



## Chau Chak Wing Museum

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### Architectural Design Statement May 2017

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JPW  
JOHNSON PILTON WALKER

ARCHITECTURE  
LANDSCAPE  
INTERIORS  
MASTERPLANNING  
EXHIBITIONS



# Executive Summary

## **Transformational Project**

Co-location of the Macleay and Nicholson Museums with the University Art Gallery will capitalise on their unique collections to create a new world class cultural destination, and a new heart for the University's Cultural Precinct.

The University of Sydney 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan sets out an ambitious plan to position the University of Sydney as the best university in Australia and a leading institution globally.

The vision for the Chau Chak Wing Museum, to bring together three of Australia's most significant collections spanning natural history, art and culture in an unique multi-disciplinary environment, is aligned with the key objectives and detailed strategies of the University's Strategic Plan.

## **Unique Site**

Within the most recognisable vista of Australia's first university, the site demands a response that is respectful of its setting and neighbours, yet confident in its expression of our time and of the University's future.

## **Unique Brief**

By providing new spaces and facilities for collaboration, innovation and enquiry, the Chau Chak Wing Museum will draw together academic staff, students and visitors, creating a unique, world-class research and learning environment.

# 01 Introduction

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## Project Vision

The Chau Chak Wing Museum's exhibitions, programs and onsite collection access will enable the University of Sydney to transform the relevance and significance of its unique collections of great cultural, artistic, scientific and historical importance.

A suite of world-class gallery spaces will deliver more than three times the University's current display space and allow the University to significantly expand exhibition programs. For the first time the university can host major traveling exhibitions from first class international and national collections.

Themed study rooms will support interdisciplinary teaching and learning and enable greatly expanded schools programming. These spaces will become the backbone of object-based learning and critical analysis across multiple disciplines.

Embracing a unique gateway location on the northern side of the Camperdown Campus, the Chau Chak Wing Museum will be a cultural destination of local, national and international significance.



View from The Quadrangle

# 02 Urban Design & Built Form

## Site

The site is the Fisher Tennis Centre, directly to the east of the Great Hall and between Parramatta Road to the north and University Avenue to the south.

### Existing Levels

The site slopes down from west to east, with a change in level from University Place to University Avenue of approx. 11.5m. Over the site width, this is equivalent to a gradient of more than 1:12.

There is a significant drop along the northern edge of the campus to Parramatta Road which reflects the excavation of the roadway in the 1870s.

To the south, levels are relatively flat across to Fisher Library and Eastern Avenue.

The pavement level outside the Great Hall is approximately 3.6m above the entry forecourt of the Museum.

### Landscape

Along the north side to Parramatta Road and the south side to University Avenue, stands of significant trees, mainly figs (Port Jackson Fig / *Ficus rubiginosa*), create dense screens that define views in and out of the Campus.

These trees vary in height, with most between 10 - 15m high, with several taller than 20m.

Large areas of open lawn and ivy groundcover surround the existing tennis courts.

### Key Views

Key vistas to and from the site are largely defined by the existing trees:

#### Parramatta Road

The site is not visible from Parramatta Road through the dense screen of trees along the northern Campus boundary.

It is not possible to see Parramatta Road from the site due to the trees and the difference in level.

#### Victoria Park

Views to and from Victoria Park are key historic vistas of the University.

#### The Great Hall & The Quadrangle

The site is directly opposite the Great Hall.

Views from the front steps of the Great Hall look across the site to the southern CBD skyline.

#### Eastern Avenue

There are oblique views to the northern end of Eastern Avenue, although the existing figs along University Avenue largely screen the site.



Existing Tennis Courts (Central court with one court to either side)



View from The Quadrangle



View from south east towards tennis courts



View from north east towards tennis courts

# 02 Urban Design & Built Form

## Landscape Character

### Landscape Site Assessment

The University of Sydney Grounds Conservation Management Plan (2016) identified a selection of trees (nine trees) to the north and south of the existing tennis courts as of exceptional significance and that the landscape character of the area is exceptional, though without reference to the tennis court facility as a built form.

As part of the site's evaluation as a potential location for the Chau Chak Wing Museum, the University engaged Craig Burton (CAB Consulting) to undertake a Landscape Site Assessment.

This assessment made the following recommendations:

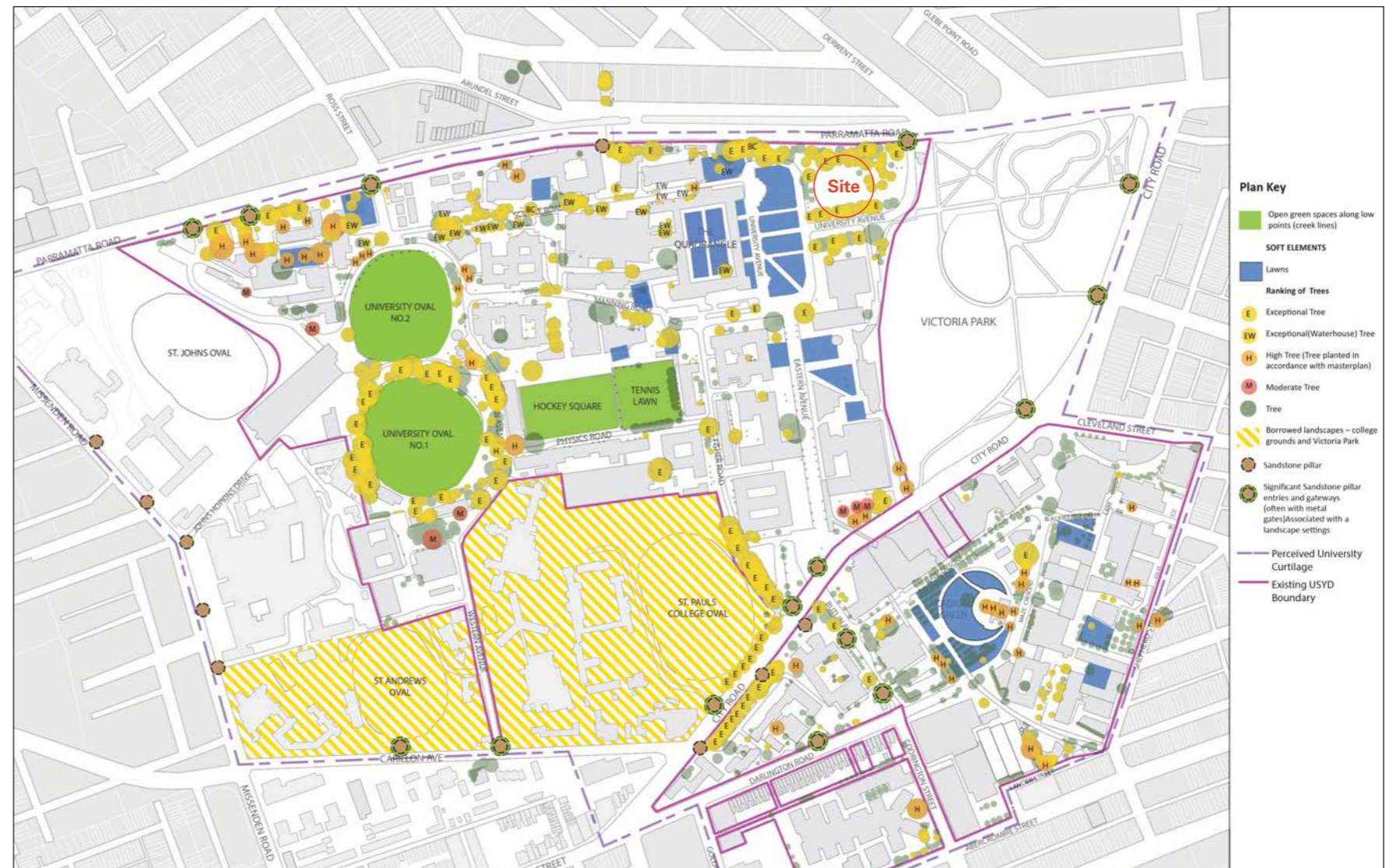
*Any built form development of the study area will need to respect the significance of the northern and southern tree plantations through conservation actions regarding tree form, root system and canopy.*

*Any development should not exceed the height and scale of the University Avenue plantation and be detailed so that its mass is broken by small scaled elements to reduce its potential visual conspicuousness.*

*Further planting or new planting to the east and west are also a consideration to ameliorate the impact of development, particularly against the University Place space and the visual aspects when viewed from downslope and from within Victoria Park.*

*It is recommended that the Lone Pine commemorative planting be relocated elsewhere within the University grounds.*

These recommendations have informed the design described by this report.



### Landscape Context - Grading of Significance

Cultural Soft Landscape  
Significant Trees and Types of Open Spaces & Landscapes  
University of Sydney, 2014

# 02 Urban Design & Built Form

## Site Suitability

Several previous masterplans for the Campus have considered the site suitable for a building:

### Walter Burley Griffin

Griffin's 1915 General Plan of the Campus proposed three buildings along the northern side of University Avenue and a major building terminating the axis from The Quadrangle in Victoria Park.

### George McCrae (Govt Architect)

Also in 1915, McCrae proposed a building on the eastern side of University Place, formally addressing the Great Hall.

### W H Maze (USyd Architect)

In the early 1960s, the University's own architect proposed a Development Plan with a L-shaped building forming a gateway with the Fisher Library (which was under construction at the time).

### Cox Architects

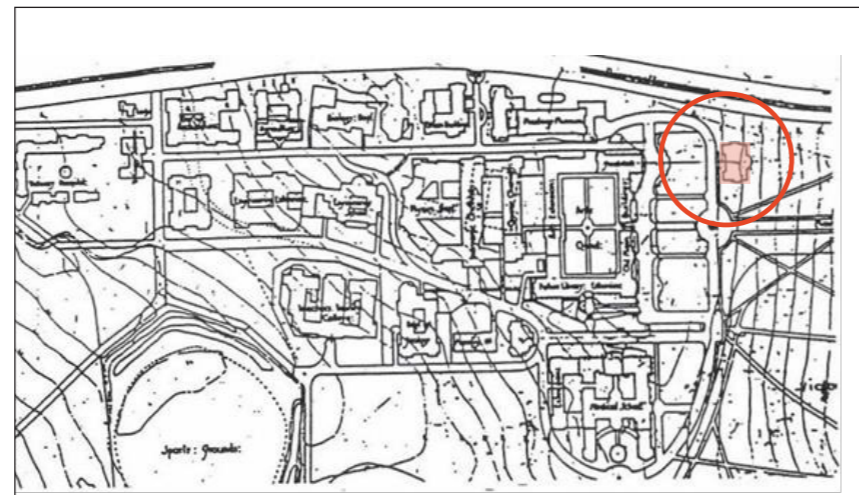
In 2008, Cox Architects were engaged by the University to develop a Campus masterplan for 2030.

This masterplan proposed a large 6 storey gallery building on the site, with a frontage connected to Parramatta Road.

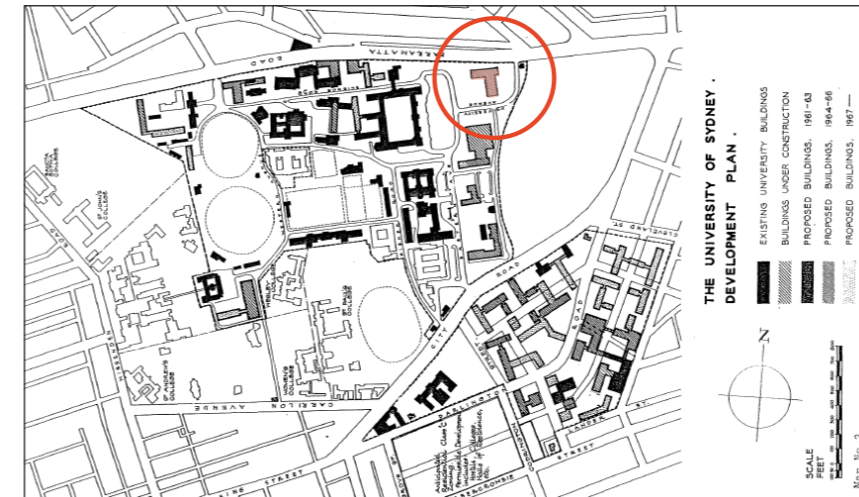
The footprint of this concept was significantly larger than the existing tennis courts.



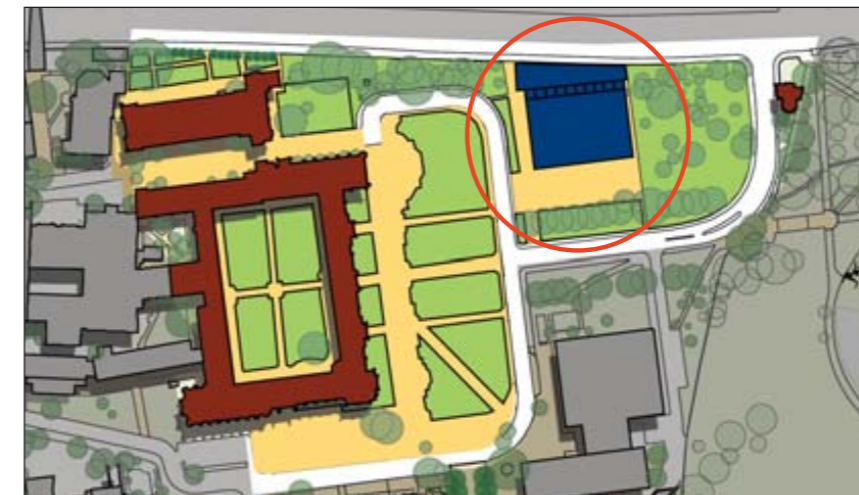
Walter Burley Griffin, Campus Plan, 1915



George McCrae (Government Architect), 1915



W H Maze (University of Sydney Architect), Development Plan, 1961



Cox Masterplan for 2030 (2008) - 6 storey Gallery

## Relationship to Other Campus Plans

### Campus Improvement Program

In February 2015, the Minister for Planning approved a range of building envelopes across the Campus as part of the Campus Improvement Program (CIP).

However, the tennis court site was not included in that approval, so is not subject to a building envelope described in the CIP.

### State Significant Development

The project is a State Significant Development as the Capital Investment Value (CIV) exceeds \$30M.