A LEADING UNIVERSITY

The University of Melbourne (UoM) is a leading international university with a tradition of excellence in teaching and research. It remains at the forefront of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

Located near the northern edge of the Melbourne city centre, the Parkville campus is recognised as the hub of Australia’s premier knowledge precinct, comprising eight major hospitals, many leading research institutes and a wide range of knowledge-based industries.

To maintain its position as one of the top 50 universities in the world, UoM is embracing a period of major change to plan and design the campus of the future; it will need to meet the changing expectations and needs of students and staff, engage with its peers and alumni, fellow researches, industry partners and the broader community, and evolve with the major transport and infrastructural changes associated with the future Melbourne Metro Rail project.

A NEW STUDENT PRECINCT VISION

Historically, the Student Precinct has been embedded at the centre of the Parkville campus, defined by the Union House hub which is reaching the end of its practical life. UoM has recognised the opportunity to create a vibrant new Student Precinct at the corner site of Grattan and Swanston Streets, which will integrate a network of new student focused and student led facilities for the Parkville Campus.

The precinct will be used for activities delivered primarily, although not exclusively, through UoM’s Academic Services division (already located at Shop 1, 757 Swanston St, UoM Student Union (UMSU), and the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Most importantly, it will foster the needs and aspirations of the individual student.

UOM STUDENT PRECINCT URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK (UDF)

The purpose of this Urban Design Framework is to provide a high-level conceptual framework that would form the basis for further programmatic investigation and analyses on the various student precinct buildings and open spaces. The UDF will make an important contribution to understanding the precinct and should be seen as an adaptable proposal in the context of a greater campus master plan and vision.

The UDF is undertaken within the UoM OC21 framework – ‘Our Campus in the 21st century: A framework for change’. This framework is the University’s planning and communication tool that supports partnerships, projects and initiatives to evolve and excel. The UDF outcomes will be used to inform the future planning and design requirements for the precinct.

URBAN DESIGN THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

The Student Precinct UDF develops on key urban design themes in alignment with the five major themes of the OC21 Prism - Technology & Tradition; Synergy & Innovation; Quality Experience; A Culture of Inclusion; and Spaces & Places. The key urban design themes for this UDF are:

AMENITY
ACCESSIBILITY
INTERFACES
BUILT FORM & HERITAGE
LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT
LAND USE & FUNCTION

STUDENT PRECINCT OVERVIEW

An overview of Stage 01 Existing Conditions & Capacity is provided at the beginning of this document. It highlights the key challenges and opportunities identified at this stage in order to transition into the Stage 02 UDF proposal.

STAGE 02 - URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

In view of constructing a high level conceptual framework and investigating opportunities for the precinct, the UDF develops five significant initiatives to realise the objectives of the key urban design themes. These opportunities are explored in further detail and include the following actions:

INITIATIVE 01: UNIFYING THE GROUND PLANE
INITIATIVE 02: ACTIVATING EDGES & BOUNDARIES
INITIATIVE 03: A NEW STUDENT PRECINCT IDENTITY
INITIATIVE 04: A GREEN PRECINCT
INITIATIVE 05: CREATING A STUDENT VILLAGE

With the support of the consultant team, the proposed interventions have involved ongoing collaboration and advice from specialist disciplines including heritage, structural, geotechnical, accessibility (DDA), traffic & transport, wind assessment, and building code/regulatory advice.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

This Urban Design Framework provides a starting point for the future decision making and development of the Student Precinct. The successful implementation of the vision will require the coordination and commitment of all stakeholders.

Following the completion and general acceptance of the UDF, the next steps would include detailed feasibility studies and concept designs for the following proposals:

Built form (UoM):
- New Arts and Cultural Building
- New Swanston St Building
- New Atrium Link
- ERC Refurbishment, Rooftop Addition and Entry Canopy
- Doug Mcdonell Refurbishment
- Alice Hoy Refurbishment
- Frank Tate Refurbishment
- 1888 Refurbishment
- John Smyth Refurbishment
- 757 Open Stage Facade Treatment

Landscape (UoM):
- Gate B entry - New ‘Welcome Mat’ & landscape treatment
- 1888 South Lawn Walkway - New landscape treatment
- 1888 North-West Courtyard
- 1888 North-East Courtyard
- Alice Hoy Courtyard
- John Smyth Forecourt
- Frank Tate Archipelago

With the support of the consultant team, the proposed interventions have involved ongoing collaboration and advice from specialist disciplines including heritage, structural, geotechnical, accessibility (DDA), traffic & transport, wind assessment, and building code/regulatory advice.
Historically, the UoM Student Precinct has been embedded at the centre of the Parkville campus at Union House. This significant institution has accommodated UMSU and provided a social, cultural and learning hub and political voice for generations of students since the mid 20th century.

Union House is reaching the end of its practical life. Its embedded location has also created a somewhat inward focus for the university, denying it proximity to transport links and engagement with the community and city beyond campus.

UoM has recognised an important opportunity to relocate the Student Precinct to the corner of Grattan & Swanston Streets. This geographical shift will re-focus UoM’s centre of gravity to the campus edge, creating a new gateway between the university and city for UMSU, SSA and student led facilities, and an enhanced public interface. By establishing the social, cultural and intellectual student heart on the doorstep of UoM, the new Student Precinct will align with other major institutions along the Swanston St spine, and strengthen connections with the UoM Southbank Campus (Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music).

The new Student Precinct is located within the City North Urban Renewal Area (City of Melbourne) and affords an important relationship with Grattan St which will see significant future changes including the proposed Metro Rail link and Parkville station entries. It will also enable new kinds of cross-fertilisation & collaboration with Carlton Connect Initiative on Swanston St, allowing dynamic exchange between UoM and both its local and global research and industry partners.
The precinct external frontage is defined by a number of entry points and thoroughfares, and a variety of built form and open spaces with key constraints as follows:

1. Vehicular driveway at key entry point results in limited pedestrian amenity and experience
2. Non-compliant walkway and access to 1888 (DDA)
3. ERC south garden lacks wayfinding and landscape definition; Underutilised open space
4. Building 138 and ERC result in limited precinct access and permeability from precinct west edge
5. Monash Rd & Porters Lane corner - Poor building presentation and interface at Alice Hoy west end
6. Poor visibility and limited access (DDA) into Alice Hoy
7. Monash Rd defined as vehicular thoroughfare with narrow footpaths results in poor pedestrian amenity
8. Building 757 and John Smyth inactive interfaces result in poor connection with Swanston St
9. Gate 6 service vehicle and pedestrian conflicts; Poor landscape definition and pedestrian amenity
The precinct internal landscape is characterised by a multi-level ground plane and circulatory network as well as a number of open spaces with key constraints as follows:

10. ERC split-level entry and ramp results in poor external interface; Perimeter brick wall lacks permeability and restricts ground plane activation
11. Large planting bed limits access and usability of 1888 north courtyard
12. Legibility of 1888 heritage north facade and internal amenity compromised by Lot 6
13. Multi-level ground plane and steps limit landscape accessibility
14. Multi-level interface results in poor building accessibility
15. High retaining wall (ramp) and inactive building interface results in poor open space with limited solar access
16. Limited connection and activation between Alice Hoy ground plane and courtyard
17. Frank Tate heritage facade obscured by raised plaza
18. Raised plaza and water feature create barriers that disconnect the ground plane and limit open space usability
The Student Precinct is bound by the major thoroughfares of Grattan St, Swanston St and Monash Rd, and the Porters Lane west edge which provides a pedestrian route through campus. Grattan and Swanston Streets will see a significant change in pedestrian movement dynamics over the next decade. The campus is changing; how will the Student Precinct account for these changes in movement and connectivity?

**GRATTAN STREET**
Grattan St is a major vehicular thoroughfare that divides north and south campus, with limited pedestrian amenity. Currently significant traffic volumes and parking is accommodated along the street, making it less attractive as a public space. There is a tremendous opportunity to re-imagine Grattan St as an enhanced pedestrian thoroughfare that connects the entire Parkville campus; Future projects such as the lowering of the street from 4 to 2 lanes, and the MM station will help realise this vision. An opportunity exists for public space upgrades along the Student Precinct edge, in conjunction with MCC.

**SWANSTON STREET**
Swanston St provides a key transport link between the UoM Parkville and Southbank Campuses, with the CBD and other institutions between. Challenges include difficulty in crossing the street due to the tram superstop configuration; campus gates do not align with crossings; pedestrian amenity is low; and access into the precinct is poorly defined and narrow. Integrating the precinct with MCC’s long term vision for a major pedestrian, cyclist and tram route is a significant opportunity. With tram patronage anticipated to reduce once the MM rail is complete, this may have implications for reconsidering the tram superstop to enable enhanced on-street pedestrian amenity and movement, in conjunction with MCC. Connecting more directly with Carlton Connect is an opportunity, which has an important relationship with the Student Precinct.

**MONASH ROAD**
Monash Rd is defined as a vehicular route into campus along the precinct north edge, that leads to South Lawn and central campus. It has narrow footpaths and poor pedestrian amenity. Reconfiguring Monash Rd into a pedestrianised shared zone would greatly enhance the pedestrian experience into campus and the Student Precinct north interface.

**PORTERS LANE**
The precinct west edge is poorly defined with limited access. Improving the interface with adjacent buildings and strengthening connections to South Lawn and central campus will be vital for the legibility and permeability of the precinct.
The existing Student Precinct is characterised by a multi-level ground plane and circulatory network that contains significant barriers including a raised plaza, multiple steps and split level building entrances that make precinct access and mobility difficult.

There is a significant grade change across the site of 6m; This creates awkward building interface issues and the need for steps and ramps. The Raised Plaza exacerbates the grade change by artificially raising the levels even higher, requiring significant steps and ramping. The original ground line represents a more favorable condition for access, as gradients are much less steep.

There is a significant opportunity to explore how the Raised Plaza can be reconfigured to provide better access through the site and usability of open space. Grade changes can be exciting and dramatic and allow for interesting landscape experiences. Grade changes also allow access to buildings at different levels, which can assist in activating buildings.
SOLAR ACCESS

The existing precinct landscape is defined by a combination of larger open spaces and smaller forecourts and courtyards which vary in their access to sunlight. The level of sunlight entering these spaces can have a significant effect in enhancing or diminishing the quality and useability of these spaces. The renewed precinct will need to carefully address these issues in regards to existing and new built form, and open space opportunities.

CHALLENGES

- How to provide external spaces throughout the precinct that have access to sunlight across the day and year
- There are currently many buildings within the precinct which cast shadows and limit solar access at different times of the day and year
- The precinct is generally south facing, away from the northern light, with taller buildings creating overshadowing

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide a range of external spaces that have solar access throughout the day and year
- Ensure there are always some external spaces that are in sun across the day and year
- Provide warm and comfortable micro-climates throughout the precinct
- 1888 south lawn generally has sunlight throughout the year, but is currently underutilized; An opportunity exists to improve amenity and provide a greater diversity of seating opportunities
- New built form (development envelopes) should be arranged and manipulated to minimize overshadowing
- Solar access will play an important role in the renewed precinct landscape and help inform the programming of open space

Note: These sun-shade diagrams exclude the shade cast by existing trees