



rmit building two lift lobby

location rmit city campus bowen lane melbourne australia

status completed march 2007

client rmit university

photography dianna Snape

Building 2 was designed by the Public Works Department to house the Department of Applied Art. It opened in 1917 and continues to hold a prominent position opposite the Francis Ormond Building on Bowen and Latrobe Streets. This flat roofed 4 storey building reflects a functional industrial architecture with large expanses of glazing to light the studios. It is a robust building that has adapted well with nearly a century of occupation by various Art and related Departments. The building was built without a lift or adequate toilets to serve the large studios on each level. Whilst the main entry to the building is from Bowen Street via a generous open stairway, there is a second front door off Bowen Lane at the rear. This laneway links into the back of Building 8, Building 24, Storey Hall and a network of doorways and stairways that is the inner life of the campus.

The Building 2 lift lobby project involved grafting a new entry, lift, lobby and toilet module onto the Bowen Lane facade. The lobby is very modest in size but provides a new level of amenity and legibility to the core access and service address of the building. The 4 storey lobby is north facing and looks out onto a gritty jumble of back laneway architecture that is quintessentially Melbourne. There is a dramatic contrast between the solid brick walls lining Bowen Lane and the new fully glazed vertical lobby element. The lobby façade has an imbedded shading system within a double glazed skin. A wall of circular polypropylene rings form the shading device which softens the daylight and focuses the view. At night the lobby glows like a lantern and so brings prominence to the entry and a sense of drama to the laneway environment.

The Building 2 lobby fits well into the urban fabric of the campus. Like other similar building upgrades it not only solves access and address issues it repairs and invigorates the immediate neighbourhood in a most positive way.

