

St Aloysius' College State Significant Development Application

Architectural Design Statement

Executive Summary

St Aloysius' College is a Catholic independent day school for boys from Year 3 to Year 12, operated by the Society of Jesus and situated across three campuses on the Kirribilli peninsular

The Main campus, housing the Middle School is located on Upper Pitt Street and is opposite the Wyalla Senior School campus on nearby Jeffreys Street. The Junior School campus, housing Years 3 to 6, is situated on Burton Street.

In association with other specialist consultants, PMDL Architecture & Design was engaged by the College in 2016 to develop a Masterplan for redevelopment across the College's three campuses. The Masterplan identified that the teaching and learning environments of the campuses present the most pressing needs of the College, similarly the study acknowledged a range of other facility requirements that need to be addressed.

The proposals for the Main Campus are a sensitive response to the need to create flexible, contemporary learning spaces at the College, whilst reinforcing a sense of community and creating opportunities for study and recreation. The courtyard infill and rebuilt north eastern wing are grounded, architectural responses which respect immediate and surrounding neighbours and recognise the need to minimise visual impacts at this iconic site. Further internal refurbishments of the existing buildings will reinvigorate teaching and learning opportunities at the College.

A modest addition and minor internal works at Wyalla create more useable spaces which are appropriate to support learning for the senior students. The heritage building is respectfully treated, and its use as an educational facility is preserved, which has been its dominant use throughout its history.

The concept proposals at the Junior School campus provide much needed additional sports and recreation space, which by their semi subterranean siting are achieved with minimal physical impacts on the site and its surrounds. The additional floor space will provide additional opportunities for contemporary learning space for the College's youngest students.



Main Campus

The Site

The Upper Pitt St Main Campus is bounded by Upper Pitt St to the North, Jeffreys St to the West, Kirribilli Avenue to the South, and adjoins “Craiglea” residential properties to the East.

The site falls significantly North to South, with a height difference of approximately 15M between the respective boundaries.

The buildings on the site are constructed on the North, West and South boundaries, and rise between 3 and 6 storeys from the boundaries. The buildings were constructed in stages between the 1960's and early 1980's and comprise predominantly red brick facades with a grid of aluminium framed windows, some quartz rendered vertical features and contrasting dark brick details.

The buildings are horizontally divided into two halves - those parts above and below the Courtyard. Below the Courtyard on the South and West sides are the Great Hall, a former Gym, Drama and support facilities.

Above the Courtyard, the buildings flank the Chapel on the Southwestern corner, wrapping three sides of the site with various teaching and learning and administrative facilities.

The Courtyard itself is an uninviting, canyon like space with no views beyond the site. This is typical of the way in which the buildings outdoor spaces fail to celebrate their spectacular location & relationship to the harbour.

Needs and Opportunities

The Upper Pitt Street Main Campus was identified in the Masterplan as requiring the most significant work of all the College's Kirribilli sites.

The key issues at the main campus identified were:

- Under-utilised, undersized, outdated and problematic spaces, which constrain the opportunities for contemporary learning settings. Timetabling practices designed to limit movement of students (in response to poor circulation) have inadvertently led to low space occupancy levels.
- A lack of connections between teaching and learning spaces, being a reflection of traditional pedagogy. The format of the existing buildings provide very limited opportunities to create connected spaces or to develop the suite of learning settings required for accepted contemporary teaching and learning.
- A lack of ownership and identity of learning spaces has developed, due largely to the factors mentioned above. Over time this has lead to spaces which are generally bland and homogenous, giving the appearance of being uncared for.



- Circulation and connection through the site is restricted and problematic. This is particularly true between the upper and lower halves of the buildings, where purposeful circulation routes are non-existent. On each level, circulation relies on narrow internal corridors and interconnecting firestairs, with the obvious results in terms of the difficulty of movement throughout the buildings.



The building is divided at the courtyard, with limited connections

Opportunities exist to address these needs through three major initiatives.

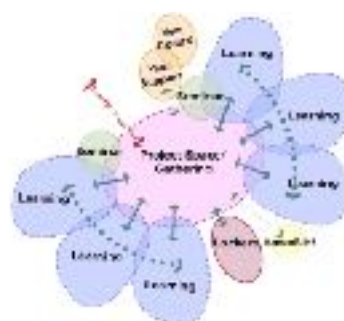
1. To create contiguous, large floor plates in which a range of learning settings & visual connections can be developed.
2. To create purposeful circulation through the site, both to reconnect the upper and lower halves and to allow for comfortable movement through the buildings.
3. To create opportunities to celebrate the College's location, and at the same time provide connections to and from the site, mitigating the inward looking, fortress like nature of the existing buildings.

Architectural Response

The proposed expansion and refurbishment of the existing Upper Pitt Street Main Campus will improve and increase opportunities for learning, accommodate cohorts around common areas, create more collaborative areas for staff, and improve connection and circulation within and through the levels.

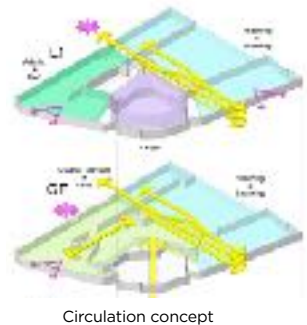
The concept is centred on three major elements:

- A teaching and learning precinct spanning the eastern Upper Pitt Street wing through to the South wing on Kirribilli Avenue. This includes infilling the existing quadrangle to provide 3 levels of suitable, broad footprint contemporary teaching and learning areas plus library, and a multipurpose space and rooftop terrace.



Conceptual diagram for year cohort space

- A 3 level circulation walkway running north-south through the site, from the new Upper Pitt Street main entry through to the Kirribilli Avenue frontage. The sheltered “street” provides a major circulation and dispersement solution that is generously proportioned, and will provide opportunities for passive recreation. Open stairways along the street will connect the four levels immediately above the current courtyard, including the existing Chapel.



Circulation concept

- An open, multipurpose auditorium space, ‘The Forum’, is planned to occupy the space which is currently the ‘Canisius Room’ and ‘Blue Gym’. The Forum space creates generous and welcoming internal lower level links from the “street” at the current quadrangle level, through to the Foyer of the Great Hall some three levels below. In addition the link provides connectivity to the Drama facilities and the Great Hall mezzanine level. A new lift will provide equitable access from the Foyer level through to the fourth level of the Juana Mateo roof terrace.

These three major strategies will resolve major circulation and connection issues, uniting the upper and lower halves of the site, and provide a large, optimal footprint which affords the College significant long term flexibility and adaptability within the Main Campus.

The Jeffreys Street/Upper Pitt Street fronting North wing, will be refurbished from the quadrangle level, accommodating covered student recreation areas, administration and staff, and specialist learning areas (Science, Art and TAS). Music remains on Levels 4 and 5. The Juana Mateo Room looking south to the harbour is seen as a key College community asset, and is therefore retained and, ultimately, upgraded.

The exterior architectural approach is formal and composed, it is contemporary and responds to the urban surroundings of the site. The goal is to create a strong identity for St Aloysius’ College Upper Pitt Street Campus that is grounded, elegant and timeless.



The Upper Pitt Street new building facade will take on the rhythm of the existing Upper Pitt Street facade. It is characterised by proportioned metal framed portals carved from the solidity of the complimentary brick facade. The design reveals the student life within the walls and provides passive ventilation to the teaching and learning spaces.



The Upper Pitt St elevation

Complimenting the grounded Upper Pitt Street facade, the eastern elevation will provide a lighter expression that opens the building to its surrounds whilst light screens provide visual privacy.



Eastern elevation



Activation of the rooftop as a recreational area provides a nett increase in open space on the site, and this open space will have significantly greater amenity than the existing courtyard. Extensive study has been undertaken to prepare appropriate landscape solutions, acoustic treatments and screening to preserve and enhance local amenity.

Interventions to the existing facades fronting Kirribilli Avenue and Jeffreys Street are proposed by creating portals that open up the College to the spectacular views, but also provide glimpses of the activities within.

When completed, the staged work at the Main Campus will reinvigorate the facilities as a place of contemporary teaching and learning.

Schedule of Areas - sqm

Site Area:	3835
Existing GFA:	10 591
New GFA:	1 862
Proposed GFA:	12 453
Existing Open Space:	2 109
New Open Space:	2 164
Proposed Open Space:	3 321



Wyalla

The Site

St Aloysius' College Senior School is located within the building located at 1-5 Jeffreys Street, Kirribilli. Listed as a local heritage item, Wyalla was built in 1889 as a place of residence. It was purchased and converted to the Senior School of St Aloysius' College in 1916. The campus has since grown to its current form consisting of three sections. The central section containing the surviving fabric of Wyalla, with brick additions to the north (Dalton Hall) and south of the original building.

Needs and Opportunities

The main learning spaces in Wyalla are considerably undersized and are unsuited to traditional teaching and learning for the older cohorts, let alone more contemporary approaches. The number of spaces can be reduced slightly in order to provide larger format spaces, complimented by breakout and study spaces.

The College is pursuing a pre-tertiary experience for its senior students, therefore this combination of spaces suits both explicit delivery and self directed learning and study.

Architectural Response

Central to the Wyalla concept is the creation of larger formatted general learning spaces to address the current shortfall in quality, appropriately sized learning spaces. A single storey addition to the eastern side of the heritage building fronting Robertson Lane, as well as internal refurbishment of existing teaching and learning spaces are much needed improvements for the senior school campus, which forms an important part of the senior boys' final passage through College life.

The addition is a simple structure featuring a glazed facade to the east and a simple skillion roof. The decorative eaves and corbelling of the original building is maintained.





Finally, once the Level 3 multipurpose space is created in the main campus, the Bellarmino theatrette can be repurposed into a lecture theatre to reflect a tertiary style of learning. In conjunction with the larger format learning spaces and smaller study spaces, the campus allows a true pre-tertiary transition to be pursued in the way that teaching and learning is designed for the senior boys.

These interventions allow Wyalla to continue to serve as an educational facility as it has done for the vast majority of its history.

Schedule of Areas - sqm

Site Area:	3 425
Existing GFA:	3 696
New GFA:	82
Proposed GFA:	3 778



Junior School

The Site

The current St Aloysius' College Junior school is located at 29 Burton Street, Kirribilli. Its immediate area is characterised by one and two storey residential developments, with some commercial development located to the west of the subject site. The southern side of Bligh Street includes several single-storey garage buildings built to their respective boundaries with Bligh Street, and the Kirribilli Community Centre.

The existing buildings on the site include the original Milsons Point Public School, which has heritage significance, and newer learning spaces constructed within the last 25 years.

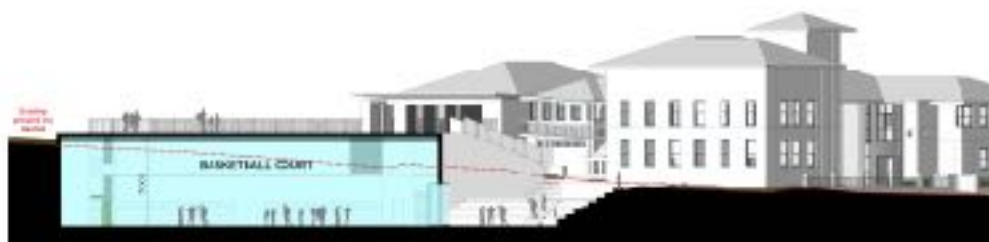
Needs and Opportunities

The 2016 Masterplan prepared by PMDL identified the need to reinstate the Great Hall at Upper Pitt Street - Main Campus, from a hall cum basketball court as the community and cultural hub for the College, which was its original purpose. The reinstatement thus created the need for a second sports court in the Kirribilli precinct to complement Dalton Hall situated on the Wyalla site. The Masterplan identified that the Burton Street Junior School Campus provides the most suitable location.

The existing buildings provide a minimal response to the space needs of the Junior School. Additional floor space would allow more diverse and appropriate learning spaces to be developed.

Architectural Response

The main volume of the sports facility will be located along the Crescent Place boundary, set into the ground such that the trafficable roof will align with the existing podium. The northern end of the proposal would address a new lowered courtyard approximately 3-5M below existing ground, which would be linked to the existing quadrant courtyard. The semi-subterranean siting of the facility minimises visual impacts and maintains and improves the open space available to the boys.



The Multipurpose Space sited substantially below ground level



An additional level of teaching and learning space is proposed to the top of the existing building fronting Humphrey place. The new level will meet the College's need to promote improved learning environments and offer students opportunities consistent with the collaborative, connected, contemporary learning practices across the three sites.

This addition is inset from the bounding walls of the existing building and replicates the existing roof forms. Appropriate curtilage is provided to the significant heritage item on the site, the former Milsons Point Primary School, and the form sits comfortably within the existing development on the site with minimal visual impacts.

Schedule of Areas - sqm

Site Area:	4 327
Existing GFA:	2 358
New GFA (Sports Hall):	1 107
New GFA (Level 2):	550
Proposed GFA:	4 015



Conclusion

The proposals for the developments at St Aloysius' College Kirribilli campuses represent an appropriate response to the teaching and learning needs of the College. The architectural responses to these needs are measured and recognise the context of this location.

The interventions at the Upper Pitt St campus in particular will significantly improve the visual amenity of the site, and have been designed so as to minimise any potentially adverse impacts.

We believe that the proposals are worthy of support.

Andrew Pender
Practice Director

February, 2018.