



Case Study 17

The Piazza, Castle Towers Shopping Centre

Castle Hill NSW

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- **Client:** Queensland Investment Corporation
- **Architecture/construction:** Bovis Lend Lease
- **Bricklayer:** Fugen Holdings
- **Building cost:** \$55 million
- **Photographers:** Eric Sierins, Jackie Dean



This page- Left: The Piazza's imposing entry links the centre to Old Northern Road, the main shopping street. The towers draw on the region's heritage values.

Above: The "civic qualities" of brick add a textural richness and feeling of permanence. The design draws on traditional architectural values without attempting to replicate.

Page 7- Centre: Unlike conventional enclosed shopping centres, The Piazza at Castle Towers makes full use of external spaces.

Top: The brickwork mass is broken down by colour, banding and articulation to create what the architects describe as a "celebration of brick".

Bottom: The red and cream bricks are highlighted by dark blue units. The bricks were chosen for their smooth faces, sharp arrises and even colouration.

The Piazza Castle Towers Shopping Centre

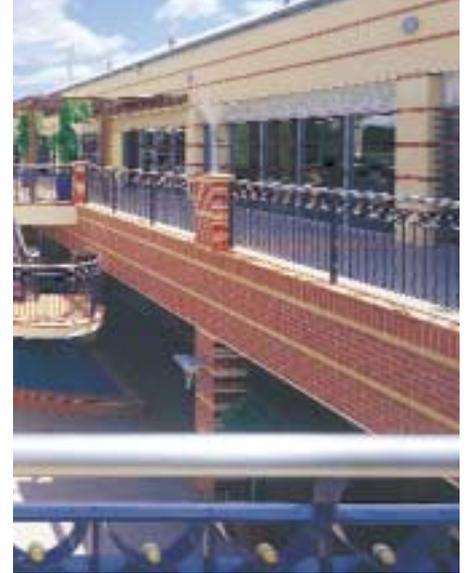
Castle Hill NSW

Although Castle Hill was the site of the first Government Farm in 1801, it wasn't until the 1980s that it became the prosperous suburb that it is today. Castle Towers Shopping Centre reflects the area's heritage values and the commercial realities of a dynamic civic/retail/entertainment facility.

In an effort to break down the mass inherent in such a centre, The Piazza is one of five precincts, each with their own 'personality'. "The Piazza links the centre to the rest of the town fabric, including Old Northern Road, the main shopping street," explains design architect Gerry Furzer. "It's part of a broader entertainment precinct with restaurants, leisure retail and cinemas."

Unlike most other centres that enclose their facilities, The Piazza makes full use of external spaces. "This is probably one of the first external restaurant precincts attached to a major retail centre to incorporate genuine public space, which is a tribute to the developer, Queensland Investment Corporation," Furzer says.

Lend Lease chose brick because of its "civic qualities" and the local built environment, according to Furzer. This is reinforced by formal elements and traditional architectural values such as The Piazza's entrance towers, that are clearly influenced by the steeple of the nearby 1861 Old St Pauls Church.



“The cream is a beautiful, clean cream and the red is a great, strong red”



However Furzer considers The Piazza draws on these values rather than making a futile attempt to replicate. "What we didn't want to do is build a historic precinct. There are historic references but we were really trying to strike a contemporary look and feel about it. It has a sort of timeless quality."

The project architect, Mark Garland, is particularly enthusiastic about the consistency and depth of colour in the bricks. "The cream is a beautiful, clean cream and the red is a great, strong red. They are quite contemporary colours." The main brick colours are highlighted and accented by a dark blue brick. All the units are smooth faced with sharp arrises.



"We used the two strong brick colours in a range of different patterns, with banding, plane changes and geometric forms, with a deliberate concern for detail and articulation in order to add textural richness and a feeling of permanence."