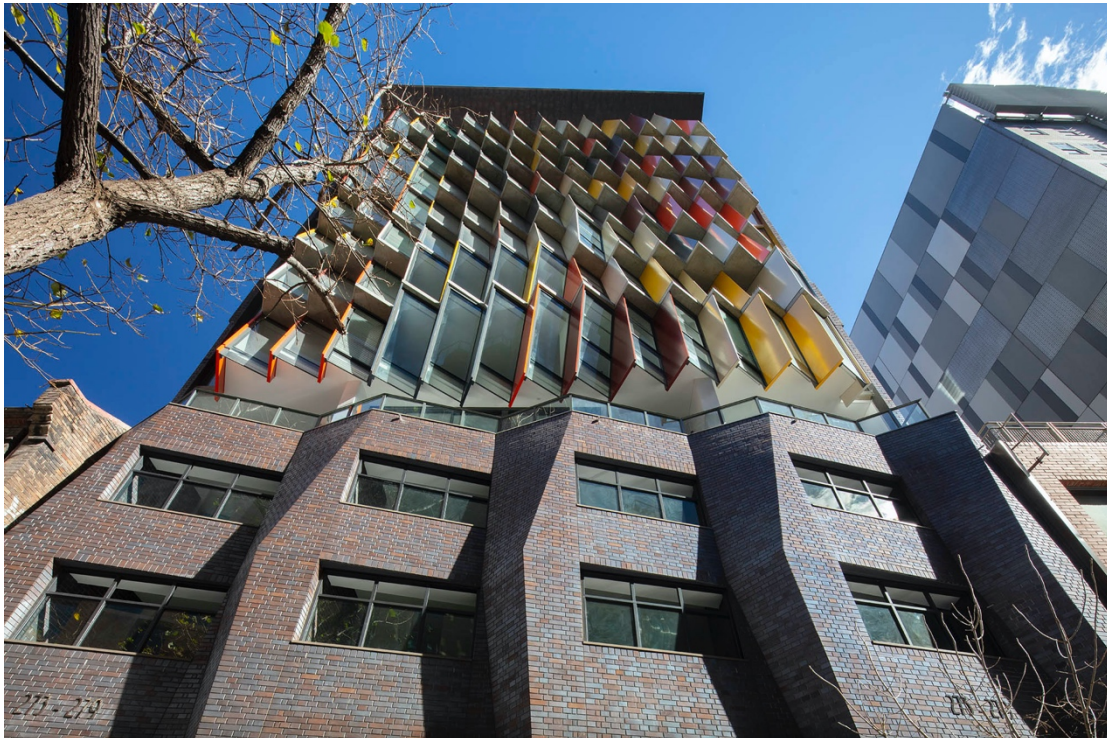


## KAZ TOWER, SYDNEY

Kaz Tower's unique façade sets a high benchmark for contemporary CBD streetscapes



Designing a contemporary 14 storey commercial and residential building in a heritage setting can be somewhat challenging. But when you add to this an incredibly creative design, with a complicated construction, challenges accelerate at speed. This was the situation Tony Owen, of Tony Owen Partners, faced when designing Kaz Tower in Sussex Street, Sydney.

It all began with a glass façade, a City of Sydney heritage requirement to build a brick podium for the first three floors, and a desire to maximise sunlight through each street-front window.

Located at 273-279 Sussex Street, Kaz Tower adjoins several historic brick buildings. And, like most cities, attracting sunlight was challenging. But with the help of parametric architecture – a computer-aided design using digital technology – Tony managed to capture every bit of sun that's reflected off surrounding buildings and design one of the most unique facades in Sydney's CBD. Tony explains, "At different times of the day the sun hits different parts of the building. So, we angled the windows in each part of the building according to where the light was coming from at a certain time of the day. And we ended up with a building that had patterned glazing where every window was at a different angle, because the different height would get sun at different times, and at the different times, the sun would have a different angle."

Tony took his ingenious idea for an angled red, yellow and white glass façade, reflecting this design in a three-storey brick podium and side brick façade. While traditional face bricks were selected to construct the podium, a brick inlay façade was the system of choice for the side walls. This is where the real fun began.



Material choice was critical to ensure continuity across the podium and façade. But finding a brick tile for the brick inlay façade to exactly match the face brick for the podium proved more difficult than expected. That's where Robertson's Building Products Iron Mountain bricks and brick tiles came to the fore.

"We just couldn't find a brick tile in an appropriate colour. We had many samples that did not satisfy anyone. Then Robertson Building Products came up with a solid brick and brick tile, which was extremely attractive for us. So, when we found the same face, it was like, that's it. And colour wise, it was comparable to the desired look because it was dark – a grey/brown – and not a uniform colour on the face, which was very attractive as well," says Marianna Mioduszewski, Director, Tony Owen Partners.

With material choice sorted, the next challenge was figuring out the practicalities of creating the angled façade with bricks. "We thought putting the side façade together would be very difficult, but Hanson Precast suggested that with Robertson Façade Systems' brick inlay, anything is possible. We went to the factory to see how individual panels are formed and shaped, and gained a lot of confidence that these

panels would be well done. So, we were very confident from day one, and they have proven that it's definitely the way to go," comments Marianna.

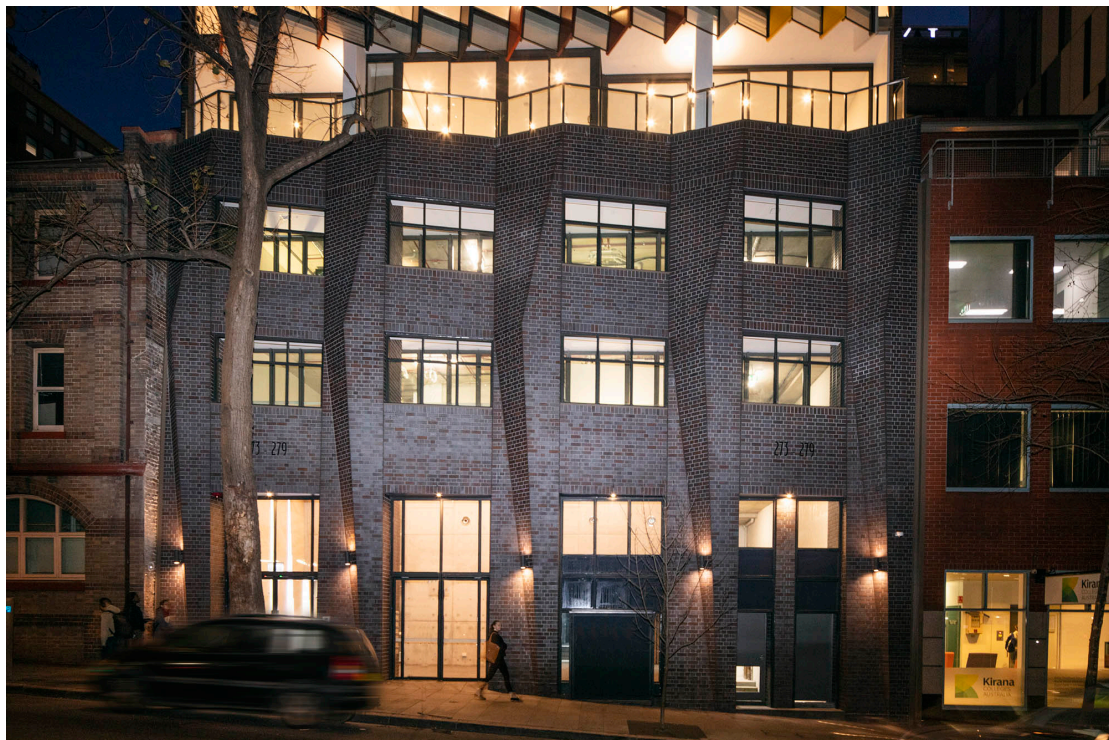
The end result is incredible. Brick inlay has been a time and cost effective way of 'laying' bricks in the Kaz Tower facade, easily creating the desired pattern. As Tony suggests, what's amazing about the side brick façade is that, "Each piece is angled in different directions, using several different shapes, which are then mirrored across the facade. So every brick façade and every brick face you can see is sculptured. And what you get is an incredibly interesting patterned façade on the side."

Laying face bricks in the podium proved more complex. The geometry of this design is not in straight lines, or even angled straight lines, but 3D curves. So, Tony invested considerable thinking time to make it as easy as possible for the bricklayers to realise his design. "The fun part of constructing a building that's a very unusual shape is figuring out how to get it built in the real world using traditional technology. So we have to be innovative and clever about it, but at the same time you're heavily reliant on a computer that allows us to locate complex shapes in space fairly easily," Tony says.

But, every challenge has a solution if you look in the right place, and find an excellent, professional bricklayer. Enter Brian Freeman and his team from The Country Group and a foam guide, which was essentially used by his team as formwork in the shape of the brick wall. And they've done a superb job. "We're very happy with the job the builder and bricklayers have done, and we're very happy with Robertson Façade Systems as well," Tony remarks.

Indeed, it is Tony and his team who are to be congratulated for creating a unique façade geometry that has set an incredibly high benchmark for contemporary CBD streetscapes in heritage precincts. And while a picture tells a thousand words, the best way to really appreciate the innovation in this design is to stroll past 273-279 Sussex Street and see for yourself.





Architect: Tony Owen Partners  
Product: Brick Inlay façade  
Iron Mountain brick tiles  
Iron Mountain face bricks  
Precaster: Hanson Precast  
Builder: Duffy Kennedy  
Bricklayer: Brian Freeman, The Country Group