Design philosophy, approach and site analysis

Overall design approach

The Kingston Arts Precinct (KAP) should be a special place. Its unique character will arise from its purpose as a mixed-use environment centred on artsACT facilities.

KAP’s physical presence will celebrate both the Precinct’s history and future. We believe KAP should be unique and distinct, rather than an extension of the existing Foreshore environment.

This Design Response illustrates the potential conceptual and physical form of the KAP. It has been shaped by the spatial needs of the artsACT facilities and a public realm that is both the connective tissue and generator for the life of the Precinct.

In laying out this vision we have thought deeply about the nature of the public realm and the best ways to enhance the presence of the heritage buildings. In doing so we considered how the buildings related to each other in the past and how this could inform the the Precinct’s future.

Why the Precinct is different

The KAP site has different characteristics from the rest of Kingston Foreshore. When combined with the Precinct’s unique arts uses, this will result in a distinctive physical environment.
It is not orthogonal
Whereas allotments east and south of the Precinct are orthogonal, the Precinct is defined by the curved alignment of Wentworth Avenue, the curved alignment of Eastlake Parade and orthogonal boundaries only in the southern part of the site.

In the north-east, the site faces onto the rear of a long length of sizeable apartment buildings. The eastern side the site faces onto the rear of the Kingston Foreshore, a frontage which accommodates access and service areas.

We think it’s clear that the Precinct needs an internal focus as well as an outward-facing condition.

And existing buildings reflect that
Roads within the Precinct follow the railway alignment, as did the many buildings that were located in this industrial area. This alignment can be seen in the remnant buildings of the power station, fitters’ workshop and bus depot.

It has a different orientation
The generating axes of Kingston Foreshore east and south of the Precinct are parallel to Wentworth Avenue. But the generating axis for the Precinct buildings follow the alignment of the historic railway line that used to service the power station. This alternative generating axis creates a different physical condition from the adjoining sites.
Design philosophy, approach and site analysis

An opportunity for uniqueness
In the surrounding Kingston Foreshore area, the orthogonal grid of wide roads and the uniformity of allotments and building scales mean there is a sameness across the entire place. The public realm seems to divide rather than unite spaces.

This context provides the opportunity to create a striking arts-focused place that emerges like an oasis from its surrounds: a place of exploration, discovery and delight.

Viewed from without, it can be a mixed-use place that harmonises with its environment, while within it becomes a distinct and beguiling arts Precinct. It can be a place which contrasts open spaces with intimate dwell spots and integrates public with private. A place where the old is celebrated, and which is enriched and rehabilitated by the presence of new forms, interfaces and activities.

The Arts Hub
Central to KAP will be the Arts Hub, nested within the greater public canvas. This hub is a series of interlinked buildings and spaces, creating public and private, light and shade, shared and secure spaces for 10 independent arts organisations.

The public canvas is the connective tissue between those arts spaces. It is a place that is open and inviting to all, creating a sense of populace. The public canvas is designed to harmonise with the spaces it serves and to provide flexibility and permeability.

A highly linked environment
Connecting the open public spaces within to the external environment beyond are a series of public connections: some pedestrian only, others shared spaces. These would provide public circulation and promenading, service access, short cuts and alternative routes. These linkages form a journey from the outside world to the stimulating inner world of the Precinct.
Resultant form

The public canvas will be faced by the buildings of the Arts Hub, oriented along the axis of the historic railway line, centred on the power station and fitters’ workshop, and connected to the bordering Kingston Foreshore through linkages.

The resultant conceptual massing is illustrated in the Master Plan.

The historic buildings of the power house, fitters’ workshop and former transport depot become emblematic within the urban canvas. The bounding new buildings reinforce the external street alignments and create linkages, providing excellent permeability and framing views of heritage buildings and the public canvas.
Artist impression
Artist impression
View corridors and heritage experience

The Precinct is experienced through a sequence of views that offer glimpses of the character of this inner world.

Rather than create one axial view, we formed many local views, to invite the observer in. The visitor is engaged in a journey of discovery which reveals the fabric of KAP.

View corridors from Eastlake Parade are established through a series of laneways, each providing a different composition in which new buildings layer and reveal the old. As one approaches, more is revealed of the buildings, culminating in a full view.

Gaps in new built form along Wentworth Avenue are positioned to reveal the profile of the power station roof. The activity of the arts facilities forms an enticing foreground. This gradual and beguiling uncovering contradicts the approach taken in the Section 49 Master Plan, which presents the entire form of the heritage elements to Wentworth Avenue. But we believe that locating the new buildings here respects and strengthens the site’s heritage characteristics. The power station has not historically had a direct address to Wentworth Avenue or its precedent, Interlake Avenue. Instead, it is a part of a wider cluster of active and varied built form. This embeddedness is emphasised through the layered views of the power station.

In contrast to these layered views from outside, from within the Precinct the heritage built form can be viewed from all angles, surrounded by the landscape of the public canvas.
16

View-corridor vignettes

When travelling to the foreshore along Wentworth it's great to see an active precinct rather than just empty space.

I agree. I like the way that the buildings follow the curves of the roads and link to the old bus depot market buildings.

Does it matter that we can't see the glassworks building from here like we used to be able to?

No, because you can't and don't want to be able to see everything from everywhere. The building reveals itself to us in just a few seconds in any case.

Is this one of the connections from the foreshore into the centre of the arts precinct?

Is that the fitters workshop in the distance? Let's walk down and have a look!

Yes, let's do that. I can see the Arts Hub building there as well, perhaps we should look in there on the way?

I agree. It is a very enjoyable procession with a clear destination.

This is a very interesting connection. It leads from Trevillian Quay Road into the precinct. It goes straight to the fitters workshop.

I was doing some research - back when the glassworks was a power station there used to be buildings between it and Wentworth Avenue.

That's right. The way the buildings are placed is a reference to the layout of buildings which used to be here.

The Arts Precinct guide says "the Wentworth Avenue buildings peel back to show the unmistakable double gable roof silhouette of the glassworks behind".

We can see it as we approach and to get there we walk through the Arts Hub building. Nice!

The arts precinct guide says "the Wentworth Avenue buildings peel back to show the unmistakable double gable roof silhouette of the glassworks behind".

We can see it as we approach. And to get there we walk through the Arts Hub building. Nice!
This is what is called the "public canvas". Why do they call it that?

How so?

Canberra's great climate must certainly encourage that! There are so many days of blue sky and sunshine!

It is the external events space at the heart of the arts precinct. It is called the public canvas because it is occupied by the public who can become part of arts events.

The arts hub building wraps around and opens up to this space. Activities can expand out of the surrounding gallery and working spaces into the canvas.

This is another of the lane-way connections from Eastlake Parade into the Centre of the Precinct.

That's right. Like all of those connections it is focussed on either the glassworks or the fitters workshop buildings.

I see that as with the other connections the narrowings of the lane way works to focus the attention on the heritage building.

And as with the other connections, we walk through the arts hub building to arrive at the heritage building. I'm enjoying the "layering" of the different buildings.

The way the arts hub building surrounds the glassworks and fitters workshop buildings seems to amplify their presence.

I agree. It is because those buildings are now "framed" by the new buildings, thereby bolstering their perceptual importance.

I like the way I can still see the lake and the rest of the foreshore through the connections.

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**Safe and effective design**

**Vehicular access**
The Precinct has major addresses to Wentworth Avenue and Eastlake Parade. The proposed scheme connects these existing roads to the central large open space via a number of lanes – some pedestrian only and some shared.

**Pedestrian connections**
The porous built form at ground level encourages organic pedestrian movement through the Precinct. Active frontages – commercial space, retail hotspots, residential lobbies and the Arts Hub – increase this permeability, allowing controlled movement and glimpses of internal spaces.

**Car parking**
Car parking for the residential and non-residential uses of the Precinct is accommodated in basement levels. Public parking for 500+ cars is provided in an above-ground car park.

For weekends, 300 additional publicly available car spaces are accommodated within the non-residential buildings’ car parking, as these will be underutilised on weekends.
Loading and service

The operation of the Arts Hub, as well as the residential and commercial uses, requires a well-considered loading and service approach. The strategy described in this scheme accommodates residential and commercial refuse and service rooms in basement levels, reducing the impact and interruption of collection. Precinct-wide services can be located centrally, fronting Eastlake Parade for access by the various authorities.

The Arts Hub includes four controllable loading spaces – one secure and enclosed serving all organisations, two within lanes which can be easily secured during deliveries, and one specifically serving the Canberra Glassworks. Shared storage spaces and shared refuse rooms are positioned around the perimeter of the Arts Hub, collection and delivery access provided by the adjacent lane.

Staging

The proposed scheme allows a flexible approach to construction staging. The publicly accessible car parking constitutes the first stage; beyond that there are a number of options for the delivery of the Precinct.

See also section D of this document.

Ownership

Ownership of the Arts Hub and the publicly accessible car park is under a Crown lease to the LDA.
Plans, elevations, sections and perspective drawings

Basement 2

01 Residential car park
02 Non-residential car park
Basement 1

01 Residential car park
02 Non-residential car park
03 Refuse
Ground Level

01 Power station
02 Fitters workshop
03 Arts Hub tenancies
04 Arts Hub shared loading + store
05 Arts Hub public toilets
06 Arts Hub common space
07 Arts Hub cafe
08 John Fowler locomotive
09 Old Bus Depot Markets
10 Mixed use/possible
   LDA activated space
11 Canberra Institute of Technology
12 Residential lobby
13 Commercial/serviced apt lobby
14 Retail
15 Cycle store
16 Precinct services location
17 Public car parking access
18 Arts Hub car park
19 Brodburger Restaurant
Level 1

01 Power station
02 Fitters workshop
03 Arts Hub tenancies
04 Arts Hub shared meeting rooms
05 Arts Hub common space/kitchenettes
06 Arts Hub artist accommodation
07 Canberra Institute of Technology
08 Residential
09 Commercial/serviced apartment
10 Public car parking
01 Arts Hub shared meeting rooms
02 Arts Hub artist accommodation
03 Canberra Institute of Technology
04 Residential
05 Commercial/serviced apartment
06 Public car parking
07 M16 premium studio space
Level 3

01 Canberra Institute of Technology
02 Residential
03 Commercial/serviced apartment
04 Public car parking
Level 4

01 Residential
Plans, elevations, sections and perspective drawings
Plans, elevations, sections and perspective drawings
Section 4
Plans, elevations, sections and perspective drawings

Section 5
Architectural design

Wentworth
Architectural design

Eastlake North
Eastlake South
Architectural design

Arts Hub
Design statement

The Functional Brief prepared by Philip Leeson Architects emphasises the need for an Arts Hub where the 10 organisations can remain independent, each with their own strong identity.

At the same time, the co-location will allow the organisations to benefit from shared services and cross-organisational learning. The cluster will also create a presence that sculpts and enlivens the public realm and brings an identity to the whole Precinct.

The principles that guided the design of the Arts Hub are focused on the activities and needs of the arts organisations.

**Adaptability**
The Arts Hub requires flexibility. It should be able to respond to the refinements that occur throughout the design process, in collaboration with the arts organisations, without changing the essential identity. This adaptability is also important to accommodate change over the long life of the Arts Hub – an extension, adjustment or addition should be possible while maintaining the distinct character of the built form.

**Specificity**
The Arts Hub is designed to accommodate a calendar of events, learning and production as well as the rich palette of daily activities. These specific uses and activities should shape the built form, rather than the other way around.

**Independence**
Each organisation has its own identity, members, social network, calendar and ambitions. Each organisation therefore should also have its own address, signage and ability to function independently.

**Integration**
The Arts Hub and the KAP is more than the sum of its independent parts and should have a shared identity, through the sharing of some spaces and services and through architectural form.

**Linking**
Opportunities for informal connections should be woven through the design. Semi-private indoor and outdoor spaces will enable unplanned interactions between the staff, visitors and students of different organisations.
Artist impression
Architectural design

Form
The Arts Hub will appear as a whole composed of distinct elements. Each element responds to particular requirements for ceiling heights, level of privacy, visual permeability, daylight and ventilation. Shared facilities – kitchenettes, staff toilets, some vertical circulation – are contained in glazed links that connect arts organisations into clustered pairs. There is the opportunity to make these connections partially public. Allowing access through opening hours and increasing pedestrian permeability would enable chance encounters and the daily activity of the arts organisations to spill out into public space.
Materiality
Different parts of the building take on different identities through the use of materials. Something of the inside can be communicated to the outside. A palette of natural materials that weather well over time are proposed – predominantly Corten steel, concrete and glazing. These wind their way around, up and over the building, in a fragmented but continuous thread.
Public realm

Public realm Master Plan

The KAP public realm Master Plan celebrates the site’s history and context, honouring the presence of the heritage buildings. It also harmonises with the surrounding open space network, particularly Kingston Foreshore to Lake Burley Griffin and Telopea Park to Manuka.

A new central square will provide a restful green space adjacent to the fitters’ workshop and the old bus depot and accommodate events, festivals and outdoor markets. Activated streetscapes, laneways and pocket parks will be the glue that binds the heritage buildings and the new architecture.

Public realm key principles

- Connectivity of movement and open space networks
- Walkability and permeability
- Flexibility and opportunity for a wide variety of events and recreational activities
- Creating a public and creative Precinct “heart”

Public realm key considerations

- Providing a well-connected series of spaces and places
- Creating a new public square for a creative village – for events, festivals and outdoor markets as well as passive recreation
- Equitable access to open space
- Responding to the site topography and the views along streets and laneways
- Maximising the outlook from residential apartments to open space to create amenity and value
- Providing a clear and legible street and pedestrian network
- Understanding infrastructure constraints and planning controls
Master Plan showing circulation and use

Connections
Visual and physical connections lend permeability to the site and embrace the surrounding urban form.

Interior/exterior urban form
The scheme plays with the contrast between the well-defined exterior and the softer, more varied interior. The exterior architecture reinforces the urban form while the interior creates a permeable, porous public experience on the ground plane.

Fine grain urban form
A fine grain ground plane blurs inside and outside with a variety of opportunities for public engagement, retail and active uses.
**Master Plan showing circulation and use**

**Spatial expansion/contraction**
The proposed massing and ground plane heightens the spatial compression and expansion, creating a variety of spaces and scales within the Precinct.

**Sequence of public spaces**
A wide variety of public spaces will encourage diverse uses at different times of the day and year depending on wind, solar aspect and program.

**Spatial scale**
A fine balance of intimacy and boldness within the public spaces creates a human scale as well as opportunities for large events.
Celebration of heritage
The public realm enhances and celebrates the heritage of the site, its evolution and the context of Kingston Foreshore.

Public canvas
The public realm forms an inviting canvas that is flexible for all seasons and times of the day. Uses may include community events, markets, outdoor cinemas, artist exhibitions, food-and-wine festivals, retail, restaurants and cafes.

Experiences
A series of public spaces offer different experiences and characters.
Materials
A suite of hard and soft landscape materials have been selected to provide robust and long lasting finishes. Material choices privilege natural and integral materials such as stone, concrete, timber and steel that require little repainting and upkeep. Brick will be used to reference the site’s industrial history, and likewise concrete and steel will call and respond to the heritage forms.
Car park numbers

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<td>Arts Hub</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public car park</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staging plan
The John Fowler Road Locomotive is a part of the Precinct’s heritage and joins the power station and fitters’ workshop to form an intriguing ensemble at the centre of the site. The road locomotive was originally based at Kingston Powerhouse and was used primarily for haulage work. It towed up to seven wagons at a time of crushed rock from the quarry, hauled wagons loaded with pipe and carted bricks from the Commonwealth brickworks in Yarralumla. The proposed location at KAP acknowledges the alignment of the old railway tracks, emphasising the orientation of the Arts Hub around the power station. While outside the primary events space it is located in the public realm, where it forms part of the ensemble of heritage buildings.

The locomotive will be housed under a specially designed weather shelter. The display will celebrate its historical significance for the development of Canberra between 1925 and 1927. We will engage expert consultants to minimise wear and tear, as outlined in the conservation strategy. A program will also be put in place to explain its historical significance.