



**Legislative Assembly** for the  
**Australian Capital Territory**

Standing Committee on Environment,  
and Planning

# Submission Cover Sheet

## **Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city**

Submission number: 104

Submitter: Warehouse Circus

Date authorised for publication: 18 December 2025



*Warehouse Circus flip, juggle, and fly on and above Aboriginal land, and we give respect to their elders past, present and emerging.*



# What is the future of Circus in Canberra?

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# Who We Are...

Warehouse Circus is Canberra's only youth circus and one of the largest youth circuses in the country in terms of weekly participants and range of offerings.

We've been operating in Canberra for almost 35 years and engage over 4,500 people annually in our programs and workshops.

Our audience reach is growing with recent years having over 700,000 people seeing circus thanks to our Artistic Program.





# What We Do...

- Teach around 700 Canberrans circus programs in our spaces, in schools and across the community each week and subsidise young people facing financial disadvantage to attend. We also run numerous one-off community workshops.
- Offer accessible activities for all ages and demographics.
- Provide opportunities for young circus artists to learn, play and create across diverse performance settings – festivals and events, in theatres and other performance venues
- Support Emerging Artists into performing arts careers
- Deliver a circus as a therapy program for people with all kinds of disabilities including multiple, complex disabilities and young people attending Disability Specialist Schools in the ACT. We are leaders of the sector in this space, running industry training on best-practice delivery of social circus programs and adapted training methodology.
- Run a Circus Agency for Professional Artists to get paid performance work in the region and provided performances for events and festivals across the region including major Canberra events such as the National Folk Festival, Enlighten, the Multicultural Festival and Floriade.
- Deliver The Canberra Circus Festival - a one-of-a-kind, youth-focused circus festival of increasingly national significance.
- Co-deliver a high school circus elective program at UC High School Kaleen

# WE ARE CANBERRA'S CONNECTION TO THE NATIONAL CIRCUS SECTOR...

## Creative Exports

We provide pathways for our graduates to further education and careers through our partnerships with:

- NICA (National Institute of Circus Arts)

An educational institute in Melbourne that offers qualifications and degrees in Circus Arts.



- APAC (Australian Performing Arts Conservatory)

An educational institute in Brisbane that offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Performing Arts.



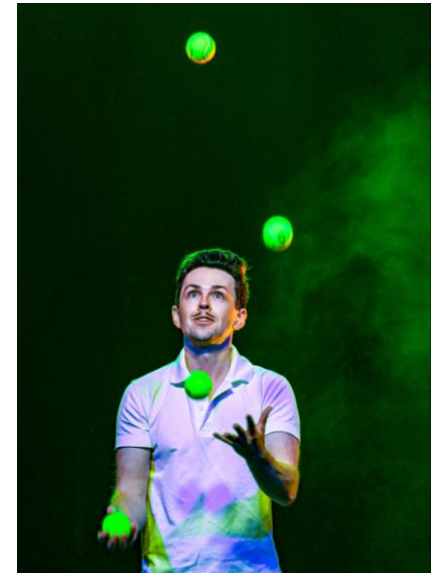
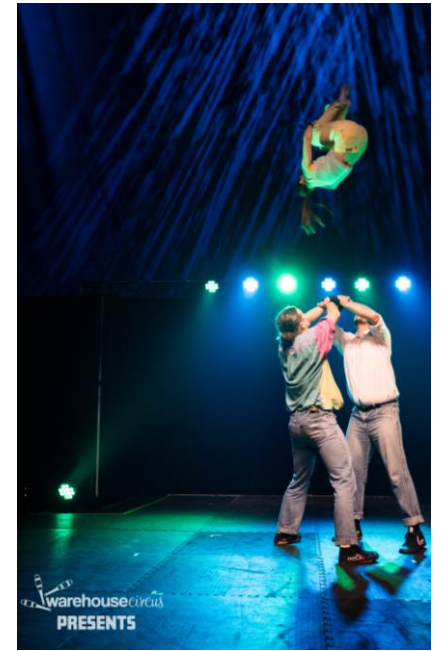
## Cultural Tourism

### Canberra Circus Festival

The only National circus festival aimed at the youth sector with youth training, trainer training and presenting a range of local, national and international performances open to the Canberra public.

### Warehouse Entertainment Agency

Providing performers for Canberra's major events and festivals



## Creative Exports

We have graduates in countless circus companies around the world including but not limited to: CIRCA, GOM (Gravity & Other Myths), 7Fingers and Cirque Du Soleil.

We have had graduates go on to be leaders across the sector, running arts companies, producing works and managing major festival programs.

We are one of the most successful youth circuses in Australia but have the smallest space of any major city or regional centre.



Twas the Night Before by Cirque Du Soleil with Warehouse Graduate Jake Kenner

# A FEW OF OUR GRADUATES:



GOM - Backbone with Warehouse Graduate Lewie West



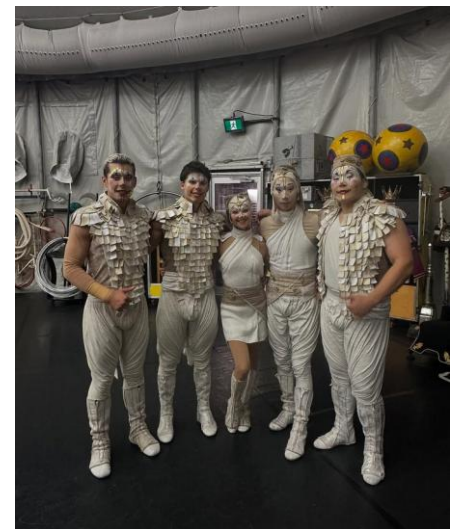
CIRCA- Wolf with Warehouse Graduate Chelsea Hall

Just a few of our graduates that have gone onto careers in the Circus industry performing around the world:

- Benton Adams-Walker: GOM, Cirque Du Soleil
- Lewie West: GOM, Rooke
- Nick Marsack: GOM, Cirque Du Soleil
- Chelsea Hall: CIRCA
- Josh Strachan: GOM, CIRCA
- Piri Goodman: CIRCA
- Lachlan Sukroo: CIRCA
- Jake Silvestro: CIRCA, Rooke, CircusOz
- Arabella Coghlan: CIRCA
- Cecelia Martin: CIRCA, Rooke
- Jack William Wilde: CircusOz,
- Tristan St John: CIRCA
- Darby Sullivan: CIRCA
- Paul O'Keefe: CIRCA
- Thomas Adams-Walker: GOM, 7Fingers
- Jake Kenner: Cirque Du Soleil
- Ethan Harris-Cross: Blanc de Blanc
- Imogen Drury
- Tom Davis: CircusOz
- Georgia Wallace
- El Kirschbaum - Highwire Entertainment, Producer for Gluttony - Adelaide Fringe
- Lauren Eisinger - Eisinger Productions, Producer for Edenborough Fringe
- Jeremy Davies - CEO, Nexus, VIC



Rooke - Nimble with Warehouse Graduate Cecelia Martin



Cirque Du Soleil - Kooza with Warehouse Graduate Nick Marsack

# What we offer to Woden Town Centre...

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- Activities for all ages and demographics
- We can embed community, education, art, sport and cultural zonings into residential, hospitality and entertainment precincts in a mutually beneficial way.
- As we run during the day and night, we can add to both the Employment and economic activity, through supporting retail and hospitality and adding to the night-time economy.
- **We can manage/curate a performance venue** and be a location for touring work to perform. Also bringing more people and community into/around the area at night with which will benefit the nighttime economy.
- **We can connect private space with public space** through activities and the creation of **safe liminal spaces** that are appealing to families
- We can support public transport systems which would offer an accessible pathway to get to us.
- **We can connect and refer to allied health providers and community services** and are ideal to co-locate with these services.

# Stats...

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- We **operate 7 days** a week!
- We currently **open between 8:30 and 9am** and **close between 8pm and 9:30pm** (excluding shows, performances, birthday party and event times)
- We are the **largest Arts organisation in the Woden** area with ties to Health, Education, Arts and Sport and we offer a retail circus shop
- We run **over 50 regular classes a week** and have around 600 students in our weekly core program (excludes casual classes and workshops)
- Nearly all our participants will come with **at least 1** other person so that is be over 1,000 people per week coming to the venue
- We have **waitlists for over half our classes**
- **Classes range from 1hr to 6hrs in length** with parents/families often staying close by during this time.
- **Planned and incidental social gatherings** in and around our spaces are common, including working bees, community BBQs, market stalls, family picnics, study groups, parent catch ups and playdates.

# What we are looking for (in an ideal world):

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A dedicated performance space! (Rather than one we need to convert)



A dedicated training space and rehearsal studios to run our programs!



Plus: offices, foyers, box office/shop, and space for making and storing props, sets and circus gear!

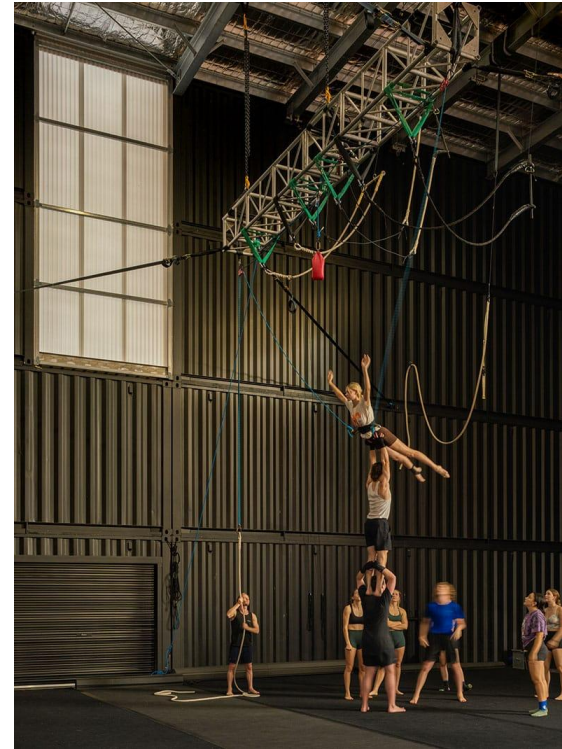
Height!



Rigging points - a ceiling that can take a lot of load!



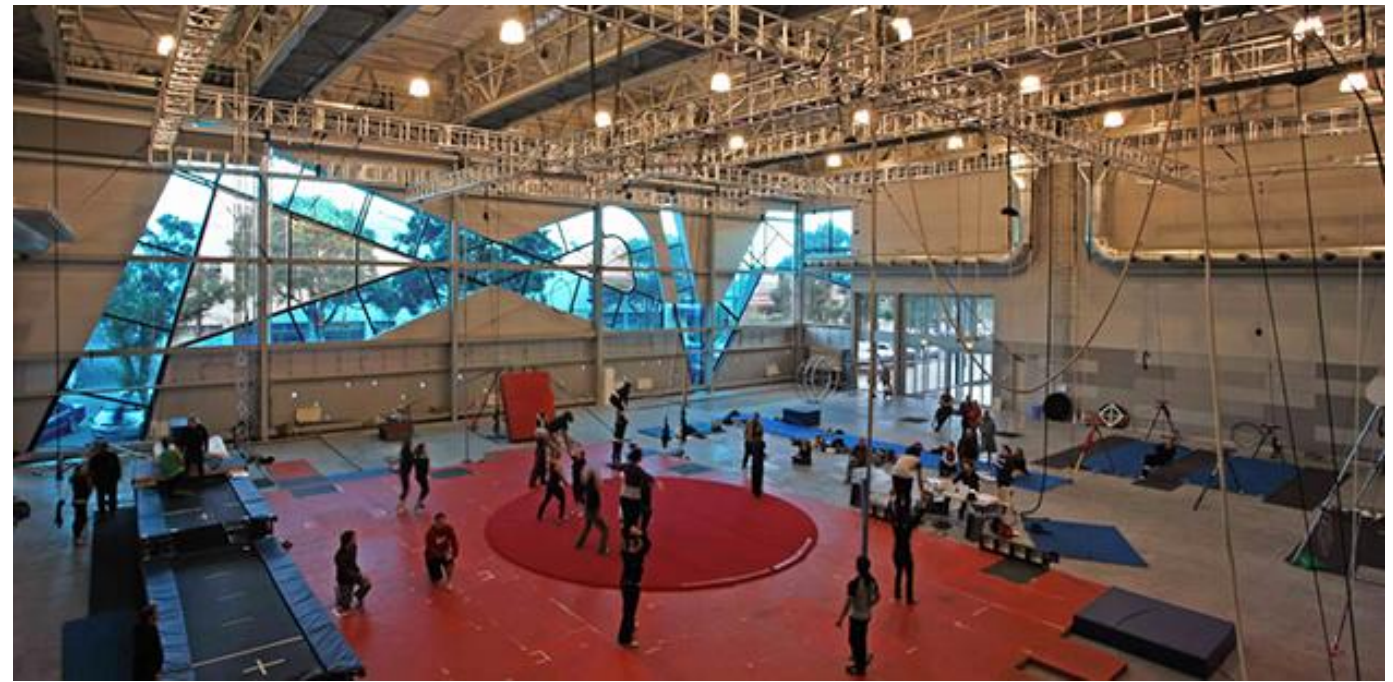
## Cross Comparison of other Capital Centres:



An innovative and cost-effective design. A flexible space allowing for both multi-streamed training and performances

# THE BRISBANE CIRCUS CENTRE

HOME OF FLIPSIDE CIRCUS, BRISBANE, QLD



A state-of-the-art, light-filled training space capable of accommodating many students at one time, with flexible rigging points.

# THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CIRCUS ARTS (NICA)

MELBOURNE, VIC



22 Fifth St  
Bowden, South Australia  
Google



A long, high space akin to Canberra City Gymnastics, (Belconnen)

# THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CIRCUS CENTRE

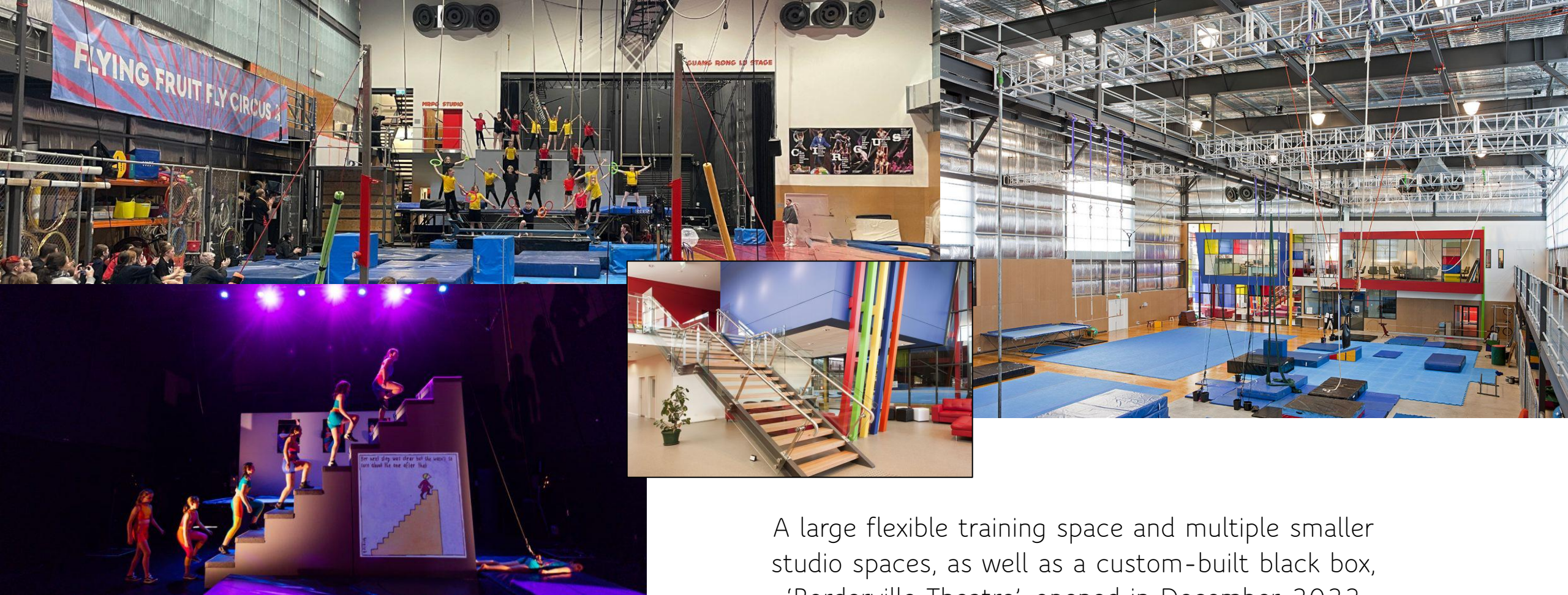
HOME OF CIRKIDZ, ADELAIDE, SA



Very large shed that has beams to rig from, large space to run classes and office spaces.

# THE PERTH CIRCUS CENTRE

PERTH, WA



A large flexible training space and multiple smaller studio spaces, as well as a custom-built black box, 'Borderville Theatre', opened in December 2023

# FLYING FRUIT FLY CIRCUS

ALBURY-WODONGA, NSW/VIC



Primary Training Space – Chifley Health and Wellbeing Hub – an old primary school gym retro-fitted with a free-standing truss rig. Single stream capacity only.

# WAREHOUSE CIRCUS

CANBERRA, ACT



Kaleen Space – doubling as the UC High School Gym. Reduced access during school events. Limited aerial points, limited storage for large equipment which must be set up and packed away daily

# Designing for the Future in Woden Town Centre

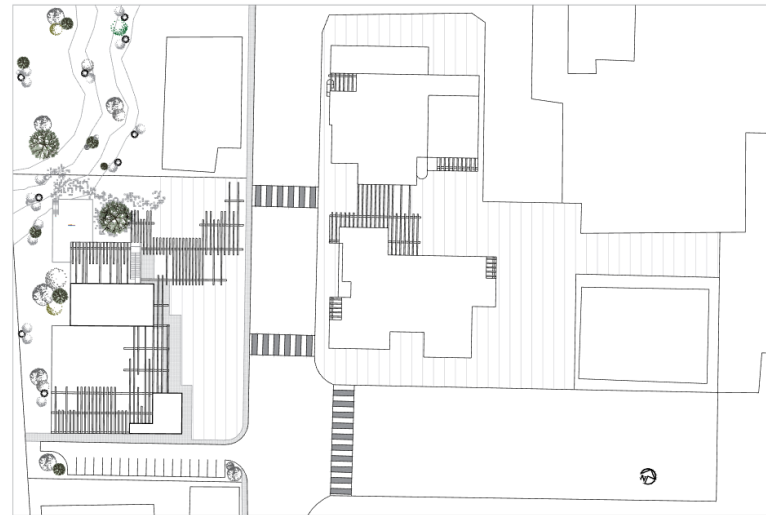
In 2025, we partnered with UC Masters of Architecture students to imagine a future space for Warehouse Circus in the Woden town centre. Some Inspiration...



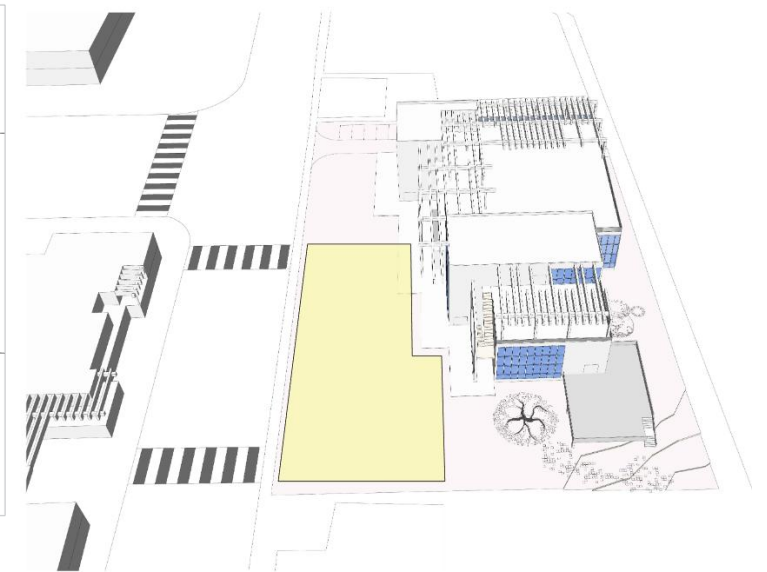
Front Elevation



Outdoor space connecting to adjacent park



Top View with Site Context



Parking + Outdoor Performance Area

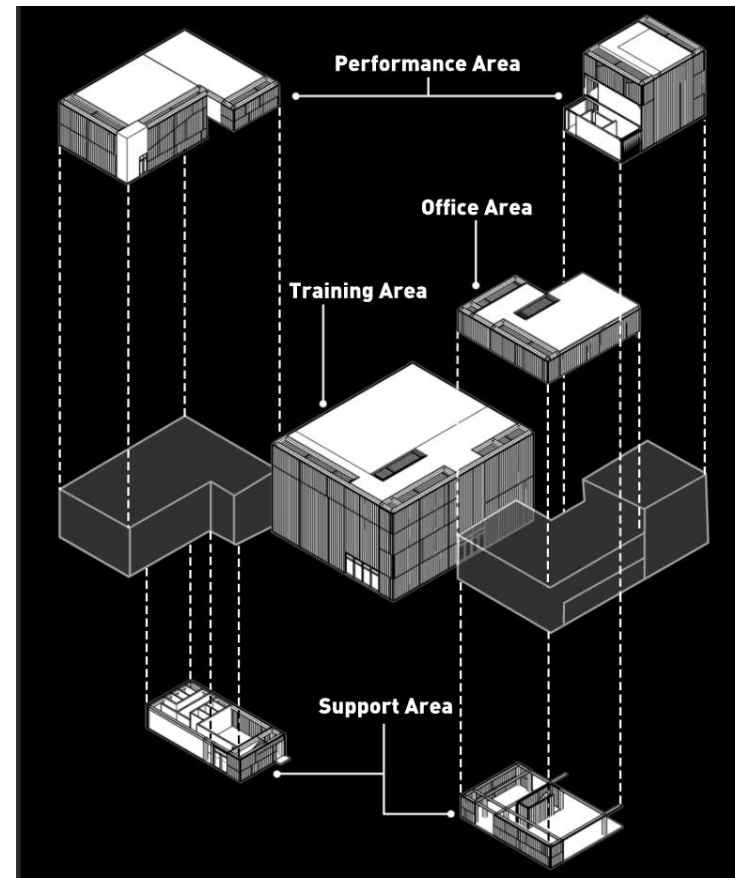
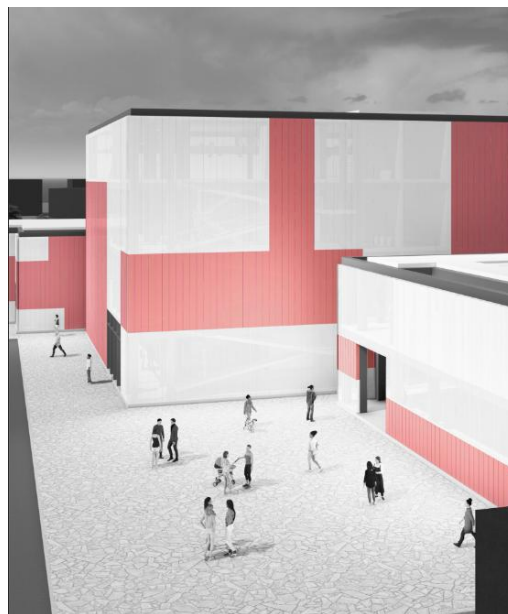
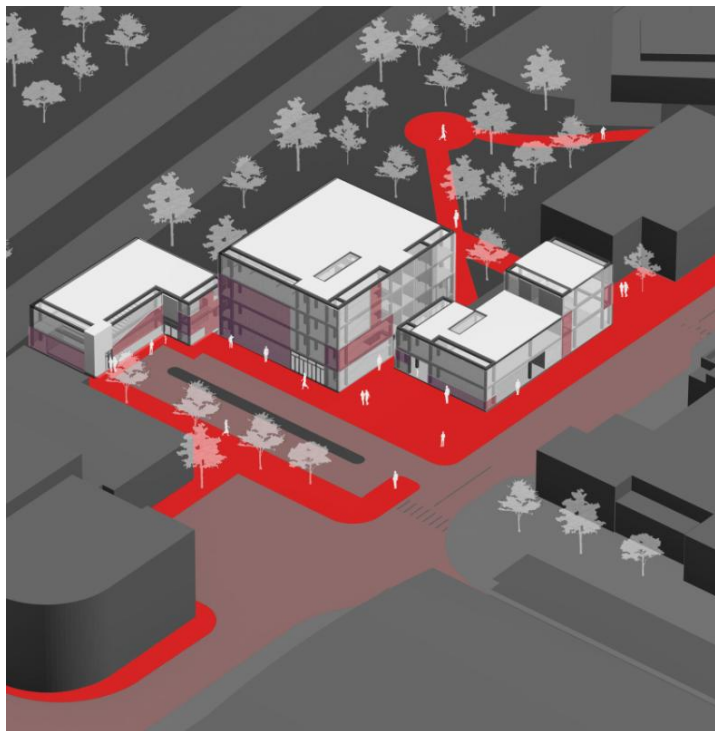
**Design by: Kazi Tusmit Tadeen**

**UC PG Studio Lead : Ann Cleary / Studio Project**

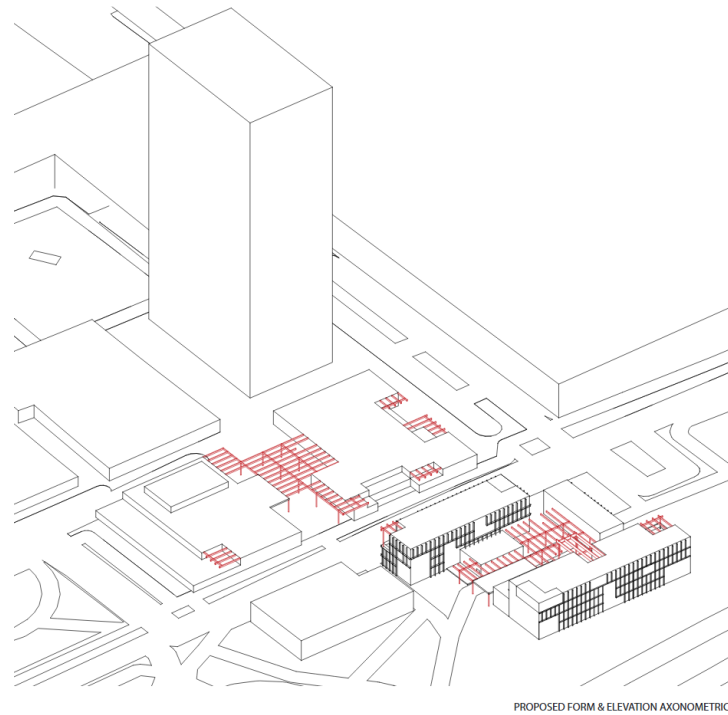
**Collaboration : Warehouse Circus Inc.**

# Some more inspo...

Design by: Zhijian Ke  
UC PG Studio Lead: Ann Cleary/Studio Project  
Collaboration: Warehouse Circus Inc.

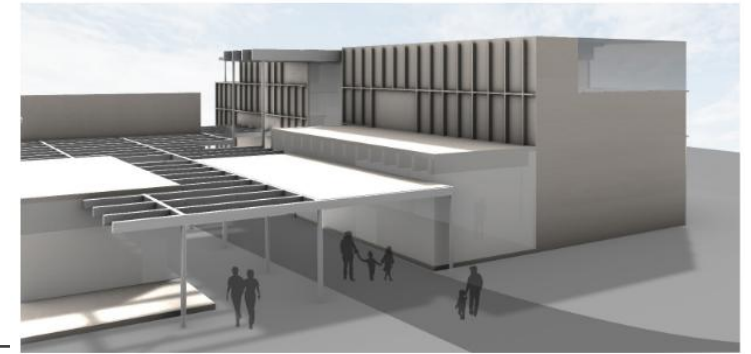


# Some more inspo...



PROPOSED FORM & ELEVATION AXONOMETRIC

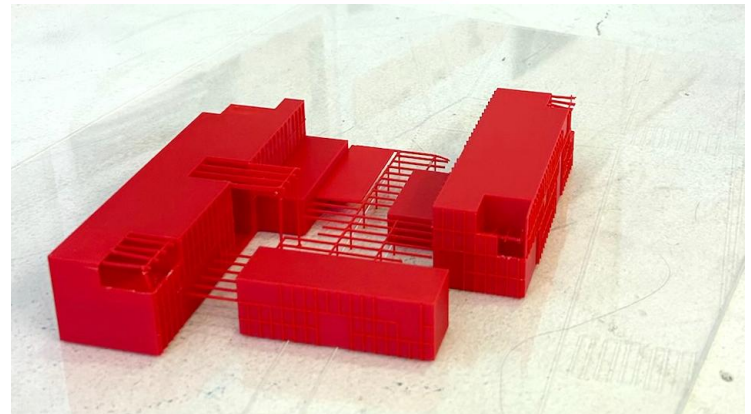
Design by: Julia Bassett  
UC PG Studio Lead: Ann Cleary/Studio Project  
Collaboration: Warehouse Circus Inc.



RENDERED EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



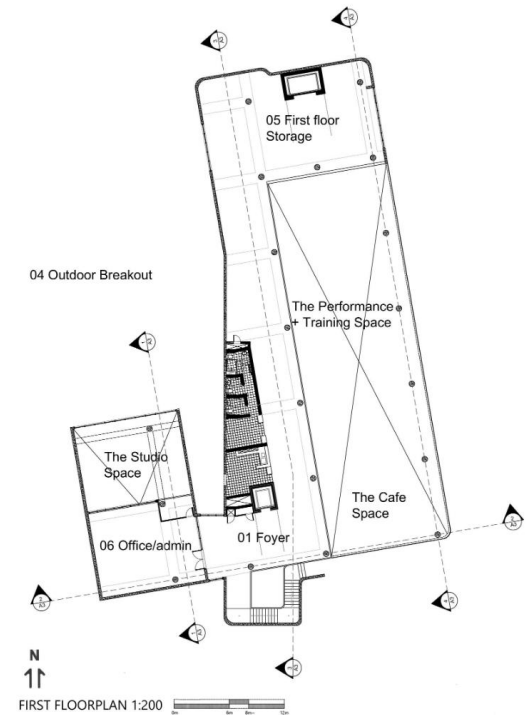
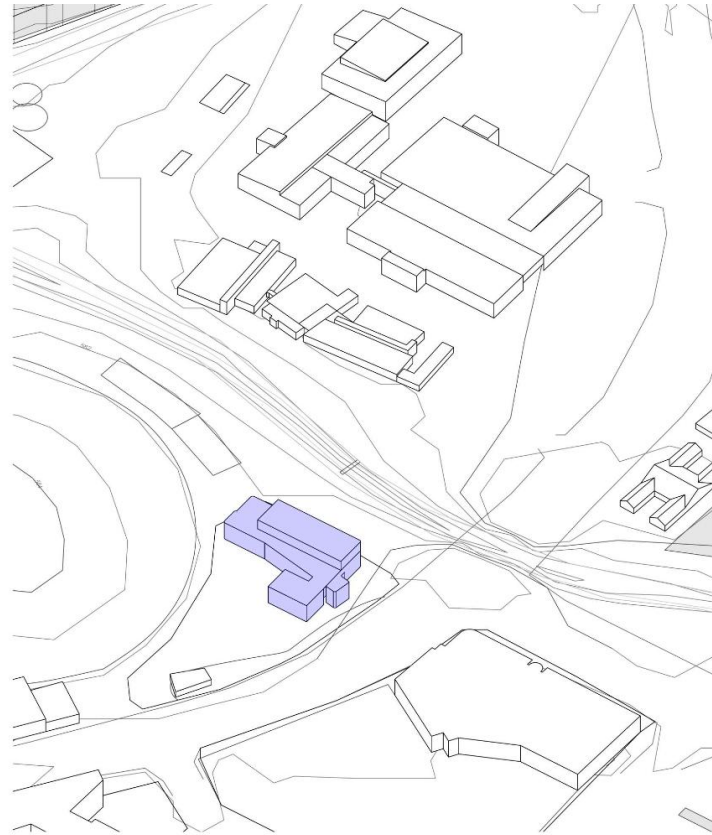
RENDERED INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



# Rejuvenating Yarralumla Creek...



RELATIONSHIP OF THE PUBLIC PLACE TO THE PRIVATE SPACE/S



Design by: Bryan Superal

UC PG Studio Lead : Ann Cleary / Studio Project Collaboration : Warehouse Circus Inc.  
UC PG Studio Student : Bryan Superal / Studio Project Collaboration : Warehouse Circus Inc.

## FURTHER READING...

More about Warehouse Circus:

<https://warehousecircus.org.au/> - Main Website

[‘Social Perspectives’](#) - a short film about us, published May, 2019

<https://www.canberracircusfestival.com.au/> - Canberra Circus Festival Website

<https://www.warehouseentertainment.com.au/> - Agency Website

More about the research on Circus:

<https://www.cirkidz.org.au/circus-research-studies/#:~:text=For%20every%20%241%20invested%2C%20%247,participatio n%20in%20our%20circus%20programs> – Australian Research about ROI of youth circus participation – findings show a \$7 return for every \$1 invested.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9222273/#:~:text=The%20results%20of%20this%20systematic,or%20differences%20fostered%20by%20juggling> – Juggling increases Brain Plasticity; ‘The results of this systematic review showed that juggling training appears to be a good form of activity to induce brain plasticity. All of the selected studies showed positive structural changes or differences fostered by juggling.’

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-0383/12/5/2046> - Study: "Circus Activities as a Health Intervention for Children, Youth, and Adolescents: A Scoping Review" *Journal of Clinical Medicine* 12

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19443927.2019.1666027> - The psychological benefits of circus skills training (CST) in schoolchildren, Theatre, Dance and Performance Training

<https://theconversation.com/circus-training-instead-of-school-sports-now-theres-an-idea-31979> - Article with links to more circus research around the world