

Multistorey steel contractor niche reaches next level

Franklin Street Car Park, Adelaide

Prominent ASI fabricator, the Ahrens Group has widened its traditional role by taking on the construction management of a new multilevel car park development in Adelaide to allow the project to meet an extremely tight development timeframe.

The project, financed by BankSA utilised 689 tonnes of steel to construct eight levels plus ground floor and undercroft providing a combined floor area of 16,600sqm (1750sqm/level) and was completed on schedule in late February.

In recent times, Ahrens has progressively broadened its business offering through upgrading and expanding its facilities that allow it to provide a more holistic approach into the Design and Construct (D&C) space, but this latest job took that involvement a step beyond that.

Ahrens Group Construction Director, **Mark Smeaton** said that while the usual Design and Construct approach involves working with the developer/client, selected suppliers and subcontractors to bring value engineering to a project and ultimately reduce the building cost, the construction management role allows the steel contractor more scope.

“Construction management involves taking a fully designed and engineered project to speed work and avoid cost overruns by creating the scopes of work and then managing the tender and construction process for the developer/client,” Mr Smeaton said.

“We originally took the Design and Construct approach to the structural engineers so we could build the structure to suit the tight timeframe, allowing them to step away and become more flexible with traditional engineering.

“The client’s interest in us taking on the overall works management was drawn by our reputation with other property developers from our ability to deliver projects with tight timeframes and also that we have a highly vertically integrated business consisting of in-house engineering, shop detailing, fabrication, painting and erection crews and equipment.

“Having the vertical integration was a good advantage for the project and assisted with a more streamlined construction management delivery.

“The real benefit to the project was our ability to undertake the shop detailing, procurement, fabrication and surface treatment through a state-of-the-art and environmentally controlled paint line facility which reduced our handling requirements and improved the quality and efficiency rate to ensure we could provide the finished steel to site in the required timeframes.”

He said that programming and prioritising was also critical to the success of the multilevel work due to site access restrictions and other logistical issues of working within the CBD.

The limited site access and a tight timeframe led to a module-based building approach to allow the team to build large sections at ground level and lift into position, speeding the steel erection time.

“We basically erected the entire main structure in 4.5 weeks which allowed the secondary trades to commence a lot quicker than building level by level,” he said.

“It also assisted with safety as we did not have any trades working above or below each other.”



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Project Team

Architect: Hames Sharley

Developer/Builder: Tritan Corporation

Structural Engineers: Wallbridge & Gilbert

Construction Manager: Ahrens Group

Steel Fabricator: Ahrens Group

Steel Detailer: Steel Pencil

ASI Steel Distributor: OneSteel

ASI Steel Manufacturer: OneSteel