

An inspired reinterpretation of the traditional church

The Anglican Parish of Dapto was looking to create a building that would complement the existing church hall, welcome visitors and re-connect with the public. By cleverly re-organizing the site, the architect has created an open and welcoming face to the public with a commercial café and forecourt, which on first impressions does not reveal that the building is a church.

Silvester Fuller's bold, civic design links the old church hall on one side and the existing pre-school on the other. The central hub is in the form of a foyer and 500 seat auditorium. Used not only for Sunday worship, the auditorium now accommodates a broad range of events seven days a week, catering to the wider community and blurring the line between religious and community space.

The tight budget required a simple and cost-effective construction. The solution was to use load bearing precast concrete panels supporting steel trusses and a single pitch roof. The use of precast was also the perfect solution for an economical and efficient method

Project Owner

Anglican Parish of Dapto
& Anglican Church
Property Trust

Architect and Project Superintendent

Silvester Fuller

Builders

Premier Building Group

Precast Manufacturer

Austral Precast

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of achieving the impressive, large spaces that were integral to the church's functionality.

The faceted precast entry points funnel users into the building, and the striking black and white colour scheme highlights the differences between these



entry points and the remaining external mass. A bright, white, smooth finish was used for the entry areas, while in contrast the bulk of the building features an earthy, black rough-textured finish.

Award winner

The project has won a Commendation in the 2012 RAIA National Architecture awards and the Blakett Prize and Public Architecture award in the 2012 AIA NSW awards.

The architect and client team visited Austral Precast's Wetherill Park plant in NSW to help find a solution to achieve the texture and finishes desired. They accidentally stumbled upon some 'unfinished' panels that had been discarded prior to the final smoothing process. The resultant rough, lumpy, irregular exposed aggregate surface was exactly what they were looking for. It took some convincing of the manufacturer that the architect would be happy with 'unfinished' panels, and that they would not be rejected on site. The fact that custom form liners were not required was an added bonus to an already restricted budget.

The builder, Premier Building Group finished the project on time and to budget. Frank Tropea from Premier comments "The restricted site and necessity to keep the adjacent buildings fully operational made this a challenging project. The use of precast meant the structure could go up quickly and efficiently in the restricted area. The loadbearing precast panels were the first to go up as they were essential to support the roof structure and critical to the time frame."