

Attracting people to the Christchurch Casino

BY KEVIN CAWLEY



The casino entrance with the frieze in blue light (top) and a more distant view in gold (above).



The frieze can also have a moving colour display.

The brief was to light the Christchurch Casino and attract people back to the central city and to enhance and give vibrancy back to Victoria and Peterborough Streets. This was part of the “enlightening Christchurch” campaign to bring the city to life with light and to put Christchurch back on the world stage.

The design solution allowed the integration of new lighting whilst keeping the architectural integrity of the building intact, since none of the luminaires can be seen as they deliver a sophisticated symphony of colour and movement. The use of the correct colours in theatre is essential in conveying the message and the emotion to the audience. So, specific colours were mixed to excite and attract people, while at the same time having respect for the architecture.

The way this was achieved was by constructing a false pelmet all around the building. The building had four black lines of granite negative detail accentuating the façade. The top line was a perfect place to conceal the 185 luminaires by both day and by night. This false pelmet was also designed to act as a light reflector. The result achieved was a perfect line of light without interruption that creates a silhouette effect of the embossed playing card concrete characters. The system is DMX programmed with two-minute light displaying moving colours. The photographs show some of the effects.

This design has won several awards, including from the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand for Protecting the Night Environment and an award of excellence from the Lighting Council of New Zealand. ■