

4. CONNECT CITY ROAD TO THE ARTS CENTRE AND YARRA RIVER

At St Kilda Road, City Road is lowered below grade, re-emerging eastbound from the underpass as Alexandra Avenue.

This underpass creates an inhospitable and unsafe environment bounded by traffic guard rails, concrete structural supports and theatre back-of-house loading areas.

Coupled with fast-moving heavy traffic, this is a difficult area for pedestrians to navigate and underwhelming and disorientating for visitors to the globally renowned arts precinct.

The following pages present several design concepts for significant upgrades to pedestrian access around City Road at St Kilda Road.

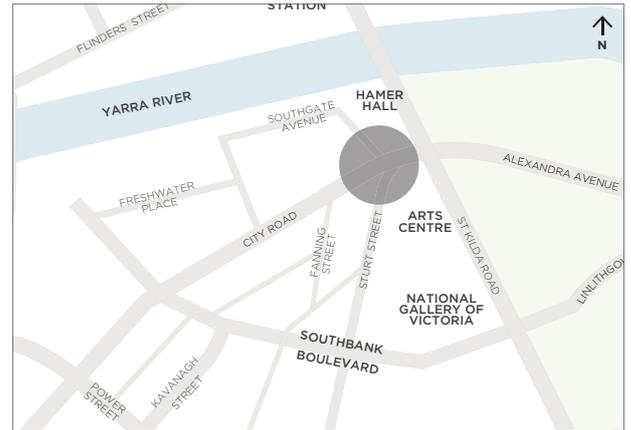


Figure 3.38: Location of the Arts Centre interface with City Road



-  Study Area
-  **A** Connecting the Yarra River to St Kilda Road
-  **B** Connecting Southbank to the Arts Centre
-  Improved pedestrian connections

0 50m 100m

Figure 3.39: Arts Centre/St Kilda Road Study Area showing potential pedestrian connection improvements

Arts Precinct

Above City Road, the Arts Centre's St Kilda Road frontage benefits from a prominent address and high quality pedestrian environment. Arts Victoria's 'Arts Precinct Blueprint' sets a vision to expand the arts throughout Southbank to create one of the world's leading arts and cultural districts.

The interface between City Road and St Kilda Road provides a significant opportunity for the integration of the Arts Centre, the Yarra River and the expansion of the arts precinct into Southbank.

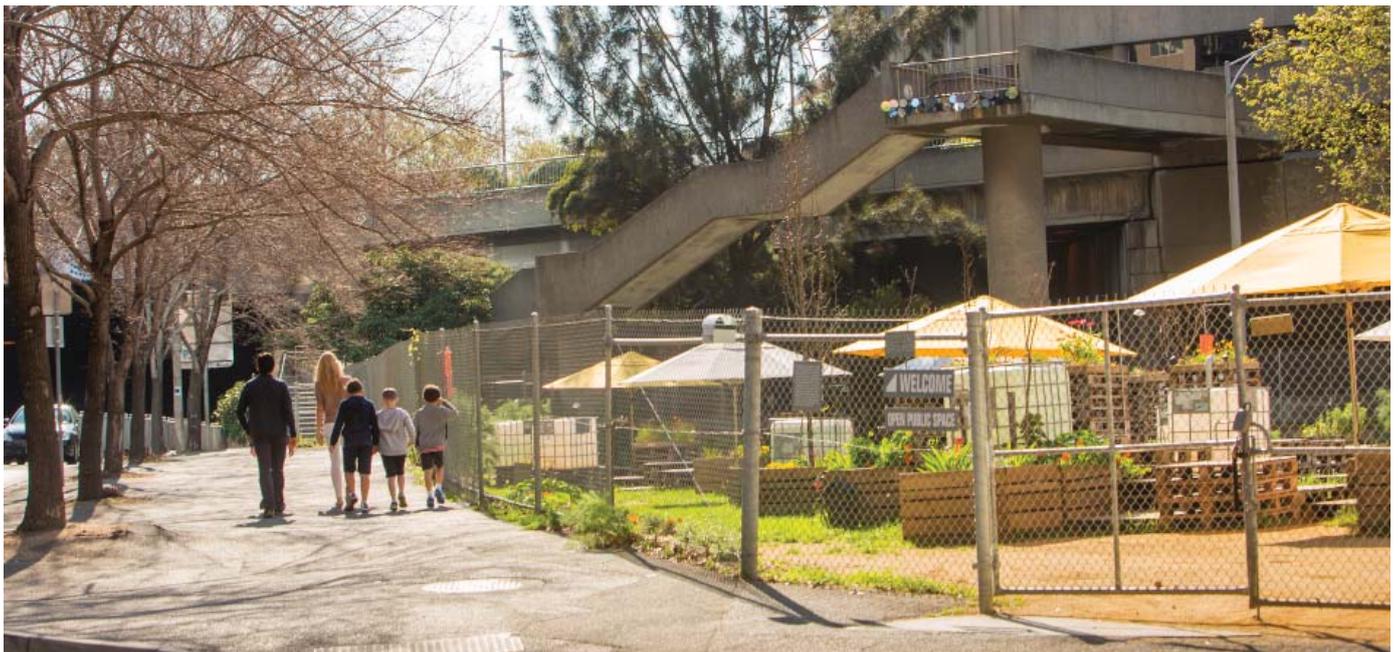
Reconnecting City Road with the city

This project acknowledges and highlights the strategic importance of reconnecting City Road with the Hoddle Grid by integrating the arts precinct within Southbank. It proposes ways to transform the existing disconnected and poor quality pedestrian environment into a connected, inviting and engaging place for people.

This project aims to:

- Create a safe pedestrian environment that is easy for everyone to get around.
- Create an inviting, public 'back door' from City Road interface to the Arts Centre.
- Replace or upgrade inadequate and outdated infrastructure.
- Create direct pedestrian links between the Arts Centre, the Yarra River and Southbank.
- Provide an improved pedestrian connection over City Road.
- Deliver a flexible concept which does not limit future expansion and growth of the precinct.

The design concepts on the following pages illustrate ways this area could be reconnected to serve both the local community and deliver on the broader Arts Precinct vision.



City Road at the corner of Fanning Street, looking east towards Testing Grounds and the existing stairs up to St Kilda Road

Connecting Southbank to the Arts Centre

Figure 3.42 presents a design concept for improving pedestrian connections between St Kilda Road and the Arts Centre lawn to the Yarra River. This design concept includes the upgrade of Southgate Avenue (Figure 3.47 p.79) by minimising parking and through-traffic while enabling better pedestrian and cycling links.

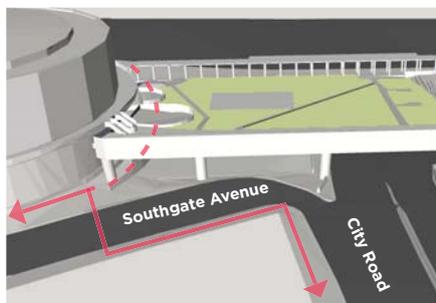


Figure 3.40: Existing pedestrian and cycling connections are poor quality, indirect and difficult to find



Figure 3.41: Proposed connections that improve accessibility between the Arts Precinct, the Hoddle grid and Southbank

“Better links are required between St Kilda Road and City Road - It’s an ugly wasteland under Hamer Hall”

Matt, visitor

Footpaths widened and resurfaced to improve pedestrian access and safety

Arts Centre posters to create visual interest



After

Figure 3.42: Artist’s impression of potential public realm upgrades looking east to the Arts Centre

Street is dominated by car parking

Blank walls create an inactive & uninteresting street frontage

Obscured ramp and stairs are difficult for pedestrians to see (cyclists must dismount)



Before

Figure 3.43: Existing view of Southgate Avenue looking east to the Arts Centre

Narrow, poor quality footpaths are difficult for pedestrians to walk along

Under utilised undercroft space creates unpleasant street frontage

Clear pedestrian and cycle ramp to St Kilda Road

Potential for Arts Centre activation (for example, a ticket box office)



Stairs to provide direct pedestrian link over City Road to Sturt Street

Connecting Southbank to the Arts Centre

Blank walls create inactive and uninteresting street frontage

Tree canopy growth is compromised by lack of space

Poor access to St Kilda Road - difficult to find



Before

Figure 3.44: Existing view of Southgate Avenue looking south to the Arts Centre

Narrow footpaths with obstructions are difficult for pedestrians to navigate

Poor cycle connection to St Kilda Road

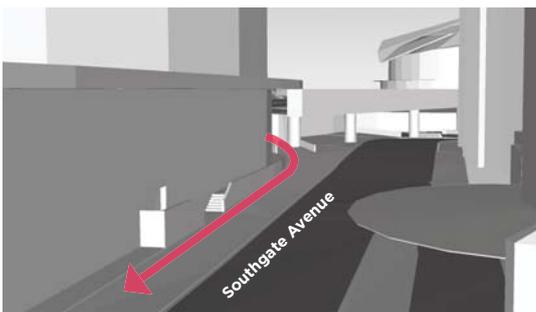


Figure 3.45: Existing connections between the riverfront and St Kilda Road

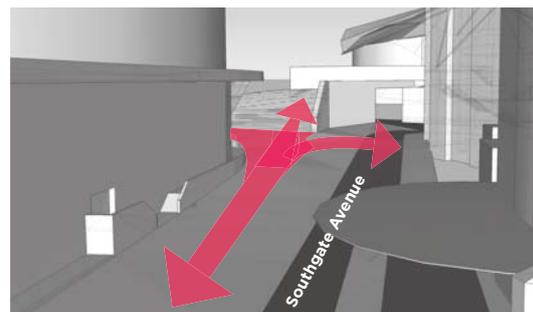


Figure 3.46: Proposed connections between the riverfront and St Kilda Road

Cycle access to St Kilda Road
via ramp (obscured)

Direct access to St Kilda Road and
across City Road to Sturt Street



After

Figure 3.47: Artist's impression of potential upgrades to Southgate Avenue looking south to the Arts Centre

Arts Centre posters to create visual interest

Street trees relocated

Footpaths widened and resurfaced to improve access and safety

“An attractive pedestrian link would help to remove the feeling that City Road splits Southbank in two”

Nathan, resident

Connecting Southbank to the Arts Centre

Figure 3.50 presents a design concept for creating an inviting entrance from City Road to the Arts Centre. A staircase and elevator would provide direct pedestrian connections between City Road and the Arts Centre and would help to integrate Southbank as part of the arts precinct.

“This really should be the gateway for pedestrians from Melbourne to the whole Southbank area. Flowing the garden down to the road would be a game changer.”
Steve, resident

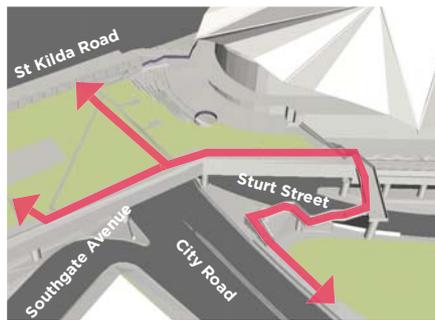


Figure 3.48: Existing pedestrian and cycling connections are poor, indirect and difficult to find

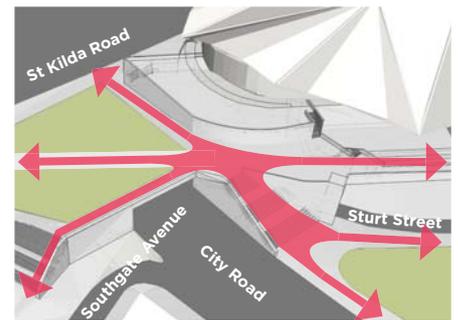


Figure 3.49: Potential connections will activate frontages around City Road and provide direct access to the arts precinct

Activation of frontage and direct pedestrian connection to St Kilda Road create a welcoming environment



After

Figure 3.50: Artist's impression of possible upgrades to connect City Road to the Arts Centre

Staircase provides circuitous connection to St Kilda Road (not DDA compliant)

Temporary arts space 'Testing Grounds' provides opportunity for an improved City Road interface



Before

Figure 3.51: Existing view of City Road underpass looking east towards Alexandra Avenue

Poor visual connection to St Kilda Road from City Road creates a disorienting pedestrian environment

Elevator incorporated in structure



Staircase provides direct connection to St Kilda Road

Potential for permanent open space to interface directly with City Road