

# 2016 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

## Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Category: Renovation

School District  
Sydney, NSW, Australia



Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School





## Exterior of Existing Building

**Community Environment:** The existing building that is shown on this and the following slide presented considerable challenges in designing an inspirational educational space.

As a brand new school, there were initially no students, parents, or a Principal in which to engage with as part of the design process. Initial visioning workshops for the school were held with key members from the Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) community including local Principal, Parish Priest, SCS Regional Consultants and members from SCS including representatives from Facilities and Marketing.



## Existing Classroom

### Community Environment:

Led by Tom Barrett, NoTosh, Fiona Young, BVN and Mark Rix, SCS, the workshop was pivotal in clarifying the learning principles for the school and establishing guiding design principles for the project.

Once Cathy Young, the Principal of the school was engaged, regular meetings were established to work through the design in relation to her vision for leading the school. Once the school had begun to enrol students for the initial 2015 school year, we were able to engage parents in the design process. A 'Meet the Architects' evening was held in November 2014 which began a fruitful dialogue with parents which has continued to stage two of the project.





## Replacing solid walls with operable windows lets in the sun

**Learning Environment:** Core to the vision for the school is the need for a **student-centred** environment which provides multiple learning contexts in recognition of a diversity of learners, and a sense of scale recognising the young learner. Complementary to this is a focus on a **holistic** learning context in which the whole school is considered a place for learning, both indoor and outdoor. Finally, student **safety** is paramount – both in relation to school duty of care for students, but also as a desire for students to feel safe to take risks in learning.









## Maximizing indoor/outdoor learning

### Learning Environment:

“Our vision for OLA was to create contemporary learning spaces that are as diverse and flexible as the individual learners who utilize them, and would serve as catalysts for our students to achieve their potential.

The building is open and well-ventilated taking into account seasonal natural light, and maximizing opportunity for indoor and outdoor learning. The prevalence of full length, high performance glazing throughout assists with the internal environment and makes all learning visible. All students share ownership of the whole space, rather than a desk within it. Hence there is no identifiable teacher ‘territory’ and students have immediate access to resources.” Cathy Young , Principal









## Flexible spaces

### Physical Environment:

The guiding principles for the design are translated into built form through clear, yet subtle levels of detail which enable a multitude of learning settings. A series of zones, from larger open spaces, to smaller enclosed spaces and nooks for student retreat and reflection, to outdoor learning spaces co-exist and can easily change through a series of sliding panels according to immediate needs. High levels of transparency between the spaces encourage and enable a seamless flow to the learning that takes place at OLA.









## Withdrawal Space

### Physical Environment –

Scale changes throughout the space from the lower-height connecting 'bridge', to intimate withdrawal rooms, and child-scaled seating recesses that reflect the importance of the young student and provides comfortable spaces in which to learn.

Materiality has been carefully considered in the design. The natural timber backdrop is relatively unique for a school environment, but is frequently referred to in relation to how it creates a warm and inviting environment and one which makes users feel comfortable, and creates a calming environment for learning.







## Transparent Administration

**Planning Process:** A rigorous process has been critical to the success of the project. From initial visioning workshops in which guiding principles for the design were collaboratively developed, to iterative design dialogue between Architect, Principal and SCS Project Officer in regular weekly project meetings.

Subsequent to the opening of stage one of the school, a POE was undertaken as a two-part exercise. Firstly, as a feedback document developed in collaboration by OLA staff, and secondly as a 'Shadowing the Principal' exercise, in which the architects spent a day at the school observing activity of staff and students. Lessons learnt from the POE have fed back into stage one, as well as into the design of stage two of the project.







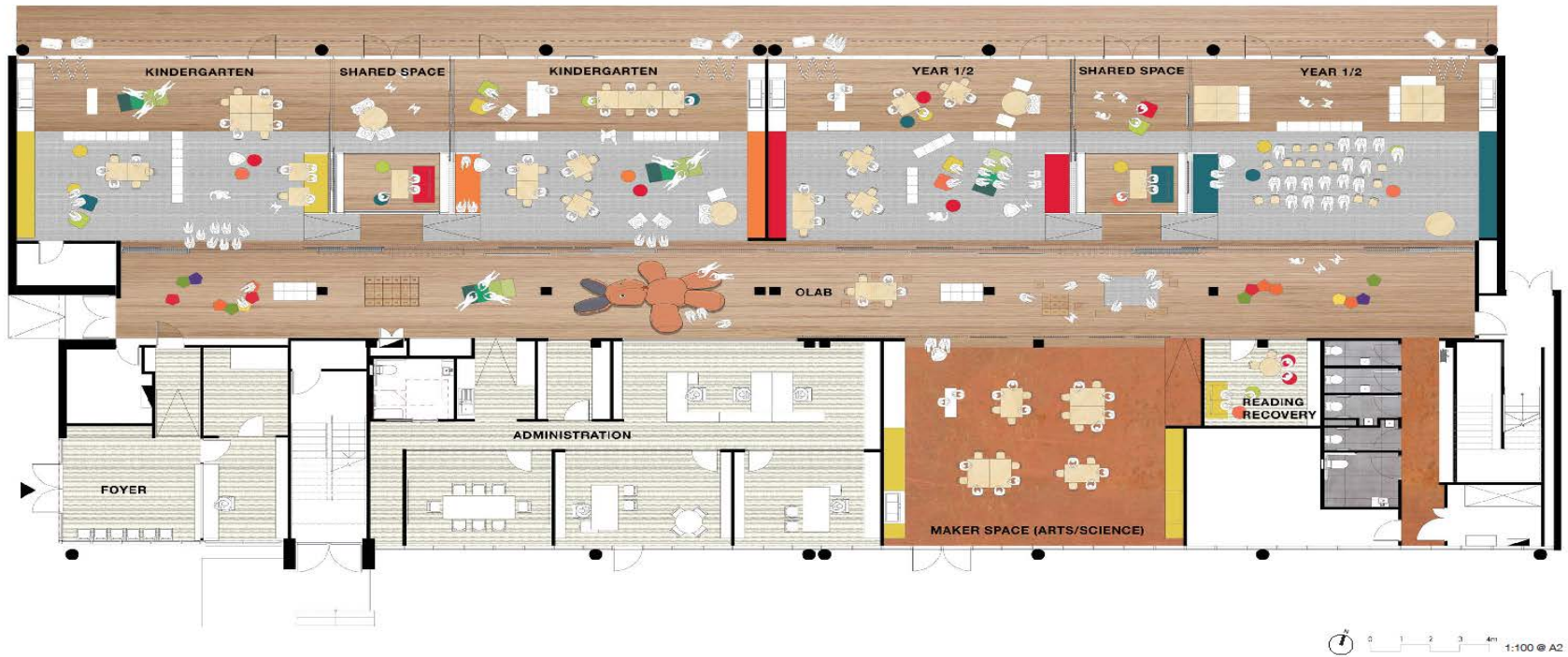
## Flexible learning spaces

**Planning Process:** A project review meeting was also held with Tom Barrett from NoTosh (who was involved in the original visioning workshop). Tom will be working with OLA staff on professional development focussing on maximising opportunities the space affords in order to inspire great teaching and learning.









Floor plan



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## Project Data

Submitting Firm :	
Project Role	Architect
Project Contact	Knut Menden
Title	Project Architect
Address	Level 11, 255 Pitt Street
City, State or Province, Country	Sydney, NSW, Australia
Phone	+61282977200

Joint Partner Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	

Other Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	

Construction Firm:	
Project Role	Builder
Project Contact	Andrew Sanderson
Title	General Manager and Director, Grindley Interiors
Address	Ground Floor 55 Grandview Street (PO Box 6246) Pymble
City, State or Province, Country	Sydney, NSW, Australia
Phone	+61299883811

# Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

## Project Details

<b>Project Name</b>	Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School
<b>City</b>	Sydney
<b>State</b>	NSW, Australia
<b>District Name</b>	
<b>Supt/President</b>	Catherine Young
<b>Occupancy Date</b>	May 2015
<b>Grades Housed</b>	K, 1 & 2
<b>Capacity(Students)</b>	120 Students
<b>Site Size (acres)</b>	1.2 ac
<b>Gross Area (sq. ft.)</b>	10550 sq.ft
<b>Per Occupant(pupil)</b>	88 sq.ft
<b>gross/net please indicate</b>	Gross
<b>Design and Build?</b>	No
<b>If yes, Total Cost:</b>	
<b>Includes:</b>	
<b>If no,</b>	
<b>Site Development:</b>	AUD \$300,000
<b>Building Construction:</b>	AUD \$2,900,000
<b>Fixed Equipment:</b>	AUD \$150,000
<b>Other:</b>	AUD \$150,000
<b>Total:</b>	AUD \$3.5 M (US \$2.6 M)



















