

# Columbia Precinct Stage 2

Urban Design Report

Prepared for:  
Columbia Lane Developments Pty Ltd

Date:  
12 April 2017



Architectus Group Pty Ltd  
ABN 90 131 245 684

Nominated Architect  
Managing Director  
Ray Brown  
NSWARB 6359

Adelaide  
Lower Ground Floor  
57 Wyatt Street  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Australia  
T +61 8 8427 7300  
adelaide@architectus.com.au

Melbourne  
Level 7, 250 Victoria Parade  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Australia  
T +61 3 9429 5733  
F +61 3 9429 8480  
melbourne@architectus.com.au

Sydney  
Level 18, MLC Centre  
19 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Australia  
T +61 2 8252 8400  
F +61 2 8252 8600  
sydney@architectus.com.au

architectus.com.au

---

**Quality Assurance**

---

**Project Leader**

Oscar Stanish



---

**Reviewed by**

Michael Harrison, Director, Urban Design and Planning

---

**Date**

12 April 2017

---

This document is for discussion purposes only unless signed.

---

# Contents

---

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction and context</b>	
1.1	Introduction	6
1.2	The site	7
1.3	Summary of strategic context	8
1.4	Existing controls	10
1.5	Parramatta Road Strategy	12
1.6	Approved Concept Plan	15
<b>2</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	
2.1	Local context and connectivity	18
2.2	Local development and precincts	19
2.3	Site adjacencies and photos	20
<b>3</b>	<b>Scenarios</b>	
3.1	Introduction	24
3.3	Scenario A - Single tower	26
3.4	Scenario B - Two parallel towers	28
3.5	Scenario C - Preferred	30
<b>4</b>	<b>The Concept Design</b>	
4.1	Preferred scenario	34
4.2	The illustrative design	36
4.3	Recommendations	41

---



# 1 Introduction and context

# Introduction

Architectus has been engaged by Columbia Lane Developments Pty Ltd to provide an urban design study to support a Planning Proposal for the site at 11-17 Columbia Lane Homebush, consistent with the State Government's Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (Parramatta Road Strategy).

Architectus has previously produced an Urban Design Report intended to support a planning proposal for the site (April 2015).

The site and its neighbours had already been the subject of an approved Part 3A Concept Plan which allowed for buildings of 18-21 storeys on the site. The Parramatta Road Strategy now recommends additional height and density to this.

This document presents an urban design analysis of the site and context as well as design options and recommendations for a Planning Proposal being submitted for the site.

# 1.2

## The site

The site is located within the Columbia Precinct, Homebush, approximately 150m from Homebush Railway Station. The site area is 6,568sqm.

The Columbia Precinct is bound by the railway to the south and east, planned open space to the west and Parramatta Road to the north.

Nearby precincts include:

- The Bakehouse Quarter to the north (a retail centre).
- Homebush to the west, including existing residential apartment blocks.
- Railway Land to the south (accessed through the Columbia Precinct).
- Strathfield Triangle to the east (approved higher density development).



Site location



# 1.3

## Summary of strategic context

### A Plan for Growing Sydney

A Plan for Growing Sydney is the metropolitan strategy for Sydney released by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in 2014.

The site is located between the Sydney Olympic Park and Burwood Strategic Centres under A Plan for Growing Sydney. It is situated near:

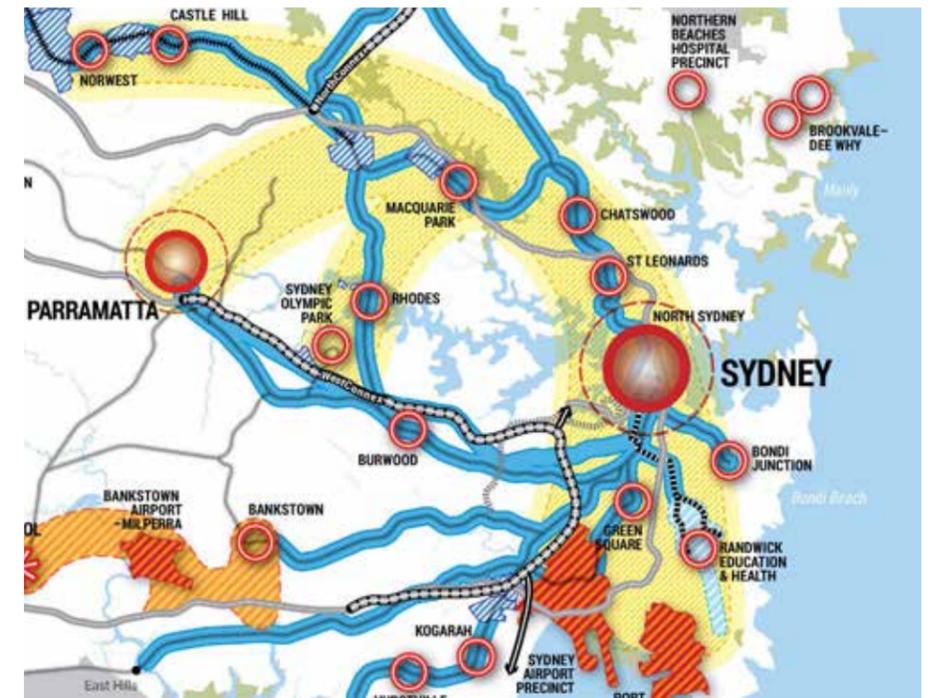
- The junction of the Global Economic Corridor which runs north to Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Macquarie Park. The Global Economic Corridor is referred to as an area of concentrated employment, economic activity and other uses in centres.
- The east-west connection of WestConnex and associated Urban renewal Corridors including the Parramatta Road Corridor. The Parramatta Rd corridor is planned to be a focus for increased, housing, economic activity and social infrastructure, especially around centres with good public transport access and amenity.

### Draft District Plans

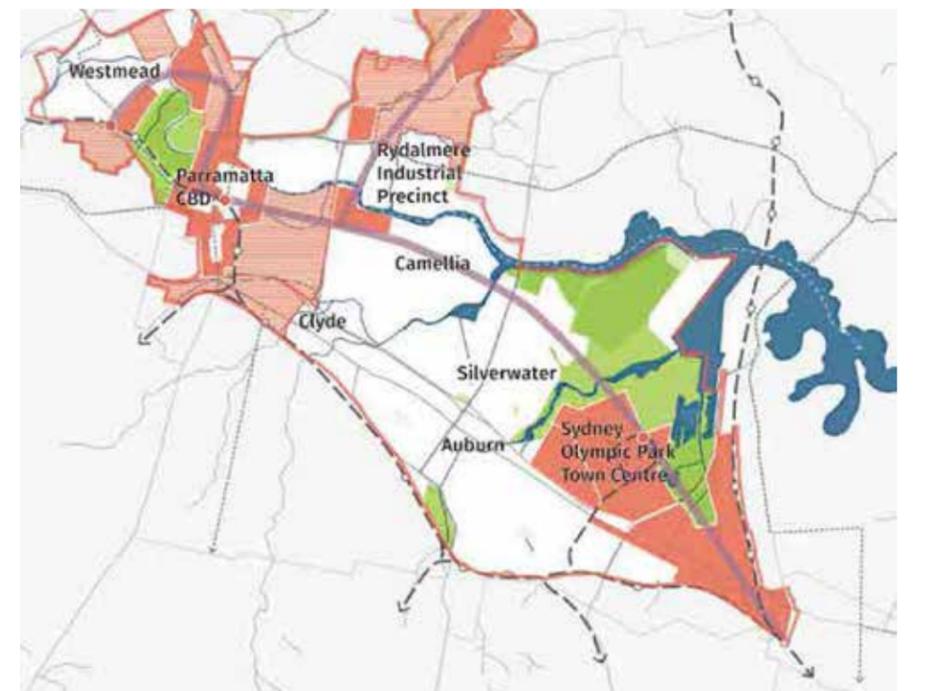
The Draft District Plans are 20 year plans for the six districts within Greater Sydney (released by the Greater Sydney Commission in late 2016). The subject site is located within the Central District, however it sits on the border of the West Central District. As such Homebush is referred to in both plans.

Both the Draft Central and Draft West Central District Plan's refer to the Homebush Precinct, as identified in the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy. They note that the Homebush Precinct:

- Is part of the Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsular (GPOP) growth area. One of the key objectives in the Draft West Central District plan is driving the growth of the Central City which is based on GPOP.
- Is one of nine major mixed use renewal areas in the West Central District.
- Has been identified for funding by the government to upgrade Homebush West Public School.
- Includes Wetlands at Homebush Bay which are listed as nationally significant.
- Identifies the Homebush Bay Run as a key asset for cultural events.
- Identifies Powells Creek and Mason Park Strathfield as an important project, in delivering Sydney's Green Grid.



Parramatta within A Plan for Growing Sydney (extract)



GPOP A Liveable City - Housing (2016)  
Source: Draft West Central District Plan

## Westconnex

WestConnex is the major infrastructure basis around which the Parramatta Road Strategy is focussed. It is a 33km project which includes a widening of the M4 east of Parramatta, a duplication of the M5 East and new sections of motorway to provide a connection between the two key corridors.

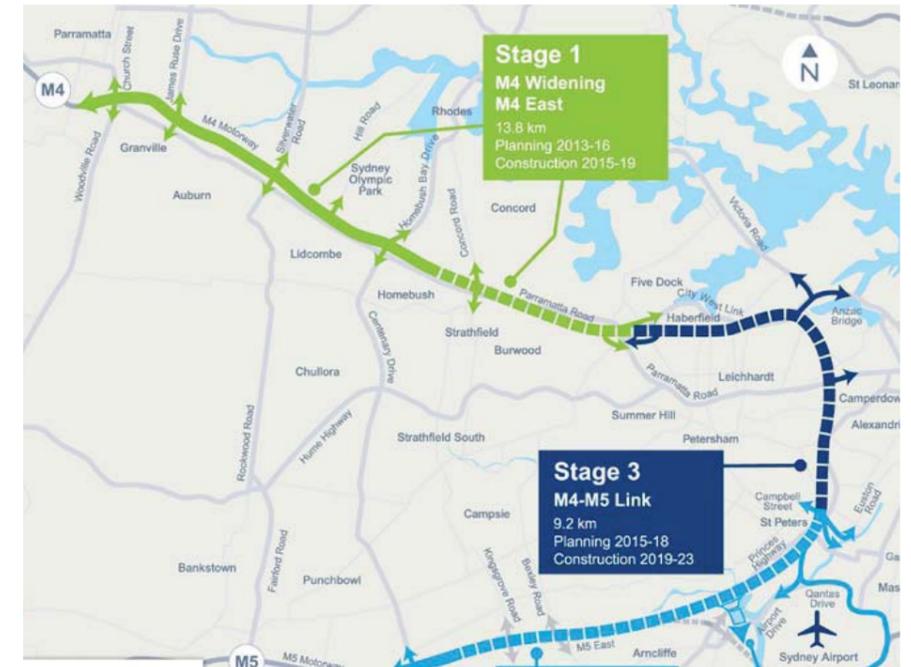
The widening of the M4 (Church Street to Homebush Bay Drive) and the duplication of the M4 east from Homebush to Haberfield may increase vehicular accessibility to the subject site. These developments are part of Stage 1 with construction expected to be completed by 2019.

## Parramatta Light Rail

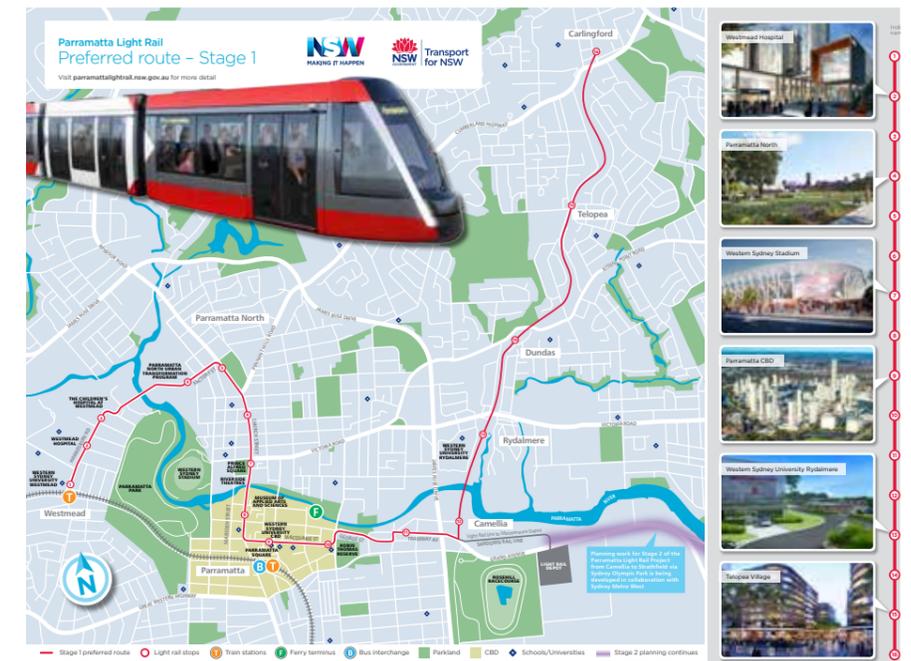
The preferred route for the Western Sydney Light Rail (now referred to as Parramatta Light Rail) was announced by the former NSW Premier Mike Baird on December 8, 2015. It is intended to “kick-start revitalisation and jobs growth along a 22-kilometre corridor”.

Stage 1 will connect Westmead to Parramatta and Carlingford via Camellia (expected to open in 2023).

Stage 2 is planned to connect Camellia to Strathfield via Sydney Olympic Park in collaboration with Sydney Metro Northwest. A preferred route is yet to be confirmed.



WestConnex Staged Plan (WestConnex)



Preferred Parramatta Light Rail Route - Stage 1 (TfNSW)

# 1.4

# Existing controls

## Strathfield LEP 2012

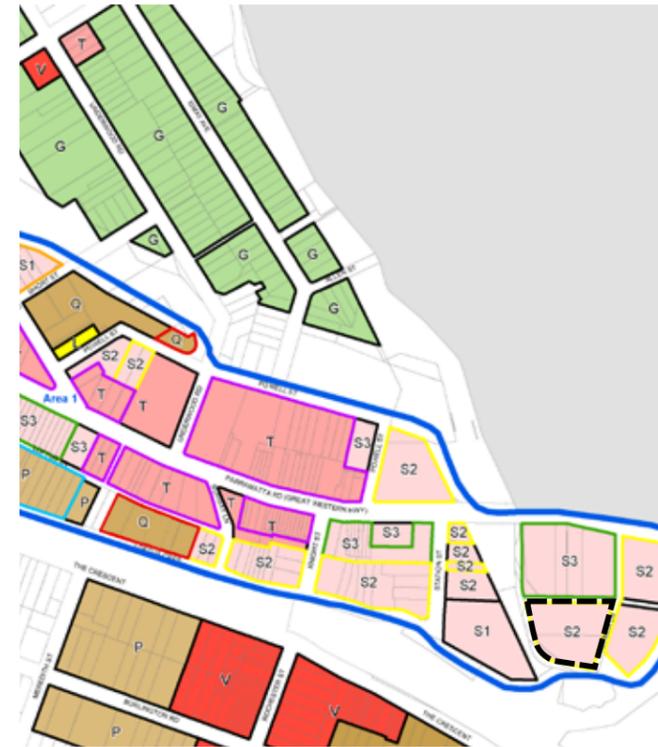
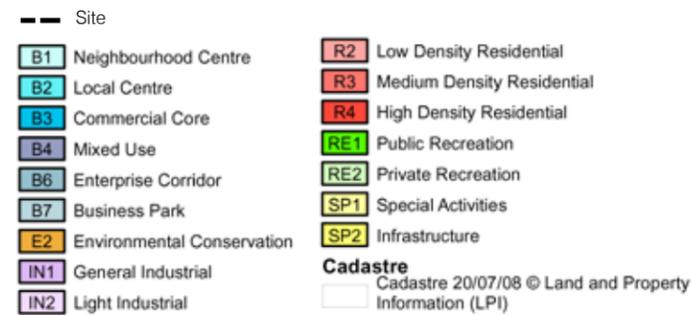
Under the Strathfield LEP 2012 the following key existing controls apply to the site:

- R4 High Density Residential Zone
- Maximum 2.7:1 FSR
- Maximum 32m building heights across the western portion of the site with 0m heights across the eastern portion of the site.

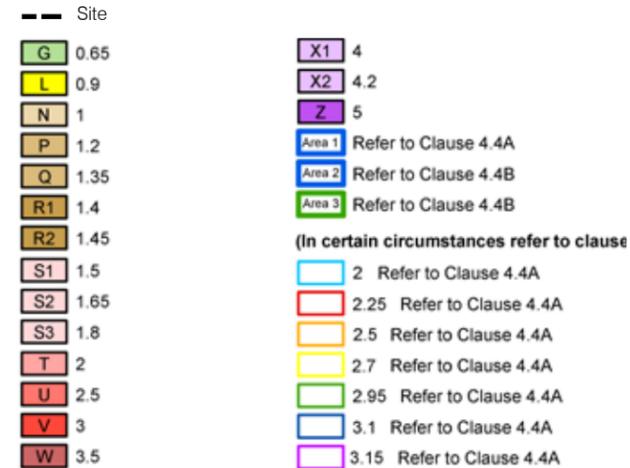
Note that the above FSR and building heights are based on Clause 4.3A and Clause 4.4A which provide exceptions to the standard FSR and building heights as the site is identified as a key site (Site 92) within the Key Sites Map.



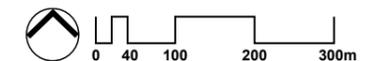
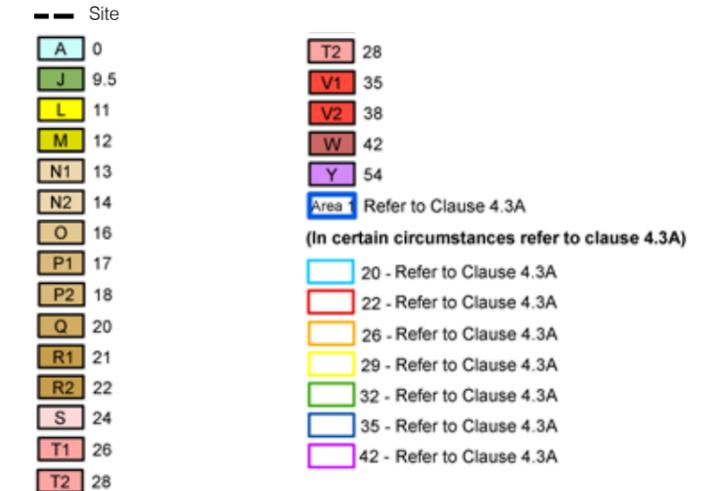
Land Use Zoning



Floor Space Ratio



Height of Buildings



## Strathfield DCP 2005

The Strathfield Development Control Plan No. 20 (adopted September 2005, in force May 2006) describes a future development pattern for the local area. This is generally based on a mixture of 4 and 6-storey buildings within the area, significantly below the LEP heights.



# 1.5

# Parramatta Road Strategy

The Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (Parramatta Road Strategy) sets out a vision for land use and transport principles along the Parramatta Road Corridor over the next 30 years released by Urban Growth in late 2016).

Urban revitalisation of the Parramatta Road corridor is proposed as part of the WestConnex infrastructure project.

The 'Homebush Area Precinct' is identified as one of 8 precincts for growth in the Parramatta Road Strategy. The Parramatta Road Strategy's vision for the Homebush Precinct is for it to be transformed into an active and varied hub, blending higher density housing and a mix of different uses, supported by a network of green links and open spaces with walking access to four train stations.

The Homebush Precinct is forecast for 9,500 new homes and 12,900 new jobs by 2050. The location of the site is identified as having the highest development density within this precinct.

The recommended controls for the Homebush Precinct are shown on the following pages. Specific to the site the following controls are recommended:

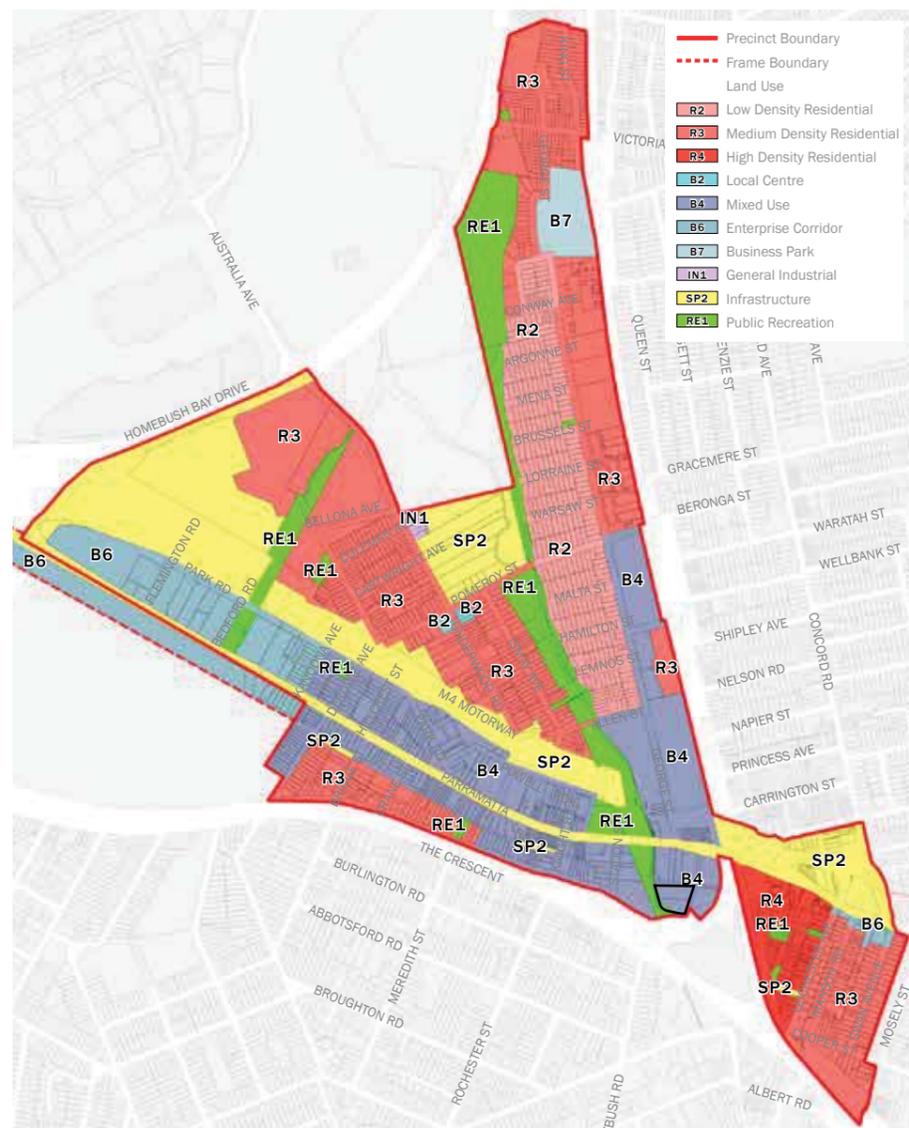
- B4 Mixed Use zone.
- 80m maximum height.
- 5:1 FSR.
- Proposed vehicle connection diagonally through site.
- Desired through site link north of the site.
- Indicative proposed open space along western boundary of site.



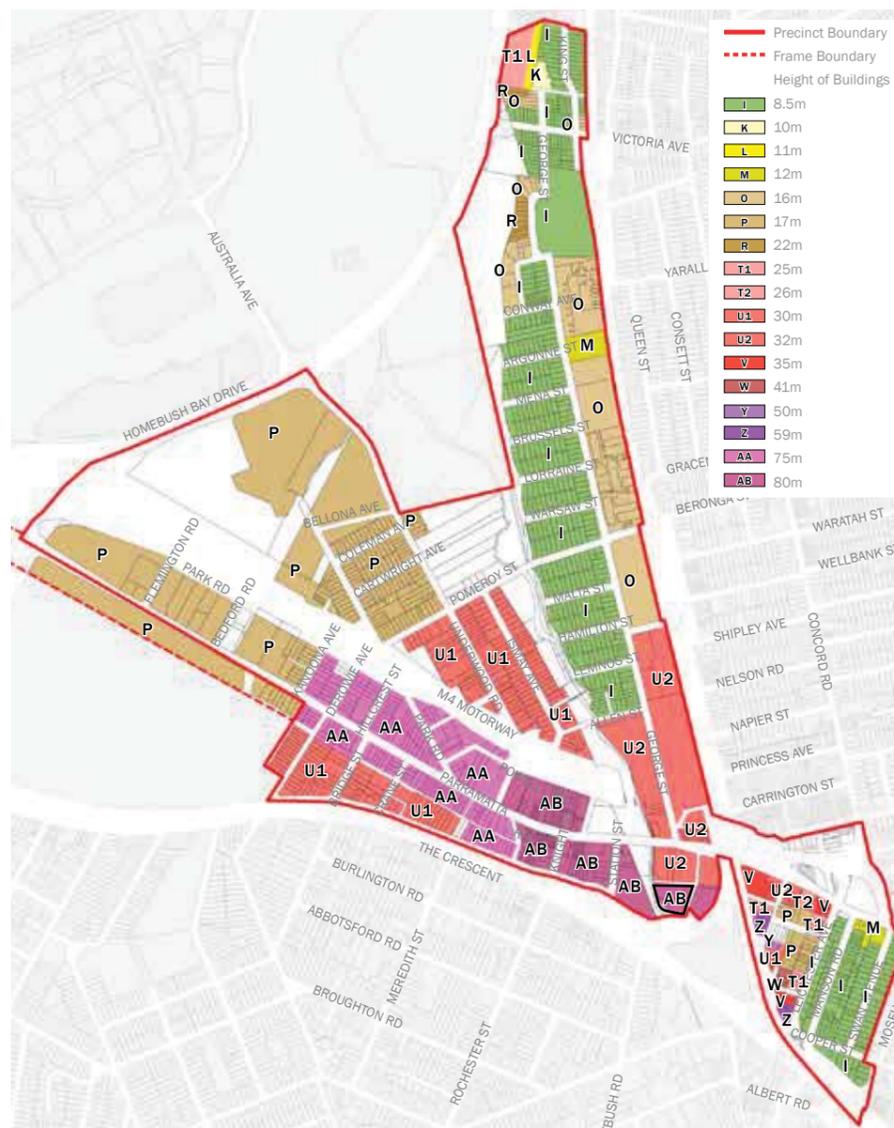
Parramatta Road Corridor:  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



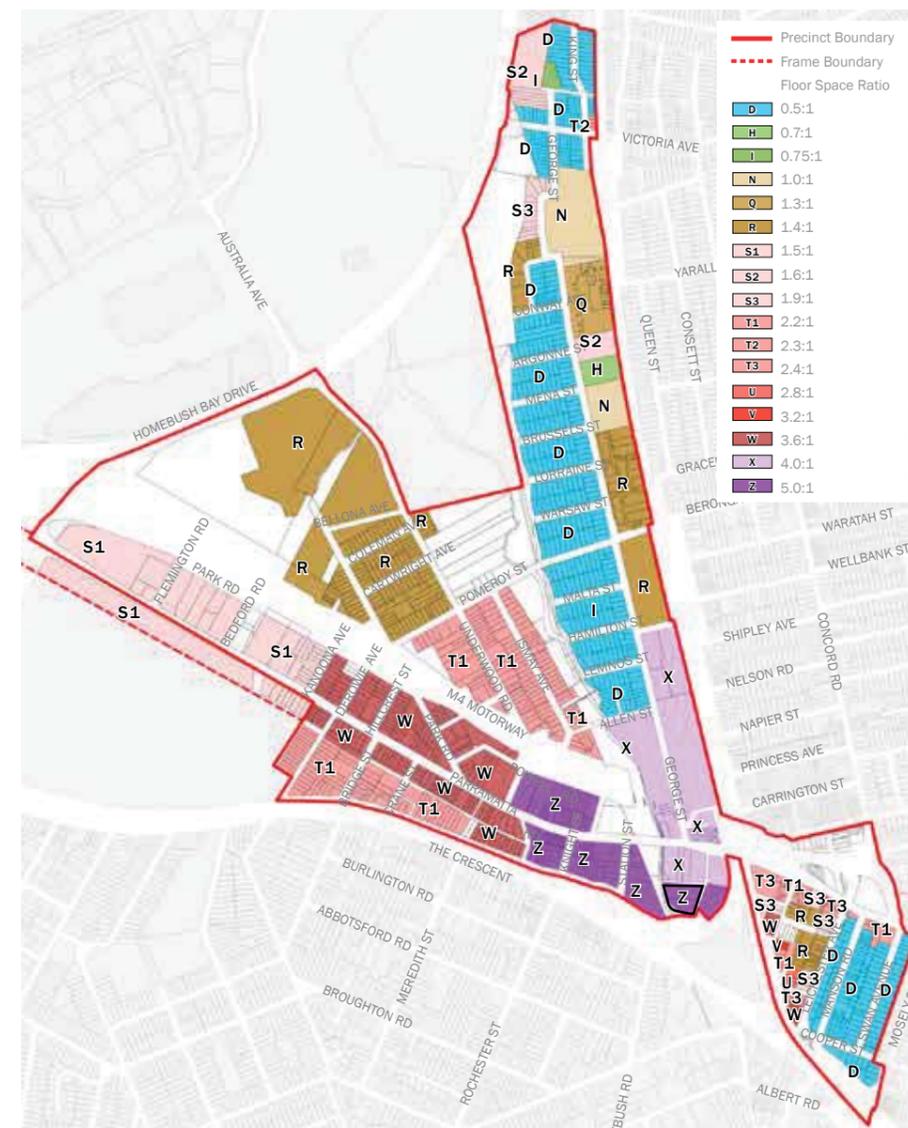
Vision for Homebush Precinct  
Source: Urban Transformation Strategy 2016



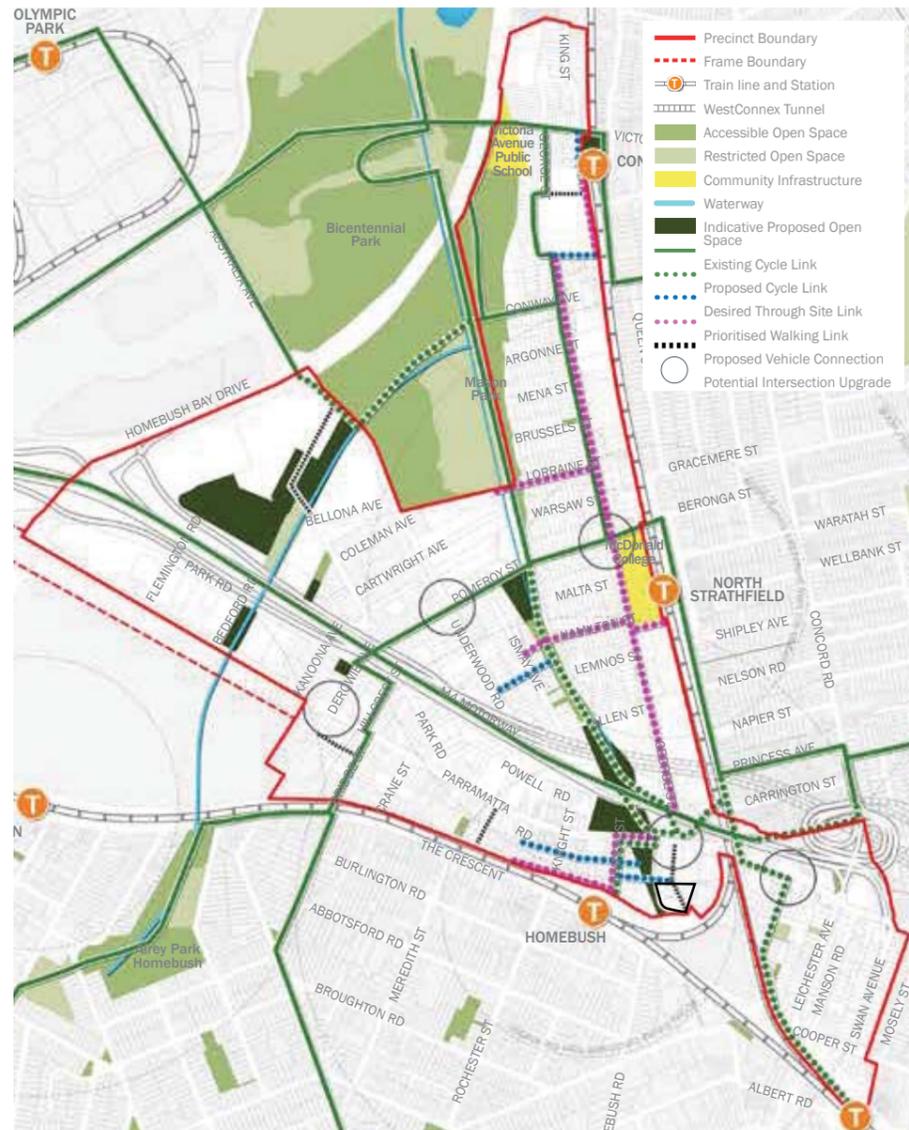
Homebush Recommended Land uses  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



Homebush Recommended Heights  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



Homebush Recommended Densities  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



Homebush Open Space and Active Transport  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



Homebush Street Function  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016



Homebush Green Edges, Transitions and Active and Commercial Frontages  
Source: Implementation Tool Kit 2016

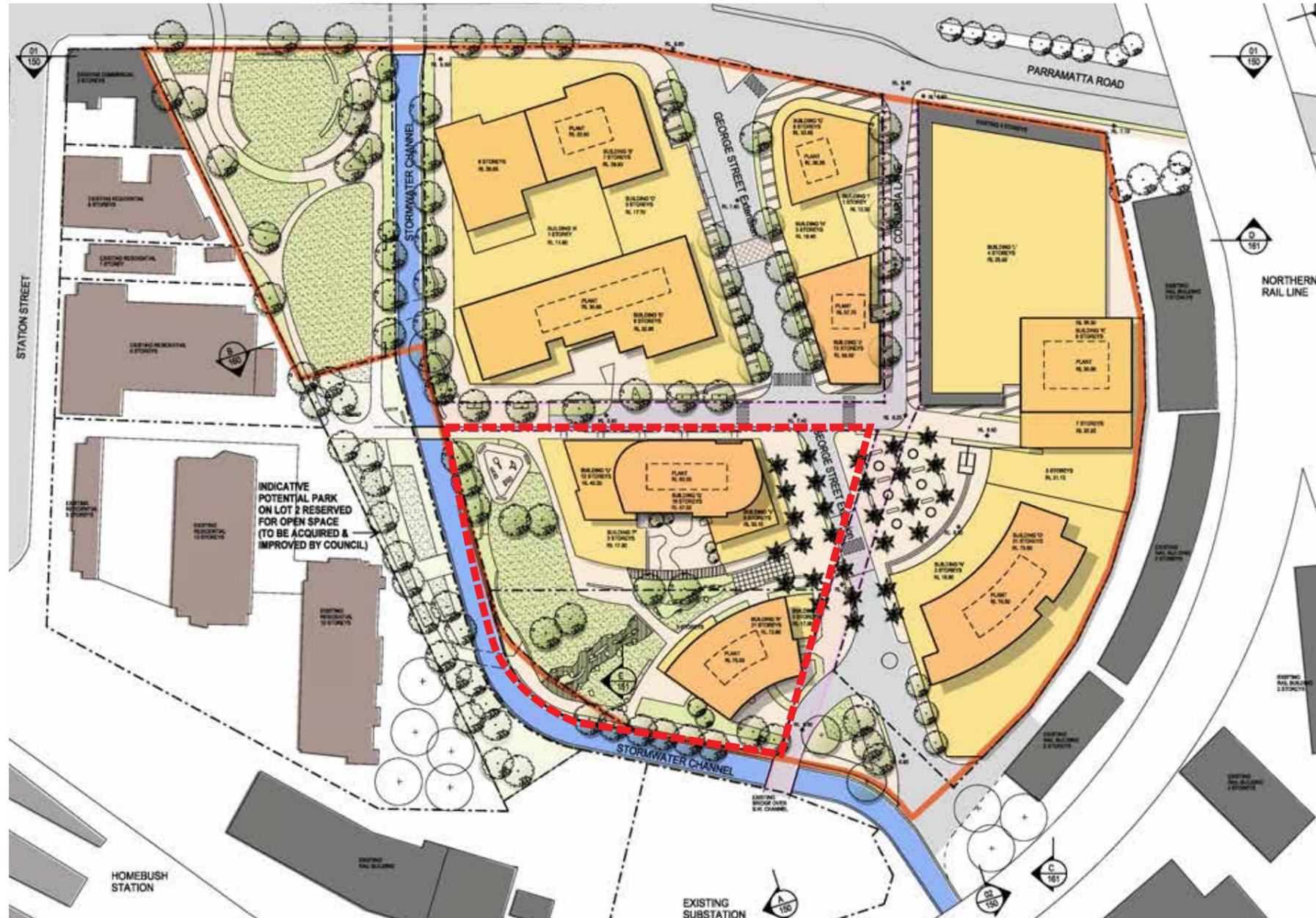
# 1.6

# Approved Concept Plan

The Columbia Precinct is subject to a Part 3A Approval (approved May 2013).

This plan includes buildings up to 21 storeys within and adjacent to the site.

This plan necessarily needs to be revised as the road layouts have changed in Stage 1 (north western part of the site) which has now been built. If Stage 2 (the site) was delivered as shown, it would prevent appropriate vehicle access to the railway lands to the south east.



Approved Columbia Precinct Masterplan (site outlined in red)  
State approval (Part 3A MP 10\_0143) Approved May 2013



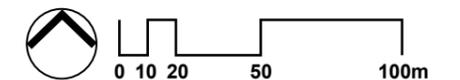
# 2 Analysis

# 2.1 Local context and connectivity

The diagram adjacent demonstrates some of the key influences for the site. Key features of this site include the following:

- The Columbia Precinct is relatively self-contained through its boundaries with Parramatta Road, the planned open space and the railway.
- The Powell Street corridor is planned to be a landscaped park / open space.
- The site has excellent connectivity to:
  - Homebush Railway Station (through the future pedestrian bridge and right-of-way through nearby properties)
  - The Bakehouse Quarter retail precinct
- The site's connectivity to Strathfield relies on the link underneath the railway to the northeast of the site.

- Stage 1 of Columbia Precinct
- Stage 2 of Columbia Precinct (Site)
- Strathfield Triangle
- Existing active frontages (pedestrian oriented - excluding car yards and similar)
- Potential future pattern of active frontages
- Barrier to connectivity
- Existing pedestrian links across Parramatta Road.
- Identified future bridged link and right of way link to Homebush Railway Station
- Link from site to Strathfield Station via Parramatta Road railway underpass
- Existing street network through Columbia Precinct
- Desire-line link through site (linking George St to Railway land)
- Access to substation and railway land adjacent to site
- Planned open space



# 2.2 Local development and precincts

## Bakehouse Quarter Precinct

The Bakehouse Quarter Precinct was formerly the Arnott's Biscuit factory. The heritage listed buildings have been adaptively reused to incorporate a range of businesses, shops, cafes and entertainment facilities. The development is just north of the site over Parramatta Road.



## Columbia Precinct Stage 1

Columbia Precinct Stage 1 has been completed. It includes the area to the immediate north of the subject site, known as 6-18 Parramatta Road, Homebush. The DA approval varied the Concept Plan and generally increased heights through providing an eight storey podium and two fourteen storey towers in an area which was previously approved generally for up to three-storey podiums with 8-15 storeys above.

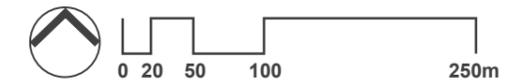


## Strathfield Triangle

The Strathfield Triangle is a major development site east of the Precinct bound by Parramatta Road, Leicester Avenue and the railway line (within the Canada Bay Local Government Area). The latest masterplan for this area (DCP amended June 2014) includes two 18-storey towers and as well as 15-storey, 12-storey and 10-storey elements.



Strathfield Triangle DCP  
Canada Bay Council - Amended June 2014



## 2.3

# Site adjacencies and photos

The site is located within the wider Columbia Precinct. Key items surrounding the site include the following:

- To the north of the site is an existing laneway with the Columbia Precinct Stage 1 site (currently under construction) to the north.
- To the east of the site is Columbia Lane and beyond this the Kennards Self-Storage site (part of the Columbia Precinct and a future development site).
- To the southeast of the site is an extension of Columbia Lane to access the railway land to the southeast (its only point of access) and also a bridge across the canal to the substation to the south.
- To the southwest and west of the site is an existing canal, planned open space behind this and existing tall residential buildings to the rear. A proposed bridged link will connect the laneway to the north of this site, the open space and a pedestrian-right-of-way leading west towards Homebush Railway Station.

A series of site and context photographs are provided overleaf.



Aerial photograph of site and near context from south with site photo locations (site outlined in red)



A



B



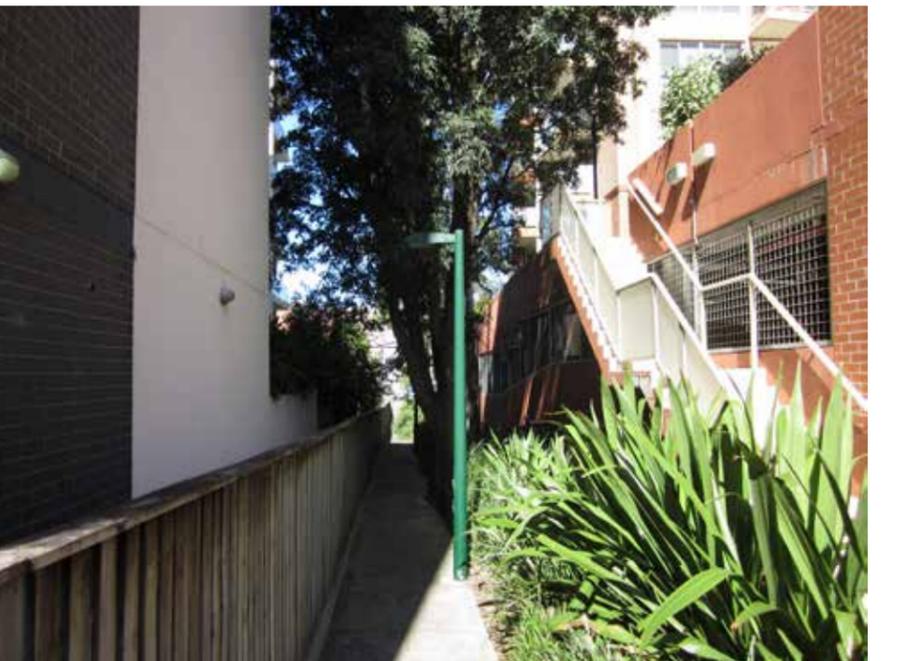
C



D



E



F



# 3 Scenarios

# 3.1

# Introduction

A number of options have been considered for the plan and built form of the site which are described and compared in this section.

All scenarios include:

- Height and density matching the controls under the Parramatta Road Strategy.
- Setbacks compliant with the Parramatta Road Strategy.
- Columbia Lane road extension as identified in the Strathfield DCP 2005 and recommended in the Parramatta Road Strategy.
- New open space in the north east corner of the site as identified in the Strathfield DCP 2005.
- A clear podium structure that is consistent with neighbouring buildings.
- Communal open space provided at ground, podium and rooftop levels.



# 3.3

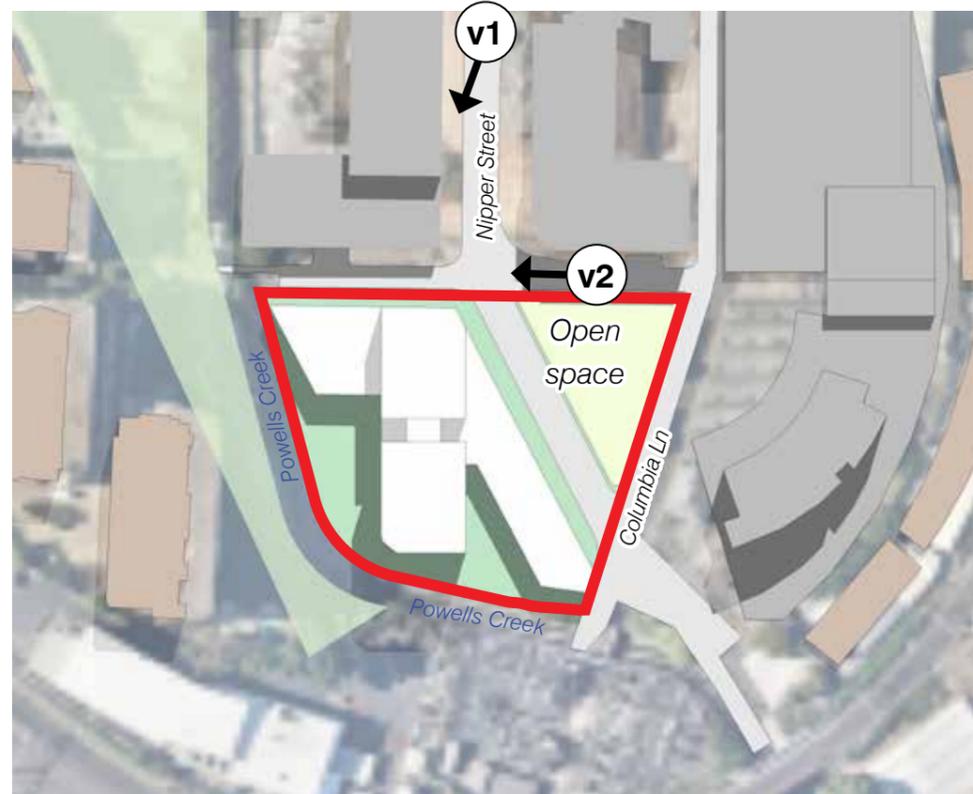
## Scenario A - Single tower

### Key figures:

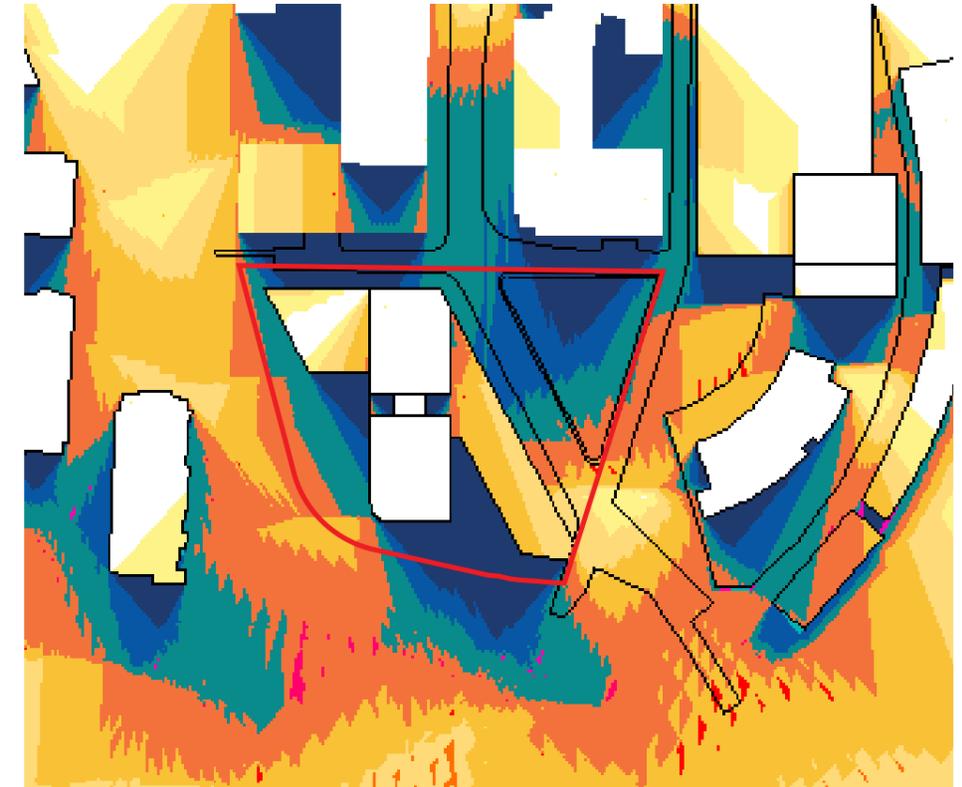
- 8-storey podium compatible with the surroundings.
- A stepped tower of 23 and 26 storeys with the tallest component to the south.
- Maximum height of 26 storeys.
- FSR of 5:1.

### Key issues:

- Long tower is visually bulky.
- North south orientation provides best solar access to on site apartments and neighbouring apartments to the south west.



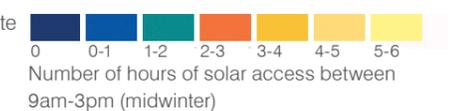
Site plan

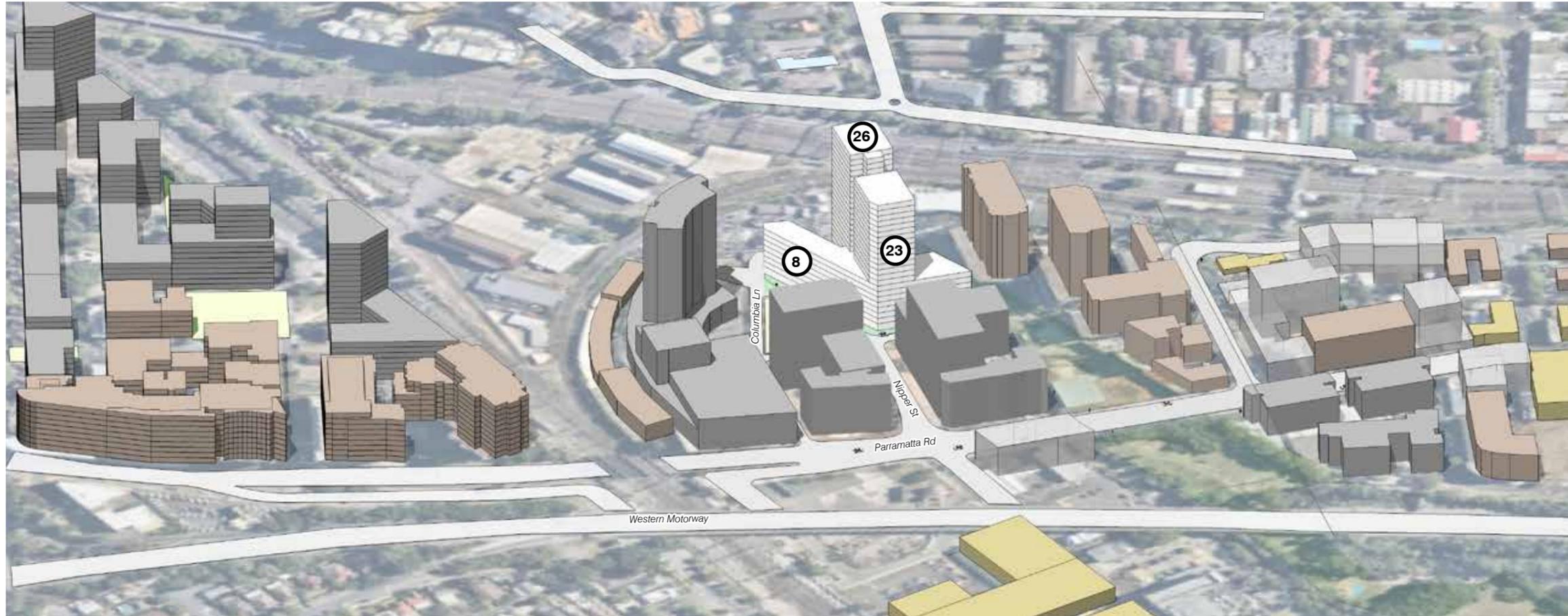


Plan view of solar access

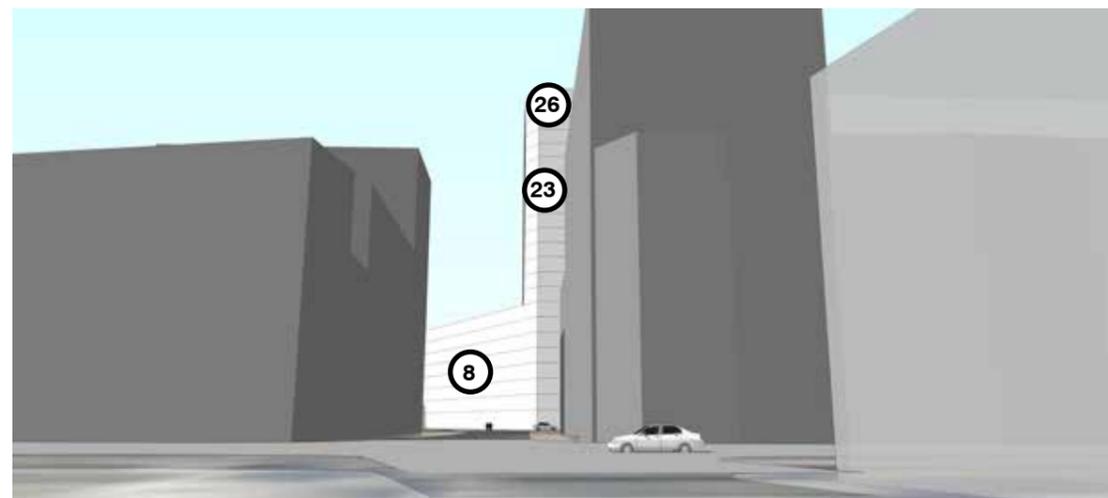


Aerial view of solar access to building south west of site

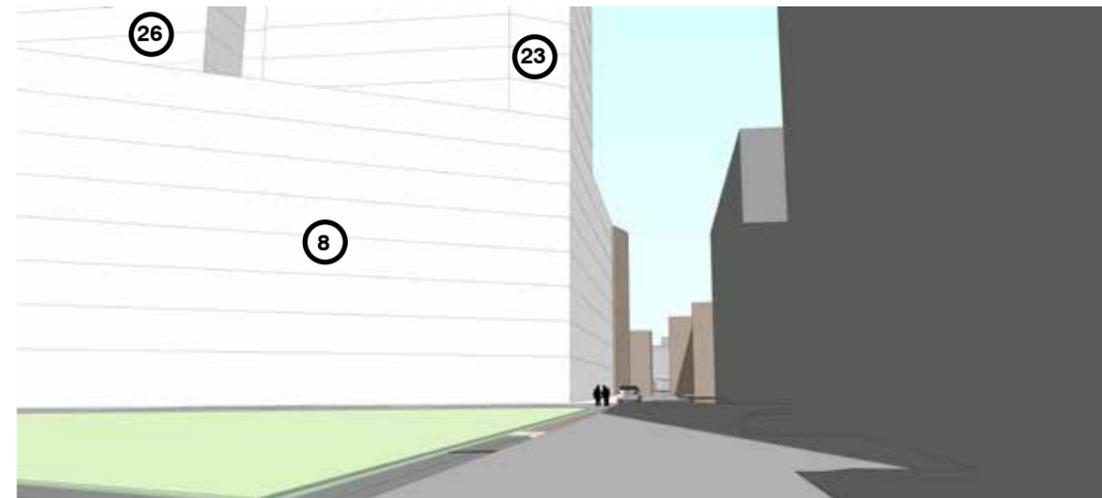




Aerial view from North



**v2** View from East of Nipper Street



**v1** View from North of Nipper Street

# 3.4

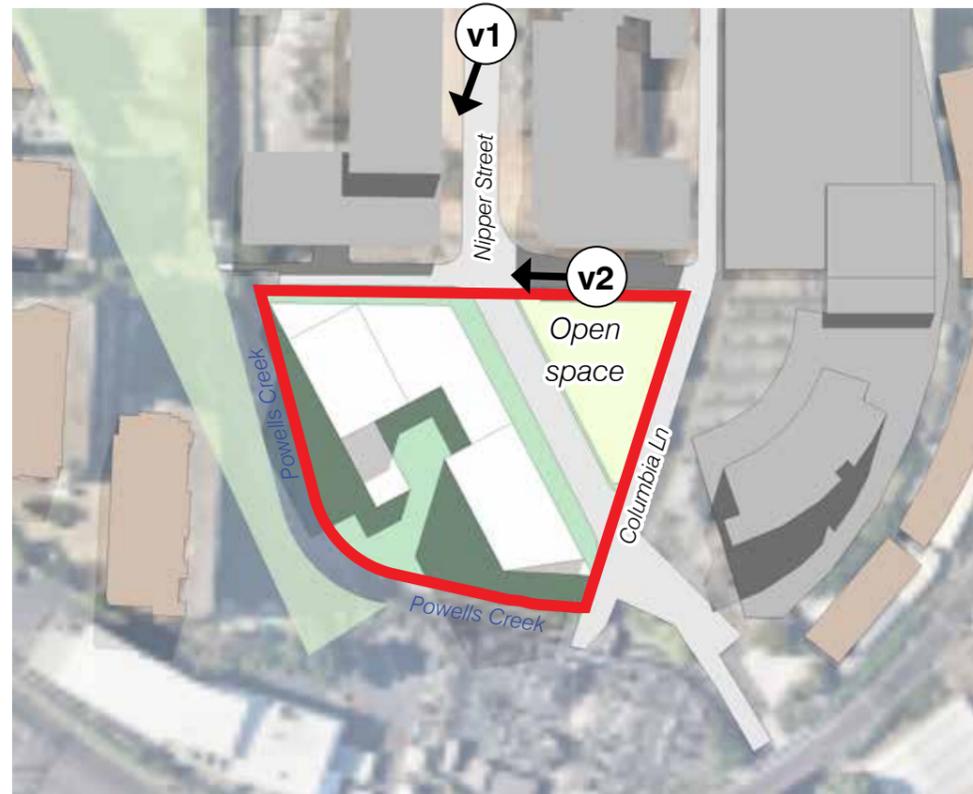
## Scenario B - Two parallel towers

### Key figures:

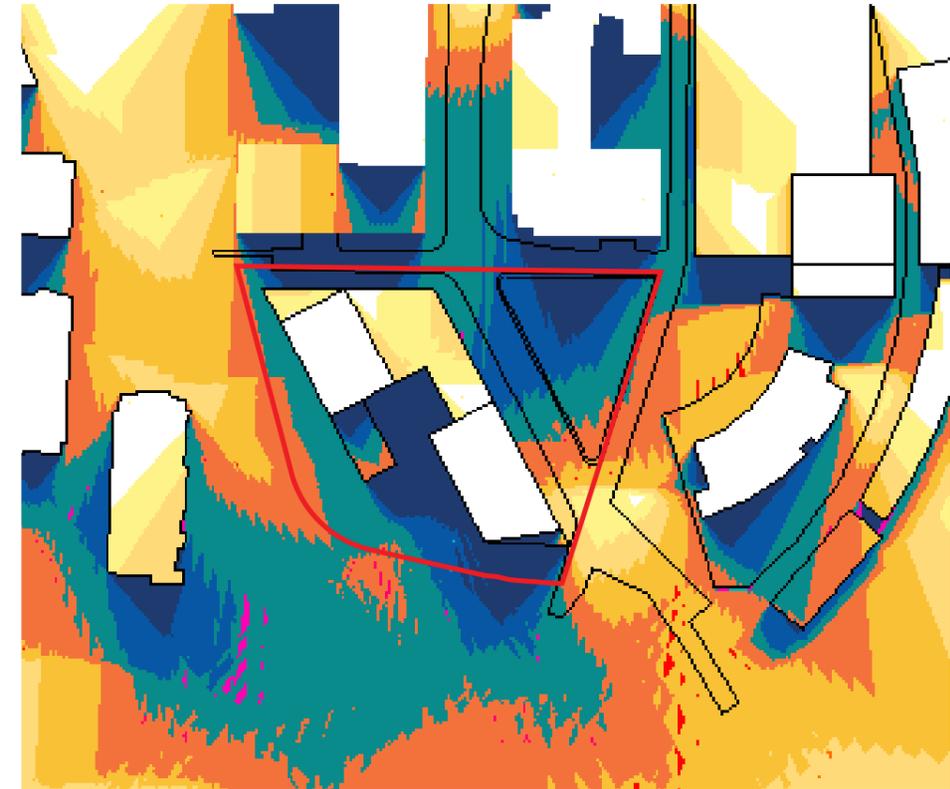
- 8-storey podium compatible with the surroundings. Two parallel towers of 25 storeys with an extension off the northern tower of 13 storeys.
- Maximum height of 25 Storeys.
- FSR of 5:1.

### Key issues:

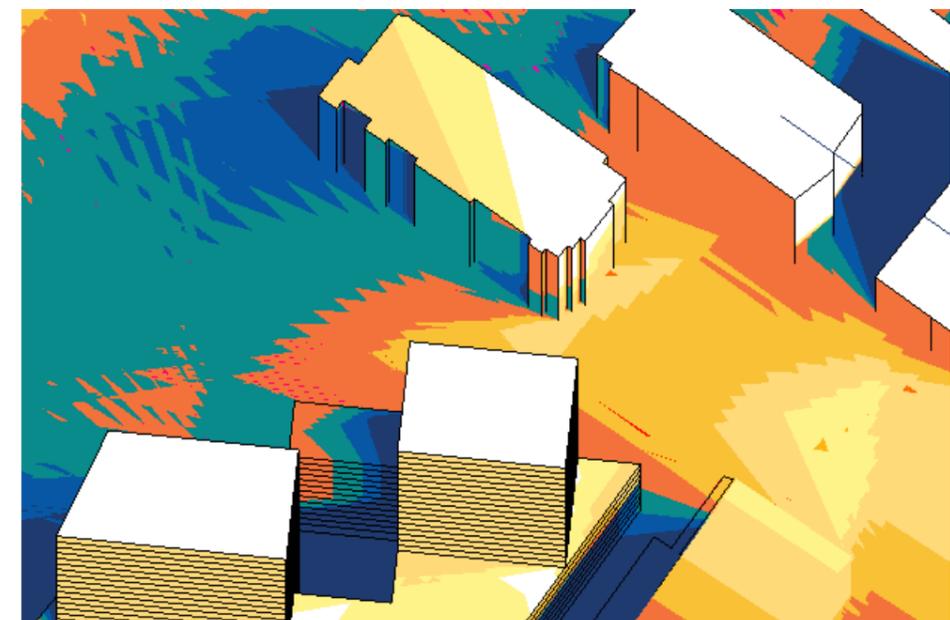
- Towers are visually slender.
- Good separation of towers for visual privacy purposes however are close together when seen from the streetscape.
- Less efficient planning of northern tower (smaller floorplate of northern tower requires extension which creates long wall).
- Angled towers result in less solar access to apartments on site.
- Provides poor solar access to existing neighbouring apartment block south west of the site.



Site plan

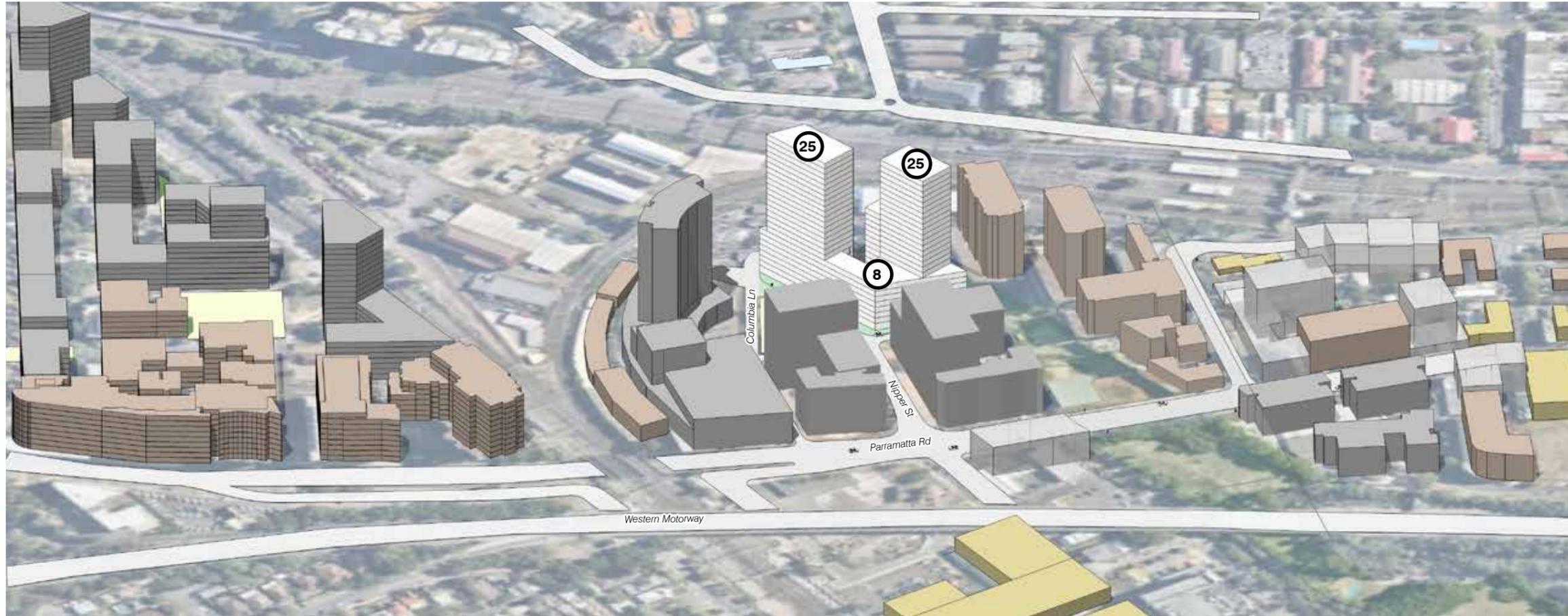


Plan view of solar access

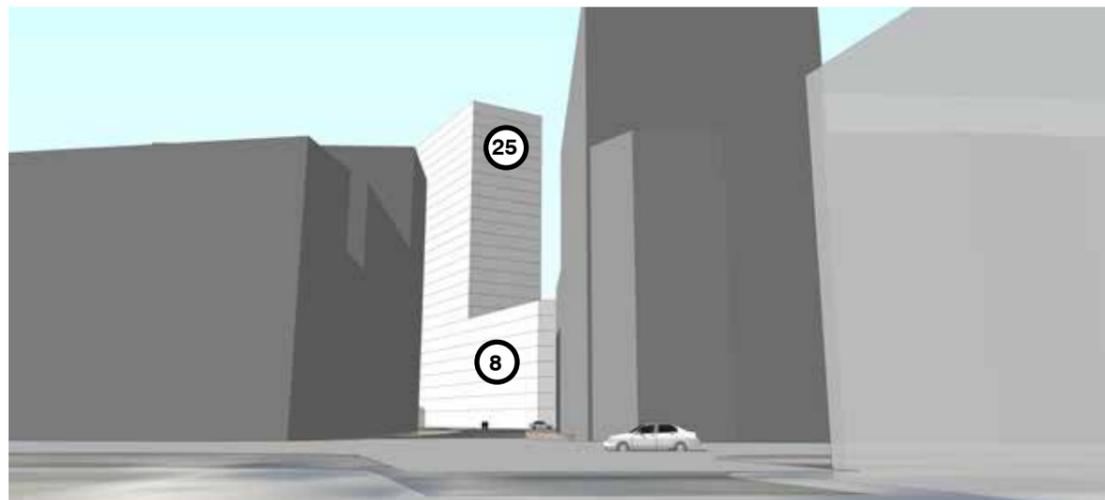


Aerial view of solar access to building south west of site

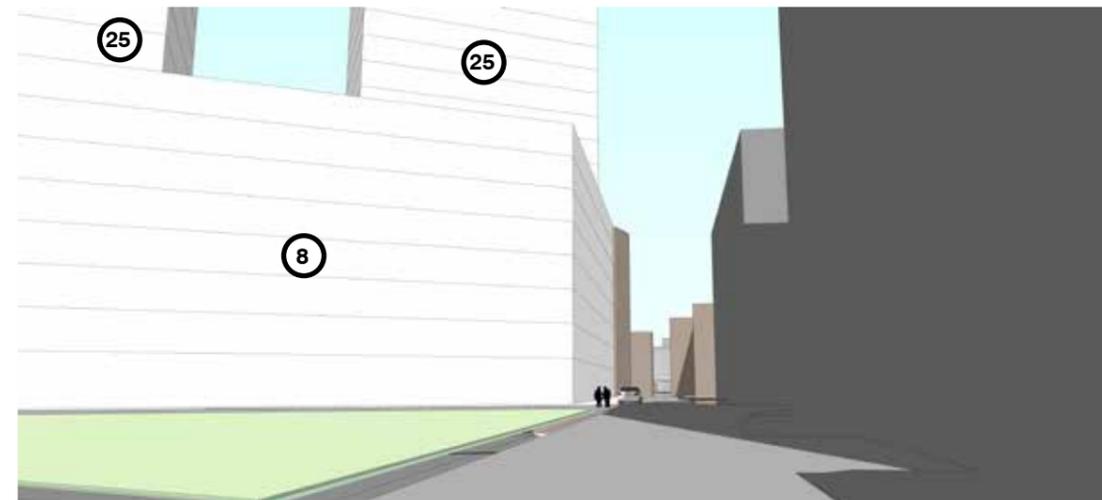
0 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 5-6  
Number of hours of solar access between  
9am-3pm (midwinter)



Aerial view from North



**v2** View from East of Nipper Street



**v1** View from North of Nipper Street

# 3.5

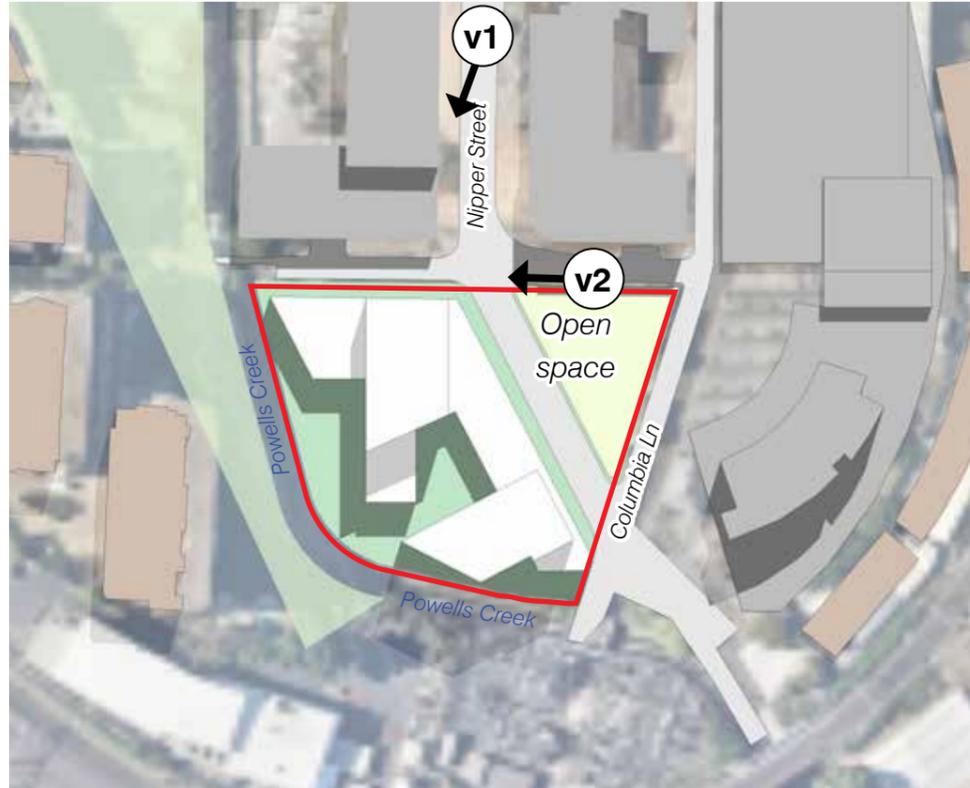
# Scenario C - Preferred

### Key figures:

- 9-storey podium compatible with the surroundings.
- Two towers of 23 and 25 storeys oriented towards the street frontages with the tallest tower facing Columbia Ln.
- Maximum height of 25 Storeys.
- FSR of 5:1.

### Key issues:

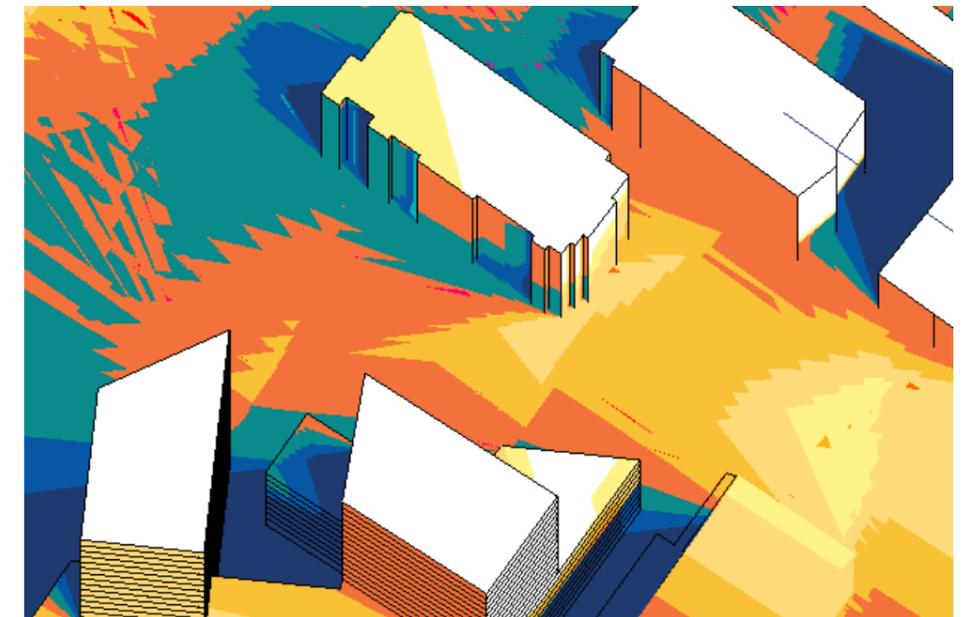
- Towers are visually slender.
- Good separation between two towers.
- Achieves ADG solar compliance of minimum 70% apartments.
- Provides better solar access to neighbour to the south west than Scenario B.
- Northern building has good separation from neighbouring adjacent building (to the north).



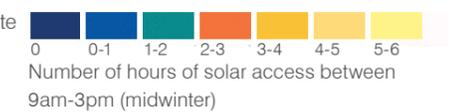
Site plan

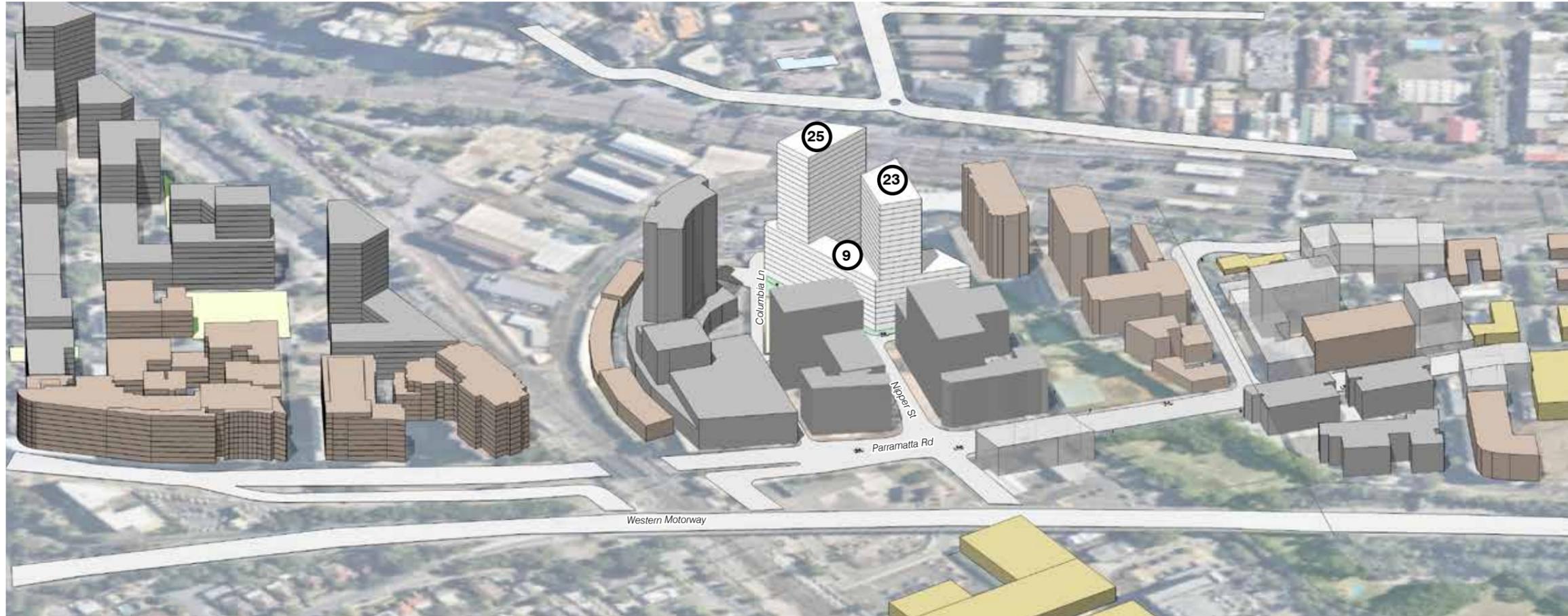


Plan view of solar access

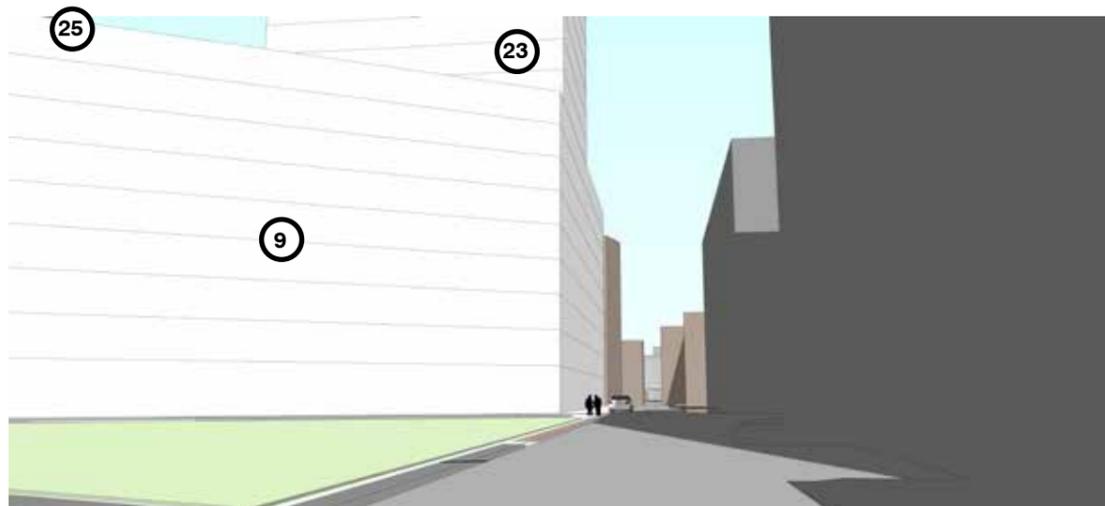


Aerial view of solar access to building south west of site

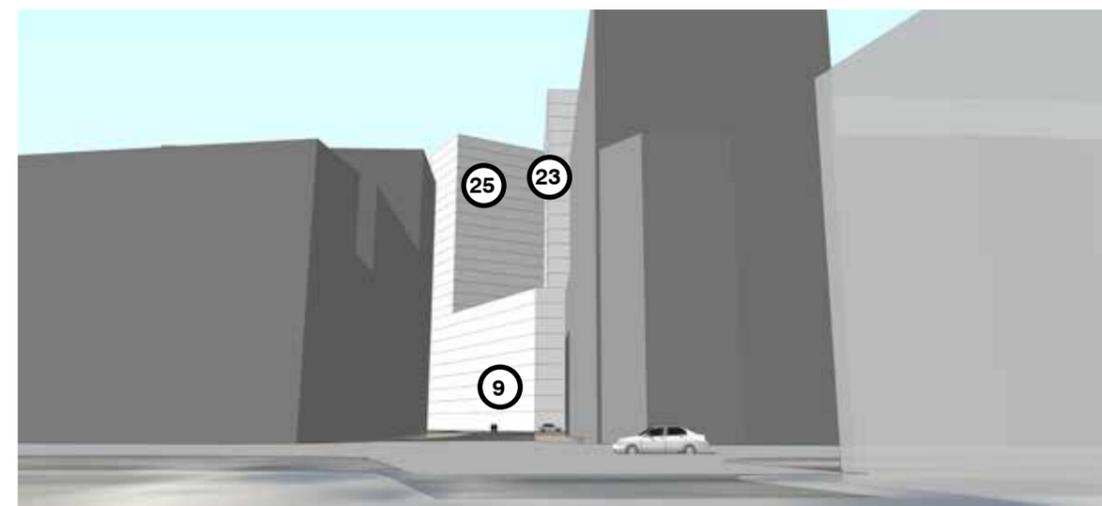




Aerial view from North



**v2** View from East of Nipper Street



**v1** View from North of Nipper Street



# 4 The Concept Design

# 4.1

## Preferred scenario

Scenario C is the preferred urban design scenario for the site.

This Scenario has been selected for this proposal as it provides the best outcome in terms of provision of open space (consistent with Council's LEP), road alignment (to relate to the approved 6-18 Parramatta Road DA) and a human-scale podium facing the streetscape and towers that are well separated from neighbouring buildings and have good solar access.

### Consistency with the Parramatta Road Strategy

The proposal is consistent with the Built Form Guidelines outlined in the Parramatta Road Strategy Planning and Design Guidelines (pages 50-69). The proposal achieves a high quality and distinct urban form which is cohesive and responds well to its context. Key features of the massing and design include:

- A building form with a podium height that provides a good relationship to the street scale.
- A podium that wraps around the corner site addressing both street frontages and the new open space being provided on site.
- A development with good solar access to apartments on site which minimizes overshadowing impacts on neighbouring properties.
- Towers that are well separated from each other and neighbouring buildings to ensure good visual privacy.
- Towers that are visually slender with less visual impact from key views including the primary view corridor towards the site from George St to the north.

The proposal also delivers the Parramatta Road Strategy's vision for the Homebush Precinct by responding to the Homebush Precinct principles outlined in the Parramatta Road Strategy Planning and Design Guidelines (pages 121-143), as outlined below.

### Future character and identity

The Parramatta Road Strategy's vision for the Homebush Precinct is to be an area focused on high density housing, which this proposal achieves by providing approximately an additional 365 dwellings to the area (calculated at 90sqm GFA per apartment).

### Open space, linkages and connections and public domain

Delivering a high quality open space network and improving the areas around the train stations is identified as integral to delivering the vision for the Homebush Precinct.

- The proposal achieves this through providing significant public contributions to the public domain through considerable dedication to road and open space. The site enjoys good amenity from open spaces through both the new open space provided as part of this development and the future open space. The new open space provided by development is at the heart of the Columbia Precinct and is based on the shape described through the existing LEP height of buildings map (which includes an area of 0m height at this location). It presents a qualitative improvement to the amenity of the Columbia Precinct.
- The proposal breaks up the long block with the new road and open space enabling better pedestrian accessibility through the site and the Precinct.
- In addition to open space facing the roads, the proposal includes large areas of communal and private open spaces within the interior of the site. The form of this space is largely dictated by the urban design form of the scenario, as a 'perimeter block'. An exact configuration and arrangement of private and communal open space will only be determined through a detailed design, however if further communal open space is found to be required to be compliant with relevant standards or controls, this can be provided on top of the podium form.

### Street function

The proposal includes a realigned road through the site which is consistent with the road alignment in Council's LEP, the Parramatta Road Strategy, and relates to the approved 6-18 Parramatta Road DA. This local road will improve accessibility and vehicular movements through the Precinct and enables the new open space to have maximum street frontage and good passive surveillance.

### Fine grain

The Columbia Precinct is relatively unconstrained from existing heritage buildings and low density dwellings which would impact on the existing fine grain character of the area. A detailed design through a DA will ultimately determine the fine grain nature of the development.

Architectus is confident that the podium and tower form of the design has been developed in line with best practice urban design outcomes. Beyond this, there is nothing proposed at this Planning Proposal stage which should prevent the preferred scenario from delivering a diversity of architecture.

Architectus recommends that the two towers within the site be developed with differing but related architectural treatments. If considered necessary, further controls can be developed as part of a site-specific DCP to provide detailed guidance as to expected architectural outcomes.

### Green edge setbacks and transitions

The proposal provides the required setbacks for local streets which will allow for a generous pedestrian path to be provided with street planting.

The proposal is aligned with the transition to open space requirements and does not overshadow the new open space being provided on site.

### Recommended planning controls

The testing for this proposal has been based on the land use, heights and densities recommended within the Parramatta Road Strategy. This is considered appropriate for the following reasons:

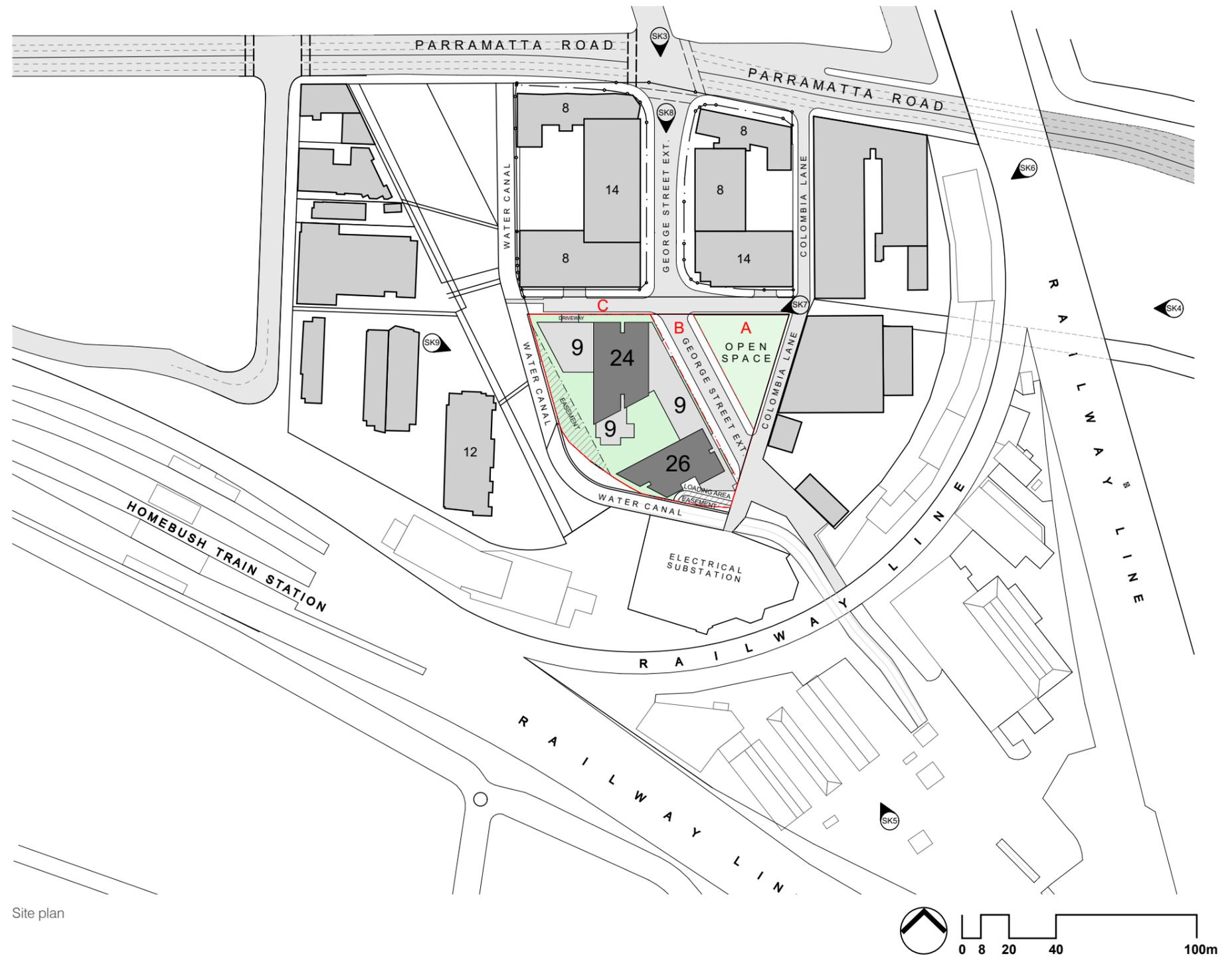
- Within the planned context of major urban renewal taking place in the Homebush to Parramatta corridor (as described through the Plan for Sydney as well as the Parramatta Road Strategy), areas close to Homebush and Strathfield Railway stations are some of the most advantageously located for providing increased densities due to their close access to rail stations and existing centres.
- It is one of the few major development sites (not affected by heritage, small lot size or strata-title constraints) located in one of these accessible locations.
- It is also capable of providing a significant uplift in density without major impact impacts on the amenity of existing residents, heritage concerns or significant visual impacts.
- It is a similar scale and density to the local community's expectation established by the Part 3A approval.
- Although the proposal will be taller than existing and currently proposed buildings within Strathfield Centre, it is considerably below the heights and densities accepted for other buildings in less-accessible centres within its context (such as the Carter Street Precinct and Sydney Olympic Park).
- The site is capable of satisfying the land use recommendations in the Parramatta Road Strategy through providing a mix of uses with work live apartments able to be provided in the lower levels of the podium. The mix and configuration of these uses will be determined in a detailed design for a DA.

# 4.2

## The illustrative design

An illustrative design for the site based on Scenario C in this document has been developed by Mosca Pserras Architects. It is described over the following pages and is considered an appropriate design response by Architectus.

n.b. The storey heights as well as shape of the design differs slightly here from Scenario C with further design development.





Ground floor plan  
 N.B. Ground floor apartments are capable of being designed as live-work units. These are understood based on Urbis' planning advice to be capable of satisfying mixed-use zone requirements.



Level 1-8 floor plan



Level 10-23 floor plan



Basement floor plan



### Photomontages of illustrative design

An independent visual impact assessment has been undertaken of the proposal. This is based on an illustrative design for the site by Mosca Pserras Architects which conforms with the preferred envelopes (Scenario C).

The existing and proposed views from the locations selected for assessment by Richard Lamb Associates are shown adjacent. The photomontages were prepared by Architectus based on a model of the illustrative design provided by Mosca Pserras Architects.



Photomontage locations

View 1



Existing view



Photomontage of proposal within view

View 2



Existing view

View 3



Existing view

View 4



Existing view



Photomontage of proposal within view



Photomontage of proposal within view



Photomontage of proposal within view

View 5



Existing view

View 6



Existing view

View 7



Existing view



Photomontage of proposal within view



Photomontage of proposal within view



Photomontage of proposal within view

# 4.3

# Recommendations

## The concept design

The concept design presented in the previous chapter is consistent with the Parramatta Road Strategy for building height, density and land use. This document has tested a range of options to assess the best built form response to these controls, which is a street-fronting podium facing the park with two well-separated towers above.

The concept design is mindful of the outlook, views and solar access of both the proposal and existing neighbouring buildings, and has separated the proposed towers to allow views through as well as around the proposal.

## Recommendations for amendments to the Strathfield Local Environmental Plan

It is recommended that controls be changed as recommended by the Parramatta Road Strategy to the following:

- 80m maximum building heights.
- A maximum floor space ratio of 5:1.
- B4 mixed-use zone.

## Urban design principles to guide site-specific DCP

The following urban design principles have been developed based on the preferred concept design and best urban design practice as recommendations for the development during future detailed design:

- The eastern portion of the site should be retained for public use. It should include an area of open space and also a vehicular route (this is necessary for neighbours) linking the George Street extension (as planned in the Columbia Precinct Stage 1) with Columbia Lane in the southeast. The open space should include opportunities for both passive and active use as well as deep soil planting.
- A podium height of a maximum of nine (9) storeys is to be provided along the northern and eastern boundaries of the developable area (excluding open space and potential road to the east). This will provide a human-scale to development consistent with the Stage 1 development to the north and should address and activate public domain areas.
- A maximum of two (2) tower forms above podium height within the site should be permitted.
- The tower forms should have a maximum floorplate of approx. 800sqm Gross External Area (measured to the outside of the building and including balconies) in order to read as slender, well separated towers.
- Buildings are to be designed to maximise solar access to public domain areas.
- New development is to ensure that casual surveillance is provided to all public domain areas.
- Vehicular access is to be provided to generally minimise the disruption of entry locations on pedestrian networks and on the interface of buildings with the public domain.
- Tower forms within the site (above the street wall) will be separated in accordance with the building separation distances in the Apartment Design Code.
- The proposed built forms should achieve architectural excellence and include high quality materials and articulated forms.

**architectus™**