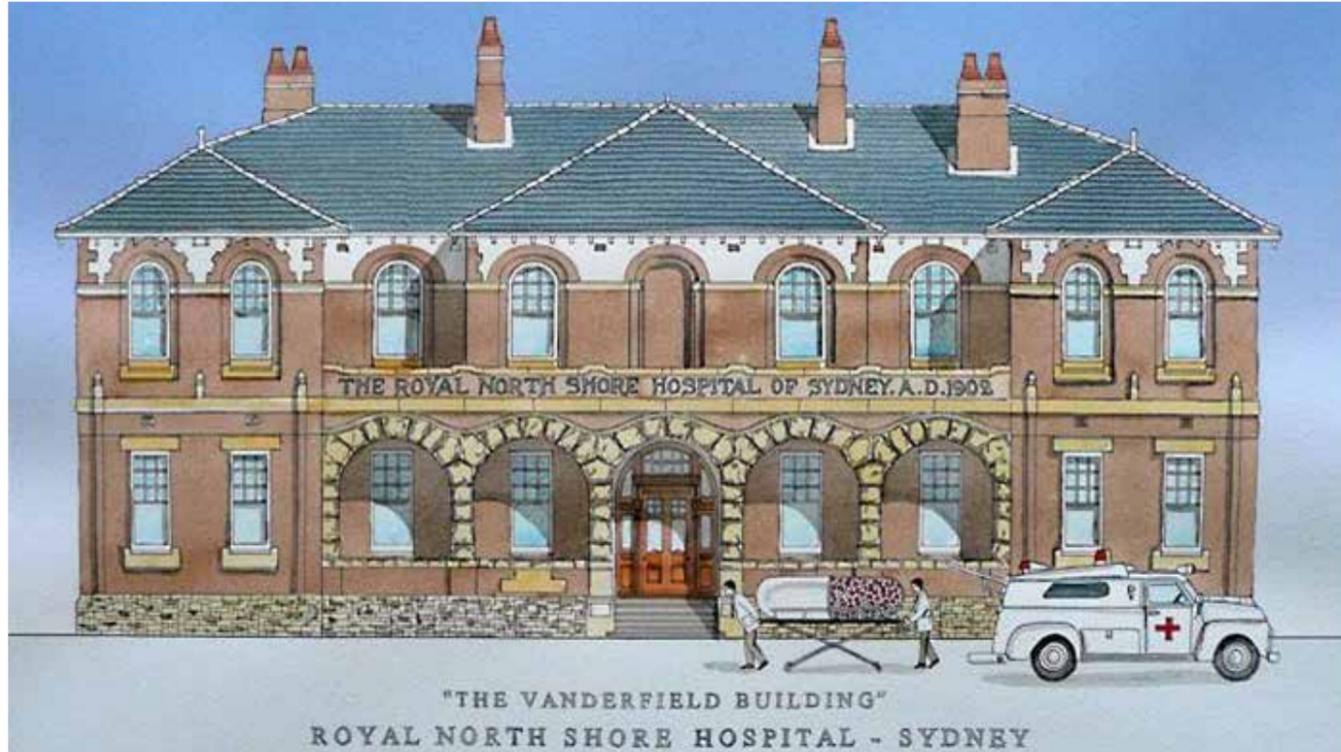


ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

reroofing project





VANDERFIELD BUILDING ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Bristile Roofing's involvement in this commercial re-roofing project extended beyond its traditional role of providing the materials and installation professionals.

Heritage

Bristile Roofing's most recent re-roofing project was to re-roof the historic 850 m² Vanderfield Building on the campus of Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH). All up, onsite work took about 10 weeks to complete, which was slightly longer than anticipated due to Sydney's inclement winter weather. With its new roof of La Escandella Marseilles tiles, a historic building has been given a new lease on life, thanks to a little help from Bristile Roofing. The finished result is visually stunning.

This imposing building whose foundations were laid in 1902 was given the styling 'Royal' by King Edward VII on 11 September 1902, following his Coronation. The new forty-eight-bed Royal North Shore Hospital of Sydney opened on its present site on 10 June 1903.

Impressive, historic and important in terms of local heritage, the Vanderfield Building is located at the centre of RNSH – a major public teaching hospital and Trauma Centre, which provides specialised services in the areas of severe burns, neonatal intensive care, spinal cord injury and interventional radiology. Certainly, the Vanderfield is an iconic building for NSW Health, by far and away the standout architectural piece on a site also noted for buildings more suited to the needs of modern healthcare.

For more than a century this august-looking brick and stone edifice housed a number of pavilion wards. Long ago it outgrew its original purpose and following recent extensive modernisation to RNHS is now home to administrative and support departments and facilities. In 2008 the building was renamed in memory of Roger Vanderfield a long-serving medical superintendent who was also one of Australia's finest rugby union referees.



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Time to act

In the show and tell stakes, some old buildings have more to reveal about themselves than others. Clearly, there's a lot of history in a building such as the Vanderfield, although history and heritage can be a fragile thing, especially when a clay tile roof begins to fail. Anthony Pidgeon, project manager for the main contractor, TCQ Construction, and who worked hand in hand with Bristile, remarks that: "the tiles were original, the wasp symbol on the front of the tiles and an imprint of Marseilles on the underside still clearly visible. Actually, some were still in reasonable shape, although the majority showed advanced penetration by lichen, the spores having invaded beneath the surface, which had also cracked." Whilst no records can be found, it seems likely that the French Marseille tiles, securely packed in wooden cases and cushioned by straw, may have been used as ballast in the hold of a ship, most probably a steel-hulled sailing vessel, which berthed at where the historic wharfs now stand on the south side of Sydney Harbour.

With many of the original Marseille tiles in a state of advanced deterioration, the hospital's building and maintenance department decided it was time to act. Accordingly, the responsible authority, North Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) appointed TCQ Construction to manage the project with Bristile being called upon to supply tiles and roofing specialists, as well as ongoing inspection and liaison with principal building contractor, TCQ Construction.

Lifting the lid

Working closely on the site with Anthony Pidgeon was Bristile's Re-roofing and Extensions Manager, Garry Hasler. An expert in managing roof restoration, maintenance and re-roofing, Hasler made frequent visits to the site, accompanying Anthony Pidgeon and the structural engineers during inspections throughout the actual roof space, prior to commencement and also during the work. Says Anthony Pidgeon, "There were no surprises. The roof space, the cavity under the original standard pitched roof, was in good condition, with no termite damage to the timber joists and purlins. In recent years, however, fire services had been updated with the installation of new wiring and sprinklers systems. We did come across remnants of the old lath and plaster ceilings, as well as pressed-metal ceilings made by the firm of Wunderlich." Interestingly, this Perth-based company joined with two other entities in 1973 to form Bristile Limited, which was taken over by Brickworks Limited in 2003.

Of course, being a working hospital, busy thoroughfares needed to be maintain so as not to impede foot traffic around the building and egress to the building itself. This required the works to be done in stages, ie one section at a time, starting on the left hand side of the building. Removing the old tiles, wooden battens and sarking in the designated section meant

cordonning off the ground level below and redirection of pedestrians to an alternative thoroughfare on the other side. And so it continued, allowing people to go about their business as a matter of course, including those wanting to visit the ground floor museum at the rear of the building.

Going with the flow

Ageing tiles are one thing, but they also have – literally – a flow-on effect in terms of how they sit alongside, as well as interact with flashing around chimney stacks, and also in gulleys (channels) that punctuate the various sections of Vanderfield's steeply pitched roof. Says Matheson, "Tiles do stand the test of time, but they are unfairly blamed for what is defective or improperly installed flashing. To maintain the heritage look we used copperised lead flashing, which is expensive, but necessary.

Meanwhile, what of the downpipes, many of which needed to be replaced? From ground up, the original cast iron downpipes extended to a height of about 1.8 metres. With its high tolerance to wear and tear caused by contact with, say horse-drawn vehicles, cast iron then joined galvanised steel downpipes which finally met with a box gutter at certain points. At the front of the building, two copper downpipes, still fit for purpose after more than 110 years, were retained. Initially, zincalume was chosen as the best match with the original cast iron, but this was quickly stymied as being out of character with the rest of the building when a trial section was installed. A Colorbond product in jasper, with its similar look to copper, was used.

Then there was the matter of the somewhat ornate astragals, curly brackets used to fix downpipes to the brick wall at intervals. Replacements had to be specially made, the first step being a specification, which was then used to laser cut and match the existing from Colorbond.

The word 'astragal' originates from the Greek and Latin for 'vertebra'. Thus, the original astragals used in architecture were made in a beaded design, which resembled a vertebra.

Gargoyles and dragons

During the late Victorian and early Edwardian (Federation) period, the gables of many buildings were decorated with clay figurines and embellishments, adding a sense of character and charm. For the Vanderfield Building, this delightful, artful finishing touch came by courtesy of the firm of Gargoyles and Dragons in Victoria, Australia's last remaining manufacturer of handcrafted roofing and building accessories in terracotta and stoneware. Finials - a distinctive section or ornament at the apex of a roof or canopy – were made by this firm and will no doubt, barring storm, tempest, human interference or Acts of God, remain in place for another 110 years.

WHY BRISTILE?

So why use Bristile? Respect between professionals is built upon just that: being a professional. TCQ Construction and Bristile Roofing's Garry Hasler have a combined 50 years' experience in the industry, they're knowledgeable, expert, attentive to the fine detail and also personable, all of which helps to build trust and confidence. Whilst Bristile is not generally known for in-depth involvement in projects such as RNSH, more and more it finds itself part of larger scale commercial work. For TCQ Construction the advantages were obvious – working with a national business like Bristile Roofing, which has extensive systems, and procedures to ensure projects run to plan, on time and on budget. Rodney Matterson, director of TCQ, insists that the project needed total involvement from an organisation with the capacity to take a project from supply to installation by its own qualified and experienced contractors. "That way," he explains, "there would be no demarcation or conflicts over responsibilities, including responsibility for processing inspections. In short, Bristile, with its specialists, would have total responsibility for the reroofing."

What's more, since TCQ Construction had been contracted by the NSW government to fulfil a project that needed lookalike heritage roof tiles, Bristile was the obvious choice.

As for La Escandella Marseille tiles, they were the only possible choice.

Moving into commercial work significantly extends Bristile's national business capabilities and enables customer to utilise its extensive systems and procedures, ensuring that projects run to plan, on time and on budget.



La Escandella Marseille tiles maintain the classic style and beauty of a certain type of terracotta roof tile originally produced in the coastal city of Marseilles in the south of France. Bearing the distinct mark of the car Marseille tile bears the distinctive mark of the craftsman tile maker and suits a range of architectural styles. Its sharp clean lines and natural terracotta colour palette give the Marseille a timeless look that has resulted in its enduring popularity. Offering the colour longevity and style of terracotta, the Marseille is ideal for homes of distinction.



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