

CASE STUDY

#05: Speedwall

easysteel.
A FLETCHER BUILDING COMPANY

Building on trust



With its unique building product designed for multi-unit residential buildings, this innovative Kiwi company is helping to fulfil New Zealand's future housing needs.

Speedwall® NZ Ltd began manufacturing fire and acoustic rated wall systems at their Hamilton factory in 2003. The revolutionary composition and clip-together simplicity of their systems has quickly seen them become a leader in New Zealand's commercial construction sector.

As we move away from the traditional Kiwi quarter-acre section, New Zealand's style of housing will become more like other major cities around the world.

"Especially in cities like Auckland, high density housing and 2-3 storey apartments will be the way of the future" explains Fred Armstrong, Speedwall's Managing Director.

"Thirteen per cent of all residential construction in 2015 has formed part of a terraced housing development. We expect this trend to continue and grow over the next few years as councils look to increase density."

Two important aspects of building higher-density housing lies in the selection of materials that provide a quieter home for the occupants - reducing noise from the city outside, and adjoining neighbours - while also ensuring a suitable fire rating between the tenancies.

Speedwall® systems meet all those requirements and more. The panels are made from lightweight aerated concrete, encased in profiled galvanised steel. Available in lengths of up to 9.1 metres, they offer the construction industry an alternative that's both fast and easy to install.

Award-winning products

Originally invented in Australia, the systems are now patented in 13 countries. In New Zealand, Speedwall® has been BRANZ-appraised since 2007, and their systems are used by many of Australasia's leading architects, developers and construction professionals in Australasia.

Fred Armstrong was named a finalist in the James Hardie Innovation category in the 2015 NZIOB Awards, in recognition of the company's unique inter-tenancy systems.

As well as multiunit residential complexes, Speedwall® is often specified for retail and warehouses, cinemas and theatres, security buildings, lift shafts and service ducts, and fire-rated boundary walls.

Some of their flagship projects include the 'Scene Three' apartments on Auckland's waterfront, Auckland University's Business School, and the Lion Nathan Breweries plant. Speedwall® was also used in the rebuild of the iconic Christchurch department store Ballantynes; as well as



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Hamilton's Centre Place redevelopment, and NZ Post's city Distribution Centres.

A long-standing relationship

Speedwall NZ Ltd has partnered with Easysteel for more than a decade. Fred Armstrong says the relationship has been "pretty unusual" in one respect.

"I don't think there's been a cross word between us in the whole 12 years! It's just one of those great business relationships...it's all been really seamless."

Originally sourced from NZ Steel, the steel is cut to machine-ready specifications by Easysteel, before being delivered to Speedwall's Te Rapa factory.

"Our galvanised steel is supplied on consignment, with a set amount of ton per month," explains Fred Armstrong.

"For our Colorsteel products, we place our orders as they come in. We know 2-3 months in advance what our needs are. It's a very simple arrangement, and it works really well." The galvanised steel is delivered in 25-tonne loads, with a series of regular deliveries throughout the month. The

"It's just one of those great business relationships..."

Colorsteel is processed and delivered weekly in smaller quantities.

Innovative and ideas

The company's main point of contact is Easysteel's Hamilton branch manager, Darryn Creahan, along with a small team of salespeople.

"Nothing is a problem for them," says Fred Armstrong.

"Anything we need, they're there to help us. They've also given us some good ideas along the way."

One recent example was when Speedwall wanted to investigate using a thinner gauge steel for their party wall system. Because it isn't available locally, Easysteel managed to source a 2.6mm-gauge steel from Taiwan.

"Darryn found it for us, which was great. We've trialled it quite extensively, and because it delivers a better yield, we're going to use it on an ongoing basis."

Availability of product

Fred Armstrong says as well as providing environmentally-

Snapshot on Speedwall Ltd

- Manufacturer of award-winning fire and acoustic rated wall systems (BRANZ-appraised)
- Used in a range of commercial and residential applications, including multi-tenancy buildings
- Head office and factory based in Te Rapa, Hamilton
- Partnered with Easysteel since 2003
- Notable projects include Scene Three apartments on Auckland's waterfront, Auckland University's Business School, Lion Nathan Breweries, Ballantynes department store, and Hamilton's Centre Place redevelopment

sustainable building products, Speedwall Ltd likes to 'keep it Kiwi'.

"We like to source New Zealand-made products wherever possible, and support local companies. So it's good to know Easysteel is also Kiwi-owned."

Another advantage of dealing with Easysteel is the size of the business, and their comprehensive stock holdings.

"Easysteel holds everything you need in stock, which is a huge benefit. In our industry, it's not just about price...you've also got to have availability of product, and great levels of service. We know Easysteel won't ever let us down."

Two or three times a year, Speedwall gets together for a roundtable discussion with NZ Steel and Easysteel; just to check in on the business relationship. Fred Armstrong says the meetings don't take long, "because we never have any problems to discuss!"

"They're a very professional team of people who really look after our needs. It's a great relationship, and it works well for both of us."

