



MEREWETHER

GOLF COURSE AND SENIORS LIVING PRECINCT

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019



Character is understood to be distinct from heritage and conservation. Compatibility is different from sameness, as it allows for many different features to coexist together harmoniously.

- DPE Planning Circular, 2018



PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

RobertsDay was engaged by the Thirdi Group to prepare a Local Character Statement in accordance with the recently released Planning Circular "Stepping up planning and designing for better places: respecting and enhancing local character".

Using our place led design expertise and knowledge of Government policy, this report provides an independent and informed assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the Merewether Golf Club site on the character of the local area.

To inform our understanding of local character and identify local community values we have researched:

- Local Character and Place Guideline NSW Government
- Newcastle 2030- Our Plan for Our Community
- Newcastle DCP (2012)- Adamstown Renewal Corridor
- Seniors Living Policy- Urban Design Guidelines for Infill Development- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
- Better Placed- Government Architect NSW
- Low Rise Medium Density Design Guide- NSW Government

The character and local community values have been distilled into a series of criteria and used to assess the impact of the proposed development from six key vantage points.

The criteria have been grouped under the following categories of:

- Natural Setting & Landscape
- Urban & Built Form
- Meaning
- Activities



WHAT IS LOCAL CHARACTER?

LOCAL CHARACTER PLANNING CIRCULAR

The Department of Planning and Environment has prepared a 'Planning Circular' titled 'Stepping up Planning and Designing for Better Places', provides advice on how the NSW planning system will ensure the delivery of development that both meets the growing needs of NSW and is contextual, local and of its place, to make better places for everyone.

"Character is what makes one neighbourhood distinctive from another. It is the way a place 'looks and feels'. It is created by the way built and natural elements in both the public realm and private domain interrelate with one another, including the interplay between buildings, architectural style, subdivision patterns, activity, topography and vegetation."

Local character considerations can be included by Councils in DCP provisions to guide the future development of certain zones.



Stepping up planning and designing for better places: respecting and enhancing local character

It is cross provides above on how the NSMY pairming systems will desired invested revelopment that both meles the growing needs of NSM and is contestual, local and of its place, to make better places of everyone. Clowdh in NSM will continue and it is this role of the planning system to golds have growth will be managed, including by earthing statistic; particularly the need for meles in charge of this communities. I private is a scribed element statistic particular to the need of the need for meles in content of the need for meles in the statistic particular to the need of the need for meles in the need of the need of the needs o

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from summerses, as it allows for many different feature: to coaxist together harmonicusty.

All places have character and what is important in one area might be very different in another. Good planning

area might be very different in another. Good planning should ensure all places have a foture desired character and once this has been established the planning framework can be used to guide the degree of change needed to achieve that vision.

Where major growth is planned, such as in graness or precincts there are opportunities to either future character of these areas through the planning system to ensure the places we creat become the much loved suburbs of the future.

n other areas where the existing character slued by the community, there are opports dan for the enhancement of that character Respecting character does not mean that new development cannot occur, instead, it means that a design-had approach needs to be implemented which builds on the valued characteristics of individual meighbourhoods and places. But form, but, scale in heighbourhoods and places. But form, but, scale in which is made an individual medium of the places of the places of the places of the places of the places. The places of the

Good design in the built environment is informed by and derived from its location, context and social setting. It is place-based, relevant to and resonant with local character and community aspirations. It contributes to evolving and future character and contributes to evolving and future character and

character in the NSW planning system NSW is rapidly growing and, respecting and enhancing local character are important considerations in

While a growing population can bring the benefits of greater housing diversity and choice, more job opportunities closer to home and investment in infrastructure, facilities and services. Communities are also concerned that new development can impact the local deposition and services for their self-thoughoute.

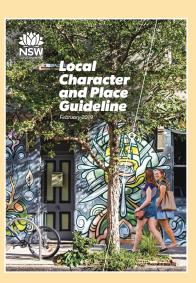
LOCAL CHARACTER AND PLACE GUIDELINE

In response to community feedback and NSW Government's direction to elevate the consideration of local character in NSW planning decision making, a planning framework for Local Character and Place Guidelines has been prepared to ensure we can maintain, enhance and cultivate the unique character and identity of places.

"Local character is what makes an area distinctive. It is the translation of land use and built form, the local economy, public realm and private spaces and the tradition and history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures, intrinsically linked to individual places.

Character is fluid and reflected by people who value and influence the places they are connected to in different ways."

The guideline provides information to clarify the key influences of local character and place, how local character can be integrated into the planning system and current approaches for the inclusion of local character in local planning.



BETTER PLACED

The Architecture and Design strategy articulates the means and methods to value and improve the built environment and public domain. Leveraging the GA200+ series of forums, workshops and discussions delivered to date, it offers directions towards design excellence at the scale of cities and towns, the public realm, and buildings. The strategy aims to create a safe, equitable, sustainable built environment, which is distinctive and of its place, creates value and is fit for purpose.

"Better Placed has been developed by the Government Architect to deliver the strategic approach needed to ensure that as our cities and towns grow bigger they get even better."

The Policy directly references existing State Environmental Planning Policies, Local Environment and Development Control Plans and influences the development of new ones.





SEPP 65 (AMENDMENT NO 3)

The State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65) aims to deliver a better living environment for residents choosing this form of housing, and enhance our streetscapes and our neighbourhoods across the State. The document outlines a consistent approach to the design and assessment of these building types and the way they are assessed by councils.

"Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions."

The NSW Government promotes better residential flat development design across NSW through SEPP 65. The Policy outlines the Design Quality Principles to achieve Good design.



SENIOR LIVING POLICY

The policy promotes a balance between the need for greater housing choice and the need to safeguard the character of residential neighbourhoods. The guidelines have been prepared to assist in the design and assessment of developmental applications for infill development. Developments under the policy can vary significantly both in terms of their urban context and the built form. The guidelines address these variations' ensuring all developments should adopt a contextual approach.

"New development under the Seniors Living policy should achieve a high standard of urban design. The policy sets out a range of design principles which must be considered in the design and assessment of applications."

The NSW Government is committed to providing housing choice for seniors and people with disabilities.



LOCAL CHARACTER AND PLACE COLLECTION

The Local Character and Place Collection is a collation of reflection pieces, case studies on local character and place and details the Department of Planning and Environment's exploration into local character and place.

The collection explores the diverse perspectives of local character practitioners, and the Department's journey of exploring local character. The Department identifies the Collection is by no means conclusive. It is deliberately catalytic and it is offered with the intent of contributing to public discourse about local character and place.

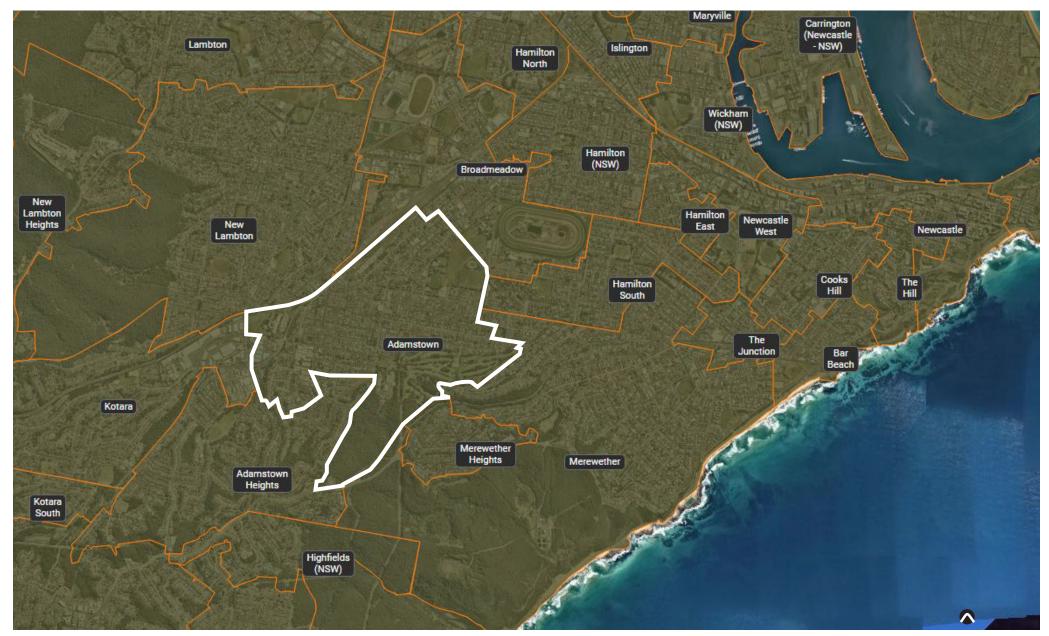
"Place is the layout, division and form of environments – its patterns, landscape, density, development, land use and mix - these aspects set the groundwork for places to flourish."

Character is a fluid, shared vision, informed by people's experience of place and their connection to each other.





ADAMSTOWN - NEWCASTLE





"The Adamstown Renewal Corridor reinforces and encourages commercial development in the Adamstown centre, increases residential densities along the corridor to accommodate an additional 700 dwellings, improve the streetscape through development and landscaping, and improve access for residents and visitors."

Adamstown Renewal Corridor -The City of Newcastle

> "Adamstown and Adamstown Heights are well located, accessible suburbs featuring sport and recreation facilities, local parks and the Brunker Road commercial area."

The City of Newcastle

"Living in Adamstown you will find yourself living 10 minutes or less from all that Newcastle has to offer."

Local resident - www.homely.com.au

"It is a quick car or bike ride to the inner city, beautiful beaches and the harbour. It also has easy access to major shopping centres, schools, parks, public transport and the Brunker Road corridor is targeted for urban renewal."

www.theherald.com.au

ADAMSTOWN SNAPSHOT







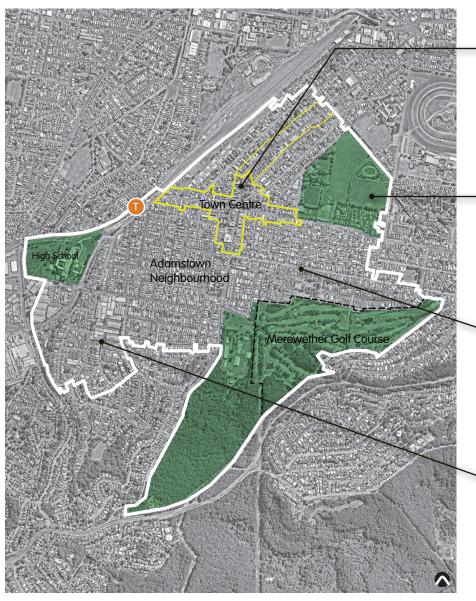




- 1 Merewether Golf Club
- 4 Aerial Image
- 2 St Pius X High School
- (5) Residential

- 3 Residential







TOWN CENTRE

(ADAMSTOWN RENEWAL CORRIDOR)
RETAIL CAFE MIXED USE
ACTIVE FRONTAGE
WIDE PAVED FOOTPATHS



EDUCATION AND SPORT

SCHOOLS OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
GREEN SPACE RECREATIONAL
PARK

NEIGHBOURHOOD

PRIVATE PROPERTIES

QUIET, GREEN STREETS

LOW RISE RESIDENTIAL



INDUSTRIAL

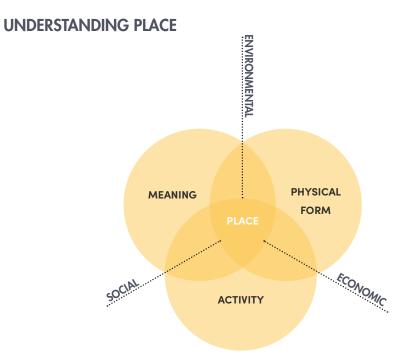
BIG BOXES WAREHOUSES





UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC



UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

SOCIAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
ECONOMIC

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

LAYOUT
DIVISION
BUILT FORM

SOCIAL

- Welcoming, friendly and safe atmosphere which offers a mix of local activity of the commercial strip and the quieter setting of green open spaces.
- Good access to health related services nearby including Hunter Health Care, Adamstown Medical Centre, Specialist services and Linguard Private Hospital.
- Well connected to their local sport, recreation, parks, schools, childcare, shops and services.
- Good accessibility with the train station located approximately 500m from the main shopping centre and local bus routes into the CBD.
- Strong sense of community.
- Popular for families and community members, with the dominant age group being 35-49 years, making up over 20% of the population.
- Population is increasing, currently at 6,445 (2016 Profile ID) and is forecast to grow to 8,413 by 2041; a population increase of over 30%.
- There is an opportunity for anticipated future housing typologies and amenities to accommodate this growing and changing demographic within the next 20 years.
- Of the families in Adamstown, 45.3% were couple families with children, 34.3% were couple families without children and 18.6% were one parent families.
- Medium and high density housing make up 33% of housing and the number is increasing.





ENVIRONMENTAL

- Lush backdrop bushland creates a quiet and relaxed leafy setting that translates to a 'laid-back' lifestyle.
- Various-sized water bodies within the site area helps to cool the expansive green open space, and contribute to the diverse wildlife in the area.
- Established Eucalyptus trees along the Merewether Golf Course.
- Generally legible trees lining along the neighbouring streets.
- Popular spot for walkers, runners and cyclists, Adamstown marks the start of the Fernleigh Track, which runs for approximately 15km along a disused railway line.
- Laneway Park has been dubbed "Our Laneway Park" by community members with a children's community garden set up.
- Belmore Street Children Park is within close walking distance to the site.



ECONOMIC

- Most common occupations in Adamstown include 26% Professionals, 14% Clerical and Administrative Workers, 13% Technicians and Trades Workers, 11% Community and Personal Service Workers and 10% Managers.
- Of the employed people in Adamstown, the predominate industries include 5.6% worked in Hospitals, 3% Cafes and Restaurants, 3.2% Defence, 2.7% Secondary Education and 2.7% in other Social Assistance Services.
- Over 80% of the residents in Adamstown are employed either full or part time.
- Median weekly household income \$1,391 (an increase from the previous Profile ID snapshot).
- To support Adamstown Renewal Corridor, an opportunity to maximise redevelopment and infill opportunities for high and medium density housing within close proximity to commercial/retail centre.



URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

LAYOUT, DIVISION, BUILT FORM

TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEW

- The land is gently sloping with high points along Brunker Rd and Pacific Hwy
- Streets in general follow the topography
- Existing valuable views to Glenrock Conservation Area

LANDSCAPE

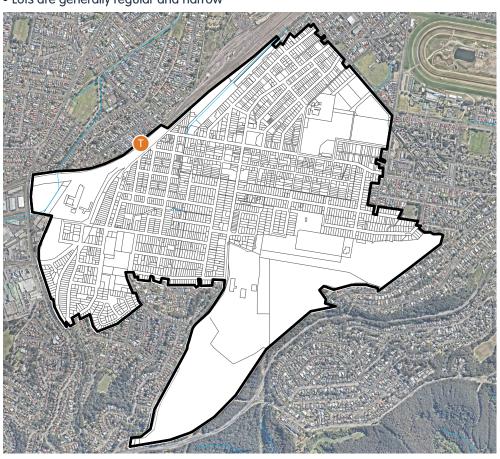
- Primary urban with extensive green space
- Native landscape
- Informal vegetated creek corridor and formal parks
- Established trees along Merewether Golf Course and local streets
- In general, mature trees in front setbacks





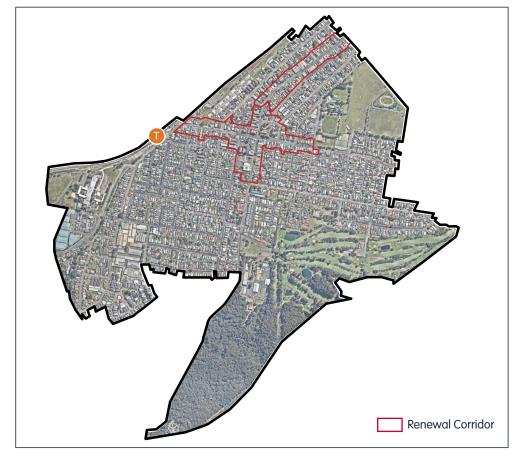
URBAN FORM

- Suburban character
- Streets are predominantly regular and connected
- Major streets are 20m and secondary streets are <15m wide
- Streets have low kerb with footpaths
- Street blocks are generally regular and narrow
- Lots are generally regular and narrow



BUILT FORM

- Existing:
 - Low density dwelling types
 - Predominantly detached townhouses
 - Generally Single and double storey
 - Pitched roof
- Future high density mixed use along Adamstown Renewal Corridor



DEFINE CRITERIA



Adamstown was established in 1869. Affordable residential lots drew a lot of settlers to the area and later the rail line brought even more people to the area. Adamstown is the gatekeeper of inner Newcastle, but is quiet and relaxed. The suburb is approximately five kilometers from Newcastle CBD and is known and valued by locals for its good public transport and great accessibility. Adamstown is unique for being home to different sport and recreational facilities including Merewether golf Course.

Adamstown is going through some transformation for a more diverse and liveable environment. According to the Adamstown Renewal Corridor, the future character of the area is identified as high density residential along Brunker Rd, mixed use along Glebe Rd and a town centre with retail/commercial focus. The precinct will be improved through activation of street edges, consistent built forms and landscaping.



NATURAL SETTING & LANDSCAPE

Adamstown has a native landscape. It offers access to different formal and informal green spaces including Myers Park, West Park, Belmore Street Children Park and extension of Glenrock State Conservation Area. The land is gently sloping providing valuable views to the Conservation Area.

There are established trees along the Merewether Gofl Course and some local streets creating a pleasant and green leafy environment.

Most dwellings have vegetation in the front setback.

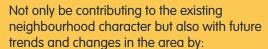


URBAN & BUILT FORM

Adamstown has a mixture of large detached dwellings set back from the street, and attached/semi-detached townhouses. The buildings date from the 1970's to 1990's, with newer developments as the area redevelops. While the existing built forms are mostly single and double storey, the Adamstown Renewal Corridor as part of the Newcastle DCP (2012) encourages higher density residential along the corridor.

In the local area, materials are predominantly masonry and lightweight cladding. Buildings are generally setback generously from the boundary with landscaping. Front fences are low and vary from vegetation to solid structures

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD...



- Contributing to the future character as a more diverse and vibrant neighbourhood.
- Maintaining the existing value as an accessible recreational destination.



Preserve the existing landscape character and ensure key ecology is respected and protected by:

- Respecting topography and green corridors.
- Retaining views to Glenrock State Conservation Area.
- Retaining or reinstating trees and other landscaping surrounding the site for screening.
- Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.



Respect and enhance the urban and built form environment by:

- Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use.
- Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm while considering the ongoing changes in the neighbourhood.
- Use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape.
- Consistent and/or established street setbacks.
- Consistent fencing and street address.





?. ACTIVITIES

Adamstown features several parks, sport and recreational facilities including oval sport fields, velodrome, golf course and local parks which results in the area having a focus for people interested in recreational uses. It also marks the start of the Fernleigh Track which runs for about 15 kilometers along a disused railway line and finishes in Belmont.

Adamstown has three well-regarded schools within its boundary, attracting families with kids to the area. The suburb will accommodate new population with future retail and residential developments along the Renewal Corridor. Almost 17% of the population was aged 60 and over in 2016.

CRITERIA FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

To understand the likely impacts of future development on Adamstown as a community, social, environmental and economic factors of place have been considered.

This place lens analyses the context through the priorities of 'meaning' of place, 'natural setting & landscape', 'urban & built form' and notable 'activities' that define the character of Adamstown.

In order to enhance and respect the existing and future character of the context and its community, key criteria have been established to assess future development against.

This will ensure good quality design outcomes, that enhances the identity of Adamstown.



- Maintain or reinforce the existing facilities and activities.
- Respond to the growing population and diverse age groups.



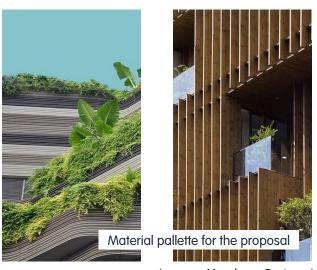
THE PROPOSAL

THE PROPOSAL

The subject site will be developed as a Seniors Development. It is located in the central north of the Merewether Golf Course and comprises the clubhouse, a portion of the golf course and the on-grade parking.

The proposed design incorporates Ageing design principals and will be sympathetic to both the adjoining residential homes & its natural landscape setting. The concept has been crafted and sleeved so that building scale & form fit seamlessly within the existing green landscape of the existing landform and surrounding golf course.









(source: Marchese Partners)















Material pallette for the proposal (source: Marchese Partners)

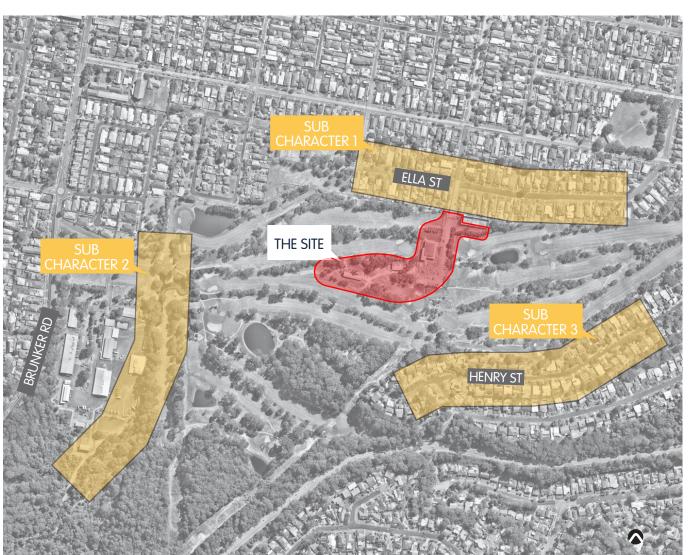


Elevation with existing trees (source: Marchese Partners)

THE PROPOSAL & NEIGHBOURING INTERFACE

SUB CHARACTER STATEMENT

The subject site sits adjacent to three notable interfaces: The Brunker Road, Henry Street and Ella Street interface. The 'sub character' of each are described below:



SUB CHARACTER 1

The Ella Street Interface:

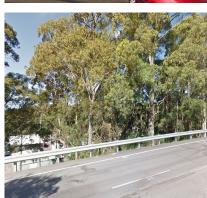
Predominantly single storey detached residences, set far back from the road. There are some established native trees along the road, with no footpaths.



SUB CHARACTER 2

The Brunker Road Interface:

Newcastle branch of Australian Air Force Cadets comprising aircraft hangars and at grade parking. There are significant established trees along the golf course boundary and the Road.



SUB CHARACTER 3

The Henry Street Interface:

Quiet intimate and leafy cul-desac with large detached houses with significant established trees onblock and on street.





SELECTED VIEWS TO BE ASSESSED BY IDENTIFIED CRITERIA







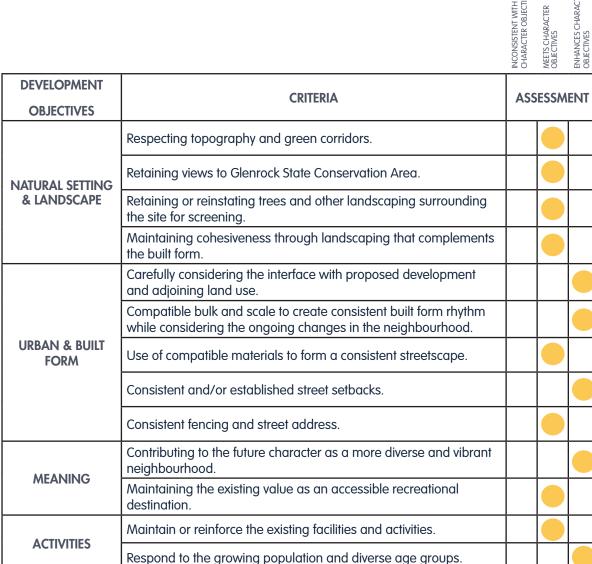
From King Street (The Entrance of Golf Club)





PROPOSED VIEW







From 49 Ella Street Site Boundary

INCONSISTENT WITH CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER OBJECTIVES FNHANCES CHARACTER



EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW





DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES Respecting topography and green corridors. Retaining views to Glenrock State Conservation Area. **NATURAL SETTING** & LANDSCAPE Retaining or reinstating trees and other landscaping surrounding the site for screening. Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form. Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use. Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm while considering the ongoing changes in the neighbourhood. **URBAN & BUILT** Use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape. NA **FORM** Consistent and/or established street setbacks. Consistent fencing and street address. NA Contributing to the future character as a more diverse and vibrant neighbourhood. **MEANING** Maintaining the existing value as an accessible recreational destination. Maintain or reinforce the existing facilities and activities. **ACTIVITIES**

Respond to the growing population and diverse age groups.

From 69 Ella Street Site Boundary

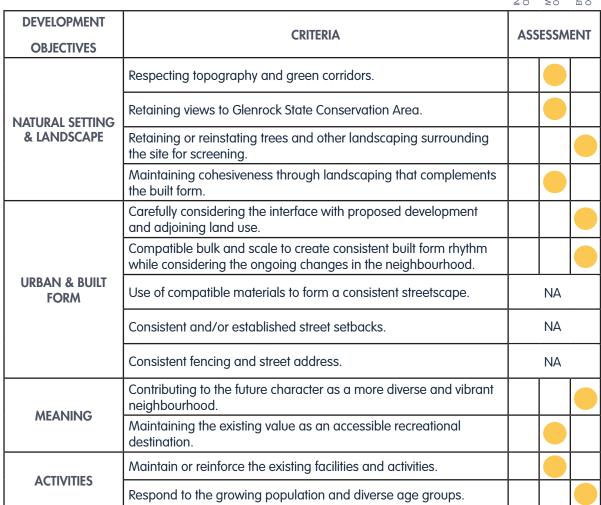
MEETS CHARACTER OBJECTIVES





PROPOSED VIEW







From Backyard of 126A Henry Street

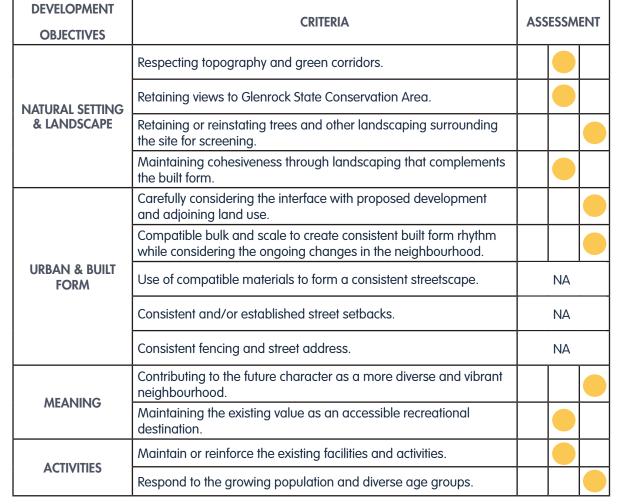
MEETS CHARACTER OBJECTIVES





PROPOSED VIEW







From Backyard of 116 Henry Street

MEETS CHARACTER OBJECTIVES **DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES** Respecting topography and green corridors. Retaining views to Glenrock State Conservation Area. **NATURAL SETTING** & LANDSCAPE Retaining or reinstating trees and other landscaping surrounding the site for screening. Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form. Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use. Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm while considering the ongoing changes in the neighbourhood. **URBAN & BUILT** Use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape. NA **FORM** Consistent and/or established street setbacks. NA Consistent fencing and street address. NA Contributing to the future character as a more diverse and vibrant neighbourhood. **MEANING** Maintaining the existing value as an accessible recreational destination. Maintain or reinforce the existing facilities and activities. **ACTIVITIES** Respond to the growing population and diverse age groups.







PROPOSED VIEW





From Backyard of 118 Henry Street

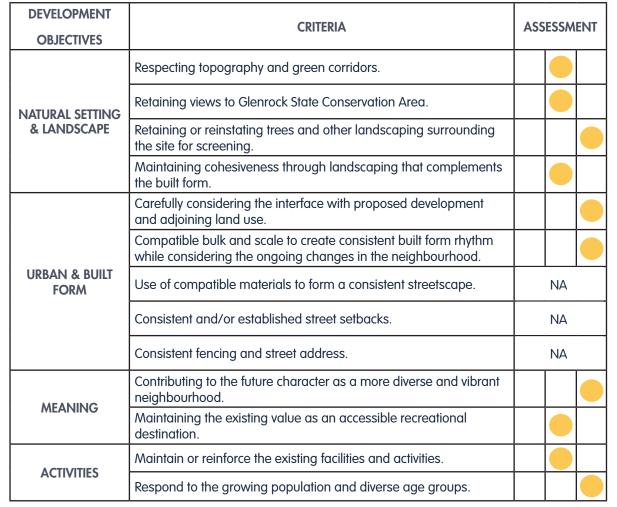
MEETS CHARACTER OBJECTIVES





PROPOSED VIEW







OUTCOMES

The proposed Seniors Development contributes to the existing character and future changes of Adamstown through the a number of approaches summarised below.

- The built form massing and scale of the building creates a consistent rhythm with the surrounding, including significant datums from existing trees, framed outlooks and topography, noted from the Assessment Views;
- Key views toward Glenrock State Conservation Area are maintained;
- The existing leafy landscape character, topography and green corridors have been maintained through the sensitive siting of the built form;
- As part of the proposal, the cohesiveness of the landscape character is maintained through the
 retention and reinstating of landscaping which will also provide additional screening to mitigate any
 visual impacts;
- The facility provides a sensitive outcome to the built form and natural environment interface through significant setbacks from nearby existing residences and demonstrates compatible bulk, with consideration to the future changes of the neighbourhood;
- The built form material palette optimises on the unique natural setting of the environment to enhance the character of the leafy neighbourhood;
- The proposed use of the building maintains the existing facilities, activities and value of the Golf Course site as a recreational destination:
- The urban form provides a positive enhancement to the wider context of Adamstown in a way that
 contributes to the diverse and vibrant neighbourhood, responsive to its growing population and
 changing demographic.

