



Main Photo Left/Below> The 'fun bar' is the central breakout space for AIS Media.



AIS MEDIA

Built in 1895, the Smellie & Co building is one of the few remaining structures from a time when Brisbane's port precinct played a vital part in the city's industrial growth.

The historic building, most recently a car park, has been transformed into the dynamic headquarters of Queensland's largest advertising company.

AIS Media commissioned HASSELL Architects to design the extensive refurbishment project. "It's not the sort of project that comes along very often," said Kirsti Simpson, Principal. "We were passionate about the building and the project itself."

Representing a significant change for AIS Media, staff were involved in identifying their specific needs: an open-plan team-driven office environment. "We needed a new space as the company was expanding and we had outgrown our previous premises," said Paula O'Toole of AIS Media. "We needed an environment that provided support facilities - adequate storage, IT equipment, meeting areas, and a 'fun' room for staff to enjoy."

The issue of flexibility was paramount to AIS Media, they wanted to occupy the building for a long time and wanted flexibility to expand or reconfigure the space as required. >

AIS MEDIA



"One of the big issues was selecting the workstation system, and AIS were particularly interested in Schiavello's ProActive Techmodule approach," said Kirsti Simpson. "From an aesthetic point of view it was appealing, particularly the way storage was handled in terms of flexibility. The more solid modules engage the existing perimeter piers. The geometry of the shell is reinforced," she said.

A prototype was built by Schiavello to perfect the way the system was employed. The system was useful in facilitating teams of four, accommodating the way AIS work.

"The Schiavello ProActive system can be pulled apart in the current configurations and changed to a format to suit changes in groups, that's one of the main reasons we chose Schiavello," said Paula O'Toole.

There were many constraints placed upon the project team as a result of the building.

"We had to be extremely careful about how our design merged with the existing exterior and impacted upon the building's shell," said Kirsti Simpson. "There were significant practical obstacles to surmount when working with a building of this age."

Schiavello's fitout team was responsible for partitioning works, including detailed drywall partitioning and glazed screens and doors. The team also performed building works such as the hydraulics.

"We had to overcome the limitations of the existing hydraulics and sources of power in order to transform it into a workable, contemporary and collaborative environment," explained Kirsti Simpson.

"The existing heritage timber block 'wash down' space in the entry has been preserved and the wonderful arched window on the upper level has become the backdrop to a communal library area.

"The central void focuses attention on an open community space called 'the fun-bar'. Essentially the hub of the space, the bar sits centrally to the whole environment. It acts as a lunch facility, used for drinks, functions, informal meetings – it's a multipurpose space but also a bit of fun," she said.

The fun bar and other break out spaces allow staff and executives to escape into a variety of areas, which are obviously different from the working environment.

"AIS are enjoying the environment and being in the one facility, certainly enjoying the greater amenity that the building provides. And they love the fitout!" said Kirsti Simpson.

AIS MEDIA

Echoes of Brisbane's industrial past have been preserved with a fresh layer of history. A dynamic new fitout for media magnates, AIS Media, illustrates a symphonious linking of old and new; breathing life back into a building with an innovative, productive workspace.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Location: Smellie & Co Building, Ground & Level 1, 32 Edward Street Brisbane
Client: AIS Media – Paula O'Toole
Design: HASSELL – Kirsti Simpson, Catherine Allen, Daniella Rowles
Project Manager: Howie Herring & Forsyth – John Deuchrass, Barry Forsyth
Schiavello Qld Fitout: David Allenby
Schiavello Qld Systems: Sean Ellem, Peter Shumsky, George Koklas
Area: 1450 m2



Left Photo> Existing heritage timber block 'wash down' space in the entry area Above> Office incorporates custom made furniture to fit into this unique space.