

MACARTHUR MEMORIAL PARK

MASTERPLAN

VARROVILLE, NSW



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Catholic Cemeteries Metropolitan Trust, which manages several Government cemeteries in Sydney's Metropolitan area, has purchased this site with the view to provide a landscape cemetery for the whole community in Sydney's West .

The site for which the cemetery is considered is approximately 113hectares in size. It lies between Camden Valley Way and the Hume Highway, south of St James Road and encompasses several parcels of land known as Lot B, 22 and 1, on St Andrews Road, Varroville.

The site is characterised by undulating grassed hills and pockets of forested areas. It enjoys panoramic views onto the Blue Mountains, Sydney CBD and the Campbelltown valley below. It sits within the Scenic Hills and surrounds the historical Varroville House.

The land presents several constraints for development including steep topography, the presence of Moist Shale Woodland and Cumberland Plain Woodland, heritage curtilage extending beyond the boundary of Varroville House, protection of Aboriginal Artefacts, riparian zones and waterways, historical water bodies, the potential for bushfires and tight Planning Control relating to the Environmental Protection of the Scenic Hills.

All constraints become opportunities in some ways by taking advantage of the landform to create welcoming spaces, meandering and scenic roads and interesting views, by retaining and enhancing all existing significant vegetation to create future sanctuaries for perpetuity, by allocating suitable burial options to the variety of settings that the site has to offer (terraces, flat lawn, natural burials) and by enhancing the lakes and riparian zones for passive recreation, contemplation and some memorialisation.

The aim of the proposal is to:

- Minimise the impact on existing environment, especially the topography and the Cumberland Plains Woodland, to protect them for future generations.
- Protect the Colonial landscape qualities
- Provide an environmentally sensitive development
- Achieve Best Management Practices in all aspects of cemetery provision, including Stormwater Management and Ecologically Sustainable Developments.
- Provide an exceptional open space for the community, for perpetuity.
- Provide a quality burial ground for the whole community

The vision for the site is to provide:

- Much needed burial space for the area whilst offering choice, at affordable prices, in varied settings, for a multi-denominational community.
- A distinctive landscaped cemetery, the best of its kind, the pride of the industry
- A Sculpture Park, offering opportunities for local and Australian artists
- A respectful space and scenic route, open to all,
- A cemetery which respects and safe keeps the important colonial and non-colonial landscape.
- An arboretum for future preservation and education of generations to come.
- A concept which respects the Land, its landform and ecology by carefully laying roads and any built environment and limiting their "footprint" (for example minimum width, using boardwalks, avoiding existing significant trees...)
- Concealed, private and low laying burial spaces to minimise visual impact.

For all of the above to be delivered, a thorough analysis of the site to determine its constraints and opportunities is essential.

To inform the concept the following studies have been undertaken:

- Market research
- Visual and landscape character assessment
- Cultural Heritage and curtilage assessment
- Ecological assessment
- Assessment of waterways and riparian zones requirements
- Assessment of Bushfire Protection requirements
- Traffic analysis
- Technical investigations on existing services and soil
- Groundwater investigations
- Archaeological Assessment (Aboriginal artefacts)

The concept prides itself on its responses to the various statutory requirements for

- Central hills,
 - Environmental Protection (Scenic) Zone
 - Escarpment Preservation Area,
 - Cumberland Plain Woodland and Moist Shale Woodland
 - Waterways and Riparian Corridor
- and
- Water Sensitive Urban Design

This proposal offers an unique solution to the preservation of the Scenic Hills qualities, one which offers a sensitive landscaped setting, responding to a unique site, with unique qualities and history whilst providing the community with a cemetery, 99.8% of which is Open Space maintained for perpetuity.