# Oxford Falls Aged Care Centre

# **DA Landscape Report**

#### 1.0 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

# 1.1 Existing Landuse, Landform & Vegetation

The subject property currently accommodates a large single storey brick residential home surrounded by extensive garden plantings with numerous exotic species and ancillary semi agricultural uses including paddocks for horse gazing and barns for their accommodation at the lower northern portion of the site. Additionally there is a large metal barn for storage and a workshop.

There is a secondary dwelling on the north-west portion of the site. This is a single storey timber weatherboard clad cottage for a site manager.

A small dam located on the western boundary collects surface water runoff from the site. This harvested rain water is used within the site for sundry purposes. Surplus water is directed towards Middle Creek to the north of the site.

The site grades down from Barnes Road (south) at RL 107.5 down towards the grazing paddocks adjacent to Middle Creek (outside and north of the site) at RL 82.0. The existing brick dwelling occupies the upper portion of the site and is surrounded by extensively laid out and planted amenity landscape.

The middle portion of the site is characterised by a sandstone outcrop ridge line which traverses east-west across the site. It has an approximate level drop from RL 101.0 down to RL 89.0. An access track follows the lower contour (RL 89.0) leading to the storage shed-barn and site manager's cottage.

A disused tennis court is located at the eastern end of the sandstone outcrop ridge line.

The main vehicular access into the site is from Barnes Road-south. The site entrance is marked with brick columns and a double gate. Thereafter Barnes Road runs alongside the eastern boundary of the site but is unmade, grassed and unused. Barnes Road (north) re-establishes itself as an informally sealed track to provide access to No. 48 leading southwards from Oxford Falls Road.

# 1.2 Existing Vegetation

Vegetation and 'Landscape Plantings' within the subject site are highly varied. The curtilage and surrounding garden areas of the main dwelling are predominantly exotic species or non-endemic to the locality.

A tall, unmanaged Leyland Cypress hedge (Cupressocyparis leylandii) forms a 4m to 5m tall screen along the south-western boundary.

Mixed Palm tree plantings around the dwelling include Cabbage Tree Palms (Livistona australis), Cocos Palms (Syagrus romanzoffiana), Dwarf Pygmy Palms (Phoenix roebelenii) and Bangalow Palms (Archotophoenix cunninghamiana)

Other exotic trees include Chinese Hackberry (Celtis sinensis) which is classified as a noxious weed in north-eastern New South Wales.

The 'Landscape General Arrangement Plan', Dwg No. 01, numbers existing 'Landscape Trees' which are not included in the Flora and Fauna Assessment Report by Travers Bushfire & Ecology (Refer to Table 3.3). It is not a definitive schedule but lists the main amenity trees and the proposed action for retention or removal. This Landscape Plan and Schedule reflects the degree of landscape disturbance that has occurred over the last 30 to 40 years within this site.

The sandstone outcrop ridgeline is characterised with some remnant trees from what was once 'Sydney Sandstone Gully Forrest' but which is now categorised as 'Peppermint –Angophora Woodland-Open Forest. It has a canopy cover of approximately 10% to 35% and a canopy height of 15m to 23m.

(Reference 'Flora Report 'Travers Bushfire & Ecology). The understorey is heavily disturbed with many exotic species recorded.

The area allocated for the detention ponds are within the paddocks currently used for horse grazing and classified as 'Exotic Grassland with Scattered Trees'. The scattered trees are mostly around the perimeter of the fenced paddock.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES

# 2.1 Design Criteria

Create a high quality landscape to complement the standard of accommodation proposed for the aged care centre.

- Provide a variety of spaces and garden styles for different uses. Smaller gardens for quiet and peaceful contemplation, and larger spaces for community and social gatherings.
- Each building shall have direct access to adjacent patios, terraces and soft landscape areas.
- Wherever practicable each garden area should have both steps and disabled access ramps leading to the next adjoining garden, and so on.
- Ensure that unencumbered access from each building is provided into the landscape in the event of any emergency
- Use the sloping topography of the site to maximise landscape design features and create visual interest.
- Face the different garden areas towards the north to capture views and winter sunlight.
- Incorporate safe water features to bring sound and tranquillity into the landscape
- Design all garden areas so that residents are contained and safe but without feeling trapped.
- Gardens should be easy for care staff to supervise and to prevent residents from wandering off the site.
- Design gardens so that visiting families may spend time with their relatives outdoors in a peaceful setting with a range of outdoor furniture to make them feel comfortable.
- Provide a wide range of native and exotic plants to bring seasonal colour and texture into the landscape.
- Locate native plants close to the site perimeters to "blend" with the surrounding bushlands (mostly to the east)
- Select exotic plants which will not become escapees into the neighbouring private properties and nearby bushlands.
- Create seasonal colour and variety so that residents may mark and enjoy the different times of the year.
- Use some deciduous trees to allow winter sunlight penetration and shade during the summer months.
- Provide a hobby garden where residents may grow their favourite plants, herbs and other vegetables.
  Provide raised planter beds to make gardening easier for older people and residents who are wheelchair bound.
- Provide low level screen planting to protect privacy to residential rooms close to common access corridors and outdoor footpaths
- Provide a store/depot to keep all garden tools and other maintenance equipment for the landscape.

- Where safe and practicable retain and protect existing native trees within the designed landscape
- Planting species and distances from building facades shall comply with NSW Bushfire safety codes.

## 3.0 LANDSCAPE LAYOUT AND GARDEN THEMES

## 3.1 Entrance Driveway

This has been widened to 6m to accommodate two-way traffic. It is bordered with a screen hedge inset with avenue trees and fronted with ground cover planting. The eye is directed to an arrival roll over paved roundabout.

Car parking for staff (6#), visitors (19#) and disabled spaces (3#) are located on either side of this entrance driveway. Ramps lead from the disabled parking spaces to the front door through an existing landscape area which will be upgraded into a native bushland garden.

## 3.2 Entrance Forecourt

A spacious paved forecourt provides a safe level pick-up and drop-off point for visitors and the community mini bus (Toyota Coaster or similar). It also acts as a turning head for larger emergency vehicles.

# 3.3 Existing Rock Garden and Pool

The existing sandstone rock garden with two pools, a small stream and water cascade will be retained, restored and upgraded.

The existing deck from the games room will be enlarged with double doors so that residents may sit outside and soak in the view across the water feature and cascade. Existing and principal trees not directly affected by the proposed buildings will be retained. The lower existing water pond will be replanted with aquatic plants to attract insect and bird life.

Direct access to this garden area from the central corridor has been designed to provide alternative access and flexibility to this rock and pool garden with its sitting-out deck adjacent to the games room.

#### 3.4 Memorial Garden

Every aged care facility should have a garden where residents, staff, spouses and other family members may go to reflect and remember those who used to live in the facility and who have now have passed on.

A rose garden and reflection pool form the centre piece of this garden. Roses may be donated in memory of loved ones.









Allocated rose garden beds are provided where named Roses may be donated in memory of loved ones.

There are low level, free standing wing walls onto which memorial plaques may be attached.





Curved walls in the Memorial garden will also accommodate commemorative wall plaques

Detailed designs for the paving in this garden will accommodate commemorative "signature" clay pavers.







Impressed commemorative clay pavers as per these examples

The Memorial garden design is based on traditional layout themes but with contemporary lines and finishes. It has a summer house which looks back over a pond with stepping pavers.

Direct access into the garden is from Building No 6 at RL 101.68. A 'Lych gate' or similar featured entrance from the native woodland garden is located at the south-west end, and a continuous arbour at the northeast end under which steps flow down to the lower terraced gardens. Flowering climbers will be trained over the arbour for scent, colour and amenity.







A Lych Gate or feature entrance gate will lead into the Memorial Garden from the native garden area

# 3.5 South-Eastern Terraced Gardens

A series of three (3#) formal terraced gardens are benched and terraced into the natural gradient of the land; each terrace with its own direct access from the adjacent residential buildings.

Each terraced garden is linked to the next by an axial set of feature steps so that access is provided from the high end Memorial garden down to the lowest garden. Small to medium trees will frame views from one end to the other. Refer to Landscape Drawing Nos. 02 and 03







Each terraced garden is linked to the next by an axial set of feature steps





Examples of formal terraced gardens defined and enclosed with hedges

All terraced gardens are defined and enclosed by a native screen hedge to the side south-east driveway. This ensures that residents and visitors are contained and safe with a sense of peace.

#### 3.6 Hobby Gardens and Planter Beds

The lower eastern end of the site has been dedicated to a number of garden beds which are for hobby gardeners. Residents may grow and cultivate herbs and other favourite culinary plants to keep active and maintain their interests in gardening and horticulture. Fruit and vegetables from these garden beds will be used in the preparation of their meals. Raised planter beds will cater for residents with access disabilities.





Raised planter beds are provided to facilitate residents who have ability restrictions or are wheelchair bound.

# 3.7 Alfresco Terrace-Deck

Leading off the arrival lobby is an "alfresco" terrace, located close to a coffee bar and café, accessed via a set of bifold doors. This terrace will accommodate residents and their visitors for informal meetings and enjoy deinks and light meals. From here one can also enjoy panoramic views northwards across the centre's function lawns and the woodland and beyond towards Middle Creek.

Steps and ramps lead down from this alfresco terrace to the communal lawns and gardens along the western side of the property.

#### 3.8 Communal Function Lawns

Two large lawns with amenity garden shrubs and tree planting face northwards to the sandstone outcrop and existing woodland. The upper lawn will have a BBQ equipped for outdoor entertaining and social functions. Disabled access from the Building No.1 is provided.

The larger, lower function lawn features a gazebo or pavilion with immediate views into the native woodland tree canopies. This pavilion will accommodate a disabled toilet and rest facilities so that residents and their families may spend time together and also enjoy a picnic together.

Both gardens are fully screened from the residential properties to the west of the subject site. Both lawns and gardens are linked with ramps for disabled access and steps from Buildings Nos.1 and3

## 4.0 RETENTION OF THE LANDFORM & EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The designed landscape has retained and followed the existing topography and grades as closely as possible.

Where the buildings have been benched into the site, the surrounding landscape treatment has sought to bring revised grades and levels back to the existing RL's and contours. This facilitates natural surface run off.

Where necessary proposed retaining walls between the buildings have been constructed with excavated sandstone from the site, with planting at the top and bottom. Natural grades close to the boundaries have been retained.

The entrance driveway has retained the existing grades and fall leading the existing house (Building No.1) and proposed main entrance. The side south-eastern access driveway has followed the existing topography as closely as possible, with the steepest gradient being 1 in 8.

Surface water runoff has been directed to a 'water garden' and a detention pond at the lower north end of the site. Both these features have DA approval from the previous planning application.

A 24m wide wild life corridor has been retained along the northern boundary of the site. Refer to Landscape General Arrangement Plan Dwg. No. 01 and the flora & Fauna Report (Travers Bushfire & Ecology)

# 5.0 RETENTION & REMOVAL OF EXISTING VEGETATION

A number of trees and smaller shrubs are nominated for removal. Removal of vegetation may be categorised as follows:

#### 5.1 Remnant Woodland Vegetation

Species identification and existing condition of the woodland trees have been identified in the 'Fauna and Flora' Report by "Travers Bushfire & Ecology". Trees identified in this report are shown numbered on Landscape Plans Nos. 02 and 03 with a prefix "T" followed by the number. Reference to these tree species and their condition is in the Flora & Fauna Report.

#### 5.2 Amenity Trees and Large Shrubs

Additionally there are a number of trees and large shrubs which currently comprise the amenity landscape surrounding the existing dwelling. These are numbered on Landscape Plans Nos. 02 and 03 **without** a prefixed "T". The species and proposed 'Action' are shown in the 'Existing Tree Schedule' on the Landscape General Arrangement Plan, Drawing No. 01

## 6.0 PROPOSED VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPE PLANT SPECIES

The proposed landscape planting is specifically orientated to provide a range of plants suitable for aged care residents and the natural environment. The Schedule of 'Proposed Tree, Shrub and Ground Cover' species is provided in Landscape Plan Dwg No. 02.

#### 6.1 Amenity Landscapes and Gardens

Aged residents are unable to venture out as much and therefore rely upon their immediate surroundings for inspiration and to follow the seasonal changes in the landscape. It is therefore important to create seasonal variation with a variety of flower types and leaf colours throughout the year.

#### Trees

Most of the existing palm trees have been specified for lifting and replanting. Their mature size will help create a well established landscape look on completion of the planting. An on-site holding area will be established to sustain these trees during the construction period.

Where appropriate native trees have been incorporated into the amenity landscape for screening (between buildings) and to attract bird life close to the communal open spaces.

Generally exotic tree species have been used to create seasonal changes with their prolific Spring and Summer flowers of varying colours, leaf colour changes through the seasons, shade in summer and a sunlight access during the winter months. Small to medium sized native trees species have also been used for screening, flower qualities and to attract bird life close to the buildings.

#### **Shrubs & Ground Cover Plants**

A mix and Australian native and exotic shrubs and ground cover plants have been specified. Consideration for their selection has been leaf and flower colour, water conservation, suitability for the site growing conditions and species which are not known garden escapees.

Irrigation of the landscape plantings will be with harvested rainwater from the existing on-site dam. In this regard self sufficiency for the landscape is planned.

#### 6.2 Perimeter Landscape Planting

The western boundary has a well established evergreen Leyland Cypress hedge. It is proposed to retain and prune the height and width of this hedge to rejuvenate it and ensure an effective year round screen from the properties in Barnes Road (West). The existing gap in this hedge will be in-filled to provide a continuous screen to all proposed buildings. It will be combined with a 1.8m high acoustic screen along the western side of the visitors' car park.

Perimeter and boundary plants along the south-east and east are native Lily Pilly (Syzigium spp) species and cultivars. This will provide both a visual screen to the site as well as vegetative buffer to the heavily degraded bushland immediately east of the unsurfaced section of Barnes Road.

Hedges defining the terraced gardens along the side driveway will provide a secondary buffer between the bushland and the amenity landscapes for this aged residential facility.

# 6.3 Woodland Rehabilitation

A number of trees within the remnant open forest/woodland are proposed for removal to accommodate Building Nos. 4 and 5. This is predominantly at the eastern end of the sandstone rock outcrop. It has been noted that many of these trees are in poor condition and are of limited ecological value. Refer to "Flora & Fauna Assessment" report by Travers Bushfire and Ecology.

A woodland rehabilitation program is specified with the clearance of the prolific exotic weed species on the woodland floor. This will be followed by replanting with locally endemic trees and understorey species. Refer to the proposed schedule of plants on Landscape Plan Dwg No. 03. All rehabilitation works will be carried out by fully qualified and experienced bushland rehabilitation contractors.

# 6.4 Water Margin and Macrophytic Planting

Two (2#) DA approved water detention basins will be planted with native aquatic and macrophytic plants species. This will stabilise water margin soils and create rich water margin habitats.

A schedule of Water Margin and Macrophytic plant species from which to select is provided on Landscape Plan No. 03.

#### 6.0 Disabled Access Considerations within the Landscape

Notwithstanding the grades and elevational changes across the site, access for the less-abled and disabled has been provided into all garden and landscape areas from adjoining buildings.

Two (2#) access points and paths and ramps into the south-eastern gardens have been provided from the central access corridor of the complex.

Additionally, wherever possible disabled access has been designed to lead from one garden area to another. Each garden has rest areas and furniture with shade in summer and sunlight access in winter months.

Gated exit points from the upper and lower south –eastern gardens are provided for maintenance and for 'Exit' in the event of emergencies.

#### 7.0 PLANNING CODES

# Warringah DCP 2011 Landscape Objectives

• To enable planting to maintain and enhance the streetscape.

Provision of an entrance gate similar to the existing gate and columns. New and improved landscape amenity planting is specified.

#### Complies

• To conserve and enhance indigenous vegetation, topographical features and habitat for wildlife.

Where safe and practicable existing native trees have been retained. Replenishment native planting within the woodland and water features have been proposed. Amenity native tree, shrub and ground cover species have been specified to enrich the environmental and ecological qualities of the site.

#### Complies

• To provide for landscaped open space with dimensions that are sufficient to enable the establishment of low lying shrubs, medium high shrubs and canopy trees of a size and density to mitigate the height, bulk and scale of the building.

Refer to Landscape Plans Dwg Nos. 01, 02 and 03.

# Complies

• To enhance privacy between buildings.

The aged care centre is set well away from neighbouring residential properties. An existing tall evergreen hedge along the western boundary provides and thick visual screen to neighbouring properties to the west.

Small to medium sized trees and tall shrubs are specified between the buildings and on either side of the central access corridor within the aged care centre to prevent overlooking and to maintain privacy to accommodation rooms.

# Complies

• To accommodate appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities which meets the needs of the occupants

Comprehensive landscape and passive recreational facilities have been provided throughout the outdoor areas of the proposed aged care centre. Refer to Landscape Plans Dwg Nos. 01, 02 and 03.

# Complies

• To provide space for service functions, including clothes drying.

Function lawns, BBQ Pavilion summer houses hobby gardens. An eastern facing viewing terrace down to the waterfall and rock garden pond complements the games room Laundry drying. Refer to architectural facilities within building

# Complies

• To facilitate water management, including on-site detention and infiltration of stormwater.

Rainwater harvesting and surface water runoff catchment has been provided. Irrigation and cleaning of outdoor surfaces will be from all water harvested and stored on-site

#### **Complies**







