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AUGUST 2010

ARCHITECTURAL

STEEL INNOVATION

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# STEEL PROFILE

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# RUB OF THE GREEN

With an inspired steel roof and clever alignment of facilities, Terroir has provided a formerly generic bowling club with a bold new identity. Words **Rob Gillam** Photography **Paul Bradshaw**



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

**ARCHITECT** Terroir  
**PROJECT** Maitland City Bowls,  
Sports and Recreation Club  
**LOCATION** Rutherford, New South Wales



**S**uburban Rutherford, near Maitland in the New South Wales Hunter region, is an unlikely setting for what is now arguably this country's most architecturally distinguished lawn bowls club. A country town, woven in with crowds of plain cottages and speared with commercial super-centres, it is a long way from the cosmopolitan surrounds normally associated with such an accomplished building.

So it's surprising, on approach, to be greeted by Maitland City Bowls' massive yet gently-flowing form.

The club's location is not the only thing remarkable. It is noteworthy that such a bold design was chosen by the clients to accommodate an age demographic usually more associated with conservatism than architectural adventure. As design director Gerard Reinmuth acknowledges: "It's quite amazing such an ambitious project exists at all. Australian bowling clubs have typically been run by the older generation who are often more conservative in their approach to design, but from the outset the client shared our vision for what the club could become."

Reinmuth says proposing a familiar material to construct the club roof helped usher in acceptance

of the building design. "The new-world design may have seemed unusual, but many of the club members have worked with steel on farms and building projects in the surrounding area and know the value and reliability of the material very well. COLORBOND® steel gave everyone confidence and that helped temper concerns over our plans to use it in our proposed fashion."

Terroir's first act was to set the extent of the roofline with a 'bumper' frontage. Constructed of LYSAGHT KLIP-LOK 700 HI-STRENGTH® profile made from COLORBOND® steel in the colour Pale Eucalypt®, it runs horizontally across the entire 90-metre eastern side and crowns the bowling greens.

In this early stage of construction, the club roof was reminiscent of a Hollywood movie set in that – when viewed from the greens – it presented an impressive facade, but just behind was the unromantic reality of the older roof, peppered with service equipment.

Project architect Chris Rogers says it was important to minimise disruptions, so Terroir staged the roof construction. "We came up with a design that was elastic enough to accommodate briefing requirements yet was still part of an integrated solution that drove the club's identity as it grew," says Rogers. "Very strong breaks in the roof and flared gutters allowed the construction to be more easily broken into different stages."

A steel substructure was carefully knitted onto the club's existing roof. "It was tricky to get the piers and columns exact because it's not until you get out the 'can opener' and start looking inside the roof that you know exactly what you're dealing with," says Rogers. "We had to do a bit of cutting and shutting ➤"

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## PANEL SAYS

This project first came to our attention at the conclusion of the initial stage – the dramatic new roof on the bowling green elevation – and we were impressed by the boldness of that gesture, its clever use of steel, and the craftiness of Terroir's strategic design move, but the most recent phase is so much more remarkable. We love the fact that a lacklustre-looking bowling club in a regional town has taken the audacious step of re-making itself as something daring and intriguing, to attract new members and better serve its existing clientele. As well as giving the 'bowlo' a new appearance – one that accentuates the club's forward-looking attitude – the architects have bestowed a sense of civic scale and pride.

**"We saw it as a chance to change the culture and pull the club back to its essence by reconnecting the clubhouse to the greens"**

in places to achieve the tolerances, but once the structure's geometry was set everything flowed from there.

LYSAGHT KLIP-LOK 700 HI-STRENGTH® profile made from COLORBOND® steel in the colours Pale Eucalypt® and Bushland® were chosen to enclose the 2500m<sup>2</sup> roof, which is broken into four distinct sections that are part of an integrated solution.

"From a technical point of view we made the decision to go with KLIP-LOK® because it can do long continuous trays, and the depth of the trays allowed us to achieve extreme cross-falls in the roof design – up to 25 degrees in some cases," Rogers says. "Coupled with this, and from an aesthetic point of view, we were most comfortable with the distance between trays in the KLIP LOK® sheets as we felt this best suited the vast scale of the roof."

The club's new roof was always destined to provide more than mere elemental protection. Terroir built upwards to create functional volumes for services such as air-conditioning and water storage to be hidden within the roof, and also to create office space for the club's staff.

Despite its monumental presence, the roof's cascading lines are largely unobtrusive, Reinmuth says, because Terroir sculpted its form to connect with the wider natural landscape. "Some quite beautiful hills are silhouetted in the distance and the slope of the roof mimics those surrounds," he explains.

There is also a dialogue between the elevated club roof and the surrounding suburban rooftops, he adds. "On a greater scale, the roof deflects the eye out to the natural landscape, yet it also has an urban context. It is less conscious, but there is a local roof-to-roof dialogue."

Having accomplished great things with the new roof, Terroir also aimed to inject new life into the heart of the club, to restore its beleaguered identity.

"Formerly, when you walked in, you could have been in any club anywhere in the country," Rogers says.

"You were in a big dark room with the noise and flashing lights of poker machines. You couldn't even see the bowling greens. To us, the club is supposed to be about bowling, not poker machines, so we saw it as a chance to change the culture and pull the club back to its essence by reconnecting the clubhouse to the greens."

The club's loading dock was moved into a basement to make way for a grand new entrance. "You used to have to enter the club asymmetrically and travel a fair distance to reach the outdoor areas, but now there is a direct channel from the entry to the greens," he adds. "This east-west central spine intersects with another north-south corridor to access the club's other key areas. "From the main axis you can see all the way through the club, from wall-to-wall," Rogers says. "It's a very natural and practical design."

Steel makes an impression beyond the club's roof, with flat sheet made from COLORBOND® steel in the colour Pale Eucalypt® being used to line the entire foyer and skylight.

"We took a familiar generic flashing material and then detailed it in a very unfamiliar way," Rogers says.

"The idea was to remind people they are standing under a steel roof – and we think that you can intuitively tell it's the same material."

In this vaulting space, the material takes on a new life. "Outside of its usual context, which can be quite prosaic, it's almost like it's no longer COLORBOND® steel but a different material altogether," Rogers says. "It has a soft, crinkly texture like leather, which gives it a quite luxurious feel. You also get a quite interesting change in colour, depending on how the light from above plays on it."

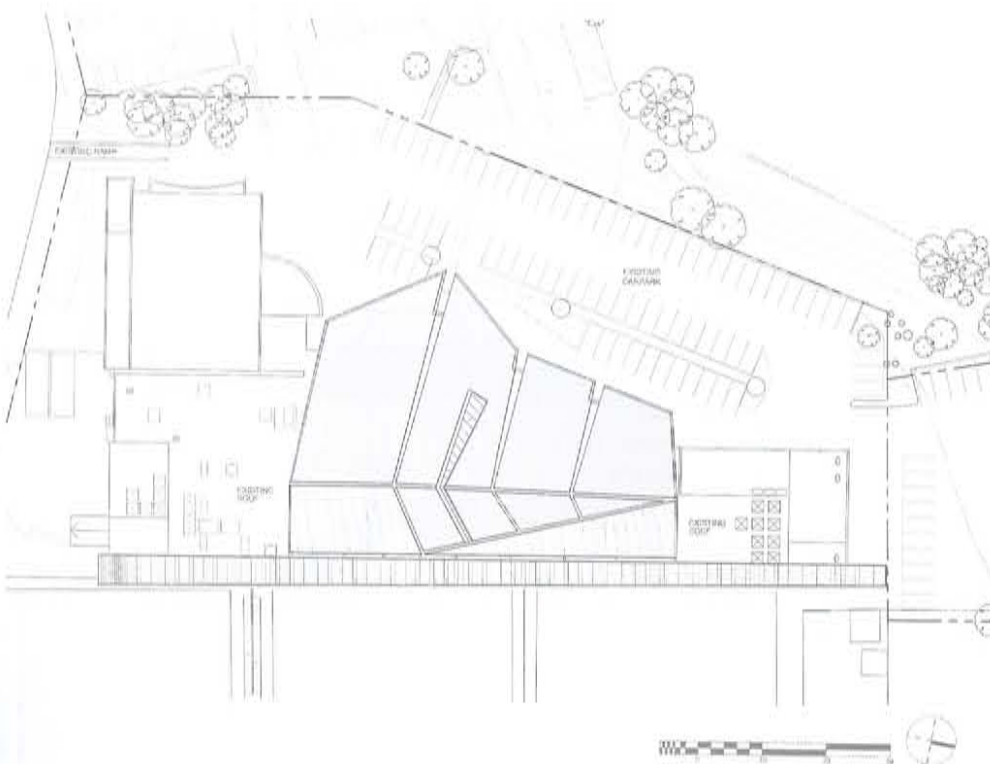
The skylight features a unique shadowing effect which is achieved by running exposed painted steel Z-purlins and UBs across the opening and above the door entry where, in another neat touch, five air conditioning jet diffusers mimic a group of bowls.

A giant 90m-long green-tinged glass facade completely transforms the club's interior. Whereas views to the greens were once blocked, they are now celebrated.

"When you walk in, you are immediately connected with them: you almost feel like you're already standing on the green," Rogers says. The sensation of being outside is subtly reinforced by the carpet, which was colour-matched with the lawns. "We took three different tufts of grass to the manufacturer," Rogers says, "and they applied them in a 'salt-and-pepper' fashion throughout the weave."

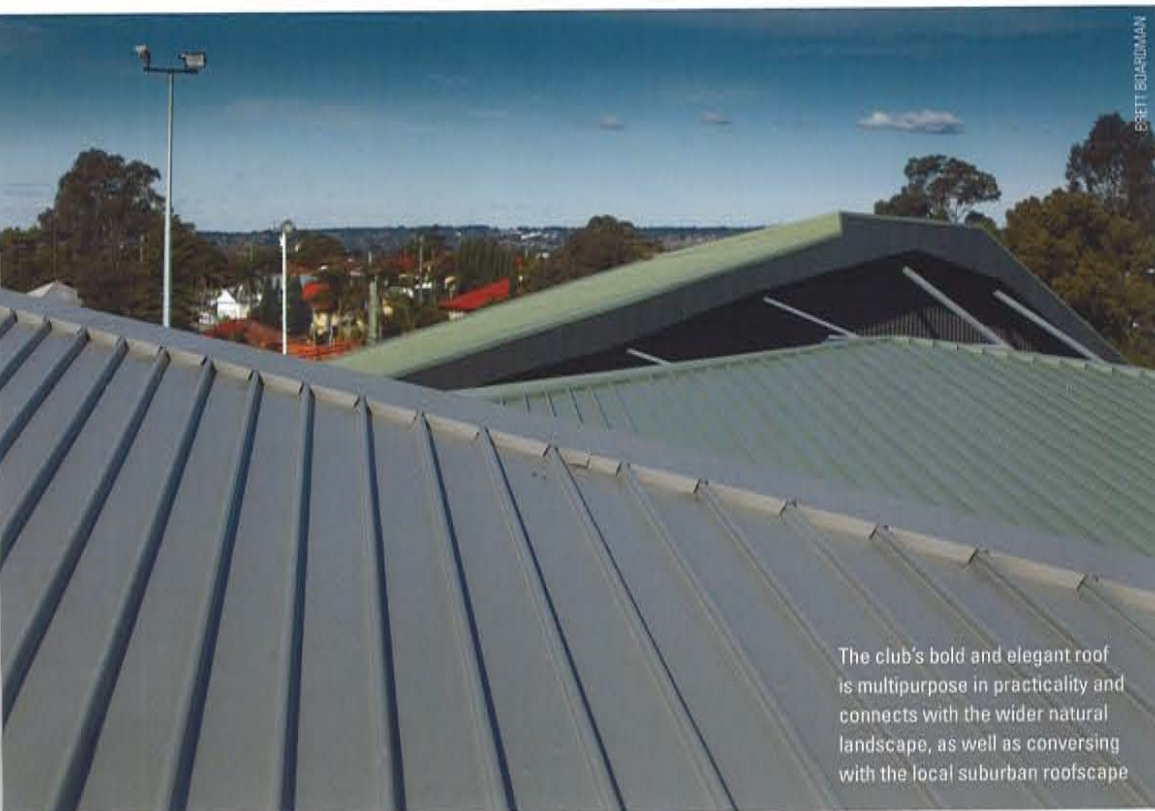
By giving the club a bold new look – which will help it attract a broader demographic than the traditional white-clad bowlers of the past – Terroir has deftly and convincingly achieved its ambitious objectives. And while the new facilities are likely to appeal to a younger crowd, there is plenty in the redesign for the bowlers too.

With the second of four stages now built, the club's master plan is slated for completion in 2015. In the meantime, Maitland City Bowls has rolled out a crackerjack, unveiling a new clubhouse that few other bowling clubs can hope to surpass. SP

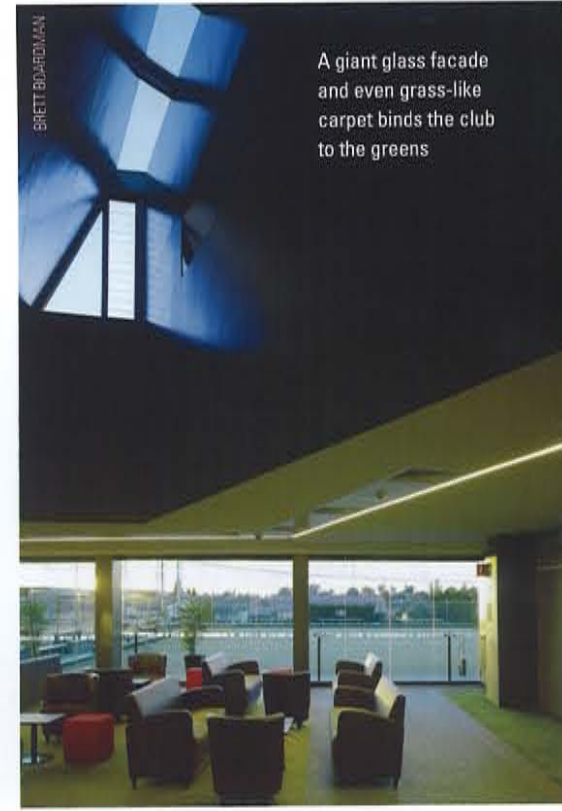




Flat sheet made from COLORBOND® steel details the foyer and skylight. Here, it imparts a luxurious feel with almost leather-like texture. Air-conditioning jet diffusers mimic a group of bowls



The club's bold and elegant roof is multipurpose in practicality and connects with the wider natural landscape, as well as conversing with the local suburban roofscape



A giant glass facade and even grass-like carpet binds the club to the greens

**PROJECT AND CLIENT** Maitland City Bowls, Sports and Recreation Club **ARCHITECT** Terroir **PROJECT MANAGER** Haymann-Cohen **PROJECT TEAM** Gerard Reinmuth, Scott Balmforth, Richard Blythe, Allie Earl, Cassandra Kiss, Chris Rogers, Moritz Von Stuenzner, Nic Fabrizio, Samaneh Moafi, Sarah Benton, Urd Norgård-Nielsen **STRUCTURAL AND CIVIL ENGINEER** Stage 1A: TTW; Stage 1B: MPC Consulting Engineers **BUILDER** Stage 1A: Hansen Yunken; Stage 1B: Classic Group **STEEL FABRICATOR** Stage 1A: IM Engineering; Stage 1B: Industrial Maintenance & Fabrications **SHOP DRAWING CONTRACTOR** Stage 1A: WFJ Engineering Co.; Stage 1B: Centreline Drawing Services **CLADDING CONTRACTOR** Stage 1A: Innerspace; Stage 1B: JA Crockets **PRINCIPAL STEEL COMPONENTS** Roofing: LYSAGHT KLIP-LOK 700 HI-STRENGTH® profile made from COLORBOND® steel in the colours Pale Eucalypt® and Bushland®; Internal cladding: flat sheet made from COLORBOND® steel in the colour Pale Eucalypt®; Structural steel including 96 tonnes of UB, PFC, SHS, UC and Z-purlins, and flat steel plate (8mm & 12mm) **BUILDING SIZE** Roof: 2500m², Internal fit-out 600m² **TOTAL PROJECT COST** \$4 million