

Winner

Durbach Block Jagger

All projects begin with country, acknowledge history and catalyse legacy into a new future.

We recognise the Awabakal people as the traditional custodians of the land, respecting their cultural practices and knowledge systems.

Thinking about Newcastle's benign climate and the project's beautiful park setting, we began to imagine a room and a garden.

In the way that gardens preceded building, we propose a villa and its verandah. As the park is to the city, so the verandah is to the villa.

The expression of the villa and its verandah is of a cube and a tower made in light coloured brick. The cube has punched windows lined in timber.

The attenuated tower like verandah has slender steel columns and mosaiced domes. It creates and shades the welcome space entry and northern corner.

Every level of the building connects across a light filled void on flying bridges.

The building itself has a robust and joyful presence in the city.

Alumni House settles easily into the civic surrounds, with its masonry buildings, towers and spires. The villa formally addresses the park. The verandah overlooks Auckland Street to NuSpace, the campus corridor and the harbour beyond.

Daily public uses animate the three street edges. Highly permeable, memorable and approachable, it becomes the new front door to the university.

Its design acknowledges circumstantial, permanent and ceremonial use.



Shortlisted

Candalepas Associates + David Boyle

We would like to acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this land in which we are situated. We would also like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which this competition is situated including the Awabakal and Worimi Nations. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.

There is a clarity of intent to the architectural expression, belying that which is an inner sanctuary for the alumni, that will use the space in years to come.

Architecture, at its best, can offer an important contribution to society and there can be universal reach in any such architectural offering; something that touches the imagination of more than simply those for whom any one building is made. No successful cultural building ignores this dimension and possibility.

In the design of Alumni House there is an intention to touch all of the alumni that engage with the building through memory and emotion and this can be done through the medium of architecture.

Alumni House sits at the juncture of the Civic Precinct of the Newcastle CBD and the Academic Corridor with Civic Park at its centre. The collection of civic buildings that exist on the periphery of the park embody the historical underpinnings of the city, its progress and its changing social values.

These buildings continue to represent important architectural works of their time and Alumni House will represent a contemporary piece offered to the Civic Precinct; contributing to the University's increasing presence and involvement in the daily life of Newcastle. The building through its architecture, will provide a destination of many connections.

We aim to produce an architecture of no tense and which acknowledges the important civic location of this building as a place of influence in Newcastle.



Shortlisted

Sam Crawford Architects + Curious Practice

Sam Crawford Architects and Curious Practice respectfully acknowledge that the Awabakal and Worimi peoples are the traditional custodians of Muloobinba (Newcastle), the land on which Alumni House is proposed.

We are in a continuous process of learning and discovery regarding the history and experience of First Nations peoples. Sam Crawford Architects and Curious Practice welcome our collaborators to join us on this journey of education and reconciliation.

Alumni House is a visible and accessible interface between the City of Newcastle and the University; between staff, students, alumni and the people of the city. It responds to and respects the site while delivering a vision for the future of connection, commitment, community, conversation, and celebration. Its architectural expression asserts a civic confidence, driven by four distinct ideas that work together to create a generous, functional and dynamic building.

Alumni House subverts the traditional streetscape of governmental buildings that bound Civic Park. In-lieu of this hard perimeter, Alumni House draws the civic border away from the street and dissolves it deep within the building plan. Recessing the civic edge in this way creates a versatile ground plane and a generosity towards the city. Activity on upper levels is set to the perimeter of the building, inverting the traditionally inward-facing institutional spaces and celebrating the presence and activity of the alumni within.

Just as the Awabakal people would inhabit different sites according to the seasons, Alumni House uses passive design principles to modify and strengthen the relationship with the natural environment and reduce the requirement for air conditioning.



Shortlisted

Tonkin Zulaikha Greer + JMD Design

Our proposal is seated in the notion of the interconnectedness of everything. We see this as a conceptual meeting point of Australia's First Peoples' philosophy of Country, custodianship and individual responsibility, and global Universities' research in the tireless pursuit of knowledge about the world.

Bringing these two strands together we can start to re-imagine the city and the buildings within it in a more holistic way. Our proposal explores ways in which we can understand the site in its context by focusing on the ecological systems of the area and trying to rebalance these; by considering tree cover, natural water flows, permeability of land and endemic vegetation we are responding to ideas of Caring for Country while at the same time proposing a 21st century approach to regenerative city making, one focused on urban rewilding.

The theme of interconnectedness flows not just through ideas about the balance of natural systems – it is also central to how we view the social program and meaning of Alumni House. We think of Alumni House as a project entirely about relationships; the coming together of different groups of people to share what they have in common. This idea is not new – it is part of traditional Aboriginal lore and runs through western ideas of community and governance. We think Alumni House is an extraordinary opportunity to form relationships that will help realise the building and sustain it into the future – relationships with Alumni in contributing to the creation of the building and in patronising it when it is complete, relationships that involve the community in making the building and furthering the relationship between the University and the City through suggested shared research.

