

# 44-48 Oxford Street

## Epping

DA/485/2016 *Design Report*

3 November 2017





## Design Concept

Trees have played an important role in Epping's history. Both the founding of the settlement in colonial times and the naming of the region some years later were brought about thanks to the abundance of trees in the area.

*"Epping had an important role in the early years of the colony, particularly during the time of Governor Macquarie, when timber from the area was in high demand."*  
[Heritage Assessment p7]

*"When William Midson suggested the name Epping, it was accepted, and the township was officially named Epping in 1899. It was a popular choice, as the district was by this time heavily forested, the result of secondary growth since the end of logging, and the area reminded residents of Epping Forest in England."*  
[Heritage Assessment p8]

Epping's location and transport links make it an ideal spot to increase housing density. In doing so, it is important to honour Epping's historical ties to the tree.

### Existing Melaleucas

The existing mature melaleucas are to be retained and celebrated in the proposed design. Their materiality and texture provide meaningful cues for the form and facades of the proposed buildings.



Figure 1 - Precedent image illustrating 'hidden forest'



Figure 2 - Existing Melaleuca Trees



Figure 3 - Detail of Melaleuca bark showing materiality & texture



## Hidden Forest

As noted above, prior to urbanisation Epping was heavily forested. So much so that the name Epping was adopted due to the region's resemblance to its namesake in England.

Drawing on this knowledge, nettletontribe is proposing a public "Hidden Forest" space on the ground plane of the development. It is proposed to be a landscaped space featuring tall, slender trees punctuated by paved "clearings" with seating and other street furniture. It is intended to be open to the public during the day time, accessed from Oxford Street via a retail laneway.

Access to the space is to be activated by retail tenancies such as cafes and small cocktail bars. These tenancies will serve the public, residents and employees of the commercial tenancy on the first floor of the podium. Patrons will be afforded the opportunity to spill out into the landscaped space. The potential exists for further community activation through the means of farmers' markets and the like which could operate occasionally in the space.

The space will be passively activated by residential lobbies and will be linked visually with the approved plaza in the neighbouring residential development to the south.

Landscaping and greenery will extend through the retail laneway connecting the "Hidden Forest" to Oxford Street. The existing melaleucas situated at the entry to the retail laneway and will serve as a natural signpost to the forest within.



Figure 4 - Proposed Ground Floor plan showing "Hidden Forest" space.



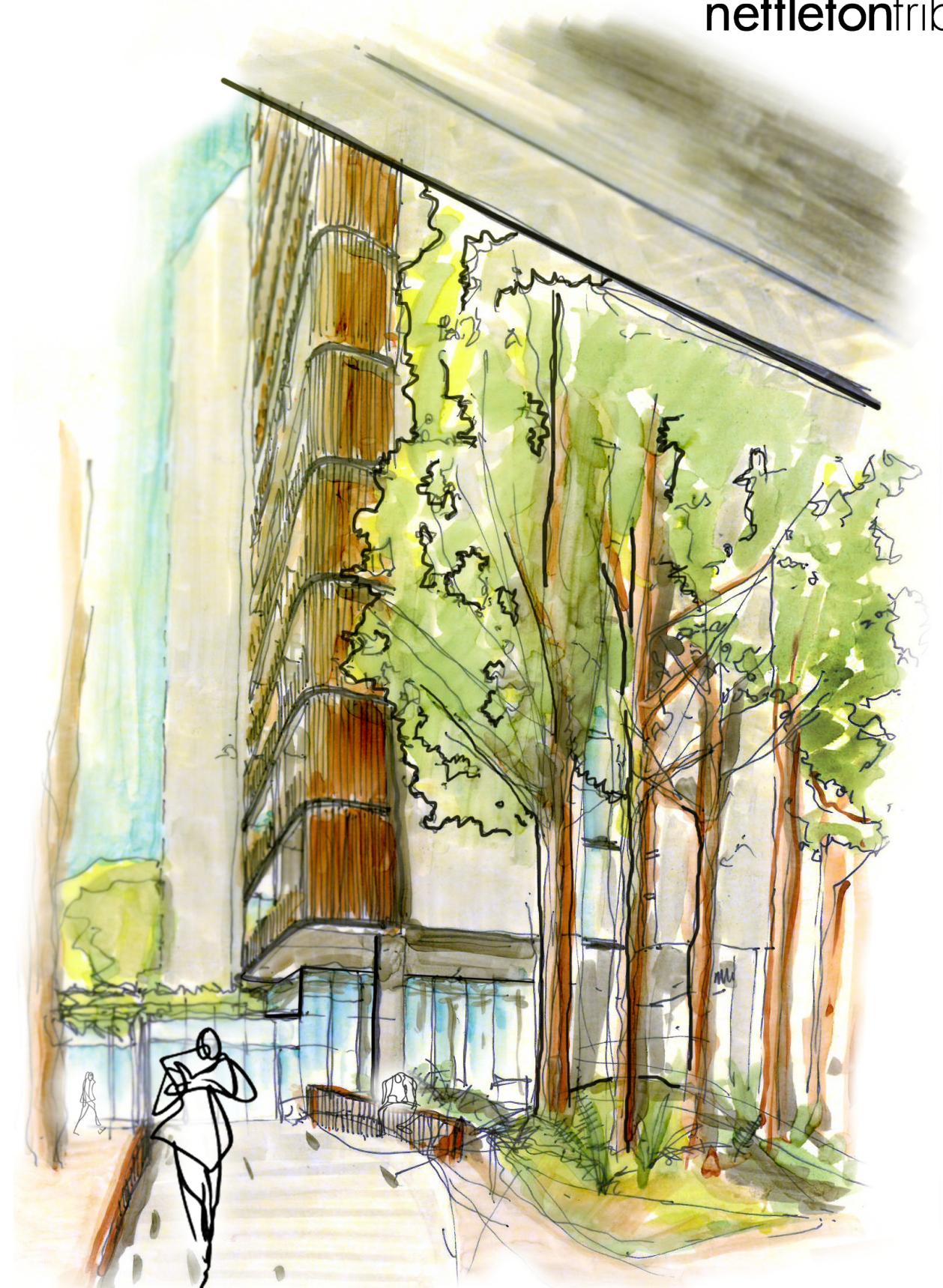


Figure 5 - An illustration of the proposed "Hidden Forest" space. Active and passive activation will take place through the implementation of retail tenancies and residential lobbies.



## Podium Response

## Contextual Datum Lines

Due to the considerable increase in uplift and density in the Epping town centre, nettletontribe deemed it important to be sensitive to the existing built character of the precinct.

Rather than simply reappropriate the existing victorican terrace character, we instead set about defining a set of rules to respond to the existing context.

Solids and voids were identified in the buildings opposite. From these items, a series of datum lines were defined and extended to the site.

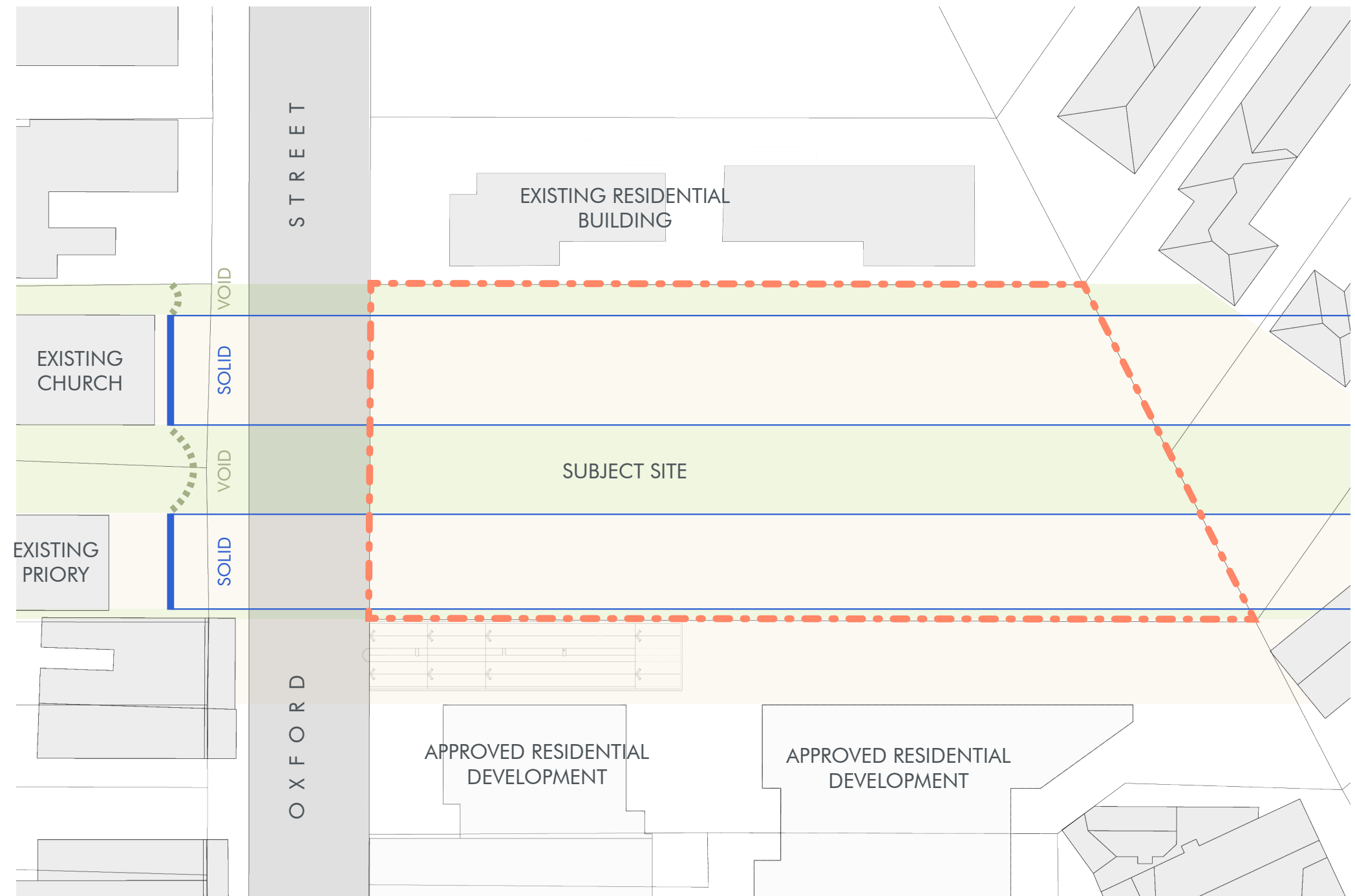


Figure 6 - Site Plan - Existing Contextual Condition



## Contextual Grid

The next step was to analyse the street in elevation. The datum lines extrapolated from the church and priory opposite are overlaid onto the envelope of the podium.

Another datum line was defined, this time drawn from the top of the neighbouring podium line.

The resultant grid of datum lines acts as a framework from which a contextually coherent form response can be developed.

nettletontribe responds to the buildings opposite by inverting the context presented. That is, where there is a solid condition opposite we propose a void or 'recess' to respond. Similarly when presented with a void, we propose to respond with a solid or 'proud' built form.

Next, the 'rhythm' of the Victorian terrace shopfronts predominant on Oxford Street was overlaid onto the podium envelope. Vertical articulation of the podium is proposed in line with this 'rhythm' so as to be consistent with other shopfronts on Oxford Street.

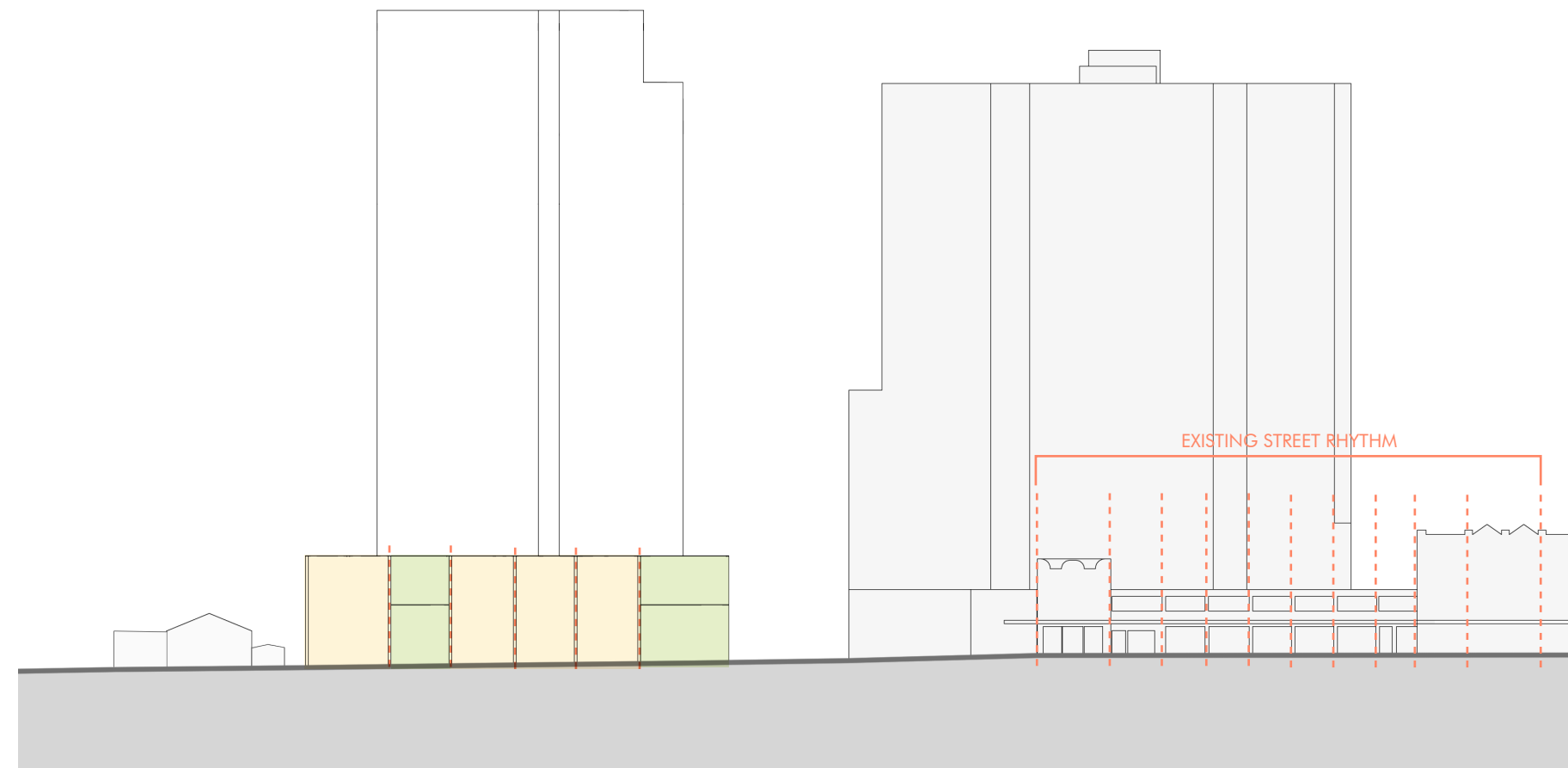
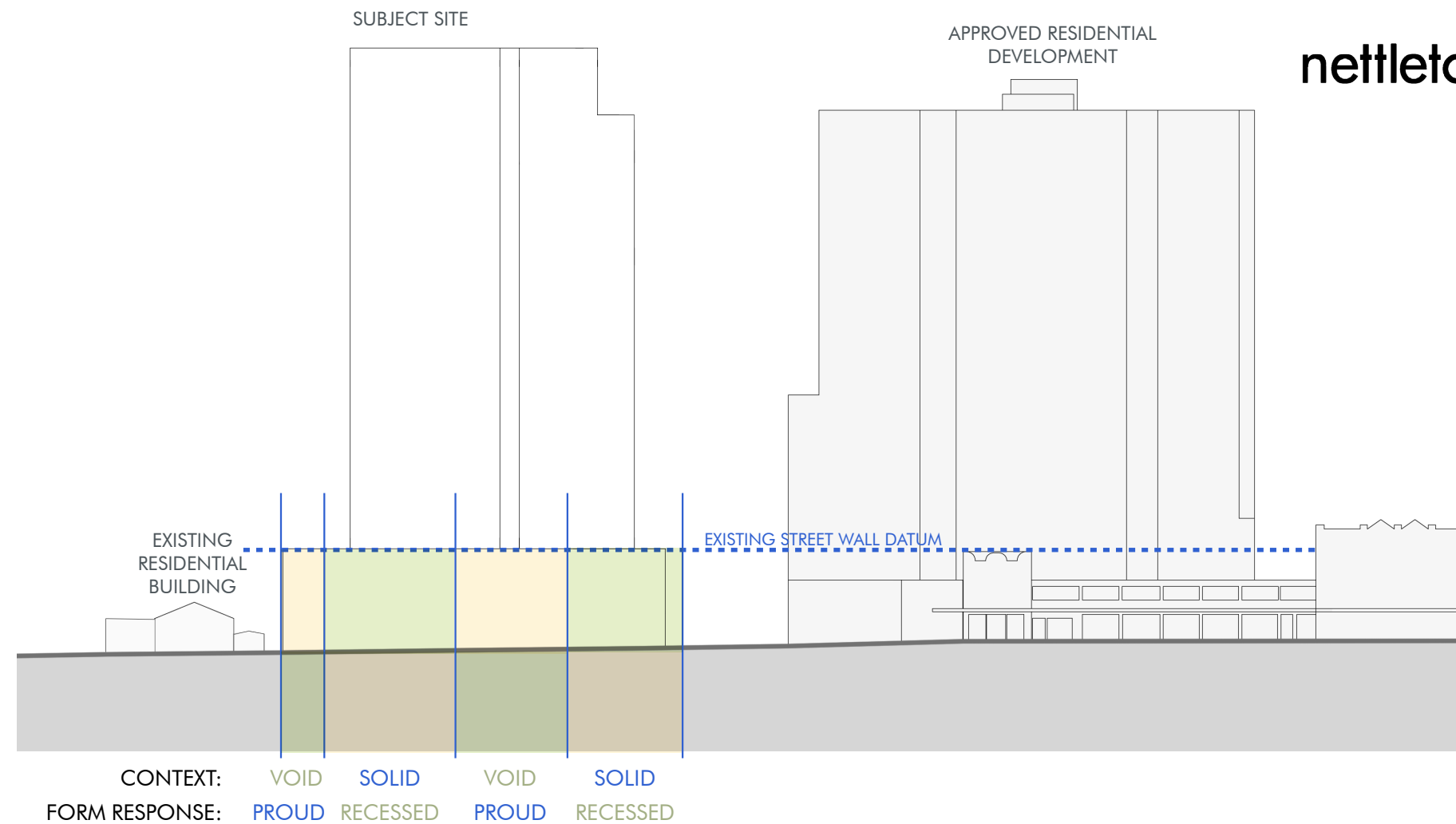


Figure 8 - Site Elevation - Response to Existing Street Rhythm