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kunanyi / Mount Wellington  
**The Springs Visitor Hub**

FEASIBILITY STUDY  
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**HP**  
TERROIR  
MCa

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Hobart City Council

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01	22 January 2018	Hobart City Council	Draft Issue (Revised: Incorporating cost report)
02	19 February 2018	Hobart City Council	Final Issue
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....4

PROCESS.....5

Policy Review

Market Data Review

Consultation

Planning Review

Heritage Review

Bushfire Requirements Review

Springs Zone Masterplan Review

Structural, Hydraulic and Civil Engineering Review

Services Engineering Review

SITE ANALYSIS.....6

.....7

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS.....8

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES.....9

Markets and Marketing

Attraction

Operation

VISION.....10

Kunanyi / Mt Wellington

The Springs

The Springs Hub

THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT.....11

Cafe / Gallery / Shop

Garden

The Courtyard

Picnic / Barbeque / Coffee

Lockers

Play

Lookouts

Context Plan

Precinct Plan

The Springs Hub Plan

Sections / Elevations

Visualisations

## INTRODUCTION

In August 2017 the Hobart City Council appointed Hirst Projects to undertake this Feasibility Study for a Visitor Centre at the Springs, kunanyi / Mt Wellington. This follows an earlier study to identify the need, concept and opportunity for such a facility.

Kunanyi / Mt Wellington has an important Aboriginal history, it has been identified as one of Tasmania's most popular visitor destinations and is a treasured and iconic place for Tasmanians.

The Springs has been the location for visitor facilities earlier in its history. It has been the location for a ranger's residence, a tea house, a hotel, an exhibition garden and a works depot. It is now the location of a carpark, public amenities, a shelter, basic information and interpretation and a semi-permanent café.

It is recognized that this infrastructure is not in good condition, and whilst improvements are being made, there is an opportunity to optimize the unique value of the site and create a destination that is in keeping with its natural attractions.

In parallel with this Report, the Mt Wellington Management Trust has commissioned a review of the current Masterplan of the Springs site.

Hirst Projects and the Consultant Team acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land of which this Study speaks.

Tasmanian Aboriginal People have protected, nurtured and cared for this land for tens of thousands of years and continue to do so today. We acknowledge the depth of history, connection to country and ongoing wisdom and skill of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community in caring for this land. Throughout the project, priority will be given to consultation with various Aboriginal groups to not only explain the context of the plan and invite input, but to engage with them over any future interpretation strategy for which the Aboriginal heritage and connection to kunanyi could be reflected.





## PROCESS

The consultant team has undertaken substantial research to assess the feasibility of a ‘visitor centre’ at this location.

This has comprised:

- Site visits
- Policy Review
- Market Data Review
- Consultation

Consultation has taken place with stakeholders including:

- Council staff managing the site
- Wellington Park Management Trust
- Operators associated with the site
- Interest groups using the site regularly
- Heritage experts
- Industry Representatives

### PLANNING REVIEW

The Springs area is subject to both the Hobart Interim Planning Scheme 2015 (the Scheme) and the Wellington Park Management Plan. It is zoned Environmental Management under the Scheme, although the assessment of applications within Wellington Park are considered under the Wellington Park Specific Area Plan pursuant to Clause F3.2.2 which reads:

*Notwithstanding any other provision of this planning scheme, any use or development of land in Wellington Park must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Wellington Park Management Plan.*

All proposed use and development assessment is against the Wellington Park Management Plan, unless there are provisions elsewhere in the Scheme that are not considered by the Management Plan. Such provisions include specific technical standards within some of the Codes. However, the provisions of the Environmental Management Zone are generally not applied.

In addition to requiring a planning permit under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) (as above) all use and development requires a separate permit by the Mount Wellington Management Trust under the *Wellington Park Act 1993*. This process is called a ‘Parks Activity Assessment’. An outline of that process is shown in Appendix item 4 (p.54). Often the LUPAA process and the PAA process are run concurrently, although generally the PAA process does require more comprehensive documentation relating to potential environmental impact and analysis against the entire Management Plan.

Refer Appendix item 4 (p.53) for full report provided by Emma Riley and Associates.

### HERITAGE REVIEW

There are no places of heritage significance listed within The Springs area either under the Interim Planning Scheme or the Tasmanian Heritage Register. Notwithstanding this, it is well recognised that there are known historic heritage values within The Springs, which is an identified value under the Springs Specific Area Plan and therefore relevant to the Parks Activity Assessment.

Refer Appendix item 4 (p.53) for full report provided by Emma Riley and Associates.

### BUSHFIRE REQUIREMENTS REVIEW

The proposed Visitors Centre will require a detailed Bushfire Hazard Assessment and Management Plan and will need to rely on active management measures rather than the clearance of vegetation, given the recognised significant scenic, cultural and environmental values of The Springs.

The City of Hobart has strict protocols in place on kunanyi / Mount Wellington for the bushfire season. In extreme and catastrophic fire events Wellington Park is closed. Any lease agreement will explicitly prohibit the operation of the Visitors Centre and access to Pinnacle Road in times of extreme or catastrophic fire danger rated conditions or other fire conditions such as active fires in the area. The building itself will need to contain appropriate fire suppression devices such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets for an internal fire.

Refer Appendix item 4 (p.53) for full report provided by Emma Riley and Associates.

### SPRINGS ZONE MASTERPLAN REVIEW

The Springs Zone Masterplan 2008 has been reviewed and informed the preparation of the Springs concept. The Springs Zone Masterplan is currently being reviewed. This process is being conducted jointly by the Wellington Park Management Trust and the Hobart City Council.

Refer Appendix item 4 (p.53) for full report prepared with assistance from Emma Riley and Associates.

### STRUCTURAL, HYDRAULIC AND CIVIL ENGINEERING REVIEW

Consultants with expertise in facilities in sensitive settings have reviewed the brief and provided issues to be addressed, including; structural form and constructability, hydraulic engineering and civil engineering.

### SERVICES ENGINEERING REVIEW

Preliminary investigations have been undertaken for infrastructure serving the proposed Visitors Centre site, including; water supply, sewer, electrical and communications



# SITE ANALYSIS

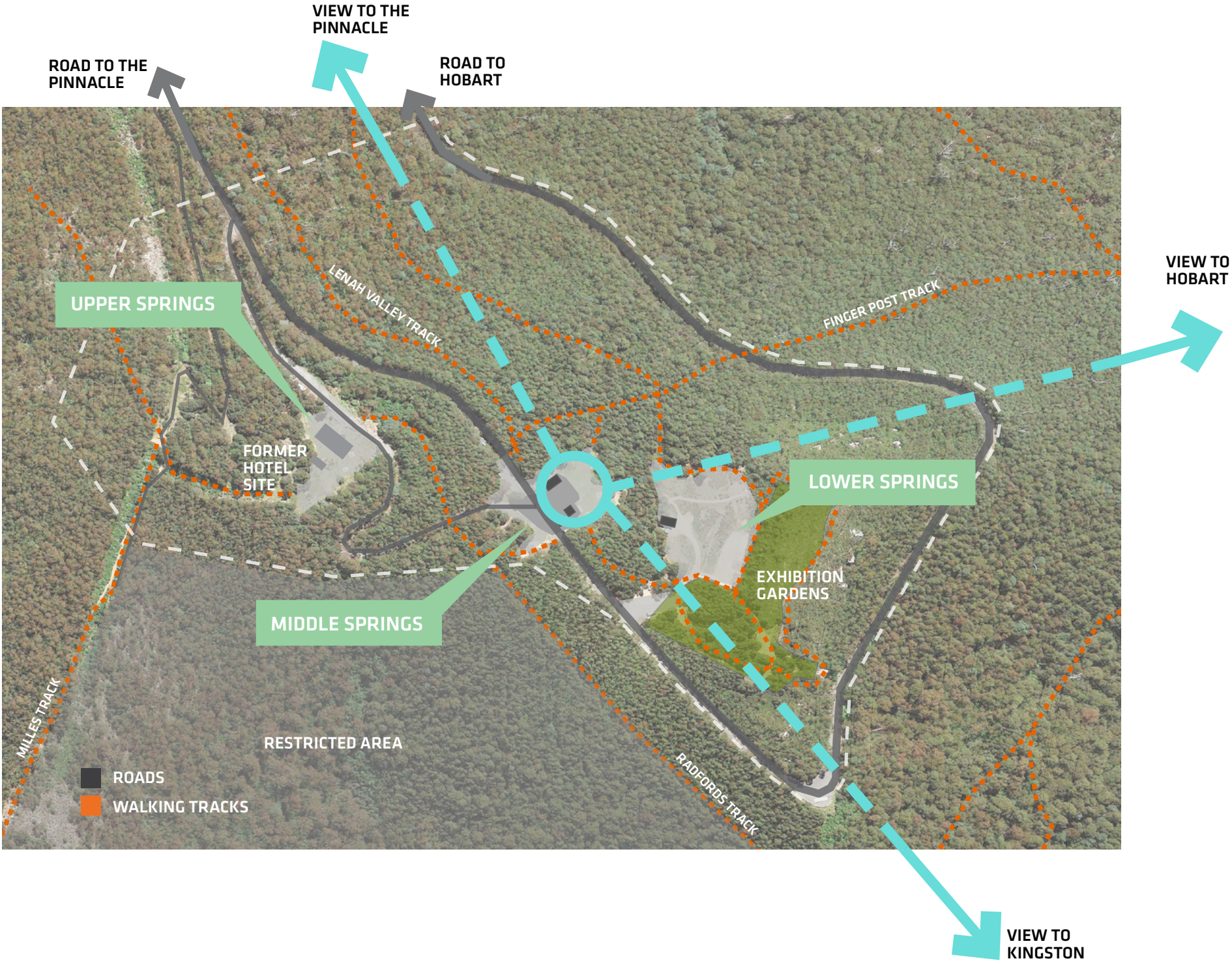
The Springs is situated between Fern Tree and The Pinnacle, comprised of three distinct areas; Upper, Middle and Lower Springs.

Historically, the Springs has been the location of various developments associated with management and visitation to kunanyi / Mount Wellington, including an early ranger's residence, tea house and then a hotel, exhibition garden and works depot.

The Middle and Lower Springs area is currently the focus for visitor facilities, including the popular main picnic area with car parking, bbq facilities, picnic huts, public toilets and basic visitor information and interpretation. The lookout closest to Lower Springs provides excellent views out to Hobart, Mt Nelson and further south to Blackmans Bay and Bruny Island.

The Springs area naturally acts as a base camp for many of the mountain's explorers. A location for visitors to familiarise themselves with the surroundings and prepare for their adventures, ranging from further vehicle journeys to the pinnacle, to bush walks and bicycle trails.

The Springs gives visitors the opportunity for relatively easy and close contact with vegetation communities of local significance. Subcrenulata forest/woodland - a distinctly different type of vegetation than surrounding lower lying areas of Hobart.





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# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

## BUILD ON CURRENT INVESTMENT

The previous study by the Hirst Projects’ team emphasised the role and importance of the mountain for residents of Hobart, Tasmanians and visitors from interstate and overseas. It is already understood as a destination in its own right, rich in natural, cultural and aesthetic experiences.

This is a major asset for Hobart. Its value cannot be simply measured in dollar terms. Over the past decades the Hobart City Council has added value by making the mountain accessible. A number of roads, tracks, trails, amenities, car and bicycle paths, seating, shelters and lookout points have been constructed. More than \$3 million has been spent over the past ten years and some \$5 million has been spent in operational costs.

The visitor hub at the springs is intended to optimise the use of these assets and to increase the return on the substantial investment.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The site has a high profile. Its previous uses and its location on the road to the Summit present both opportunities and constraints.

The Brief acknowledged the absence of key infrastructure services and identified the need to assess the status of these as part of the feasibility. These are captured in the constraints listed.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- It is a starting point for a number of the tracks and trails, attracting walkers and mountain bike enthusiasts
- There are good views of the Mountain and of Hobart
- It is generally above the snow line – making it accessible for a greater period than the Summit, yet providing access to snow covered ground
- It presents a more intimate experience of the natural attractions – trees, plants and wildlife
- It has a unique heritage as a place where people have enjoyed the Mountain through the shelters and the hotel
- It is more sheltered than the Summit and is very atmospheric in all weathers
- There is strong interest from existing walking groups to use this as a base and meeting place
- It is the starting point of tracks and trails and can be the gathering point for guided tours and classes on a variety of subjects
- There are three large cleared sites suited for infrastructure that can accommodate commercial business interests such as a café and functions
- There is evidence that locals are attracted to the site as a venue for weddings and other celebrations
- There is already a successful café operating at the site, that has grown in capacity over the recent past
- There are opportunities for community groups to play a role in the ongoing maintenance and development of the site as volunteers. The use of volunteers is not part of the business model.
- There are plans for a major destination attraction in the form of a Cable Car and associated facilities at the summit of the Mountain. Any visitor facility should be differentiated from this and potentially complement it, should these plans be successful.
- The parking strategy for The Springs site has been adopted from The Springs Zone Master Plan 2008 and comprises of short stay parking spaces adjacent to the Visitor Center facilities, with longer stay vehicle parking and bus parking at the Lower Springs site.
- Bicycle parking will also need to be facilitated within the area, likely to be positioned closer to the Visitor Centre facilities.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Visitor access is limited by: Weather conditions, Road capacity, Parking capacity (space and time)
- The needs of locals and of tourist groups can differ. It is critical that the design allow for both markets to feel comfortable.
- The variation in visitor number seasonally and from week to weekends makes a profitable operation more challenging than for urban based businesses.
- Market segments that are attracted to the Mountain vary widely in their motivation.
- There is limited regular ‘footfall’. Marketing is essential.
- Most of the constraints arise from the need to transport visitors to and from the Springs and to support them staying for as long as they require.



# DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The Springs Hub Concept has been developed to ensure that the place enhances the experience of residents and fits the forward-looking model for tourism.

## MARKETS AND MARKETING

### Segments

The Springs hub will appeal to a wide audience. People increasingly defy segmentation. Today communities develop across the borders of demographics. The Mountain will attract people from all walks of life and with multiple motivations. Whilst there are key interest groups eg. walkers, cyclists, bird watchers, these will not make up the majority of visitors to the Mountain.

### Localhood

The Springs hub will attract repeat visits from locals. Locals want to feel that the Mountain is theirs. This also works for visitors as many don't want to identify as tourists, rather they seek out a sense of 'localhood' experiencing an authentic Springs destination loved and visited by the people who live there.

### Connectivity

The Springs hub will be created for the social media age. The proliferation of social media means that information is now created by anyone and shared with everyone. This scale of connectivity will drive the Mountain brand and narrative making it available 365 days a year.



## ATTRACTION

### Destination

The Springs will be a known destination. The Springs is not just a place to stop along the way to the Pinnacle, nor is it only the starting point for other trails and tours. It is a destination in its own right with special qualities that invite exploration and discovery in all seasons.

### Experiences

The Springs hub will deliver memorable moments. The delivery of great experiences is essential but it is moments that are powerful. The Springs hub must be intentionally designed and operated to provide those moments will create positive memories that will be shared widely.

### Variety

The Springs hub will offer a variety of experiences. The Springs is three sites in close proximity. Each has a different ambience and offer. Connection of the three sites will offer the variety of experience and encourage the spirit of exploration.



## OPERATION

### Operational Excellence

The Springs hub will be attractive to a quality operator. Infrastructure is only one element in the creation of a destination experience. The quality of the operation – hours of opening, service delivery, quality product that will be the driver of success.

### Financial Sustainability

The business model for the Springs hub will be financially sustainable over a long period. The lease revenue must cover the maintenance and management of the hub (possibly excluding major refurbishment) and there must be sufficient attraction for the operator to run a commercially sustainable business.



## VISION

The Vision is driven by kunanyi / Mt Wellington, a vast wilderness. The Springs is a special place.

### KUNANYI / MT WELLINGTON

Kunanyi / Mt Wellington evokes an almost spiritual reverence from locals who have grown up in its presence and from visitors that see it as an extraordinary piece of Tasmanian nature and history.

Its majesty and unspoiled wilderness seep into the pores of those who are enticed to explore it. The natural beauty resonates and the moods of the mountain are a source of wonder.

On kunanyi / Mt Wellington, you are near Hobart, yet far from it.

### THE SPRINGS

The Springs has its own sense of place on the Mountain. It has a deep and long history, both indigenous and European. It has an atmosphere of its own, distinct from the Summit.

At the Springs the Mountain itself takes centre stage. The views are support acts.

- You are on the Mountain, not below it, and not on top of it, but within it.
- You celebrate the Mountain and the glory of nature from a unique vantage point
- You engage in the Mountain experience at this location
- You are emboldened to explore....
- The Springs is a wild place for all weathers.

### THE SPRINGS HUB

The hub is spread across the three sites that comprise the Springs destination. At each site, and in all weathers, there is a different opportunity to explore the Mountain and its history, to learn something about wild nature and your place in it.

# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

This Vision inspires the architecture, the designed landscape and the building’s interiors.

The Vision will drive every experience enjoyed at the Springs.

The Springs concept is threefold:

- 1. It is a special location with its own beauty and atmosphere.
- 2. It offers a new experience at every visit, across the seasons and in all weathers
- 3. It is central to the experience of the Mountain. It is an active place. It contains multiple ports. These connect to every other part of the Mountain. Some connections are physical (views, roads, paths) and some are virtual (stories of culture, history, science)

## TARGET MARKET

The Springs hub targets the locals and tourists.

Locals:

- Specialist interest groups who know the Mountain but want a place to meet, undertake an activity, rest and recuperate.
- Local families with a short time to play and explore in nature
- Locals wanting a short or longer walk or a pleasant time away from the city

Tourists:

- The 2-hour break, to explore the Mountain through the Springs site, learn something about the place and enjoy a coffee
- The half day – a visit that will include a walk, a drawing, writing or painting session and a light meal
- The full day – a visit that includes a tour or longer walk

The Springs is specifically designed to appeal in all seasons and in all weathers.

It places the visitor in nature, but sheltered and sustained to make it an enjoyable and memorable experience.

It offers opportunities for tour operators and education providers to offer products and services that draw on the Springs special qualities

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The Springs Hub is made up of a series of indoor and outdoor spaces that each offer a different experience, designed to attract the multiple market segments that are targeted by this initiative.

Important at every location, across all three Springs’ sites, is the creation of spaces to sit and stand that focus attention on the qualities of the place. These spaces are part of the interpretation strategy - encouraging visitors to look up, and down, and into the landscape, and to notice its beauty at every scale.

The Springs will also be connected to the wider world. This is a project that, whilst focusing on the real, welcomes the digital age. Webcams will bring into the Springs images of places that are hard to reach - they may show birds’ nesting sites, weather conditions or rock formations. Bringing to life the heart of the Mountain and its inhabitants. Wireless connectivity at each site will enable visitors to connect to information, images and words that enhance their understanding, to share their experiences across the globe and to celebrate their enjoyment. This is the basis of marketing the Mountain - enabling visitors to tell their friends and the world where kunanyi / Mt Wellington is, and that they are missing out if they don’t plan a visit!



# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT



## CAFÉ/GALLERY/SHOP

From a business perspective, this is the core offer at the Springs. Central to the experience is a space that combines a great café that also acts as a gallery and retail environment. Artworks and merchandise will be displayed in an environment where all elements can work together to deliver the Mountain narrative.

This space combines indoor and covered outdoor areas that are located and designed to manage:

- Queuing
- Small and large groups
- Take-away operation
- Clearing for events
- Weather patterns
- Interpretation

This is a specialist space introducing the Mountain experiences to locals who are seeking something new, or visitors. It will particularly showcase the experiences that are available from the hub.



## GARDEN

This space achieves two purposes:

- It interprets the natural landscape, introducing the plants and geology that can be seen elsewhere on the Mountain
- It is an attractive place to wander and take shareable photographs

It will include plant displays, pathways, sculpture and seating





# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT



## THE COURTYARD

This is a space that will serve multiple purposes at different times of year. It has both outdoor and undercover elements.

- It is an expansion area for the Café.
- It can serve as an event space (for private parties, weddings and markets)
- It can be a meeting space for corporate training sessions
- It can be a studio for yoga or other classes

It is separable from the café, and can be used as free space to wander and reflect, and provide shelter and warmth in inclement weather.



## PICNIC/BARBEQUE/COFFEE

This area is adjacent to the café for regular users who use the takeaway facility, who may purchase food at the café or who wish to bring their own. It includes tables and seating, coin operated barbeques, and may also be adjacent to specialist kitchen areas eg a pizza oven or fire-pit





# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT



## LOCKERS

The lockers are rentable spaces for regular operators/users to store gear. This may be equipment such as exercise mats or art materials.



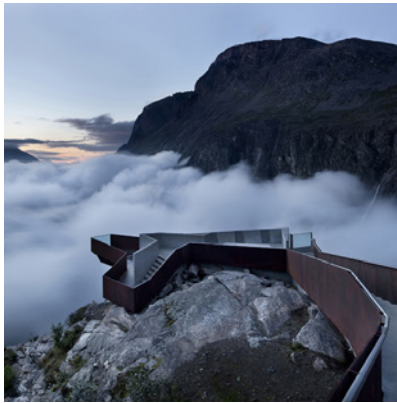
## PLAY

The play area is an attraction in its own right. It is designed to introduce young children to the Mountain landscape and to encourage exploration of the physical environment. It prepares children for adventure on the surrounding trails and tracks.



## LOOKOUTS

These are the spaces that offer views of Hobart and are designed to encourage people to dwell and contemplate as well as to take photographs, paint and draw.





# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

## CONTEXT

The Springs is a memorable destination and not just a stop along the way to the Pinnacle.

It is a destination which capitalises on the network of tracks and features on the Mountain.

It offers exploration and discovery opportunities for people from all ages and backgrounds, locals and visitors alike, and with different length of visits.

## SPRINGS HUB

The Springs hub is defined as a destination visitors move within, not past. New signage and road delineation on the pinnacle road at each approach, announces the arrival at the Springs hub.

The Springs is more than just a road-side stop. The visitor experience offering covers the upper, middle and lower Springs sites. From the middle springs, visitors are guided via improved walkways mostly on existing tracks, to key features within the Springs Precinct; enhanced lookouts and new interpretation structures for the former hotel and gardens sites. The beginnings of the extensive Mountain track networks are enhanced and provide thresholds for extended experiences beyond the Springs precinct.

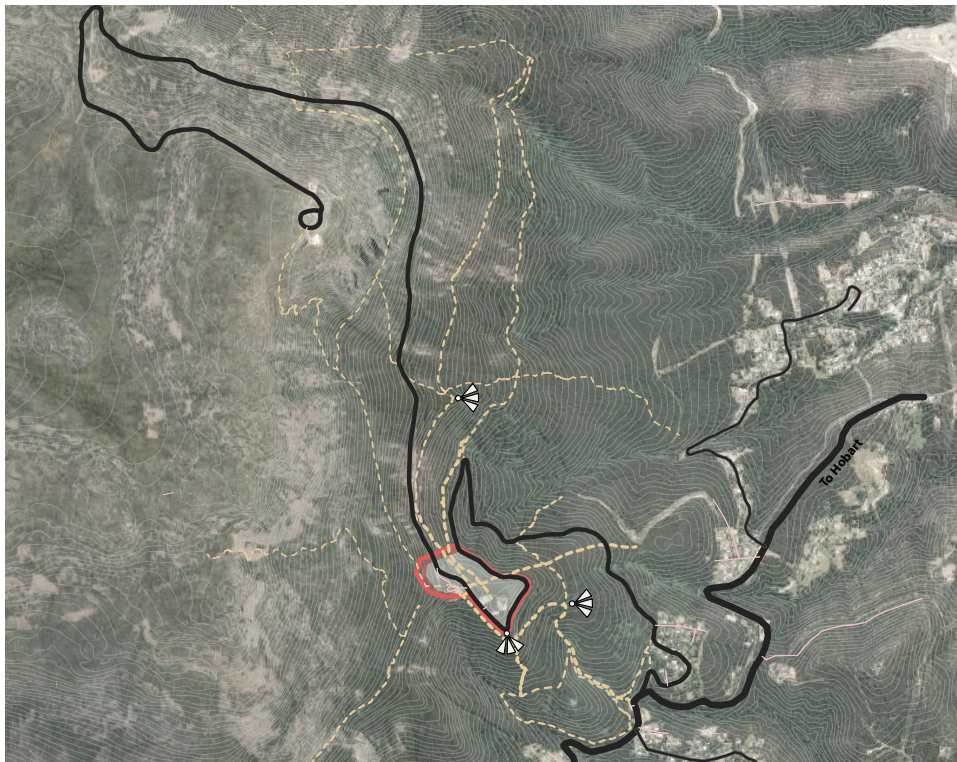
The Springs Hub will embrace opportunities for volunteer enthusiasts with special skills and interests to collaborate with the on-site operator and participate in programs and projects that enhance the experience.

## MIDDLE SPRINGS

The Springs hub will offer a variety of experiences. Many occupy the developed part of the middle Springs site. Infrastructure will provide for projected visitor mix and numbers, and meet current standards.

The focus of the Middle Springs is not a building, but a people-focussed place where the intrinsic experience of being at the site - on a clearing with high vegetation all around - is interpreted in a modest structure, at the heart of which is an open space; The Courtyard.

The Courtyard provides shelter and protection in different weather conditions, but doesn't lose the connection to outdoors. It has a built form that is in character with the walkers' huts that dot the mountainside. The Courtyard is at the centre of the various functions on offer at the hub and broader mountain context.



Refer following pages for full size illustrations.



# THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

## SCALE

The proposed built form emphasises the historical occupation patterns and uses of the Middle Springs site, and simple skillion roofs minimise snow loading. The Mountain Hut and Toilets are functions around the Courtyard, whilst retaining their functionality as stand-alone accessed facilities if required.

New infrastructure comprises economical practical timber structures which minimise site impact (both visually and in terms of touching the ground lightly) and enable pre-fabrication.

## FORM

The Springs hub design enhances and ‘heros’ the unique qualities of the place and fits the forward-looking model for place-based tourism.

The Springs Hub at the Middle Springs site will appeal to a wide audience arriving by cars or busses or arriving via one of the many walking tracks that lead to the Springs.

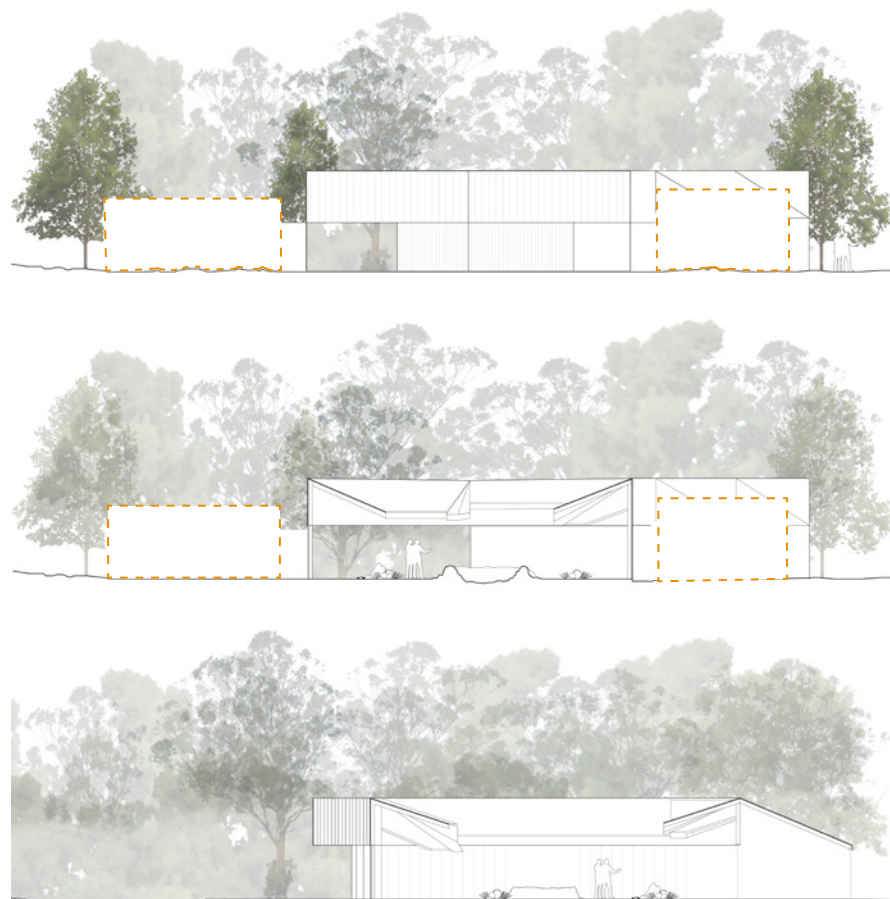
The Mountain itself continues to take centre stage. The Springs hub is a destination with special qualities to experience a wild place in all weathers.

## EXPERIENCE

The Springs hub will deliver memorable moments. The delivery of great experiences is essential but it is moments that are powerful. The Springs Hub at the Middle Springs site, focussed around the Courtyard, will be intentionally designed to facilitate operations which will provide those moments. The positive memories created will be widely shared.... chance encounter during a yoga class with a wallaby grazing on the clearing outside becomes a social media hit!

The covered perimeter provides all-weather access to the different functions and places for formal or informal use. The stone ground surface interprets the geological basis of kunanyi / Mount Wellington. It also provides opportunity for an exciting indigenous interpretation which is anchored to the mountain setting.

Views out to surrounding bush and cleared spaces frames the natural world outside, whilst visitors enjoy gathering around the central open fire.



Refer following pages for full size illustrations.



THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

CONTEXT PLAN



- 1 PINNACLE
- 2 ROCK CABIN
- 3 SPHINX ROCK
- 4 ICE HOUSE RUINS
- 5 SPRINGS HOTEL SITE
- 6 SPRINGS PRECINCT
- 7 SPRINGS LOOKOUT
- 8 RADFORDS MONUMENT





THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

THE SPRINGS HUB PLAN



- 1 FORMER SPRINGS HOTEL
  - 2 PROPOSED INTERPS PAVILION (NOM. 50m2)
  - 3 PICNIC AREAS
  - 4 PROPOSED SPRINGS HUB AT MIDDLE SPRINGS
  - 5 PROPOSED PARKING
    - a bus parking
  - 6 FORMER EXHIBITION GARDENS
  - 7 LANDSCAPED NATIVE GARDENS
  - 8 PROPOSED 50m2 SPRINGS LOOKOUT
  - 9 NEW LOOKOUT & EVENT SPACE 200m2
  - 10 EXISTING PINNACLE ROAD LOOKOUT
  - 11 ZEBRA CROSSING
  - 12 PLAY AREA
- IMPROVED WALKWAY ACCESSIBILITY



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THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

THE MIDDLE SPRINGS PLAN



- 1 ENTRY
- 2 INFORMATION BOARD
- 3 TOILETS
- 4 LOCKERS
- 5 CAFE/GALLERY/SHOP
  - a servery
  - b kitchen
  - c store
  - d kiosk
- 6 THE COURTYARD
  - e fire feature (screened for safety)
  - f line of roof over
  - g security screen
- 7 PARENTS ROOM
- 8 WALKERS HUT & SMALL GROUP SPACE

THE MIDDLE SPRINGS PLAN



0 1 2 5 10m  
1:200 @ A3

THE SPRINGS HUB CONCEPT

THE MIDDLE SPRINGS ELEVATION / SECTION



SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



SECTION A



SECTION B

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 INFORMATION
- 3 TOILETS
- 4 LOCKERS
- 5 CAFE/GALLERY/SHOP
- 6 THE COURTYARD
  - i firepit (screened for safety)
  - j line of roof over
- 7 WALKERS HUT AND SMALL GROUP SPACE

0 1 2 5 10m

1:200 @ A3