

New Architecture, Building and Planning Building

Briefing Note

The University has committed to developing a new building for the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning with a project cost of \$114m, on the Parkville Campus, to be ready for the start of the 2015 academic year. In redeveloping this site, the University is adding to the vibrancy of the campus for all students; the new building will enhance our campus experience while providing better facilities for the teaching of architecture and related professions in the built environment.

Under the deanship of Professor Tom Kvan, the Faculty is fostering a new culture of research, teaching and engagement; the new generation undergraduate degree, the Bachelor of Environments degree has bedded down successfully and under the directorship of Professor Philip Goad the graduate school, The Melbourne School of Design has been successfully established and an active exhibition culture has emerged.

Following a design competition in 2009, design consultants lead by John Wardle and Boston based Office DA are developing the design. The building will promote a studio culture across all disciplines in the Melbourne School of Design and will provide extensive studio space for undergraduate teaching. The opportunity is framed as creating “a pedagogical building and a living building” – one that informs and develops understanding by its occupants while being a platform for research itself. The National Bank faced will be retained in the new design in a manner that enhances its engagement rather than being an applique. Library and workshop spaces are to be generously provided so that the building becomes a vibrant home for the study of design across our built environment.

Options to re-develop or replace the existing ABP building have been under active consideration over several decades, with frequent discussion of replacement. The main building was built in the 1960s with a small budget using donated materials and the fabric is now seriously degraded. Consideration was given to the possibility of renovating the existing building but a major review of the building structure concluded that the cost of renovating and repairs would be as costly as replacement.

The project is seen as an opportunity to act on the University Precinct intentions while providing a “once-in-a-lifetime” opportunity for the Faculty, with a commitment to innovation in relation to the design and delivery of an outstanding centrally located campus building. In developing the building, the faculty will implement advanced practices for briefing, design, construction, and operation to demonstrate leadership and innovation in the making of the built environment and its contribution to urban space.