



Above: Looking from the building's tower onto the fourth floor cafe, the full extent of the glass-roofed atrium becomes apparent, as does the double skin glazed facade at the edge of the building.

Anyone in the construction industry will tell you that it is far simpler to build a new building than it is to refurbish an existing one. For contractor McKee Fehl Constructors the challenges associated with the gutting and reconstruction of the Mid City Cinema Complex, and the associated fit-out for the Department of Conservation, were two-fold.

There have been a number of unusual challenges and risks associated with this project; commencing with major structural demolition and then building new structures – all within a building that had resident tenants – and achieving this within the strict time constraints, says McKee Fehl project manager Stephen Cummings.

“The demolition required extensive hands-on management and innovation to cope with the limited access and noise constraints. This saw us concrete-cutting, drilling, hoisting, breaking, and moving material around within the building by hand, with bob cats and various types of craneage.

“The construction of the new floors within the old theatres had to be programmed and coordinated with the demolition, to ensure critical parts of the demolition could be carried out in the available time windows, or to maintain access for other tenants,” says Cummings.

Carried out over 12 months, the successful completion of the two projects was closely linked to a number of extenuating factors, says Cummings.

“There were lead time and supply issues for products not normally available in the local market, such as the low-emission MDF panelling and whiteboards, and Tasmanian oak timber door and window frames. We also had to co-ordinate with DOC as they carried out a progressive shift of their office equipment while construction work continued.”

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Above: Along with natural light, the atrium also provides natural ventilation as fresh air from the rooftop is circulated through the atrium and back up to the roof via the double facade.

Above right: High-efficiency, low-mercury lamps and solid-state, long-life lamps are used throughout the building as a way of further minimising energy consumption.



Bogacki Property Consultants has been working in partnership with the Department of Conservation for more than seven years. The company has been instrumental in planning DOC's head office reorganisation since the department occupied four separate buildings.

Over that time the company has reorganised DOC into fewer and better-quality premises with the ultimate objective of housing the entire Wellington-based department together in one place, says Andy Bogacki, director of Bogacki Property Consultants.

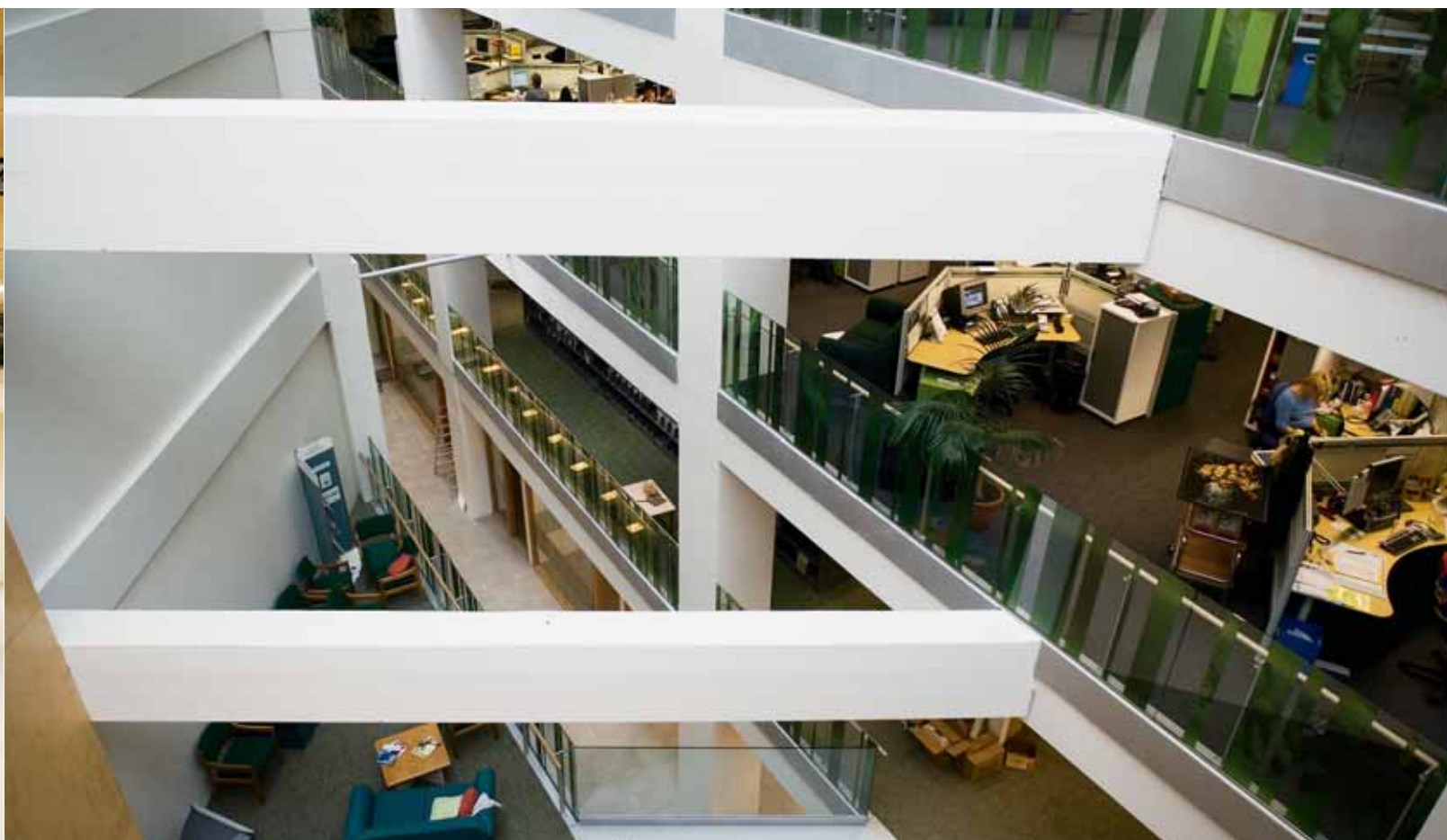
"The Department of Conservation has been looking for a new office building in which to house its Wellington staff that would provide a pleasant, environmentally pro-active space so that staff can feel proud of the place in which they work – this has now been realised through the Conservation House project."

The department employed a list of six fundamental principals as criteria for the selection and development process. These were to optimise site potential, minimise energy consumption, protect and conserve water, use environmentally preferable products, enhance indoor environmental quality and optimise operational and maintenance practises.

"The building needed to be as much as possible a high-performance green building – otherwise known as a sustainable building – with objectives being to prevent environmental degradation and avoid resource depletion of energy, water and raw materials," says Bogacki.

Initially, 11 buildings were identified as potential offices before five were shortlisted for consideration. The culmination of the four-month process was the choosing of the Manners Street site, which Bogacki says met a number of the criteria including the potential for sustainability, proximity to staff facilities, and an attractive financial package.

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Above: The open-plan layout of Conservation House, coupled with the glass-roofed atrium, means there is less of a dependence upon artificial lighting.

When property developer The Wellington Company bought the Mid City complex the intention was to develop a flagship of environmentally sustainable building practices, and in the process create a desirable working environment, says director Ian Cassels.

Gill Consultants was then appointed as development manager to source tenants, initiate the concept design, and negotiate and manage the development.

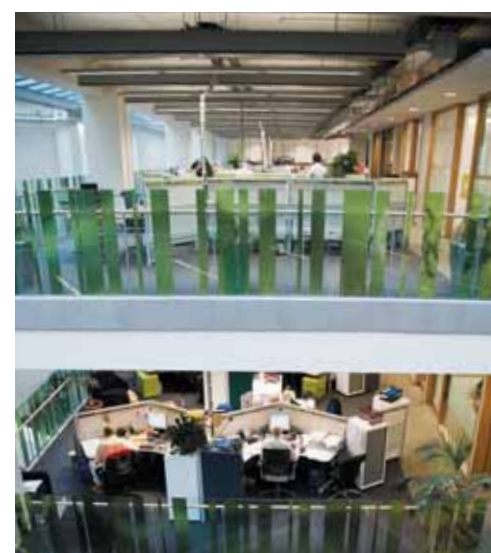
“When you enter Conservation House the air quality is astounding, you know you’ve stepped into something different. Even on that sub-conscious level we’ve created a quality perception amongst staff that relates back to retention,” says Rasbeer Gill, director of Gill Consultants.

“In what was an audaciously strategic move we bought the building that DOC was in previously, with the intention of steering them towards setting up office in the former Mid City complex,” says Cassels.

The move paid off – the building’s environmentally sustainable design practices were in keeping with where DOC itself was heading.

“Contributing to Conservation House’s equivalent 5-star green rating is its central city location and utilisation of existing infrastructure. Any such building in a walkable city is going to be far more efficient than a comparable one in a city that isn’t walkable. A city has to work on all levels, including the transportation of the people who work there, in order to sustain carbon-neutrality – or better,” says Cassels.

For more information, contact The Wellington Company, Level 12, BNZ Trust House, 50 Manners St, Wellington, phone (04) 802 4291, fax (04) 802 4298. Website: www.thewellingtoncompany.co.nz. Or contact Gill Consultants, Level 8, BNZ Trust House, 50 Manners St, Wellington, phone (04) 384 6017, fax (04) 384 6047. Email: rasbeer@gillconsultants.co.nz.



Above right: The fourth floor cafeteria has been designed to encourage staff collaboration and co-operation by acting as an informal meeting area, catering to different working styles.

Top: The chilled beam system and double skin external facade contribute to a more comfortable and natural environment for DOC staff, as well as lower running costs.

Above: Extensive natural light from the floor-to-ceiling atrium augments the open plan layout, creating an expansive feel.

The world of project management is ruled by what those in the business refer to as the triple constraints – time, cost and scope. Often competing with one another, changes to any one constraint will inevitably affect the other two.

These constraints were all too keenly felt by Wellington-based Impact Project Management, appointed to provide project and cost management services to DOC for the fit-out of Conservation House, says director Garth Palmer.

“One of the worst winters on record contributed to a significant delay in the new building being handed over to DOC for the fit-out. Unfortunately, the date for relocating staff couldn’t be moved, so we faced a significant issue – a lack of time to complete the work.”

To address the issue, the Impact team worked closely with DOC’s legal division and the incumbent contractor to develop a procurement strategy that met government guidelines and enabled the project to be delivered to DOC’s timeline.

Acting as a single point of contact for DOC throughout the project, Impact’s role was to manage the internal works construction, the design and manufacture of all furniture and the relocation of DOC staff and equipment from four existing locations.

Palmer says the considerable time constraints and the incorporation of leading-edge technology pushed the boundaries of project management. Nevertheless, the company’s extensive experience and excellent teamwork ensured the project’s timely completion.

“We currently manage development projects worth more than \$100 million for the likes of Wellington International Airport, Fairfax, Unisys and PSIS. These, and our previous track record, led to our selection for this important government project,” says Palmer.

For details, contact Impact Project Management, PO Box 19-155, Courtenay Pl, Wellington, phone (04) 801 9021. Email: garth@impactpm.co.nz. Website: www.impactpm.co.nz.



Above: Tasmanian hooped pine timber panelling was chosen as a detail material for the reception area because it is a sustainable plantation timber.

Sub-contractors are the lifeblood of the building industry, providing essential services in conjunction with those of the main contractor. DN Barrett Construction was one of the sub-contractors brought in by McKee Fehl to work on the Conservation House fit-out for DOC. In many instances sub-contractors have a wide range of experience that makes them an invaluable industry resource, says DN Barrett Construction managing director Damian Barrett. “Initially McKee Fehl brought us onto the project to carry out finishing and joinery work. However, our existing property services experience soon meant that our team was being utilised in a number of ways across the breadth of the project.”

At the peak of their involvement, DN Barrett Construction had 15 onsite workers who spent a total of four months on the project.

Working to the designs of the architects, the bulk of the work carried out by DN Barrett Construction was the framing, finishing and hanging of the Tasman oak doors and timber feature walls and panels throughout the building.

Like many of the other contractors, challenges associated with refurbishing an existing building were also of concern to DN Barrett Construction, says Barrett.

“Especially built to house a cinema complex, the most significant challenge we faced during the refurbishment was dealing with a building that wasn’t square. The painstaking attention to detail that this caused, to ensure that everything was flush, all added to the extra time needed to spend on what should have been an essentially straightforward job.”

DN Barrett Construction has a workforce skilled in all aspects of residential and commercial construction from formwork through to finishing work.

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