

Albeus Fahey Building
IONA PRESENTATION COLLEGE
James D. MacConnell Award Entry

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iona Presentation College is a 100 year old, K to 12 Catholic girls school, in Perth (Western Australia).

The Albeus Fahey Building at Iona Presentation College is a 5 storey, split level learning centre located in the centre of the Senior Campus, following the demolition of the Boarding House and Library.

The building provides contemporary learning environments to cater for the existing student population with a core focus on arts, design and innovation. It also encompasses the 100 year old Presentation Sisters heritage by responding to the historical links with the isle of Iona - between the ocean and the river - and the story of the founder, Nano Nagle.

The design process incorporated a focused design thinking program, led by an education consultant to identify the opportunities for developing the teaching and learning experiences to be embraced by Iona Presentation College. The Architects participated in developing and articulating a rigorous design brief that informed the learning environment concepts.



History



Iona Abbey



Nano Nagle

Iona Presentation College was founded on 11 September 1907. The College is named after the Scottish Isle of Iona. Five Presentation Sisters from Kildare, Ireland, followed a call in the 1900s that brought them to Western Australia.

Perth's first Bishop, Bishop Gibney, felt the Mosman Park site reminded him of the Isle of Iona in Scotland, where Irish Saint Columba (or Columcille) founded a community in 563AD. The Scottish Isle of Iona became a centre of learning from which Saint Columba set forth to spread the Gospel. Bishop Gibney hoped that the site in Perth would fulfil the same purpose.

The Presentation Sisters have continued to work throughout Western Australia, providing assistance, advice and other services to the needy, in the true spirit of Nano Nagle.

Founder of the Presentation Sisters, Nano devoted her life to the education of poor girls in her hometown of Cork, Ireland. Carrying a lantern through the dark streets, she would visit the sick and needy within the community, offering hope and compassion. The lantern has become a symbol for the Presentation Sisters, representing her kindness and God's love for the poor. The historical context and the symbol of the lantern have been used throughout the building as inspiration.



Isle of Iona



The College is on an elevated site with existing facilities which include Administration, General Purpose Classrooms, Science Laboratories, Music, Library, Boarding House, Hall, Art and Technology Rooms, Sports Centre, Swimming Pool, Convent, Corpus Christi Parish Church, on site car parking, maintenance areas, as well as outdoor passive and limited active recreation areas. The buildings within the Campus vary in age, style, and ability to meet current educational needs.



SCOPE OF WORK & BUDGET

Total cost of project

\$23.6 million AUD

Gross floor area

6,725 m²

Initial planning for the project established

- strategic directions for the College Board in phasing out student boarding,
- condition analysis of outmoded learning environments,
- general parameters for facility types required, and
- a clear masterplan for the educational needs moving forward

The College resolved to establish a new facility focused on

- design and innovation,
- research and production,
- culture and heritage.

During local authority negotiations, the College identified a need for change management to dig deeper into what teaching and learning should look like for Iona.



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

School and community engagement covered a number of different layers:

a] The establishment of a Local Development Plan for the site in accordance with the local authority requirements, including public comment and feedback.

b] The architect introduced an external education consultant to the College and together helped senior leadership to form an in-house team of learning and design leaders. The planning group were then led through a design thinking process which encompassed 5 workshops that challenged “the way things have always been”, focussed on a range of learning contexts and questioned everything about the way students experienced them, and the spaces in which the action happens.

Group members had to adapt not only their own individual mindsets, but also were tasked with challenging and changing the entire school community's understanding of what might be next practice in teaching and learning.

The workshops also included excursions to venues providing opportunities of different learning environments—

- > Scitech Centre (highly interactive science museum)
- > Medical School, Curtin University
- > Holy Cross College, Ellenbrook/Western Australia

This allowed the in-house planning team spaces to reflect upon as they articulated what learning needs to look like at Iona.

Student groups provided input into the design thinking process, including —

- > analysing their social learning habits,
- > reflecting on existing formal spaces,
- > participating in prototyping different furniture in 2 existing classrooms,
- > experimenting with different learning settings in the old library.

c] Engaging with the Presentation Sisters to establish an art inspired journey around the building that celebrates the history of the site, founders and College history; provides opportunities to develop new rituals, create areas for community art and cultural events, and be an engaging learning experience for visitors to the College. In collaboration with students, staff, leaders, the community and the sisters themselves; the Presentation Walk was created.

Details of this process included -

> Working closely with the landscape architects, artists and fabricator, the Architects created stations in and around the building for all to experience. The totems are interactive and with a smart phone a person can retrieve a more detailed depiction of each station.

> The stations include - a contemporary statue of Nano Nagle, a contemporary painted mural wall, a Celtic Cross, a water feature reflecting the Blackwater River with stepping stones quoting “one step beyond” establishing a new place for year 12's to celebrate their rite of passage, and forever grounding the project with the heritage of the site.

The Albeus Fahey building is rich in history and culture, reflecting a truly collaborative approach with the larger community.



Perth's Iona Presentation College partnered with an education consultant to set it on course for a powerful transition in the way it envisions teaching and learning, the role that its school community plays in designing the future of learning, and just how significant iterative changes in their physical learning space can be. All of this has led to the development of a Masterplan for space design that genuinely reflects what's possible in this school's next 20 years.

The consultant helped senior leadership at Iona Presentation College to form an inhouse team of learning and design leaders, who have immersed themselves in challenging "the way things have always been" at this highly reputed local school. The consultant curated a set of powerful experiences, working side-by-side with the school's teachers and the Architect.

They focussed on a range of learning contexts and questioned everything about the way students experienced them, and the spaces in which the action happens. Music rooms, libraries, science labs, the cafeteria, humanities, maths, and business classrooms: every area of the curriculum, space and teaching methodology was explored through new lenses.

Individuals had to adapt not only their own mindset, but also had to set about challenging and changing the entire school community's understanding of what might be next practice in teaching and learning. The close relationship between educators and students at the school made it possible for leaders and staff to work together to gather a range of data to inform their ideas, conduct interviews and push one another to reach the next level in thinking, offering provocations and helpful feedback as ideas began to emerge. By immersing themselves into a deeper understanding of their current strengths, demands and

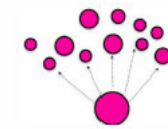
obstacles through the Design Thinking process, the group began to prototype and quickly test what great teaching and learning could mean for them, and the spaces needed for that.

Throughout the design thinking process, the partnership with the Architects made a noticeable difference to the insights and understanding.

Most schools ask for an Architect when they think they've already worked out the spaces they need, but having the Architects intently follow and contribute to the journey at Iona College has nurtured different perspectives to those one might have expected. The ability to incorporate a clear and early vision of learning has created a more solid understanding of what is truly needed within the space. It has also made visible the purposeful changes needed to see great teaching and learning emerge before concrete is poured and ribbons are cut.

The majority of face-to-face work took place on site at the school, with a pivotal away-day at Curtin University. The education consultant's facilitation provided an opportunity to work outside the constraints of familiar classroom walls, find new inspirations and freedom in thinking by engaging with a new and unknown space. The Iona team saw their progress, development and ideas in a new light, and the day instilled a new wave of momentum to bring about the changes they had been working on.

Loaded with the key next versions of their prototypes, the team at Iona Presentation College are well on their way to implementing change across the school, developing new and useful spaces for learning and creativity, and most of all continuing to provide their students with the tools and space to grasp every opportunity given to them.



Immersion



Synthesis



Ideation



Prototyping

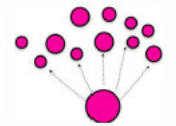


Feedforward

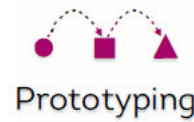
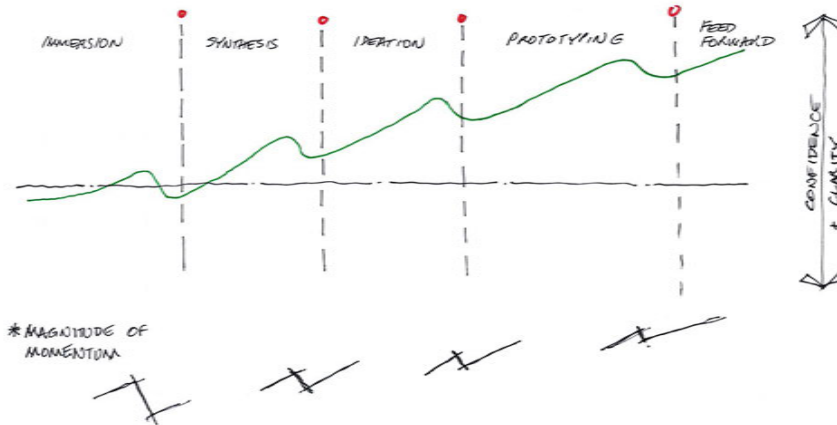


Design Thinking

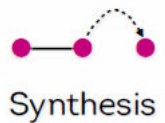
workshops: the learning discovery



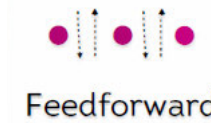
workshop: scares + excites



workshop: west wing
furniture testing:
amplify, rectify + justify



workshop: site visits (scitech)



workshop: reflective,
interactive, creative

presentation walk

INTRODUCTION

In recognising the core value “heritage & tradition” of Iona Presentation College, an interpretive signage “reflection” walk and feature artworks were designed and developed in close consultation with the College, Presentation Sisters and local artists to create pieces that would celebrate the Presentation heritage and story as a foundation for embracing and building the future of the College.

NANO NAGLE SCULPTURE

We first encounter a stylized free-form sculpture of Nano and her lantern, drawing the gaze of the viewer into Cove Lane, and inviting them to follow her as the Irish children she gathered up from the impoverished streets of 18th century Cork would have done. The lantern is a recurring theme through several of the Presentation Walk stations, the light of Nano’s lantern carrying deep symbolic meaning within the Presentation family.

Founder of the Presentation Sisters, Venerable Nano Nagle (1718-1784) devoted her life to the education of the poor in her hometown of Cork, Ireland. Carrying a lantern through the dark streets, she visited the needy, offering hope and compassion. The lantern has become a symbol for the Presentation Sisters, who generously provided the funds for this representation of Nano.

THE CELTIC CROSS

This crucifix is a contemporary version of the original seventh-century “Iona Cross” found on the Isle of Iona. Such crosses were introduced to faithful communities by St. Patrick and St. Columba, melding the Christian Cross with symbols of the sun and ancient Celtic carvings.

Axolotl Concrete is a cutting edge, sustainable, lightweight and cost effective aesthetic alternative to solid concrete. It has already received several accolades including an Australian International Design Award, acceptance into the New York Material Connexion database and being showcased at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney for 12 months. Axolotl Concrete can be applied to virtually any solid surface at any size and shape and can be utilised in interior or exterior environments (Axolotl, 2021).



Nano Nagle statue



Celtic cross

ARTIST



Mural wall / Cove Lane at Iona Presentation College

FROM THE ARTIST

"Presentation Women" is a story of journeys, place, interconnectedness and community. The piece evolved from several months of research, consultation and interviews with staff, students and the Sisters themselves. My investigations revealed several important stories about Presentation history and the role of the Sisters in Iona's journey to become not only a distinguished institution but an iconic community. Among these, a palpable connection between generations of presentation women and a culture amongst them that has remained relevant through varying geographical, cultural, and historical conditions. This really caught my interest.

This culture that had been revealed to me was clearly underpinned by the Presentation values of service, hospitality, compassion and education, and a history of resilience, pioneering and dedication. This is the thread that connects these women and people across various contexts. Transcending time and space. This is the distinct sense of

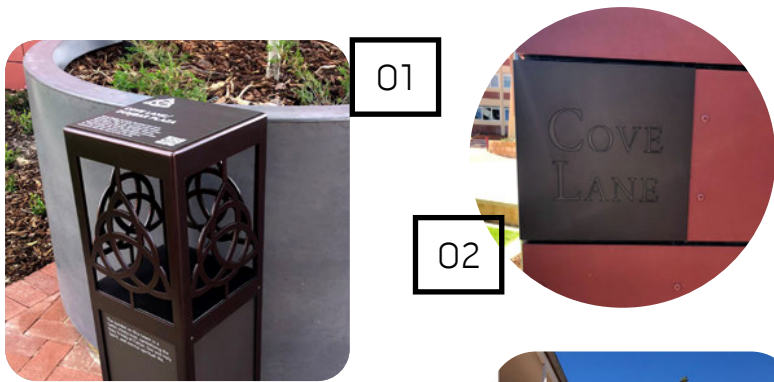
community and purpose that can be observed among present day Iona students. Regardless of how strongly they subscribed to the religious side of Iona's foundations, they all feel connected to those core Presentation values and empowered by what Nano stood for. This, to me, is what makes the Sister's legacy significant and achievements worth celebrating. I selected a series of portraits to try to capture this connection across generations. The continuation of Nano's legacy through women, girls and people through time and around the world.

The geographical journey that led to Iona's establishment in Mosman Park, Western Australia, is illustrated through flowers. Nano is surrounded by species from Ireland, in particular the regions around Cork. Moving towards the founding Sister these gradually transition from Irish species to Western Australian species, starting with those from Geraldton and the Mid-West. The more contemporary sister and then the students, are surrounded by species from the Swan River Region. All the species used also have symbolic visual qualities. The colour palette has been sampled from iconic lead-light depictions

of Nano Nagle's story, and many of the flowers' structures reference Christian & Presentation iconography.

Many species depicted feature only four dominant petals or cross-shaped stamens and structures. Others have a visual similarity to flames and lanterns—alluding to Nano's Lantern.

The abstract blue lines running through the background are derived from a loose comparison of topography between Iona (the campus), sitting between river and sea; with Iona's namesake (the island), sitting between sea and strait. It seemed significant to reference how both Ionas provide solace, perspective and/or perhaps a bridge between bodies of water.



01 COVE LANE/ DUNBAR PLAZA

Nano Nagle secretly founded her first school in 1754 in Cove Lane with about 30 students. This site, opposite the corner of Cove Lane & Dunbar St, Cork, Ireland, later became the first Presentation convent in 1775, and the centre of the Sister's outreach into the rest of the world.

04 OUR LADY OF FÁTIMA ARCHWAY

The Our Lady of Fátima Archway was moved during construction. It was restored by re-galvanising the original archway, and new supports were added in the style of the original before it was reinstalled after construction of the Albeus Fahey Building was completed.

07 GO ONE STEP BEYOND

As Presentation people, we are called to 'go one step beyond' using deeds rather than words (the Nagle family motto). Liam Lawton, in his song 'One Step Beyond', issues a challenge to all Presentation people to continue to 'light the lantern' and keep the Presentation charism at the core of all we do.

02 COVE LANE CORNER SIGN

This sign at left was created as an homage to the original Cove Lane/Dunbar Street sign that can still be seen today in Cork, Ireland.



05 ANGELUS BELL

The Angelus is a devotion commemorating the incarnation, that the Son of God was made flesh through Mary giving birth to the baby Jesus. This bell, symbolic of the special place that Mary has in our faith, is rung to mark the times when the Angelus is prayed and to mark special or important occasions within the Convent.

08 BLACK WATER POND

This pond is representative of the Blackwater River runs through Ballygriffin, where the ancestral farm estate of Nano Nagle resides. With the Nagle Mountains as a backdrop, the valley and river has informed the Sister's deep connection to the natural world and our role as stewards for the earth.

03 COVE LANE LANTERNS

Nano was known as the Lady with the Lantern, walking the narrow streets of Cork, bringing education to the poorest and most needy. Of the Presentation family it may truly be said there are, "Many lamps, [but] one flame" ...the flame of the Divine (Rumi).

06 MARY/ ST. COLUMBA

In 1907 Bishop Gibney, then Bishop of Perth, remarked that Mosman Park situated between river and sea reminded him of the Isle of Iona (Scottish coast). He hoped that it would become a centre to spread the Gospel. St Columba spread Christianity from Ireland, founding a 'place of learning' on the Isle of Iona where the College derives its name.

ENVIRONMENT

[EDUCATIONAL & PHYSICAL]

The educational brief derived from the design thinking process and took into account Etienne Wenger's 'Components of a Social Theory of Learning'. Through developing a brief that focused on these principles –

- > Community - contributing to Iona traditions, faith, embracing change, empowering women, making place, experiencing heritage
- > Identity - presentation and display spaces for exploring ideas, challenging understanding, celebrating creativity, innovation
- > Meaning - facilities providing real life settings, encouraging conversations, building engagement
- > Practice - facilities for researching, designing, testing, producing, presenting, displaying

Overarching themes evolved to embrace –

- > Comfort + community
- > Formal to Informal
- > Belonging, gathering, friendships
- > Project Based Learning
- > 'Iona-vation' Concept
- > The 'Learning Buzz'
- > Professional Development
- > Facilitating change
- > Learning change-makers

The Architect presented a pre-occupancy design overview for all staff, a reminder of the planning process that informed the Albeus Fahey Building.

Flexibility

The multi-storey facility embraces 'Social Theory of Learning' concepts by grouping –

- >workshops adjacent to student breakout and gathering spaces,
- >laboratories with outdoor gardens and balconies,
- >south-facing studios for natural light and ventilation to enhance the creative arts experience

The 'Digital Lounge' transitions from student movement into an informal making space with touchscreens, individual study spaces and self-directed project areas adjacent to the studios.

The 'Food Workshops' open out to Café 33, providing a real world opportunity to embrace both domestic and commercial culinary experiences, and the adjacent Cove Café for barista training. Access to the 'Forum' provides for 'Masterchef' experiences and larger international food celebrations.

The 'Solais' is a place students want to be in, whatever their learning needs are. Whilst providing traditional book resources, it empowers

- >self-discovery and exploration,
- >single class groups or larger gatherings in the presentation space for visiting speakers, book clubs, film sessions,
- >private, pairings and small group spaces through carefully curated furniture and acoustic treatments,
- >technology use, including multiple screens and a video conferencing facility,
- >support as a one-stop-shop for any issues with personal devices,
- >the use of a large outdoor balcony on the north side,
- >student display using different media, including the 'Lantern' stairs where display boxes cater for sculpture, mannequins, and artworks

The 'Loft', linked with the 'Solais', can be adapted for any use



from private study through to large exams.

The 'Staff Community Room' provides for meetings, social gatherings, parent nights and the Iona Past Pupils' Association.

Innovation was driven through the workshops by moving away from the trends of 'Makerspaces' to envisioning 'making space' that supports all learners - teachers and students – to explore, discover, research and embrace the future. This facility forms part of the learning continuum for the 100 year old school, a place that facilitates changing practice, consolidating identity, creating meaning and building community.

The design

- >links students and teachers alike in the 'Solais' where learning is a collective goal,
- >values all levels of settings from 'private spaces' through to 'watching spaces',
- >rejects 'front of room' planning, blurring the edges of each learning environment,
- >responds to social groupings of girls (10-12) by scaling places for interaction,
- >celebrates its place between the river and the ocean – reflecting the Isle of Iona,
- >embraces light, ventilation and movement to outdoor learning,
- >enhances blurred spaces through defining lighting and acoustic treatments,
- >integrates learning technologies seamlessly into the fabric of the building,
- >creates meaning through the central stair as the 'Lantern' – reflecting WA sunlight, colour of the sky and the 'Light' of the Presentation sisters' tradition,
- >makes learning visible from different levels through light shafts, also expressing the 'light of the lantern',
- >respects the place of teachers with a staff lounge,

meeting rooms and direct access in to the 'Solais' for their professional learning community,
>celebrates history through the Presentation Walk, an interactive heritage trail installed at intervals around the building, a learning discovery of Nano Nagle, Presentation Sisters and the Iona College story.

The building is designed to integrate into the existing built fabric, while creating a new hub for the 'heart' of the Iona 7-12 campus. The 5 storey, split level building connects into the surrounding levels and buildings. As the site is tight and sloping, the building needed to respond accordingly. Thus, enhancing universal accessibility (specifically to neighbouring buildings), circulation and connection throughout the campus.

The use of glazing, lightwells, and transitions between levels, allows the girls different perspectives; from the views out to river and ocean, to the heritage of place and the Sisters, to more individual spaces. One student commented "I can see what other classes are doing and it inspires me to try something new."

Taking cues from both the historical context (isle of Iona in Ireland) and the local context in addition to an 'Australian' theme (Western Australia specifically), the internal and external colours consist of warm neutrals, soft and deep reds, materials such as stone and timber, neutral slimline bricks, and colour - through Swiss Pearl cladding. Gentle highlight elements of sage reinforce the gum leaf, a part of the Iona branding.



Staff community room



The Loft



Digital Lounge

Education Environment supporting curriculum



Education Environment supporting curriculum



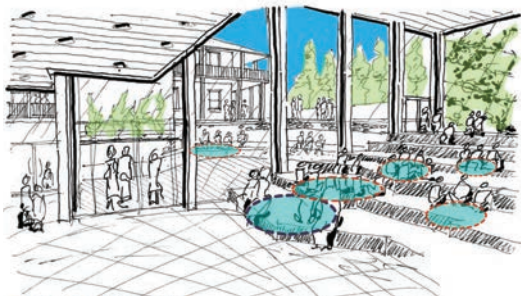
Education Environment supporting curriculum



FORUM -

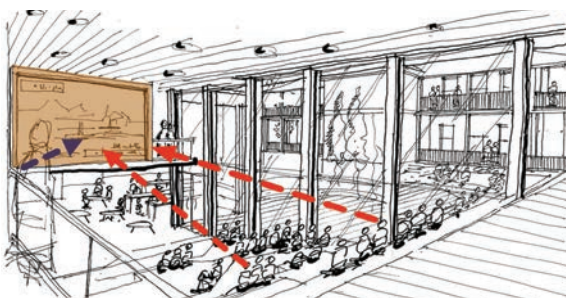
ALBEUS FAHEY BUILDING

FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY



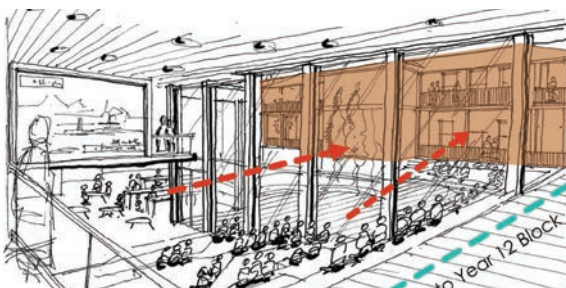
OBSERVED BEHAVIOUR

OUR FRIENDSHIP GROUPS RANGE FROM 10-15
'FACE TO FACE' WITH OUR FRIENDS



AGORA - MEETING PLACE

MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATION- YEAR GROUPS,
HOUSE GROUPS, CLASS GROUPS (2), DISPLAY OUR
WORK



AGORA - CONNECTIONS

ONE'S PLACE WITHIN THE HERITAGE OF THE SITE,
AMBITION AND RIGHT OF PASSAGE FOR YEAR 12



FRIENDSHIP GROUPINGS

DIFFERING TIER SIZES



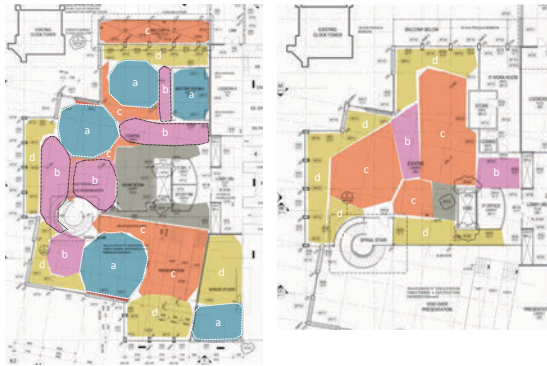
VISIBLE CONNECTIONS

HERITAGE + PLACE +
AMBITION + FUTURE



SOLAIS- ALBEUS FAHEY BUILDING

FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY



A large component of establishing the different zones in the building and for the furniture settings was to base it on different types of space that students might work with. Whether that be working together in small groups working independently or learning in a more direct focus teaching setting. These zones were established prior to any furniture being selected.



The Solais



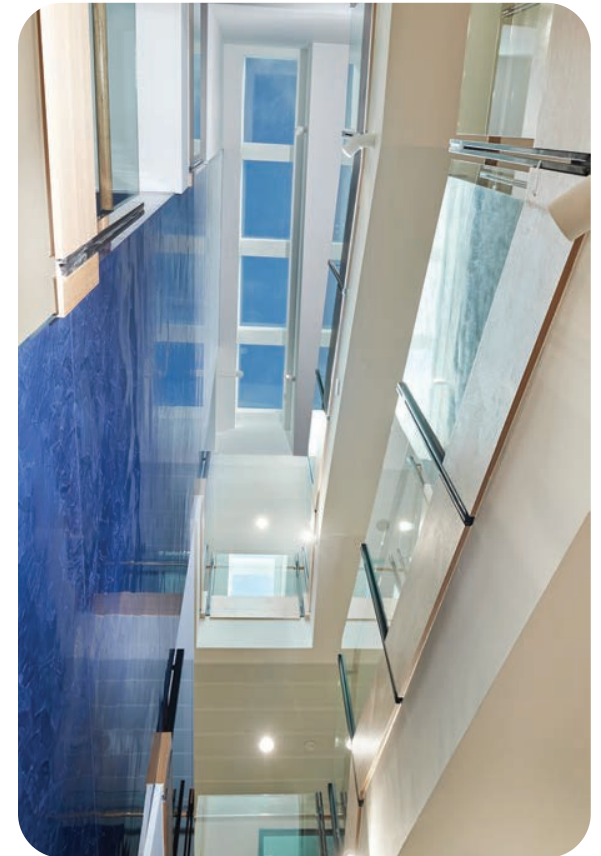
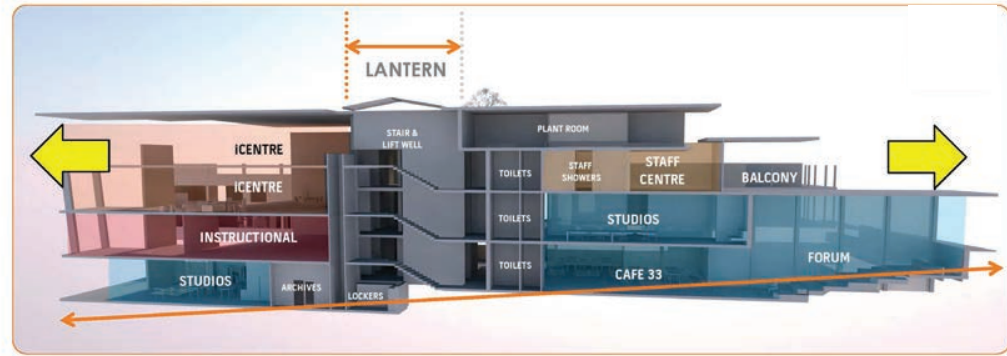
The Solais



'LIGHT OF THE LANTERN' - ALBEUS FAHEY BUILDING

"THE LADY WITH THE LANTERN"....
NANO WALKED THE STREETS OF CORK
BRINGING ASSISTANCE AND COMFORT TO
THOSE WHO WERE MOST IN NEED.
A TOWER OVER THE CROSSING MAY BE
CALLED A LANTERN TOWER IF IT HAS
OPENINGS THROUGH WHICH LIGHT
FROM OUTSIDE CAN SHINE DOWN TO THE
CROSSING.

FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY



OUTCOME OF THE PROCESS & PROJECT

This building encompasses every element of the '**social theory of learning**'. It is an expression of the College culture to '**go one step beyond**'. The vision was for a '**learning buzz**' experience through -

- >Facilities for researching, designing, testing, producing, refining, presenting, displaying – Practice
- >Facilities providing real life settings, encouraging conversations, building engagement and spaces for developing content – Meaning
- >Presentation and display spaces for exploring ideas, challenging understanding, celebrating creativity, innovation - Identity
- >Contributing to Iona traditions, living out faith, learning pathways, embracing change, empowering women, building confidence, making place, experiencing heritage - Community.

This set of ideals informed the design decisions, providing spaces that enable learning experiences to be created by the teacher and learner through -

- >establishing vocabulary to focus the learning spaces on a level of services rather than traditionally faculty based -

Studios – wet and dry
Laboratories – wet, making, innovating
Workshops – production
Instruction – agile, groupings

- >a 'Forum' that transitions between floors, provides technology, directly supported by the Broadcast Studio, for presentation, performance and small group study - the 'Agora' – and visually links to the original building and Convent
- >the 'Solais' and 'Loft' that interconnect resources, group and private study areas with a presentation space for visiting authors and movie presentations.

- >the close proximity, horizontally and vertically, of research facilities to the workshops, laboratories and studios, including from adjacent buildings and embracing the 'Crossing'- physically, pedagogically and experientially,
- >informal gathering spaces encouraging learner discourse and staff development,
- >authentic learner transactions through media, graphics, broadcasting and innovation workshops.



Small cosy group spaces



Visual arts

Materiality Inspiration

The existing Iona Presentation College campus is primarily constructed out of masonry, with warm reds, creams and greys. Building on the existing campus and style guide, the project palette compliments the existing language with a contemporary approach.

Taking cues from both the historical context (isle of Iona in Ireland) and the local context in addition to an 'Australiana' theme (WA specifically), the internal and external colours consist of warm neutrals, soft and deep reds, materials such as stone and timber, neutral slimline bricks, and colour - through Swiss Pearl cladding. Gentle highlight elements of sage reinforce the gum leaf, a part of the Iona branding.

Timber can be found both internally and externally, while the use of large windows provides valuable natural light. The project seeks to 'bring the outdoors in', both through materiality and light, whilst framing views through picture windows, linking the river and ocean and celebrating the historical significance of the 100 year old Morton bay fig trees.

Natural daylighting and ventilation, as well as the link between indoors and outdoors are key elements featured within the design. The use of curtain wall glazing, lightwells, skylights and voids create light

filled spaces emphasising the connection to the exterior. While the 'lantern' filters light throughout the stairwells, lobbies, and surrounding areas, providing opportunities for the display of artwork in the heart of the building.

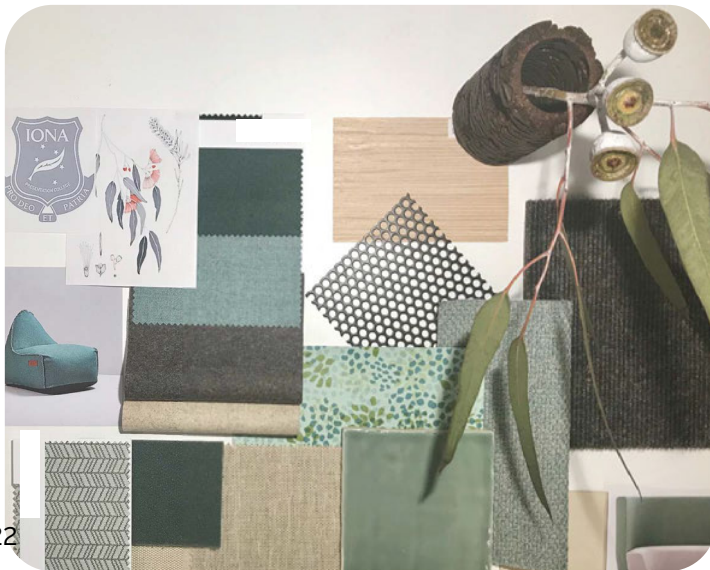
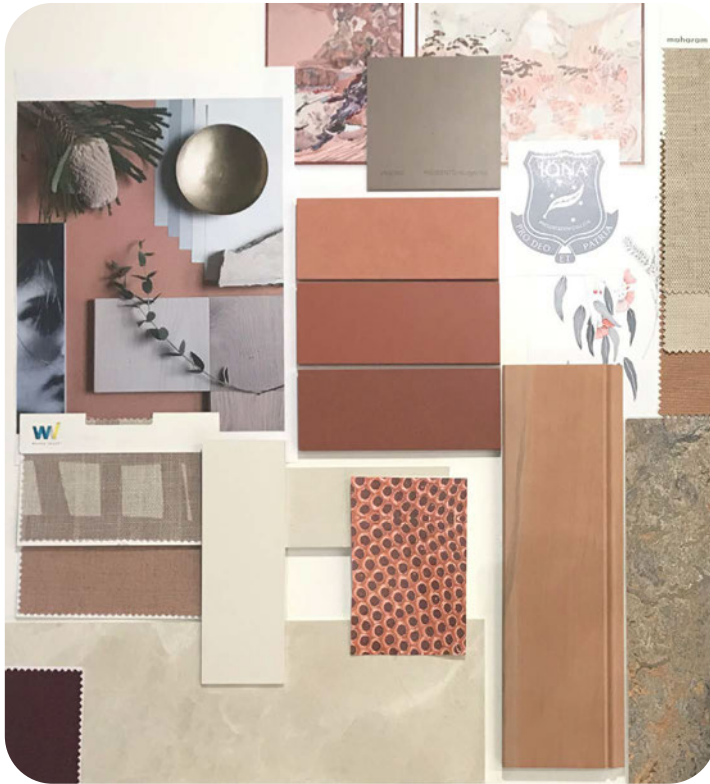
SUSTAINABILITY + MATERIAL CHOICES

The suppliers of the materials and furniture were asked to provide us with suitable products to fit within the design intent, sustainability and life cycle goals, a true future building project. The furniture suppliers, all provided their ergonomic certificates and labelled the Australian/ locally made/ sourced projects.

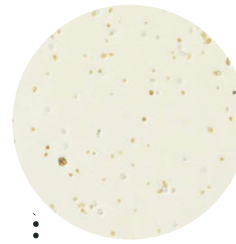
Our close collaboration with the two flooring suppliers resulted in the use of a muted colour palette inspired by the Ireland stones- in a contemporary and sophisticated way, combined with the contextual coastal location, of Western Australia and Iona Presentation College in Mosman Park. After many, many iterations, you will see the upper most level, the staff community with the soft greys, subtle metallic fleck, laid in a herringbone pattern, symbolic of the aerial snap shot of the West Australian landscape, the beautiful texture and pattern of nature.

It wasn't until installation was completed that the full design intent was visible. The majority of the student areas pick up on the blue of the river and the ocean. The use of the two products compliment each other in the one project and provide clarity and delineation between staff and student spaces.

Materiality Inspiration



capral cw175
double glazing



swiss pearl
feature sheeting
granulated marble



metal cladding
'picture window'



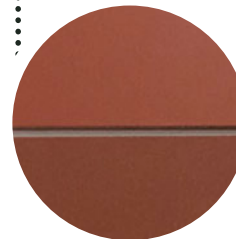
composite
timber 'pop' out



growies on wires
on all elevations



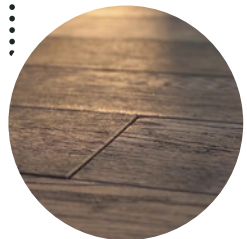
swiss pearl
feature sheeting
two earthy shades



brick
slimline profile
off-white/ cream



composite timber



Materiality Inspiration



COLOUR

www.southern.com

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Carpet Inspiration

