

The Kaizon Architecture team designs new embalming suite for Tipene funerals



Project Summary

Tipene Funerals, well-known South Auckland based funeral home, engaged Kaizon Architecture to design and fit-out the new embalming suite of rooms at their South Auckland premises.

Francis and Kaiora from Tipene Funerals approached Kaizon and met with the Senior Registered Architect, Treiz Azzu, to discuss their requirements for a new embalming suite. Treiz and the team went on-site to analyse and view the existing space. After detailed discussions with Tipene Funerals, ensuring that Treiz and the team understood the full requirements and needs they had, the design phase began.

Requirements for the embalming spaces

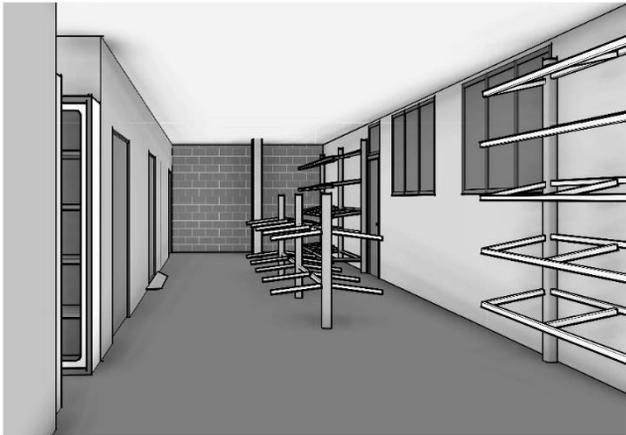
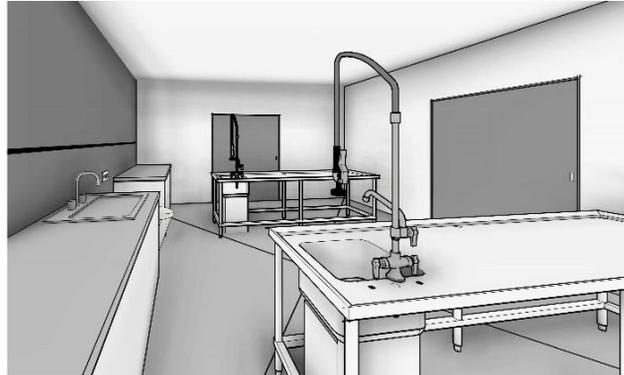
Designing the embalming suite was more unusual than a standard office room fit-out or residential fit-out. There were specific requirements that needed to be considered due to the sensitivity and practicalities of the process. In order for Treiz to design something that met the client's expectations, she endeavoured to fully understand the process of embalment so that she could compliment that process with appropriate and effective design.

The entire suite needed to be carefully designed in a way that supported the transitional process of embalment. From the discreet access for the hearse, to the practicalities of wheeled access equipment requiring level floors, the suite of rooms were carefully considered and designed to facilitate the required flow of the process.

Secondly, they had to make some decisions around the right kind of ventilation for the suite. This was an important factor due to the use of particular chemicals utilised during the embalming process. Treiz and the team gave them the choice of providing the ventilation by either windows or via mechanical ventilation. In this case Treiz advised not to use windows so that they would avoid any weathertightness issues and due to the sensitive nature of the process. Treiz then liaised with the Mechanical Engineer on the project to design the right kind of system and ventilation for Tipene Funerals.

Kaiora and Francis stated that there needed to be sufficient space, access to water, and the right specialist equipment to enable her and the team to prepare the bodies effectively and with minimal disruption to them. Treiz spent time thinking about the ergonomics of the various spaces and processes, and how this could best work with the existing space available. Treiz ended up designing large hose taps that were joined to the tables and hung over a large sink. *Image on the next page to demonstrate this:*

“The general aesthetics of the room needed to be considered to ensure that they allowed for the embalming process to take place with ease. Things such as.. furniture placement and sizing, circulation of the furniture within the space, and wall and floor materials should be constructed with materials impervious to water and having a smooth surface.”

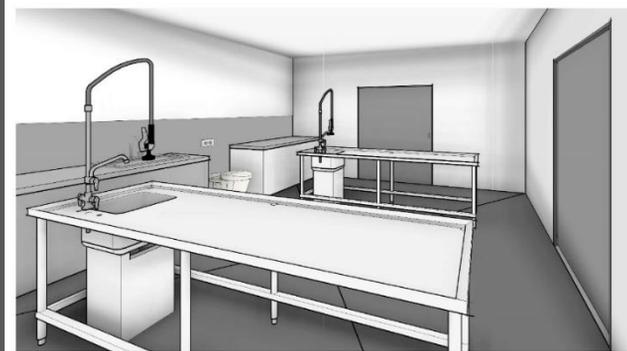
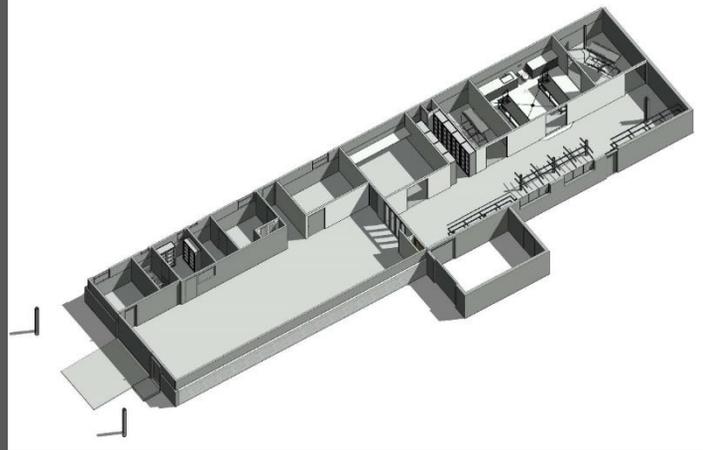


Another aspect of the embalming process that Treiz and the team needed to consider was the storage of caskets adjacent to the embalming room, without impacting the working space which needed to be clear. Due to the physical dimensions, numbers and varying weights of the caskets, Treiz demonstrated an innovative approach and storage solution in close proximity to the preparation rooms. This ensured the caskets were easily and readily available at the appropriate point in the embalming process.

Treiz and the team also had to consider special requirements for the Muslim community. They created a separate space for the Muslim deceased so that the beliefs and dignity of the community is respected and upheld.

The general aesthetics of the room needed to be considered to ensure that they allowed for the embalming process to take place with ease. Things such as specialist equipment needed, furniture placement and sizing, circulation of the furniture within the space, and wall and floor materials should be constructed with materials impervious to water and having a smooth surface.

Kaiora commented on the final design saying, “I really love the design that Treiz came up with. I wasn’t sure exactly what I was wanting at the start – I only knew it had to meet some very specific requirements. Treiz really spent the time understanding the embalming process, and it resulted with a fantastic design that blew me away. The design was so practical with what we needed. I would recommend Kaizon to anyone.”



Regulations and Consent

Part of Kaizon's Architectural practise is to guide and assist clients through the consent and building code regulatory process. This was one of the fundamental services Kaizon provided that Tipene Funerals were most grateful for. Treiz took the burden off Kaiora and Francis and dealt directly with the Council on a few issues concerning this project. Kaiora said, "Treiz and the team have been invaluable with helping us through the consent and regulatory process. I really would have struggled doing it on my own, but Treiz handled everything and spoke directly with the Council on several issues. She ensured we only needed to meet the regulations relevant to us, and she increased the speed of the whole process due to her knowledge and expertise."

A couple of issues that Treiz needed to manage with the Council was the concern of chemicals being extracted from the deceased bodies. The Council thought Tipene Funerals needed resource consent in relation to chemical handling. Treiz conducted some research and found that the mortuary is classified as a Funeral Directors Premises, which is different to a mortuary within a hospital. Therefore, no special chemical handling consent was required here. Treiz stated, "it's important to understand Council Building Code and Regulations when you are working on any project. Knowledge is key and it can really help to speed up the process – I find clients are so grateful when I manage things directly with the Council, it takes away added stress from the client and makes the whole project more seamless."

Conclusion

The final design has now been approved, signed off and is with contractors to begin build. The project was a huge success for many reasons, and both Kaizon and the client are happy. Simon Kleeman, Director of Architecture & Building Surveying, Kaizon, commented on the project saying, "This unique project demonstrates our ability to listen, understand and provide successful outcomes for our clients. One of our missions and values at Kaizon is to exceed our client's expectations, and we've really done that with this project. Treiz and the team always ensure they understand not only their client's needs and requirements, but they go a step further to ensure they understand the holistic picture of any project. Why the room / building is being built, what is its' purpose, what is the process that the room / building is being used for? When you understand the big picture you then ensure you are designing something appropriate and reflective of all those things."

For more information on Kaizon's Architecture services contact Danielle@kaizon.co.nz.