



The Albion Flour Mill, Brisbane.





# Bringing Heritage to Life

Designing within and around a heritage-listed building is as challenging as it is rewarding, writes Stephen Crafti.

**F**KP is currently working on several heritage sites, three of which highlight the sensitivity involved when development also includes preserving history. New structures should relate to the heritage of the site, whether man-made buildings or natural forms.

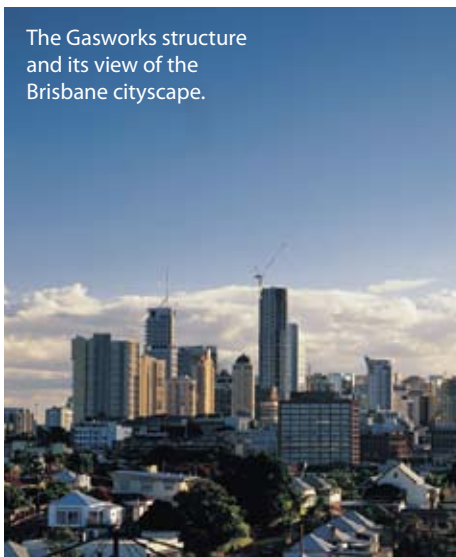
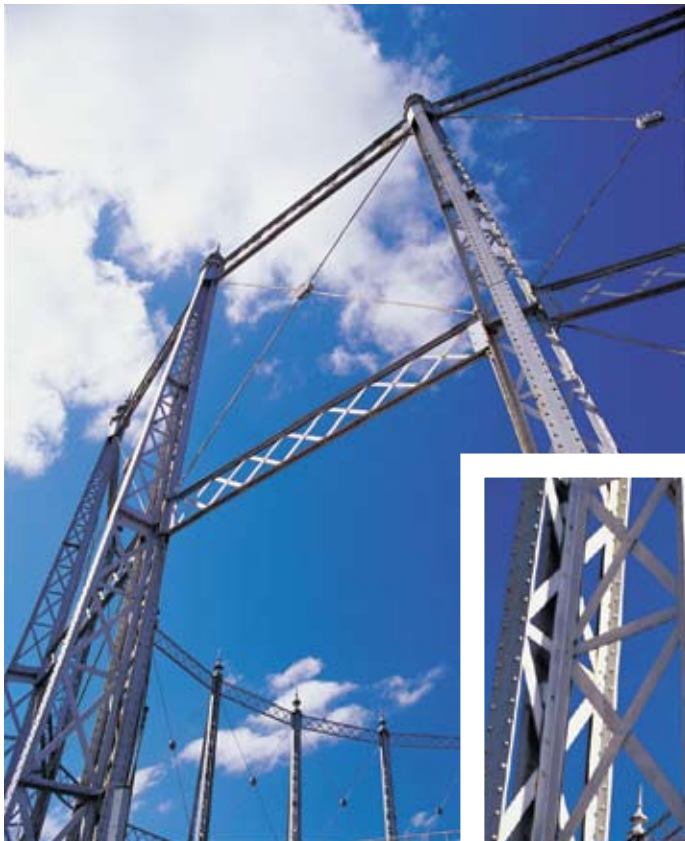
## The Mill Albion

Located at Albion, an inner-city Brisbane suburb, this light-industrial precinct is one of Brisbane's targeted urban renewal areas. Recognised by its iconic silos, the Albion Flour Mill is an important landmark within the local community and one that will continue through FKP's delivery of a village-inspired community, known as The Mill.

Constructed for Scottish migrants, the Gillespie Brothers, during a severe economic depression in the early 1930s, the Albion Flour Mill continued production for 72 years and remained Brisbane's sole working mill until ceasing operations in 2004.

FKP's vision for the Mill involves the delivery of a true mixed-use development which creates a warm and inviting 'village' atmosphere while celebrating the history of the site. Designed by award-winning architect Richard Kirk, The Mill's design will include the transformation of the original red brick flour mill building and the incorporation of the iconic silos as the centrepiece of the development. Joining





The Gasworks structure and its view of the Brisbane cityscape.



these buildings will be a further two residential and two commercial buildings linked at ground level by a series of public plazas and community spaces.

“The Mill development has been designed to deliver an intimate village community and its mixed use nature will attract a wide variety of individuals and add to the vibrancy of the destination,” says Queensland Executive General Manager Matthew Miller.

The five-storey heritage-listed flour mill building, which is proposed for residential apartments, is framed by red brick walls and also features timber structures and steel trusses. The timber columns alone (which are each 300mm x 300mm) exemplify masterful building techniques from a bygone era.

“With the intention of featuring as much of the original material as possible, brick walls will be exposed and, where appropriate, recycled

timbers used for floors and kitchen joinery,” explains Richard Kirk, architect for The Mill. “Honed concrete will complement the finishes used in apartments, to create an industrial aesthetic. And to ensure the public, as well as residents, appreciate the heritage building, there will be cafes, restaurants and retail at ground level.”

“One of our key design drivers is to encourage pedestrian movement throughout the entire site, including the flour mill building,” Kirk adds, referring to Albion railway station at the edge of the development. Ground level development at the silos will also incorporate a retail component, which at this stage includes a bakery.

New residential and commercial buildings, proposed as part of The Mill design, will be distinct from the heritage structures, but will retain a similar rhythm. Precast concrete blades on some of the new buildings are evocative of the original concrete used in the mill. “We want to create a certain texture and depth in our design,” says Kirk.

### Gasworks

In the inner-city Brisbane suburb of Newstead, FKP is developing one of Queensland’s last gasometers. The heritage listed gasometer, built in the late 1880s, is set to become the new civic heart of Brisbane’s leading mixed use community which will be known as Gasworks.

Already a landmark in the Brisbane landscape, the gasometer structure will form the focal point of community and civic space within Gasworks, and is said to rival Melbourne’s Federation Square and the Rocks in Sydney. Immediately surrounding the gasometer will be a public piazza open to the community and supported by a wide variety of restaurants, cafes and lifestyle or social opportunities.

Gasworks, and indeed the gasometer, forms part of a wider 17 hectare site known as Newstead Riverpark. Newstead Riverpark represents one of the largest urban renewal projects in the country and is being developed by FKP and Mirvac on Brisbane’s prime river front, less than two kilometres from the Brisbane CBD.

FKP and Mirvac are currently in the process of lodging preliminary approval with Brisbane City Council for the broader Newstead Riverpark masterplan. Overall, Newstead Riverpark will set a new benchmark in contemporary living for inner Brisbane. The masterplan and architectural vision is one that embraces a contemporary mixed use, urban community and is supported by green and civic spaces.

Originally used to hold and distribute gas to many of Brisbane’s inner suburbs, the gasometer only ceased operation in the mid-1980s. But while this history recedes into the recent past, its massive structure is a constant reminder of its function.



Artist's impression of the Butter Factory, Shepparton.

Fifty metres in diameter and 21 metres above ground level, the gasometer tank also extends up to approximately 15 metres below ground level. "When the gasometer was filled, its tank would gradually rise out of the ground," says Peter Rossi, Gasworks Project Director at FKP.

FKP is responsible for the delivery of the gasometer and is working closely with Urban Renewal Brisbane (a division of Brisbane City Council) to deliver a design that celebrates its history while also promoting active community use. At the completion of Gasworks and the broader Newstead Riverpark, the gasometer will be presented back to Brisbane City Council to manage the asset.

The cast iron gasometer structural frame will be integral to the design, as will the Victorian brick tank walls enveloping the structure below ground. The gasometer will be transformed into a vibrant civic space with proposals incorporating distinctive subtropical architecture responding to Queensland's subtropical climate.

"Look at the intricacy of this brickwork," says Rossi, referring to the brick walls below ground level. "We want to integrate these features in the new spaces, whether a cinema or retail space. In the end, it's about producing an exemplary design outcome."

### The Butter Factory

The Shepparton Butter Factory is soon to embark on a new chapter in its colourful history. The red brick neo-Georgian style facade of the Shepparton Butter Factory, built in 1894, features the distinctive signage – 'Shepparton Co-Operative Butter Factory Ltd' – a key feature and symbol in its revitalisation as a unique landmark retail centre in Shepparton.

Opening in 1894, the historic Butter Factory produced 122 tons of butter each year. But in 1914, due to a drought, only 54 tons of

butter was made. "People can relate to those circumstances now," says Jason Smith, Executive General Manager for FKP Property Group's Victorian office, referring to Australia's drought conditions.

Like the other heritage sites being developed by FKP Property Group, there is a keen awareness of the importance of the original structures, both to the local and wider communities. "The Butter Factory is an important part of the local Shepparton history. It provides a sense of cultural identity, as many locals grew up with the building," says Smith.

Mindful of the Butter Factory's resonance with locals, FKP Property Group has commissioned Bruce Henderson Architects with Fenton Design to design a scheme that includes three specialty stores behind the historic facade, together with a large retail liquor outlet. There will also be a glass and steel building in front of the facade tastefully blending heritage with contemporary design. "The modern structure will most likely be a restaurant or cafe for locals and passers-by travelling through the Wyndham Street precinct," adds Smith.

In addition to the revitalised Butter Factory, the development will also include a second freestanding retail building consisting of seven tenancies as well as serviced apartments on the rear of the site facing Welsford Street.

While the new buildings are independent of the historic facade, the architects have taken inspiration from some of the architectural features once inherent in the site. The seven retail stores, for example, will feature a pitched roof. But unlike the original butter factory, which once featured a tin roof, the new roofs will be clad using Zinalume.

FKP Property Group is looking forward to seeing the revitalised Butter Factory as a new thriving retail centre. "While it can't be fully replaced, the Shepparton Butter Factory is an important part of the history of Shepparton, and we are thrilled to ensure the iconic building retains a strong identity in the community's future," says Smith. ■