as clever as consumer marketing, says Paul Bennett.

