

# VERTICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL GUIDELINES NSW | Australia

## 01 Specifications

Client: NSW DoE  
Year: 2014  
Location: Adelaide SA  
Budget:  
Area:  
Year Levels: 7-12  
Students: Varied  
Architect: DWP Suters

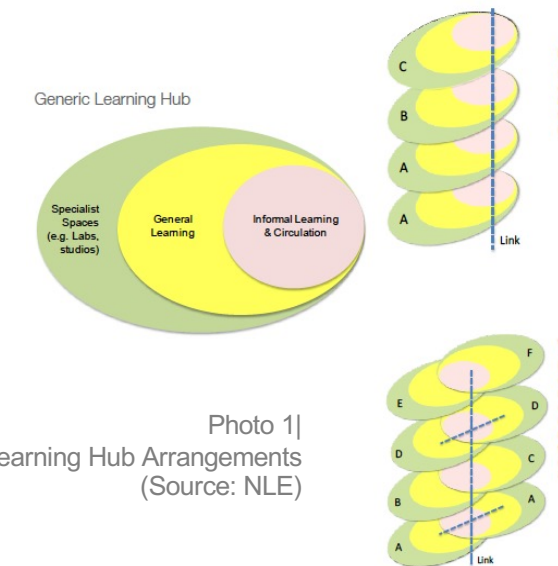
## 02 Overview

As a result of increasing population growth in dense urban settings, the Department of Education and Communities NSW appointed NLE to develop a multi-level schools concept that would accommodate the educational demands of the Australian Curriculum for secondary students. As more and more families take up residence in inner city suburbs the demand for educating children is placing pressure on public schools which are currently reaching their maximum enrolment numbers. In dense urban environments schools have become landlocked having expanded over the years to the point where they can grow no further in the horizontal plane with no option but to expand vertically.

## 03 Process

The main project objective was the production of a report that investigates the development opportunities for a hypothetical vertical school in a dense urban context enabling public schools to expand their collective enrolment number thus reducing overall pressures and minimal disruption to the school system of the local region.

A series of evidence informed educational space planning principles was developed, followed by different concept designs that explored the optimal arrangement of teaching and learning spaces, movement of the student mass both vertically and horizontally, operational and management requirements of the school, quality of the indoor environment and opportunity for outdoor relief.



## 04 Outcomes

Based on the planning objectives, NLE recommended the design concept progress via the creation of Learning Hubs ('the Hubs') which can operate in isolation across an entire level or be linked to other hubs on a single level as well as interact with floors above and below depending on how the levels are configured. It was proposed that all developments will include a: Learning Community Hub (reception, services, administration etc); Student Hub (informal learning, general learning student services, resource hub & social space/cafeteria)

And then a selection of the following Hubs, configured to respond to the site and learning community context: Flexible Trans-disciplinary Hub (e.g. for project based learning across a combination of disciplines which may be typical e.g. dance/drama or atypical e.g. dance/science) Disciplinary Hub (e.g. for specialised pathways of typically grouped subject areas e.g. performing arts and including some general learning. )



# VERTICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL GUIDELINES NSW | Australia

## 04

### Outcomes

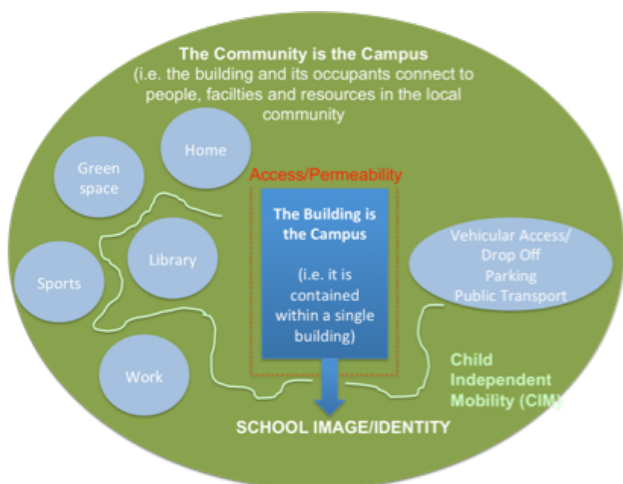
#### Community Engagement

The study investigated the ability to share common facilities with the local community including extended hours of use and where potential opportunities for commercial return may exist on the initial capital investment

#### Flexibility

The Hubs are designed in 'halves', so that they can be split over one or more levels or combined to create larger hubs in accordance with the building's floorplate. The way in which this is achieved can be collaboratively determined on a case by case basis by the design team and learning community.

A series of arrangements was then explored to demonstrate how trans-disciplinary or disciplinary hubs could be arranged to support different curricular and pedagogical objectives



## 04

### Outcomes

#### The Dual Campus

During its investigation, NLE determined that one of the main ideas influencing multi-level school developments is that of a 'dual campus' i.e. the building IS the campus and/or the building is ON a campus.

#### The Building is the Campus

The school is contained within a single building or within a number of floors of a multi-use facility. This is likely to be the case for inner-city and urban developments.

#### Spatial Implications

- Accommodates a comprehensive curriculum within a building (use of public facilities will be explored on a case by case basis at which time the flexibility of objective 1 will come into play)
- Community interface & projected identity
- Controlled access - public privileged private
- May offer multiple optional access points to better address surrounding facilities

#### The Building on the Campus

The building is a new development/adaptive reuse or an extension of an existing building on an existing 'campus'. This could be an actual academic campus such as a school or tertiary institution, or could be embraced more broadly as a neighbourhood or community where it is proposed that surrounding facilities will be used. In this case there will be less demand on the design concept to support a comprehensive curriculum as students will have access to existing facilities on campus. This emphasises the importance of concept versatility as identified in objective 1.

#### Spatial Implications

- Can be applied in isolation or as an extension to an existing building
- May offer multiple optional access points to better address surrounding facilities



# VERTICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL GUIDELINES NSW | Australia

## 04

### Outcomes

#### Educational Space Planning Principles

The Concepts will:

- be flexible and allow customisation to suit different community contexts by providing both core and optional space types
- be suited to both 'the building on the campus' and 'the building is the campus' scenarios
- take into consideration shared access to local facilities
- be responsive to significant shifts in student numbers
- offer a safe and secure learning and working environment that invites community participation and engagement
- be mindful of the needs of learners at different learning stages
- offer an engaging and supportive student experience suited to range of learning styles
- offer flexible and well connected teaching and learning spaces
- offer technology-enabled settings with an emphasis on mobility
- have the capacity to support comprehensive curriculum delivery
- be configured to maximise meaningful and functional relationships and links between people, disciplines and resources
- support teachers in their roles as student mentors and members of a professional community
- maximise outdoor learning opportunities
- create a healthy and environmentally sustainable environment that serves as a tool for learning
- treat the entire school as a library by offering a central resource hub supported by distributed resource nodes as required.
- respond to varied access and usage patterns.

