

NORTH ROCKS
LIBRARY

NORTH ROCKS VILLAGE MASTER PLAN ADDENDUM

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the proposed master plan for 361-365 North Rocks Road outlining the place vision and urban design approach whilst providing an overview and discussion around how the master plan could be amended in response to the recommendations made by the panel on the 31st October 2023.

This document has been broken down into the following parts:

Part 1: Project Background - provides an overview to the current revised planning proposal


Part 2: Panel Recommendations - provides an urban design response to the panel recommendations





Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	We acknowledge and respect Traditional Owners as the original Custodians of the land upon which we work. We honour their Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has, and will, ensure the continuation of cultures and traditional practices.
----------------------------	---

	Hassell Level 2 Pier 8/9, Hickson Road Sydney NSW hassellstudio.com sydney@hassell_studio	Contact David Tickle Principal dtickle@hassellstudio.com +61 2 9101 2000
---	---	---

Part 1: Project Background	Introduction	5
	Place Vision	6
	Master Plan Principles	8
	Master Plan Overview	9
	Height and Landuse Summary	10
Part 2: Panel Recommendations	Panel Recommendations	12
	Master Plan Review	13
	Design Merit	18
	Resultant Floor Space Ratio	20
	Conclusion	21

Artists Impression - View of Village Square and Library
(Source: FK Architects)

Note:
This report is preliminary in nature and based on information supplied including the original planning proposal materials. It is subject to further research and analysis, detailed design testing, rigorous and detailed compliance assessment and client instruction on a site-by-site basis, and subject to negotiation and approval by the City of Parramatta, state and local design review and other planning and design approval processes.

PART ONE

PROJECT

BACKGROUND

Introduction

Project Overview

At 12.67 ha the proposed Village, at 361-365 North Rocks Road, North Rocks is one of the largest sites in the Parramatta Region. Currently occupied by Nextsence (formally known as RIDBC), the eventual relocation of the facility will enable the renewal of the land. Insightful and sensitive urban design will ensure a built form outcome that is compatible with its context, whilst providing a diversity of housing options in close proximity to transport and retail amenity. Importantly it responds to and compliments the shopping centre opposite whilst delivering missing civic infrastructure including an oval, urban plaza, library and community hub.

Opportunities

The location, size and topography of the site supports a number of design principles that support the North Rocks Village vision.

Creating a High Amenity Area

North Rocks Village forms part of the ‘nucleus’ of the North Rocks centre and is directly adjacent a bus node, a public primary school, as well as an established district shopping centre precinct.

Visionary

Develop a new Australian suburban centre vision - supporting a well connected, sustainable and thriving community.

Civic Infrastructure Delivery

Potential for new civic heart with new oval, urban square, library and community spaces.

Deliver on Diversity

The Village is able to deliver on the objectives of Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (City Plan 2036) which identifies the introduction of Housing Diversity Precincts.

Meeting a Need

As a community ages appropriate housing is essential for continued health and wellbeing. A new precinct in the heart of North Rocks can

provide housing options for people enabling them to remain in the community they love.

Tree Retention

Creating a master plan design that responds to the existing trees on site.

Green Streets

A diverse street typology will draw nature into the heart of the Village via calmed green streets.

Visual Permeability

The design had deliberately considered visual connections across the site with building setbacks to provide visual access to bushland to the north.

Housing Options

Housing typologies that meet the needs of different family units, singles, couples and those in their autumn years.

Integrated Character

There is capacity to have six character areas that reflect the civic, bushland and urban diversity of a contemporary Village.

Open spaces

A network of open spaces that support recreation, relaxation and contemplation.

Site Connections

A focus on broader connections, internal mobility and curated journey

Site Responsive

Careful consideration of urban grain, orientation and building scale. In particular a respectful transition in scale is proposed along the eastern and western interface ensuring compatibility with adjacent existing built form to the east and west.

Detailed Assessment

The urban design review has been informed by solar shadow studies, deep soil zones and extensive canopy cover.

Staged Approach

The scale of the site enables a staged approach to development to assist the North Rocks Village to integrate and mature as a heart of the community.



Place Vision

Re-imagining the Heart of North Rocks Local Centre

Design principles for a thriving community



Community heart

The North Rocks village site sits at the intersection of multiple focal points - community, commercial and natural values. It remains one of the largest sites in common ownership in the Parramatta Region, due mainly to the campus style operation of Nextsense but this use is now redundant given Nextsense's relocation. Its scale and orientation provides unique potential to help shape a future village destination within North Rocks.



Set within a landscape

The landscape has grown and matured to become a strong characteristic of the site. There are opportunities for a natural interface to bushland to the north that connects into Bidjigal Reserve. These connections will enhance local walking trails and provide opportunities for the community to experience other natural systems.



Activated, engaging spaces and edges

A new village centre, public square and community oval will provide a civic heart to the precinct and to the surrounding residential communities. Injecting a community and commercial focus into the local centre that complements the North Rocks Shopping Centre.



Diverse, characterful architecture

North Rocks village will house a diversity of homes providing a greater depth of housing choice and diverse community spaces. It will help to alleviate housing pressure and showcase the benefits of the 'missing middle'. A mix of housing and high quality public spaces are integral to the creation of a thriving place.



SUPPORTING FUTURE COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES WITHIN NORTH ROCKS



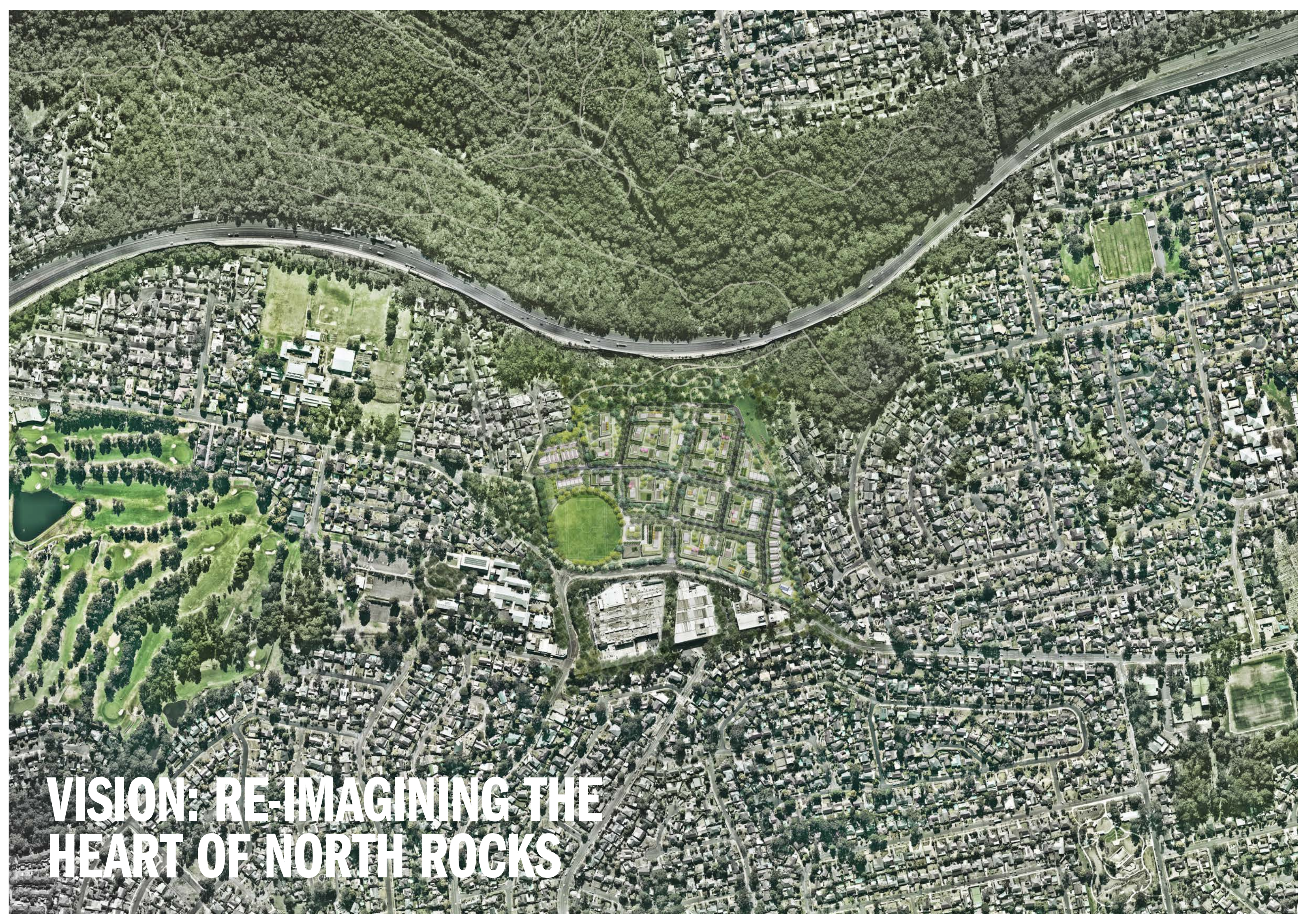
AN EXTENSION OF THE SURROUNDING BUSHLAND SETTING



PLAYFUL AND ACTIVATED COMMUNITY SPACES



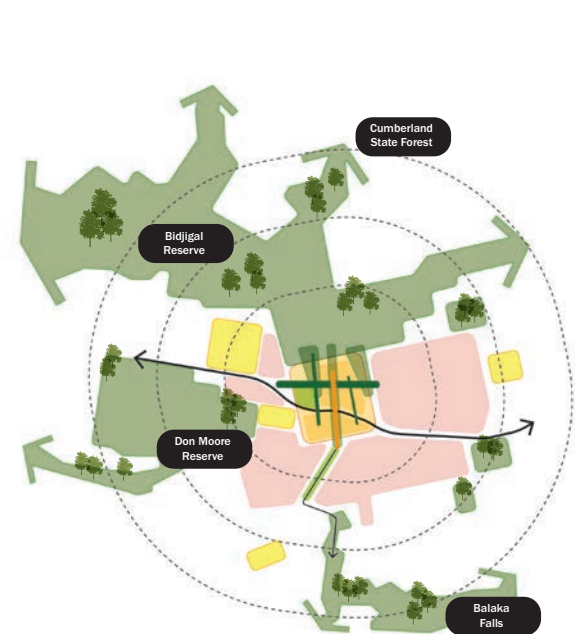
ARCHITECTURE THAT CELEBRATES A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



**VISION: RE-IMAGINING THE
HEART OF NORTH ROCKS**

Master Plan Principles

The North Rocks Village Master Plan has been driven by a local community vision. It is informed by a detailed understanding of the local context and important strategic drivers; including housing diversity, nature's positive impact on health and wellness, connections to the Bidjigal Reserve and developing a new community heart that delivers on the important features of a contemporary and sustainable Village. The refined design is highly site responsive and will integrate with the existing local character.



THE MISSING PIECE IN NORTH ROCKS

The RIDBC site provides a unique opportunity within North Rocks to create a future village centre. A welcoming destination filled with community spaces for the surrounding residents.

The site will complement the existing North Rocks Shopping centre building on the community activity and connecting the surrounding schools, open space and residential areas.



CELEBRATE THE BUSHLAND SETTING

An interlocked natural landscape setting is distributed through the neighbourhood areas. It connects the site and supports broader use of the reserve areas which aligns with the goals established within the Parramatta LGA including:

- Provision for 40% tree canopy cover
- Enhanced biodiversity and landscape character
- Prioritise pedestrian and cyclists over vehicles
- Increased urban biodiversity in residential areas as 'Habitat Stepping Stones'



A CIVIC HEART AND PLACES FOR ALL

The master plan proposes a series of open space destinations with multiple opportunities for social interaction, play and public amenity.

Open spaces that vary in scale, amenity and character including parks, reserves, gardens and plazas. These new places will support an active community but also include opportunities for contemplation, relaxation and mindfulness.



SIX CHARACTERFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS

The master plan looks to create six characterful neighbourhoods that celebrate the different qualities of the site from the bushland to the surrounding communities, creating diversity of place.

- Civic Heart
- West Village
- East Village
- Urban Neighbourhood
- Bushland Neighbourhood West
- Bushland Neighbourhood East

Master Plan Overview

The master plan seeks to deliver the overall vision for the North Rocks Village renewal, being a diversity of housing typologies set within a heavily treed landscape setting including a range of open spaces. The built form response is respectful with lower (2 & 3 storey) typologies along the eastern and western interface with taller apartment forms

(4-7 storeys) in the centre and rear of the site. A new civic heart comprises an oval, village square interacting with key civic infrastructure including a library and community hub. The structure is highly permeable particularly for pedestrians with improved connections to the retail precinct opposite and bushland reserve to the north.

AT A GLANCE

- 12.67 hectare site
- Approximately 900-950 dwellings (low-rise apartments, townhouses, detached and seniors housing comprising ILU's) and aged care.
- 1.7 hectare oval precinct with sportsfield, pavilion & multi-purpose court.
- 6 new parks.
- New 'Village Square' (1,600m²).
- New 'Library' and 'Community Hub' (4,300m²).
- Improved transport infrastructure, access to M2 and local access upgrades (cycleways, pedestrian links).
- Shuttle bus service for 10-15 years, then on-demand.
- FSR 1.1:1
- Heights 2-7 storeys
- 34% of the site as open space.
- 40% tree canopy (up from 23%).
- 23% as seniors housing.
- Staged over approximately 10 years.

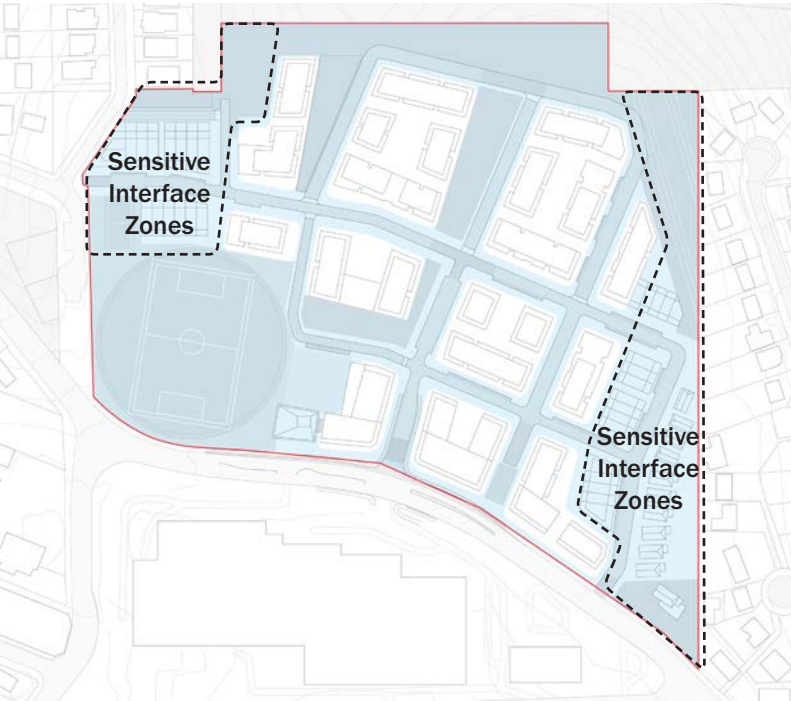


Height and Landuse Summary

The overall objective of the master planning is to create a sustainable and diverse contemporary Village. Importantly, this Village needs to be of its context. This is achieved by careful consideration of the street block orientation, scale and interfaces.

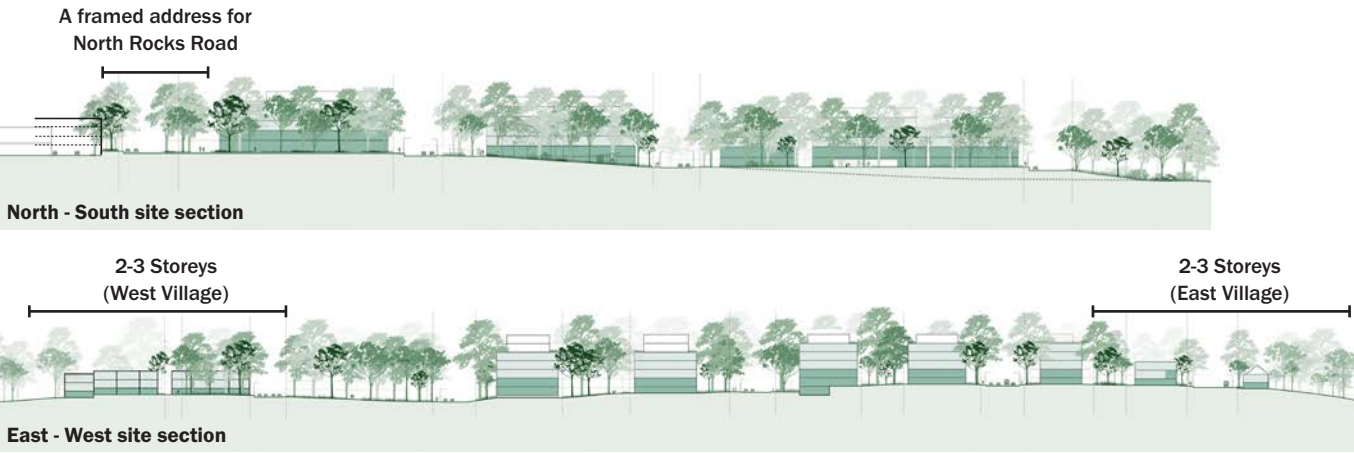
- The approach is characterised by:
- A structure that provides for sensitive interfaces to the east and west of the site. These areas are a mix of detached housing and missing middle. The maximum heights are three storeys, creating a sensitive interface with the existing residential development. To the east detached housing backs onto the existing residential housing.
 - Towards the core of the site and located within the gully is more intense residential development. As building height within this area will not be easily seen from outside the site then the impacts on existing amenity are ameliorated.
 - A portion of the site to the south creates a higher intensity development to frame the North Rocks Road interface.

Area of site containing 3 storeys or less

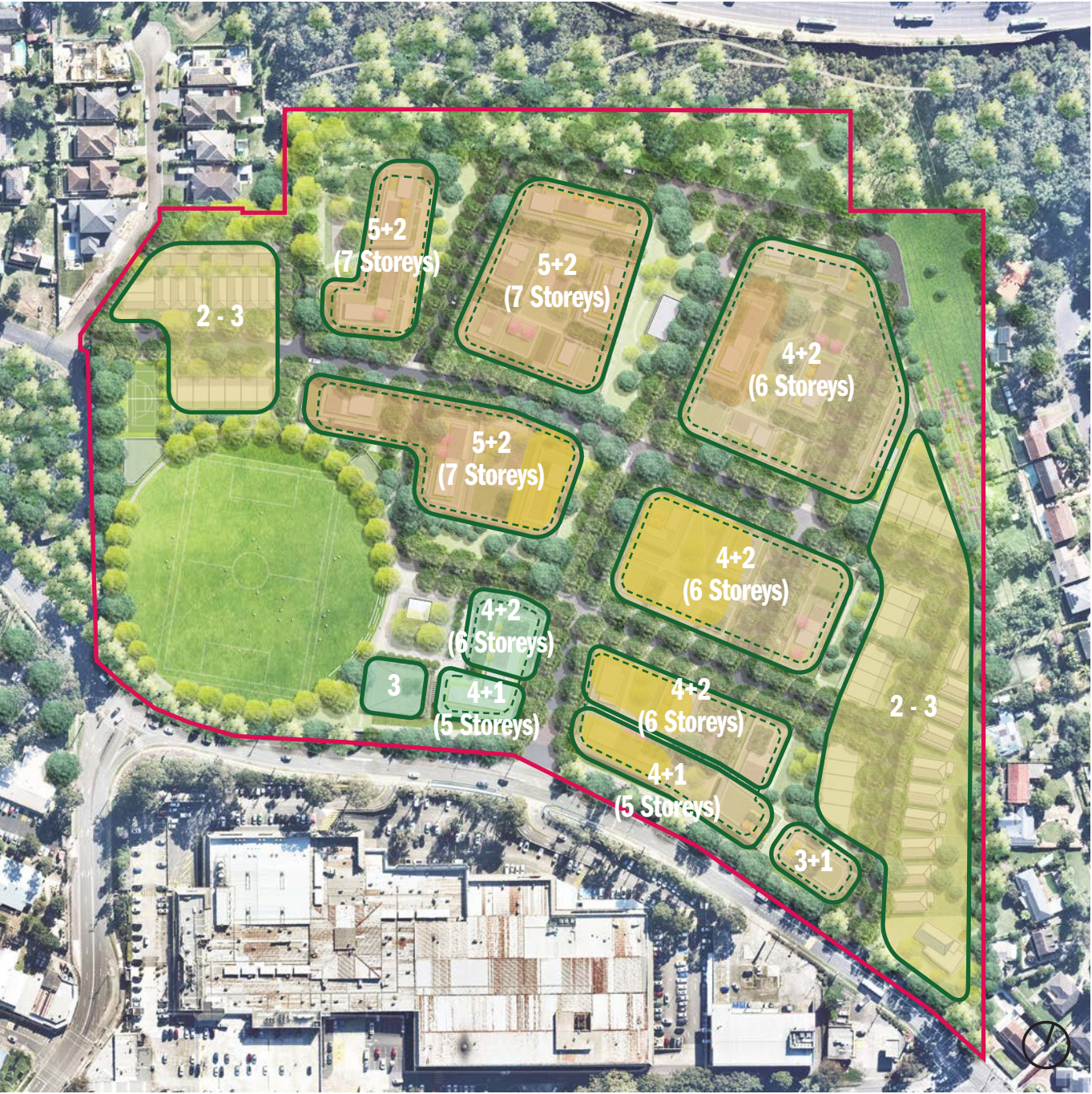


Total area of site 3 storeys or below = **87,488 sqm or 69% of total site area**

Areas of higher development intensity have been located within the core of the site and setback from existing residential development.



Site Sections
The master plan built form looks to transition scale towards existing residential areas whilst defining a clear address against North Rocks Road as a future Local Centre.



LANDUSE		SCALE	
	TOWNHOUSES AND DETACHED HOUSING		2 - 3 STOREYS
	APARTMENTS		4 - 6 STOREYS
	SENIORS (LOW-RISE ILU's AND AGED CARE)		4 - 7 STOREYS
	COMMUNITY HUB WITH RESIDENTIAL		

PART TWO

PANEL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Panel Recommendations

Following the presentation to the Panel on the 31st October 2023 the project was found to have both Strategic and Site-Specific Merit and was recommended to move forward to Gateway provided the below recommendations were considered and addressed.

Recommendations relating to urban design and revised master plan

- The scale of the proposed development is to be compatible with the interface along North Rocks Road up to a maximum of three storeys;

→ The scale of the proposed development along the eastern and western boundaries is to be no more than a maximum of two storeys;

→ Notwithstanding the lower heights at the interface with the existing neighbourhoods, the heights of buildings across the site are to be stepped down the site to relate to the sloping topography, with a maximum of five storeys, with potential for an additional on storey at the top-level setback, to minimise visual bulk and amenity impacts, and stepping down to two to three storeys;

→ The provision of a minimum 34% of the site as open space including the proposed oval;
- The identification of an appropriate zoning or other mechanism to ensure the proposed oval, public spaces, parks and bushland areas for public use;

→ The proposed floor space ratio is to be aligned to the new proposed heights;

→ Prepare an affordable housing viability report and clarify housing affordability rates, including floor space and number of units and method of management in perpetuity to consider the delivery of affordable housing in the development consistent with the government's strategic housing policy. The Greater Sydney Region Plan and Sydney Central District Plan have affordable housing targets in the range of 5-10% of new residential floor space subject to viability; and

→ The inclusion of a proposed LEP provision for a site-specific Development Control Plan (DCP). The site specific DCP is to be generally consistent with, and address, the proposed arrangement of development in the revised master plan and as modified by the requirements above. It is to be prepared by the proponent in consultation with the City of Parramatta and the Department of Planning and Environment.

Master Plan Review

Panel Recommendation

The scale of the proposed development is to be compatible with the interface along North Rocks Road up to a maximum of three storeys.

Urban Design Response

The interface to North Rocks Road can be refined to reduce the heights and maintain a maximum 3 storey interface to North Rocks Road. Although it is noted there is no clear rationale for this height limitation and the shopping centre site opposite has a current building height of 12m.

A setback fourth level can be included (to be consistent with the height control opposite) but with a generous 5m upper floor setback to allow for a landscaped edge and scale transition into the site, supporting the landscape character and urban design outcomes of the master plan.

Additionally,

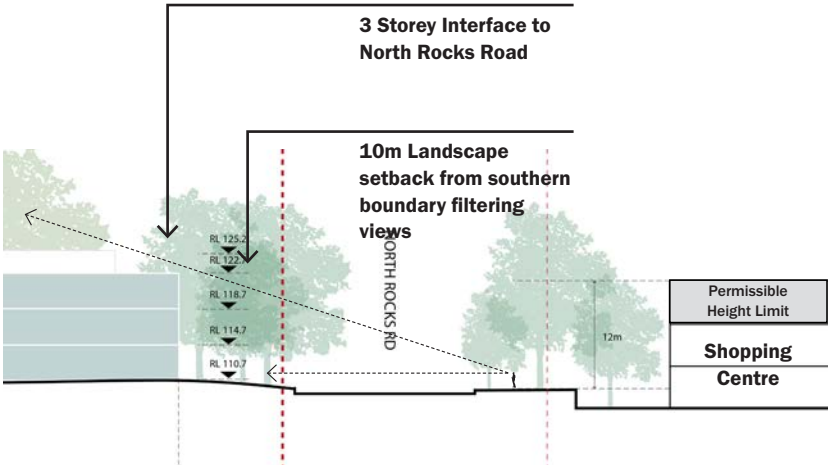
- 1) A 10m southern boundary setback is provided along North Rocks Road to allow for the retention and establishment street trees along this edge to complement the landscape character of the North Rocks area.
- 2) The western section of the North Rocks Road site frontage contains the proposed oval, which retains existing vegetation (as well as new tree plantings) with no built form, thereby minimising visual change from this arrival. Similarly, the future three (3) storey library and community centre supporting the functions of the Local Centre are inset 120m from the western boundary.
- 3) The eastern section of the North Rocks Road site frontage retains an existing single level cottage and surrounding landscape setting for future community use. The retention of this structure and immediate landscape will minimise visual change from the eastern boundary arrival. New development along the frontage is inset 95m from the eastern boundary.



Indicative view from North Rocks Road demonstrating reduction in scale of interface to 3-storeys. (Urbis)



Summary of Master Plan updates and response to recommendation



Indicative section of Interface to North Rocks Road maintaining 3-storey built interface to street



Street view of existing interface condition to 4-lane North Rocks Road / Surface Car Park and Shopping Centre

Master Plan Review

Panel Recommendation

The scale of the proposed development along the eastern and western boundaries is to be no more than a maximum of two storeys.

Urban Design Response

The master plan proposes a responsive and compatible development approach to the eastern and western boundaries that include retention of significant vegetation, physical and visual separation, and compatible 2-storey built form.

In response to the Panel recommendation, further refinement along these boundaries can be undertaken to ensure a 2-storey interface in these locations is maintained with a stepping down of the built form towards the eastern and western boundaries.

Upper-level setbacks can be increased and offset from these edges to further transition height towards the eastern and western boundaries of the site.

Further, topography and existing vegetation have been considered in the northwestern corner of the site where future apartment development is:

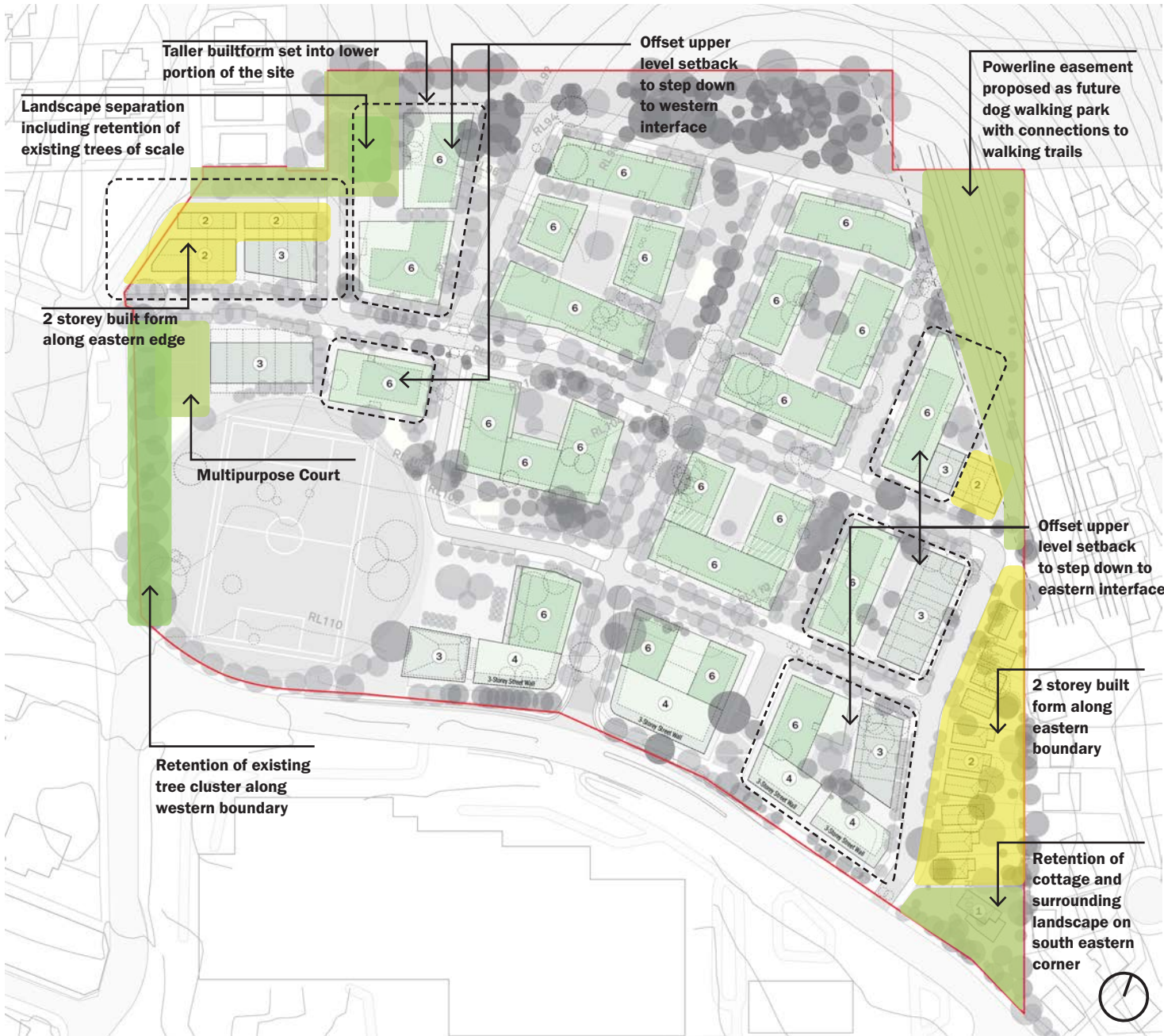
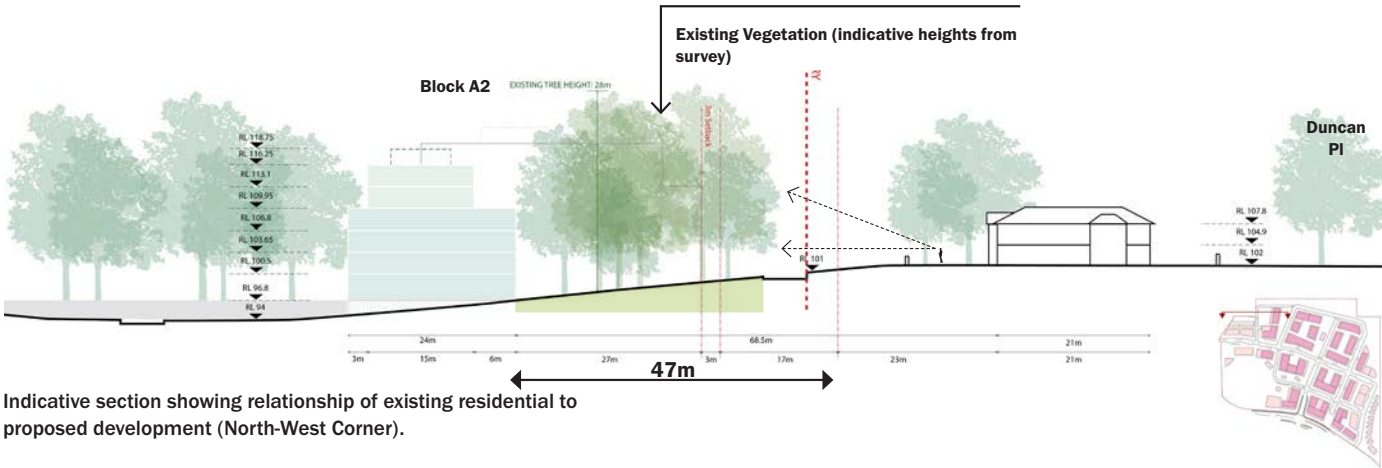
- separated by a generous landscaped setback,
- set down into the lowest part of the site where their scale is minimised, and
- further screened from surrounding existing residential areas via the retention of existing mature trees and the establishment of new tree and shrubbery plantings.

This is demonstrated via the following cross section depicting the apartments to the north of the site and further confirmed through visual impact assessment from this location.

Also, with reference to the View Shed Map undertaken by Urbis it can be shown that the proposed development scale has extremely limited/no visibility from outside of the site from both the eastern and western residential areas.



Visibility including the screening effects of surrounding vegetation. (Urbis)



Summary of Master Plan updates and response to recommendation

Master Plan Review

Panel Recommendation

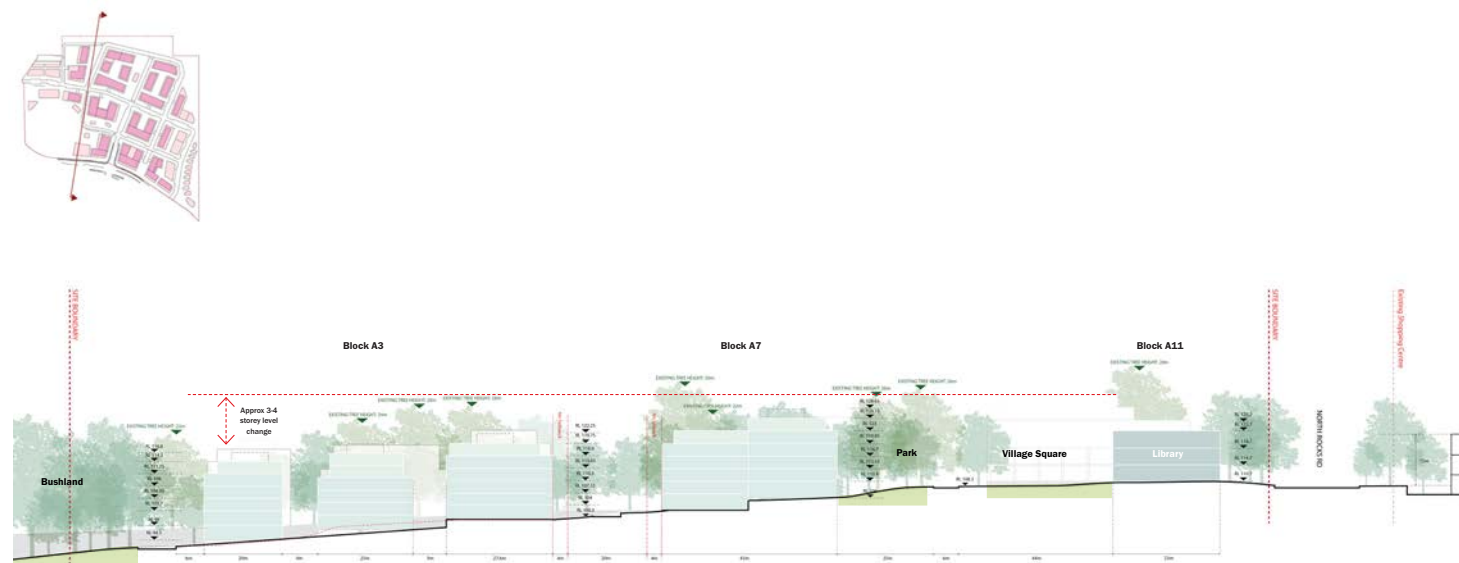
Notwithstanding the lower heights at the interface with the existing neighbourhoods, the heights of buildings across the site are to be stepped down the site to relate to the sloping topography, with a maximum of five storeys, with potential for an additional on storey at the top-level setback, to minimise visual bulk and amenity impacts, and stepping down to two to three storeys.

Urban Design Response

In response to the panel recommendation, heights can be reduced to a maximum five (5) storeys with an additional storey at the top level that is setback. A transition in scale can be further delivered through a stepping of the built form along the edges of the site with modulated upper floor setbacks to specifically respond to the recommendation.

As depicted through the section below heights of buildings across the site have been stepped down with the topography further limiting any visual impacts from the surrounding areas.

It should be noted that the level change between the front (North Rocks Road) and rear of the site equates to approximately 3-4 storeys further concealing taller built form within the site.



Long section through the site (n-s) showing the level change and setting of taller built form into the topography.



Summary of Master Plan updates and response to recommendation

Master Plan Review

Panel Recommendation

The provision of a minimum 34% of the site as open space including the proposed oval.

Urban Design Response

The master plan enables the delivery of high quality public open space (equivalent to 34% of the total site area) and assuring the ongoing public use of these spaces in perpetuity. Proposed open space includes a full-sized oval, multi-purpose court, village square (civic plaza), village green, linear local parks, and a bushland reserve. This open space forms a connected network of publicly accessible parkland that enables movement through the site, whilst providing both active and passive recreation opportunities.

The following table provides an overview of the proposed open space area.

Open Space Type	Area (Sqm)	Proportion of Site (%)
Sports Oval and Multifunctional Court	18,317	14.5%
Northern Bushland Interface	14,432	11.4%
Linear Open Space	5,907	4.7%
Village Square	1,600	1.3%
Resident Pocket Parks	1,097	0.9%
Community Garden/Park	1,929	1.5%
Total	43,282	34%

*These figures are indicative only. It is subject to further research and analysis, detailed design testing, rigorous and detailed compliance assessment and client instruction on a site-by-site basis.



Summary of proposed open space areas and distribution

Master Plan Review Overview

The following diagrams provide an overview of how the master plan can be amended in response to the urban design recommendations detailed within page 12 of this document.

Master Plan Reviewed by Panel



Updated Master Plan In Response To Recommendations



Design Merit

Notwithstanding the above response to the panels recommendation it is believed that there is supported potential for the master plan to achieve additional height in the following limited parts of the site.

There is design merit in maintaining the existing building height arrangement (2-7 storeys) per the masterplan submitted for rezoning review, which was the subject of intensive design testing, local character analysis, environmental and visual impact assessment and also interrogation and refinement by peer experts including Gabrielle Morrish, Ken Maher, Nicole Gurran and Tim Williams.

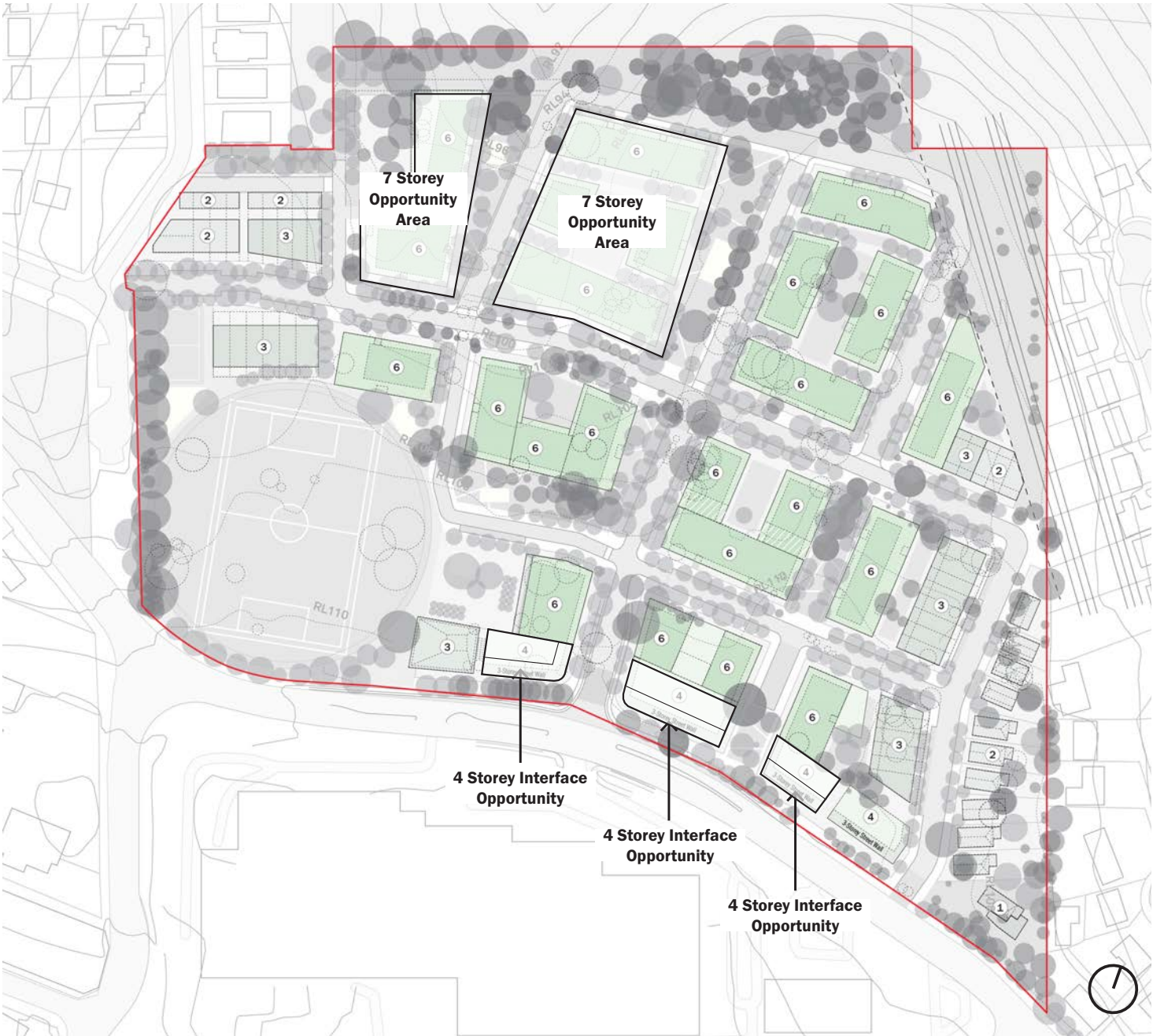
Should the panel disagree and seek to implement overall reduction in height as per the panel’s suggested recommendation, then it is respectfully requested the masterplan retain the potential to achieve one (1) additional storey but in limited parts of the site, only where it will have negligible visual or other environmental impacts, such as overshadowing, whilst supporting and not compromising the suggested urban design rationale of the Panel.

That is, a recessed additional one (1) storey in height can be accommodated but within limited parts of the site only being:

- the far north-western corner (from 6 up to a potential 7th storey), where the topography falls away and can accommodate an additional level without any adverse impact, and
- along the central part of the North Rocks Road frontage (from 3 up to a potential 4th storey), consistent with the historic 12m height control applying to the land opposite the site on North Rocks Road.

The potential to achieve the additional one (1) storey in height in these specific locations would also be subject to the following design criterion contained within a site-specific LEP local provision or DCP:

- a) 7 storey buildings within limited parts of the site (north-western corner as shown outlined).
- b) Additional design criterion to be applied to any proposed height above 5 storeys including any 7 storey elements, including:
 - Application of upper-level setbacks with landscaped edge.
 - Subject to detailed visual and shadow impact assessment, confirming no adverse impacts.
 - Lighter weight construction and materiality to further reduce bulk and scale.
- c) In these situations, a 5-storey street wall will be maintained (as per the Panel recommendation) with any additional floors above recessed and subject to the above design criteria.
- d) Maintain 4 storey built from along North Rocks Road confined to the centre of the site (as shown outlined) with generous landscaped offsets from the eastern and western site boundaries, with provision for a setback fifth storey element, held to the same additional criterion as above.



Summary of proposed additional storey in limited parts of the site.

Design Merit

Design Merit Response Cont.

The site is capable of accommodating additional height within the north-western portion due to the significant level change within this area. This height can be accommodated with minimal environmental impact and can be delivered to support the overall massing and built form strategies within the master plan.

This is demonstrated via the section below, with the suggested maximum 7 storey building heights shown. Significant existing tall trees are to be retained and along with new tree plantings will result in an established landscape at a comparable height to the proposed buildings. That is, the buildings will continue to sit within and below the existing tall tree canopy.

A comparison of the visual catchment of this additional one (1) storey at both the rear of the site and along North Rocks Road has been reviewed from a Visual Catchment and View Shed assessment which demonstrates no significant difference on visibility which as shown previously has limited/no visual impact on the surrounding residential areas, with the most visibly accessible part being to the south which has low sensitivity in terms of visual impact assessment criteria.

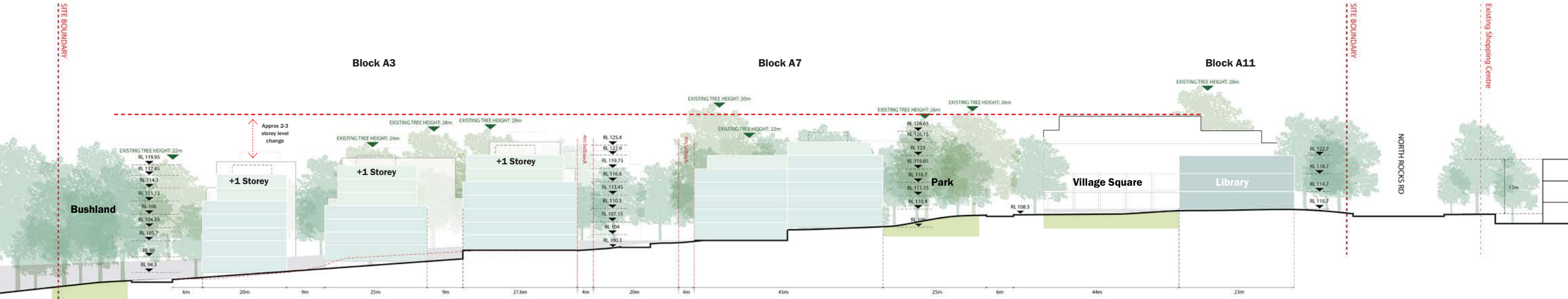
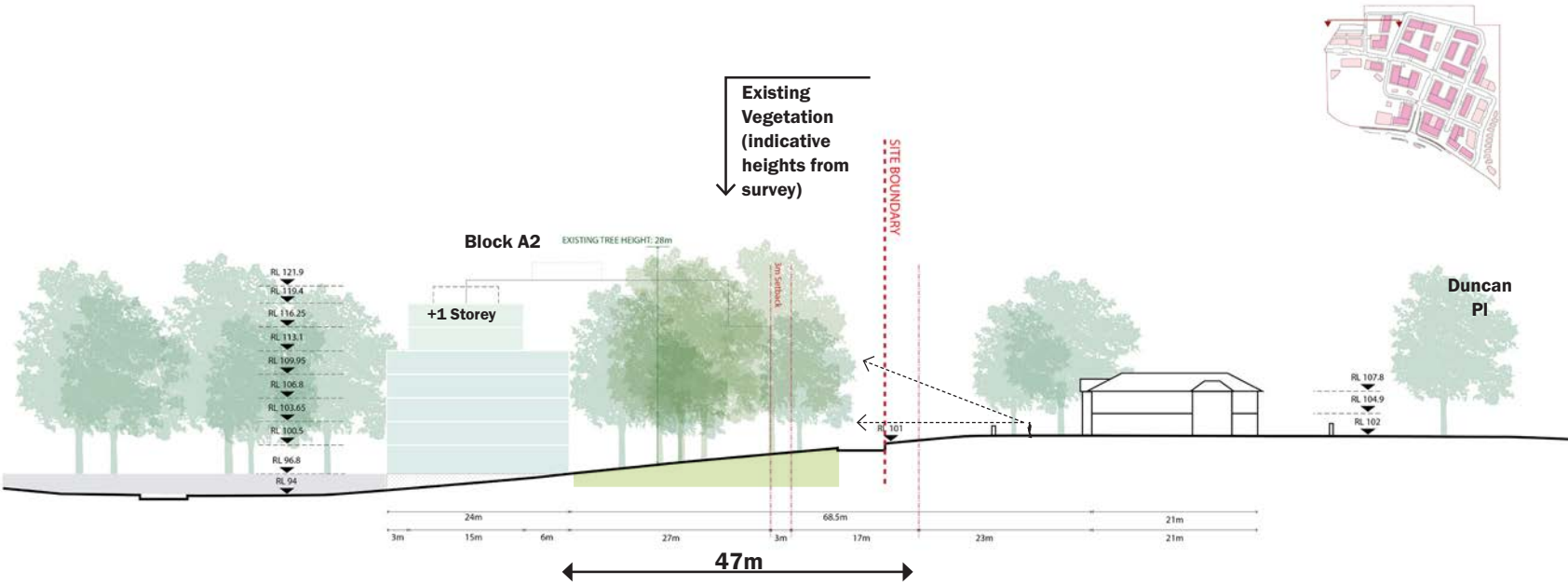


Diagram illustrating sites topography and ability to deliver additional scale to the rear of the site.

Resultant Floor Space Ratio

The two built form scenarios' put forward in this submission therefore include:

- 1. A reduction in building heights and refinement of the built form as suggested by the Panel.
- 2. A reduction in building heights and refinement of the built form as suggested by the Panel but retaining the potential for one (1) additional storey in limited parts of the site, subject to additional design criterion, for example where the level is recessed, and it can be demonstrated there is no adverse environmental (visual and shadowing) impacts.

Lodged Planning Proposal Master Plan



Approximate FSR: - 1.35:1

1. Master Plan amended in response to Panel recommendations



Approximate FSR: - 1.10:1

2. Master Plan amended but retaining discrete areas of up to 7-storeys in the far north-western corner and 4-storey interface along the central part of the North Rocks Road frontage



Approximate FSR: - 1.15:1

Conclusion

The following addendum has been prepared to demonstrate the ways in which the revised master plan could be amended in response to the Panel's recommendation providing explanations and supporting diagrams to assist in the Panel's assessment.

We would like to re-iterate that the revised master plan was prepared in response to the Councils urban design review and has genuinely looked to address all these concerns. Further, it has been subject to ongoing peer review by industry experts to ensure that the outcomes and urban design basis for the Planning Proposal are of the highest quality and deliver true public benefit to both future residents but also the broader North Rocks community.

We believe that the North Rocks Village project provides a unique and valuable opportunity to truly define a local centre for North Rocks and its residents. Together with the existing shopping centre the site provides a complementary and vibrant nucleus for the North Rocks community.

The master plan celebrates the areas bushland character and integrates these qualities deep into the plan, enabling proximity and accessibility to a previously disconnected landscape. This generosity of landscape has been balanced against a modest scale of development where the spatial proportions and inter-weaving of both landscape and building will be well proportioned and create a future development with space to 'breathe'.

We would welcome any further opportunity to discuss the proposal or address any remaining concerns.

Yours Sincerely,



David Tickle
Principal

AUSTRALIA

BRISBANE

Yuggera and Turrbal Country
Level 2, The Ice Cream Factory
45 Mollison Street
West End QLD
Australia 4101
T +61 7 3914 4000
E brisbane@hassellstudio.com

MELBOURNE

Wurundjeri Country
61 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC
Australia 3000
T +61 3 8102 3000
E melbourne@hassellstudio.com

PERTH

Whadjuk Country
Level 1
Commonwealth Bank Building
242 Murray Street
Perth WA
Australia 6000
T +61 8 6477 6000
E perth@hassellstudio.com

SYDNEY

Gadigal Country
Level 2
Pier 8/9, 23 Hickson Road
Sydney NSW
Australia 2000
T +61 2 9101 2000
E sydney@hassellstudio.com

ASIA

HONG KONG

22F, 169 Electric Road
North Point Hong Kong
T +852 2552 9098
E hongkong@hassellstudio.com

SHANGHAI

12F, 45 Caoxi North Road
Xuhui District
Shanghai 200030 China
T+8621 5456 3666
E shanghai@hassellstudio.com

SINGAPORE

33 Tras Street #02-01
Singapore 078973
T +65 6224 4688
E singapore@hassellstudio.com

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON

Level 1
6-14 Underwood Street
London N1 7JQ
United Kingdom
T +44 20 7490 7669
E london@hassellstudio.com

UNITED STATES

SAN FRANCISCO

650 California Street
Level 7
San Francisco CA 94108
United States of America
T +1 415 860 7067
E sanfrancisco@hassellstudio.com