

Hoop pine veneer panels bring tiers of joy for design students

DRAMATIC use of hoop pine veneered fire-retardant MDF panels suspended from hoop pine glulam timber beams is a stand-out feature of the Melbourne School of Design building created by architects John Wardle and Boston-based Nader Tehrani.

The Group 1 fire retardant EO emission boards from Austral Ply are displayed in a vertical tier of three plywood-clad classrooms that pierce the volume of the atrium.



The 'wow' factor .. hanging studios feature in the Melbourne School of Design building.

Four months ahead of schedule

Incredibly, the complete building took just over a year to build – construction commenced in May 2013 and was complete by July last year,

four months ahead of schedule. It has already gathered significant publicity both locally and abroad.

The first lucky users of the new Melbourne School of Design in the final weeks of 2014 were those about to leave

it – students presenting their final year architectural projects, in a brand new home for the University of Melbourne's design disciplines.

This impressive new structure replaced a hard-working post-war building that had been

knocked around and changed over the years.

The bright new building is a collaboration between Melbourne award-winner John Wardle and American Nader Tehrani, director of Boston, USA-based NADAAA.

The building is full of holes (in a good way) – from small varying-sized perforations in steel and plywood, to the scattered array of different sized windows on the south facade that faces the historic campus.

On all but this side, the building is wrapped in overlapping perforated zinc panels, a complex veil protecting sun exposed sides from harsh light, and blurring the solid lines that often define the edge of a building.

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Building finishes as a showpiece for nil-emission engineered wood

From P 10

The building's 'wow' space, however, is the atria on the first floor – a large, tall room cutting over four levels with a beautiful faceted timber ceiling, bringing tempered light into the space. This atrium is the heart of the building, with movement up and around its mesh covered walkways. The space's big gesture is its 'hanging studios'. Suspended from the ceiling, this tall object hovers above the main floor. The hanging studio seems to have been shaped by its unique setting, and

This atrium is the heart of the building

thousands of different sized holes in its skin add further balanced fragility.

The atrium itself is a flexible



Impressive new structure .. hard-working post-war building replaced.

space filled with shaped furniture for students to work and meet, but can be used for larger events and gatherings.

The building finishes as a showpiece for engineered wood. A suspended studio uses Tasmanian ash veneers; flooring includes grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus paniculata*), and a

Japanese-style terrace on Level 4 has been built with spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*).

Stairs and connections are a theme throughout the building, both inside and out. The north eastern corner of the building features a giant staircase and amphitheatre to provide space for events, talks and the like

outside, as well as giving access directly to the first floor. It's a generous public moment here, and a motif of John Wardle, who was responsible for a similar manoeuvre at his award-winning building at Melbourne Grammar several years ago.

The old building had a great little gallery, the Wunderlich, which hosted some top shows before it was demolished. The gallery has returned bigger and better – like a big empty swimming pool, the new Dulux Gallery is submerged, sitting half a level down in the big ground floor space. In this way, the foyer and gallery are both separated and connected.

It's one of the best aspects of the new building and will no doubt host many great design shows as the building comes into life.

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