

DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2 to design new Sydney primary school

News | Words [Louisa Wright](#)



A playground at Ultimo-Pyrmont Public School designed by DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2. Image: DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2

The New South Wales government has appointed a consortium comprising DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and Paris-based BCM2 to design the new Ultimo-Pyrmont Public School in Sydney.

The consortium was selected to design the primary school following a design excellence competition.

The new school will be constructed on the site of the existing Ultimo Public School, located at Wattle, Quarry and Jones streets in Ultimo.

Managing director of DesignInc Sydney, Sandeep Amin, said the existing building was “deemed very restrictive” and prevented utilization of the buildings. “The way the existing buildings are located doesn’t allow [for the] optimum outcome in the design,” said Amin.

“Our vision for the new school is one that seamlessly blends imagination, learning and nature to enrich the students’ early learning journey,” Amin said.

“Ninety percent families and the children from those families live in high-rise apartments, so there’s very little contact with actual nature,” he continued. “For us the basic driver for the design was how we can make use of the site in a way that we can bring contact with nature back to the children of the school.”



The childcare centre and playground at Ultimo-Pyrmont Public School designed by DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2. Image: DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2

The design incorporates natural light and ventilation in all classrooms.

“We tried to maximize play areas. Almost all of the terrace or rooftop surfaces are play areas,” Amin said.

On the Jones Street frontage the school is single storey and increases in height as it moves towards Wattle Street, reaching three storeys.

The winning concept design was selected by a five-member panel including people from the design, construction and education industries.

The panel said the winning concept was “well-scaled, flexible, imaginative and appropriate to the stages of education and ages of the children, with playful and creative architectural expression.”

“The environmental design and performance was well-considered, the building is straightforward to build and maintain while still delivering a fresh and vibrant quality contributing to the advancement of the standard of amenity of early teaching and learning facilities in Australia,” the panel said.

A “pop-up” school will be built at Wentworth Park for students while the school undergoes redevelopment. Construction of the pop-up school is expected to start in early 2017 and will be ready for occupation in mid-2017.

The redevelopment of the school will cater for the growing population in Sydney.

Ultimo Public School currently has 285 students. The temporary school will accommodate 360 students and the new school is expected to accommodate 800 students.



The library and informal learning spaces at Ultimo-Pyrmont Public School designed by DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2. Image: DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2

The Department of Education and Communities (DEC) had originally agreed to sell the site of Ultimo Public School and purchase a new site on the corner of Wattle, Jones and Fig Streets in Ultimo. The DEC decided not to proceed with the purchase because the site was found to be contaminated and the cost of remediation would be too expensive.

A parliamentary inquiry into inner city public primary school enrolment capacity in Sydney and the redevelopment of Ultimo Public School is currently underway.

The new Ultimo-Pyrmont Public School is expected to open on the first day of term one in 2020.

The NSW Department of Education was not able to confirm the members of the jury panel or the other shortlisted design teams.

Words	Louisa Wright
Images	DesignInc, Lacoste and Stevenson and BCM2
Posted	15 Dec 2016
Tags	Education , Education Design

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