

Somerville looks to the future

CHRIS HERDE

ONE of Brisbane's oldest private schools is looking up.

Construction has started on Somerville House's five-level multipurpose learning centre which will open in February.

The building is part of a strategic masterplan for the historic South Brisbane girls school that will have an extensive refurbishment and building program over the next eight years.

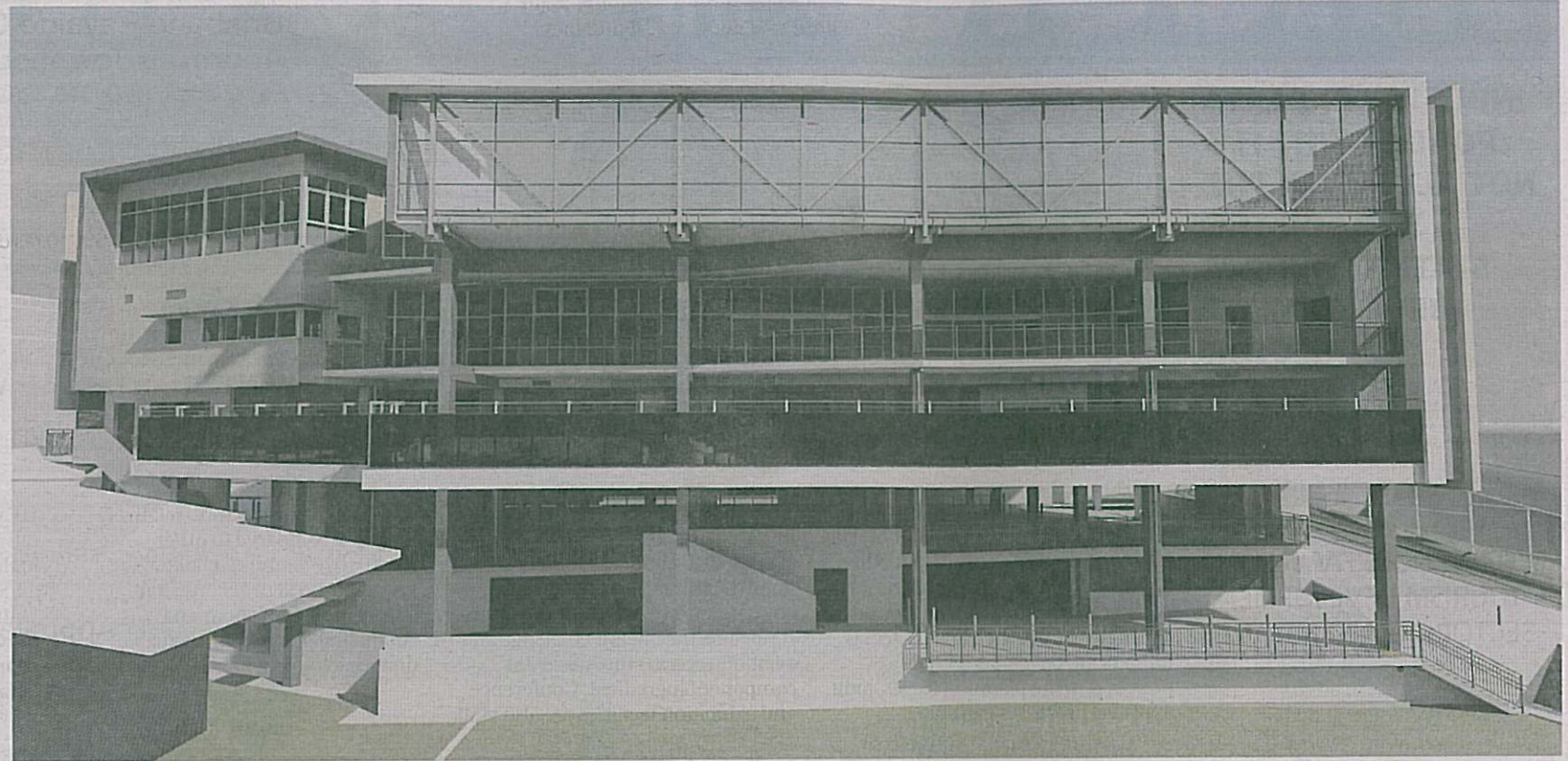
Principal Flo Kearney said the multipurpose learning centre was an "exciting project for the school".

"It's very forward thinking. It will meet a number of our needs in the one building on a piece of real estate in the school campus that we felt we could better use," she said.

"Being an inner-city school we are building up simply because we have limited space."

Designed by architects Bickerton Masters and built by Kane Construction the \$12.5 million building on the top of Graham St will cater for the school's new pre-Prep classrooms with state-of-the-art facilities and separate indoor and outdoor learning areas.

It will also extend the school's set-down loop and parking facilities for a parents; and offer flexible spaces for



MOVING UP: Kane Constructions is undertaking major renovations at Somerville House school on its challenging steep site on limited land in South Brisbane.

general and specialist learning including assemblies, performing arts, functions and collaborative learning activities.

It will have function areas and two rooftop Olympic standard Plexipave tennis courts.

The school, which has been

at its current site since 1920, has 1285 students

It has begun refurbishing the Mary Somerville Science Centre and will upgrade the Vulture St cliff-face frontage.

Kane Constructions director David Rutter said the five-

level multipurpose building was a challenging project.

"It's a very tight site. It's a steep site as well. So it's got a bit of everything," Mr Rutter said.

"But access is the biggest challenge. The whole job is in a

set down loop where the girls are dropped off and picked up in the mornings and afternoons.

"So we have to shut the gates and not have any deliveries to and from the site for 45 minutes in the morning and 45

minutes in the afternoon.

"We have a full-time gatekeeper on site making sure if trucks turn up during non-working hours they are sent away and conversely if parents arrive outside the designated time they're also sent away."