

Excerpts from Urban Design Report

FORESTRY PLACE

NCP AMENDMENT APPLICATION
URBAN DESIGN REPORT

MARCH 2021

REVISION 09



Project Background

Forestry Place is located in the prestigious residential suburb of Yarralumla. Situated off Banks Street, the site is adjacent to the Royal Canberra Golf Club and Westridge House, and in close proximity to the Brickworks precinct, Weston Park and the Molongolo River foreshore.

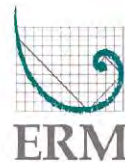
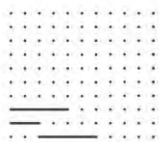
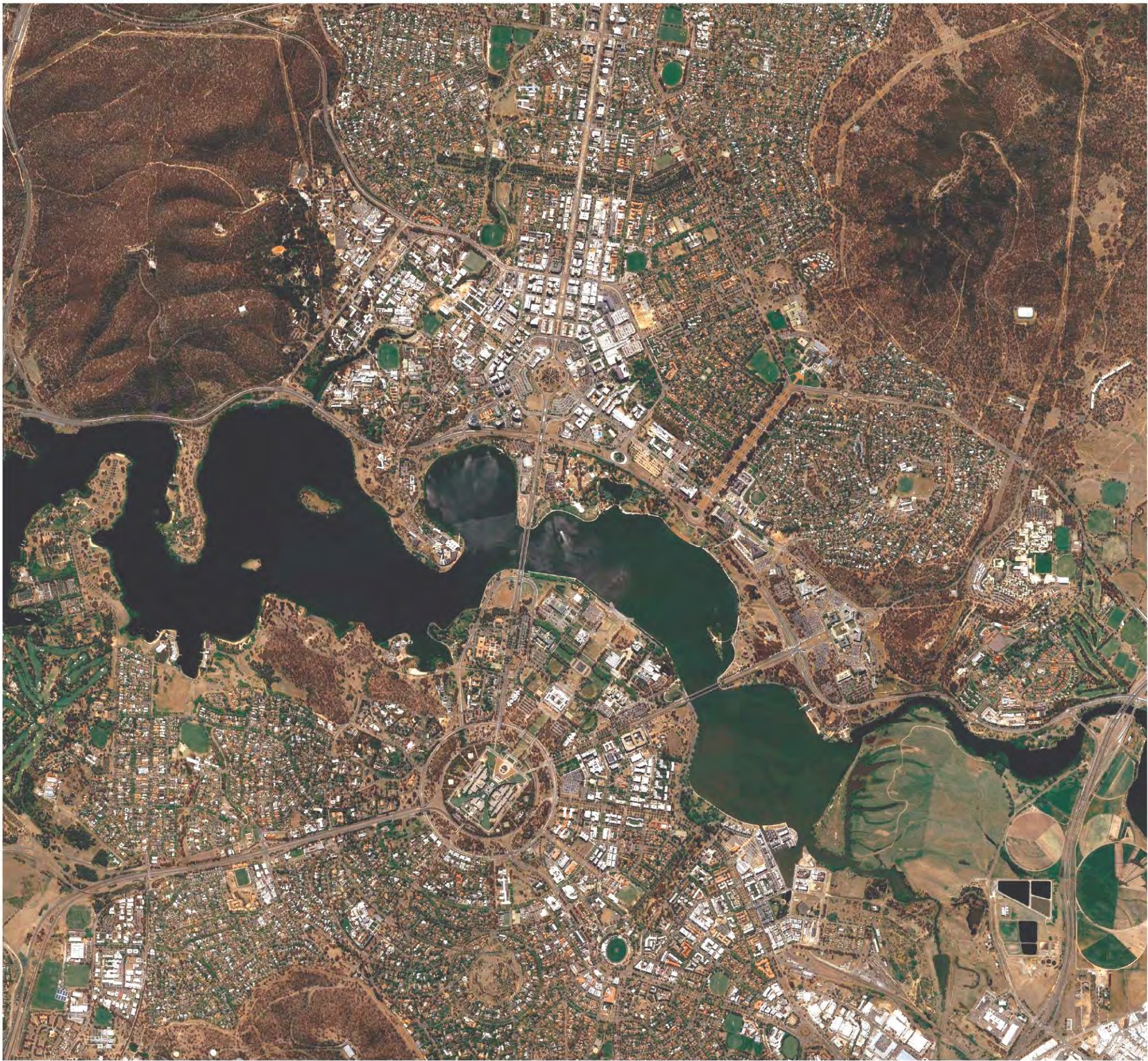
The site comprises approximately 11 hectares (ha) of land with groups of buildings including the historic former Australian Forestry School (AFS) and Forestry House, and being the former CSIRO Yarralumla site it includes various CSIRO research facilities, plant nursery, and arboretum.

The AFS, having been constructed prior to the residential development of the suburb, has been part of its growth and has remained a significant landmark to the local community, the city and the ACT.

The precinct is an example of the principles of the garden city movement – an ideal city, a city of the future: a city of hexagonal boulevards and streets joined by bush corridors, embellished with monumental buildings and surrounded by land and water.

Contained within this report is a detailed investigation of the site, the cultural heritage, and its landscape heritage to inform the development of a sensitive and respectful concept master plan that fits within the local site context and the greater precinct of Yarralumla.

The proposed master plan is the embodiment of the urban principles established by Walter Burley Griffin and renowned architectural artist Marion Mahony Griffin.



www.forestryplace.com.au

Site History

Forestry Place is situated on Banks Street in arguably one of the most striking residential suburbs in the ACT. The AFS, having been constructed prior to the residential development of the suburb, has been part of the growth of the suburb since its establishment and has remained a significant landmark to the local community.

The Australian Forestry School was constructed in 1938 by the Department of the Interior with plans and specifications supplied by the Works & Services Branch in Acton, Canberra. Schlich Street first appears on a 1933 plan of Canberra, it was included in the original 1918 Canberra Plan (though unnamed) as part of one of Walter Burley Griffin's geometric residential groupings alongside Westbourne Woods.

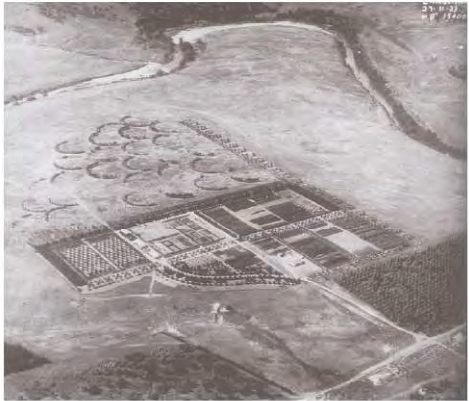
After the AFS amalgamated with the ANU in 1965, the joint institution continued to function as a research and administrative centre for national forestry, under the auspices of the Forestry and Timber Bureau. The Forest Research Institute was formed in 1963. Along with construction of the Divisional Headquarters building in 1967, a number of other research facilities were constructed during this period, including the Controlled Environment Laboratory in 1969.

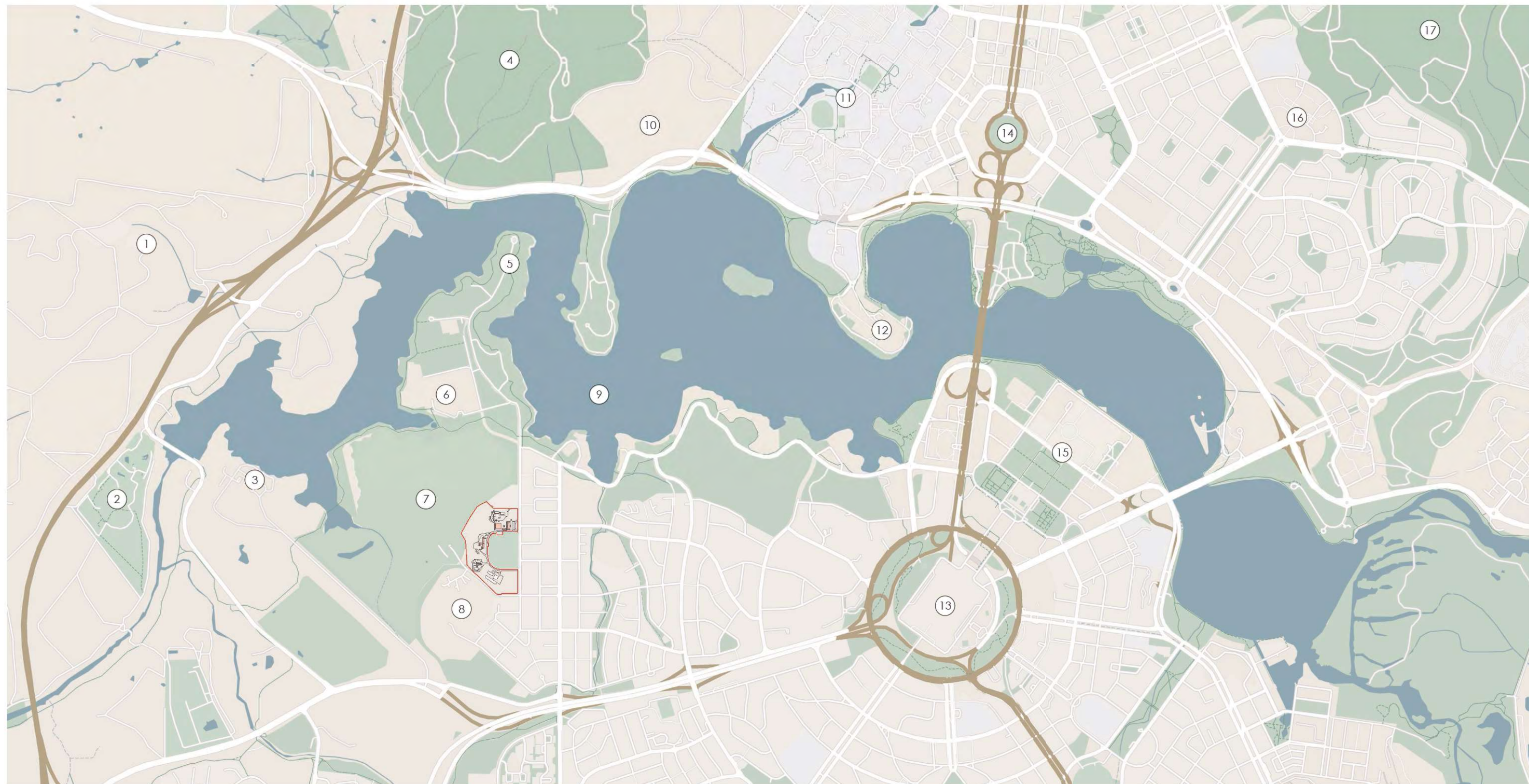
The sequential site uses of Forestry Place are:

1913–1920	Westbourne Woods (Nursery and Arboretum);
1927–1968	Australian Forestry School;
1968–1975	Forestry and Timber Bureau;
1975–2004	CSIRO Division of Forest Research
2004–Present	CSIRO and external tenants.

Forestry Place is important for its array of features from different phases of development linked to the scientific and educational purpose of the Site. Site development at Forestry Place can be defined by the following key phases:

1927-1938	Australian Forestry School establishment;
1938-1942	Inter-war period;
1948-1958	Post-war period;
1969-1975	Administration period;
1975-2022	CSIRO period;





Site Location

The 11ha site is located between the Royal Canberra Golf Club and the western edge of Yarralumla with its orthogonal grid at Banks Street.

The site sits within easy reach of the amenity of Lake Burley Griffin and its open space foreshore and affords views to the landmarks of Black Mountain Tower, Mount Ainslie and Capital Hill which locate it in its broader Canberra context.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. National Arboretum | 10. National Botanical Gardens |
| 2. National Zoo | 11. ANU Acton Campus |
| 3. Government House | 12. National Museum |
| 4. Black Mountain | 13. Capital Hill |
| 5. Kurrajong Point | 14. Canberra CBD |
| 6. Heritage Nursery | 15. National Galleries/Library |
| 7. Royal Canberra Golf Course | 16. National War Memorial |
| 8. Brickworks Development | 17. Mount Ainslie |
| 9. Lake Burley Griffin | |

Connectivity

Novar Street is the main vehicular north-south access and through route to this section of Yarralumla. It intersects with Adelaide Avenue to the south and Alexandrina Drive along the foreshore to the north.

There are various east-west connections along Novar Street to Banks Street and its connection to Wilf Crane Crescent, which provides access internally to the site and the former Forestry School and Forestry House.

Bentham Street runs along the higher southern site boundary and provides access to the Royal Canberra Golf Club and more recent Lane-Poole Place development. Bentham Street does not currently provide vehicular access to the site.

A commuter and recreational cycle route circumvents Lake Burley Griffin passing through Weston Park and crossing Banks Street. This cycle route connects to Civic, Woden and other places in Canberra.

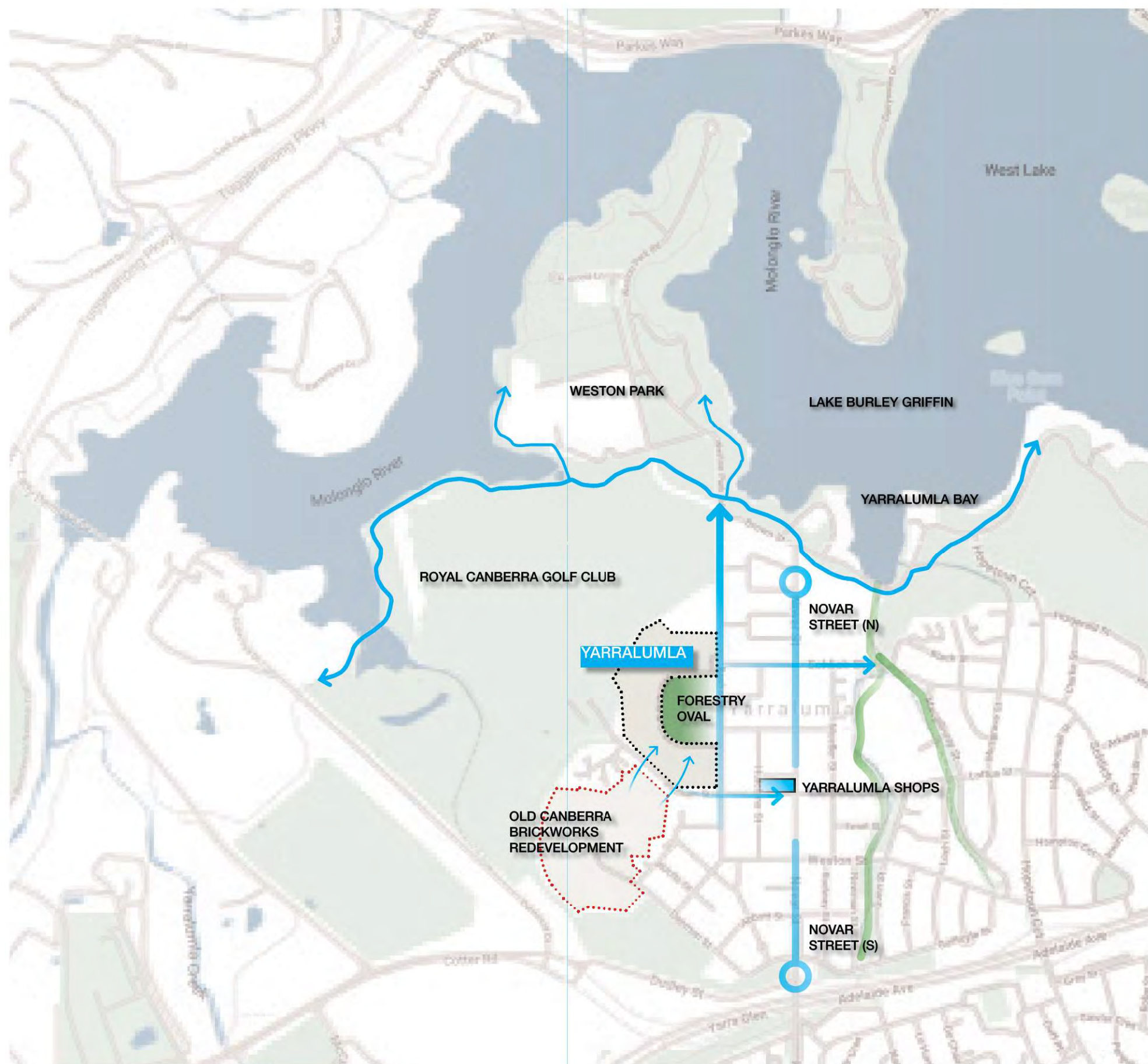
There is no direct cycleway connection along Banks Street to the site although the western verge is wide enough to accommodate a future link which is proposed as part of the development.

Canberra has a well-developed public transport system with bus routes within Yarralumla and planning underway for an extension to the light rail transit route along Adelaide Avenue linking Civic to Woden. A bus route runs along Novar Street turning into Schlich Street with bus stops within a 5 minute walk.

The site currently affords strong filtered pedestrian connectivity to surrounding residential areas to the south from Bentham Street and the east from Banks Street and is used for recreational purposes.

Future pedestrian links are envisaged between the 'Old Canberra Brickworks' redevelopment and the site across Bentham Street.

The site is within a 5-10 minute walking distance to the amenity of Yarralumla Shops.



Topography

The site is contained within a crescent centrally focussed around Forestry Oval which forms its inner edge.

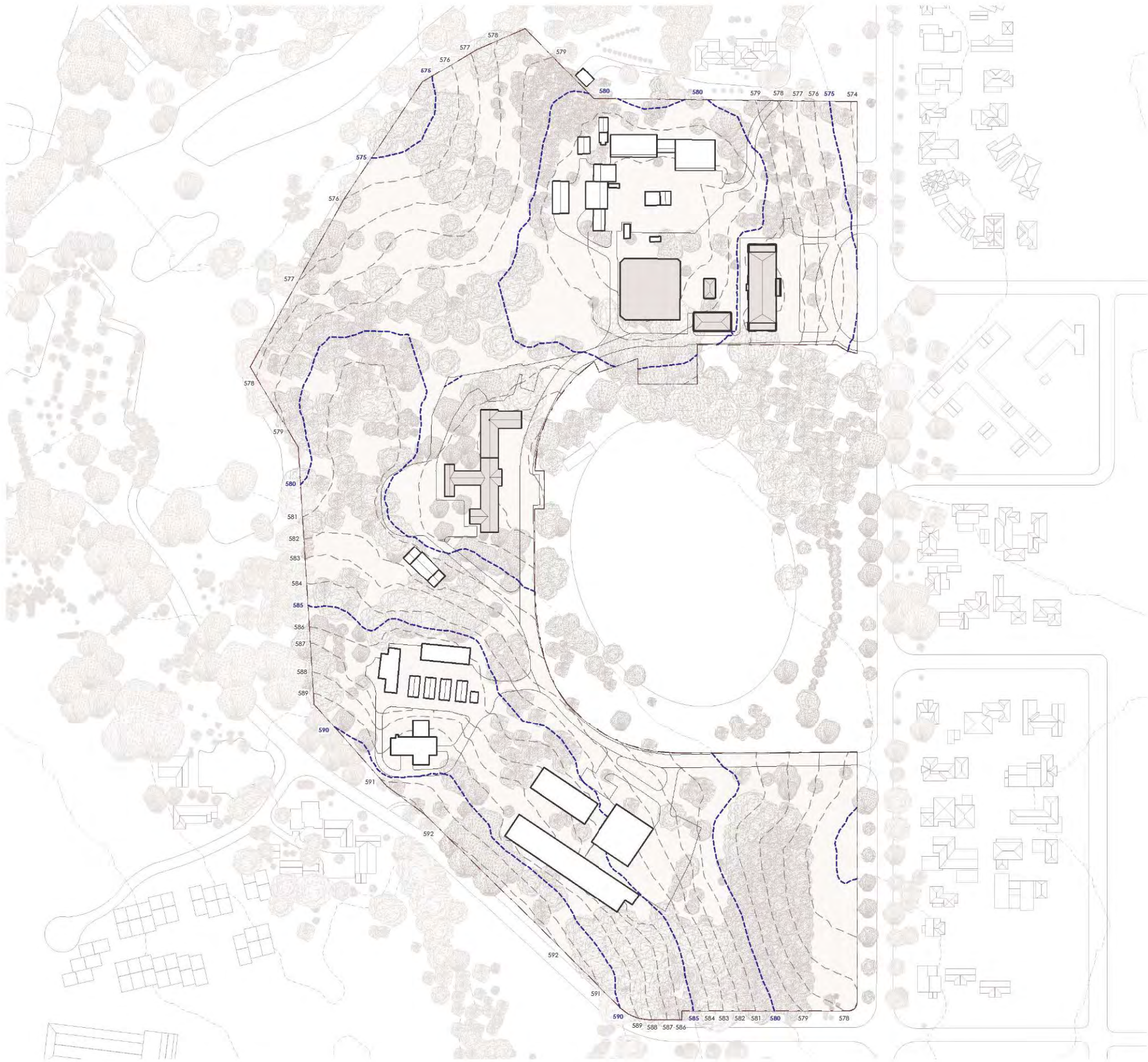
The site falls towards the oval with a higher ridge forming along Bentham Street to the south where it meets the Royal Canberra Golf Course to the west.

There are substantial level changes across the site that are integral to its landscape topography with a 15m level change between its highest and lowest points.

The site is also characterised by ‘cut and fill’ platforms and hard stand areas that have been created with the development of the various building clusters that currently exist in their own separate settings or precincts within the site.

The topographic settings and associated curtilages of the Forestry School and associated buildings and tennis court are to be retained thus reinforcing the ‘heritage’ place making qualities when viewed from the various vantage points along Forestry Oval, Wilf Crane Crescent, and Banks Street.

The non-heritage building forms are to be removed with the original platforms within the sloped topography and surrounding landscaped settings to be redeveloped, minimising the footprint of further development and maintaining the visual qualities of the landscape setting.



Heritage

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and Heritage Management Plan (HMP) were previously prepared for the Site in 2001 and 2008 by Peter Freeman Pty Ltd Conservation Architects & Planners. In 2018, ERM prepared an updated HMP for Forestry Place which addressed changes to the Site since the 2008 HMP, which included the removal of several buildings, and provided updated heritage advice that directly relates to the divestment of the property from Commonwealth control and its future use and development. In 2019, ERM also prepared a Constraints Analysis and Preliminary Master Plan Heritage Review that identified the need for a detailed Heritage Assessment (HA).

The buildings were assessed in regards to their Commonwealth Heritage Values and categorically nominated as being of None, Low, Moderate, or High significance.

Forestry House and the Forestry School predate CSIRO occupation of the site have been found to be of considerable heritage value, both as individual structures but also as part of the history, character, and interpretation of the site. This also includes the Tennis Courts and Museum situated around the Forestry School. The property is recognised as being of Commonwealth heritage significance for its association with the CSIRO Forestry Precinct and as the site of the Former Australian Forestry School [Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) Place ID 105595]

Further to this, the HMP also outlined the importance of two primary heritage views situated on the axis of both the Forestry House and School buildings that ought to be maintained.



Arborist

A level 5 Arborist was engaged to complete an Arboricultural Assessment of the trees within Forestry Place between April and May 2020. All assessment results were tabulated within a Tree Schedule and the Tree location plan

Currently there are 1550 trees over 6m in height on the site.

The trees were assessed as either individual trees or in groups where appropriate. Each tree or group of trees were identified, assigned a tree number or group, height, trunk circumference, canopy width and were assessed for health, structure, regulatory status and overall tree quality. Trees less than 12m or weed species were identified but not assessed as described above.

There were 24 Tree Groups that were divided up into species or groups of similar species. Each group was assigned an overall Tree Quality assessment of either Exceptional, High, Medium, Poor or Weed Species.

If individual trees within a group were significantly different then comments were detailed within the tree schedule.

Additional reviews of individual trees and tree groups were also conducted throughout 2020 with the Friends of ACT Trees and Institute of Foresters and they have provided their input and advice as well as support of the future replanting program.

Individual Trees

- A. Registered Trees - Atlantic Cedar
- B. Registered Trees - Atlantic Cedar
- C. Tree 1445 - Pinus Species
- D. Tree 567 - Eucalyptus Albens
- E. Tree 581 - Araucaria Bidwillii
- F. Tree 293 - Pinus Ponderosa
- G. Tree 305 - Cupress Sempervirens
- Tree 306 - Cupress Sempervirens

Legend

- Registered
- Exceptional
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Poor

Tree Groups

- 1. Medium Quality - Atlantic Cedar
- 2. Medium Quality - Mixed Eucalypts
- 3. Weed Species - Pinus Radiata
- 4. High Quality - Mixed Pinus
- 5. High Quality - Canary Island Pine
- 6. High Quality - Chir Pine
- 7. Poor Quality - English Oak
- 8. Medium Quality - Pin Oak
- 9. Medium Quality - Brachychiton
- 10. Weed Species - Pinus Radiata
- 11. High Quality - Canary Island Pine
- 12. Weed Species - Pinus Radiata
- 13. Poor Quality - Mixed Eucalypts
- 14. Medium Quality - Quercus Robur
- 15. Poor Quality - Mixed Pinus
- 16. Poor Quality - Eucalyptus
- 17. Poor Quality - Pinus & Eucalyptus
- 18. High Quality - Pinus Pinea
- 19. High Quality - Pinus Ponderosa
- 20. High Quality - Pinus Ponderosa
- 21. Poor Quality - Quercus Palustris
- 22. Exceptional - Pinus Pinea
- 23. High Quality - Quercus Palustris
- 24. Weed Species - Pinus Radiata

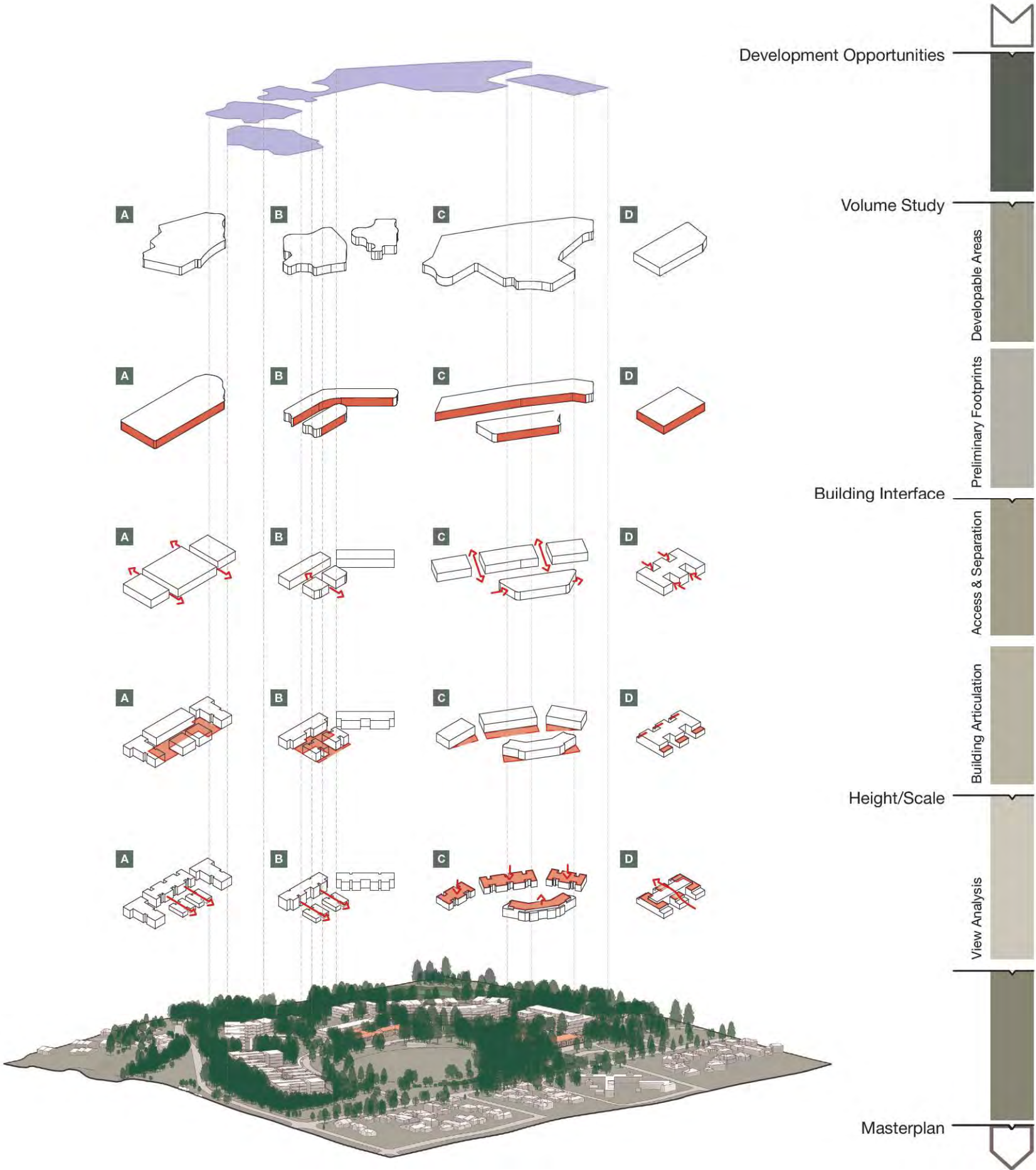


Built Form Evolution

From the opportunities and constraints 3D mapping process and the identifying of areas within precincts best suited for further site development, the evolution of building form most suited to each precincts characteristics has been undertaken.

This includes the study to minimise building footprints to maximise tree retention, privacy, and open space, leading to more detailed building forms that embody;

- high quality residential apartment planning including best orientation to take advantage of site specific views and climatic conditions.
- appropriate height and scale that fits into the topography and the high quality landscape rather than impose on it.
- minimisation of visual impacts on surrounding neighbours.
- site specific precinct planning that responds to each existing setting rather than the imposition of ‘orthogonal grid’ planning of Yarralumla suburb that sits outside of the sites developed character.
- maximised valuable tree retention and open space.
- a minimum 20m setback to adjoining neighbours and an average 50m setback to Banks Street



Design Concept

The Design Concept involves precincts that are individually integrated into the existing landscape setting, providing a ‘mixed use’ approach to the redevelopment of the site including;

- adaptive reuse of the Forestry House for a boutique hotel
- retention and adaptive reuse of the Forestry School and its associated buildings for commercial and community use
- Aged Care
- high quality residential apartment living (including seniors living)
- community facilities including pool, tennis court, glass house and community gardens, and meeting rooms

Each precinct will take advantage of its own particular topographic setting, views, and climatic conditions.

Vehicular access to each precinct from Wilf Crane Crescent is provided in order to utilise the existing road infrastructure while minimising the need for new infrastructure that is contained to the creation of a circuit and landscaped common in Precinct C, and a new driveway and drop off from Banks Street for the Aged Care in Precinct D.

All parking associated with the occupants of the new proposed mixed uses will be provided in basements with Visitor parking for the residents also accommodated in basements with additional kerb side parking provided where appropriate.

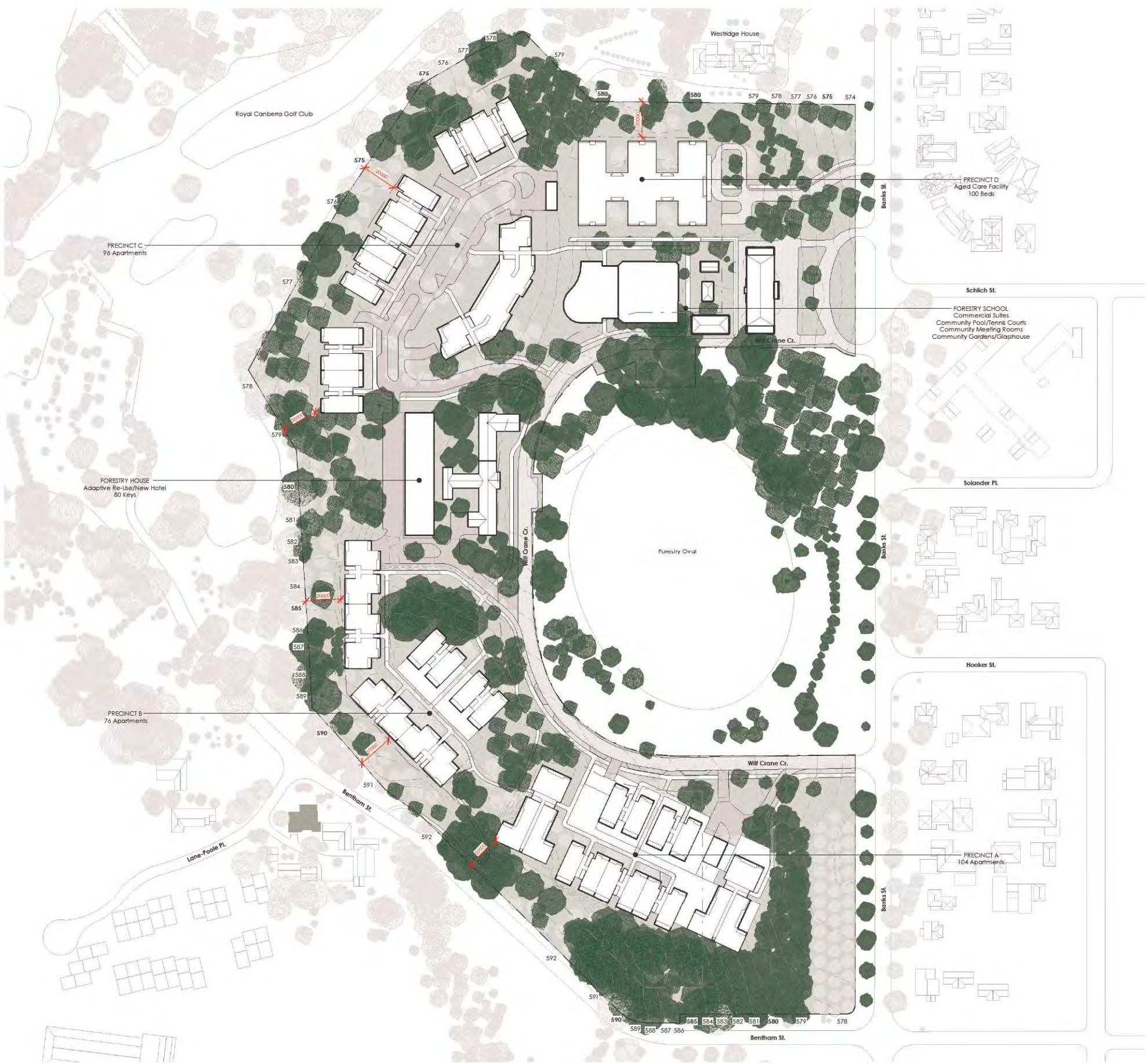
Each precinct will feature its own high quality detailed landscape design while integrating with the overall masterplan which utilises and enhances landscaped buffers to its surrounds, including site pedestrian permeability.

This integrated approach to the preservation and enhancement of the sites valued landscape and heritage qualities results in new uses and densities that will ensure the vitality, liveability, and longevity of the site well beyond its current ‘end of life’ phase.

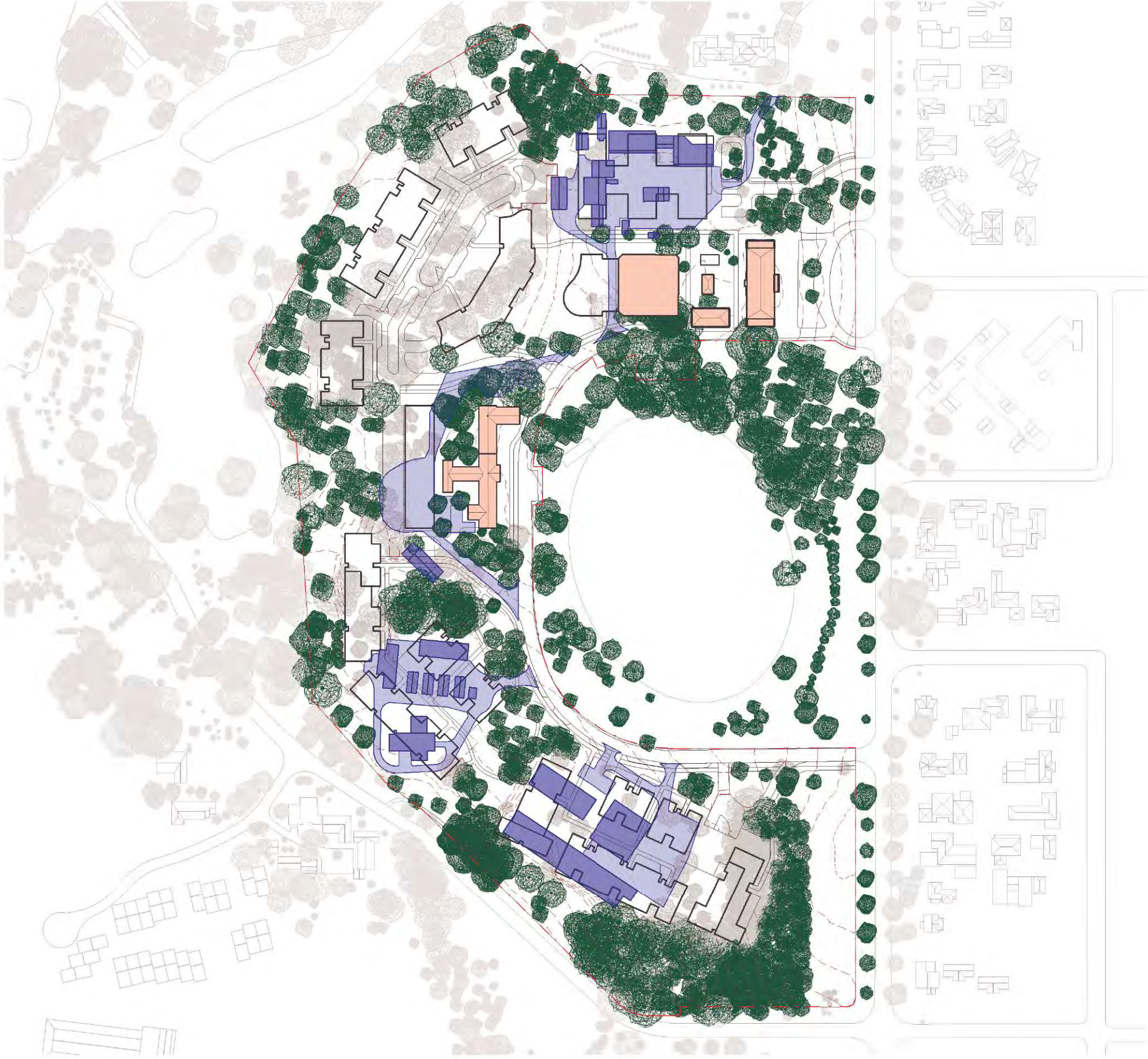
Indicative Development Yield

RESIDENTIAL	PRECINCT A	104 apts
	PRECINCT B	76 apts
	PRECINCT C	42 apts
TOTAL		222 apts
INDEPENDENT LIVING	PRECINCT C	54 apts
AGED CARE	PRECINCT D	130 beds
ACCOMMODATION	FORESTRY HOUSE	80 keys
COMMERCIAL	FORESTRY SCHOOL	800 sqm
RECREATION	COMMUNITY POOL	800 sqm
	TENNIS COURTS	1185 sqm

NOTE: Unit summary prepared to demonstrate feasibility/compliance of proposed building envelopes and communicate indicative development yield



Existing and Proposed Buildings



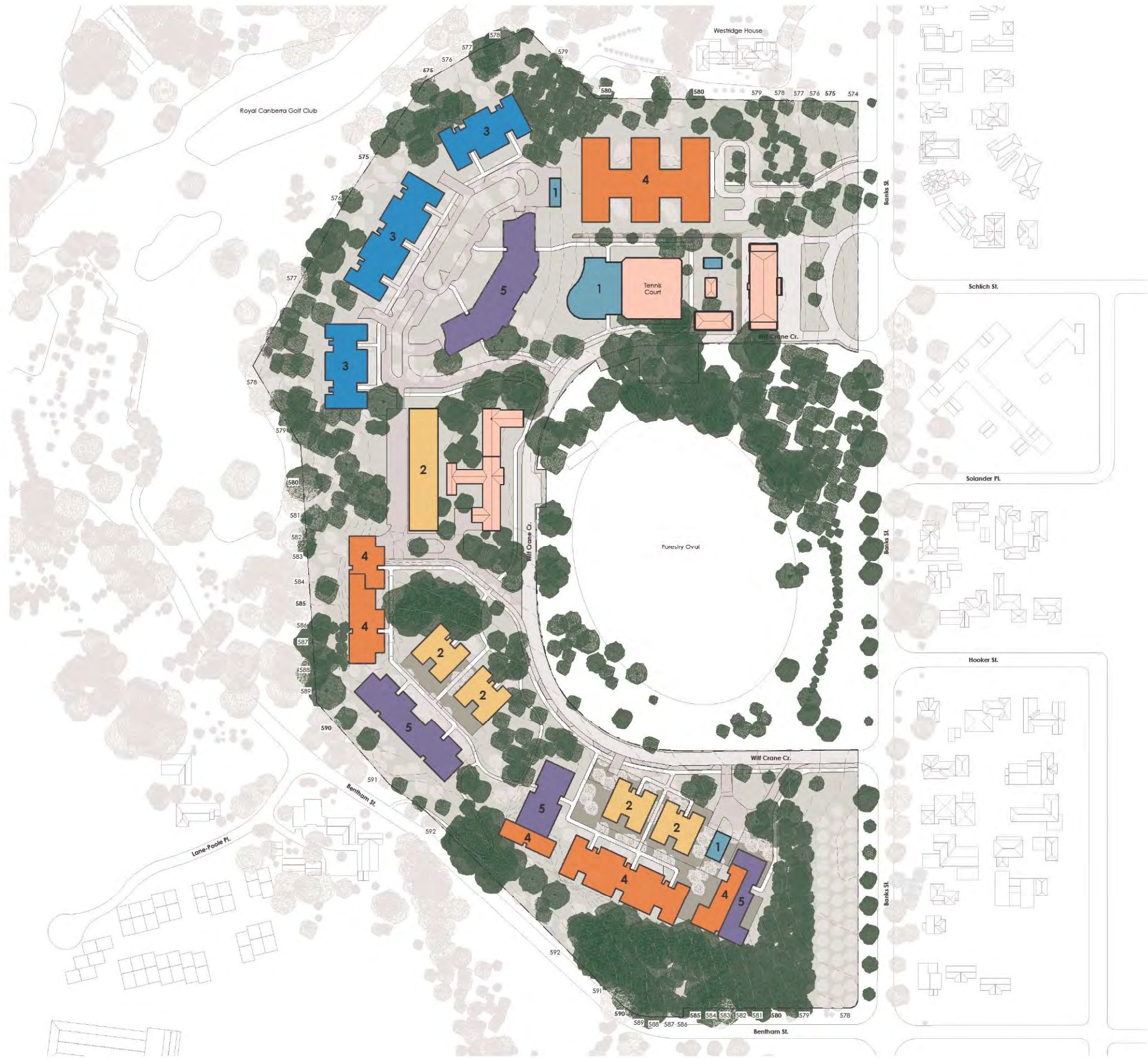
Legend

	Retained Heritage
	Retained Planting
	Removed Building
	Removed Planting
	Building Footprint
	Road

Building Heights

Legend

Heritage
1 Storey
2 Storey
3 Storey
4 Storey
5 Storey





1

Forestry House

Wilf Crane Crescent

Forestry School

Banks St.



2

Banks St.

Wilf Crane Crescent

Forestry House

Elevations/Sections

The proposed development of individually identified precincts that respond to particular locations, surrounds, views, and climatic conditions has been carefully considered to ensure the dominance of retained trees and tree clusters with the proposed built form sitting into the topography.

This has been done in the 3D mapping context with the resultant 2D site sections indicating the proposed outline form in relation to the retained tree canopy.





1 Bentham St. Wilf Crane Crescent Forestry School Westridge House



2 Forestry School Forestry House Bentham St.

Elevations/Sections

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Built Form

The proposed scale of building forms for each precinct vary in height, massing, and articulation in a crafted response that integrates with and is respectful of the unique characteristics of the site.

Each precinct is defined through the local topographic and landscape setting with the scale of the retained tree clusters remaining dominant while providing high quality setbacks and separation between built forms.

Key heritage views are maintained while the recognition of Forestry Oval as a focal point around which each precinct is planned ensures that the integrity of the high value visual qualities of the site are maintained with further opportunities for the enhancement of the landscape are afforded.

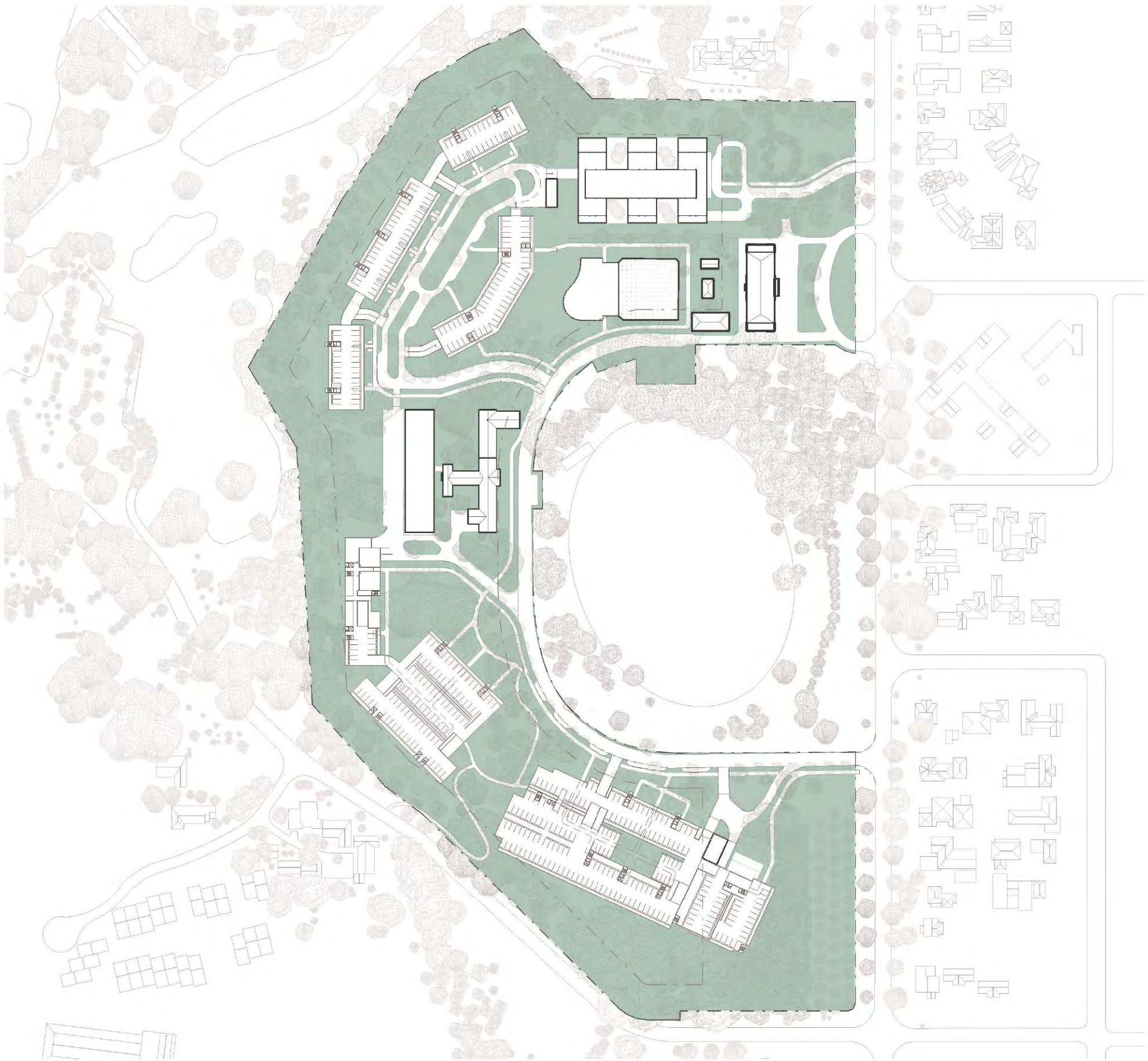
The forested quality to the site prevails over the built form as a conscious effort has been made to keep buildings below the tree canopy in each precinct.

Urban Design Framework

Deep Soil Planting and Open Space

Basement planning has been generally aligned with the outer edges of the building footprints of each precinct. This ensures the maximum retention of deep soil planting zones for existing tree and tree cluster retention, as well as the enhancement of landscape within this retained framework particularly along the landscape setbacks/buffer zones to the adjoining neighbours along the Bentham and Banks Street frontages.

Under the proposed scheme approximately 58% of the entire site area is designated as deep soil planting zones.



Legend
Deep Soil Zones

Urban Design Framework

Publicly Accessible Open Space and Amenity

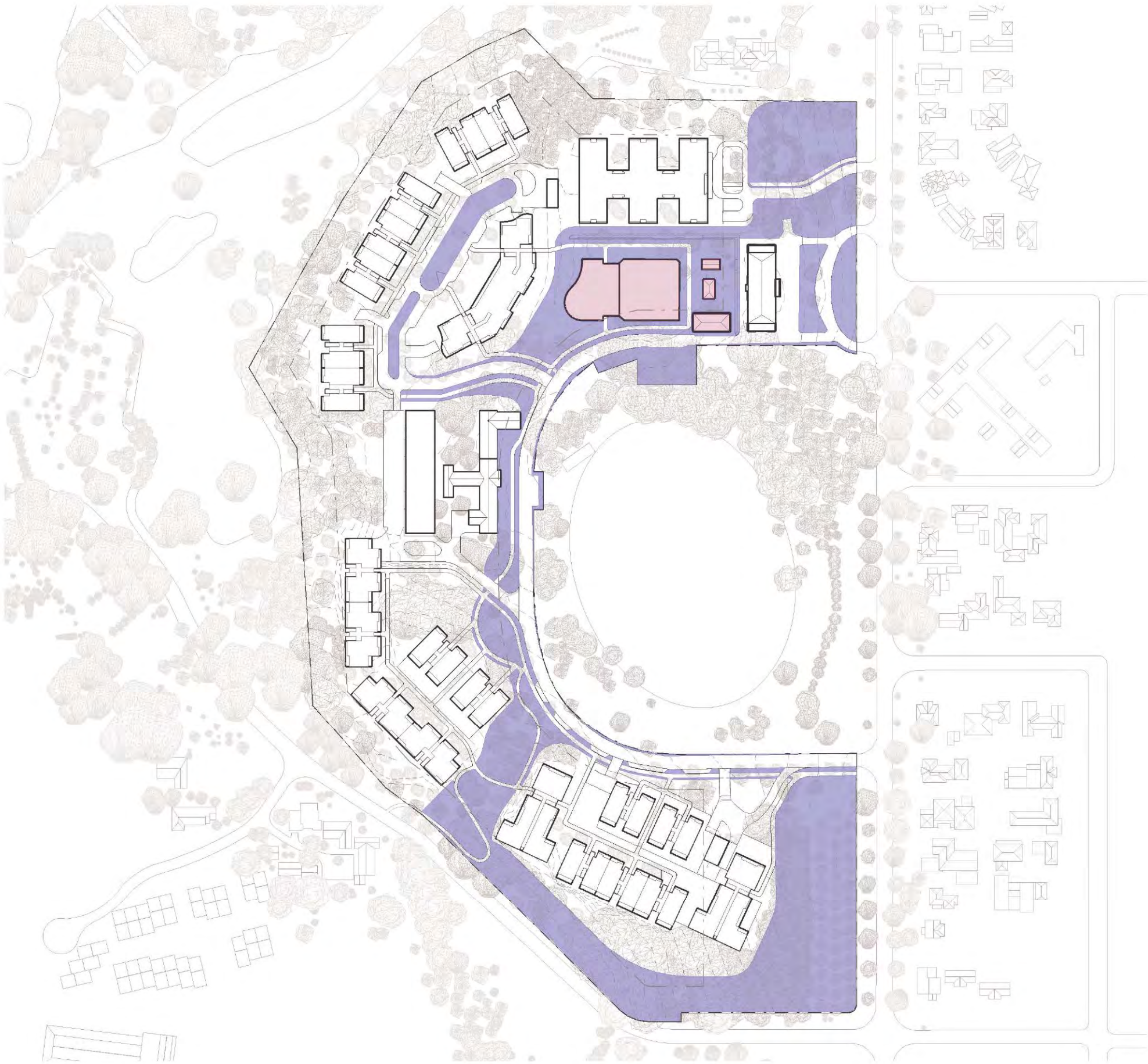
Each individual dwelling in Precincts A, B, and C will have access to large private balcony space for the upper levels, and large well landscaped terraces to the ground levels.

The majority of dwellings will have dual private open spaces located in ‘through style’ apartment planning thus optimising access to winter sun and cross ventilation.

Well landscaped communal open spaces will be included in the development of each precinct including existing courtyards and terraces for Forestry House, and new garden and glass house for the Forestry School precinct.

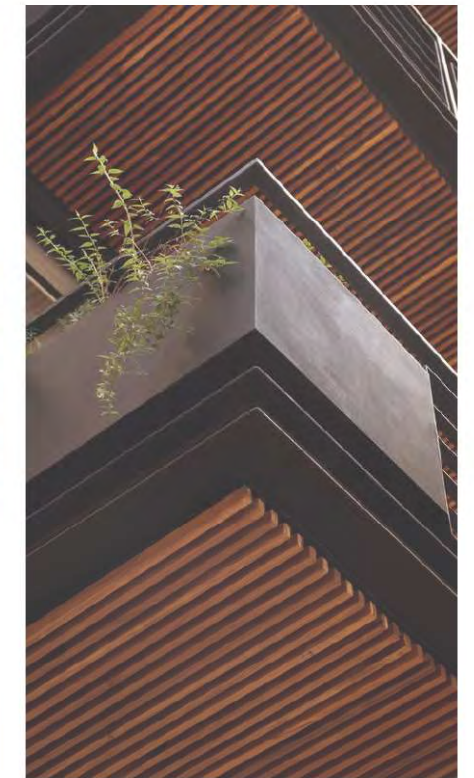
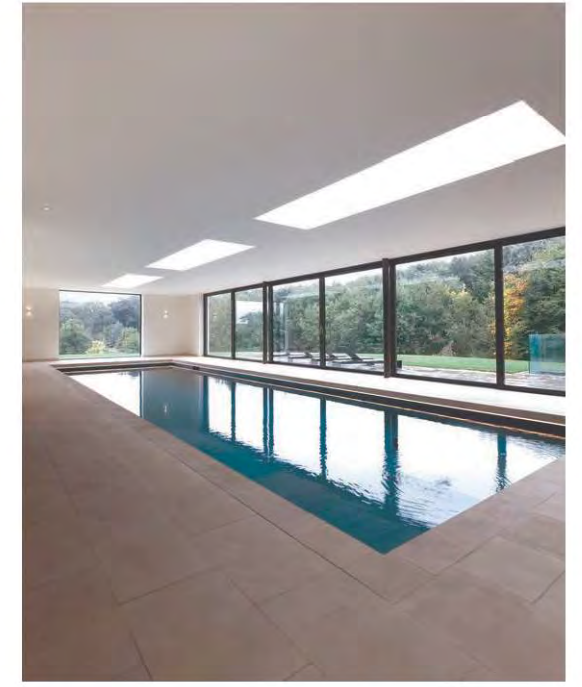
Additional communal amenity is proposed by the inclusion of a swimming pavilion that will be connected to outdoor communal/terrace space and the rejuvenated tennis courts that belong to the Forestry School precinct.

All publicly accessible open space and associated communal amenities are integrated into the overall high quality landscape masterplanning framework.



Legend

	Publicly Accessible Open Space
	Communal Facilities



Building Typology

The use of well considered apartment planning is essential for good practice site planning outcomes.

The delivery of high quality materials selection and approach to facade design that enhances environmental performance, aesthetics, and integration with site landscape context is subject to detailed design.



Building Typology

These images indicate that a contemporary approach to the use of facade treatments that feature a simple combination of recessive natural materials is appropriate for the design of the buildings in each individual precinct.

When set against the colours, shape, and form of the soft landscape the buildings will compliment the existing character of the site.

This will contrast with the colour palette and building typology of the retained Forestry House and Forestry School so as to not compete with the heritage character of the site which is essential for the longevity of the development.

The images on the following pages are a representation of the visual impression of this philosophy when implemented in the site.

Artists Impressions

Four views have been created to convey the character, scale, and setting including retention of existing trees and tree clusters in each precinct.

View 1 shows the proposed development for Precinct A from a vantage point located on Forestry Oval

View 2 shows the proposed development for Precinct B from a vantage point located along Wilf Crane Crescent

View 3 shows the proposed development for Precinct C as it relates to the newly created circuit around a landscaped common

View 4 shows the proposed communal garden area including Glasshouse taken from a vantage point adjacent to the tennis courts in the setting between the Aged Care development in Precinct D and the former Forestry School



