

FENCING TIMES

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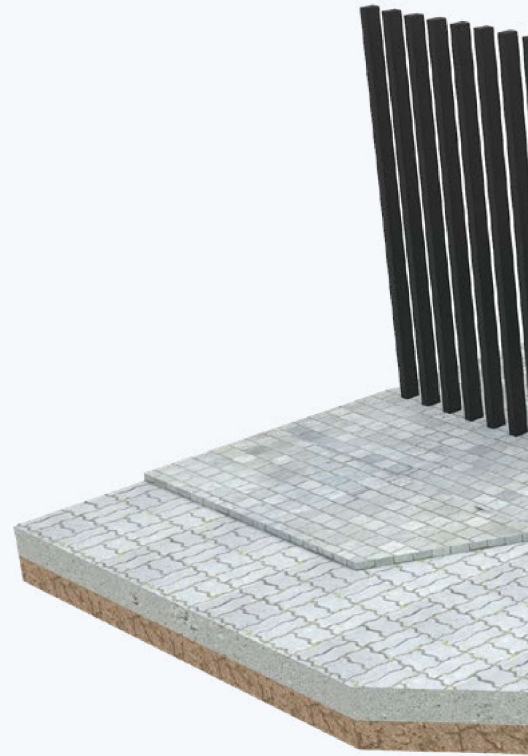
Fancy Fence
presents
Banana Gate

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David Stott, owner of Fancy Fence Australia, with his son Jack, and co-worker Michael

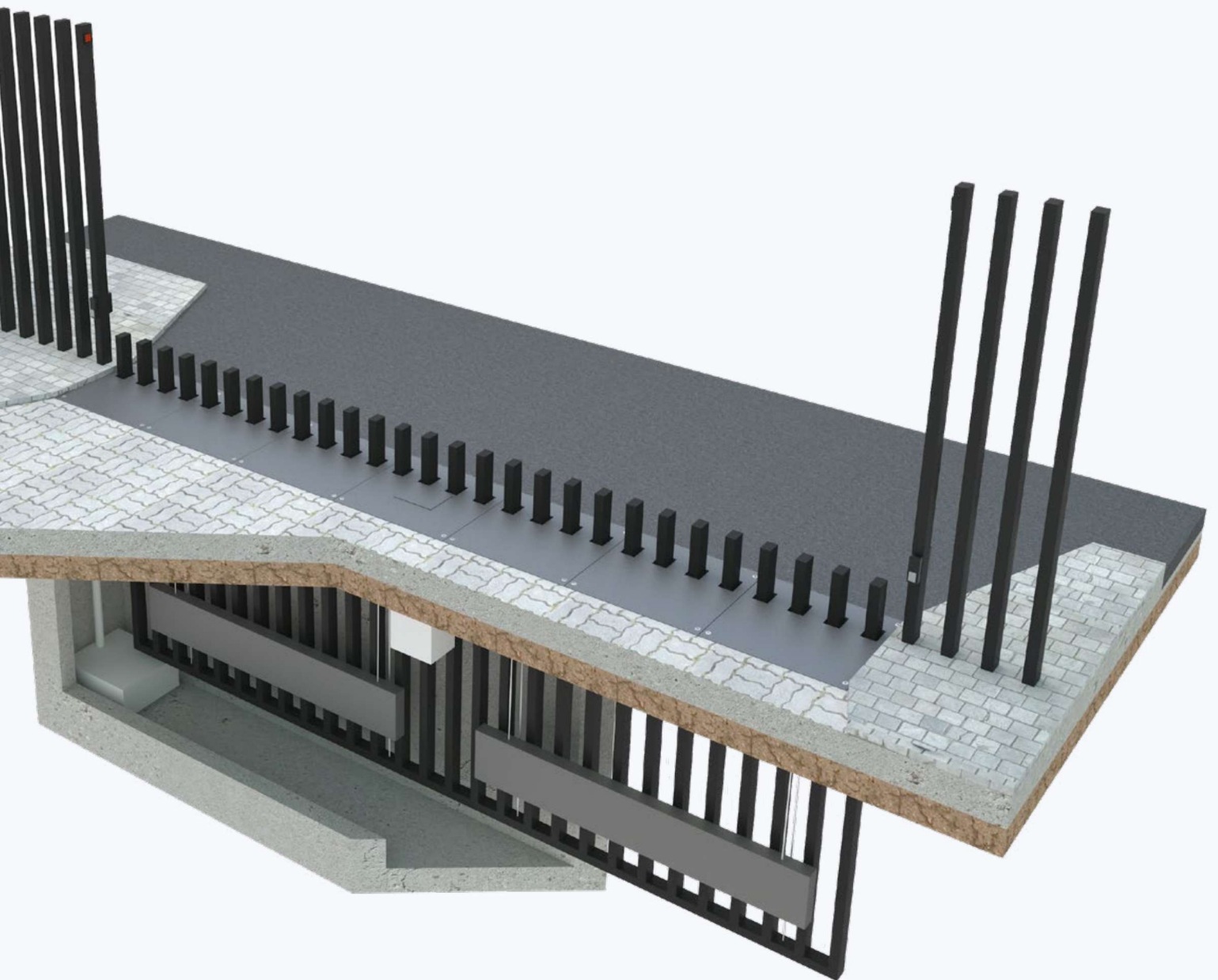
Fancy Fence, a vertical gate manufacturer from Lublin in eastern Poland, is expanding its range with a curved version of its vertical gate system. The curved gate can follow almost any form the property boundary takes.



The Banana version of Fancy Fence's vertical gate was developed for a customer in Australia. "The customer lives at the end of a cul-de-sac," Fancy Fence CEO Jacek Kühnl-Kinel says. "The end of it is rounded, and he wanted a gate that followed that curve. He couldn't find anyone who was able to provide him with what he wanted, but he eventually found his way to Fancy Fence Australia."

PROJECT

"We'd never made a curved gate either," Kühnl-Kinel goes on. "But when the enquiry came in, we weren't able to think of a reason why it couldn't be done, so we started work on development. There were plenty of calculations and drawings involved, to give the correct curvature to the underground structure and the foundations. And it then presented quite a technical challenge to get all the parts curved in precisely the way it was set out in the drawings. But there are some projects you don't do for the money; you do them for the challenge, and to demonstrate what can be done. In the end, all the hard work, mainly of our Australian team, produced an amazing end result. And now that we know how to do it, we can obviously do it more often."

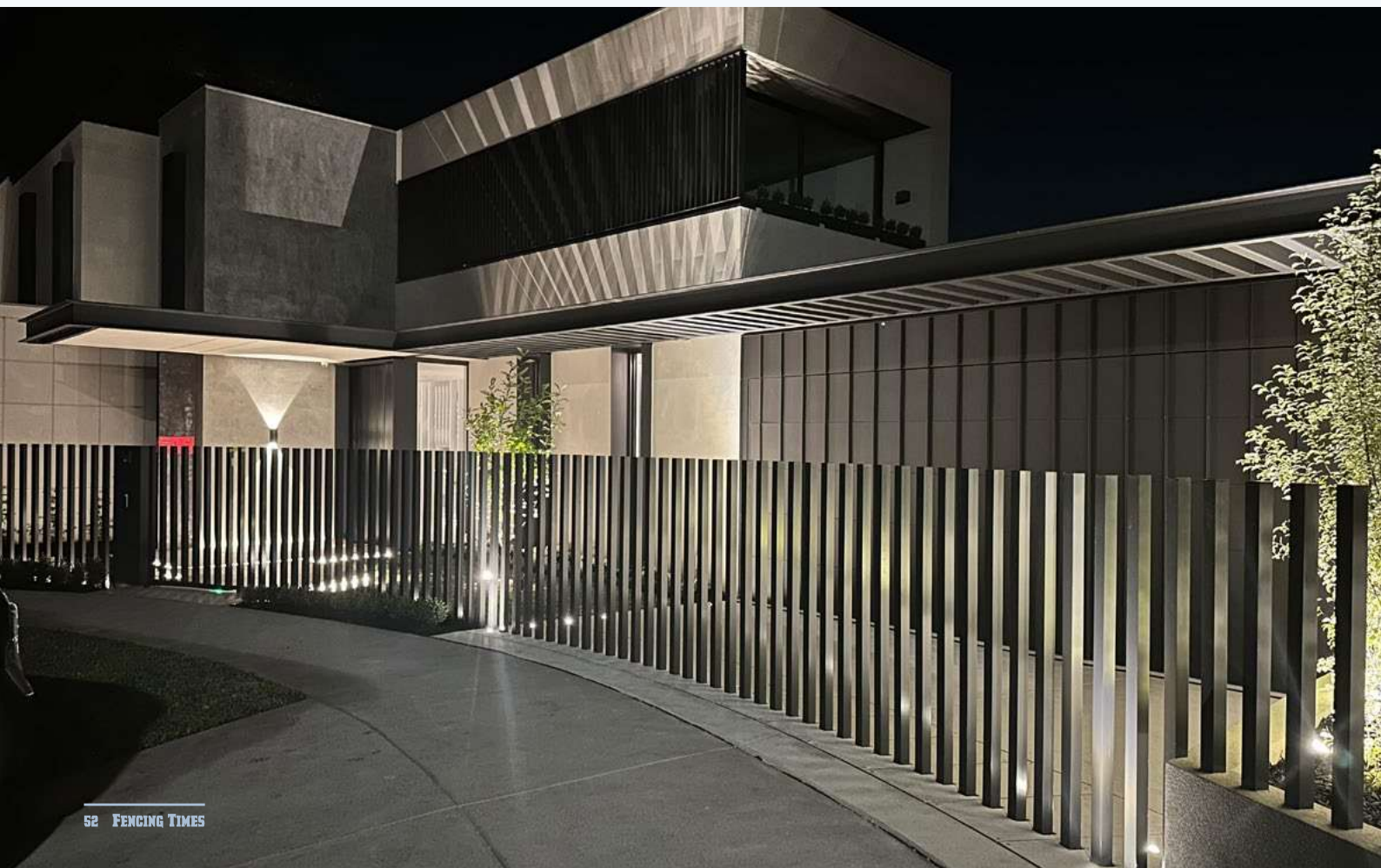
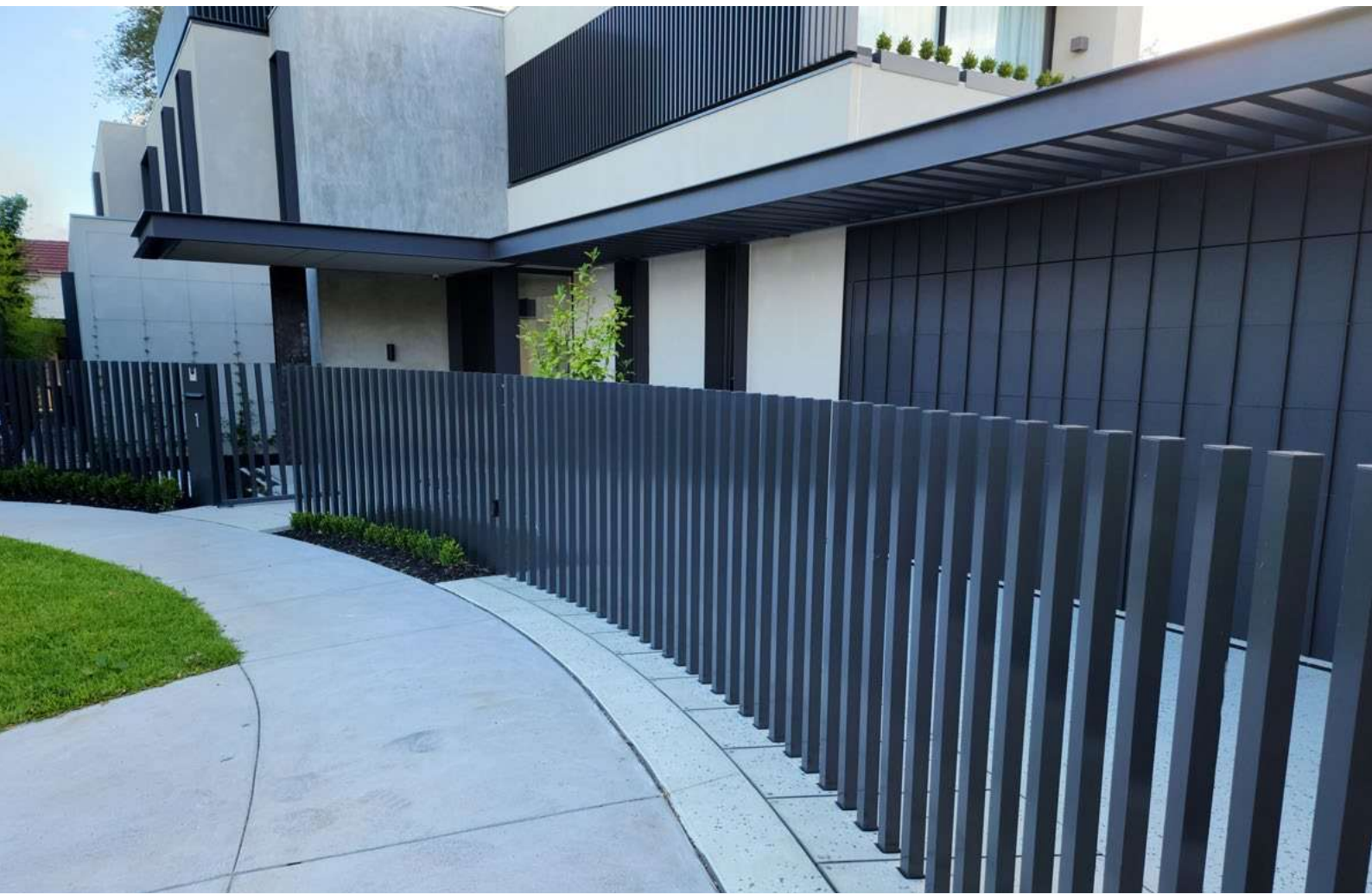


FANCY FENCE

Fancy Fences are gates, which look like fixed palisade fencing. As they open they sink into a concrete recess in the ground, which also serves as the foundation. They are operated by a sliding gate motor. An underground counterweight of the same weight as the gate leaf ensures that the sliding gate drive is never subject to a heavy load, and allows the gate leaf to be moved easily by hand in the event of power failure. According to Kühnl-Kinel, a Fancy Fence retractable gate system has two major advantages over swing and sliding gates: "The first one is that you don't lose any space for a sliding gate to pull back," he says. "And you don't need to leave any space free for a swinging gate leaf either. You can use all the available space for other things. And secondly, the gate opens much faster: a 2-metre-high gate opens just as quickly as a sliding gate with a 2-metre passage: within 8 to 10 seconds."

BANANA

The new Banana Gate can be produced to fit almost any curve. "The upright palisades are joined together under the ground using long steel profiles," Kühnl-Kinel explains. "These are screwed to both sides of the palisades. For the Banana version of the gate, we had to have those profiles rolled into a curve. The concrete box that the entire structure sinks into also had to be adapted to the curve of the gate. Then to finish up we had to adapt the shape of the cover plates. And the biggest challenge of all was that we had to get it all right the first time. If we had miscalculated and it wasn't noticed until the installation stage, we would have had to have shipped new materials to Australia, or else come up with some very creative improvisations there on the site. Obviously that was something we wanted to avoid."



SPECIFICATIONS

Just like its straight-line brother, the gate is supplied as standard with an infill of hollow sections measuring 60 by 40 by 3 millimetres, with a height of 1.8 metres and passage width of up to 6 metres. "But those are really just measurements for the leaflet," Kühnl-Kinell says. "They're the dimensions we used for type approval, to comply with the machinery directive, because we had to use something for the test. In practice every gate is custom-made, and is fully adapted to the situation on the site. From a technical viewpoint we're able to make the gate up to 2.7 metres high, with a passage width of up to 8 metres. Then you get infill profiles of 100 by 100 millimetres. In theory the opening width is unlimited, because you can always put multiple gates next to each other. They fit together seamlessly. We recently installed 120 metres of Fancy Fence for a project in Quebec, Canada, consisting of 25 gates. That can be done with the new Banana Gate too – and you can combine straight and curved gates as well."

CONFORMITY

The first Fancy Fence gate was installed in 2015. "Since then, the system has been continuously improved and refined," Kühnl-Kinell says. "We used climate chambers to simulate aggressive environments, such as coastal areas. Today, we can confidently say that the gates perform flawlessly even in extreme temperatures from -30 to even +50 degrees Celsius. And the gates comply to all European regulations too – they have passed all the necessary tests required for certification in accordance with the European Construction Products Directive and the Machinery Directive."



PUBLIC SPACE

Kühnl-Kinel wants to create even more variants of his Fancy Fence in the future. *“In the future we want to focus more on gates for public spaces,”* he says. *“In these spaces there is often a call for gates that hermetically seal a site at night, but are barely visible during the day. Two years back we made a gate for the railway station in Annemasse, in the French Alps. It’s been such a success that we now need to make gates for the Paris metro and for other metropolises. These clients asked us whether they needed to install bollards in addition to our Fancy Fences, or whether our gates were also able to stop vehicles (whether or not the drivers had malicious intent). This gave us the idea of having our gates crash-tested against IWA 14 and American ASTM F2656 standards, at CTS in Münster. We believe we can achieve quite a high rating. Then we can combine the functionality of a gate, a fence and a row of bollards, all in a single product.”*

FULL FRAME

As well as that, there is a gate with a full frame in the pipeline. Like the palisades, it disappears completely into the ground. *“We’ve already completed all tests and received a positive compliance report from the notified body who did the certification process. We’re working on a gabion gate too, which presents completely new challenges. For starters obviously due to the heavy weight, but also because of the wide slot at the opening. If you drive a car over a 60-millimetre slot, you hardly notice it. But if the slot gets bigger, you end up with a dent in your wheel rim. So we’re currently working on making some kind of cover for that. But we love our technical challenges here – the Banana Gate is a good example of that. When someone comes to us with a special request it makes our hearts beat that much faster, and right away we start trying to figure out whether we can fulfil it. So there will definitely be more variants on their way!”* ■



