

A UNIVERSITY TRAINING IN TRANSFORMATIVE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

by Johannes Schuster

The following (edited and slightly enlarged) article first appeared in the March 2025 TRIUNE newsletter. It was written as part of a larger exploration of what an architectural training might look like within the setting of an Anthroposophical University envisioned to be established in Australia and can be downloaded [here](#).

Table of Contents

A UNIVERSITY TRAINING IN TRANSFORMATIVE ART AND ARCHITECTURE	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Table of Figures	3
What is Transformative Art & Architecture (TAA) ?.....	4
Transformative Architecture and the Biosculptural Method	5
The moral Perspective.....	5
TAA and its Biosculptural Method.....	6
What is the aim of TAA?	6
Monistic Foundation	6
What is Universal Beauty?.....	7
How can this be achieved?	7
The Creative Process.....	8
Pollination versus Spiritual Fertilization	10
The Higher Purpose	12
The Higher Purpose behind the LYSS Classes 1–10 Footprints	14
Primary School.....	14
.....	14
Overview of the floor plans of the LYSS Classes 1–10	19
The Higher Purpose for Specialist Rooms.....	20

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Comparison of the human creative process with the yearly plant cycle.....	9
Figure 2: Spiritual Fertilization divides the process into two halves	10
Figure 3: Three quarters of the archetypal plant process directly relate to seed development	11
Figure 4: Juxtaposition of the transformative human creative process with the plant's 12 yearly growth gestures.....	12
Figure 5 LYSS primary School Class room footprints 1 to 6 and classes 3 – 6 in the photo. The curvilinear layout also reflects the watery element connected with the school's location adjoining the Little Yarra river.....	14
Figure 6: LYSS classes 1 and 2.....	15
Figure 7: LYSS classes 3 and 4. Note the different aspects of the view, showing class 3 on the left in the photo and on the right in the footprint	16
Figure 8: Class 5 Interior: the greater degree of formality is connected with the intrinsic nature of conceptual thought, which begins to awaken in the class 5 child.....	17
Figure 9: Class 5 (left) and 6 (right) front view	18
Figure 10: Class 6 rear view with side elevation and floor plan	18
Figure 11: Metamorphosing classroom floor plans mirroring the development of students' consciousness.....	19
Figure 12: Library/Admin Building:.....	20
Figure 13: Library/Admin Building, Framing stage, roof plan, side and interior views.....	21
Figure 14: Science Building front view and original side elevation	22
Figure 15: Science Building: original roof and floor plans and interior views of the biology (left) and Chemistry Lab (right)..	23

What is Transformative Art & Architecture (TAA) ?

Below words of Rudolf Steiner's, taken from a lecture given to the workers of the first Goetheanum, speak of a new, morally transformative architecture of the future.

*"It is probable that our building will not be able fully to attain its goal – indeed we are only aiming at a primitive beginning. Yet if human culture is able to take what is expressed in our building ... and develop it; if the ideas underlying such works of art find followers — then people who allow themselves to be impressed by these works of art and who have learnt to understand their language, will never do wrong to their fellow men either in heart or intellect, because **the forms of art will teach them how to love**; they will learn to live in harmony and peace with their fellow beings. Peace and harmony will pour into all hearts through these forms; such buildings will be "Lawgivers" and their forms will be able to achieve what external institutions can never achieve.*

*However much study may be given to the elimination of crime and wrong-doing from the World, **true redemption, the turning of evil into good**, will in future depend upon whether true art is able to **pour a spiritual fluid into the hearts and souls of men**. When men's hearts and souls are surrounded by the achievements of true architecture, sculpture and the like, they will cease to lie if it happens they are untruthfully inclined; they will cease to disturb the peace of their fellow men if this is their tendency. Edifices and buildings will begin to speak, and in a language of which people of today have no sort of inkling."*

Rudolf Steiner, *Ways to a New Style of Architecture*, 1914
(emphasis added)

When reading these words for the first time, they left a deep impression on me. Many years later they were to inspire the creation of TAA.

As an architectural theory and methodology in its own right, the 8 module TAA course contextualizes the relevant Anthroposophical foundations and offers a practical and teachable framework for incorporating a moral element into the forms of art & architecture.

Transformative Architecture and the Biosculptural Method

Most students passing through a training in architecture, will be motivated by the idea that their designs are going to make a positive impact on the world. The question is how we can inspire and equip tertiary students with a living knowledge of how architectural form can become *morally transformative*, that is to say: uplift the soul of those who move within and around them? And how can a such transformative architecture be taught?

This is a completely different question from trying to create a built up environment that is merely well-designed, functional, green, healthy or energy efficient etc. As important as all such considerations are, they are in the end utilitarian in nature. Whilst utilitarianism can be efficient, practical, profitable, healthy, even attractive, it can never become truly beautiful nor uplifting. Why not? Because in the final analysis there are always functional and/or commercial motives attached to anything of a purely utilitarian nature.

True beauty on the other hand, can only arise when it is freed from utilitarian motives, which implies that it is given as a free gift and not as the result of a commercial transaction. This doesn't mean that Michaelangelo couldn't have been paid for his work, but it means that the money wasn't what motivated him. This also doesn't mean that functional and utilitarian requirements need to be ignored, but it means they are initially set aside for a later stage in the process. This allows for a creative "open space" to arise within which an inspiration is able to metamorphose a formless spiritual essence into architectural form.

The moral Perspective

We can admire the beauty of a rose, a spectacular sunset, the gait of a brumby, the smile of a baby or humour of a wizened old face. Some manifestations of beauty are universal and not subject to the eye of the beholder, nor are they limited to the phenomena of nature alone. We may also come across them in human created works of art. When listening to such works as Mozart's *Ave Verum*, Bach's *Magnificat* or Beethoven's *Pastorale* for example, we are transported to another realm, which is highly moral in nature and which, momentarily, transforms us into better human beings than we were before. The architectural equivalent of such moments is to stand in awe inside a great cathedral, look up at a Greek temple or walk up the steps of a great modern building such as the Sydney Opera House. These are all experiences of *universal beauty*.

But in practice, how can we even begin to find an approach to create comparable beauty within the much smaller context of our everyday professional lives and architectural surroundings? How can we do justice to Steiner's words, to "*send a spiritual fluid into human souls and into human hearts*"? At this point it becomes clear just how much we lack an architectural approach capable of translating such moral goals into practice. TAA represents an attempt to formulate a spiritually grounded, practical methodology that makes a moral architectural intention possible—and at the same time also teachable.

TAA and its Biosculptural Method

Transformative Art & Architecture (TAA) is a newly formulated theory of how spirit engages with artistic and architectural form. As a theory it is fully grounded in Rudolf Steiner's research of the spiritual universe and our place within it.

The **Biosculptural methodology** is what puts the theory into practice. While the theory of TAA is based on the universal principles of spiritual science, which are not likely to change with the passage of time, the practical methodologies of how this theory is applied may vary and change over time. Both TAA and the Biosculptural methodology complement each other and form part of the same TAA course.

The name *Biosculptural Architecture* implies a deliberate association with the name *Biodynamic Agriculture*. Both are practical endeavours with concrete methodologies arising out of anthroposophical principles and both seek to establish links between cosmic/spiritual and earthly/physical realities. Just like biodynamic agriculture seeks to bring plants into a dynamic relationship with the cosmos, in order to draw increased life force into fruit and vegetable, so does the Biosculptural methodology explore practical ways of embodying soul/spiritual qualities within the "sculptural" and "living" forms of a building.

What is the aim of TAA?

There are many architects and architectural movements today whose entire focus is about functionality, sustainability, energy efficiency, health, ecology, environmental awareness etc. TAA is not focused on any of these. It does not wish to replace or modify any of such worthwhile principles, which are already recognized as being integral to best architectural practice. Rather than replacing such approaches, TAA adds another perspective which does not replace but complement existing architectural best practice.

In effect, TAA's spiritual perspective only adds one extra layer to the design process. It is however a layer that is very likely to have a significant effect on the chosen geometric forms, final appearance and the overall feel and atmosphere emanating from any given project.

Monistic Foundation

TAA arises from an Anthroposophical, *monistic, spiritual perspective*, which seeks to elevate architectural design, without compromising function, from utilitarianism and sensationalist fashion to a spiritually uplifting '*transformational*' level. It does this by aiming for an experience of *Universal Beauty* - not "subjective beauty" that lies in the eye of the beholder, but *Universal Beauty*.

What is Universal Beauty?

For the purposes of TAA, beauty becomes universal when it bears within itself an element of “Goodness and Truth”, giving rise to the triad of “Goodness and Truth and Beauty”. These three ideals have a long history, going back to Plato and even earlier. Christ’s words: “I am the Way (of Love), the Truth and the Life” also represent a similar triad of universal values. In a nutshell, TAA aims to create morally transformative architecture through the incorporation of the qualities of “Goodness (Love), Truth (Authenticity) and Beauty (Life). TAA and its Biosculptural methodology have identified a number of concrete, practical steps and design and evaluation criteria towards this aim.

How can this be achieved?

In its present form, TAA addresses three perspectives of form creation, all of which are essential to create a meaningful and spiritually uplifting environment. They are:

1 Spirit Content:	The Spiritual Nature of the Creative Process
2 Living Form Language:	The 4 Ethers as Nature’s Etheric Language of Form
3 Consciousness of Form:	Creating awareness of The “Consciousness” behind Forms appropriate for the Consciousness Soul Age

1- Creative Process – Spirit Essence

Understanding and working with the spiritual nature of the creative Process is necessary to help incorporate spiritual essence into architectural form. We can approach the archetypal nature of the creative process by studying the creative steps of cosmic evolution as spiritually researched by Steiner, which reveal themselves to be the steps of WARMTH – LIGHT – MOVEMENT – FORM. We can also trace the same steps in the archetypal plant gestures over a 12 month period. More about the creative process shortly.

2- Language of Form – Living Form

“Spirit cannot act in the world without form”. All forms of nature ultimately have a spiritual origin and are therefore filled with purpose, meaning and beauty. The form itself arises within physical substance through the creative tension that exists between the polarity of life forces and physical forces, as explained by Ernst Marti through his “World Formula”. Understanding and appreciating the dynamic tension that exists between these polar opposites is the first step towards an artistic and living architectural language of form. We can begin to learn how to create living and meaningful forms by studying the form language of the 4 Ethers and the 12 formative forces connected with the zodiac.

3- Consciousness of Form – Human Being

Every form has consciousness. There are 4 archetypal categories of form connected with the typical forms of the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human kingdom. The spiritual counterparts of the lower kingdoms are not physically incarnated within their material bodies. Only the human form can incorporate a spiritual centre or Ego. Since the forms we wish to create are to serve, above all, the human kingdom, and since the human being was created in the image of God, it behoves us to study the "*lawfulness of the human physical body*" as Steiner puts it. This in turn will help us to find the new architectural principles appropriate for the consciousness soul age. In other words, the ultimate criterium for any architectural form is whether it is capable of serving the spiritual evolutionary goals of humanity at a given time or age.

Within the scope of this article it is not possible to give an overview of each one of the above three TAA perspectives. In the following, we will therefore only focus on the first perspective of the creative process.

The Creative Process

Through Anthroposophy we can come to understand how the creation and evolution of the world itself is a creative process on the part of many spiritual hierarchies. This process unfolded in four archetypal steps that could be summarised by the principles of:

WARMTH – LIGHT – MOVEMENT – FORM

The Hermetic principle of "as above - so below" implies that such fundamental principles apply on all levels of creation, from the largest all the way down to the lowest scale. Therefore, every truly creative process must allow these four steps to take their course. There must be personal commitment, enthusiasm and engagement (WARMTH). There must be appropriate skills, information and an element of artistic/spiritual inspiration (LIGHT). There must be a sufficient amount of time and space to allow the design to evolve, so the solutions have time to "cook" and mature (MOVEMENT) before the process is finally able to yield a concrete, comprehensive and beautiful result (FORM). If any of the four steps or principles is missing in the design process, the results are being compromised.

So, for example:

Lack of WARMTH	means	tight, cheap, generic
Lack of LIGHT	the results	boring, uninformed, uninspiring,
Lack of MOVEMENT	are likely to be	impractical, rigid, inflexible
Lack of FORM		chaotic, fragmented, arbitrary

The above four archetypal steps inspire the four stages of the creative process. Within the architectural design process the same 4 steps can be seen as follows:

I. WARMTH	I: <i>Briefing Phase:</i>	Clarifying intent, higher purpose and resourcing
II. LIGHT	II. <i>Creative Chaos Phase:</i>	Seeking Inspiration
III. MOVEMENT	III. Incubation / Exploration:	Exploring the Life*, Soul* and Seed Model* Gestures in resonance with the inspiration
IV. FORM	IV. Design Development:	Evolving the seed model into a purposeful, living whole

This now allows for a juxtaposition of the human creative process with the 12 archetypal plant gestures over a 12 month cycle. The 12 plant gestures are to be seen as archetypal stages, i.e. not applicable to any specific plant species.

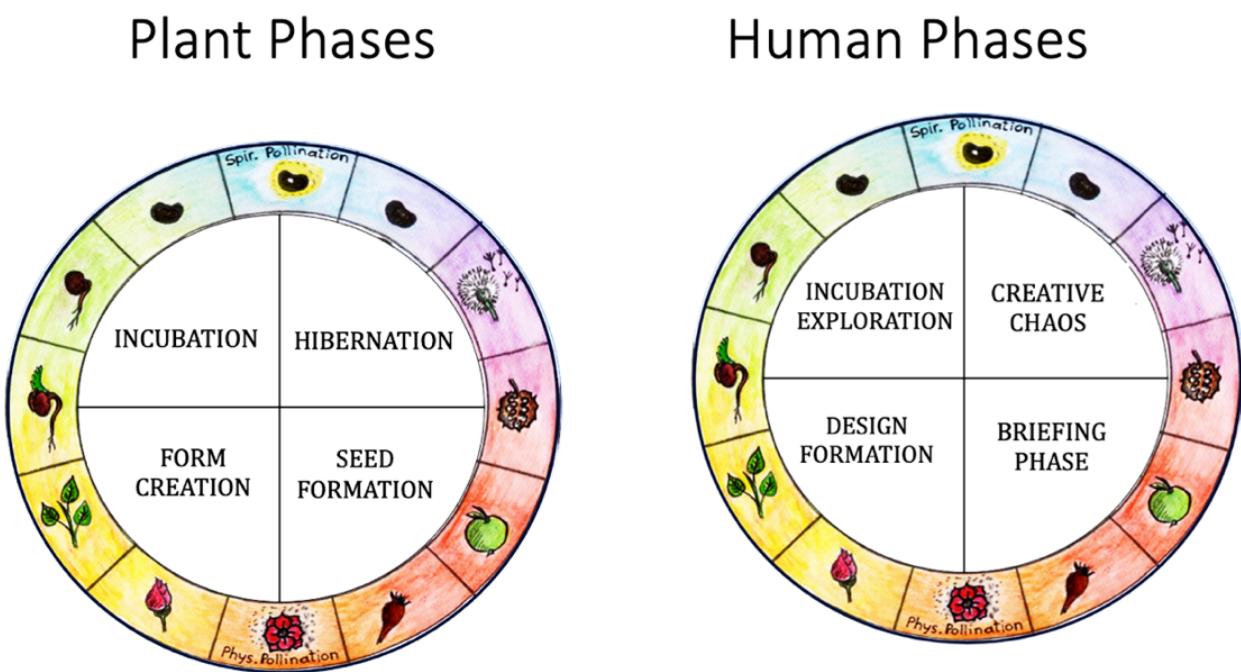


Figure 1: Comparison of the human creative process with the yearly plant cycle.

*The Life Gesture , *Soul Gesture and *Seed Model stages represent the 3 consecutive steps of the incubation phase (corresponding to the 11, 10 and 9 o'clock equivalent on the clock face). The 'seed model', for example, represents the germinating spring seed, which bears within itself the spiritual, formative blueprint of the mature plant form as shown in figure 2 below. The study of these various relationships forms part of the first teaching module of the TAA course.

The transition from the 'seed model' (at the 9 o'clock position) to the final form (at the 6 o'clock clock position) is comparable to the growth of the plant from seed to flower¹. The flower stage represents the culmination of the plant's form and beauty. Within the architectural context, this stage represents the final form or design. So the process begins with pollination and ends with the flower at the same 6 o'clock position on the clock face. The architectural correspondence to pollination is the gathering of all relevant bits of information, which belongs to the start of the briefing phase. It is not possible within the scope of this essay to go through all the 12 stages, suffice to say that all 12 gestures can be cross-referenced with a particular step in the human design process.

Pollination versus Spiritual Fertilization

Many scientists still take it for granted that the form of a living organism is determined by its genome. But that is not so. The DNA contains all the specific details, but not the form. Rupert Sheldrake, the well-known British biologist, makes the following point: if all the cells in our body have the same DNA, how does an individual cell 'know' whether it is part of the shape of a finger, kidney, or heart etc.? It cannot know, because a higher principle is needed to mediate and maintain the form. Rupert Sheldrake calls it a morphological field, Rudolf Steiner describes it as the etheric body. This has implications for our plant process.

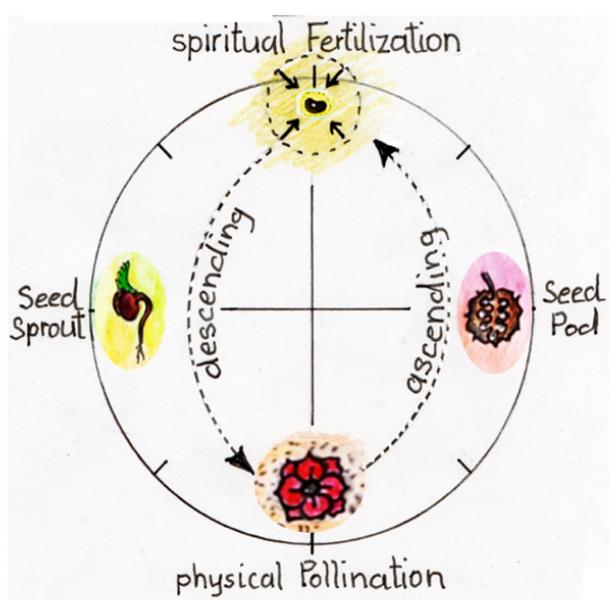


Figure 2: Spiritual Fertilization divides the process into two halves

be wiped clean so to speak before a new form can be drawn upon it. This divides the yearly

From Rudolf Steinert's biodynamic lectures we know that the physical pollination of the plant does not ultimately determine its form. He explains that the pollinated seed, being in a state of highest molecular complexity, would never be able to receive the spiritual imprint of the form. This spiritual form impulse comes from the constellations of the stars and is imprinted into the seed through a separate spiritual fertilization process occurring during the archetypal winter phase. Moreover, for the seed to become receptive to the spiritual imprint of the form, it must first let go of its molecular complexity and enter into a state of inner chaos. The slate has to

¹ This is where the form language of the four ethers provides a useful template in design development. It is only through a living, etheric form language that the soul/spiritual qualities of the original inspiration are able to condense into outer form. Therefore, the study of the form language of the four ethers, plus, at a more advanced stage, the study of the formative forces connected with the zodiac, become a necessary part of any TAA based university curriculum.

plant cycle, and with it also the human creative process, into an ascending and a descending half, as shown in Fig. 2

During the ascending phase, the plant prepares the seed. The physical maturation of the seed occurs between pollination and seed pod, the spiritual fertilization occurs when the seed rests in the darkness of the winter earth. After spiritual fertilization begins the descending phase, which culminates in the pre-pollinated flower.

A similar pattern can be observed in the transformative human creative process. We prepare and find the 'Seed Idea' during the ascending half of the process. But the seed idea at this stage is only an idea without form. If there is to be a creative, spiritual dimension to the form, it cannot be conceptually crafted but must be inspired. Artistic inspiration is what corresponds to the plant's spiritual fertilization process. But just like the fertilized seed has much growing to do before it turns into a flower, the same is true for an inspiration or spiritual impulse seeking physical form.

The descending phase begins with playful experimentation and ends with an embryonic three dimensional form called the 'seed model'. The seed model represents the three dimensional transformation of the 'Seed Idea'. Its purpose is to show the spiritual gesture in its purity, without functional complications. The myriad of functional requirements equate to the complexity of the seed, which has to be let go of during the creative chaos phase, in order to become receptive for an inspiration. Only after the 'seed model' has been able to capture the essence of the new form can the actual design development phase begin to incorporate all functional and environmental requirements.

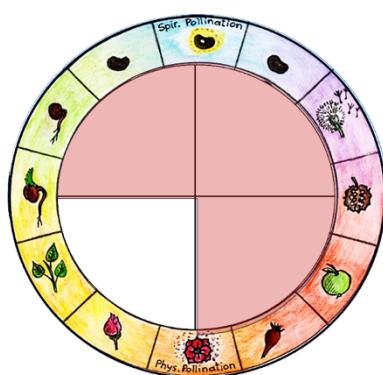


Figure 3: Three quarters of the archetypal plant process directly relate to seed development

What the plant process tells us, (architects take note !!) is that three quarters of the whole process are connected with seed preparation. From pollination all the way to the sprouting seed, every gesture represents a particular seed activity. Only the leaf, bud and pre-pollinated flower stages represent new formative expressions no longer tied to the seed itself. This suggests that if we want to incorporate a spiritual impulse into form, we must allow for the additional time, effort and resources it takes to create an inspired seed. Incidentally, this is exactly what AI cannot do. We can use AI in the bottom half of the creative circle, but not in the top half.

The following diagram (Figure 3) illustrates, in a simplified form, the transformative human creative process and its correspondences with the plant process .

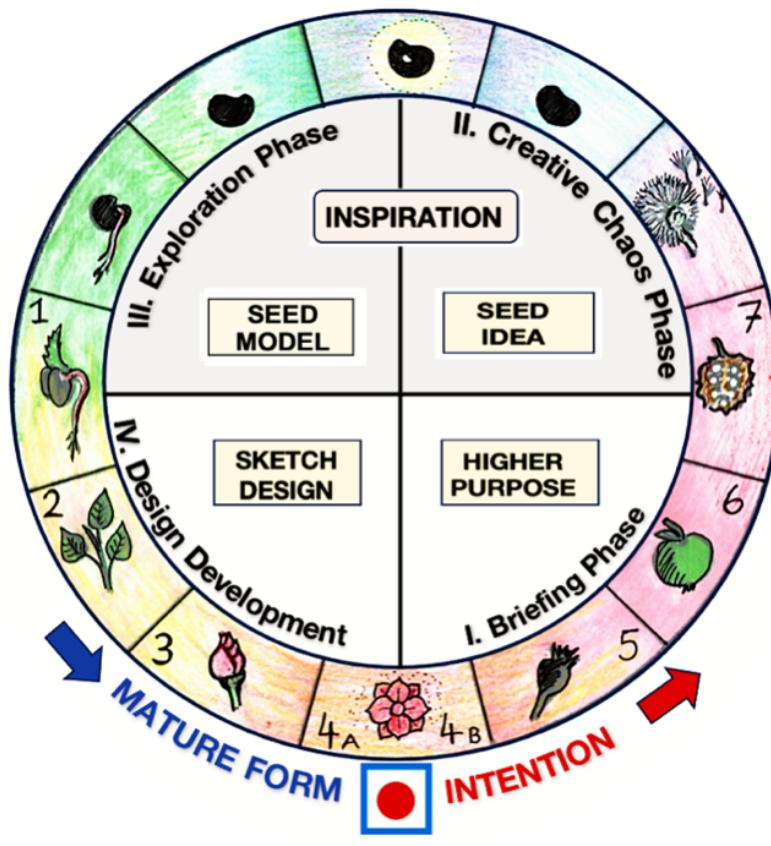


Figure 4: Juxtaposition of the transformative human creative process with the plant's 12 yearly growth gestures.

The Higher Purpose

One of the most important elements in the transformative creative process is the *Higher Purpose*.

The "HIGHER PURPOSE" for a building corresponds to the pollinated seed of the plant prior to the seed pod stage (9 o'clock position). When chosen in the right way, it creates the spiritual resonance that "draws in" the inspiration for the structural gesture of the form. Often, when thinking about spiritual ideas or the spiritual world, we think in terms of abstract concepts and ideas. But we know from Rudolf Steiner that in the spiritual world there are no abstract ideas, only beings. Everything is and has Essence and Being.

Although we cannot normally see or consciously meet with spiritual beings, we can experience them, even if only peripherally, as a qualitative essence. So if we want to be inspired we literally have to be able to resonate with a spiritual essence or being and, importantly, the right spiritual being, because not all beings or inspirations are for the good of humanity. So for a higher purpose to become interesting and attractive to the right spiritual presence, it must be both, *moral/spiritual* and *selfless*.

1) Moral/spiritual means there has to be a moral intent on the part of the owner, which is subsequently made tangible through the higher purpose. To begin with, the general underlying higher intent must resonate with the qualities of Goodness, Truth and Beauty, which want the building's aesthetic impact to serve, inspire and elevate

the surrounding community in some way. But a general idealistic intent is not enough to individualize a form, which is why we also need a specific 'Higher Purpose', capable of being physically incorporated into the building's structural gesture. Further below we will give examples of this from the Little Yarra Steiner School.

2) Selfless means the higher purpose is offered as a free gift to the community. Designing a building with an individualized structural gesture invariably adds extra time, work and money to a project, which must be appropriately resourced by the owner. This additional effort, if it is selflessly given without commercial motives, adds a very special quality to the project and in fact helps the spiritual impulse to find its appropriate form. However, this also means that the Higher Purpose cannot be inherent in the function. While it must complement and ennoble the function, for it to be selfless, it cannot be part of a necessary functional requirement.

In a design process, pending on the size and scope of a project, the Higher Purpose could be expressed in anything from a single sentence to a multipage document. However, it cannot be taken into the 'Creative Chaos Phase' in this form. This is the stage where the plant seed goes from complexity to Chaos. In the human context, this means becoming empty, letting go of all pre-conceived ideas². But not completely. Just like the plant seed, in spite of all the chaos, must retain an inner antenna, a spiritual resonance that is able to attract the right spirit impulse matching the plant species, so must the essence of the Higher Purpose be retained, but not in the form of a whole document.

At this stage in the process the Higher Purpose must be condensed into a '**Seed Idea**', meaning just a few words or perhaps a poem that captures its essence. So we approach the Chaos Phase with a different consciousness, humble, cap in hand, with the seed idea quietly resonating in the back of our mind.

² Within a different, context, this is the archetypal, initiatory stage sometimes referred to as "the darkness of the soul", which must precede the 'enlightenment' stage that follows.

The Higher Purpose behind the LYSS Classes 1–10 Footprints

As shown in the Little Yarra Steiner School examples below, the **HIGHER PURPOSE** for **classes 1-10** was connected with the evolving stages of consciousness of the students, which is reflected in the floor plans and roof gestures of the buildings.

I applied the principles of Biosculptural architecture to the design of all the initial Little Yarra buildings over the first 21 years (1986 – 2007) of the school's establishment phase.

Primary School

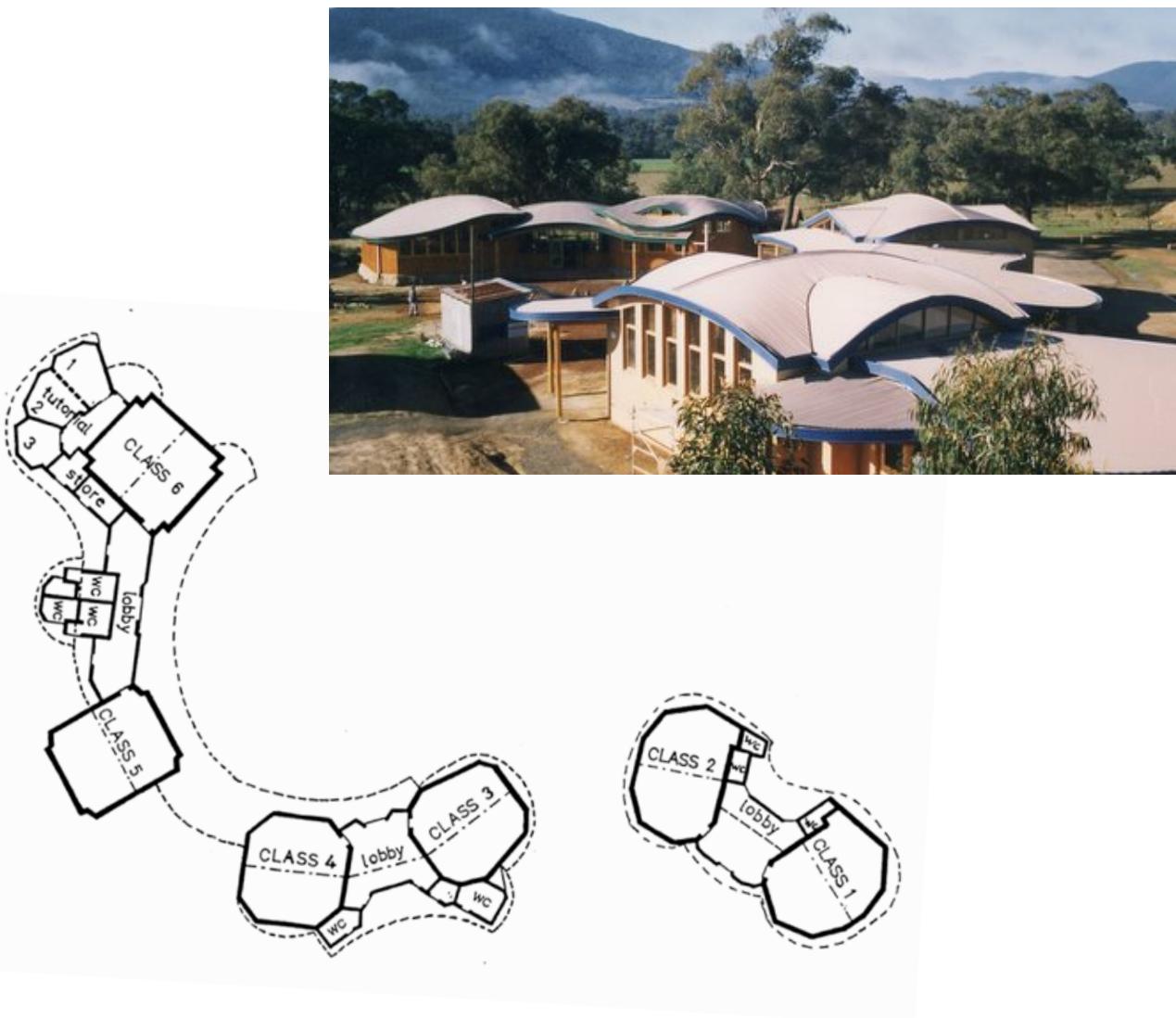


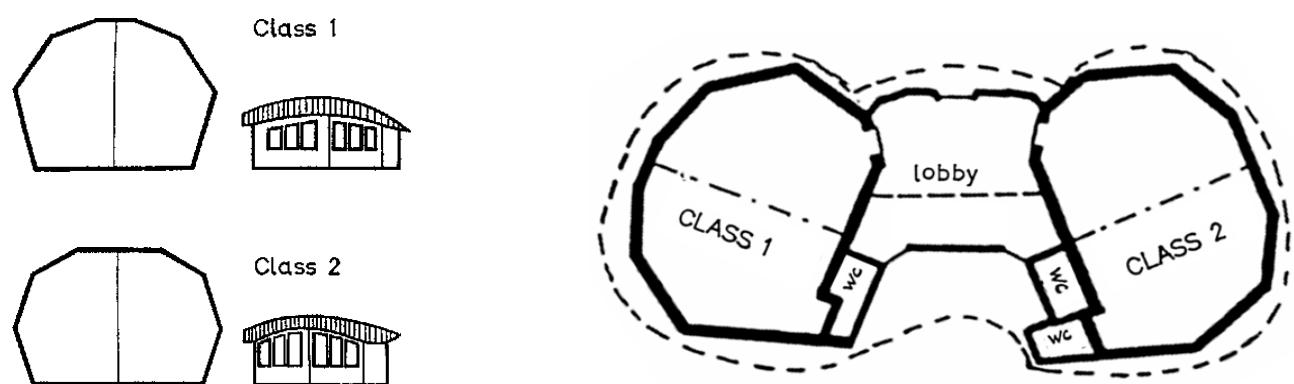
Figure 5 LYSS primary School Class room footprints 1 to 6 and classes 3 – 6 in the photo. The curvilinear layout also reflects the watery element connected with the school's location adjoining the Little Yarra river.

Classes 1 & 2

The consciousness of the early primary school child is not conceptual but dream like. At this stage the most important quality is for the children to be held in a sphere of warmth, which means physically, emotionally and also architecturally. This is why the forms are organic and rounded, gathering the children in a circle like a shepherd gathering his flock. Unlike the upper primary school classrooms, beginning with class 4, which have some form of clerestory windows looking out into the world with interest, the roofs of classes 1 and 2 are more inward, like protective shells, nurturing imaginative, inner activity.



Figure 6: LYSS classes 1 and 2.



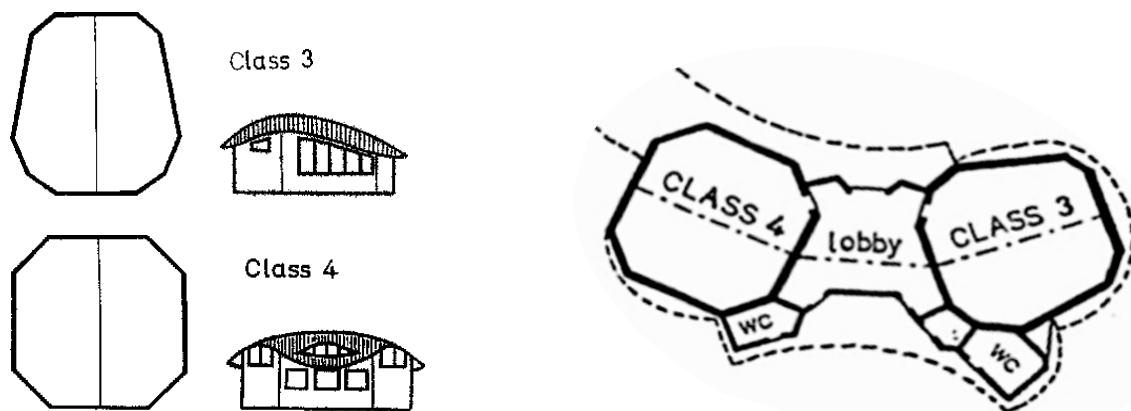
Classes 3 & 4

Class 3 marks a very special phase in the development of consciousness. It is when the 9 year old child often makes yet another leap in individuation, which tends to create feelings of separateness accompanied by anxiety. This is where the class 3 teacher must provide a firm and reassuring, predictable environment. If in class 1 and 2 the teacher was like a shepherd, in class 3 the teacher becomes the unambiguous leader. This is shown in the more elongated footprint, which orients the class towards the teacher and in the roof, which rises in height towards where the teacher stands.

By Class 4, this crossing point that is associated with class 3, lies in the past and the children are now entering what might be characterized as the golden age of childhood. It is the most musical, rhythmic and lively year, reflected also in the footprint, which again allows for a circular desk arrangement and in the musical waving forms of the roof. But it is a fleeting moment that won't last. By class 5, this flowing, rhythmic element will begin to recede as it makes way for the emergence of abstract thought.



Figure 7: LYSS classes 3 and 4. Note the different aspects of the view, showing class 3 on the left in the photo and on the right in the footprint



Classes 5 & 6

The consciousness of the child from Kindergarten to the upper school undergoes enormous changes. It represents a progression from inward focus to outward interest, from dreaming to wakefulness, from picture thinking to abstract thinking. This evolutionary sequence is expressed architecturally in the change from organic informality to more linear, geometric formality, which begins with class 5. It is at this time that the consciousness of the children is able to grasp abstract concepts. They delight in the discovery that we cannot actually see trees, we only ever see a pine tree, an oak or a birch tree etc. Historically, ancient Greece was the birth place of the awakening intellect. This awakening process becomes the leading theme of class 5, which is also reflected stylistically in the class 5 architecture.

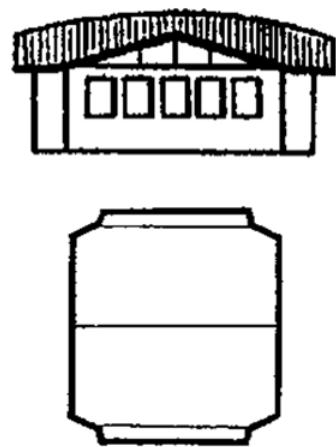


Figure 8: Class 5 Interior: the greater degree of formality is connected with the intrinsic nature of conceptual thought, which begins to awaken in the class 5 child.

The Class 5 floor plan, for example, encompasses a rectangle in the proportion of the “golden section” which is also the proportion of the windows and a number of other relationships in the room. The corners have not yet crystallised into right angles, but geometrically arise out of two overlapping pentagons. Overall the room has much less of the organic flow of the earlier rooms, in favour of greater formality and weight. The greater degree of formality is connected with the intrinsic nature of conceptual thought, which brings structure, form and understanding as against movement and flow, which arise from the heart. The Class 4 and early class 5 child still have a perfect balance between movement and form, but this balance is about to tilt in the following years.



Figure 9: Class 5 (left) and 6 (right) front view

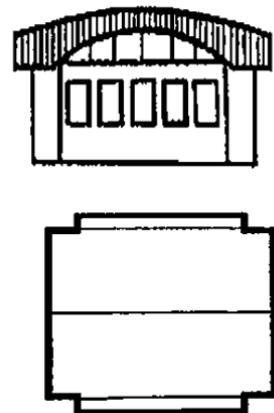


Figure 10: Class 6 rear view with side elevation and floor plan

In **class 6** the students learn about ancient Rome and the curriculum branches into science, geology, acoustics, optics etc. This focus on the physicality of the earth is also reflected in the children's spurt of growth, which at this prepubescent stage begins to flow into the limbs.

Class 6 is the only class room with a rectilinear floor plan. The square with its right angles has traditionally been used to represent the earth element. As such, this "earth bound" form represents the turning point in the evolutionary sequence of metamorphosing classroom shapes, as shown in Fig. 9 below. What balances the rigidity of the right angles are the curvilinear roof lines reminiscent of the Roman arch.

From here on the students leave their childhood behind and embark on the journey towards adulthood, which in the ideal case is at the same time also a journey towards freedom, when eventually, as conscious adults, they are able to give free direction to their own lives.

Overview of the floor plans of the LYSS Classes 1–10

The following diagram (Figure 9) illustrates how the metamorphosing floor plans reflect the descending and ascending streams of the students' consciousness. The descending stream represents the progressive awakening within the material world, while the ascending stream reflects the individual awakening of the personality toward adulthood.

*Classes 11 and 12 are not included in the diagram, because they had not yet been built during my time at the school.

** The Kindergarten was newly purpose built only a few years ago. It could not be included because its design was guided by considerations not connected with the architectural impulse described here.

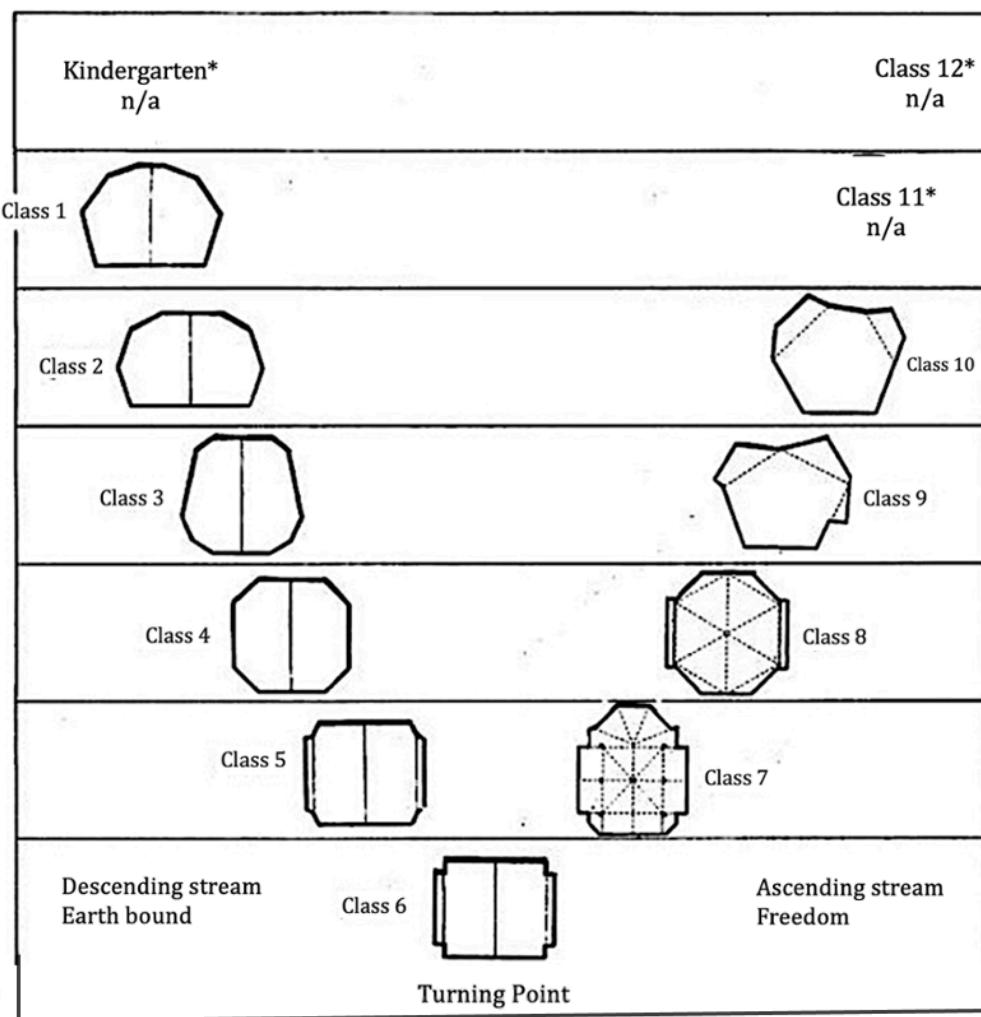


Figure 11: Metamorphosing classroom floor plans mirroring the development of students' consciousness.

The Higher Purpose for Specialist Rooms

Other than being *moral/spiritual* and *selfless*, there is no rule what the Higher Purpose should be. It need not have been the evolving consciousness of the students, it could have been something entirely different, as long as the relationship to purpose and function is retained. However, “The Development of the Students’ Consciousness “ as the chosen the Higher Purpose was only appropriate for general class rooms that are used by the same age groups. It would not have been suitable for buildings used across different year levels. For the specialist buildings, therefore, a different Higher Purpose had to be found for each building.

Below are a two examples of Higher Purpose that have shaped the gestures of the library/administration and the science laboratories.

The Library Administration Building

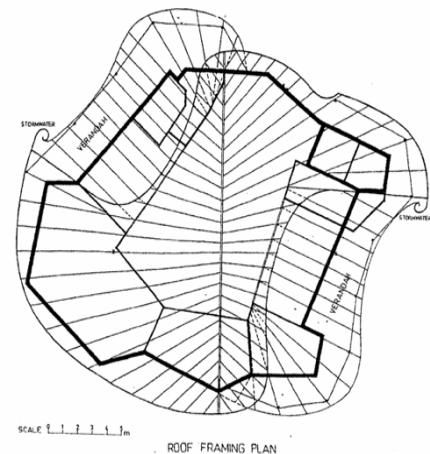
Higher Purpose:

The Library /Administration Building represents the front door to the school. It overlooks the entrance and sits centrally between the upper and lower school precincts. It accommodates the school’s administration and at the same time functions as college meeting room and library. All of which connects this building with a ‘head’ function, which implies a particular orientation towards ‘thinking’. However, as an activity, thinking can be cold and calculating, or warm, flowing and creative. This polarity is also mirrored in the right and left hemispheres of the brain, one being more creative and intuitive, the other given to logical thinking. We need of course both capacities of thinking; yet for thinking to become alive, it is essential that it be connected to the heart. This Higher Purpose is expressed in just a few words through the following **Seed Idea**:

Winged Thoughts - Warmed from the Heart



Figure 12: Library/Admin Building:
on the right: original view (no landscaping yet)
above: more recent view of the Front entrance



The building's curved ridge beam divides the roofline into right and left hemispheres swinging in different directions. Each wing cradles the lower roof sections from opposite directions, creating two rows of clerestory windows that allow for a light filled internal space. Another polarity is created by the undulating eave lines which introduce a lively, rhythmic element which is however contrasted by the more crystalline, asymmetric, but dynamically balanced angles of the floor plan.



Figure 13: Library/Admin Building, Framing stage, roof plan, side and interior views

The Science Laboratories

Higher Purpose

It was not easy to come up with a Higher Purpose for the science laboratories. Within an educational context, what would be an appropriate moral/spiritual perspective pertaining to natural science?

As it turned out, the link to etheric forces seemed both obvious and appropriate, because it is the very denial of the reality of etheric forces by main stream materialistic science that has contributed to the destructive nature of modern technologies.

So, with the aim of creating a palpable etheric link to the building's structural gesture, we decided to use the characteristics of "Sound- or Chemical Ether" as an appropriate higher principle to seed the formation of a science building.

The Sound Ether is the force of levity that at the same time is able to rhythmically divide and reunite, such as in chemical compounds or cell division, creating harmonious internal differentiations and proportions. This gave rise to the following **Seed Idea**:

The qualities of Sound Ether:

Weightlessly lifting - Rhythmically separating - Harmoniously ordering

The structural roof gesture hints at this in the rising central roof sections pushing up through the lower roofs, like a seedling rising out of the earth in spring.

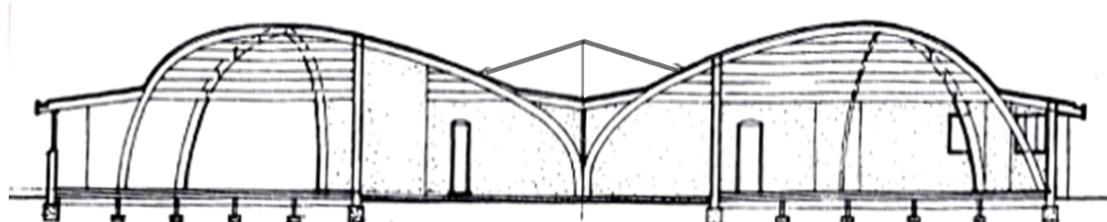
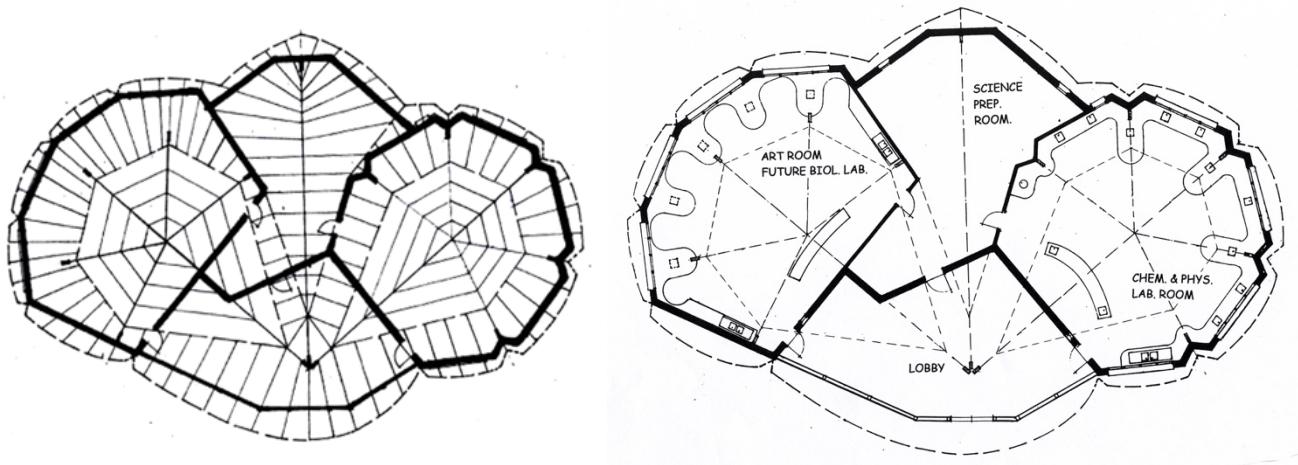


Figure 14: Science Building front view and original side elevation



The rhythmic, watery element appears in the meandering internal work desks, while the slightly inverted corners of the Chemistry room (on the right in the above floor plan) mirror the dividing impulse behind cell division.



Figure 15: Science Building: original roof and floor plans and interior views of the biology (left) and Chemistry Lab (right)..



Biographical Note

Johannes Schuster is one of the founders, first-class teacher, long standing administrator and original building designer of the [Little Yarra Steiner School](#), Victoria, Australia.

More recently, Johannes founded the [Transformative Art and Architecture – International Training Initiative](#), within which he and his partner Sue Schuster, have been offering courses in Australia, South America, Europe, South East Asia, China and Taiwan for the last 15 years. The full TAA course currently consists of 8 modules (350 hours) provides the theoretical foundation for qualifying as a Biosculptural Architectural Design Consultant.

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