

University project ticks all the boxes

Jo Bailey

Image Construction has been awarded the contract to build another high-profile public facility.

In April the Christchurch firm will start work on the new \$3.3 million Lincoln library and service centre on a site beside the town's current library which is being demolished.

This project follows the company's work on the Undercroft Lounge in the James Hight Building at the University of Canterbury, where stage one works transformed a large bicycle storage and thoroughfare area into a sophisticated student lounge.

Image Construction also completed stage two of the multi-million dollar project which saw the addition of commercial tenancies including cafes, food outlets and a wine bar.

Director James Woods says the Undercroft project was completed under an "immensely tight timeframe" to remedy the shortage of social and study spaces on campus after the UCSA building was damaged in the February earthquake.

"With winter approaching, the University wanted to get students out of the tent city temporarily housing their social activity as quickly as possible. In mid May 2013 we were given a brief, budget and 12 week timeline for stage one of the project that included initial design, budgeting and construction."

Woods says close collaboration between the University, Image Construction and other consultants involved with the project saw the stage delivered on-time, with compliance from the Christchurch City Council allowing immediate occupation.

"This was very much a collaborative project with project documents becoming available as the design progressed. To achieve consents and get through all the bureaucracy in such a short time frame was quite an achievement."

Woods has praise for his site manager and a "great team" working on the project including a range of sub-contractors.

"Getting the right sub-contractors with experience working on these sorts of institutional projects with tight constraints was integral to the success of the contract.

"Everyone stepped up and performed."

In October last year, Image Construction and architects Warren & Mahoney were approached by the New Zealand Institute of Building to lead a group of around 50 people through the project.

"The Institute considered it a significant post-earthquake project for Christchurch.

"It was great to go back and reflect on what we had achieved."

Woods says Image Construction is looking forward to building the 700sqm Lincoln library and service centre that is expected to open to the public in early 2014.

"We are pleased to be working alongside Selwyn District Council to deliver a great facility to the community".

In addition the company has several large architectural homes under construction and more about to start.

"The top-end residential market has been almost dead since the earthquakes but the balance has started to shift. We're getting a lot more enquiries for architectural homes and from people wanting to build on the hillsides."

Refurbishments for clients in a range of sectors including retail, entertainment, medicine, education and industry make up the balance of Image Construction's portfolio.

Woods says the medium-sized company's future growth will be "controlled and sustained" to preserve its reputation for providing personalised, quality service.

"We believe our team of dedicated and skilled site managers and builders deliver a product that is second-to-none, and we don't intend to compromise that by growing too fast."



The Undercroft Lounge project at the University of Canterbury has transformed a large bicycle storage and thoroughfare area into a sophisticated student lounge.

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