

LEARNING AND TEACHING BUILDING, MONASH UNI

A striking brick landscape takes shape inside Monash Uni's Learning and Teaching Building



A new gateway building is under construction at Monash Uni's Clayton Campus. The Learning and Teaching building is the mastermind of John Wardle Architects. It's not only helping to develop a built edge to the campus, in line with MGS Architect's Clayton Campus Masterplan, but is also creating a more student centred learning experience with contemporary teaching and learning spaces.

This creatively designed and visually stunning building will include 70 formal learning spaces and informal learning spaces for 240 students, as well as contemporary staff workspaces, being

home to the Faculty of Education and the Office of Learning and Teaching.

Meaghan Dwyer, Principal at John Wardle Architects says, "The building has two important roles. It has a role in the context of the Masterplan, which is about arrival and the university campus at large. It also has a role in providing a new teaching and learning environment." Even under construction, you can immediately see that the building delivers on both of those requirements, and more.

Sitting at the intersection of one of the campus' busiest pedestrian pathways, at only four storeys high, the Learning and Teaching building stands in contrast to its neighbouring modernist (and towering) 11 storey Menzies Building. Yee Jien, Senior Associate at John Wardle Architects, explains, "Monash University is a landscape campus, so our design intent was to bring the landscape inside, which then turns up

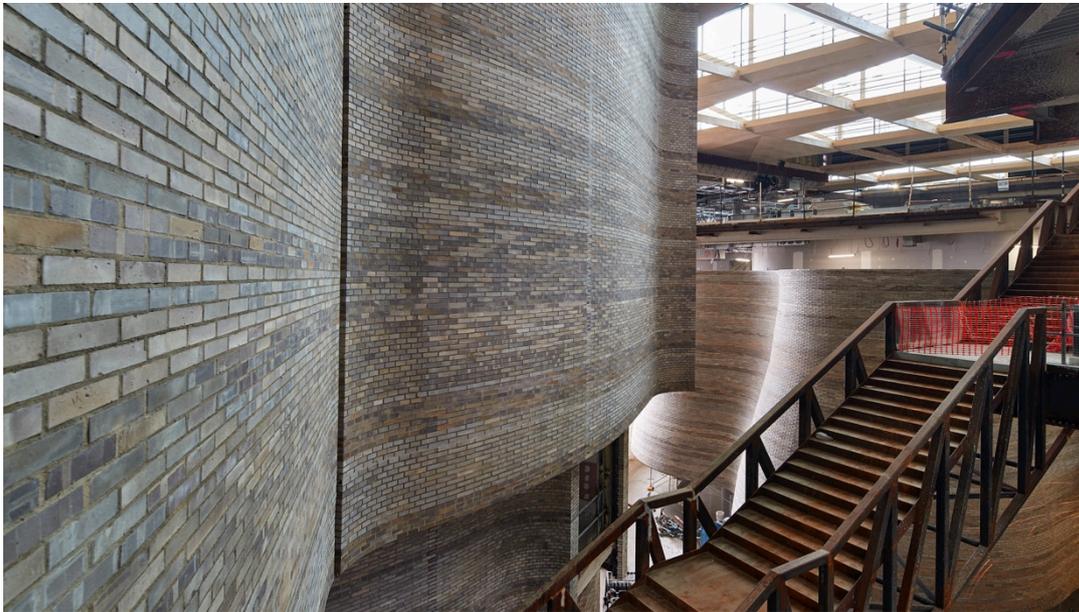


the building into these vertical brick elements." Brickwork was chosen as the feature of the design intent and, without a doubt, bricks have become the real focal point of the building.

In fact, that perfect blend of practicality and creativity has truly taken hold. The building houses three brick elements: A tower standing four storeys high, a kiln comprising a series of magnificent curved brick-clad areas, and a theatre in the round clad in brickwork. As Yee explains, "What happens inside these brick elements is that, aside from being visually striking and being used as a wayfinding device inside a large building, we're accommodating a number of formal and informal teaching spaces within them."

Selecting the right brick for these elements was a critical and lengthy process. It required working with a brick maker who had the passion and skill to deliver a standout brick; and one with a transparent process, to be able to explain how he was making minor adjustments to the samples, so the architects could be part of that critical conversation.

That was Klynton Krause, third generation boutique brick maker at Krause Bricks in country Victoria. "We worked with Klynton to see what he was able to produce and we quickly became attached to the qualities of the brick he delivered," comments Yee. "The bricks had a hand made quality about them, and the texture and colour tied in well with the design landscape theme," Yee says.



It was through an extensive process of sampling over several months that the team selected the colour range. Yee continues, "Rather than us decide what the colour was, we picked out of the samples that Klynton produced. He really understood where we wanted to take the design from the initial computer renders – that is what set him apart from his peers."

In the end, the perfect solution was a Monash Grey brick blend. And the result is absolutely striking. Brickwork is the signature of the building. From the moment you step foot in the door, and even from quick glimpses outside, you see the bricks. "Monash University has been very excited by what they have seen (so far in construction) and so have we," says Yee.

There's no doubt that Monash University's new Learning and Teaching building really will offer a dynamic learning environment, and simply be a delightful and inviting place to study.

For more information on this project, or the Krause Monash Grey brick blend, please contact Robertson's Building Products on +613 8199 9599.

Architect: John Wardle Architects
Product: Krause Bricks Monash Grey blend
Builder: Multiplex
Photographer: Peter Bennetts