

## Underground music venue and parking could transform Kingston Foreshore arts precinct

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A basement music venue, underground parking and public square linked by undercover walkways could help transform the Kingston Foreshore's "huge blank canvas" into a "national first" arts precinct.

Three design options have been pitched for the 5.4 hectare site in a \$300,000 feasibility study for the precinct to be launched by the ACT government on Saturday night.

Heritage buildings including the Kingston Glassworks, Fitters' Workshop and the Old Bus Depot Markets would be retained on the site, but several new buildings are proposed including an amenities building behind the Fitters' Workshop which could be home to a "below ground" music venue.

ArtsACT Director David Whitney said the basement live music venue could emulate similar venues elsewhere including Sydney.

"The joy of that is the sound doesn't go anywhere... you're not going to disturb people living out and about," he said.

"There is a real challenge between wanting to activate an area and have a night time economy and being respectful to people living in the same area."

Mr Whitney said visitors would be "spoilt for choice" with a 3500 square metre open-air public quadrangle between the markets and glassworks, a central focus of the precinct and possible venue for performances and festivals.

The study seeks to reactivate street frontages especially the northern side of the Old Bus Depot Markets, suggesting its eateries could operate on a more full time basis alongside art retailers and cafes for visitors to the galleries.

"Other opportunities for more 'grunge type' uses, not dissimilar to the popular burger store, Brodburger, should inhabit this part of the precinct and could include uses such as craft beer breweries and coffee shops," the study says.

Mr Whitney said it didn't necessarily propose rebuilding Braddon, but the area could learn from the suburb's revival.

"Braddon has a particular style, but there's no reason why those spaces in any of the buildings that feed on to the central courtyard area ... couldn't become ... gallery spaces or artists' workshop spaces," he said.

"The joy of the project... is that it's not just building an arts bit in the corner and the rest is all accommodation and apartments, its juggling that stuff around."

Earlier plans for the site [considered a multi-storey car park with up to 1575 spaces](#), but the latest study calls for underground parking with about 500 spaces following concerns about the suitability on the heritage site raised at stakeholder meetings.

Mr Whitney said the cost of underground parking was yet to be calculated, but its location would be restricted by its proximity to the lake and water table.

Rather than earlier plans for a "salt and peppered" mixed-use approach with arts workshops and venues scattered among residential and commercial developments, the study recommends centralising the art organisations to avoid potential noise complaints and encourage artist collaboration.

Mr Whitney said bringing more arts organisations to the area following the success of the glassworks and Megalo Print Studio would allow them to "spark off each other" keeping with ideas for an [arts' hub](#).

"[The study] gives a pretty solid discussion document for us to go back and have a look at and see what it is the arts community and the broader community are looking for and then we need to roll out in some approach to the whole precinct," he said.

"The strength of this is it really builds on that vision 'let's make the whole of Kingston an alive, contemporary arts space.'"

The precinct would be managed by an independent entity at arms-length from the government, the study recommends, which Mr Whitney said could be based on existing models such as the South Bank Corporation in Brisbane, Federation Square in Melbourne and Carriageworks in Sydney.

Arts Minister Joy Burch said creating the arts hub was part of the government's commitment to urban renewal with more than 7500 square metres of space on the site dedicated to arts organisations.

The feasibility study is the third major piece of work undertaken for the arts precinct building on a strategy released in 2011 and the [Section 49 Master Plan](#), released in May 2014.

It can be downloaded from the artsACT website from 8pm Saturday at [www.arts.act.gov.au](http://www.arts.act.gov.au).