

North Melbourne Community Hub

Final Concept Design Presentation

FMC – 2 September 2025


CITY OF MELBOURNE

Project Background

Purpose

This project is seeking Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) endorsement of the North Melbourne Community Hub (NMCH) final concept design to progress into the detailed design phase.

Background

- **2021:** Macaulay Structure Plan identified need for a new community hub due to population growth
- **27 June 2023:** Council endorsed 91-115 Melrose Street as the location for the new hub, resolving to retain half of the site for future community use
- **2023:** Phase one of community engagement with feedback on services, design, and construction priorities informing the draft concept design
- **10 September 2024:** FMC endorsed the draft design for consultation
- **Nov - Dec 2024:** Community consultation occurred on the draft concept design with feedback informing the final concept design



Strategic Context

Macaulay Structure Plan (2021):

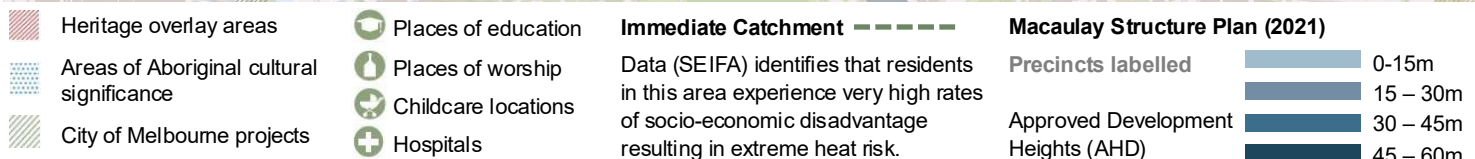
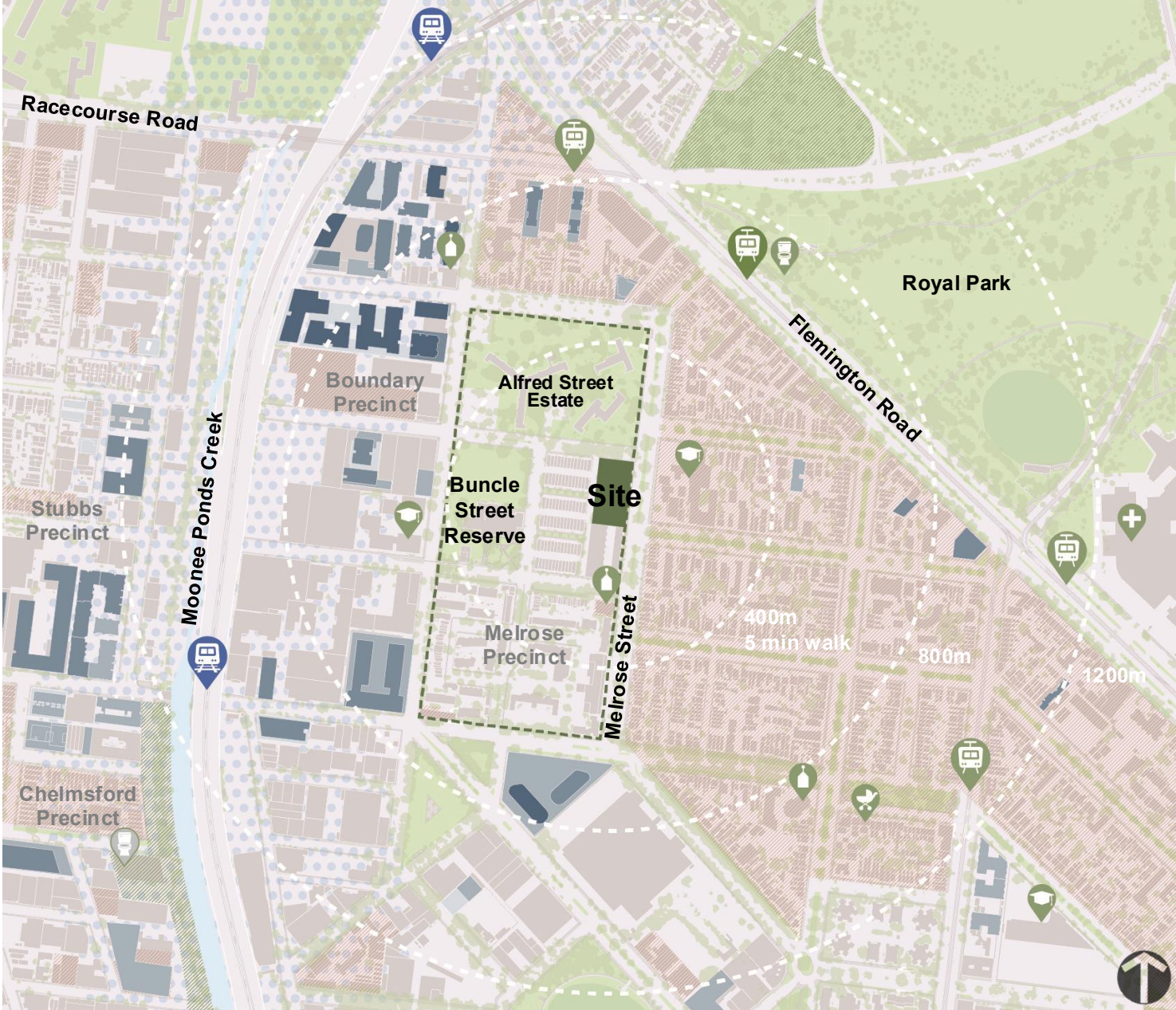
- New community hub 3,000 sqm required to address population growth and ageing and oversubscribed community assets.
- An intergenerational hub to bring together service teams relevant to different age groups.

Council Plan (2021-25) Major Initiative:

- Construct a replacement to the existing North Melbourne Community Centre precinct for the Melrose community and growing Macaulay population.

Budget Allocation

- \$40.5 million has been included in the 4-Year Council Works Budget (2025–29)



Project Scope

- 3,000 sqm building to provide space to meet current and future needs of the local population.
- An integrated community hub providing a range of Council services:
 - Healthy Ageing
 - Child and Maternal Health + Family Services
 - Youth Services
 - Toy Library
- Wide range of multi-purpose spaces and outdoor areas.
- Modification and minor upgrades to Jean McKendry to enable continued use of hall and commercial kitchen until completion of the new Hub.
- Excludes sports and recreation facilities. These programs will continue to be provided at Buncle Street Reserve.



Project Vision

North Melbourne Community Hub will be a welcoming place to celebrate and foster community connections. It will be a beacon of community life that showcases the diverse histories, cultures and voices that have shaped and continue to shape the local area.



An Integrated Community Hub



Family Services



Youth Services



Healthy Ageing



Toy Library



Bookable Community Spaces

Engagement Summary

Engagement Overview

Community Engagement Phase 1 – 16 August to 5 October 2023

- Feedback on key service, design, and construction priorities to inform the draft concept design.

Community Engagement Phase 2 – 20 November to 18 December 2024

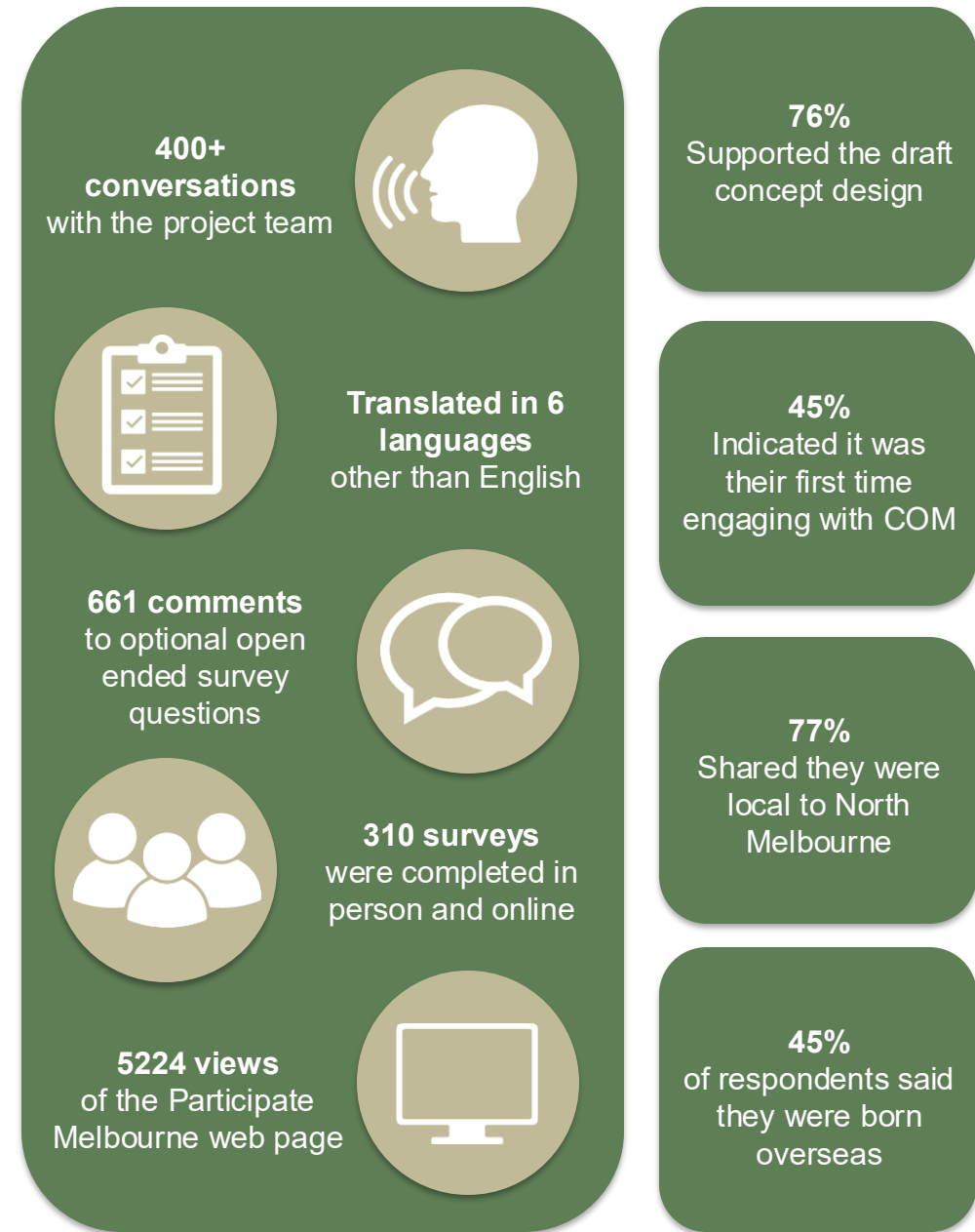
- An opportunity to demonstrate how previous community feedback shaped the proposed design while also assessing community support.

“It will be wonderful! Good luck with the project and can’t wait to see it.”

“I want to congratulate the input you are doing consulting some of the people and the community... This means you care about us and the community.”

“I am excited to see the design in real life ... I encourage more detail mapping of the services and user’s experience and journey day-to-day operation of the hub to ensure use by range of community groups.”

“Having our valuable toy library included as part of the children’s spaces would be wonderful.”



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PLAN

Engagement objectives

Purpose of engagement

To gather input, assess support, and refine key elements of the proposed draft concept design through community feedback. Feedback received from this second phase of engagement will help inform the final concept design for the North Melbourne Community Hub, for consideration by the Future Melbourne Committee in September 2025.

Engagement activities

Planned activities (e.g., survey, workshops)

- Surveys (paper and online)
- Community pop-ups
- Attendance at community meetings and events
- Community Reference Group (CRG) meetings
- Stakeholder workshops

Engagement risks

Potential risks (e.g., timing, topic)

- Misinformation on the project and engagement process
- A diverse representation of North Melbourne is not captured during engagement.
- Barriers for community to participate are not mitigated
- Timing of engagement (close to Christmas)

Engagement scope

Parts of project that can and can't be influenced by community feedback

For consultation

- How the community would like to access and use the hub
- Allocation and type of community spaces (based on demand)
- Floor planning (design of spaces to accommodate activities)
- The design and materials used within the hub
- The look and feel of the landscaping around the hub

Key stakeholders and target participants

People and groups impacted by the decision

- Current service users
- North Melbourne residents (diverse population)
- Local business owners
- Community groups and organisations
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Traditional Owners

Communications activities

Activities to reach target participants (e.g., social media, newsletters)

- Draft concept design and information on Participate Melbourne
- Print media and website postings
- Geo-targeted social media advertisements
- Multilingual flyers and posters with QR codes
- Key community groups and organisations emailed directly to advise of engagement.

Out of scope for consultation

- Mix, type and function of service provision in Hub
- The size and location of the building
- Timing of the construction and opening of the hub

Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Nov 2024	March 2025	March 2025
Community engagement scoped.	FMC endorse community engagement on draft concept design.	Consultation with the Melbourne Design Review Panel (MDRP).	CRG forms and co-design of CE occurs. Disability Advisory Committee consulted	Broad engagement opens on 20 November. Engagement activities commence	Engagement closes 18 December. Community notified on Participate Melbourne	Engagement Summary Report presented to Councillors on 17 March 2025.	Engagement Summary Report shared on Participate Melbourne.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY REPORT

Project background

Project scope and context

- Community consultation in 2023 gathered feedback on key service, design, and construction priorities, which informed the draft concept design for the new community hub.
- The Future Melbourne Committee endorsed the [draft concept design](#) for broad community engagement on 10 September 2024.
- Phase 2 of community engagement on the draft concept design was open from 20 November to 18 December 2024.
- A consultation summary and Phase 2 Community Engagement Report was circulated with Councillors in March 2025. This has now been shared with community on [Participate Melbourne](#).

Project methodology

Overview of engagement activities

To help identify and alleviate potential barriers for engagement the project worked with a Community Reference Group (CRG) to co-design the Community Engagement Plan.

Activities

- Draft concept design and information on Participate Melbourne
- Print media and website postings
- Geo-targeted social media advertisements
- Multilingual flyers and posters with QR codes
- Key community groups and organisations emailed directly to advise of engagement.
- Pop-up community engagements across North Melbourne

[More information please see the full Community Engagement Report.](#)

Participant demographics

Overview of who participated in engagement activities

- During the engagement period 5,224 views were received on the Participate Melbourne webpage and 310 surveys were completed.
- 77 per cent of participants were residents from North Melbourne. Results also show strong participation from across West Melbourne, Kensington and the wider municipality.
- 48 per cent of participants were between 25 – 44 years of age.
- 45 per cent of participants indicated that this was their first time engaging with the City of Melbourne, demonstrating that the consultation effectively reached new members of the community.
- 41 per cent of participants said they speak a language other than English at home and 45 per cent of participants said they were born overseas.

Key findings

Key insights from community feedback

- 76 per cent of participants were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the proposed draft concept design.
- Feedback highlighted a need for a mix of flexible, practical and accessible spaces to accommodate a wide range of activities. This includes quiet areas, large community halls, outdoor gardens, play areas for children, a toy library, and spaces for youth engagement. Ensuring financial accessibility for all community members was also a key concern.
- More green space areas in North Melbourne and was seen as a key priority for community in both rounds of community engagement. Suggested green spaces at the hub included community gardens, shaded rest areas, and natural playgrounds with climbing structures and water play. Feedback also supported use of eco-friendly materials, and integration of greenery throughout the space.
- The importance of on-going engagement with community and ensuring the design of the hub reflects the diversity of the North Melbourne community. In addition, the importance of the design incorporating culturally safe spaces which are functional and considered.
- Community feedback highlighted the need for a fit for purpose recreation facility to replace the indoor stadium and gym in North Melbourne.

Next steps

- Feedback received from this second phase of engagement has helped inform the final concept design for the North Melbourne Community Hub. Ongoing engagement will occur throughout the design and construction phase with the Community Reference Group.

What did we hear from Community Engagement?

Community priorities



Flexible, accessible community spaces

Provide a wide variety of multi-use and program specific spaces that respond to the varying needs of community.



Outdoor and green spaces

Deliver a sustainable and responsible design with a diversity of green spaces for the community.



Culturally inclusive & community driven

Ensure community voices are captured and reflected in the design and embedded throughout the hub.

Project responses

- A wide variety of adaptable spaces are proposed in the design that align with community expectations.
- Spaces are arranged within the building to consider operational requirements and respond to the varying needs of the community.
- Incidental play and social engagement will be prioritised throughout design of landscape and interior spaces.
- The Operational Model of the Hub is progressing in conjunction with design development. This will explore the day-to-day operations of the Hub, opening hours, a prioritisation of needs framework and community access.
- Extensive indoor and outdoor green spaces are being prioritised to enhance building activation and safety.
- Landscaping will aim to include a range of edible plants including herbs, Indigenous edible plants and productive fruit trees where possible.
- Generous footpath widths and activation of the edges of the site.
- Sustainable strategies including low-carbon, responsible materials, passive design, integrated solar panels, water-saving systems, and natural cooling methods will be included.
- The design will retain the significant existing trees fronting Melrose Street.
- The design will include spaces that can respond to changes in community and programmatic needs.
- Inclusion of a toy library based on strong support from community.
- Diversity of the community reflected through artwork and language throughout the Hub. The operational model will look to replicate and build upon the diverse programming at existing facilities.
- Ongoing engagement to continue with community and key stakeholders including the Community Reference Group.
- First Nations voices and perspectives will be meaningfully embedded into the design.



State Library Queensland, Brisbane. Partners Hill.
Image: David Chatfield



The Roundtable, North Melbourne. Common and Enlocus.
Image: Dianna Snape



Naam ngarrgu library, Melbourne. Six Degrees Architects.
Image: Dianna Snape

What did we hear from Community Engagement?

Community priorities



Safety, lighting and security

Deliver a welcoming Hub that feels safe and secure for the entire community.



Food and social gathering spaces

Provide a range of food preparation and eating areas which support cultural and social exchange through the sharing of food.

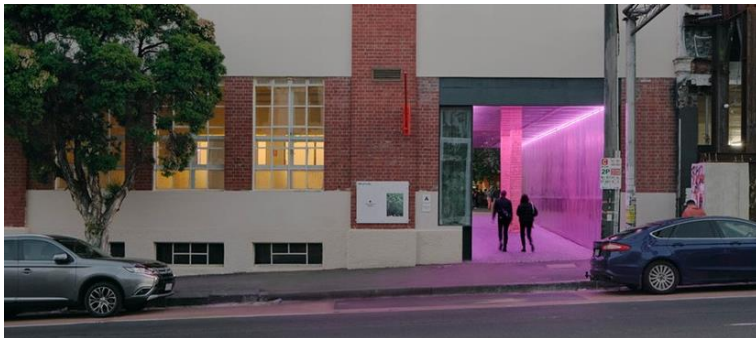


Recreation

Ensure the community has access to high quality recreation facilities.

Project / design responses

- Lighting design will be prioritised and amenity spaces such as bike parking provided within landscape.
- A specialist lighting design brief will be developed alongside City of Melbourne's industrial design team.
- Gender Impact Assessment and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design reviews will occur throughout design development process.
- Extensive internal and external, 'fit-for-purpose' food preparation spaces to be provided in the design. This includes kitchenettes, small kitchen areas and commercial kitchens.
- The provision of food preparation, dining and gathering areas to be included in the landscape design.
- Recreation services will remain at the current NMCC at Buncle Reserve and are not included in the scope of the new hub.
- The current facilities at North Melbourne Community Centre (Buncle Street) includes an indoor single court stadium (not full-sized court). These facilities are nearing end of life.
- Investigations into options for future recreation facilities are currently underway to understand where they could be located.



Collingwood Yards, Melbourne. Fieldwork Projects.
Image: Dan Preston



Anna Puigjaner, Kitchenless City.
Image: Architectural Review



Image: City of Melbourne

Proofing of Concept Design



In addition to community feedback, the final concept design was developed and tested through collaboration with stakeholders, consultants, and the following processes.

September FMC 2024
Approval of Draft Concept Design

September FMC 2025
Approval of Final Concept Design

Melbourne Design Review Panel

The panel is a pillar of Council's Design Excellence Program and consists of design experts that provide independent advice on city-shaping projects.

Traditional Owner Engagement

Cultural consultations enable meaningful dialogue with Wurundjeri Elders regarding proposed development to occur on Wurundjeri lands.

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

The innovative GIA process undertaken by the project team identified tangible opportunities to better embed inclusion into the final concept design.

Service Provider Design Workshops

The project team have worked collaboratively with City of Melbourne service delivery teams to ensure design is both fit-for-purpose and best practice.

Community Reference Group

Ongoing meetings with local representatives ensure the concept design meets the needs and aspirations of the existing and future community.

Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

Advice and insights from DAC on the concept design have provided a lived experience lens and reflect the diversity among people with disabilities.

Engineering & Building Services Coordination

The project has undertaken extensive consultant coordination to proof the design and identify the most effective and efficient project delivery.

Final Concept Design

Site Occupation and Approach



Existing Conditions

The current site feels enclosed and difficult to access



Connecting to Context

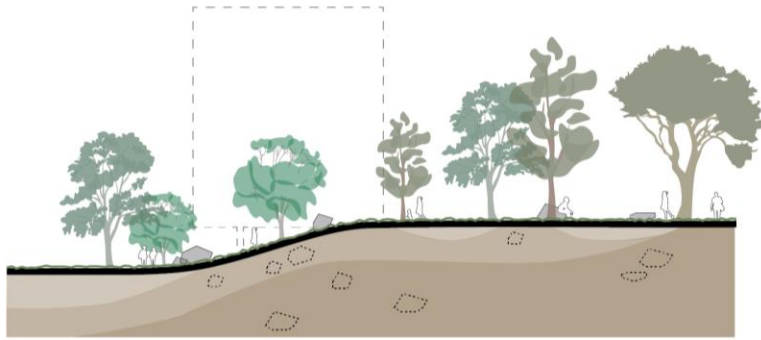
Landscaping will celebrate typography and improve precinct accessibility



Nestled in Nature

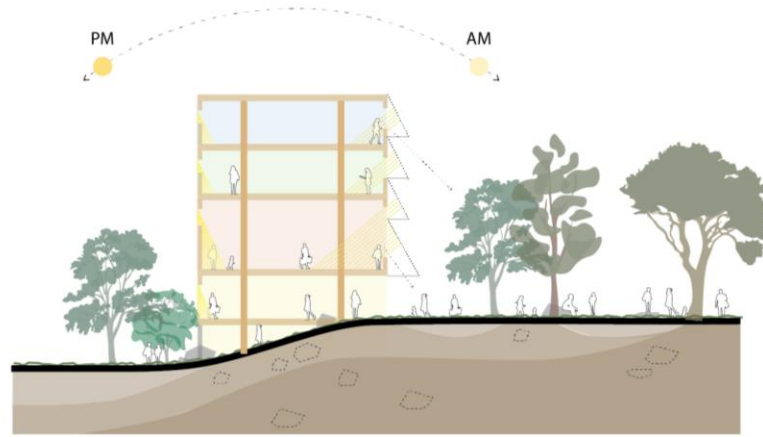
Open space, landscape and new entrances will welcome visitors to the hub.

Designing the Community Precinct



Welcome ground

New public open space that embraces the site's terrain and celebrates underpinning geology



Framing community

A climate-responsive, rational building structure shaped by site orientation and community use



An inviting local icon

A dynamic façade that reflects the hub's evolving programs and community life

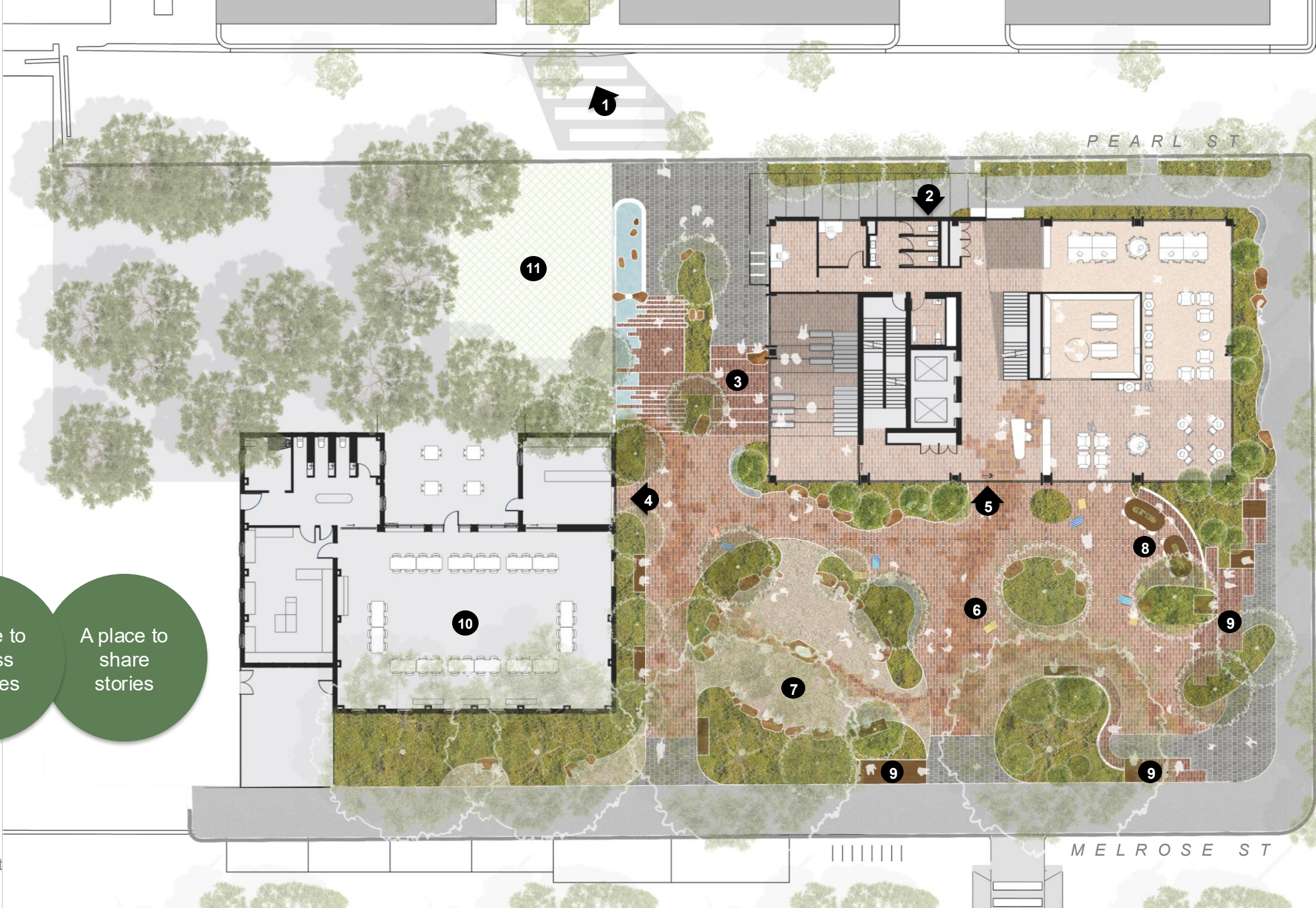
Site Masterplan

- 1. Connection through to Bunde Street
- 2. Lower ground rear entrance
- 3. Bleacher seating and feature stairs
- 4. Jean McKendry Hall entrance
- 5. New Hub main entrance
- 6. Welcome ground arrival landscape
- 7. Gathering circle
- 8. Outdoor tables
- 9. Perching along edges
- 10. Ongoing use of existing Jean McKendry Hall and Commercial Kitchen.
- 11. Temporary landscaping

A place to be

A place to access services

A place to share stories



Precinct Material Palette

Reflecting the local landscape



Unearthing geological layers to reveal clay, mudstone and basalt



Rocky embankments of historic riverine landscape



Surrounding canopy trees abundant with life and texture



Restrained structural expression of local industrial buildings



Dappled light and shadows reflect seasonal change

Proposed Materials



Bluestone / recycled red bricks



Boulders and masonry anchor building in landscape



Mass timber and natural materials



Robust exterior skin



Light and texture from feature mesh



Welcome ground

A new public open space provides a landscaped forecourt, including a variety of gathering spaces - to connect, share food, stories and relax under canopy trees.



Melrose Street Arrival

*A building animated by activities unfolding from morning through to the evenings.
The entrance landscape peels open to invite the public in.*



Sutton and Melrose Street Corner

The hub unites an evolving range of programs under one roof, including shared areas, multi-purpose meeting spaces and dedicated community services.



Pearl Street Entrance

Creating new precinct connections, the hub will be accessible on two sides and at two levels. Celebrating the sloping terrain and historic escarpment shrublands with a place to play, engage with water and catch the sun.

Final Concept Design Drawings

Ground Floor Plan

- 1. Welcome ground arrival landscape
- 2. Hub main entrance
- 3. Presentation auditorium / lounge
- 4. Toy library
- 5. Entrance hall / drop-in space
- 6. Study area
- 7. Amenities (WC, DDA WC)
- 8. First aid + office
- 9. Feature steps and seating
- 10. Jean McKendry entrance
- 11. Existing Jean McKendry terrace
- 12. Existing Jean McKendry hall
- 13. Existing Jean McKendry commercial kitchen

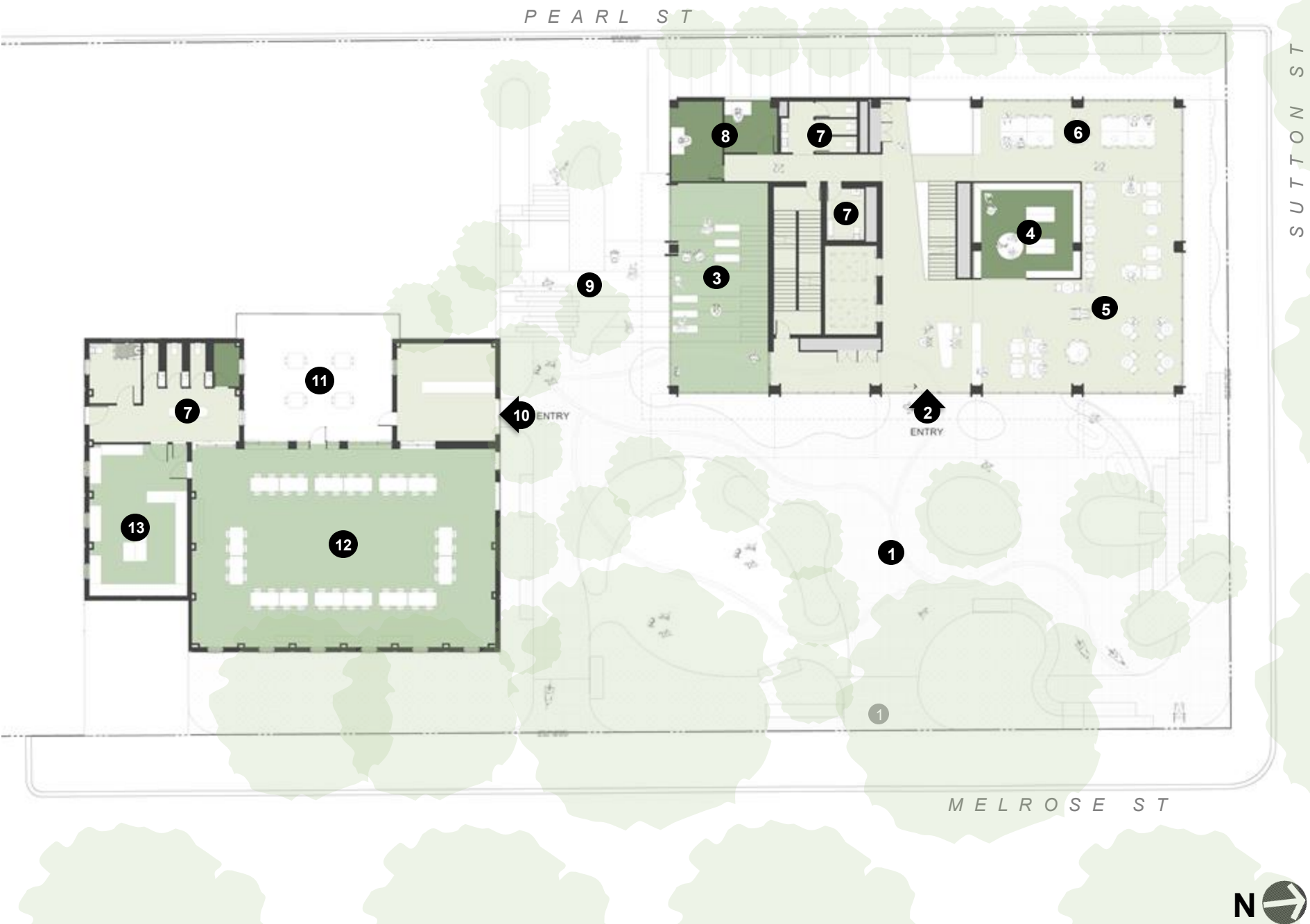
LEGEND

Shared spaces

Multi-purpose

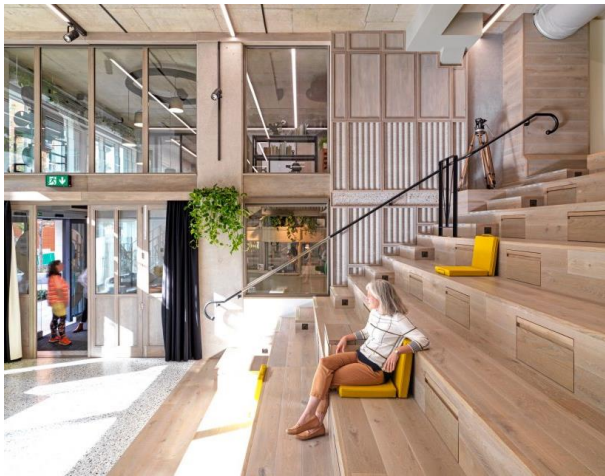
Fixed use

Back of House



Lower Ground Floor Plan

- 1. Pearl Street entrance
- 2. Lobby
- 3. Presentation auditorium / lounge
- 4. Feature steps and seating
- 5. Youth space
- 6. Youth Services staff area
- 7. Amenities (WC, DDA WC)
- 8. Audio recording room
- 9. Changing Places
- 10. Laundry
- 11. Building services (e.g. waste)
- 12. Connection through to Buncle Street



Auditorium bleacher seating for informal and formal use.
Central Somers Town Community Centre, London. Adam Kahn Architects. Image: David Grandorge.



Feature steps for rest, seating and connecting to nature.
Waller Park, Meyer Studio Land Architects. Three-fold Architects. Image: Charles Hosea

LEGEND

Shared spaces

Multi-purpose

Fixed use

Back of House



Level One Floor Plan

- 1. Main Hall with option to divide into two spaces
- 2. Balcony
- 3. Lobby
- 4. Drop-in area
- 5. Bookable meeting room
- 6. Storage
- 7. Amenities (WC, DDA WC)
- 8. Reflection room
- 9. Commercial Kitchen



Bringing the outdoors in: A spacious hall with tree canopy views.
State Library Queensland, Brisbane. Partners Hill.
Image: David Chatfield



Rooms with adaptable room configurations for community.
Darebin Intercultural Centre, Preston. Sibling Architecture. Image: Peter Bennetts

LEGEND

Shared spaces

Multi-purpose

Fixed use

Back of House



Level Two Floor Plan

- 1. Bookable meeting space (extra-large)
- 2. Lobby
- 3. Drop-in area
- 4. Staff offices
- 5. Staff meeting room
- 6. Community group storage
- 7. Amenities (WC, DDA WC)
- 8. Community kitchen
- 9. Bookable meeting room (small)
- 10. Bookable meeting room (medium)
- 11. Bookable meeting room (large)
Suitable for art and craft activities



Flexible spaces for informal community use and hire.
Sand End Arts and Community Hub, London. Mae Architects. Image: Michael Dillon



Community kitchen space for food preparation.
Anna Puigjaner, Kitchenless City. Image: Architectural Review

LEGEND

Shared spaces

Multi-purpose

Fixed use

Back of House

PEARL ST



MELROSE ST



Level Three Floor Plan

- 1. Waiting area / lobby
- 2. Reception desk
- 3. Pram parking
- 4. Outdoor play space
- 5. Indoor play space
- 6. Parent Room
- 7. Amenities (WC, DDA WC)
- 8. Storage
- 9. Child and Maternal Health staff areas
- 10. Consult rooms
- 11. Child and Maternal Health waiting area



Outdoor play spaces.
Naarm ngarrgu library, Melbourne. Bush Projects Landscape Architecture. Image: Dan Preston



Indoor play spaces.
Djerring Flemington Hub, Melbourne. Croxon Ramsay Architects. Image: Dianne Snape

LEGEND

Shared spaces

Multi-purpose

Fixed use

Back of House

PEARL ST



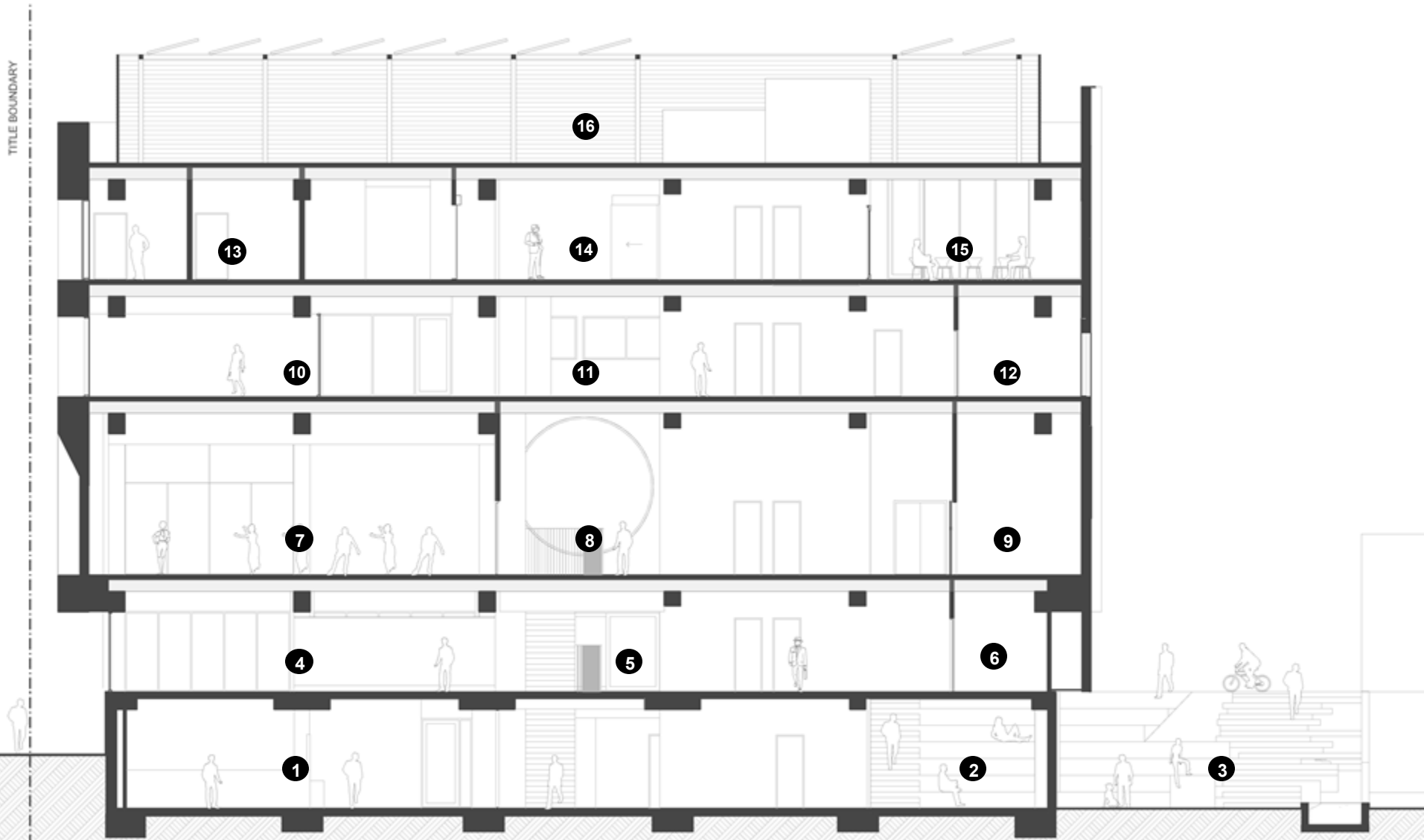
SUTTON ST

MELROSE ST



Building Section – (North/South)

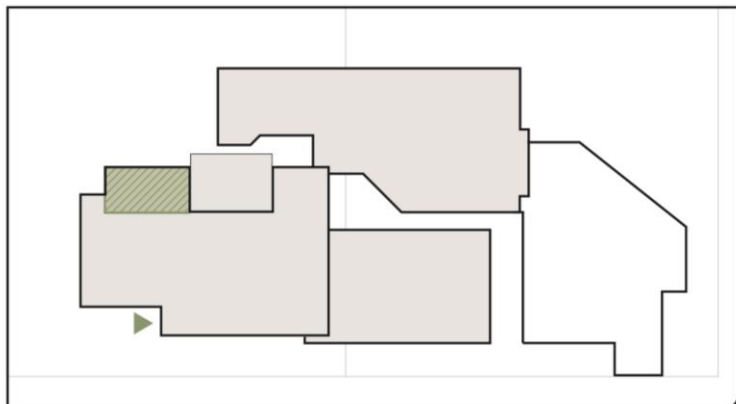
- 1. Youth space
- 2. Presentation auditorium / lounge
- 3. Feature steps and seating
- 4. Entrance hall / drop-in space
- 5. Main entrance
- 6. Staff offices
- 7. Main Hall
- 8. Lobby
- 9. Storage
- 10. Healthy Ageing + Bookable meeting rooms
- 11. Drop-in area
- 12. Storage
- 13. Child and Maternal Health consult spaces
- 14. Drop-in area
- 15. Indoor play space
- 16. Building equipment and solar array (No public access)



Further Information

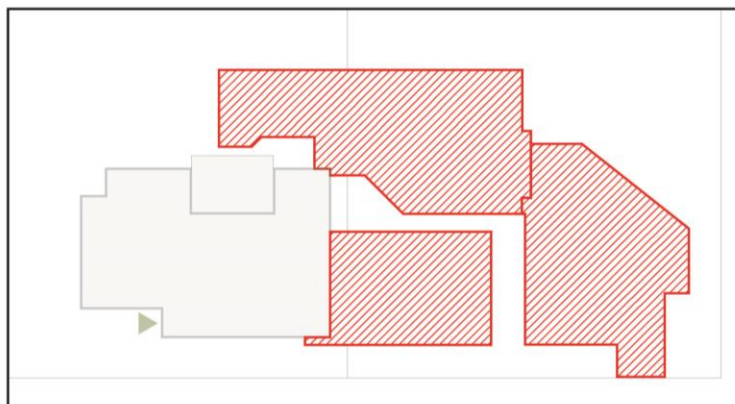
Project Staging and Delivery

Construction on the North Melbourne Community Hub is anticipated to commence in late-2027.



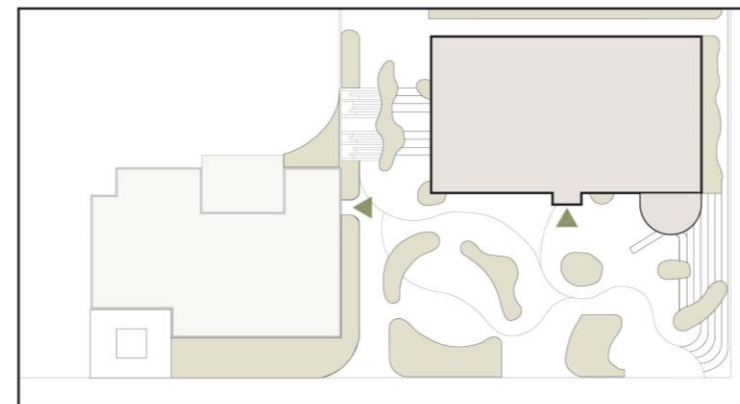
Stage One: Early Works

Minor modifications and upgrades to Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre. This will enable continued community access and use of the hall and commercial kitchen through Stage Two and Three.



Stage Two: Disassembly

Disassembly of existing buildings on site to allow for major works of Stage Three. Material salvage and re-use to be explored to reduce environmental impacts and reduce upfront carbon.



Stage Three: Construction of New Hub

Construction of new public building and surrounding feature landscape.



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