

prodesign



bye

"Alas, after a certain age every man is responsible for his face." (Albert Camus)

Sentimental Journey

Word games with Sarah Maxey, Kris Sowersby and Kate Camp

Squaring Up, Downtown

New tricks with old bricks at Britomart Square

Signing Off

It's farewell from us

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Clean Slate

Jose Gutierrez puts a new spin on a hospitality venue not known for its architectural detailing. Words: Michael Barrett. Photos: Emily Andrews.

Hobson Street is not exactly regarded as a bastion of quality architecture - either down the strip or inside the joints that line it. For that reason it's nice to find a small pocket of some interest in a quiet and unassuming ex-Westpac Bank building from the 70s.

The architect on this project was Jose Gutierrez, fairly fresh from an award-winning burst after picking up a Gold Pin at last year's Best Awards. This project, however, was quite different.

The brief, he says, was to give the dated and run-down interior of an existing pool hall a new look that would create a cool place to hang out and play pool, "a good place to kick off the night".

Unsurprisingly, given the state of the local retail scene, this had

to be done on a limited budget.

Gutierrez's main concept was to make the pool tables the focus of the space, emphasising the act of playing pool as a performance in itself.

He did this by reconfiguring the pool tables within the space, which allowed for new raised booths on the outer edges. Given the paucity of views - nondescript does not adequately summarise the state of the adjacent carpark onto which the pool hall looks out - the decision was made to block all natural daylight. All existing windows were blacked out and artificial light was selectively introduced over the pool tables and the newly raised booths.

New bar tops were also built around the existing columns in order to reinforce a rhythm and define the boundaries around

the pool tables and a new bar was located with its back to the existing windows on the roadside frontage.

Gutierrez says that the colour palette was inspired by the red and black diamond-shaped patterns on the grips of the existing pool cues, and that this then further evolved into the LED-lit diamonds on the back wall of the lower space.

The upper level has an additional 11 pool tables and will be refurbished in the second phase of the works.

In any other venue, blocking natural light is probably an anathema. Here, the dark void brightened with highlights of vivid colour and carefully placed artificial lighting creates a heightened sense of the interior architecture and drama of the space.

Selected credits

Project team Jose Gutierrez Ltd

Project manager Carlisle Mason Investments

Paint Resene

Flooring Basically Floors Ltd

Lighting Red Wire Electrical

Loose furniture Robyn Skeates Office Interiors