

## DESIGN

## A sum of its parts

*The way a lock functions was the metaphor employed as a design strategy on the redevelopment of a large Melbourne manufacturing site.*



**A**SSA Abloy, owners of Lockwood security products has opened a \$16m plant at its redeveloped Oakleigh site which has been transformed into a Centre of Design Excellence and expanded manufacturing capability.

Architects behind the project were Baldasso Cortese – who were charged with redeveloping the 56,000sq m site within a tight budget while keeping manufacturing output going.

Director Anthony Baldasso, who led the project team, says a big picture focus was key to the success of the job. "We could see early on that the site needed a strong masterplan and that we needed to have a clear understanding of not only the buildings, but also the functioning of the entire site. That we were invited to the table right at the beginning was a bonus for us and added value for the client."

The architects worked alongside the clients from the outset, allowing the

combined project control group to think strategically and put systems in place to streamline the process.

"We considered the site's basic components – operational efficiency, traffic flows, planning, user needs analysis, budget and staging – and the resulting masterplan concept had a strength that was self-evident to ASSA Abloy when we made the presentation," says Baldasso. "It was such a departure from the existing site layout and showed that strategic masterplan thinking can really add value."

Demolition of ten redundant buildings freed up a major section of the site to allow development to proceed with a more open feel – buildings within a landscape, rather than the previous ad hoc development.

Baldasso says the concept behind the site's buildings was based around the idea of interlocking. "The layout resembles an assembly of interlocking

**The main reception entrance has a revolving door made by ASSA Abloy group company Besam. The choice of surrounding colours complements the site's modern, airy design.**

parts, much as in the company's products, and speaks a strong architectural language befitting its industrial context.

"We selected natural materials such as textured precast concrete, glazed brickwork and stained timber to contrast with aluminium panelised forms and accentuate relationships between the different areas and to provide a visually strong form as a point of difference from the existing buildings."

The site's visual focus is the new training, auditorium and canteen building. This showcase building is three interlocking parts, each brought together around the central courtyard. The building integrates well with the existing administration buildings and forms a campus-like feel around a courtyard.

"Creating a pleasant interior environment was a key objective of the design brief," says Baldasso. "Before the buildings were considered from a functional viewpoint but the new design makes a priority of comfort levels."

"From the briefing, it was clear that this building needed to project a strong corporate image and street presence," says design director, Steven Cortese. "At the same time, the buildings had to be seen from all angles."

This was exacerbated by a 3.5m elevation difference within the site. "Again, the interlocking design assisted in reconciling this difference, with the buildings flowing into – and wrapping around – each other and the site."

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## CLADDING

## The case for EIFS

The use of Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) is growing as architects and builders become familiar with their benefits, including superior energy efficiency, design flexibility and ease of installation.

In Australia EIFS are bought either as a complete system from the manufacturer or as separate components. When buying components, purchasers must ensure they are well matched so that the systems' optimum strength, weatherproofing and durability is attained.

Current practice relies on rendering to seal the face of the building and the openings to the wall system. This contrasts with best practice in Europe and the US where a correctly installed EIFS system includes sealants to all joins and sealing and flashing all openings before applying render.

Manufacturers such as MasterWall offer a choice of individual components, a complete system pack or a supply and install service right through to rendering.

One of the main advantages of EIFS is energy efficiency. When compared to batt type insulation inserted between studs, EIFS has fewer thermal gaps because it sheathes the exterior of the building. EIFS can be used to create a range of architectural details, many which would not be using traditional methods. Cornices, columns, arches and keystones are some popular choices.

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## HOME AUTOMATION

## Intercom system

Available now from LeisureTech Electronics is Russound's ComPoint intercom communications system can be used as a standalone system or part of a complete home automation setup.

Using any ComPoint keypad, users can communicate from room to room or with visitors, with complete control of the system from anywhere in the home. Features include a "do not disturb mode" that blocks intercom messages from coming through to a room or individual rooms can be set to "listen mode" enabling easy monitoring of intercom chat throughout the home.

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