

WESLEY COLLEGE CHAPEL, MELBOURNE

Krause Emperor bricks deliver a perfect balance of familiarity and warmth at Wesley College



The Drennen Centre is Wesley College's new multi-storey student centre in Glen Waverley. A much-anticipated centralised learning space replacing classrooms and school spaces lost to a devastating fire in 2016.

Working closely with the school, Cox Architecture's innovative and thoughtful design has realised a building that is more than just a student centre. It's the campus focal point, and a thoroughly modern and flexible learning space incorporating cutting-edge technology to align with contemporary ways of learning and teaching.

The centre includes a whole of campus library, dedicated Year 9 precinct, collaborative learning hub supporting flexible learning, a STEM and design technology hub, specialist language classrooms and a chapel.

Cox Architecture is to be congratulated for the way its design consolidates each element into a cohesive yet distinct building, seamlessly integrating into the existing campus movement patterns and predominantly masonry palette.

The most aesthetically striking element in the development is the chapel: The spiritual heart of the campus, built for service and reflection. And a long-awaited inclusion, proposed since the College's inception in the 1960s.

It was well worth the wait.

Its design and build were not without challenges. Mostly in bringing to life the brick veneer walls' complex and exquisite brick detailing, and the sheer technicalities of delivering a water-tight, brick-clad roof.

Persistence and patience paid off handsomely.

Between Cox Architecture and Hutchinson Builders, much blood, sweat and tears, along with several iterations and 1:1 test models, the roof is perfectly water-tight and flows seamlessly from the brick veneer wall construction.



campus.

For the team at Cox Architecture, the most satisfying moments in the design are the resolution of the brick detailing, turning from a roof into a wall plane, and the way the brick appears to fold in on itself at the large feature window. It is spectacular.

Krause Emperor Bricks, in Ghost, were the brick of choice, sitting well within the institutional context of grey concrete masonry and aluminium curtain walls, extending the masonry language with their warmth and tonal variation.

"The Krause Emperor bricks provided the design with a masonry unit that had warmth, and was also quite varied, giving the building texture and life. Its long format was also instrumental in accentuating the horizontality of the building," comments Daphne Liang, Architect, Cox Architecture.

And, as Daphne remarks, Ghost brick's subtle pale tones, "sit comfortably alongside the adjacent raw concrete block buildings, providing the right balance of familiarity and warmth."

Dark metal cladding on the upper levels of the building provides a striking contrast to the pale Krause Emperor bricks, and helps to break down the height of the new three storey building, aligning it with what is largely a two storey

The Drennen Centre is indeed a standout development by Cox Architecture and is rightly described by Wesley College as 'inviting, bright and performing beautifully for the school.'

Architects: Cox Architecture
Product: Krause Emperor bricks, Ghost
Builder: Hutchinson Builders
Bricklayer: Lawler Bricklaying
Photographer: Fiona Storey

