



## Case Study 20

# Health and Microbiology Laboratory, The University of Queensland

Gatton, QLD

### Representing Australia's clay brick and paver manufacturers

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**Client:**

The University of Queensland,  
Property and Facilities Division

**Architect:**

m3architecture

**Construction:**

McNab Constructions

**Bricklayers:**

Jack Morrisby, Gavin Sticklen and  
Trevor Jervis

**Building cost:**

\$520,000

**Photographer:**

Jon Linkins, m3architecture

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**“We had a hammer and a bolster in the**

Clockwise from left:

An uplight on the eastern face highlights the dramatic surface texture and patterning.

The bold facade began as a series of self portraits that were ultimately transcribed into brickwork.

A brick seat faces the deeply-recessed cinema-format window into the laboratory.

The two bricks specified were bolster cut at different points to produce degrees of texture according to the cut point and core pattern.

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The contrast couldn't be more stark. Inside: the clinical white surfaces and stainless steel fittings essential in a 'level-two physical containment' laboratory. Outside: a wildly-unexpected mingling of whole and shattered bricks, their jagged ends and core holes threateningly exposed to passers-by.

And the contrast continues for this is a campus of "well mannered" brick and concrete buildings dating back to the 1960s; functional and unexceptional.

The external patterning on the Health and Microbiology Laboratory began life as a series of self portraits developed by m3architecture's Ashley Paine. "The portraits are a collection of works that sought new representations of the artist," explains project architect Michael Banney. "These were developed through a variety of media and processes and ultimately transcribed into another medium/process, namely brickwork."

Far from being random, the patterning was developed in the office and drawn brick for brick. Banney admits to enjoying the



**office and dozens of sample bricks that we experimented with."**

development phase. "We had a hammer and bolster in the office and dozens of sample bricks that we experimented with."

Two bricks were specified, one smooth, the other slightly textured and with different core patterns. "Bolster cuts at different points produced different degrees of texture. The bricks were either 'centre split' or 'offset split', creating different amounts of texture – what we referred to on site as 'rough cut', 'centre cut' and 'smooth cut'."

These were combined to create the facade texture. "To minimise wastage, the quantity of each cut type was calculated so all the halves were utilised. A variety of textures were then achieved by considering the bond pattern of each course, together with the brick type, cut placement and the mortar plane."

To assist the bricklayers, all brick positions, control joints and corner returns were drawn, with the brick types and joint finishes colour coded. "As the first few courses were laid it became apparent to us that the process was worthwhile, and I think the brickies could see, and were excited about what they were making."

With the patterned brickwork on three sides of the building, some interesting shadows are generated, especially around midday when the strong Queensland sun is close to vertical. At night an uplight on the east face creates a similar but reverse effect.

