Albury Commercial Club

The need to keep 60 per cent of the existing facilities open and the short construction time frame dictated a steel solution.

When the Commercial Club in Albury needed to increase their parking facilities they turned to steel. Significant expansion over the last five years and further planned future growth to the Club had created the demand for more parking space. The Club already had an underground parking facility, built in 1991, and the space over that facility was available for the new carpark.

The new steel carpark follows the existing grid of the 1991 underground structure, the foundations of which were sufficient to support the new structure.

In building the new carpark the Club had a key requirement. It had to continue trading during construction so at least 60 per cent of the existing on-ground parking had to continue to be available for patrons during the planned 20 weeks of construction.

The carpark is a 5,000 square metre steel framed composite steel structure with two suspended levels catering for 240 cars or 80 cars per level in addition to 80 cars in the 1991 underground carpark. A covered steel roof at a five per cent gradient is supported off the primary structural frames which act as safety hand rails and are supported off the primary structural members. Robert Simmons said that "from a distance the building looks like an office as the openings are mistaken for windows. At night the perforated panels appear translucent.

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The façade gives the structure its unique appearance. Brightly coloured perforated metal clad panels alternate with checker plate steel panels. These were chosen because they were both attractive and relatively light-weight given the extent of the cantilevers. The gloss blue, terracotta and cream panels lean out at an angle of 5º giving the façade its singular character. They allow light into the building during the day and provide light "windows" at night giving visibility from outside. This design feature has been enhanced by a high level of artificial lighting at night, increasing safety and making the carpark more user friendly.

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The carpark has been designed for convenient pedestrian movement. In the south-east corner an exit opens to the club's bowling green while the stairs at the north-west corner gives access to the street."

Minimal construction material, off-site fabrication and storage of materials and a no-propping structural solution enabled the Club to continue operations during construction. It also contributed to the project's completion in just 18 weeks, 2 weeks ahead of schedule with a bonus for the builder.