

Macquarie Park: Framework for open space and mixed use development

In support of a mixed use development for 66-82 Talavera Road
Macquarie Park

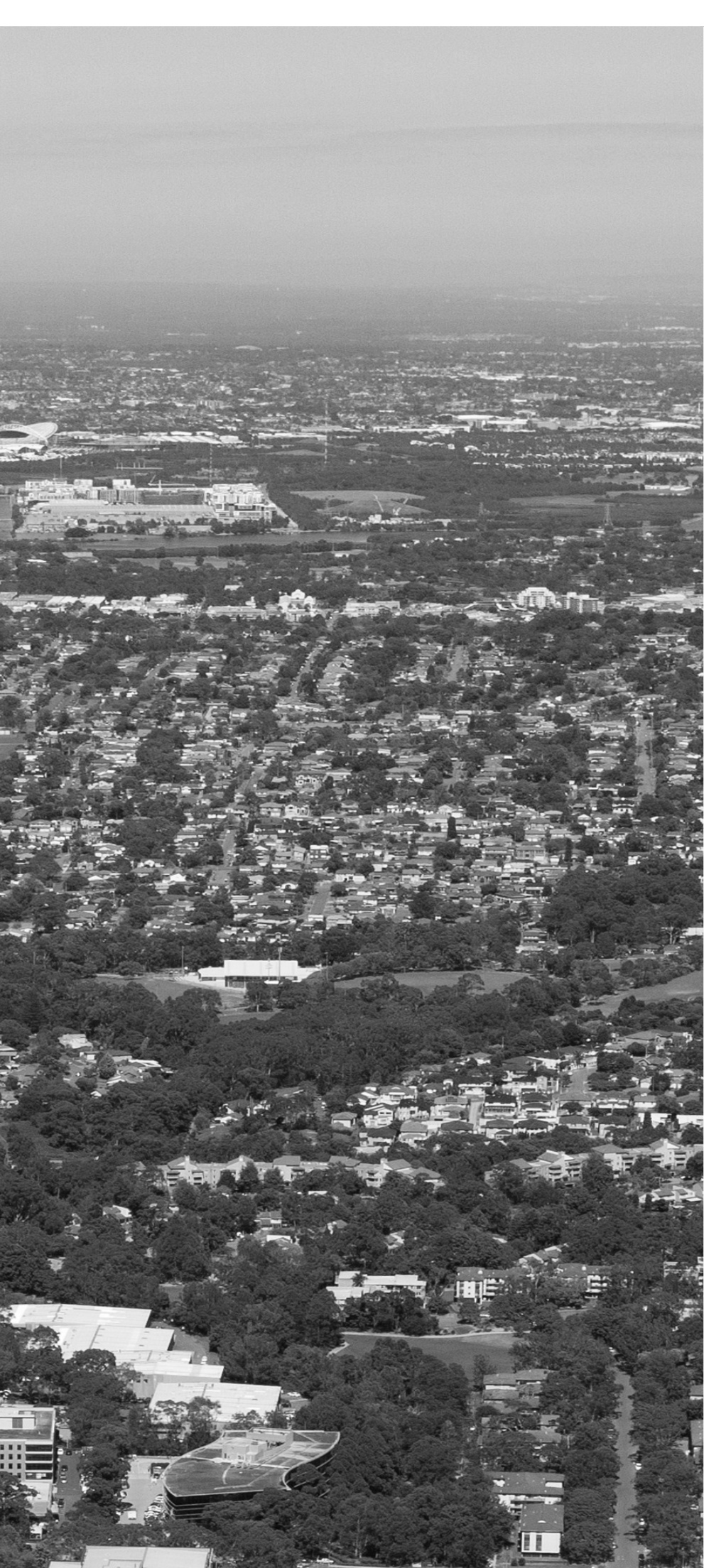
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Architectus Group Pty Ltd
ABN 90 131 245 684

Nominated Architect
Managing Director Sydney
Ray Brown
NSWARB 6359

Architectus Sydney
Level 3 341 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
T +61 2 8252 8400
F +61 2 8252 8600
sydney@architectus.com.au

Architectus 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
Managing Director Melbourne
Mark Wilde
www.architectus.com.au



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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

This report has been prepared by Architectus for Holdmark in relation to their site at 66 - 82 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park. The site is to the north of the Macquarie Park centre, and 550m from the Macquarie University Station. The report provides support for a rezoning of the site by establishing a framework for the site to be rezoned to mixed use whilst maintaining the integrity of the Macquarie Park employment centre.

There is significant pressure for residential development within Macquarie Park as evidenced by multiple approaches to the City of Ryde Council to seek permission for residential land uses within Macquarie Park as well as by the very high rates of sale for the recent residential developments on land adjacent to the Macquarie Park B7 zone. This report presents a unique opportunity for Council to leverage off strong residential demand whilst delivering critical infrastructure within Macquarie Park.

The site and its context

The site is located at 66 - 82 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park, and is currently zoned B7 Business Park. The planning controls that apply to the site are currently in a state of consideration, with the Ryde LEP 2014 having recently come into force and the Ryde LEP 2014 - Draft Amendment No. 1 (Macquarie Park) having been on public exhibition in late 2014.

Additionally, the site adjoins the Herring Road Priority Precinct boundary, an area identified by the Department of Planning and Environment for future high density mixed use development. Amended planning controls to achieve this objective have been drafted.

The site currently accommodates a four storey office building, a single storey warehouse with mezzanine office space, and a conference centre that is utilised by the on-site offices. A new office building is under construction in the south east corner of the site.

From a strategic planning perspective, Macquarie Park is a crucial part of the Global Economic Corridor that extends from the Sydney CBD to Parramatta CBD and Norwest.

There has been significant pressure for residential development within Macquarie Park due to housing pressure within greater Sydney and the high levels of amenity afforded by Macquarie Park.

We consider that the primary focus for Macquarie Park should continue to be for employment uses, but that improving amenity and activity and the provision of housing on appropriate key sites within the locality will be an important part of the business park’s success and long term viability.

Key findings

The role and composition of business parks is evolving, with an increased emphasis on worker amenity and employee well-being as well as the provision of a full offer of services and facilities while protecting commercial uses.

There is a recognised shortfall of open space within Macquarie Park (see the Ryde Open Space Strategy, 2012) but no clear mechanism to allow for the delivery of open space to the extent required to support residential dwellings within the Priority Precinct and the wider business park.

This shortfall has the potential to severely limit the ability of Macquarie Park to continue to attract businesses into the future as residential, retail and commercial growth exacerbate the centre’s existing concerns. However, it is difficult for Council to purchase new sites for open space due to the prevalence of private ownership in the area.

Council have an opportunity to strategically approach the problem by permitting mixed use development where substantial public benefit can be delivered on site by the developer.

This strategic approach should be formalised in a framework that clearly demonstrates decision making logic and provides certainty for Council, developers and business.

Next steps

While a rezoning to B4 Mixed Use is supported for the Subject Site, Architectus and Holdmark recognise the challenge of maintaining the integrity of Macquarie Park’s commercial core while providing sufficient open space and social infrastructure to support the area’s growth.

It is therefore recommended that a framework to support rezoning to B4 is implemented in the centre to facilitate decision making.

Under this Framework, Council could consider rezoning applications for sites that can achieve ALL of the following nine criteria.

Public open space

- 1. Provide either new open space shown in the Draft Macquarie Park DCP 2014 or a new 1 hectare minimum public open space, designed to Council’s reasonable requirements.
- 2. Where a site proposes to deliver the 1 hectare minimum open space, the site must be larger than 3 hectares, thereby allowing for a 2 hectare development site for mixed uses.
- 3. The open space must have a frontage to a major road (Waterloo Road, Talavera Road, Wicks Road or Herring Road) and one secondary street.
- 4. The proposed open space should satisfy specified design criteria (refer to Section 4.1 of this report) and be dedicated to Council on completion.

Non-residential floorspace

- 5. Provide a minimum of 20,000sqm GFA of non-residential floorspace.

Key worker housing

- 6. Deliver key worker housing (or Affordable Housing) at the rate of 3% of total dwellings provided.
- 7. Up to 15% of the open space (1,500sqm) can be used to deliver the required key worker housing.

Childcare facilities

- 8. Provide privately run childcare facilities suitable for 60 children.

Public domain

- 9. Delivery of all other required public domain on the site including roads and through site links as nominated in the Draft Macquarie Park DCP 2014.

There are three sites in the Macquarie Park centre that currently fulfil all criteria under the proposed framework and have been identified by Architectus as suitable for open space and mixed uses, including the Subject Site.

Recommendation

On the basis of this framework, Architectus recommends that the subject site be rezoned to B4 Mixed Use with an increased maximum building height and Floor Space Ratio (FSR). This could be implemented simply and effectively through inclusion as part of the Herring Road Priority Precinct or, alternatively, through a Planning Proposal through City of Ryde Council.





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1 The proposal



1.1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Architectus for Holdmark in relation to their site at 66 - 82 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park. The site is to the north of the Macquarie Park centre, and 550m from the Macquarie University Station.

The report provides support for a rezoning of the site by establishing a framework for the site to be rezoned to mixed use whilst maintaining the integrity of the Macquarie Park employment centre.

The framework is designed to provide a genuinely positive outcome for Macquarie Park, a centre of metropolitan significance, by drawing on Architectus’s extensive and unique experience in the locality. This experience spans both government and private stakeholders, providing a balanced view to the delivery of infrastructure and public domain works in the centre.

Macquarie Park is one of the premier business centres of Sydney, with a growing metropolitan significance as part of the Global Economic Corridor. In 2014, the North Ryde/Macquarie Park centre overtook North Sydney as Sydney’s second largest office market with over 866,000sqm of commercial office space.

There is significant pressure for residential development within Macquarie Park as evidenced by multiple approaches to the City of Ryde Council to seek permission for residential land uses within Macquarie Park as well as by the very high rates of sale for the recent residential developments on land adjacent to the Macquarie Park B7 employment zone. This report presents a unique opportunity for Council to leverage off strong residential demand whilst delivering critical infrastructure within Macquarie Park.

Existing situation

The site is currently zoned B7 Business Park under the Ryde LEP 2014, allowing for a range of commercial and industrial uses, with an FSR of 1:1 and a maximum building height of 30m. Under the proposed planning amendment Ryde LEP 2014 - Draft Amendment No. 1 (Macquarie Park) the site would be subject to an increase in the permissible FSR and height of the site.

The site currently accommodates a four storey office building, a single storey warehouse with mezzanine office space, and a conference centre that is utilised by the on-site offices. This represents a significant underutilisation of a well located, large site.

Council has recently approved a development for a six storey commercial office building which is currently under construction on the site.

The opportunity

Architectus was engaged by Holdmark to investigate the site’s development potential. Architectus and Holdmark see an opportunity to provide a district open space on the site as part of a high density mixed use rezoning and redevelopment.

The subject site provides a unique opportunity to provide this open space and potentially key worker housing in close proximity to the commercial core, key transport nodes and Macquarie retail centre, and at no cost to Council.

Architectus worked closely with Clouston Associates Landscape Architects to master plan a site that would provide the optimal open space outcome for Macquarie Park.

The proposal

The new open space is proposed to be located on the intersection of Alma Road and Talavera Road, where it will be highly visible and will have a relationship with the Macquarie Shopping Centre, and be one block away from Waterloo Road. The park is 550m from Macquarie University Train Station and within a comfortable walking distance of many businesses and new dwellings in the Herring Road Priority Precinct.

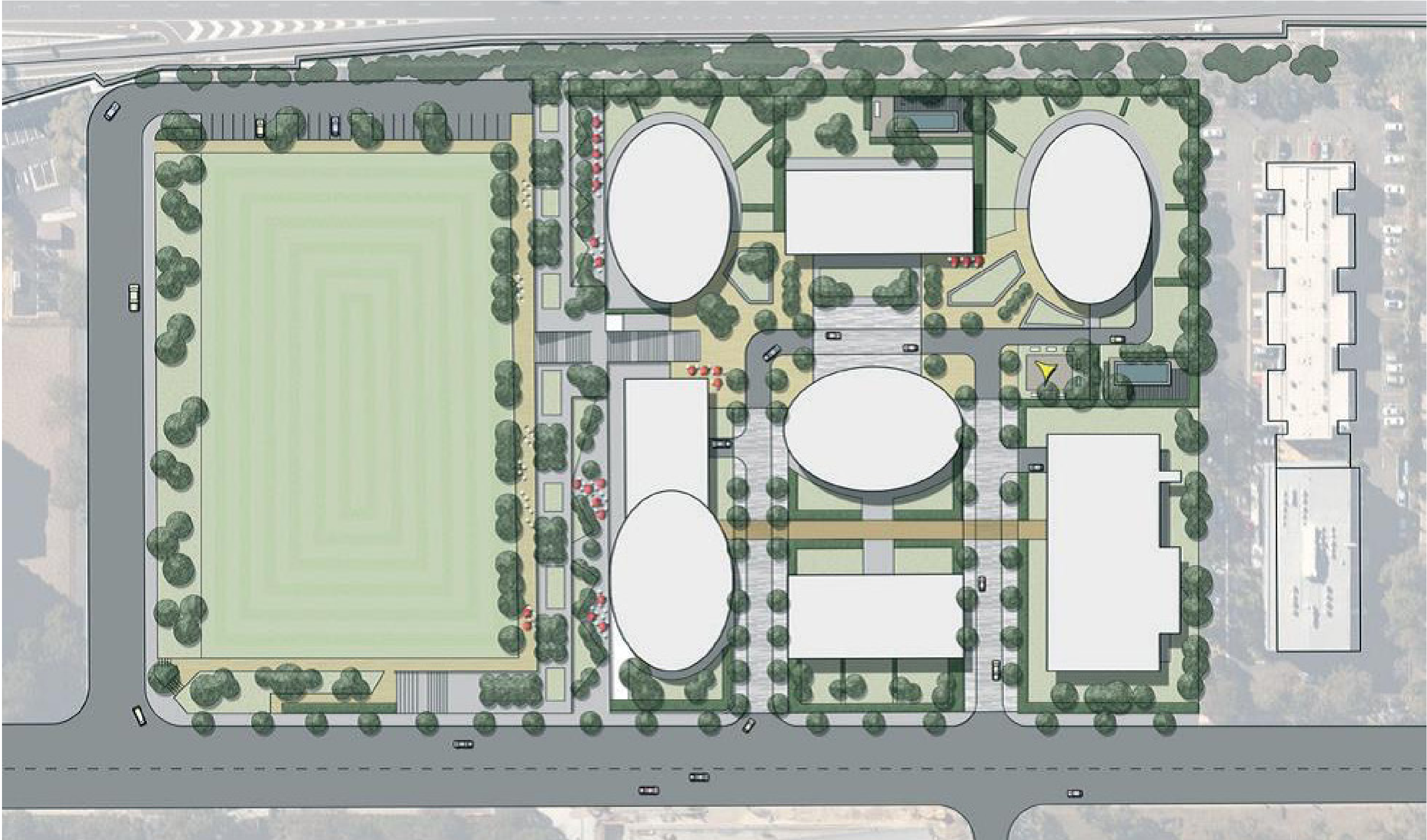
The open space would make up 1 hectare at the corner of Talavera Road and Alma Road, the western section of the site.

The remaining part of the site is proposed to be developed for mixed uses, with an option to include key worker housing on the north-west boundary of the site replacing a portion of the open space. The proposed built form is designed to maximise solar access to the park and public domain. The master plan achieves an FSR of 3.5:1, with maximum building height of 120m, which is consistent with the maximum proposed Priority Precinct controls.

The proposal allows for approximately 128,000sqm of residential GFA, or 1,280 apartments (excluding key worker accommodation) at an average of 100sqm per apartment. The plan also allows for the approved commercial building on site, which has commenced construction and will accommodate the offices of AstraZeneca pharmaceuticals, who have a manufacturing facility opposite the site.

It is worth noting that if the site was developed for commercial uses at the current FSR of 1.5:1, the peak morning traffic volume would be 2.2 times greater than that generated by the proposed, predominately residential scheme.

To allow for the delivery of an open space on the site through provision of residential development, a rezoning from B7 Business Park to B4 Mixed Use is required.



Indicative Master Plan (not including key worker housing)



Indicative built form and scale (not including key worker housing)