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Ettore Altomare (Abet Laminati), Sue Melosu (Allen Jack+Cottier), Ian Bannister (Abet Laminati). Photo: Rae Phillips

ALLEN JACK+COTTIER WELCOMES GUESTS TO NEW STUDIO

10 April 2006

Leading Australian architectural practice Allen Jack+Cottier officially opened its new Sydney studio on Thursday (6/04/06). The firm has adapted two floors of an early twentieth century warehouse in the inner-city suburb of Chippendale to provide new premises for its growing practice.

The rapid growth of the practice over recent years meant that AJ+C staff were spread across three separate office spaces in Sydney's Surry Hills. The partners decided it was time to bring all Sydney staff under the one roof. "This coming together for the first time in ten years into one studio environment represents a new and exciting phase in the evolution of the practice," said Allen Jack+Cottier Managing Director Glynn Evans in his welcoming address.

The challenge was to create a large open-plan office environment but maintain the atmosphere of a small practice. By designing a flexible studio-like environment with a variety of breakout spaces the practice has created an interactive and creative space that achieves this goal.

The large open space can be divided into several smaller studios, each consisting of project teams working in flexible 'team pods'. The application of this idea means that the practice has retained its collegiate and creative environment in spite of its size. A central staircase inserted into the existing steel structure, connects the two floors and provides an opportunity for staff from different teams to interact and communicate.

"The design deliberately engenders a synergy between the large experienced practice we've become and how we see ourselves as a creative dynamic architectural studio. In thinking through this design and the implementation of this project, we made a commitment to always be both. This commitment has already been reflected in the spirit of the place, which so far has been happy and settled," Evans continued.

Ecologically sustainable design was also a key factor in the interior design of the new studio, which incorporates a range of very simple sustainable design features that reduce its impact on the environment and make it a healthy place to work. The selection of non-toxic internal finishes and low-volatile organic compound (VOC) adhesives and paints, and the use of low-formaldehyde MDF (E0) (exceeding Australian standards), increase the indoor air quality of the studio by reducing the degree of toxic emissions. The combination of the existing operable windows with a ventilation-only cycle in the air-conditioning means fresh rather than artificial air is readily available. Other ESD features include energy-efficient lighting and retrofitted sanitary ware to minimise water consumption.

"The combination of this relocation and our recent rebranding has led to a renaissance within the firm, and we now look forward to a future which holds almost any possibility for us," said Director Michael Heenan in closing.



Directors Glynn Evans and Michael Heenan welcome guests. Photo: Rae Phillips



Kathy Trelease of Eeles Trelease and Andrea Wilson of Simpson Wilson Design Photo: Rae Phillips



Eddie Bronson playing gypsy jazz at the opening. Photo: Rae Phillips



Allen Jack+Cottier reception on level 2. Photo: Marcus Clinton



The existing columns were retained and highlighted. Photo: Marcus Clinton



A stairway tucked behind a Danpalon screen connects the two floors. Photo: Marcus Clinton.

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