

# STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

## Former Newcastle City Holden Site 500 King Street Newcastle West



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

EJE Heritage has been requested to provide a Heritage Assessment and subsequent Heritage Impact Statement for the proposed development of the former Newcastle City Holden Site, Newcastle NSW, which involves demolition of existing car showrooms and construction of a Holiday Inn Express facility.

The initial section of the report places the site within an historical context, and examines the physical condition and context of the current building. With the history and physical condition and context of the building understood, a heritage assessment of the site can be completed using the NSW Heritage Branch guidelines encompassing the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter 2013* heritage values: historical significance; aesthetic significance; scientific significance; and social significance.

The Statement of Heritage Impact that follows examines the proposed works, identifying any impacts which the proposal might have on the significance of the heritage items, and any measures which should be taken to mitigate any negative impacts, if these are in fact identified.

The Historical Context section of this report was prepared by Stephen Batey B.Arch  
This Statement of Heritage Impact was prepared by EJE Heritage. The project team consisted of:

- Barney Collins – (Director), Conservation Architect.
- Stephen Batey – Heritage Consultant.

Unless otherwise acknowledged, photographic images are by EJE Heritage.

### 1.1 METHODOLOGY

This report has been undertaken in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office publications, *Assessing Heritage Significance and Statements of Heritage Impact*, together with the Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013*.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2 CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

EJE is not qualified to offer structural opinions. This report is not intended to convey any opinion as to the structural adequacy or integrity of the structure, nor should it in any way be construed as so doing. Similarly, the author's observations are limited to the fabric only: he does not comment on the capacity, adequacy, or statutory compliance of any building services.

<sup>1</sup> Burwood: Australia ICOMOS, 2013.



### 1.3 HERITAGE LISTINGS

The site and building are not listed as a Heritage Item, however a number of items of varying heritage significance are located adjacent to the subject site. Items listed below are derived from Newcastle City Council Local Environmental Plan 2012, Schedule 5 Part 1, as hereunder:

Suburb	Item	Address	Description	Significance	Item No.
Hamilton East	Fig Trees	Stewart Avenue	Road Reserve of Stewart Avenue	Local	I161
Newcastle West	Former Castlemaine Brewery	787 Hunter St	Lot 103 DP1191992	State	I501
Newcastle West	Army Drill Hall	498 King St	Lot 1 DP 222839	Local	I508
Newcastle West	Birdwood Park	502 King St	Lot 1 DP 1158072	Local	I509



Figure 1. Extract of Newcastle City Council LEP Heritage Map. Subject Site outlined in Blue. Blue circle represents 200m radius from subject site

The subject site is in proximity (within 200m) of further Heritage Items of Local significance, as hereunder:

Suburb	Item	Address	Description	Significance	Item No.
Newcastle West	Bellevue Hotel	738 Hunter St	Lot 101, DP 1096718	Local	I499
Newcastle West	Bank Corner (Former Bank of NSW)	744 Hunter St	Lot 1, DP 196241 + Lots 1&2, DP 75008	Local	I500
Newcastle West	Former Newcastle Cooperative Store	854 Hunter St	Lot 1, DP 82517	Local	I504
Wickham	Wickham Railway Station	Hannell St	Lot 100, DP 1183581	Local	I683
Wickham	Wickham Signal Box	Hannell St	Lot 100, DP 1183581	Local	I684

It is clear from the list of Heritage Protected items above that a great range of types, styles, eras and uses are represented. While there is great variety in the scope of listings, there is great uniqueness in each listing and respect for each item on its individual merit must be considered and maintained.

In the Historical Context section below, a brief history of the subject site and each of the Heritage items immediately adjacent to it are given.

Item 1501, The former Castlemaine Brewery, has a boundary that extends all the way to Stewart Avenue so is covered in the historical context of the report. There is no extant construction on that particular portion of the site however, and the visible and accessible portions of the listed site are on Hunter Street and Wood Street well away from the subject site. Any development of the subject site will have no affect on the significance of the Former Castlemaine Brewery item.



## 1.4 SITE IDENTIFICATION

The site is identified as 500 King Street Newcastle West, it is located within the Newcastle City Council. The real property description is: Lot 2; DP542059, Lot 9; DP446798, Lot 8; DP95173, Lots 6&7; DP 95174 The site is zoned B3 Commercial Core



Figure 2. Aerial Photo. Subject Site outlined in Blue. Source Six Maps



Figure 3. Extract of Newcastle City Council LEP Land Zoning Map. Subject Site Outlined in Blue

## 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 2.1 PRE-COLONIAL INHABITATION

Prior to European exploration and settlement, *Muloobinba* (Newcastle) and the *Coquon* (Hunter River) region hosted the traditional nations of the Awabakal and Worimi Aboriginal people. The river estuary at this time was considerably wider than the present day harbour, consisting of shifting sands and moving channels, with the area of today's Foreshore reserve then a large shallow lagoon.<sup>2</sup> Coastal Banksia, otherwise known as *Honeysuckle*, flourished along the banks of the river, an area rich in food sources for the traditional occupants. Sea food such as fish, oysters and pippies would have been a prominent source of bush tucker, with evidence of shell middens, a campsite, and ceremonial ground discovered at *Meekarlb* (today's Honeysuckle Precinct).

While not always confrontational in nature, European colonial occupation in the 19th century drastically affected the Aboriginal people; times of conflict, dispossession of hunting grounds, and the introduction of diseases such as small pox drastically reduced Aboriginal populations in the area. The first European census of aboriginal people in the area of Newcastle occurred in 1827, and counted only 140 individuals in receipt of government provisions.<sup>3</sup>

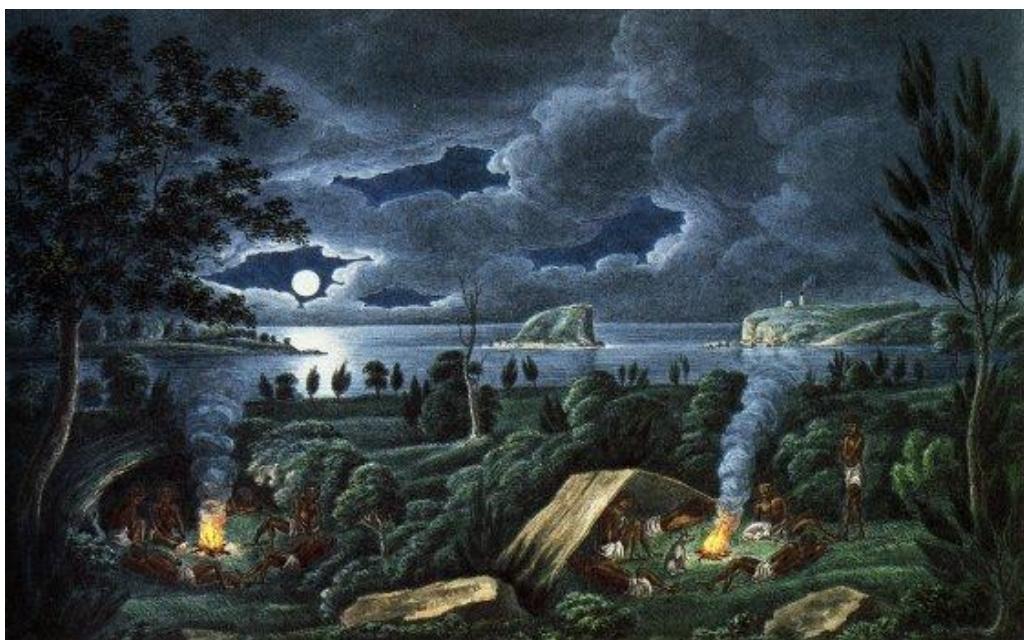


Figure 4. Lycett, Joseph (ca.1775 – 1828). *Aborigines resting by a Camp Fire near the Mouth of the Hunter River, Newcastle, NSW*.

National Library of Australia

### 2.2 COLONIAL OCCUPATION AND COAL EXPORT

Lieutenant John Shortland described his discovery of the Hunter River when he stepped ashore in September 1797. He wrote that "...on its south shore and near the water a considerable quantity of coal was discovered"<sup>4</sup> and that this was "...as good coals as any in England"<sup>5</sup>. He produced a sketch map of the river on this visit, recognising "A Swamp" on the south shore around the area of the subject site.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hunter Estuary as Discovered by Dr. John Shortland* (Sept. 10, 1797), in: The Institution of Engineers, Australia, *Newcastle Harbour – A National Engineering Landmark*. 1989.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Government – Hunter Development Corporation, *History of Ferries in Newcastle*, n.d.

<sup>4</sup> *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.3 pp 343 – 350.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland and Stafford. *Architecture Newcastle*, p 6.

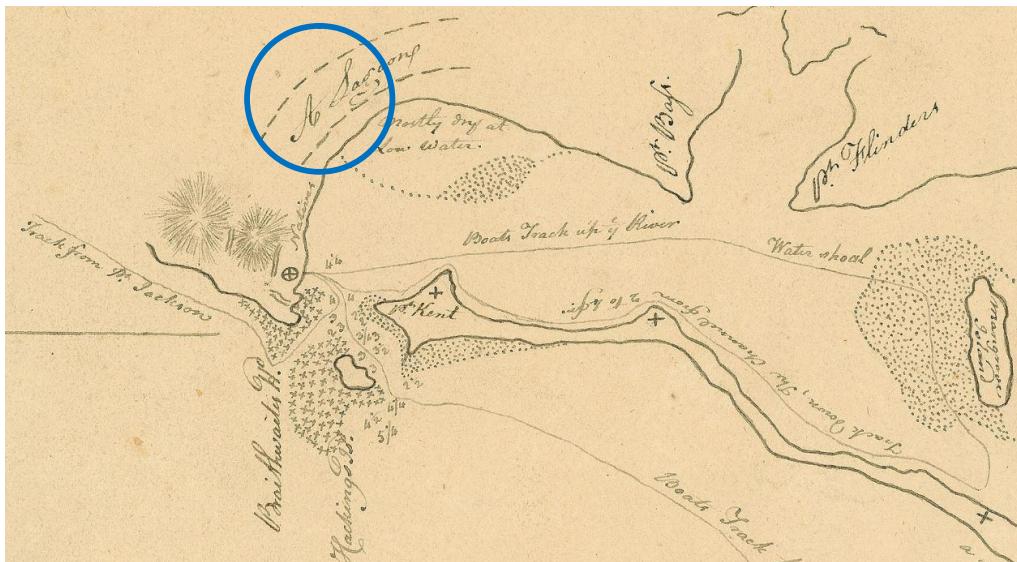


Figure 5. Lt. John Shortland. *An eye sketch of Hunter's River*. 1797. The site is circled in blue.  
Newcastle University Cultural Collections

This discovery of readily accessible coal set the future direction of the area's colonisation, and the first loads of coal for export were loaded as early as 1799.<sup>6</sup> In 1804, after the establishment of a stable penal colony, coal production by convicts began as an industry, with ships being loaded by wheelbarrow at the end of Watt St.

By the 1840s the A.A. Co. had several mines operating and imported British miners to supplement their workforce that was largely made up of assigned convicts. During the 1830s and 1840s people including Richard Furlong, Alexander Walker Scott, and Dr James Mitchell established farms and small industries on grants to the south east of the town and to the west of Throsby Creek as well as the north side of the harbour. The immigration into the town increased the demand for housing and associated facilities. By 1841 the population of Newcastle totalled 1,377 and there were 193 houses in the town.<sup>7</sup>

The 1880 Port of Newcastle map (Figure 5 below) shows the subject site as being adjacent to swamp. There were no roads formed between Steel Street and Stewart Avenue. The current Markettown's Eastern side premises is noted on the 1880 map as being the Newcastle Gas Co Works. Subdivided lots are indicated along Hunter Street (then Carlton Street) and the West side of Stewart Avenue (then Stewart Street). The line of Parry Street is shown diagonally across the map south of the Newcastle Gas Works. The Australian Agricultural Coal Company's rail line traversed past the subject site, at what would become the southern edge of Birdwood Park, on its way to the Port of Newcastle. Ownership of the land is attributed at that time to the Australian Agricultural Coal Company as part of a 2000 acre holding which it was granted by the British Government.

<sup>6</sup> Newcastle Port Corporation, *Coal: Australia's First Export*, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> C. and M.J. Doring Pty. Ltd., Consulting Engineers, 'Honeysuckle Project Historical and Industrial Archaeological Survey', October, 1991, p. 2; Turner, 'Honeysuckle...', p.2.



Figure 6. Extract of the 1880 Port of Newcastle Map. Overlaid with current Aerial Photo

The swamp was subsequently drained and the ground stabilised at the turn of the century. The runoff from the swamp was consolidated into Cottage Creek which retained its course under the existing Carlton Street (Hunter Street) bridge and into the Hunter River. On the stabilised ground now available roads were formed to service new subdivided lots. By 1910, The Royal Engineers Map attributed to Lance Corporal A Barrett shows the lines of National Park Street and King Street have been formed and notably the outline of The Castlemaine Brewery, Birdwood Park and the AIF Drill Hall are all shown.

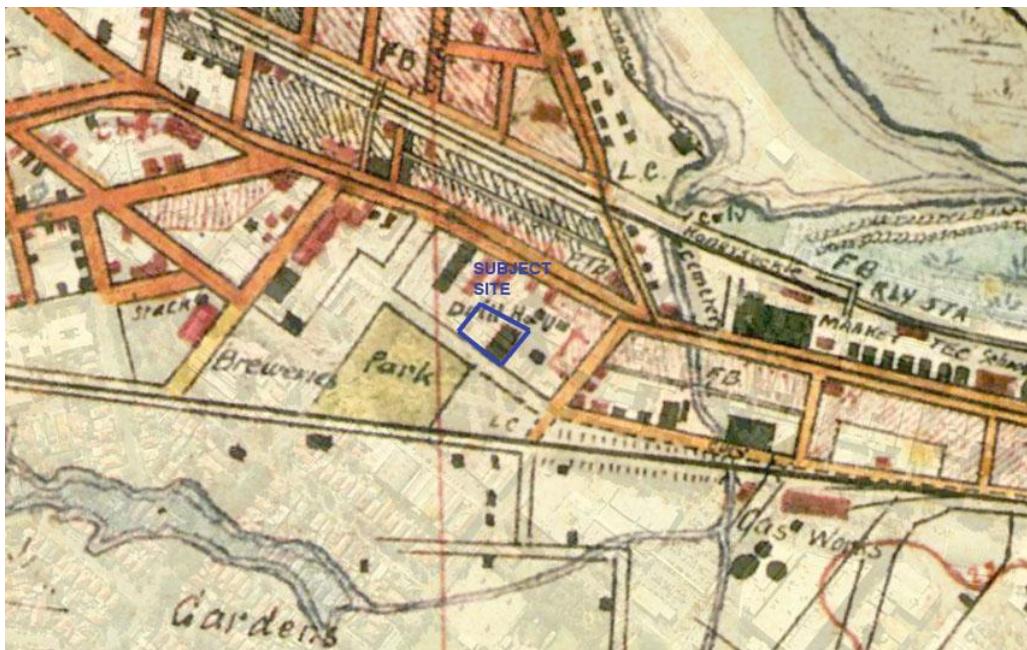


Figure 7. Extract of the Lance Corporal Barrett Map of 1910 overlaid with current Aerial photo. The subject site is outlined in blue. Note the boundary outline is correct on the aerial photo.

## 2.3 THE FORMER CASTLEMAINE BREWERY FROM 1874

The Castlemaine Brewery is of State Significance as a Newcastle landmark. Additionally, the item is unusual in the architectural sensitivity used during subsequent stages of construction, resulting in a significant industrial streetscape. The original Brewery was constructed in 1874 to the designs of Mr. Oswald Lewis, Architect., with substantial additions being constructed in 1878 and between 1911 and 1914. The Brewery operated under its original purpose, even enjoying much success and healthy profit until 1931, when The Great Depression and other mounting factors such as competition from Sydney saw the operations close down.



Figure 8. Staff gathered at the front of the Castlemaine Brewery Hunter Street. Source University of Newcastle Cultural Collections

In 1938 The Castlemaine Brewery witness the first of its many changes-of-use. Tooth and Co, based in Sydney, decided to use the Brewery as a distribution Depot for their product. Pitt and Merewether Architects designed major Alterations and Additions to the buildings to suit their new use. This use of the site continued successfully until 1974 when Tooth and Co relocated to a new depot in Nelson Rd Cardiff. The brewery site was sold in 1974 and became the 'Pink Elephant Markets'.

It's next change-of-use was a major Bicentennial Project leading up to 1988 which saw the buildings refitted to become the Newcastle Regional Museum. The original idea for a Museum in Newcastle was developed by a consortium of interested parties, including the institution of Engineers and Supernova Inc. who worked hard to promote the idea of a regional Museum in the 1980s.

The site originally selected by this group was the Honeysuckle Railway Workshops, then still in the hands of the State Rail Authority. Moves to acquire that site failed and a decision was made to acquire and restore the former Castlemaine Brewery in Hunter Street, Newcastle West. The Castlemaine Brewery was home to the Museum from 1988 until 2008 when it closed to allow for the new Museum in Honeysuckle to be built.

The Brewery buildings remained unoccupied for a number of years awaiting their next incarnation. In September 2012, the Newcastle Herald reported plans were afoot to convert the

buildings into serviced apartments. In 2016 work is well underway in this current transformation and repurposing of the buildings.

#### 2.4 STEWART AVENUE FIG TREES

Many of the fig trees identified under this heritage listing exist along the road reserve of Stewart Avenue as it passes through Hamilton South. The trees along Stewart Avenue at the Western edge of Birdwood Park are also included being the Northern extremity of the Avenue. The trees are a prominent avenue planting of mature trees on a principle approach road to the City Centre. They are possibly associated with residential subdivision of the area in the early 20th century.



Figure 9. Stewart Avenue Fig Trees c June 2015. Source Google Street View

#### 2.5 THE AIF DRILL HALL FROM 1910

King Street Drill Hall was built in 1910 as an Army training facility. During World War 1 and World War 2 it also served as a recruiting and induction centre. Many Newcastle soldiers who served in overseas theatres of war started their military careers at this depot. It continued as an Army training depot until 1992. After this date all local Army depots were closed and centralised in a new complex at Adamstown.

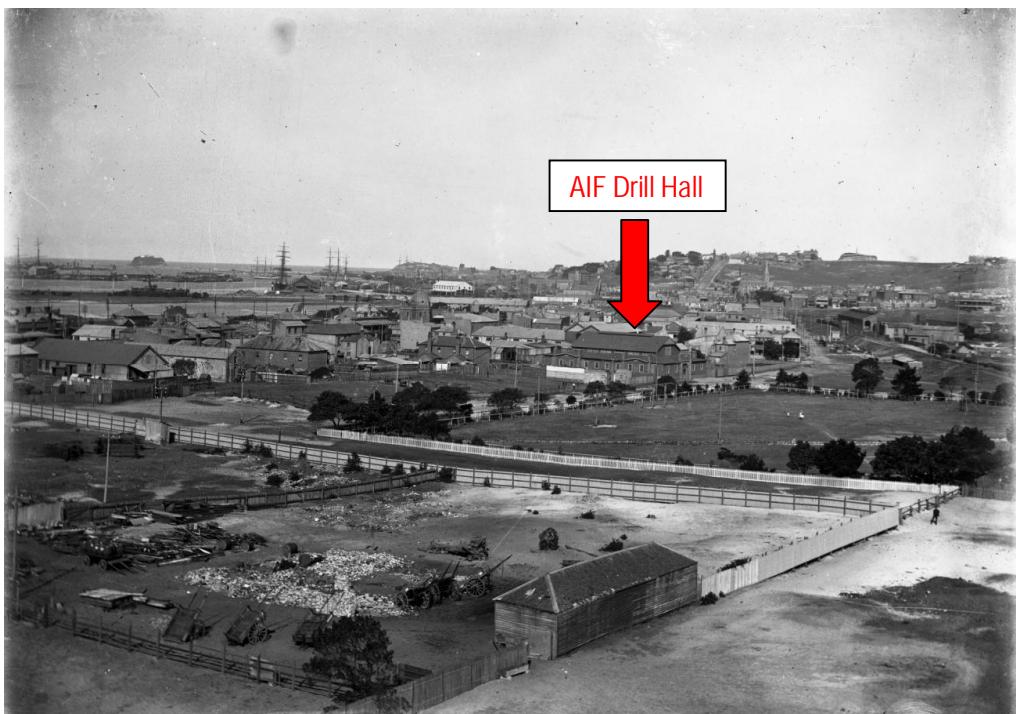


Figure 10. Panorama photo circa 1910. Stewart Avenue is in the foreground. The AIF Drill Hall and what would become Birdwood Park is in the centre right of the image. The young Fig Trees are visible behind a white picket fence.

The King Street Drill Hall was built as a training facility for Army Militia Infantry units during the period of Universal Training. It was the Regimental Headquarters of the 4th Infantry Regiment and the 16th Infantry Battalion. It is Newcastle's oldest remaining Army Depot and is heritage listed. It later became the headquarters of the 35th Battalion Militia, the 2/35th Battalion and 14 Brigade Citizen Military Forces. The last occupant of the depot was the Newcastle Company of the University of NSW Regiment, an Army Reserve unit.

The depot (*the Drill Hall*) has a long history with Newcastle's military community and large numbers of young men, who volunteered for overseas service in World Wars 1 and 2, enlisted here and completed their medical and induction procedures. Many were killed or wounded on active service.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Information is from the NCC Pamphlet "Newcastle's WWII Sites of Significance" ([http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/138119/Plaqu\\_Book\\_28\\_April\\_2009\\_.pdf](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/138119/Plaqu_Book_28_April_2009_.pdf))



Figure 11. The AIF Drill Hall circa 2001. Source EJE

## 2.6 BIRDWOOD PARK FROM 1910

Birdwood Park, first established in 1910 is one of Newcastle's oldest reserves. It is believed to have been named after Sir William Birdwood, the World War 1 General in charge of the ANZAC corps. General Birdwood visited Australia for an extensive tour in April 1920. His itinerary included Newcastle on Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup> 1920 His itinerary included a luncheon with returned officers of the AIF.<sup>9</sup>

Birdwood Park was the site of the control centre for the National Emergency Services (Newcastle Branch) from September 1942 to February 1944. The service was established in 1939 to care for the public during an air raid. It was staffed by male and female volunteers as wardens, first aiders and ambulance drivers. The control centre with its 12 inch thick concrete walls, operated 24 hours a day with a staff of 12.<sup>10</sup>

Birdwood Park has been, and continues to be, used for events and demonstrations. Circuses were also staged at Birdwood Park in years gone by.

<sup>9</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald Saturday March 20 1920 p14

<sup>10</sup> Information is from the NCC Pamphlet "Newcastle's WWII Sites of Significance" ([http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/138119/Plaques\\_Book\\_28\\_April\\_2009\\_.pdf](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/138119/Plaques_Book_28_April_2009_.pdf))"



Figure 12. An ALP meeting in Birdwood Park July 1949 Stewart Avenue visible in the background.  
Source Newcastle City Collections.



Figure 13. An ALP meeting in Birdwood Park July 1949. The AIF Drill Hall visible in the Background.  
Source Newcastle City Collections.

Because of this cultural significance, when Birdwood park was bisected by roadworks to continue King Street into the alignment of Parry Street in 1973 there was great public uproar. Objection was made at the loss of the mature fig trees and the loss of the community space from the park. Newcastle Residents demonstrated their disapproval of the work being

undertaken, and someone with connections to the circus managed to bring a circus elephant to assist with a blockade of the earthmoving equipment.



Figure 14. The construction of the state highway 10A through Birdwood Park, Newcastle 1973. (The extension of King Street through to Parry Street). Source Newcastle City Collections



Figure 15. Abu the elephant protests the construction of the state highway 10A through Birdwood Park, Newcastle 1973. Source University of Newcastle

## 2.7 NEWCASTLE CITY HOLDEN FROM 1960

McLeod, Kelso and Lee was the original Holden Dealer on the Site at King Street and operated out of the subject site and the Hunter Street shopfront from prior to 1960.



Figure 16. McLeod, Kelso and Lee dealership Hunter Street Newcastle January 1960. Source: <http://www.fbek Holden.com>



Figure 17. McLeod, Kelso and Lee dealership. Photo on the corner of King Street and Stewart Avenue circa 1970. Source Newcastle City Collections.

As part of their marketing campaign McLeod, Kelso and Lee (MKL) presented their own Spring Fair which was reported to have entertained 7,000 Novocastrians in 1968. The Spring Fair was given a mention in the November 1968 edition of 'Pointers' magazine – an internal publication of GMH Holden. (extract below)



This was the theatrical 'front of the house' setting that invited Newcastle to visit the McLeod, Kelso & Lee spring Motor Show. Some 7,000 accepted in three days and enjoyed the gala atmosphere which is described below.

## Dealer's own Motor Show

Such is the wide range of models today a GM<sub>1</sub> Dealer can now hold his own Motor Show, as McLeod, Kelso & Lee showed in Newcastle last month.

From the Toranas through to the Monaros, plus the Commercials, and such exotics as Firebird and Camaro available for such occasions, there were cars enough to attract and entertain some 7,000 people for three days.

All departments were open to visitors.

Radio advertised it intensively. Prizes won in radio contests were presented as part of the showroom entertainments.

A series of 'Melbourne Cup' fashion parades entertained all ages. The victor of Bathurst Bruce McPhee with his GTS 327, fresh from their triumph, was a major attraction. There were GMAC Scots lasses. There was a picnic tableau in a garden setting.

Coffee and biscuits or cordial drinks were 'on' all the time.

One large poster told the history of 'M.K.L.'

'The Holden Story', a mural display, covered a large section of a wall with story and photos; it had the first Holden to help tell the story.

Figure 18. Extract of November 1968 edition of 'Pointers' magazine

As well as Newcastle West, MKL had other dealerships in Lambton, Maitland and Mayfield. MKL traded until Early 1979; soon after the release of the VB Commodore. A dispute between the directors resulted in the dealership being bought out by Young and Green Pty Ltd.

Young and Green had been operating since 1919<sup>11</sup> retailing Vauxhall, Oldsmobile and Bedford Trucks and later expanding into Suzuki, Honda and Mitsubishi.

The business was first launched by Walter Edgar Young after serving in World War One. His son Alexander (Alex) Walter-Young AM OBE. Alex began working at the dealership for his father in 1940<sup>12</sup> and much later took over the reins of the business. Under his direction, Young and Green Pty Ltd became the biggest motor vehicle and spare parts dealership in Australia outside the capital cities.<sup>13</sup>

Alex Walter Young was a determined and highly influential man and an incredible advocate for the Hunter Region. His business and civic involvement was vast: a principal director of both Young and Green Pty Ltd and MAMI Insurance, the foundation chairman of the Hunter Development Board, a director of the Hunter Technology Development Centre, a member of the Federal Task Force for the Hunter and a director of the Hunter Apprenticeship Group. He served as president and a member of Newcastle Chamber of Commerce and Industry for 20

<sup>11</sup> "The Young and The Restless" Newcastle City Council Collections

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



years, as chairman of the Hunter Valley Research Foundation, as member of the Hunter Planning Committee, and foundation chairman of the Newcastle Port Task Force. He also managed to find time to hold down trustee positions with the Anglican Church of Australia and Newcastle Regional Museum, the chair position of the Newcastle Salvation Army Advisory Board, and membership of the Australian National Airlines Commission. He received an OBE in 1978 and an AM (Member of the Order of Australia) for service to the community on Australia day 1990.

Sadly business concerns sourced mainly from his involvement with MAMI insurance caused many troubles starting in the early 1990's. The Young and Green group of companies went into decline. Alex Walter Young attributes the decline of Young and Green to economic downturn, social change and an emphasis on long-term goals rather than short-term principles. 14.

Young and Green traded at the subject site from 1979 till 1993 when the business was put into liquidation. It was bought out by John Abrahams and the name changed to Newcastle City Holden.

Newcastle City Holden Purchased the AIF Drill Hall site at about the same time to add to its tenure at 500 King Street. The Drill Hall was already identified as an item of Local Heritage Value and listed in the Newcastle City Council LEP. The intention was to use the Drill Hall to house their Spare Parts department. A Heritage study was undertaken of the Drill Hall by EJE Architecture at that time. The conclusion of the study was that the use of the Drill Hall by Newcastle Holden would not be detrimental to the heritage value of the building and would in fact encourage the ongoing maintenance of the building.15

Newcastle City Holden traded at the subject site from that time on, only ceasing in March 2016 when they moved premises to Hannell Street Wickham. The site has been used only for (retail) car storage since that time.

<sup>14</sup> "The Young and The Restless" Newcastle City Council Collections

<sup>15</sup> Statement of Environmental Effects: Change of Use to Motor Vehicle Spare Parts Sales and Storage, Army Drill Hall, 498 King St September 2001



### 3. PHYSICAL CONDITION AND CONTEXT

#### 3.1 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The subject site is in Newcastle West, close to the location of the proposed transport interchange. This area is in a state of transition, with significant, commercial and residential uses being proposed and constructed together in a relatively small area.

The site itself with frontage onto Little King Street is occupied predominantly by single story buildings and hardstand areas, previously used as a car sales area. All buildings on the subject site are proposed to be demolished.

The site immediately to the East incorporates the heritage listed "Drill Hall" which is proposed to be retained and adaptively reused. A number of very fortuitous acts involved with the subdivision of the lots along Little King Street and the design of the Drill Hall have resulted in the Drill Hall being set central in a well defined cartilage. The Hall is like a jewel in its own setting and able to be viewed from all sides allowing its heritage features and value to be accessible to the public.

To the north, the site adjoins a 13 storey mixed use development known as 'Latec House' / the 'Pinnacle Apartments', and a recently developed 2 storey commercial building occupied by Lawler Partners.

Birdwood Park to the south is an integral contextual component and the design of the proposed works has the ability to integrate and enhance the park. Birdwood Park is recognised in the Newcastle City Council 'City Centre Public Domain' DCP Technical Manual as being a 'Distinctive Place within the city and by that recognition require special treatment to define and bolster their individual character within the city. The DCP technical manual encourages that these 'Distinctive Places' be expressed through customised designs for street lighting, furniture, paving inserts and patterns as well as public art.

To the east, the site adjoins a 4 storey car park with ground floor retail fronting Little King Street, while to the west the site adjoins a vehicular easement and a narrow strip of undevelopable land.

#### 3.2 THE BUILDING

The existing buildings are the former car dealership showroom and service buildings. They are predominantly shopfront glazing to the showroom and painted masonry to the service and amenities areas. The rest of the site area is paved hardstand area for displaying cars and there is a ramp to the flat roof of the showroom building for storage of additional cars.

The site is ringed by a tall perimeter fence which cuts off all public access.



Figure 19. Newcastle City Holden Site Photo circa 2016. Source EJE

### 3.3 CURRENT USE

The building is currently only used for car storage and car yard paraphernalia such as display ramps. The car dealership now operates out of brand new facilities on Hannell Street Wickham near the Throsby Creek bridge.

### 3.4 CONDITION

The building is of reasonable condition, the portions of the building closest to Stewart Avenue were constructed since the 1989 Earthquake. The parts further from Stewart Avenue date back to the late 1950's. All parts of the buildings have been altered on at least one occasion, often more, as the Dealership upgraded its image and livery. There is very little original fabric left visible or tangible to identify the original design.

## 4. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The NSW heritage assessment criteria encompass four generic values in the Australian ICOMOS *Burra Charter 2013*: historical significance; aesthetic significance; scientific significance; and social significance.

These criteria will be used in assessing heritage significance of the place.

The basis of assessment used in this report is the methodology and terminology of the *Burra Charter 2013*; James Semple Kerr, *The Conservation Plan: A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance*;<sup>16</sup> and the criteria promulgated by the Heritage Branch of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The *Burra Charter 2013*, Article 26, 26.1, states that:

*Work on a place should be preceded by studies to understand the place which should include analysis of physical, documentary, oral and other evidence, drawing on appropriate knowledge, skills and disciplines.*

Places and items of significance are those which permit an understanding of the past and enrich the present, allowing heritage values to be interpreted and re-interpreted by current and future generations.

The significance of the place is determined by the analysis and assessment of the documentary, oral and physical evidence presented in the previous sections of this document. An understanding of significance allows decisions to be made about the future management of the place. It is important that such decisions do not endanger its cultural significance.

The *NSW Heritage Manual*, prepared by the former NSW Heritage Branch and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, outlines the four broad criteria and processes for assessing the nature of heritage significance, along with two added criteria for assessing comparative significance of an item.

### Heritage Significance Criteria

The NSW assessment criteria listed below encompass the following four values of significance:

- Historical significance
- Aesthetic significance
- Research/technical significance
- Social significance

<sup>16</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> ed). Burwood: Australia ICOMOS, 2013.



Listed below are the relevant Heritage Assessment Criteria identified in the Heritage Act:

- Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
- Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
- Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).
- Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
- Criterion (e) An item has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
- Criterion (f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
- Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principle characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural places; or cultural or natural environments).

An Assessment of Significance requires that a level of significance be determined for the place. The detailed analysis uses the levels of significance below:

LOCAL	Of significance to the local government area.
STATE	Of significance to the people of NSW.
NATIONAL	Exhibiting a high degree of significance, interpretability to the people of Australia.

## 4.1 ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Historical Significance

*Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The subject site, while having had a stable usage and purpose for over 60 years is deemed to be of little significance to the cultural or natural history of the local area. The buildings have all been refitted a number of times and little is left of any original building design.

Of far greater importance and being of high Historical Significance are the immediately adjacent sites of the AIF Drill Hall and Birdwood Park because of their association with the cultural events and military defence of Newcastle. These two sites are already recognised for their significance and listed on the heritage register.

*Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The subject site is associated with Alexander (Alex) Walter-Young AM OBE and was part of the biggest motor vehicle and spare parts dealership in Australia outside the capital cities. The site was only a part of that empire and not the original part having only been acquired in 1979. Alex Walter Young's other achievements are viewed as of greater significance to the natural and cultural history of the local area. In that regard, the buildings extant on the subject site have little significance by their association with Alex Walter Young.

### Aesthetic And Technical Significance

*Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).*

The subject site and buildings thereon are not of any particular nor consistent aesthetic and do not demonstrate a high degree of technical nor creative achievement. The many alterations to the buildings made over many years are intrusive on any aesthetic characteristics that may have existed originally.

### Social Significance

*Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

It has long been recognised throughout Australia that a large proportion of the population, for social and cultural reasons, associates with either Holden vehicles or Ford vehicles. The crescendo of this association is closely related to the V8 Supercar racing series. As a Holden dealership, the site has strong association with those Australian Citizens who associate with the Holden brand. However the Holden vehicle itself, rather than the dealership where it is bought, is the focus of that loyalty. Now that the dealership has moved, the subject site is no longer considered to retain that social and cultural association, therefore has little Social Significance.

### Research Significance

*Criterion (e) An item has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The subject site is not considered to have potential to yield information yet to be understood about the cultural or natural history of the area. Research significance in regards to the subject site is therefore little.

### Rarity Significance

*Criterion (f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The subject site does not possess rare or endangered aspects of cultural or natural history, and is therefore of little significance.

### Representative Significance

*Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural places; or cultural or natural environments).*

The existing buildings on the subject site have little representative significance. The adjacent items of Birdwood Park and the Stewart Avenue Fig Trees have high representative significance that is not easily realised by the current use of the site.

## 4.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The extant buildings upon the subject site are considered to be of little overall significance for their historical, aesthetic and technical significance and have been refitted a number of times over so do little to demonstrate their original design.

The subject site is considered to be of little significance within the criteria described above, and certainly when it is compared to the neighbouring items which are already recognised for their social, cultural and historical significance. However the location of the subject site by its position adjacent to Birdwood Park, The AIF Drill Hall and the Stewart Avenue Fig Trees has significance that is not being realised by the site being underutilised. The Proposed Works have vast potential to make the significance of the location and adjacent listed items available to the public.

## 5. PROPOSED WORKS

The proposal on Lot 8; DP95173, Lots 6&7; DP 95174 is an aged care facility and has the most impact on the Heritage Protected AIF Drill Hall. The proposal consists of Carparking on the Ground and First levels with 12 storeys of Aged Care Units above. On the Ground Floor, on the corner of the building adjacent to the Drill Hall is a Retail tenancy perceived to be a cafe.



Figure 20. RSL Care proposal shown in the context of the Drill Hall, Birdwood Park and surrounding development. Source EJE

The form of the building responds to the scale of the Drill Hall adjacent by horizontal elements of its podium facade, and also to the scale of the open park in front of it by the size and form of the tower. The cafe tenancy on the corner and a public laneway of substantial width activate the interface with the Drill Hall and encourage adaptation and reuse of the Drill Hall building. The proposed laneway between King Street and Hunter Street associated with the proposed works will be important for public access between the Commercial uses of Hunter Street and the Recreation area of Birdwood Park. Another Feature of the design of the proposed works is a viewing alcove with full height windows from the foyer area of the proposal. The viewing alcove deliberately directs views towards the Drill Hall, the reason becomes apparent when the owner and operator of the proposal is understood.

The owner and operator of the proposed works is RSL Care. A majority of the end users of the building are likely to be Returned soldiers and their family. Having the site adjacent to the Drill Hall being used by the Returned and Services League of Australia will dramatically increase the social significance of the AIF Drill Hall.

Many of the end users of the proposed works are likely to have received military training in the AIF Drill Hall. Military Veterans will appreciate living in proximity to the Drill Hall particularly when the Drill Hall is brought into use again.

The Drill Hall building, as mentioned previously, is extremely fortunate in that it sits centrally in a well defined curtilage due to the established subdivision pattern and design of the hall. Current development built to the boundaries of the Drill Hall lot has reinforced the edges of the Drill Hall lot with a solid wall enhancing the setting the Drill Hall sits within. When given reuse purpose, the Drill Hall will become a stand-alone building with a stand-alone use. The side and rear elevations of the Drill Hall are respected by setbacks from the boundaries and will be able to be viewed by the public. The Drill Hall's only elevation on a boundary is at the street which fronts Birdwood Park beyond. The Drill Hall will become a heritage jewel in the precinct visible and

accessible from all sides. It has the potential to be a heritage example similar to the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.

The future of the AIF Drill Hall will be dependent upon nearby development and subsequent repurposing of the Hall. Whilst under the care of Newcastle City Holden, the Drill Hall was in use, but its main facade and entry was underutilised and neglected. Using the Drill Hall as a stand-alone building and reinstating the front entrance will enable the use of the Drill Hall to be closer to its original design and its upkeep encouraged. Development will underpin the Drill Hall's very survival.



Figure 21. Drill Hall Melbourne City. A precedent of a successful repurposed Drill Hall. Source John Gollings

Introduction of Residential accommodation in the location of the subject site, along with the new Office space at the Gateway building on the corner of Parry Street and Stewart Avenue, and the potential addition of hotel accommodation on the site between this site and Stewart Avenue will all combine together to reinvigorate the public use of Birdwood Park at all times of the day. It gives Birdwood Park the potential to be a meeting place similar to Wynyard Park in the Sydney CBD.

Adjacent to Wynyard Park is a wide variety of building usage including Commercial, Retail, Hotel, and Residential along with a Transport Interchange where buses on the street can link with the Railway Station underground. The situation with Birdwood Park will be similar with Commercial (the Gateway building), Retail (Markettown and many other smaller retail shops), Residential (Proposed Works), Hotel (proposed adjacent works), Transport (major bus links adjacent and the new Wickham Terminal Station in close proximity), as well as the TAFE college will all be immediately accessible. The wide mix of uses will ensure that the area is populated at all times of the day bolstering the safety of a large area of Newcastle West. All of these existing, recently completed, and proposed works will combine to encourage the adaptive reuse of the Drill Hall, the population of Birdwood Park and the appreciation of the Stewart Avenue Figs.



Figure 22. Scots Presbyterian Church (and Apartments) Wynyard – Sydney. A precedent of adaptive reuse of another heritage building adjacent to a Park and combining with the existing building uses in the area to activate the Park at all times of the day.

## 6. STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

This is the Statement of Heritage Impact for: Former Newcastle City Holden Site

Date: This statement was completed in May 2016

Address and Property Description: 500 King Street Newcastle West

Prepared by: EJE Group

Prepared for: Core Group Projects

The following aspects of the proposal respect or enhance the heritage significance of the item or area for the following reasons:

The form and scale of the building respect and respond to the adjacent Heritage Protected items. The proposed use of the building and the location of the retail facility all combine to enhance and reinvigorate Birdwood Park. The viewing alcoves on the lower two residential levels create a positive link between the RSL Care Residential Facility and the former Military Drill Hall. All of these factors combine to encourage the continued use, maintenance, preservation and respect of the Heritage Protected Items adjacent to the subject site.

The following aspects of the proposal could detrimentally impact on the heritage significance of the item or area for the following reasons:

There are no aspects of the proposal that are perceived to detrimentally affect the Heritage Protected items adjacent to the site.

The following sympathetic design solutions were considered and discounted for the following reasons:

There were nil sympathetic design solutions that were discounted.

The following actions are recommended to minimise disturbance and/or enhance the interpretation of the heritage significance of the item or area:

Cues as demonstrated in the design of the proposal should be maintained to allow sunlight and public pedestrian access to the Fig Trees, Birdwood Park, and the AIF Drill Hall. Setback distances should be respected and overshadowing should be considered so as to allow Public enjoyment of the spaces and items.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The subject site is currently underutilised and surrounded by vast potential in an area that is undergoing major change. Development of Commercial, Retail and Residential uses is already underway in the surrounding sites and more is pending. There are Heritage protected items of great local significance immediately adjacent to the subject site which have the potential to be great civic and cultural drawcards which will encourage their maintenance and preservation for future generations. The ability for these Heritage items to be properly appreciated and preserved hinges on the development and activation of the area of the subject site. The design of the proposed works respect and respond favourably to the AIF Drill Hall, the Stewart Avenue Fig Trees and Birdwood Park. Having the site adjacent to the Drill Hall being used by the Returned and Services League of Australia will dramatically increase the social significance of the AIF Drill Hall. The proposed works also bring the site usage to a population and purpose appropriate for the scale of the surroundings and encourage a civic nature to the area. All of these factors show that the proposed development is entirely appropriate and beneficial for the area. The Heritage significance of the identified items will only be enhanced by the proposed development.



## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Australia ICOMOS. (2013). *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*. Burwood: Australia ICOMOS Incorporated.

Kerr, J.S. (2013). *The Conservation Plan: A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance*. Australia ICOMOS Incorporated.

Maitland City Council. (2011). *Local Environmental Plan*. Retrieved 14.10.14 from <http://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/PlanningDevel/PlanningPolicy/MLEP2011>

NSW Heritage Office. (2001). *Assessing Heritage Significance - A NSW Heritage Manual Update*. NSW Heritage Office.

NSW Heritage Office. (N.D). *Statements of Heritage Impact*. NSW Heritage Office.

### Newspapers

*Australian Town and Country Journal*

*The Maitland Daily Mercury*

*The Maitland Mercury*

*The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*

*The Maitland Weekly Mercury*

### Online Resources

Google Maps: <https://www.google.com.au/maps>

Nearmap (by license) - <http://au.nearmap.com/>

University of Newcastle: *Cultural Collections* - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/uon/>

NSW Land & Property Information: *Historical Lands Records Viewer* - <http://images.maps.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW LPI: *NSW Globe* - <http://globe.six.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW LPI: *Spatial Information Exchange* - <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>

## 9. APPENDIX

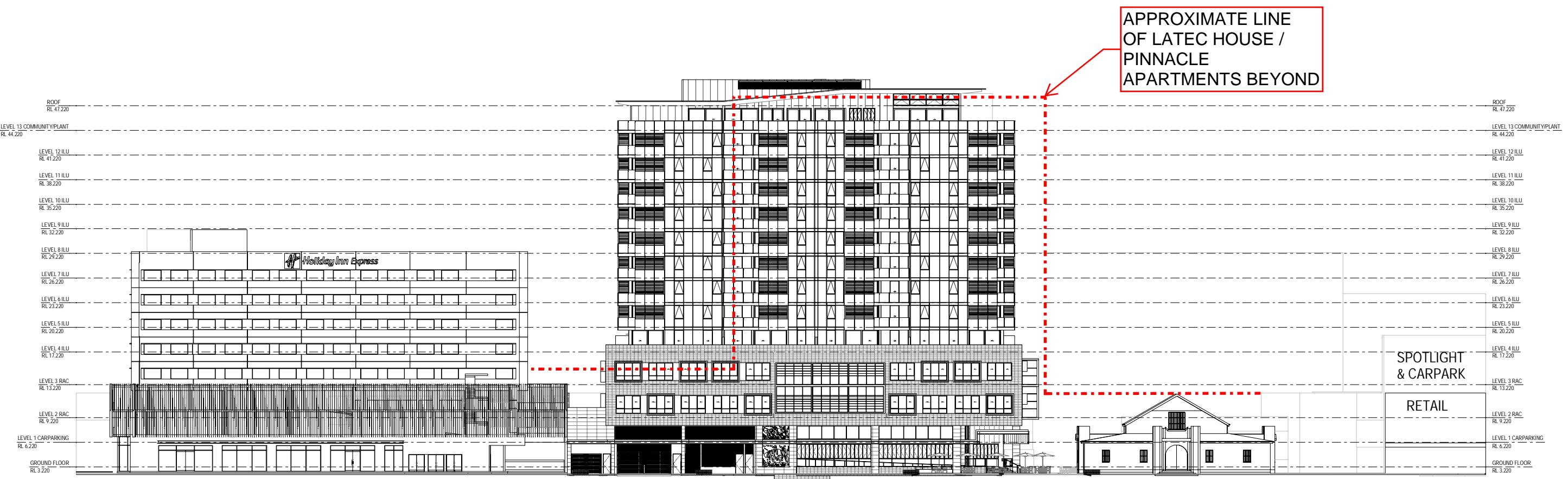
### Architect's Design Drawings



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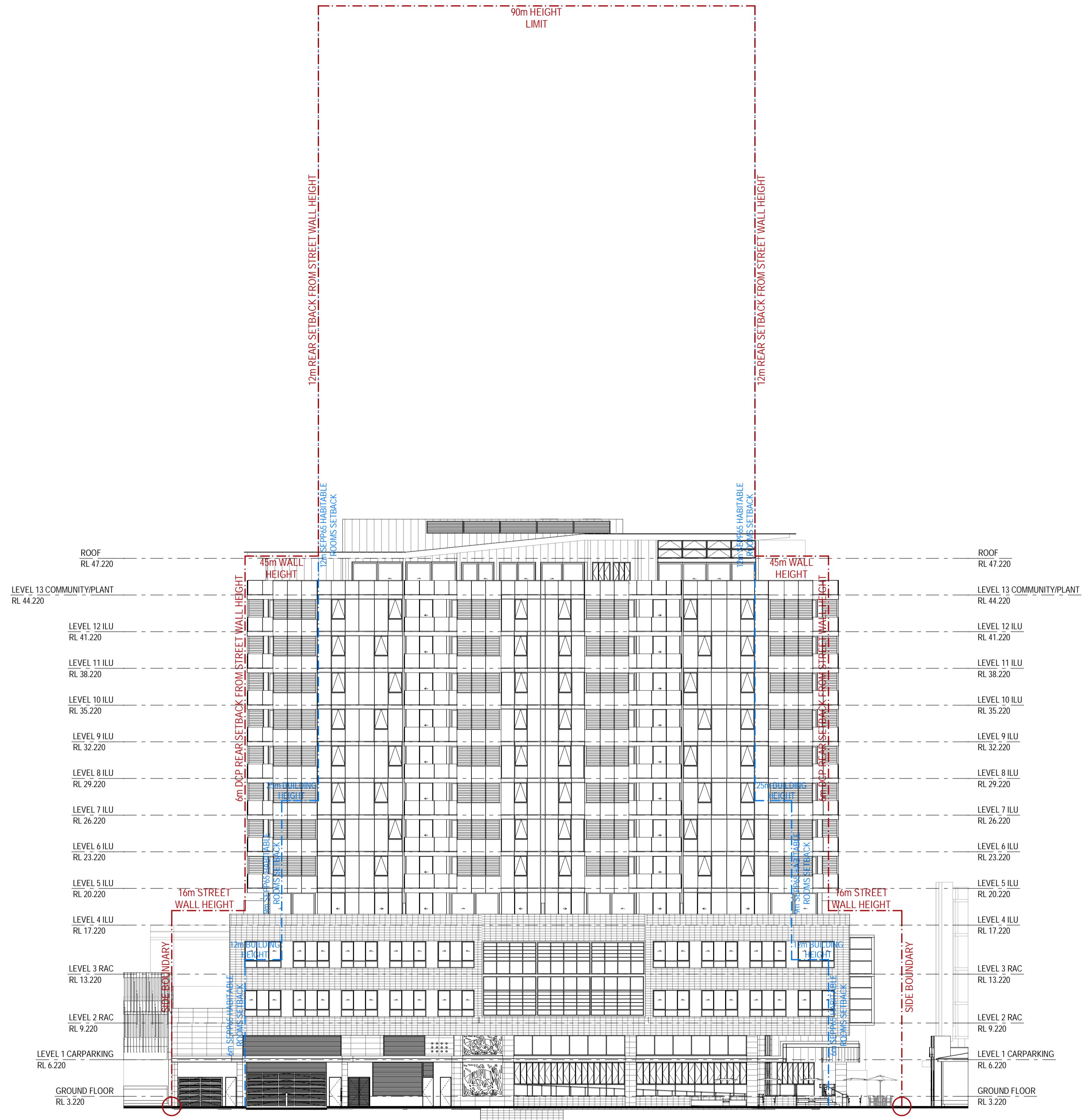
Prepared by EJE Heritage

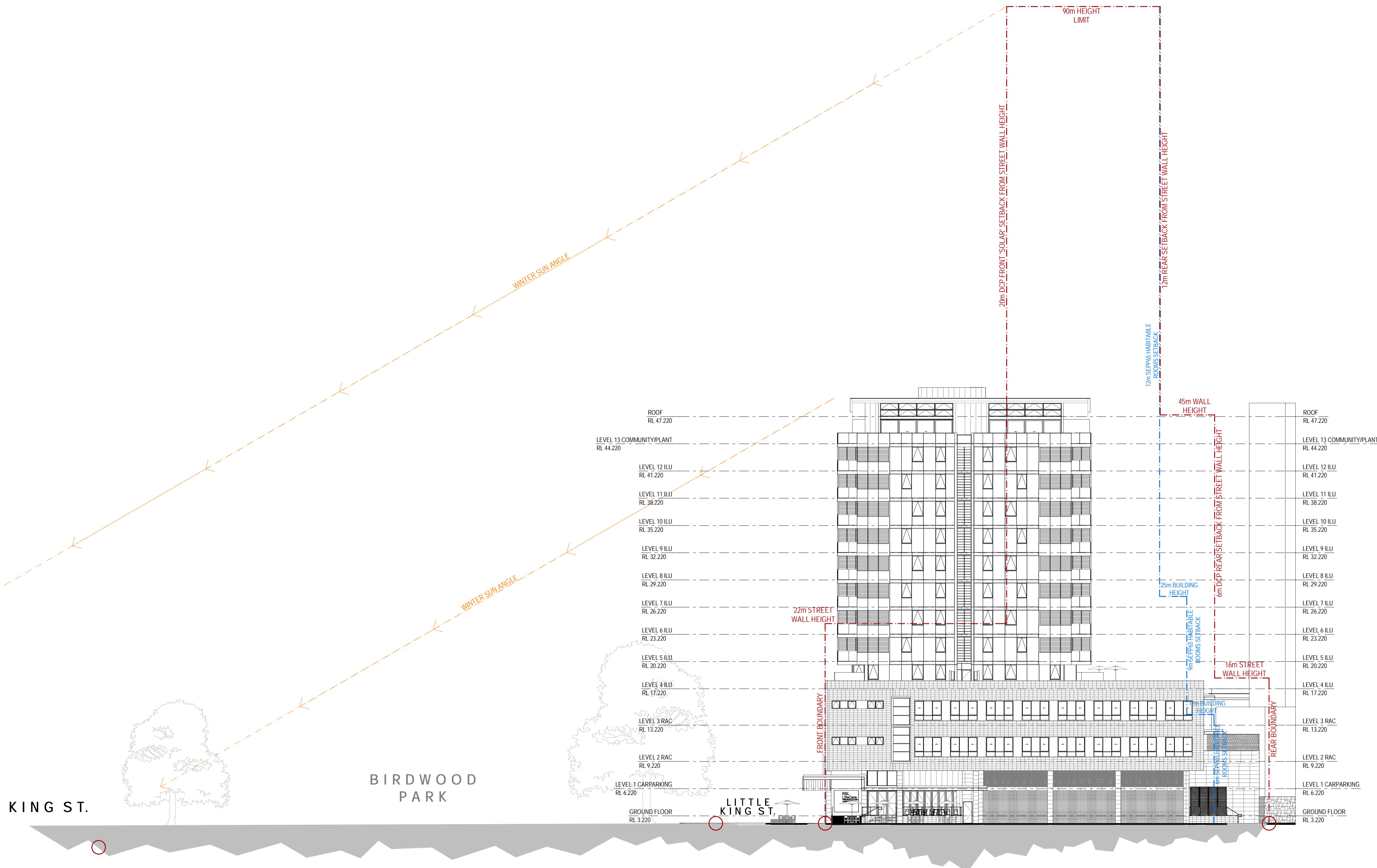
Nominated Architect – Bernard Collins #4438

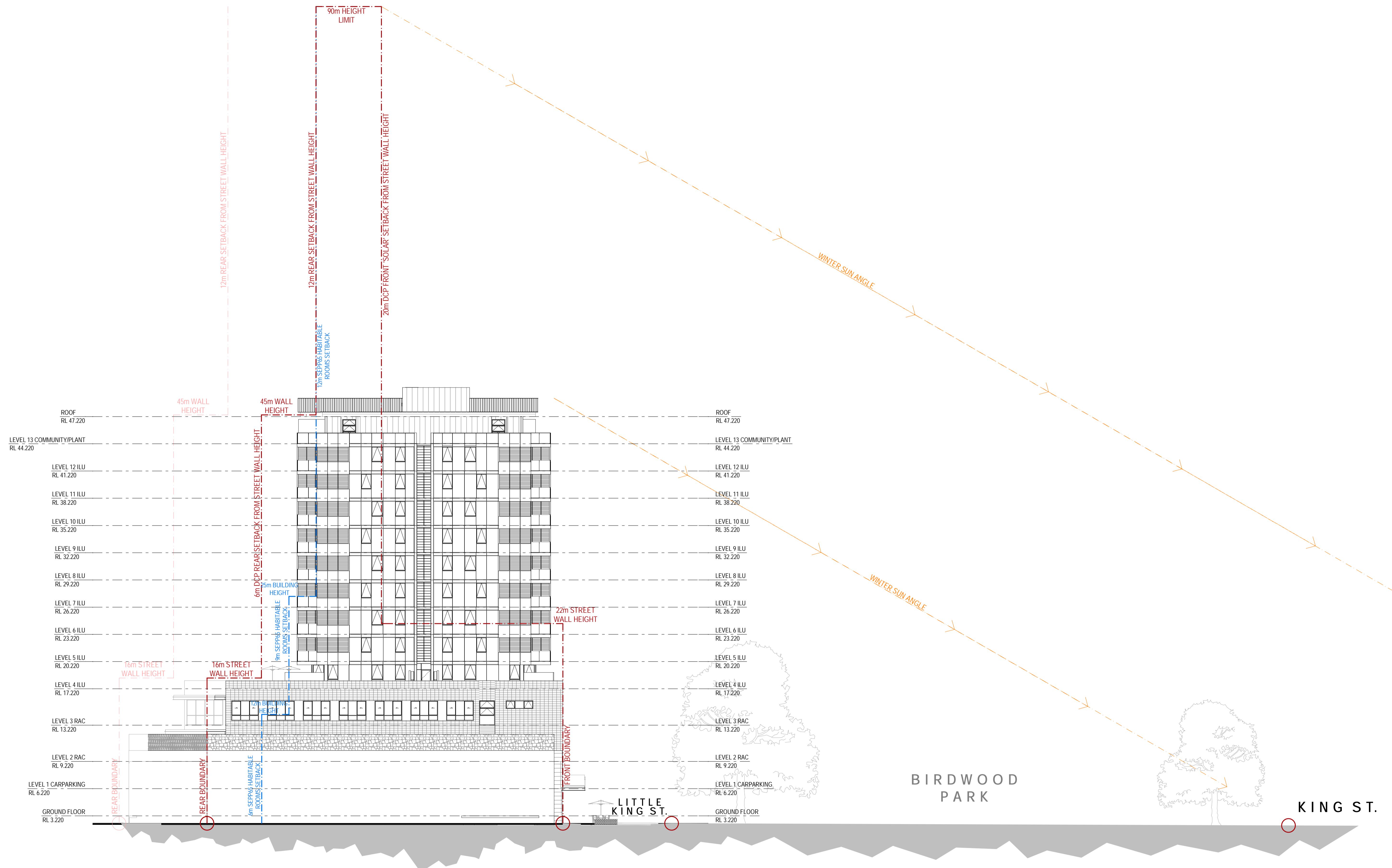


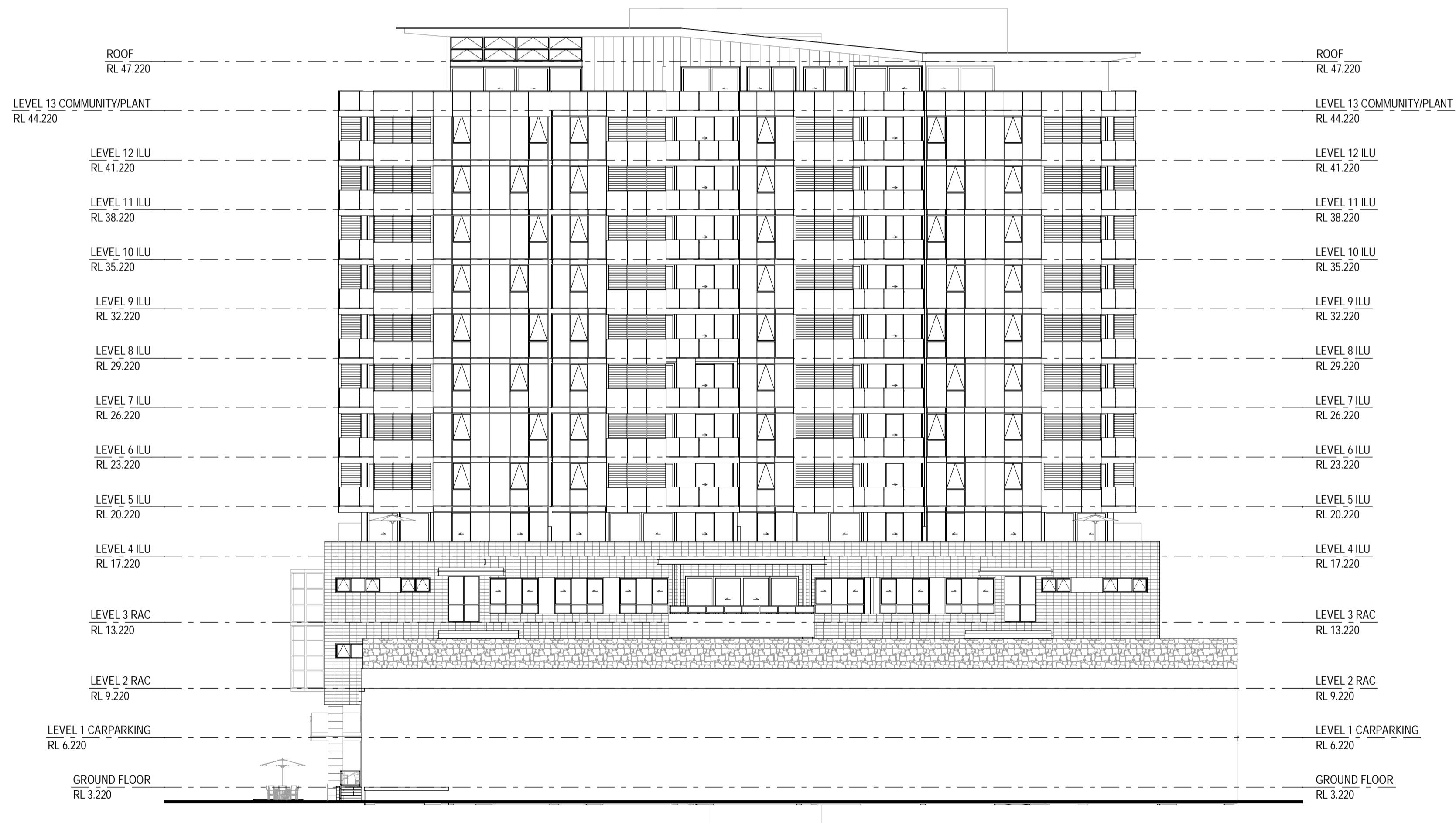
STREETSCAPE ELEVATION  
1:500@A3 SIZE











**BIRDWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT**  
SITE B - NORTH ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1:200@A1 or 1:400@A3