

Positive progress



Miles Construction has done what many other construction companies couldn't — it has achieved positive growth through the recession due to a wide portfolio of work and ability to offer clients unrivalled value for money.

"We add value by effective and timely communication throughout the project and by going beyond the scope of our work to achieve the best outcome for our clients," owner Alastair Miles says. "The company's diverse portfolio of work has been a great stabilising factor. Currently we are seeing increased activity in our renovations and extensions work, while the commercial side seems quieter."

Miles Construction is owned by Alastair and his wife Donna. Alastair is also an elected member of the Canterbury Association of Registered Master Builders' executive and serves on the Canterbury branch board of NZ Institute of Quantity Surveyors.

What the company does is simple to say — it offers build, design and project management services nationwide. Its work portfolio includes residential (small units to million dollar architectural homes), light commercial, hospitality and industrial work.

The key, as always, is doing it well. "We have an extensive track record in renovations and extensions, from small to \$500,000-plus projects," Alastair says.

"We offer guidance on the practicalities and financial implications of different options. This enables our clients to make informed decisions on the extent and the design of their renovation prior to committing to detailed design fees. In this way, our clients don't get disappointed with over-run budgets."

The company has been involved with a number of retirement villages and social housing projects. It has recently completed stage one of a project involving the construction of 24 retirement cottages at Windsor House in Shirley.

"Another growing area for us is dealing with leaky homes," Donna says. "The company is currently working with three different clients to resolve their leaky home problems."

Commercial and hospitality work

The hospitality activities of the company are centred on building and fitouts of new coffee shops and restaurants. Miles Construction is a preferred project manager for the Lone Star Restaurant Group.

"Our most recent project for the Lone Star group has been the build and fit-out of the new Joe's Garage coffee shop in Sumner. We also enjoyed working on the recently completed fit-out of The Naked Baker in New Brighton," she says.

"On the commercial side, we are very proud to have had Nokia Australasia, RSPCA Canterbury and Comcare as some of our clients. Our commercial clients appreciate our flexibility and ability to deliver their projects within a tight time frame and to the exact budget."

Miles Construction is a member of Site Safe and has a full working health and safety policy.

A new area of business for Miles Construction is rural, with the company recently building its fifth dairy shed in the lower South Island. "Our involvement in the agricultural sector is gathering momentum," Donna says. "We work closely with Reporoa Engineering and have just finished a dairy shed that is regarded to be the best dairy shed in West Otago and Southland."

FROM THE TOP: Dairy sheds are a new area of business; a commercial project, the Nokia Care store in Armagh St, Christchurch; the Tai Tapu house which won Miles Construction a silver award (new homes \$450,000 to \$600,000) in the 2010 House of the Year



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The company is also undertaking a number of interesting renovation projects, one being the total renovation of a neglected, but grand, character house in Fendalton. The owners have made a decision to stay in the house during the renovations. "They are the world's most patient people and have miraculously managed to stay sane and cheerful throughout the process," Donna Miles says.

"The house was left totally dilapidated for a number of years. Many people would have considered bowling it but thankfully our clients could appreciate the value and history of this magnificent home and have decided to bring it back to its original glory."

Another interesting renovation project is taking place in Akaroa. Weir Walker Architects have done an amazing job of designing the renovation and extension of this existing bach. "This will be our second cantilever steel-frame hill construction in Akaroa. The result will be a total transformation of the original bach," Alastair says.

Thermal insulation technology

Miles Construction is also building a house involving the latest technology in thermal insulation. Situated in Christchurch and designed by architect Haden Elmsie, it is the first house in Canterbury to utilise the Pro Clima building system, a unique, globally proven system that guarantees measurable outcomes in airtightness and moisture control.

New to New Zealand, this European technology works by utilising the use of the Intello Plus product, an intelligent internal wrap that prevents air movement through the building fabric, greatly improving the energy efficiency of the home and reducing moisture build up within the structure. "You haven't got any air movement through your walls, which then condensates when it hits the cold surfaces," Alastair says. The system also ensures the long-term effectiveness of the insulation and the structural durability of the building by protecting it from moisture damage. The Intello Plus wrap not only prevents air coming into the house, but interestingly includes a membrane that lets moisture out.

Use of the wrap means the client has been able to reduce the number of heat pumps required from eight, down to just two. The amount saved in heat pumps results in the client not spending any additional money insulating his home.

New environmental focus

Alastair says the Pro Clima product has opened up new possibilities in thermal insulation and has given Miles Construction a new focus in residential building. "It's given us a lot of information on how to design for thermal efficiency. We've learned an awful lot and it's not just about the internal wrap, it's about basic



LEFT: The unique Intello Plus building wrap used by Miles Construction

design analysis," he says. "Building energy efficient houses is only going to become more and more important. In the UK and Europe homes are rated on thermal efficiency which can have an impact on price.

"I think now that the extent of leaky homes and poor building practices of the past are becoming more apparent, there will be increased interest in airtightness and thermal efficiency".

Miles Construction has had a number of architects visiting the site to look at the project. Alastair and Donna hope to form a closer partnership with architects who are interested in sustainable homes, as they see it as a strong new direction for Miles Construction.

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