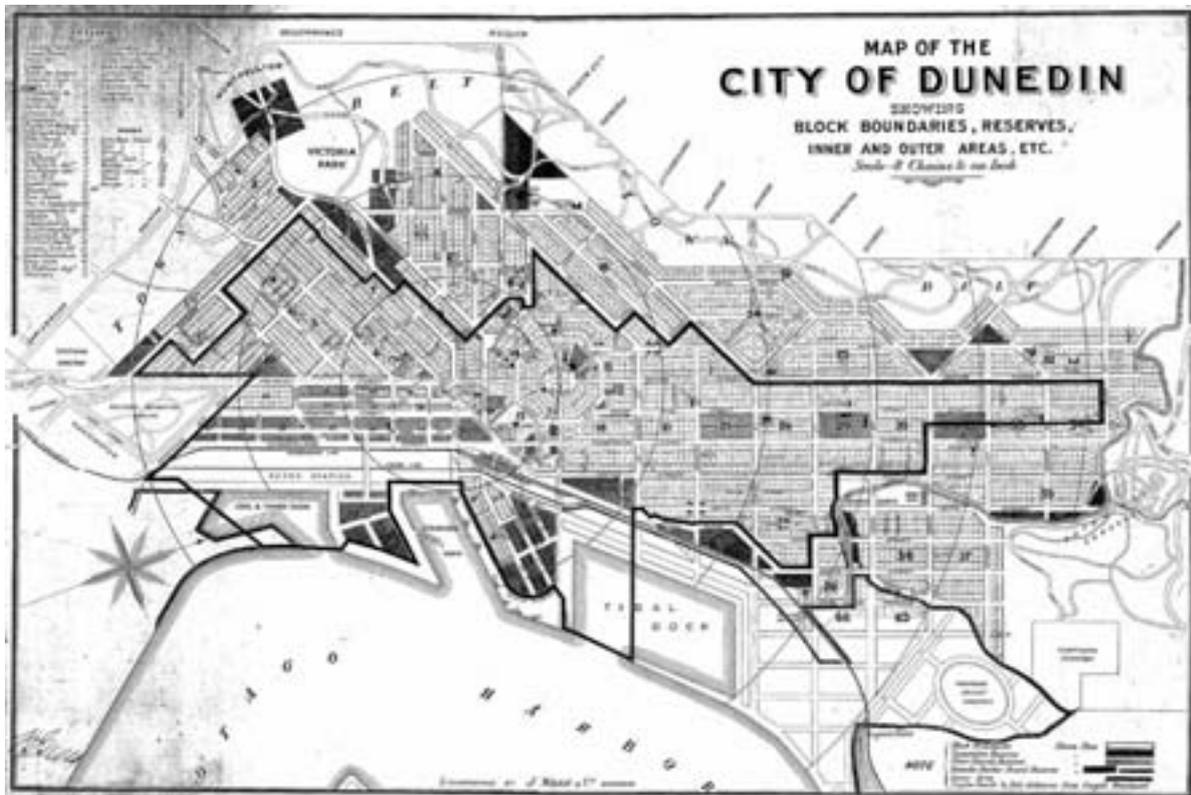


chapter two
the dunedin campus



2.1 The University in the city

The history of the University of Otago is intimately enmeshed with the history of the city of Dunedin. It is perhaps useful to divide the history of the city and therefore the University into three sections, each of which provide insight and inspiration for the Master Plan to guide future development. The three sections are:

- Connection** covering the pre-European settlement of the area
- Imposition** the founding of modern Dunedin and the University
- Consolidation** the development of the city and the growth of the University

Connection

The documented history of Dunedin began before the founding of the European settlement as part of the strategy to open New Zealand to colonisation. The human history of occupation is of course much older, with Māori settlement of the South Island, including the land which is now Dunedin, traceable for over 500 years.

The physical signs of this earliest human inhabitation of the landscape are faint, recorded in the naming of places, dispersed archaeological finds, records left by early European settlers and from the record of oral history of the Māori people themselves. It is apparent, from the evidence that is available from this time, that the Dunedin

site was not inhabited but that it was nonetheless used by the local Māori people as a place for hunting, plant cultivation and harvesting and possibly for the husbandry of pigs. The land around the river now called the Water of Leith, called Owheo by the Māori people, was certainly used. Archaeological investigation has revealed evidence of shell pits, where shell foods were prepared and eaten, and signs of a small settlement, adjacent to the Leith, north of the campus.

This period in the city's brief history includes early connection when explorers and whalers in the southern oceans encountered Māori civilisation.

What inspiration can be drawn from this period to inform the University Master Plan? Perhaps it is in the faintness of the mark left by Māori culture on the land, as we urgently seek more environmentally harmonious ways of dwelling in connection with the natural world.

Imposition

Developments in archaeology may, in the future, reveal much more about the pre-European settlement of the landscape that was to become Dunedin. What is clear, however, is that whatever was there was not considered significant by the European founders of the city, as they set about building a modern European city from scratch in what they saw as a virgin landscape.

In keeping with the spirit of the age and the precedent of the founding of other cities in Australia and the United States, Dunedin was conceived as a grand city on a vast scale, certainly ambitious given the size of the founding

population. The plan included a complete inventory of facilities and civic institutions befitting the founders' ambitions. Hospital, botanical gardens, Town Hall, churches and of course the University all had their place, and appear on the city plans, either at the inception, or very shortly afterwards.

The City Plan was conceived and instigated by a young surveyor, Charles Kettle, who led a team to map the land and set out the city streets and its principal sites. The plan is famously based on the plan of Edinburgh's New Town. While it is clear that Kettle knew the plan and followed some of its rules, regular rectangular city blocks, straight streets, landmark churches at the close of significant vistas, Kettle's plan is also a pragmatic response to the practical business of making efficient use of land, providing usefully-sized building plots and adequate and efficient streets. Kettle's plan is not merely pragmatic, however. It is also an inspired response to the landscape. In carrying out the survey and laying out the city grid, Kettle reveals an underlying orthogonal and diagonal geometry to the surrounding hills and used these two geometries to fix the plan in the landscape. This simple geometric device creates a plan of great richness and incident, which comes together in a focus at the famous Octagon marking the centre of the city. Having fixed the built plan Kettle then framed the composition with reserved green belts of conserved parkland and botanical gardens which serve to give a green frame to the city. By contrast to the certainty and rigour of the body of the plan, the shoreline to the harbour seems unresolved and remains an ambiguous feature of the city today.

What inspiration should we draw from Kettle's plan imposed on the landscape?

- Firstly the grid provides a highly flexible and pragmatic discipline for the efficient construction of buildings on a regular building plot module of 22 yards (20 m).
- Secondly it provides an urban design control to organise diverse buildings into useful streets and places.
- Thirdly the generosity of the street dimensions provides the space for creating civilised streets through the campus and linking the University with the city

Consolidation

The third period in this brief history describes the occupation of Kettle's plan up to the present day. Dunedin has been a remarkably successful city, rapidly filling the space of the Kettle Plan in gold-rush and industrial economic booms that saw it become the most important city in New Zealand. Fine stone buildings, suburban growth, the coming of the railway and vast expansion on the Dunedin waterfront are all features of this period of consolidation and growth. Throughout this period the city's University grew and prospered. The University has developed from its opening in 1871, with three Professors and about eighty students, until today, with 22,000 students and separate campuses in Christchurch and Wellington and further smaller centres across the country.

It has spread well beyond its original tidy allocation within Kettle's Grid to take up a significant portion of North Dunedin. Student residences occupy a larger area, extending beyond North Dunedin, and the University's influence within Dunedin's culture and economy now extends across the whole city region.

Growth at this pace and scale is not an orderly process and the environment of the University campus reflects the process that created it. Much of the campus is excellent but as a whole it lacks the coherence and structure that a more planned process might have delivered. Creating an environment that provides that missing coherence in the context of addressing the other challenges faced by the University is the purpose of a Master Plan.



the dunedin campus



The Dunedin Campus today

The following summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the current campus

Strengths

- 01 A river-side location
- 02 Mature landscape setting
- 03 Fine historic buildings
- 04 Excellent new information services building
- 05 Space for growth
- 06 Proximity to the city
- 07 Proximity to the town reserve and botanical gardens
- 08 Close proximity of student housing

Weaknesses

- 09 Poor use of the asset of the Water of Leith
- 10 Important sites on the Leith bend occupied by low quality space
- 11 Computer building spanning the river obstructs views and reduces potential of site
- 12 Urban void around the highway S bends
- 13 High speed traffic close to the campus
- 14 Poor connectivity for pedestrians between the Health Sciences Precinct and core campus
- 15 Low quality landscape design and public art
- 16 Poor quality street designs
- 17 Low capacity development of key sites
- 18 Potential of historic core not realised
- 19 Poor microclimate at base of Richardson building
- 20 Unwelcoming and inaccessible base to the Commerce Building
- 21 Blank frontages to buildings facing main pedestrian circulation routes
- 22 Poor quality buildings surrounding Union Lawn at the heart of the campus



The Main University Buildings

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | The Clocktower / Geology Building | 6 | Information Services Building |
| 2 | Science Buildings | 7 | St. David Lecture Theatre |
| 3 | Richardson Building | 8 | Centre for Innovation |
| 4 | Arts Building | 9 | Commerce Building |
| 5 | Union Building | 10 | Health Sciences Buildings |

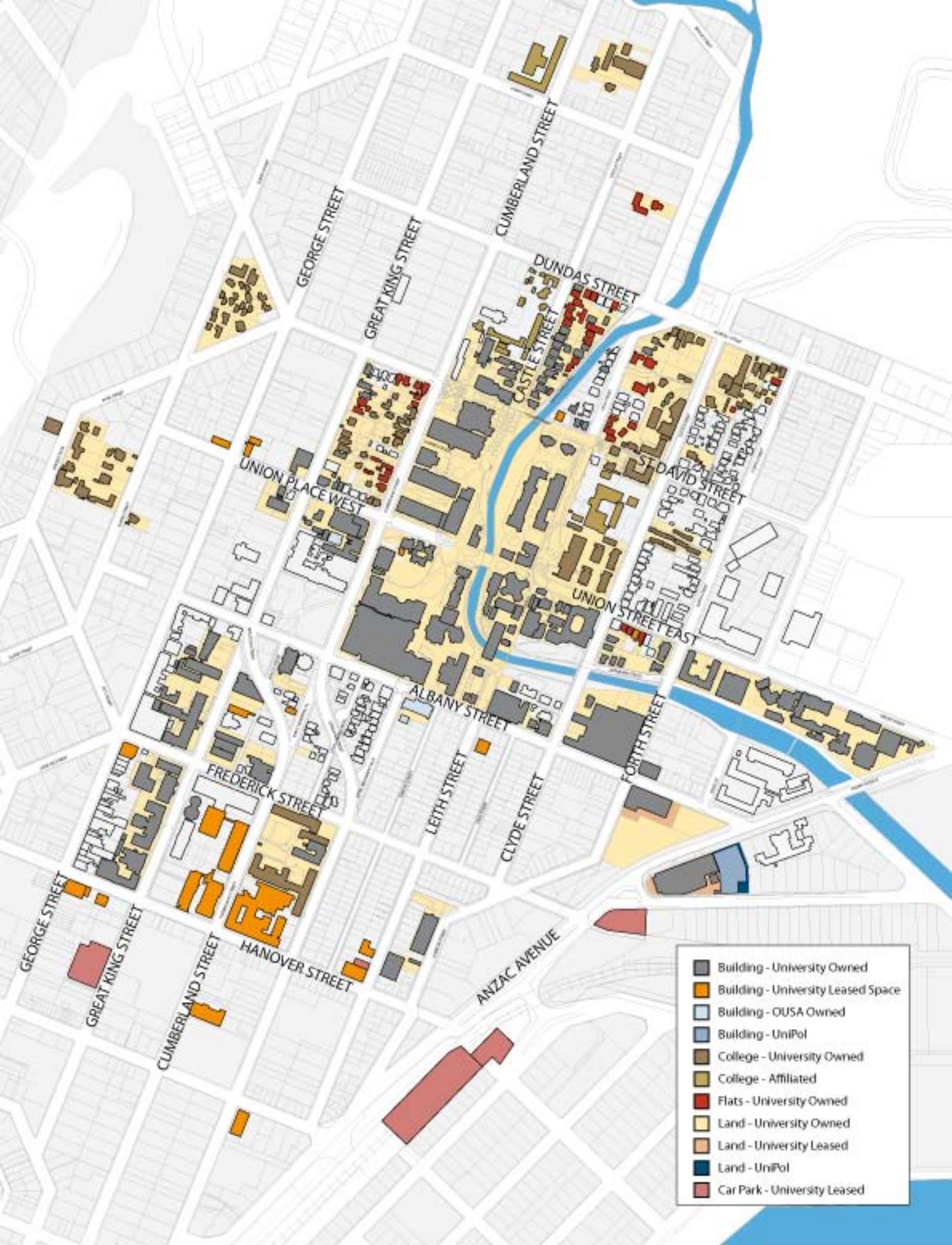
2.2 The Dunedin Campus today

The Dunedin Campus is a complex and varied part of the city, without clear boundaries and with a great variety of building types and spaces of varying styles and quality. This heterogeneous character reflects the history of the institution. The University's formidable success is expressed in the size of the University estate now covering much of North Dunedin. The campus architecture includes buildings from various periods of the city's history, many designed by the pre-eminent architects of New Zealand at the time. What the campus lacks is a clear sense of coherence and legibility. One of the challenges of the Master Plan has been to discover and articulate a more coherent expression for the University without repeating the errors of earlier plans that attempted to unify the campus by severing the University from Dunedin.

The heterogeneous character of the buildings and spaces that make up the University campus is shown in the photograph on the left.



left: Aerial photograph of the University Campus viewed from the north



Building and Land Ownership

The Dunedin campus has expanded considerably from its original North Dunedin site, bounded by St David Street, Leith Street, Union Street, and the Water of Leith. It now extends over five Kettle Grids in a north-south direction – from Dundas Street to Hanover Street, and eight Kettle Grids in an east-west direction from George Street to Anzac Avenue. The spread east has been the most recent major addition to the campus, with the recent merger of the Dunedin College of Education with the University, the acquisition of the Wickliffe Press site, 180 Albany Street and adjacent sites, and the development of the University Plaza at the Forsyth Barr Stadium.

The University owns the majority of the land and buildings which it occupies. There are however some leased spaces within buildings around the edge of the campus - mainly as temporary solutions to accommodate space shortages. The exception is the academic space within the Dunedin Hospital, which is a strategic co-location of elements of the Dunedin School of Medicine with the Otago District Health Board. There are also several leased car-parking sites to the south of the campus, including the Park-and-Ride scheme at Ward Street.

A very important and defining element of the campus is the Residential Colleges and student flats that surround the campus and are scattered throughout the neighbouring suburbs. The University owns and operates the majority of the Colleges, while student flats are mostly privately owned.



**STUDENT
RESIDENTIAL**

**STUDENT
RESIDENTIAL**

RECREATION

EDUCATION

**STUDENT
RESIDENTIAL**

**RETAIL/
COMMERCIAL**

INDUSTRIAL/ PORT

Campus Relationship to the City

The relationship between the University and the city can be read in four ways.

Firstly there is the relationship of the academic campus to the city. Since its early days, the University has grown around two centres, both designated as part of the original Kettle plan for the city. The first centre of growth has been around the iconic Clocktower Building on the banks of the Water of Leith. The second is the cluster of Health Sciences academic buildings built around the Hospital. One of the attractions of the University, widely reported during consultation with staff and students, is the compact walkable form that the campus has retained. One of the Master Plan challenges has been to retain the compact campus form while accommodating future growth. Linkage between the two centres of growth sets another challenge, in creating a unified and coherent University campus for the future. The academic buildings provide a strongly contrasting character to much of the surrounding city. The generally large scale and height of the University estate is set against the residential villas of North Dunedin. The architecture and civic presence of the estate provides a further contrast with the industrial buildings to the south and east of the estate. The Master Plan has sought to address the challenge of linking the University to these highly contrasting areas of the city.

Second is the relationship of the student residential buildings to the city. Student residences have been provided in two types. Some students are accommodated in residential colleges, generally large scale facilities catering for first year students. The remainder are generally housed in student residences provided by the private sector in converted villas, and small-scale apartment blocks scattered across a wide area of North Dunedin. Much of this accommodation is poorly maintained and of a low standard, creating a poor environment surrounding the academic core of the University. The challenge will be to build on initiatives already under development by the city, the University and the private sector to find ways to accommodate future growth in a manner that regenerates these run-down areas surrounding the campus.

The third relationship is the way in which the city provides social, commercial and cultural facilities used extensively by the staff and students of the University. This economic and cultural 'spin-out' from the University covers a diverse range of services including:

- Crèche and pre-school child care facilities
- Theatres and concerts
- Events and festivals
- Sports and recreational events
- Bars and pubs
- Catering in restaurants in George Street and increasingly in Albany Street

Capturing the benefits that this activity can bring to the city as part of its economic and regeneration strategy is an important intent of the Master Plan.

Fourthly the relationship between the research findings of the University, and the business and economic development that can flow from it, is another important element in the relationship between the University and the city. The provision of incubation space, the hybrid use of University space for both business and academic use, and the ad hoc adoption of low cost space in the city are all elements of this relationship, forming part of the Master Plan strategy.



Existing Road Layout within the Tertiary Education Precinct

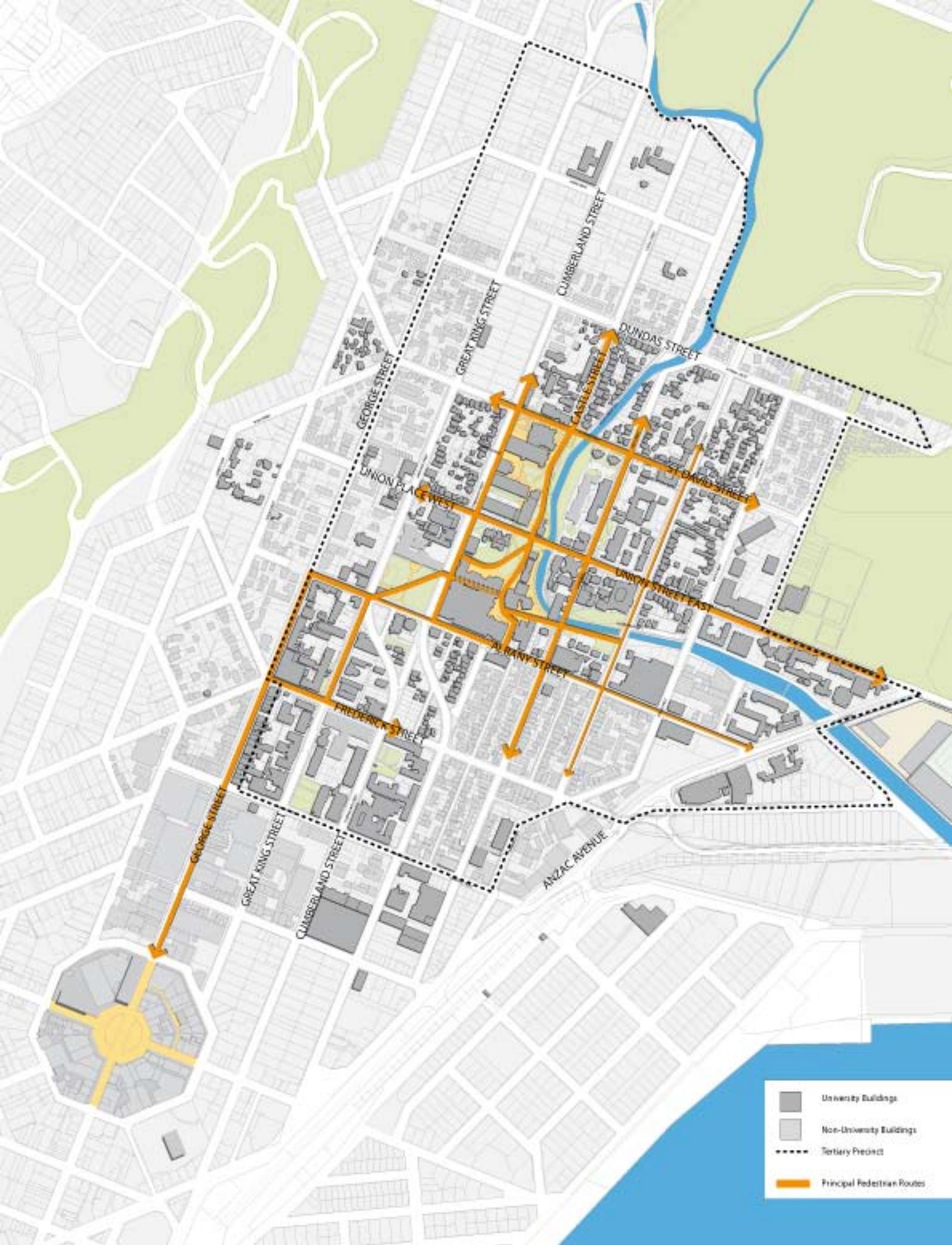
The existing highway layout within the Tertiary Education Precinct comprises one way traffic flows passing north south through the area. Between Albany and Frederick Streets the one way routes cut across the street grid creating connections northbound between Cumberland and Great King Street and Southbound between Cumberland and Castle Streets. The effect of these proposals is to:

- Concentrate traffic on the major one way routes rather than dispersing traffic more evenly across the network of available streets
- Increase traffic speeds on one way streets

the dunedin campus



- Create four dead end streets where the diagonals cut through the street grid
- Create streets that are unpleasant for pedestrians to use due to the adjacent traffic speeds and volumes concentrated on the main highways
- Create major lines of severance and separation between the Health Sciences and Central Campus areas
- Disrupt the regular street grid creating irregular and difficult to develop building plots
- Disrupt the spatial clarity found in the rest of central Dunedin tending to disrupt clarity of movement and orientation for users.



Existing Pedestrian Routes

The diagram shows a strong pedestrian movement between the Health Science Precinct and the main campus through the Museum Reserve.

However, the walking experience between the two precincts is rather unpleasant, vehicles are travelling at high speed between Great King Street and Cumberland Street, forcing people either to use the crossing between Albany Street and Great King Street, or to put themselves in danger by running across from the S-Bend.

The diagram also shows the general desire of walking towards St David Lecture Theatre and along Union Street towards the Stadium. These will be vital cues for the future expansion of the University.

The image shows the exterior of the St David Lecture Theatre. The building features a modern design with large glass windows and a light-colored stone or concrete facade. A prominent sign above the entrance reads "ST DAVID LECTURE THEATRE". In the foreground, several people are walking, their figures blurred due to a shallow depth of field and motion blur, suggesting a busy, active environment. The sky is clear and blue, and the overall scene is brightly lit, indicating a sunny day.

ST DAVID LECTURE THEATRE

2.3 User issues

Introduction

An understanding of user concerns and issues was gathered through stakeholder consultation. Interviews, meetings, workshops and surveys were conducted in the period March to June 2009. A large cross-section of the University community was consulted, including the University Executive, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Directors and Heads of service units, staff from each Division, students (undergraduate and postgraduate), and external stakeholders. The following themes arose during the consultation process.

The student experience

The consultation with students confirmed that the most fundamental attribute of the University that attracted students to enrol was its reputation for academic excellence and anecdotal responses indicated that employers valued the well-rounded nature of Otago graduates.

An important and unique characteristic of the University is that the majority of undergraduate students come to Dunedin to study from elsewhere in New Zealand and the University encourages these students to enter one of the Residential Colleges for their first year. Furthermore, the University places particular emphasis on the quality of the pastoral care and academic support that these students receive in the Colleges.

Once their first year is completed, the majority of students move to shared rental accommodation ("student flats") in the city Precincts around the campus. This is the result of both logistic considerations related to the limited capacity of the Colleges and of social convention which has evolved whereby moving to more independent living has become established practice amongst undergraduate students.

It is clear from the user consultation that students' experiences of their time in both the Colleges and student flats are significant to their memories of their undergraduate years.

Also clear is the special importance students attach to the Information Services, Link and Hunter Buildings as very successful informal gathering and study hubs. Indeed, there is a desire by both students and the University's Departments for the capacity and distribution of such hubs to be enhanced.

The staff community

The consultation process identified the University's well established reputation for teaching and research excellence and a strong sense of collegiality as key factors in attracting and retaining staff. The small scale, family-friendly, creative nature of the city, combined with the region's natural beauty and diverse recreational offerings, were also referenced.

The vitality of the city and the availability of diverse employment and social opportunities available to staff and their families were also referenced as being highly important to the ongoing attractiveness of the University as a long-term career prospect for academic staff.

Divisions and Departments

A defining characteristic of the University is the strong sense of collegiality that exists within its Departments, and while the administrative structure of the four academic Divisions facilitates operational effectiveness and devolved administrative functionality, it is within the Departments that the academic pulse of the University exists.

The relatively small size of the University enables effective cross-departmental collaboration, and staff consultation revealed a strong desire for this to be facilitated further through the collocation of departments with synergistic interests and through informal interaction. It was considered that more shared spaces located throughout the campus that support inter- departmental and cross-Divisional interaction would assist in achieving this latter ambition.

Also considered important by staff was the need to foster interaction between staff and students, particularly postgraduate students.

Inter-campus and remote connection

Consultation with students at the Christchurch and Wellington campuses indicated a strong desire for enhanced inter-campus connection and particularly with Dunedin. It was reported that students in these and other locations do not have access to the same facilities that are available in Dunedin, although it was acknowledged that a lack of economies of scale makes this difficult. Residential accommodation, student services and amenities were referenced in particular in this regard.

It was also noted that “virtual” connection to the University through information and communication technology was particularly important to students outside Dunedin, not only between campuses but also for students and staff in other locations, be it in other University facilities, on placements or undertaking field-based research. Ready access to videoconferencing and reliable, effective and easily accessible data linkages were cited as particularly important.

Teaching and learning

The University wishes to encourage a research-informed approach to teaching and thus the “visibility” of research to undergraduate students is important.

The preferred learning styles of students are constantly evolving as technology allows an ever-increasing range of possibilities. There is also an increasing demand for distance and ‘e- learning’, particularly to support Health Sciences students doing placements in regional locations.

Some departments, notably in the Health Sciences Division, are shifting to smaller collaborative group teaching. This is fast becoming popular among students as a more engaging form of learning. Reference was also made in the consultation to collaborative and problem-based learning requiring different teaching spaces, with the provision of break-out space adjacent to formal classrooms being considered to be important.

Research

Reference was made during consultation to the importance of the availability of suitable space and specialist facilities to attract the best staff and students, particularly when research grants and other opportunities become available. It was noted that both solitary work space and collaboration spaces are required, with the latter being important in fostering collegiality.

Strong views were expressed on the importance of research and other academic activities being co-located within departments. However there is also a desire for departments with research synergies to be co-located wherever possible to allow cross-disciplinary collaboration and the efficient utilisation (sharing) of research space and equipment.

Reference was also made to the importance of the potential for the commercialisation of research.

Academic workplace

The consultation process revealed a considerable diversity in the quality, size and allocation of academic workspace. A particular area of need is the quality of workspace provided for postgraduate students. There was also an expressed need for more shared spaces that enable casual interaction and informal discourse between postgraduates and academic staff, although this was not seen as diminishing the importance for individual offices which are considered by most staff to be important for concentration, privacy and the accommodation of personal libraries and reference material.

Specialist research and laboratory spaces

Staff advised that increased research activity has created a demand for more specialist research and laboratory spaces. There is an opportunity to help satisfy increased demand by improving management and utilisation of space. New and more sophisticated equipment, processes, and health and safety regulations are a challenge to accommodate in older buildings and the cost of upgrading must be considered in the context of the opportunities afforded by new purpose-designed buildings.

Teaching and learning spaces

The Information Services, Link and Hunter Buildings have been very popular and successful as venues for self-directed, informal and small-group learning. Similar venues are desired elsewhere across the Dunedin campus. Students and staff considered that some large lecture theatres are located too far from the critical mass of students, creating unreasonable walking distances between classes.

It was also noted that audio-visual linking of large lecture theatres on campus allows large classes to be accommodated. There is emerging demand for more flexible spaces that allow multiple modes of learning to occur in the one space and class.

Social and passive recreation spaces

The ISB and Hunter Centre in Dunedin, the Medici Café in Christchurch and the Café at UOW in Wellington have proven to be very successful as hub spaces and there is demand for more such social hubs across campus. Students and staff would like to see more passive recreation and entertainment facilities incorporated into the campus.

Residential accommodation

The colleges are very popular with many more applications each year in recent times than there have been places available. This issue will be exacerbated as the student population grows. Furthermore, the University currently offers residential places only to students from outside Dunedin and there is reportedly demand for places from students resident in Dunedin who are keen to enjoy the collegiate experience. An undergraduate social convention has evolved whereby students move into shared private accommodation ("flats") in the second and subsequent years. It is important that the University continues to work with the Dunedin City Council to improve the quality of this type of accommodation.

The need was also expressed for more short and long term postgraduate accommodation, although it was noted that Abbey College now provides this.

Campus Environment

The view was expressed that there is a need to improve the appearance of streetscapes and student housing around the campus, to open up the ground floor of buildings to make them more welcoming and a strong desire for more green space on campus and better opportunities to sit and socialise outside.

Wayfinding and accessibility

It was considered by many in the consultation process that the campus has become too spread out and dislocated and there is a need to better connect the different Precincts. There was also consistent reference to the 'one-way pair' of State Highways at Cumberland and Great King Streets as being dangerous for pedestrians and a significant barrier to cross-campus connection. Also referenced were the need for better signage and information-posts in a format accessible by all, including people with disabilities, and the need to continue to improve building access for people with disabilities.

Local Community

External stakeholders who were consulted expressed the view that the campus is hard for visitors to access, with a lack of visitor parking and obvious entry points. Despite the fact that the campus is integrated with the City Grid and has no defining boundary elements, it was suggested that the University did not appear welcoming to the wider public. It was suggested that a structured "visitor experience" could include campus tours.

Local Industry

It was considered that the University needs to continue to support and assist the growth of local innovators, including the commercialisation of the University's research, e.g. biotechnology. Similarly, the City looks forward to continuing the University's relationships with local industries.

