



## Case Study 15

### Roma Mitchell Arts Education Centre

Adelaide SA

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- **Client:** Department for Administrative and Information Services on behalf of Department of Education, Training and Employment
- **Architect:** Hassell Pty Ltd
- **Construction:** Hansen Yuncken
- **Structural consultant:** Wallbridge & Gilbert
- **Bricklayer:** John Wark & Son
- **Building cost:** \$28 million
- **Photographer:** Patrick Bingham-Hall

**This page- Above:** Durable, self-finished materials such as brick, concrete, stainless and galvanised steel, come together in the atrium's Escher-like geometry.

**Left:** Passers-by are offered a glimpse into some classrooms and activity areas. The placement of brickwork above large expanses of glass was "a feat of engineering" according to Hassell's David Vidler.

**Page 3- Left:** The deep, brick-lined reveals were constructed vertically, then backed by a reinforced slab and craned into position for attachment to a steel frame. The brick walling is supported on shelf angles and steel mullions.

**Right:** The Centre's bold design has added significantly to the revival of Adelaide's historic West End.

**Bottom:** The Roma Mitchell Arts Education Centre makes bold use of specially-made, bar-marked red bricks, echoing those of neighbouring heritage buildings.

# Roma Mitchell Arts Education Centre

Adelaide SA

After a century of patchy development, Adelaide's West End is undergoing an arts-led revival. The bold, new Roma Mitchell Arts Education Centre in Light Square adds significantly to the amenity and character of the area.

The challenging brief called for a facility catering to the disparate needs of visual arts and performing arts studies. The building form is a number of interlocked volumes punctuated by slotted, deep reveals. Glass walls at street level give passers-by a glimpse into classrooms and activity areas.

The deliberate placement of brickwork above large expanses of glass "attempts to interpret the aspirations of the college," says Hassell project architect, David Vidler. "A significant element of the client brief required that the project confront the accepted ways that building materials and processes are utilised."

In keeping with the area's masonry character, the Centre makes extensive use of red brick cladding. "The brief also required low ongoing maintenance costs which led to the selection of self-finished materials – brick, concrete, galvanised and stainless steel – materials that don't require paint or subsequent treatment," Vidler explains.

**“Adds significantly to the amenity and character of Adelaide’s West End”**



The bar-marked red bricks were made to order, echoing a style that was popular over a century ago when adjacent buildings such as the historic Goldsborough Mort warehouse were constructed. "The use of deeply raked joints on the brickwork to further enhance the shadow line around each brick creates a dramatic effect in full sunlight." The brickwork is complemented by stainless steel panels stamped with a quilt pattern.

Vidler is especially satisfied with the brick-lined reveals. "The brick soffits are suspended by steel rods and droppers from a concrete slab. The brickwork is constructed vertically like a conventional wall panel, with steel droppers embedded in the joints. The wall is then laid on the face and a reinforced slab cast at the back. The whole assembly is craned and attached to a steel frame. Achieving the final effect was due to considerable efforts by the both the engineer and bricklaying contractor."

The Roma Mitchell Arts Education Centre was completed in December 2000 and won an Award of Merit in the New Building category of the RAIA SA Chapter's 2001 Awards as well as a Commendation for Excellence in the Adelaide Prize 2001.

