THINK BRICK AUSTRALIA

Case Study 39

Boag's Brewery Bottling Hall

Launceston TAS

Representing Australia's clay brick and paver manufacturers

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Boag's Brewery Bottling Hall

"Launceston is a city of brick," explains architect Jack Birrell who describes it as "one of the most intact heritage cities in Australia." Built around the 1881 Esk Brewery malt kiln, the Boag's complex is located within the city's central business district.

A new automated bottling line was required to keep pace with Boag's recent sales success. A suitable area on the site was largely clear but contaminated by the residue from a colonial-era zinc smelter. Further complications were a high, tidal water table and highly-reactive soils.

The project was fast tracked, requiring the builders, engineers and architects to work closely. A network of timber piles supports a metre-deep ring beam carrying the floor slab and supporting the inner leaf of precast concrete panels and the outer brickwork.

The heritage context made the facade design a highly sensitive issue. "We took our cameras and sketch books and trod Launceston streets doing a huge study of facade proportions and the brick details we loved," says Birrell.

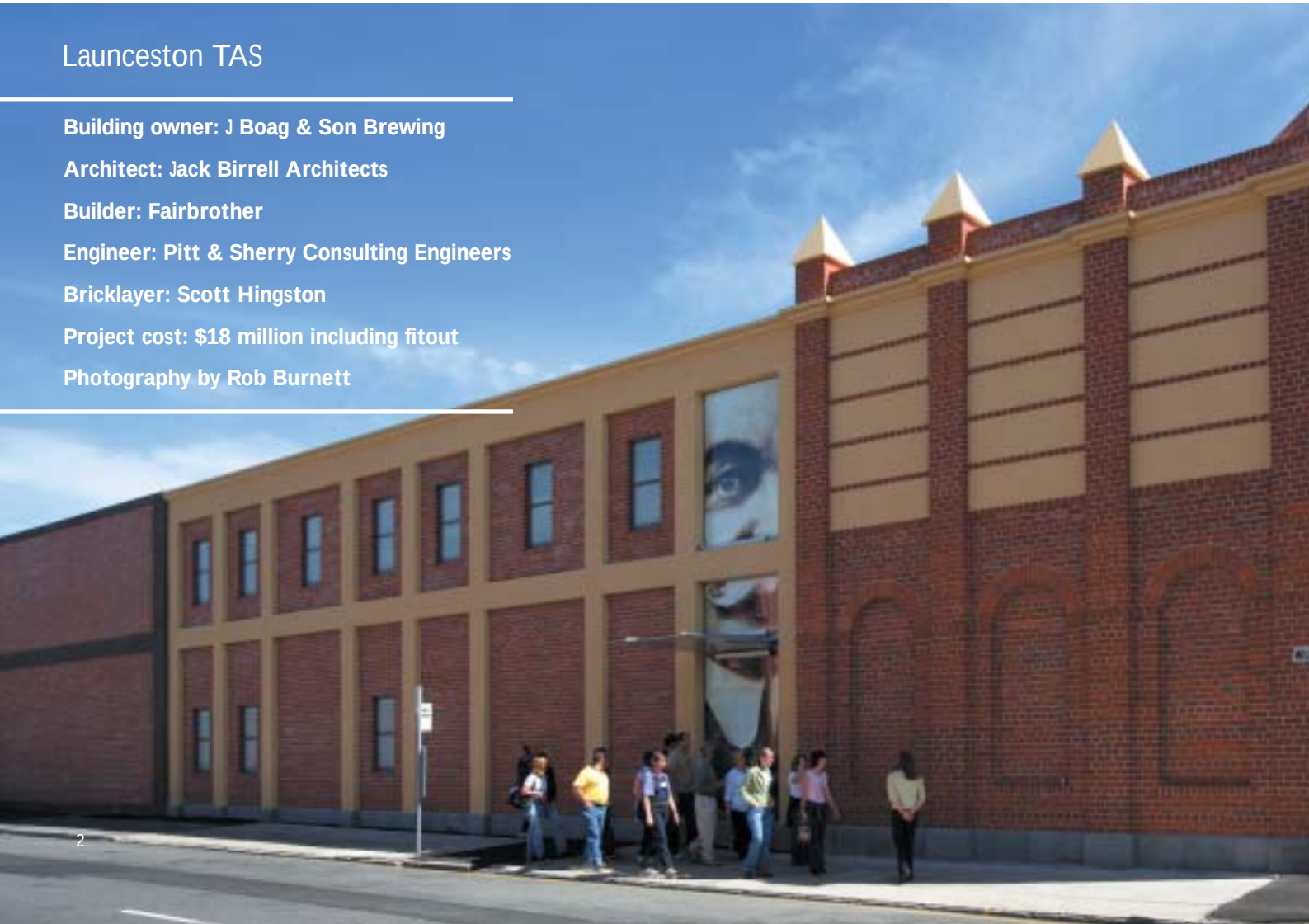
The new building addresses three very different streets and the facades are modulated to reflect this. The Tamar Street elevation responds to the adjoining rendered Victorian hotels. "As you move around the corner into William Street, it's more of a raw industrial brick architecture that has evolved over time." And along The Esplanade the new "warehouse" facade is a mannered interpretation of the adjacent heritage brick mouldings with an indented string-course of dog-toothed bricks.

Launceston facades have what Birrell calls a "staccato rhythm," that effectively divides the brickwork into slender vertical panels that tend to hide cracking in re-entrant corners. The Boag project continues this theme, with concealed control joints at the edge of the relatively narrow articulated panels.

Bottling halls are noisy places making sound attenuation critical. "Bricks play a big role in that," Birrell explains. "In some parts of the building they are three layers thick to get the relief in the building. But this also gave us more building mass on the outside resulting in great acoustic performance." Even at 3 am the hum escaping the bottling hall is lower than the city's background noise.

The bricks chosen have a lively red blend in keeping with the heritage context, enhanced by the deliberate sprinkling of bricks with strong bar marks. The result is a timeless building that respects its context without being imitative.

"(Brick) gave us more building mass on the outside resulting



Launceston TAS

Building owner: J Boag & Son Brewing

Architect: Jack Birrell Architects

Builder: Fairbrother

Engineer: Pitt & Sherry Consulting Engineers

Bricklayer: Scott Hingston

Project cost: $18 million including fitout

Photography by Rob Burnett

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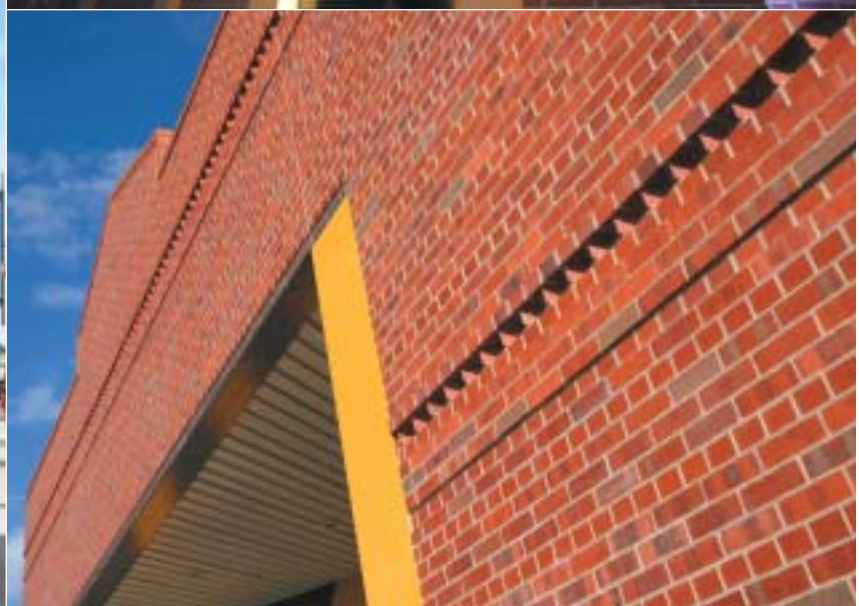
in great acoustic performance”



Links:

www.boags.com.au

www.birrelli.com.au

www.pittsh.com.au

(Facing page) Boag’s Williams Street elevation displays the strong vertical modulation typical of Launceston. The brewery tour is popular with visitors. (This page, top row) Architect Jack Birrell at the deeply-revealed corner “entrance” (actually an emergency exit). Up to three layers of brick backed by precast concrete panels deaden bottling line noise to a distant hum. (This page bottom row) The corner is capped with a contemporary take on traditional brewery symbols. Recessed lighting highlights the main elevations. The Esplanade facade responds to its industrial neighbours, the mass being relieved with dog-toothing and projecting courses.