

spaceagency

The Roofing 2000

State Planning Policy 7.0 Assessment



Context and Character

The site is at the nexus of 2 of the major arterial connections that skirt the Swan River. These two highways signify colonial identities and have underpinned the metropolitan structure from the earliest days of the colony. The site is one of the nodal points along each route between Perth City and Fremantle and most significantly marks the intersection and only river crossing west of the City.

The site has potential landmark qualities to significantly mark the river crossing, the gateway between the neighbourhoods of North and East Fremantle and the city limits of Fremantle, the Port City. Beyond the metaphysical, it has the benefit of substantial urban amenity, being located within the new East Fremantle town centre, George Street precinct of East Fremantle and within 2 kms of Fremantle City Centre. All the amenities of Town and City plus the river and beaches and easy accessibility on foot, bicycle, private car or public transport.

The site sits at the forefront of the natural escarpment that skirts the southern bank of the Swan River. It affords panoramic views of the river from Port to Mosman Park and beyond the North Fremantle peninsular to the Indian Ocean. Conversely, it is visible from all points from the river and open ground to the north. Significantly, it's visibly anchors the southern bank of the Stirling Bridge and is at the forefront of the view during a crossing.

This precinct is part of the Mooro District and the traditional land of the Yellagonga and continues to be significant for the Nyoongars. Before colonisation the area was abundant in food, shelter, materials and water. There was an important route from the areas currently known as Perth and North Fremantle along the northern bank of the river. At North Fremantle and at this place the water was shallow enough to swim across and then continue south to Bibra Lake, Rockingham, Mandurah and the Murray River. The whole river foreshore area is known as an "Important Place" and was most likely the area where the traditional owners of the land first encountered Europeans.

During the early days of colonisation the area was primarily used for farming. Following the gold rush the Plympton area was the first to be developed between 1890 and 1910. The first buildings on this site were built at this time and were originally surrounded by other dwellings, churches, shops that formed a primarily residential area in the new Municipality of East Fremantle (1897).

The consequences of Post WWII growth caught up with the Plympton Ward in 1970 when a large swath of the neighbourhood was resumed and progressively demolished to establish a new river crossing and the extension of Stirling Highway southward. The consequences were not only a loss of Edwardian architecture and gridded residential streets, but the imposition of the alien metropolitan scaled infrastructure of bridges, highways and traffic that changed the character of the immediate area.

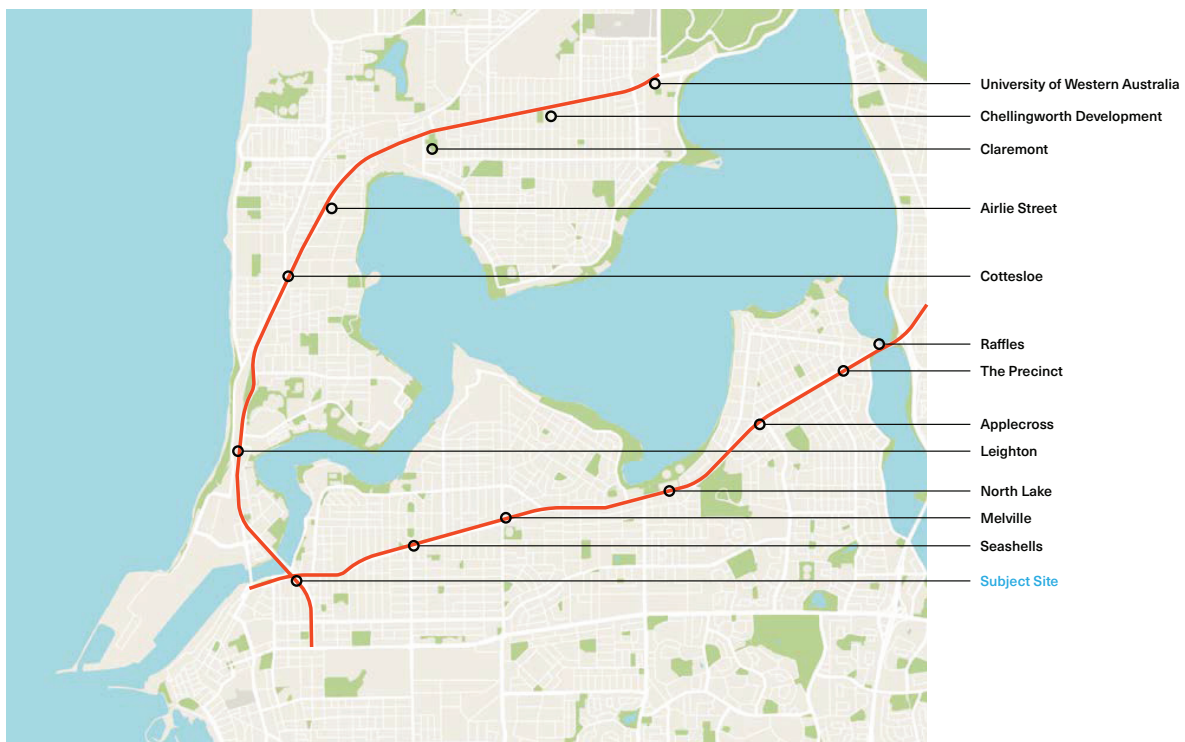
It is at the landfall of this bridge and on the side of this highway that you find this site. On the fault line of past and future, local and metropolitan.



Thus, development of this site will have to reimagine and respond to at least 4 contextual settings:

1. The foremost feature of the place is the river aspect. Its natural beauty and geographic grounding are the takeaway memory of the place. Otherwise, the context is two extremely busy highways, one a heavy haulage route to the Port. Their scale and environmental impact are inescapable. The two local streets, one presenting an unremarkable 3 level hotel and single level heritage retail building, and the other the scar off the infrastructure event that created a new street where houses once stood, presenting a mute side lot fence and recent bland infill small lot housing.
2. Apart from the from the urban disruption surrounding the site resultant from the extension of Stirling Highway, Plympton remains a quiet residential area. Many heritage value weatherboard, brick and stone cottages have survived a colourful inclusion of Mediterranean inspired villas during the 60's and 70's and recent replacement and infill housing. The original town centre of George Street significantly contributes to local vibrancy and identity. A number of large scale apartment buildings of the 1960s+ 70s era are inter-dispersed throughout the neighbourhood.
3. The site's location on Canning Highway in proximity to the Council Chambers and the new commercial centre justifies a natural progression of the new town centre zone identified in the Town's Local Planning Strategy. The nexus of the two major routes created an obvious neighbourhood focus. Recent buildings are of a significantly greater scale than earlier development and present an opportunity to introduce some housing diversity and density within what has been a traditional suburban pattern.
4. The elevated nature of the site, with long distance views towards it from all four directions and its location at a natural crossing, entry, gateway and natural marker highlight the potential and the responsibility incumbent on a structure that will become an important landmark.

Thus, the proposal is deft and dynamic, varying scale, materiality and detail to respond to the difference contexts with which it rests.



Landscape Quality

The design of the landscape has been a significant consideration in the planning and development of the proposal. Following a systematic assessment of the planning policies, local neighbourhood, natural environment and site conditions the architectural form was located on the northern edge of the site creating an opportunity for significant open space and highly connected ground plane.

The project sits at the intersection of the Derbal Yaragan (Swan River), local ecological corridors, historic transport links, bike paths and local communities. The project embraces its location at the crossroads of the local context and the landscape has been organised to create new links and public open spaces that enhance the local area.

The landscape design allows for the retention of significant trees, strong pedestrian connectivity, generous deep soil zones and tree canopies, alfresco dining and amenity areas, nature play zones and high-quality landscaping throughout the development.

The result is the creation of a series of parkland, garden and amenity spaces that respond to the local character of the area and provide a highly connected and amenity rich landscape for local residents and a much-needed public open space contribution to the Town of East Fremantle.



Built Form and Scale

The built-form and massing of the development is a direct derivative of the prescribed maximum building envelope the forms part of Schedule 13 the Local Planning Scheme.

Spaceagency have had an uninterrupted design involvement developing the Scheme provisions and the subsequent design of the proposal following its approval.

Key factors that informed the evolution of the maximum building envelope were primarily a concentration of the building mass to the northern, highway fronting portion of the site, to reinforce the sites prominence in the town centre precinct, and for the envelope to taper down to comparable scales to respond to the adjoining conditions to the south and west. The winter solstice truncation to the south ensures no overshadowing to south and a 45 degree truncation to the west to ameliorate the scale to the Sewell Street.

The overall maximum height of the envelope was determined in reference to the town section, taking account of scattering of similar scaled existing apartment buildings. The opportunity to exceed the maximum building envelope on the condition of a positive open space outcome came with a prescriptive overshadowing condition that consequently focused the extra over massing of the building to the northwest corner of the site.

The design approach is to consider the built form as an object in the round, with the real possibility that it will not have similar scaled neighbours in the future. So rather than a tall building forming a part of a composition in concert with its neighbours, it is a complete composition on its own.

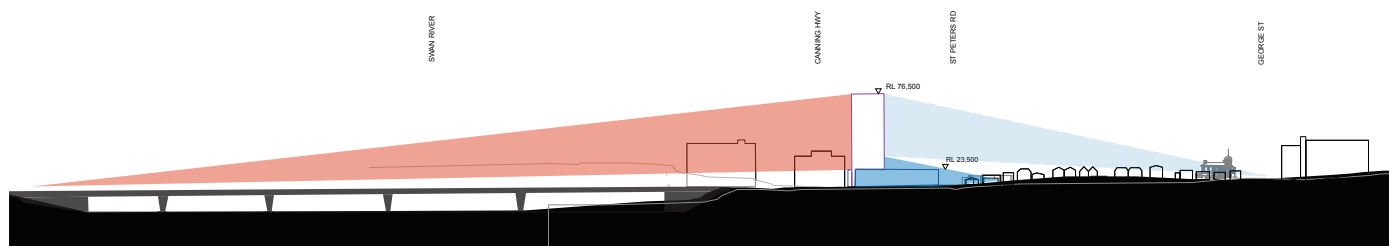
The form presents as two unequal towers plus a podium, broken at the primary corner to allow the taller of the two towers to extend all the way to the ground. The podium opens up the south east corner of the site and embraces the new parkland.

Each of the two towers have been given a further slender proportion by expressing the two north facing balconies individually, in effect visually presenting the building as cluster of four towers each with a slightly altered gaze.

Within the proximity of its immediate neighbours the proposal responds to the neighbourhood street, presenting a podium of scale and height comparable with the Tradewinds Hotel and materialised as brickwork, directly referencing the immediate vernacular.

From adjoining Plympton and the adjacent town centre, the proposal is experienced as an overlay with the surrounding urban fabric. From here fine detail is less perceivable, but the composition of the massing, articulation, solid void, landscaping and colour assume prominence. The local reference is less direct and more abstract.

From beyond 500 metres the proposal assumes a role in the landscape. From this distance the overall scale of the proposal is seen in the context of the horizon, the large scaled natural elements (river and, escapement) and urban infrastructure (bridge, highways, port) and takes on the responsibility of being a landmark. A point from which you can take your bearing, a marker and takeaway “sense of place”.



Functionality and Build Quality

All communal and private space are above street level and completely grade separated from public areas. This seeking a subtle balance between 24 hour publicly accessible spaces and communal open space security.

Vehicle movements have been replanned to avoid congestion and provide a safe environment for driver's and pedestrians.

A typical tower apartment floor contains 2 units. Corridors are short and are single loaded. Apartments have full width balconies, providing good natural daylight and cross ventilation. All apartments have retracted balconies, providing sun and wind protection as well as optimum privacy and inside/outside interface.

East and west facing windows have been shaded by vertical louvre blades, while maintaining framed views to the north-west.

Apartment floors are served by a waste sorting room. Waste collection, mail and courier deliveries and utility monitoring are all accommodated at a service point separate from resident and visitor's entries.

Material selection is focused on long life, no maintenance criteria, with coloured off form concrete and face brickwork proposed for the apartment facades.

All building services are envisioned to be integrated into the building and mechanical plant screened from view.



Sustainability

Overall project sustainability will be 5 star, benchmarked to GreenStar Certification. It will also maintain an ongoing Carbon Neutral (Climate Active Certification).

The proposed new apartments in a high amenity precinct, well served by public transport and lifestyle choice, will provide housing diversity within an ageing population location and will contribute greatly to the Towns' urban infill target, taking pressure off the loss of both heritage value and tree canopy within the Town.

Passive environmental principals have been adopted as much as possible in the design of the apartment building. Deep recessed balconies shade the major glazing elements. East and west facing windows will be shaded by vertical sunshades.

Double-glazing will reduce heat loading and the reverse in winter. The "through apartment" plan will afford excellent cross ventilation and the recessed balconies will transfer natural daylight deep into the floor plan.

Material selection has focused on long life no maintenance criteria, with coloured off form concrete and face brickwork proposed for the apartment facades.

Sustainability Opportunities



SOCIAL SPACES

External spaces for people to meet and socialise



MICRO-CLIMATE

Landscape and urban design to provide comfortable external spaces



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Integrated green infrastructure



ENHANCED BIODIVERSITY

New landscape habitats to repair biodiversity



SURFACE WATER NETWORK

Surface water systems to enhance identity and ecology



HERITAGE MEMORY

Heritage memory integrated in the landscape narrative

Amenity

The project houses a variety of differing complementary uses that offer convenience and amenity to residents and visitors as well as contribute to the vitality of the place at different times of the day and week. It will be a place of social engagement, recreation, residence as well as employment. At the ground plane, this is focused on the park space, which is an at grade extension of the public realm incorporating alfresco dining, apartment entry forecourt and general gathering place.

Universal access is planned throughout the development.

A variety of apartment types are proposed, ranging from single bed apartments to two- and three-bedroom options and a large penthouse at the top level. Green roofs to the Sewell St. wing as well as the eastern tower, provide a landscape aspect to upper levels.

Balconies to the apartments are recessed into the building providing sun, wind protection and optimal visual and acoustic separation. As the site presents long east and west elevations, vertical shading and double-glazing will mitigate acoustic and thermal loading on the interior. The typical apartment plan will allow good natural day-lighting and ventilation.

The proposal maintains nearby properties amenity, without detrimental overshadowing, and as it has no adjoining boundaries, overlooking of private outdoor living areas.



Legibility

The central Sewell Street entrance is planned as an extension of the public realm. It has a generous and easily identifiable, direct access open space connecting the café and apartment lobby.

Apartments are entered through a controlled access lobby space and some Sewell Street apartments have an optional direct street entry.

The universal access lifts are available directly from the main street entry, as well as hospitality staff and bicycle entries.

Vehicles and people are completely separated, with a separate vehicle entry. This is provided for access to the car parking as well as service delivery and waste collection. All vehicles including trucks will exit the property in a forward motion.



Safety

All public and private external spaces within the project will be detailed to conform to CPTED principals. This including natural access control, territorial reinforcement, after-hours lighting and natural and passive surveillance opportunities.

Vehicles and people are completely separated, with a separate vehicle entry. This is provided for access to the car parking as well as service delivery and waste collection. All vehicles including trucks will exit the property in a forward motion.

Community

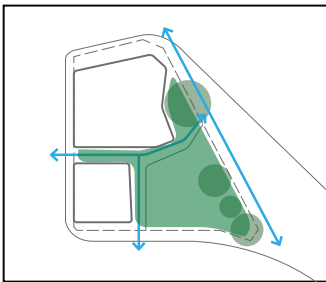
The provision of a new neighbourhood park will reinforce the local identity of the precinct, as well as bring additional amenity, economic benefit and potential employment to the community.

The inclusion of the extra height provisions of the Scheme were a direct result of the public consultation, which identified the opportunity for open space to be incorporated within the development to reflect a public benefit.

The project embodies social engagement directly through the exercise of its local park and gathering space and cycling program, enabling the public to access and interact within this new public asset.

In addition to the hospitality use, the proposed apartment building adds 95 apartments to the locality. The new residents will add to the social and economic vitality of the precinct.

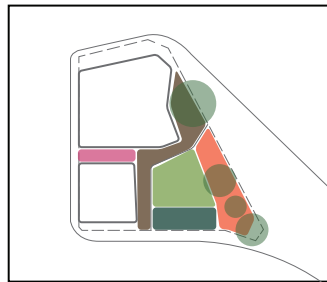
Public Space



Create a new highly connected public space in the Plympton neighborhood.



Amenity



Create new amenity for a range of users.



Ecology



Build a resilient and bio-diverse green network.



Aesthetics

The proposal is bound to be controversial, as it is a significant departure from the adjoining urban fabric that surrounds it, however it also presents as an exciting regional landmark project, and alongside it a significant new public space.

The proposal seeks to operate at variety of scales, up close as a face brick deep rhythmic colonnade or terrace in response to it more immediate neighbours and from a far a singular landmark gesture as it stands apart from its surrounds.

The design approach is to consider the built form as an object in the round, with the real possibility that it will not have similar scaled neighbours in the future. So rather than a tall building forming a part of a composition in concert with its neighbours, it is a complete composition on its own.

Any direct translation of the local area design language is difficult, however we have been encouraged by abstracting references to the “Mediterranean” influences evidenced in some of the houses in the surrounding streets.

