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102 bed AJ+C designed student housing project opens at Macquarie University.

Sydney - Tuesday 14 August 2012

Allen Jack+Cottier's newest student housing project, Robert Menzies College (RMC) at Macquarie University's Ryde, NSW, campus was officially opened yesterday by the Archbishop of Sydney, The Most Reverend Peter Jensen.

The new 4 level, 102 student bed accommodation building is among a number of innovative student housing projects designed by Allen Jack+Cottier, one of the leading student accommodation architecture firms in Australia with more than 1,500 student beds currently under construction, or completed.

"AJ+C has a deep understanding of tertiary student housing design, and the need for tertiary institutions to offer well designed, affordable, practical & attractive housing in today's highly competitive environment," said AJ+C Principal & CEO Michael Heenan. [AJ+C's International Grammar School building at Pyrmont NSW is shortlisted in the world's Top 10 Best School Buildings by the World Architecture Festival 2012.]

BEIJING
SYDNEY



L-R - Professor Chris Bellenger (Master of RMC 2005-2011), Mr John Alexander (Federal MP), the Most Reverend Dr Peter Jensen (Archbishop), the Honourable Michael Egan (Chancellor of Macquarie University), Dr Robert Mackay (Chairman of RMC Board) and Mr Bruce Pollard (Present Master of RMC).

"As is the case with many of the specialist student housing projects we design, the site for Robert Menzies College is not a greenfields site – it is an infill development, shoehorned in between a number of existing buildings. That presents us with a unique set of design challenges, and opportunities," he said.

"Our core objective was to give our client a robust, contemporary, flexible, energy-efficient & architecturally outstanding building that exemplifies Robert Menzies College's aspiration to provide "Home for an expanding living-learning community."

"At the same time, it was important to deliver a rational and attractive response to the building's context – to use it to 'complete' the fabric of the College."

"The result is, we believe, considerably more than the sum of its parts," Heenan said. "The new College knits together previously disparate elements of the site, while referring to existing architecture & materials, and enhancing RMC's public 'face' to Waterloo Road & Macquarie Campus. It also makes a statement as a stand-alone modern building," Heenan added.

Robert Menzies College Master, Bruce Pollard, said the new the building successfully achieved all these objectives.

"College life enables its members to engage fully in the university experience and to develop academic, sporting, social and spiritual wellbeing in a supportive context," he said. "The new building means the College can expand the options we offer to students, while maintaining our tradition of encouraging academic excellence in a caring community."

"We are extremely happy with the completed building and feel that it exemplifies the aims and aspirations of RMC and ourselves," AJ+C Architect, Scott Norton said. "Architectural references have been made to the robust materials and textures of the existing buildings, such as face brick and terracotta cladding.

"The building also picks up on elements of form, such as the vertical windows of the dining hall and the modulated blocks of the accommodation buildings," he added.

The new building provides 102 student beds, seminar rooms and common room areas for senior undergraduates, post-graduate and doctoral students. While it has been designed to sit well stylistically with the existing buildings on the site, it also makes a statement as a stand-alone contemporary building.

It has been designed with passive solar principles in mind, providing custom sunshading elements particular to the direction faced, cross ventilation to all common areas and corridors, insulated facades and thermal mass. Vertical blades to the east and west facades are not only practical but design features to add detail to the façade.

The Robert Menzies College opening ceremony was attended by the Honourable Michael Egan, Chancellor of Macquarie University. Local State and Federal members and Councillors of the City of Ryde Council.

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