

## NEWS & INSIGHTS

# Innovative green retrofit reigns supreme

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Argosy's 8 Willis St and Stewart Dawson's Corner project has taken out the top honours and multiple other accolades at the 2024 Property Council New Zealand Property Industry Awards.

Owned by Argosy, the development won the Property Industry Supreme Award as well as category wins for Commercial Office Property and Heritage & Adaptive Reuses. The building boasts significant sustainable credentials and was also awarded Excellence in the Sustainable Building.

Argosy's head of sustainability, Saatyesh Bhana, said, "The Supreme award is the pinnacle building award in the property industry as it considers design, sustainability, purpose and more. This year a

record number 190 finalists make it the most competitive awards yet, so it was a real honour for the team to be recognised.”

8 Willis and the heritage Stewart Dawson’s Corner are an integration and expansion of two previously challenged properties on Lambton Quay. The two buildings provide 16,776m<sup>2</sup> premium mixed-use space and include the workspace for StatsNZ and Ministry for the Environment (MFE), along with several speciality retail tenants.

## Sustainable Retrofit

Recognising the demands in the commercial property market for more sustainable and resilient buildings, 8 Willis is Wellington’s first office building to achieve the 6 Green Star rating and New Zealand’s first completed project to achieve the maximum 10 innovation points.

Argosy’s unique green portfolio strategy focuses on retrofitting existing buildings, which is a more sustainable approach, than the traditional ‘demolish and rebuild’ approach taken by most property companies.

## Engineering Innovation

Encompassing learnings from Argosy’s previous Green Star projects, Saatyesh says the design team pushed the boundaries, implementing innovative strategies for decarbonisation, seismic resilience and heritage adaptation. “A significant innovation was in the seismic solution, which saw Beca increase the seismic rating by using only 12 dampers instead of the normal 44. “This meant a significant reduction in materials and therefore less cost and a less invasive execution.”

This engineering innovation was internationally recognised by the Institution of Structural Engineers, winning the Innovation in Seismic Retrofit for Improved Resilience Award 2023. It was also awarded at the New Zealand Society For Earthquake Engineering John Hollings Seismic Resilience in Practice Award and at the international Institute of Structural Engineers Awards.

## Green Innovation

Another key innovation was the building’s air conditioning system, which utilised decarbonisation design through the removal of gas boilers. Reverse cycle heat pump chillers provide simultaneous heating and cooling resulting in an energy efficient air conditioning system.

The project also includes a hybrid VRF HVAC system, which utilises significantly less harmful refrigerant gas and provides 200% fresh air rates. Inclusion of two atriums introduced additional natural light into the building. Solar panels, intelligent LED lighting, daylight and 20,000 litre rainwater tanks were also part of the smart design.

The result will be 38% lower overall carbon emissions over a 60-year lifespan.

## Care for heritage, people and culture

The approach to the care and integration of the heritage building into the wider development was another key aspect that supported this development's success. The project involved not only sympathetically strengthening and restoring the Victorian façade and timber truss roof to the Lambton Quay site but also for the new surrounding architecture of the 8 Willis office tower to contrast and compliment these heritage buildings.

Saatyesh says that the seamlessly integrated base build and fitout design for 8 Willis enabled tenants to enjoy people-centred workspaces reflective of cultural values, including manaakitanga (hospitality) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). "StatsNZ and MFE, along with the retail tenants, have been operating within the building for a number of months now and the development is performing above their expectations."

The 8 Willis St and Stewart Dawson's Corner project also won numerous accolades in 2023, recognised by the New Zealand Institute Architects, Window & Glass Association and Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat.

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