# **PTW** FOREST PARK, EPPING

Redevelopment of Epping Road, Blaxland Road and Forest Grove, Epping

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# **Urban Design Strategy**

Prepared for Austino Property Group

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### PTW Contents

Summary

- 1. An Urban Vision
- 2. The Proposal
- 3. Existing and future Urban Structure and Character
- 4. Landform and Street Network
- 5. Existing Pattern of Land Uses
- 6. Transport: Rail and Bus
- 7. Existing Mixed Use and Active Streets
- 8. Changes in Urban Character
- 9. Urban Design and Key Objectives
- 10. Development Strategy: Development which recognises the future town centre character
- 11. Development Strategy: Realigned public open space and public access
- 12. Development Strategy: New urban spaces integrated with Epping Town Centre
- 13. Development Strategy: Urban built form as place making
- 14. Building Interface: providing appropriate setbacks to public open spaces
- 15. Building Interface: northern and western edges of new open spaces
- 16. Building Interface: southern edge of new open space
- 17. Building Interface: Epping Road
- 18. Building Interface: Blaxland Road
- 19. New Landscape Open Spaces

Appendix A: Artist Impressions

Appendix B: Architecture Drawings



Position of site relative to Epping Town Centre, Epping railway station and Epping Road.



The proposed development, to be know as Forest Park, Epping, has variations in building interface with appropriate setback provisions to adjacent public open spaces.

### PTW Summary

Under this urban design study, consideration has been given to higher density in the form of residential mixed-uses and associated urban form. The feasibility for higher density, achieved through design excellence, will contribute to the southern edge of an activated and urban town centre.

Informing this Urban Design Strategy in support for potential redevelopment of the site bounded by Epping Road, Blaxland Road, Forest Grove and Forest Park, is an analysis of the site and surrounding urban context. The name of the proposed development is to be known as Forest Park, Epping.

Under this urban design study, consideration has been given to the likely changes to the area in regard to new residential mixed uses and associated urban form to the southern edge of Epping's Town Centre; and being in close proximity to Epping railway station and the bus routes along Epping Road.

This proposal recognises urban change in close proximity to Epping railway station and the Town Centre of Epping. Being a unique and amalgamated site, the opportunity to consider the urban potential of this site through greater development and the realignment of the former Bowling Club as a new open space will provide greater public benefit. Impacts from traffic volumes in the area, along with impacts from railway noise and traffic noise from Epping Road and Blaxland Road necessitates careful consideration of the balance between increases in density and building heights and the likely impacts of new residential uses and public domain amenity in the potential redevelopment of this site.

Consideration of potential redevelopment of the adjoining CBUS site, on the corner of Epping Road and Blaxland Road, can assist also in an understanding of how the southern edge of the Town Centre is being redeveloped.

An understanding of these elements, both within and surrounding the site, provides a basis for defining urban design principles and key objectives in the redevelopment of the site. The urban importance of the subject site is demonstrated in the way the site is located as a 'gateway' site to the township of Epping and edged by historic Forest Park. Through amalgamation this unique and prominent site has the opportunity to support greater development yield including the reconfiguration of an existing privately owned open space - a former Bowling Club.

The Town Centre of Epping is defined by a number of streets: Langston Place, Pembroke Street Oxford Street and Cambridge Street. These streets are generally edged by low rise mixed use commercial retail and community uses that are more suburban in character. This character is currently undergoing change and new taller mixed use residential developments are currently being proposed. The urban vision of this will present new urban streets that will promote an active urban environment consistent with the aims of Sydney as an international and sustainable city. The proposal recognised this evolution of the Epping Town Centre.

The proposal allows for differences in the built form interface with minimum set back provision to new urban open spaces. To the northern and western portions of the development a new urban plaza is proposed with ground floor retail uses while to the southern portions residential uses will have minimal setback provisions while set above adjoining ground levels to ensure privacy.

As presented here in this study is the analysis of the existing urban setting leading to an understanding of the future desired urban character within the Town Centre of Epping.



The site, bounded by Epping Road, Blaxland Road and Forest Grove, is located at the southern edge of Epping Town Centre. The proposal reconfigures the privately owned open space of a former Bowling Club (shown shaded) as new public open space located between Epping Town Centre and Forest Park.



The site bounded by Blaxland Road, looking north



The site bounded by Epping Road, looking west with proposed redevelopment of the CBUS site shown beyond



### PTW 1. An urban vision

The key to higher density living at Epping is not only the architectural quality and apartment type to meet SEPP 65 but the quality of the public domain.

This is an important site in the redevelopment of Epping Town Centre. An important feature of higher density living in Epping is the provision of new residential uses which contributes to an improved public domain. As this development site is unique in the town centre context of Epping, as a large amalgamated site which includes the reconfiguration of a privately owned open space - a former Bowling Club - this study supports greater development yield in association with the provision of new public open space within the town centre of Epping.

The proposal considers greater building density along Epping Road and Blaxland Road in the form of taller mixed use apartment towers. This will acknowledge and define the urban character at the southern edge of Epping's Town Centre. In addition to this different urban edge treatments will be applied to define new public open spaces, including a new built form edge to Forest Park; and in this different types of public open spaces and urban landscapes will be provided.

The proposed redevelopment considers a

desired future urban character for the Epping Town Centre which meets the objectives of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for the Urban Renewal of Epping. The following key features are identified:

\_Part of a new residential precinct with an emphasis on the creation of new urban spaces;

\_Respects and improves connection with the adjoining landscape of Forest Park;

\_Realigns the open space area of a former Bowling Club to provide a sequence of new ubna spaces and a mid-block pedestrian link;

\_Provides new urban markers at the southern edge of Epping's Town Centre;

\_It is envisaged that Epping Road will be developed as a civic street;

\_It is envisaged that Blaxland Road will be developed as a vegetated street;

\_The northern edge to Forest Park will be extended and integrated with the proposal through the provision of new residential courts, terraces and modulated built form to 'soften' the interface.



Distribution of new built form as urban markers - view from Blaxland Road



The proposal reconfigures the privately owned open space of a former Bowling Club (shown shaded) as a new public open space located between Epping Town Centre and Forest Park.



The proposed development of Forest Park, Epping will allow the provision of new and community focused open spaces integrated with the existing public domain pattern of Epping's Town Centre.

### PTW 2. The Proposal

Redevelopment of the site provides an opportunity for an enhanced public domain

The proposal provides an improved public domain with new development outcomes. The following urban strategies are identified:

#### **Realignment of Open Space**

The proposal realigns the existing private open space of a former Bowling Club and provides a new mid-block north-south public domain connection between the Town Centre of Epping and Forest Park. The proposal allows a distinct spatial progression from a more urban character at the north of the proposal (adjacent to the Town Centre and Epping Road) to a more open landscape and at the southern portion of the site.

#### **Pedestrian Access and Public Open Space**

The location of new public open spaces will accommodate important pedestrian linkages. The design and orientation of these open spaces will provide public amenity and outlook. It is envisaged that new built form will contribute to different public domain landscapes.

#### **Massing and Building Height**

Taller buildings, up to 72m and as urban markers, will define the Epping Road and Blaxland Road corner and the north-eastern corner of the site. The modulation of building height across the development site will provide an important transition to Forest Park.

#### **Views and Vistas**

New development will provide the opportunity for elevated views from new residential towers to overlook Parramatta River valley to the south, the rolling hills of Ryde to the east and Carlingford to the west. Elsewhere modulated built form will allow views into landscaped courts (when adjacent to Epping Road) and the historic landscape of Forest Park.









New mixed use residential towers, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the CBUS site, will form an urban gateway to the southern edge of Epping's Town Centre





Central open space connection - view taken from the CBUS site looking south across Epping Road



The built form strategy of the proposal consists of mixed use residential towers to the western edge of the site with open space defining built form elsewhere.

# PTW 3. Existing and Future Urban Structure and Character

The development site is edged by streetscapes within an urban town centre. This redevelopment recognises the change in urban pattern and activation within the Town Centre of Epping.

Located at the southern edge of the Epping Town Centre, the proposed development site is bounded by Blaxland Road and the Northern railway line to the west, Epping Road to the north, Forest Grove to the east and Forest Park to south. This site, once containing multiple landowners, now has greater redevelopment opportunity as an integrated urban solution of mixed uses, higher density of residential uses and improved public domain outcomes. The site, containing a former Bowling Club, will be reconfigured to provide greater public amenity in the development while recognising the need for new open space areas within a changing urban town centre.

The primary urban address is off Epping and Blaxland Roads while a secondary address with potential vehicle entry is available off Forest Grove.

The urban neighbourhood character of this area of Epping, consisting of lower rise retail buildings off Langston Place and smaller free standing suburban residential uses, is currently undergoing change. To the south and opposite Forest park are medium density residential uses.

Opposite and immediately to the north are currently larger floor plate commercial office uses but this is site is currently being redeveloped.



Epping Road looking east



Blaxland Road looking north



Forest Grove looking south



Forest Park



-Epping Railway Station

Proposed redevelopment of the site know as CBUS

The site of the proposed redevelopment is to be known as Forest Park, Epping

#### Site Opportunity

The proposed development site is edged by streetscapes with a distinct urban character and Forest Park does not contribute positively to the urban character of Epping Town Centre due to limited pedestrian linkages.

The redevelopment of the site recognises the urban character of Epping Town Centre, as defined by its streetscapes and public open spaces:

\_Epping Road: a busy regional city roadway which can accommodate taller scale development;

\_ Blaxland Road: a busy tree-lined regional city roadway which can accommodate taller scale development;

\_ Forest Grove: ; a tree-lines local roadway that can accommodate smaller scale development; and

\_ Forest Park: a passive and historic park to become a local community passive recreation hub.

### PTW 4. Landform and Street Network

The gently undulating topography of the local area has resulted in a rectangular grid system of streets with narrow blocks for retail uses and larger blocks for suburban residential and community uses.

The street grid of the surrounding neighbourhood appears to be the result of the combination of the convergence of major elements such as ridge lines, creek lines, the Northern railway and the alignment of Epping Road which cut across the urban grid. The subdivision pattern of the area varies considerably from narrow retail frontages of medium depth in the vicinity of the railway station, to generous residential lots of considerable depth.

The Epping Town Centre, located on a northsouth ridge line, is edged by drainage lines that connect with Parramatta River to the south and Lane Cove River to the north-east.

The topography of the local area has resulted in a rectangular grid system of streets with narrower blocks for retail uses to the east of the railway station with larger blocks for suburban residential uses located elsewhere. Epping Road aligns with the spur of a minor ridge line while the Northern railway generally following a valley and parallel with Blaxland Road, cuts across a ridge at the point of the railway station. The area is characterised by long streets. Forest Grove for example is a long street which meanders east of the development site.

The highest point within Epping Town Centre occurs at a point west of the development site and Epping Road. The Epping Town Centre is generally level with Cambridge Street and Prtichard Streets radiating east following ridge lines.

#### Site Opportunity

This large site and has three varied and distinct urban street frontages with the potential for greater density and improved public domain outcomes.

The development site edges Epping Town Centre and is in close proximity to Epping railway station and the M2 motorway.

The development site is on elevated gently sloping ground with an opportunity for southerly views out across Forest Park. Elevated views of vegetated ridge-lines to the north and west will be possible. Consideration of the relationship between new development along Epping Road and adjacent to Forest Park requires consideration.



The site located with the topography of Sydney



Epping Railway Station

The redevelopment site of Forest Park, Epping

# PTW 5. Existing Pattern of Land Uses

Open space areas within Epping are located to the edges of the Town Centre, with Forest Park being an important town centre asset with limited pedestrian access. Street aligned retail uses focuses on the railway station while elsewhere there is an open pattern of residential development.



#### Site Opportunity

As indicated by the existing land use pattern in the map above, there is a varied pattern of land uses adjacent to the development site. Important open landscape spaces, as part of any urban centre, are located to the south and west of the Town Centre. As the development site is located to the southern edge of Epping's Town Centre, an opportunity for new place making in the form of new urban public spaces integrated with the Town Centre, is presented.

### **PTW** 6. Transport: Rail and Bus

In the redevelopment of this site access to public transport is excellent, being well served by rail and bus. The site is within walking distance of Epping railway station and a number of nearby bus stops.



#### Site Opportunity

As indicated in the analysis map above, the site area is strategically located adjacent to the town centre of Epping and the railway station. The site is well located in the context of Sydney's existing primary rail and bus networks which gives access to the employment areas of Macquarie and Sydney City. In addition to this, the site has the opportunity to be well served to a range of nearby community and local retail uses.

### PTW 7. Existing Mixed Uses and Active Streets

The Town Centre of Epping generally consists of smaller scale street based retail. Several mixed use retail centres are located on the western side of Epping railway station and in these areas they are lacking in urban character.



#### Site Opportunity

An important aim of the NSW Department Planning and Environment Metropolitan Strategy and Epping Urban Renewal Strategy is to create vibrant urban places within revitalised suburbs. As welcoming places and where people want to live, these centres will have an urban character and vibrancy that offer a sense of community and belonging. In the redevelopment of this site consideration is given to the provision of an intensity of land-uses with an urban character in close proximity to public transportation.

# PTW 8. Changes in Urban Character

The Town Centre of Epping is currently dominated by low scale development of 1-4 storeys. However new taller buildings are being located on sites to the southern edge of the Town Centre as gateway urban form off Epping Road.



Proposed development Sites (Source: NSW Department of Planning and Environment)

#### Site Opportunity

Epping Town Centre is undergoing change in urban pattern as a number of redevelopment proposals are being considered. Through the consolidation of land parcels higher densities of taller residential buildings are being proposed.

In regard to the development proposal for Forest Park, Epping, which recognises changes in density and scale within Epping's Town Centre, allow the distribution of new built form to frame views from Epping Road to Forest Park.

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### PTW 9. Urban Design Principles and Key Objectives

This large site overlooking Forest Park has the potential to accommodate greater density of use. Consider the realignment of the private open space of the former Bowling Club as a public open space to provide a pedestrian connection between Epping Town Centre and Forest Park.

The redevelopment of the site is underpinned by the following Urban Design Principles:

#### **Massing and Building Height**

Provide taller mixed use buildings along the north and western edges of the site as urban markers. Elsewhere provide greater modulation in building height, especially as transitional built form along the southern edges of the site when overlooking Forest Park.

#### **Views and Vistas**

The site has high visual exposure to the southern edge of Epping Town Centre, is clearly visible off Epping Road and will have visual connection with the other key redevelopment sites within the town centre of Epping. Locate taller urban markers at the corner of Epping Road and Blaxland Road and frame views across the site and new urban spaces between Epping Road and Forest Park.

#### Access and Public Open Space

Provide direct public access between Epping Town Centre and Forest Park.

Design each residential apartment tower to provide an urban address with clear pedestrian entries off Epping Road and Blaxland Road. Locate vehicle entries off Forest Grove.

#### **Built Form Interface**

Provide a variety of building interfaces. These are to spatially define and contribute to the character of the new public spaces adjacent to the development site.

#### Redevelopment of the site will mitigate the

#### following likely urban impacts:

1 Noise from Epping and Blaxland Roads; 2 Realign the open space of the former Bowling Club to become a publicly accessible open space connection between Epping Town Centre and Forest Park;

3 Different building interfaces will be provided and these will define the sequence of new urban spaces adjacent to the development site;

4 Address privacy within the new development;

5 Minimise overshadowing onto Forest Park; and

6 Locate one vehicle access point off Forest Grove.







The redevelopment strategy locates taller buildings to the western edge with modulated built form stepping down from Epping Road to Forest Park.

PTW 10. Development Strategy: development which recognises the future town centre character Redevelopment within Epping Town Centre will reinforce and contribute to the existing urban structure.



#### Strategy

The redevelopment of the site recognises increases in residential density within a more activated Town Center. New built form should allow a vibrant and active town centre of active streetscapes, street edge development and with taller accent buildings.

# PTW 11. Development Strategy: Realigned Public Open Space with Public Access

New built form will align with the existing streets and corners while defining new publicly accessible open spaces.



#### Strategy:

Realign the former Bowling Club site as a sequence of new public open spaces with greater public amenity, having greater solar access and mid-bock pedestrian links.

PTW 12. Development Strategy: new urban spaces integrated with Epping Town Centre The proposed development of Forest Park, Epping introduces a hierarchy of urban spaces with differences in spatial quality and building interfaces.



#### Strategy:

The proposal provides a network of interconnected public open spaces of distinct urban character. These connect with a finer grain of pedestrian laneways and pedestrian focused roadways within the Town Centre of Epping.

# PTW 13. Development Strategy: Urban Built Form as place making

Relate building height with higher densities and a diversity of built form in close proximity to public transport corridors.



#### Strategy:

Distribute new built form across the development site to define the southern edge of Epping Town Centre, Epping Road and a new residential neighbourhood overlooking Forest Park.

# PTW 14. Building interface: providing appropriate setbacks to public open spaces

The provision of quality public domain is an essential part of the proposal. This will be achieved through consideration of building interface and set back provisions.

The proposal will define new publicly accessible urban spaces through variations in building interface and setback. New built form will be used to articulate differences in the public domain from new urban spaces to scenic open spaces.

The proposal will provide a range of building interface solutions as part of a walkable urban village. To the northern sections of the development new ground floor retail uses will activate an urban plaza. This will be distinct from the building interface to the southern edges of the development which overlook Forest Park. Here the relationship between the proposal and Forest Park seeks to create a sequence of memorable open spaces and facilitate a 'livable' urban edge. Variations in the design of the built form and building interface will not impact negatively on the amenity of the new community open spaces while achieving occupant privacy.

This development considers minimal setback provisions. In particular the building interface when adjacent to new open spaces, considers the following treatment:

+ For residential uses when adjacent to the new urban plaza and Forest Park edge, raise the ground floor 1.2m MIN above the adjoining public domain levels. Variations in this floor level can enhance the privacy of the use without impacting negatively upon the amenity of the public open spaces; + Consider using masonry plinths to visually define and give distinction between ground floor residential uses and the new public open space areas;

+ Alternatively provide vegetation screening within the minimum setback zone in association with new ground floor residential uses;

+ Alternatively provide private garden terraces and/or balcony courts within the minimal setback zone in association with residential ground floor uses;

+ For ground floor residential uses, consider the treatment and height of plinth walls and balustrades to minimise any adverse impacts on the public open space;

+Limit the extent of walls which enclose basement vehicle parking will face directly onto the park; and

+ Locate new public pathways along the building edge to promote an activated public park without impacting on the privacy of the residential uses.

The following building interface precedent images are provided as by way of example in support of a need to provide specific set back requirements for the Forest Park, Epping development.



The proposal recognises a building interface which contributes positively to an existing vegetated public open space





The proposal has new ground floor residential uses raised above adjoining park levels



Within the minimum set back zone, the proposal provides balcony terraces, plinths and planting. The proposal will be integrated with new public pathways with night time lighting to demonstrate the urbanity of Epping's Town Centre

# PTW 15. Building Interface: northern and western edges to a new urban plaza

The proposal allows for differences in the built form interface with minimum set back provision to new urban open spaces. To the northern and western portions of the development a new urban plaza is proposed with ground floor retail uses.

The building interface in this area will provide the following:

+ Generally one metre setback is to be implemented with additional setback as a ground floor indent for active retail uses;

+ New retail uses integrated with colonnade and/or awning elements;

+ For ground floor residential uses (and away from retail use) provide a change in level in addition to the treatment of plinth walls and balustrades to minimise any adverse impacts on the public nature of these spaces. For ground floor residential uses raise the floor level 1.2m MIN above the adjoining levels of the urban plaza. Refer to precedent image on page 25.



Section B: Building Interface for residential uses with new urban plaza. Note required change in floor level and ground plane.





Plan: Open Building Interface to northern and western portion on new Urban Plaza



Section A: Building Interface for retail uses with new urban plaza



Precedence studies of building interfaces between retail uses and urban plazas

# PTW 16. Building Interface: southern edge of new open space

To the southern sections of the development and adjacent to Forest Park extension, provide a modulated building interface with new courtyard spaces, terraces and plinth walls. This setback is to respect the public uses without impacting on the privacy on the adjoining ground floor residential uses.

The building interface in this area will provide the following:

+ Generally one metre setback with a change in floor level;

+ Raise ground floor residential uses 1.2m MIN above the adjoining levels of the park;

+ Consider the use of masonry plinths to visually define the privacy separation;

+ Provide vegetation screening within the minimum setback zone and locate public pathways along the building edge to promote an active and public park; and

+ Locate garden terraces and balcony courts within the setback zone.



Building Interface to southern portion of development overlooking park





Plan: Building Interface to southern portion of development



Detail: Building Interface to southern portion of development



Precedence studies of privacy screening to the new edge of Forest Park

# PTW 17. Building Interface: Epping Road

The building interface to Epping Road will have a large setback and incorporate formal landscape treatment. Variations in building setback will provide appropriate built form modulation.

The building interface in this area will provide the following:

+ Provide 8 metre MIN setback to the residential towers;

+ For built form modulation, provide additional indent of 2 metre MIN for ground floor and/or penthouse residential uses; and

+ Provide landscape treatment as an appropriate entry experience to each apartment lobby.



Epping Road Building Interface



# PTW 18. Building Interface: Blaxland Road

The building interface to Blaxland Road will have a large setback. Podiums in association with residential towers will include new retail uses.

The building interface in this area will provide the following:

+ Provide a10 metre MIN setback to the residential tower;

+Provide a 8 metre MIN setback to the podium; and

+ Provide urban landscape treatment to podium in association with the propsed retail uses.



Blaxland Road Building Interface



### PTW 19. New Landscape Open Spaces

The provision of high quality of the public domain is an essential part of this redevelopment.

The new open space (realigned former Bowling Club) is proposed to connect Epping Town Centre with Forest Park. This open space will provide civic and recreational uses. This open space area will deliver high accessibility and a diversity of uses from passive to active recreation opportunity.

The concept of landscape is reinforced with new community activated green slopes extending from Forest Park up to the southern edges of the development while adjacent to Epping Road a new public square will be edged by the proposal integrated with active local retail uses to the ground plane. The public domain character of the proposed open space shall consider the following:

20m Min wide public open space linkage;

\_provision of active edges to the northern section;

\_middle section providing vertical access and sight lines to an under croft retail anchor (i.e. supermarket) and southern/upper level open space;

\_a passive southern edge with upper level connections to an open space with commercial business uses;

\_solar access in wintertime;

\_deciduous canopy trees;

\_ central water feature to southern section;

\_ planters along level changes and steps to lower ground floor/sunken courtyard;

\_ street furniture; and

\_high quality stone pavement finish.



Public open space - view from Forest Park



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# PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression Aerial view over Epping Rd





PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression Corner of Epping Rd and Blaxland Rd





# PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression Blaxland Road View





# PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression Epping Road View





PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression View From Forest Park





# PTW Appendix A: Artist Impression View From Forest Park showing extension of the park



