



1. Len Lye completed facade. 2. Rooftop aspect. 3. Render of the Len Lye Centre.

LEN LYE

Holmes Consulting for the Len Lye Centre

Project Location: New Plymouth



New Zealand's Len Lye (1901-1980) was a celebrated filmmaker, painter, kinetic sculptor, and poet one of the most inspiring and original artists of his time. The stunning Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth, Taranaki, is a celebration of his work, and one of the most technically challenging and interesting structural design projects Holmes Consulting has delivered.

Our role on the project was to deliver structural designs that supported the architectural vision, as well as the client's need to create a compelling gallery space to attract visitors to the region. The principle design challenge on the project was based around the complex facade—finding a way to bring the architect's bold concept to life without compromising the structural integrity and functionality of the gallery. The approach was necessarily collaborative, with team-based problem solving at the core; the architect and structural engineers worked together over a number of weeks and months before involving the facade engineer, precaster, and steel fabricator.

Our innovative design had many points of technical interest, including designing a 'box within a box', so that the design of the internal layout of the building could proceed in parallel with the resolution of the complex facade. The conscious choice of decoupling the facade afforded Pattersons Architects freedom—a pivotal part of the project's success. The decoupling meant that the interior and its complex interplay of spaces stacked inside, beneath and over each other could be developed at the same pace as the exterior, which had its own complexities in terms of geometry, materials, detailing and constructability considerations. Part of this project also entailed the seismic strengthening of the adjacent Govett-Brewster Gallery. This project is an excellent example of a structure where open minded, creative and technically advanced engineering was a critical enabler of the vision for the project. We are submitting this project to the awards because it's a great example of the way projects can and should work: with great communication, collaboration and shared ambition from all parts of the project team. As much as we're proud of our input, we owe much to an exceptional Len Lye Centre team.

The outcome is simply stunning, with some exceptionally clever engineering hidden behind the memorable and sensuous Len Lye facade.

Judging & Copyright Statement

This project is an entrant in the 2016 INNOVATE NZ Awards of Excellence competition. The winners will be celebrated at our Awards Gala Dinner on Saturday, 12th August 2017 in Taupo.

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