

“We wanted to create a point of difference with this precinct”

NUMBER 33

Chadstone Place, Chadstone VIC

Owner: CFS Retail Property Trust & Gandel Group
Developer: Colonial First State Property Management

Architect: The Buchan Group in conjunction with RTKL Associates, Los Angeles

Builder: Probuild Constructions

Terracade™ installation: C&S Lightweight

Paving contractor: Image Paving

Austral Bricks™ products: Terracade XP terracotta façade system in Pilbara, Bunbury, Kalbarri and Whitehaven in Smooth and Linear finishes

Terrace™ Red and Terrace Cream clay pavers





In 1949 twenty-eight-year-old Kenneth Myer, son of the retailing pioneer, came back from visiting the USA fired with enthusiasm for an emerging retailing concept: the super-regional shopping centre. “Gentlemen,” he told the Myer Emporium board, “I am convinced of the future development of retail business in areas other than the centre of capital cities.”

Their first venture, Chadstone Shopping Centre, 12 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD, opened in October 1960 and has been pre-eminent in Australia for almost 50 years.

Unlike the classic mall model established by Victor Gruen in the mid-1950s, Chadstone was initially an open-air design. However enclosure began in the late '60s, a concession possibly to Melbourne's fickle weather, but also to the concept of disconnecting the retailing experience from external influences, leading to the “Gruen Transfer.”

Melbourne's weather may not have improved – just a little drier perhaps – but shopping centre owners are now embracing the great outdoors and creating a more “extroverted” design. Chadstone Place, a \$100 million expansion, allows the centre to regain the title of Australia's largest shopping centre and brings Main Street back to the shopping experience.



“We wanted to create a point of difference with this precinct,” explains Andrew Mackenzie, project director for architects The Buchan Group, “to put it in a Main Street environment with Main Street componentry such as street lighting and a substantial landscape to give it a softer edge.” Working with him on the project were Ossy De Silva, project architect, and Brenton Reynolds, design assistant.

Construction was carried out over an existing carpark, which placed load limitations that precluded conventional walling solutions such as precast concrete. Terraçade, Austral Bricks revolutionary lightweight terracotta façade system, not only ticked that box but gave the project a raft of other pluses.



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“Terraçade is prefinished and doesn’t have the maintenance issues that a rendered or painted finish has”

Terraçade– pronounced as in “terracotta façade” – is available in two systems. The heavier-duty system, Terraçade XP, is suitable for buildings to 40 storeys and was selected for this project. Its lighter cousin, Terraçade TN™, is ideal for smaller projects including residential.

Both systems use the same size tile module: 600 x 300 mm. Both are installed similarly. The wall structure is battened and where necessary a breathable Frameshield 100 vapour and moisture membrane is installed. Aluminium mounting rails are then fastened and the tile modules are captured on these rails and finished with anodised or powder-coated trims.

All Terraçade tiles have the long life, colourfastness and natural appearance characteristic of genuine kiln-fired terracotta. “We chose Terraçade because of the variation in texture and colour that allowed us to create the look of a series of individual buildings along the ‘Main Street’ façade,” Mackenzie explains. “It is also a lighter product which gave us the flexibility to create a series of varying façade treatments.”

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Terraçade's low ongoing costs were also a factor in its selection. "This is a prefinished product. With an alternative product such as lightweight cement sheeting you have to apply a finish and then paint it and it then becomes an ongoing maintenance issue as that deteriorates," Mackenzie contends. "In contrast, Terraçade is prefinished – so what you see is what you get – and doesn't have the maintenance issues that a rendered or painted finish has."

This project was Mackenzie's first direct exposure to Terraçade, although it was used in a previous project by his office. Not so for the installer, C&S Lightweight, who have been working with the system for the past three years.

"It was a pretty fast-moving site," says C&S's site manager Mick Cowan who led a team of six. "There must have been 300 people on site at any one time so it took a fair bit of planning and coordination between us and Probuild to make sure we could get certain areas done at certain times."





The installation team were given a designated area to work on and complete before moving to another area, usually well away from the last. "Overall the job went very well," Cowan tells us. "Austral supplied us on time with the product we required."

As this is a cladding system, Austral Bricks supply all the components including the optional membrane, mounting rails and trims. Although powdercoated trims are available, C&S chose mill-finished trims and arranged for them to be powdercoated to colour-match the Terraçade tile modules they were working with at the time.

The only deviation from standard Terraçade installation was the placement of stainless steel posts at corners judged to be vulnerable to knocks. The posts create a neat re-entrant corner that will withstand considerable abuse.

Complementing the Terraçade facades and reinforcing the Main Street theme are extensive areas of paving, predominantly in Austral Bricks Terrace Red clay pavers complemented by a smaller number of Terrace Cream clay pavers. The pavers are mortared to a series of concrete slabs and finished with narrow – three to five millimetre – slurry-filled gaps.



“The execution of the Terraçade installation is fantastic”

The paving stretches along the development frontage and down Chadstone Lane and is particularly distinguished by a series of paved steps and entranceways.

“The standard size pavers have a finer grain and we were conscious of the need for that with this sort of sidewalk treatment,” says Mackenzie.

Chadstone Place opened in October 2008 with tenants including the major banks, Fitness First, Dick Smith Electronics and Victoria's first Woolworth-branded supermarket. The development is also the first Australian shopping centre to be awarded a 5 Star Green Star Certified Rating from the Green Building Council's Shopping Centre Design pilot rating scheme.

“The execution of the Terraçade installation is fantastic,” commends Andrew Mackenzie. “All the feedback we are getting from the head building contractor and the owners is that the installers have done a great job and the product is really doing what they hoped it would do. Everybody's happy!”

in practice



Photography: Roger du Buisson

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