

**ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS TO
CLARENCE VALLEY CONSERVATORIUM
6-8 VILLIERS STREET GRAFTON
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT**

INTRODUCTION

The below information has been gleaned from Clarence Valley Conservatoriums webpage:

Clarence Valley Conservatorium (CVCON) has its roots stemming back to the 1930's. The music rooms at 4-8 Villiers Street, Grafton were established in the 1930s by the Sisters of Mercy as part of the Catholic school system and also offered lessons to non-Catholic students.

Fifty years later, in 1982, under the direction of Sr Cecilia Moran, purpose-built premises were constructed, completed in 1986, and the centre named St Cecilia's Music Academy.

The centre then became an independent, incorporated, community-based organisation, called St Cecilia's Music and Performing Arts Centre of Grafton Inc. with a newly formed Management Committee and Administrator.

In 1995 the Sisters of Mercy ceased to be involved in the day-to-day operations of the centre, while retaining ownership of the buildings. For the next 2 years the centre became a campus of the Northern Rivers Conservatorium.

1999 – 2003 St Cecilia's received \$15,000 from the Department of Education and Training under the Regional Conservatorium Program and was formally accepted into the NSW Regional Conservatorium Association in 1999 when recurrent funding from the Department of Education and Training commenced.

To reflect the amalgamation of several local council regions in 2003, the name changed to the Clarence Valley Conservatorium. At the same time the premises were purchased from the Sisters of Mercy, a Director was appointed alongside the Administrator and Clerical Officer and a campus opened in Maclean in rented premises from the Council.

While the 1986 building continues to serve the CVCON well, the original music rooms in the cottage next door are no longer fit for purpose despite the recent addition of an accessible ramp. The cottage is a labyrinth of small rooms that causes issues for accessibility, storage, acoustics and safety. Having two buildings that are completely separated is dysfunctional and disconnecting. The CVCON is striving to operate successfully under a single roof in a modern, practical, functional, acoustic and aesthetic environment.

PROPOSED DESIGN

The proposed design offers a contrasting architectural solution to the existing cottage that is proposed to be removed/relocated. Also, the design does not try to compete with the design elements of the 1980's building. Instead, it contrasts with independent design features. Some elements are interpreted from the simplistic former school buildings (currently Gurehlghm) on the corner of Villiers and Victoria Streets.

A cantilevered canopy and signage pylon provide architectural design clues towards the entry providing a sense of arrival and place. The new entry via the new addition replaces the existing underwhelming entry through the existing 1980's building. Users are comfortably drawn inside to the foyer which provides easy orientation towards the reception for any queries or ticket purchasing, enrolment enquiries etc, or turn left to access the CVCON's original intimate auditorium or proceed straight ahead and upstairs for practise rooms.

The scale and proportions of the design along the Villiers Street frontage is very human and respectful of the domestic scaling of the 1980's building. The building increases in bulk further away from Villiers Street and does not feel heavy or dominating from the street.

Ground floor of the existing and new building is now fully connected and has no change in level. First floor is accessed via stairs and/or a generous lift. The design is fully accessible, providing equitable and dignified access to everyone of all ages and all abilities.

The materials of face concrete block are chosen for minimal maintenance and durability and sound-proofing. Cladding is selected for first floor walls to provide design relief and to imbue a sense of lightness. This also affords the simpler installation and playful arrangement of circular windows, representing musical notes. The windows, all double glazed for acoustic reasons provide fleeting glimpses and informal connections between onlookers externally and occupants internally.

The contemporary design will establish the CVCON as a cultural icon within the Clarence Valley.

HERITAGE

Refer to the Statement of Heritage Impact prepared by Perumal Murphy Alessi as part of this Development Application proposal.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Being established on this site since the 1930's provides a sense of ownership of public space around the CVCON. Territorial Re-enforcement is realised through connections that students, educators, musicians, performers and spectators have with the venue, building and surrounding open spaces which communicates what activities are appropriate and where people should or should not be.

Natural surveillance will be achieved by visibility between inside spaces and external spaces with the use of substantial glazing. Other design elements of building layout, orientation and location, low level landscaping, and aesthetic and security lighting are other design elements that afford natural surveillance.

Security systems such as motion detectors and CCTV are proposed in the detailed design to provide technical or mechanical surveillance to minimise crime.

Access control will be implemented in the detailed design in the form of card readers and electric door strikes to enable the CVCON to monitor and understand user movements.

Space / Activity Management strategies will be implemented with a reception that is the first port of call for all visitors. The reception has clear visibility of the entry and of all people coming into and out of the building.

CONCLUSION

The design solution is a respectful and inspiring contemporary solution that addresses the context of siting in the Conservation Area between a 1960's building and connected to a 1980's building.

The alterations and additions result in a connected, fully accessible building that enables the CVCON to operate successfully and provide equitable and dignified access to music lessons, cultural programs, leadership, partnerships and collaborations; something that the CVCON has never been able to do.



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2nd September 2025