



London
Central

40 London Circuit

Works Approval Submission

Urban Design and Architectural Design Report
17 December 2025


CAPITAL
PROPERTY GROUP

JPW

Acknowledgement of Country

Document Control

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, skies and culture.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Purpose

This Design Report has been prepared by JPW on behalf of Capital Property Group as part of a Works Approval submission for the London Central development in Canberra City.

This document describes the urban design and architectural proposals for 40 London Circuit, and its integration with the broader masterplan for the site.

Queries

Any queries regarding this document should, in the first instance, be directed to Capital Property Group

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Status

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1 Vision

Our vision is to create a vibrant new destination that capitalises on this site's landmark location at the heart of Canberra's city centre.

40 London Circuit is integrated with the masterplan to provide increased pedestrianised public space and a more expansive north facing public plaza, ground floor spaces that are better suited to cater for diverse uses and precinct activation, and a more flexible and sustainable workplace configuration that is able to meet evolving tenant requirements into the future.

40 London Circuit is the final component of a comprehensive precinct masterplan for London Central that will enrich the urban fabric and vitality of civic life within this great city.

2 Place & Context

Country

The design for 60 London Circuit has been informed by the site’s unique characteristics, setting and location.

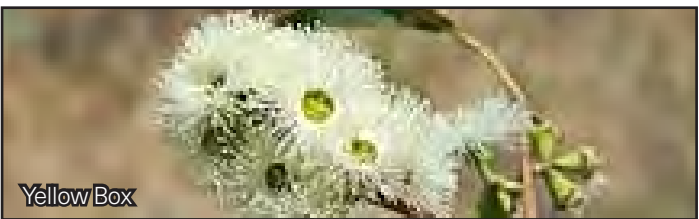
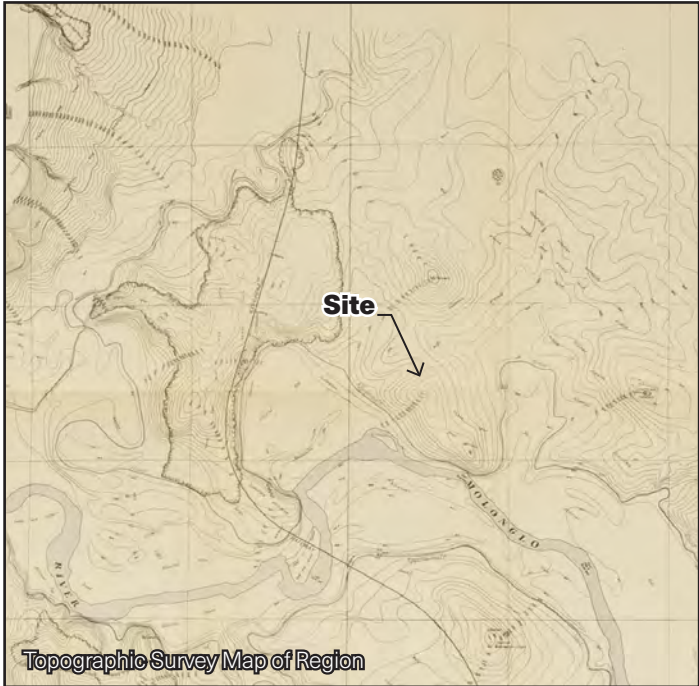
The site’s elevated position offers views across the valleys and to the adjacent waterway of the Molonglo River, framed by the prominent landforms of Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie, whilst its unique geology intersects several distinct sub-subterranean conditions, including volcanic rock, sandstone, and limestone.

The native vegetation, prior to European Settlement, is likely to have been grassy open woodland, including plant species such as Silver Wattle (Nummerak), She Oak (Dulwa) and Yellowbox (Bargan).

These intrinsic characteristics of Country have informed many aspects of the design thinking for the project.

JPW’s work with Capital Property Group within the City Hill Precinct has also afforded opportunities for preliminary consultation with local knowledge holders, which has helped further the design team’s understanding of the site, and opportunities to connect to and design with Country.

This learning will continue through ongoing consultation with local communities and stakeholders throughout the life of the project.



2 Place & Context

Historic Context

In 1912, Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin won an International Design Competition for the design of Australia’s capital city. Their vision for a Garden City, uniquely tuned to Canberra’s landscape and topography, was a highly innovative design which gives Canberra its unique character today.

The Griffin's Unique Vision

The Griffin's plan of Canberra is organised around a series of intersecting axes that visually link to key landscape features.

60 London Circuit is located directly adjacent to City Hill, one of the key landscape features that defines the northern termination of the Municipal Axis, which links what is now known as Civic to Russell along Constitution Avenue.

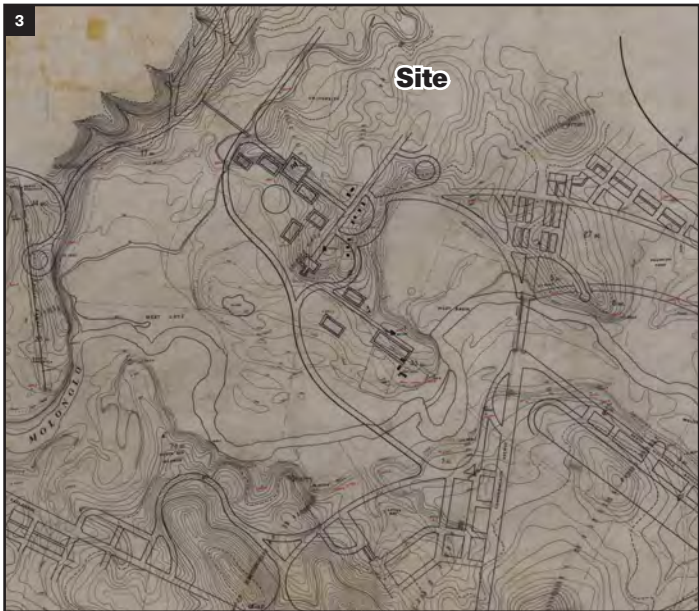
Two diagonal axes, from City Hill along Kings Avenue, and from Russell along Commonwealth Avenue, terminate at Capital Hill to form a triangular plan.

City Hill is a landscaped space ringed by a large roundabout, Vernon Circle, with a second hexagonal circuit, London Circuit, defining a series of city blocks around City Hill.

The site sits between Vernon Circle and London Circuit, with the eastern side defined by Northbourne Avenue, which is an extension of the Federal Highway, the national road linking the centre of Canberra to the north.

The site plays an important role in reinforcing the Griffin’s urban structure of Canberra, and in activating the precinct as the city extends southward towards Lake Burley Griffin.

As a landmark site, it is vital that the site planning strategy and built form response delivers architectural, landscape and urban design excellence.



- City Geometry**
- 1 Marion Mahony Griffin's competition plan of the Federal Capital, 1912.
 - 2 Detailed Plan of Canberra Showing Federal Capital Commission Subdivisions Overlaid on Griffin Plan with Working Notes and References to Supporting Plans, 1927. Note fine-grained subdivision of Melbourne Building, and outline of future Vernon Circle.
 - 3 Plan drafted in 1925 of recorded flood lines in relation to future edges of lake as per Griffin design including formal basins, adjacent streets and esplanades. This plan indicates to topography of City Hill, with the site to the northern side of this geographic landmark.
 - 4 1953 Image of City Hill Precinct from the south
 - 5 2023 image of City Hill Precinct from the north

2 Place & Context

Urban Context

The site is adjacent several historic and important neighbours, reinforcing the civic stature of this part of the city.

The buildings to the north, south and west of the site are distinguished examples of their time, presenting visually strong forms that are articulated through fine detailing and careful selection of materials.

Melbourne Building

The Melbourne Building, directly across London Circuit to the north, is heritage-listed and one of Canberra’s most distinctive buildings.

Paired with the Sydney Building on the eastern side of Northbourne Avenue, they reinforce the geometry and urban importance of this important road and geometric intersection within Canberra’s urban structure.

Both buildings were based on design principles set by the prominent architect, J S Sulman and the design work was finalised by J H Kirkpatrick.

The geometric order, dimensions and rhythm of the Melbourne Building’s colonnades was originally inspired by Brunelleschi’s *Hospital of the Innocents* in Florence, Italy.



Reserve Bank of Australia

The Reserve Bank of Australia Building is a heritage-listed building at 20-22 London Circuit, to the southwest of the site across Knowles Place.

The building was designed by Howlett and Bailey in 1962 and built from 1963 to 1965 by Civil & Civic.

A modernist 3 level form with a rectangular footprint of 45 x 30m, the building presents a tightly controlled expression to the streetscape with regular modules of elegant marble-clad columns and recessed windows and cladding.

ACT Law Courts

The law courts complex, which now extends around Vernon Circle but retains all principle entrances along Knowles Place, comprises several phases of development.

The Magistrates Court building fronting the Knowles Place Extension directly to the south of the site was designed by local architects, Graham Humphries, Rodney Moss and Colin Stewart, and completed in 1996.

The 4 storey building contains a number of courts, office spaces and chambers. A basement car park and loading area are located along the eastern side, and accessed via an external ramp with secure access.

More recent building projects have linked this building to the original Supreme Court building which is located further south along Knowles Place.

- 1 Aerial view of the Melbourne and Sydney Buildings in 1958. The general form of London Circuit is defined, but Vernon Circle is yet to enclose City Hill as a park landscape.
- 2 View through the colonnade of the Sydney Building across Northbourne Avenue towards the Melbourne Building and the subject site from 1928.
- 3 View of the site from the intersection of Northbourne Avenue and London Circuit (looking southwest).
- 4 View of the site from the intersection of West Row and London Circuit (looking southeast towards Northbourne Avenue).

2 Place & Context

Urban Context

The existing identity of the precinct will be complemented by evolving functions and urban intensity, including the Canberra Theatre Expansion, and West Basin Development, as well as expanded public transport infrastructure.



Other Future Urban Relationships

Canberra Theatre Expansion

In 2022 the ACT Government ran an international design competition to extend the Canberra Theatre, and a consortium of Australian and international architects was subsequently selected to develop a concept which will include a 2000 seat auditorium.

While this project will not directly impact the site, it will have some influence on pedestrian and traffic movement around the precinct, and will make a significant contribution to the activation of Civic, particularly in the evenings.

West Basin

Plans to increase development in the zone between Vernon Circle and West Basin, evident in the NCA's plans and recent land sale releases by the CRA, will significantly increase the density and activation of the City Hill precinct and the immediate surrounds, and connectivity of the site to Lake Burley Griffin.



- 1 View of Reserve Bank Building on London Circuit from the southwest.
- 2 View of the ACT Magistrates Court from Knowles Place.
- 3 View along Knowles Place; Reserve Bank on right and ACT Magistrates Court centre. London Central site to the left of image.
- 4 View along the Knowles Place extension. ACT Magistrates Court to the left, London Central site to the right and Reserve Bank Building beyond.
- 5 Proposal for Canberra Theatre Expansion.
- 6 Indicative Masterplan Proposal for the West Basin Precinct.

2 Place & Context

Urban Context

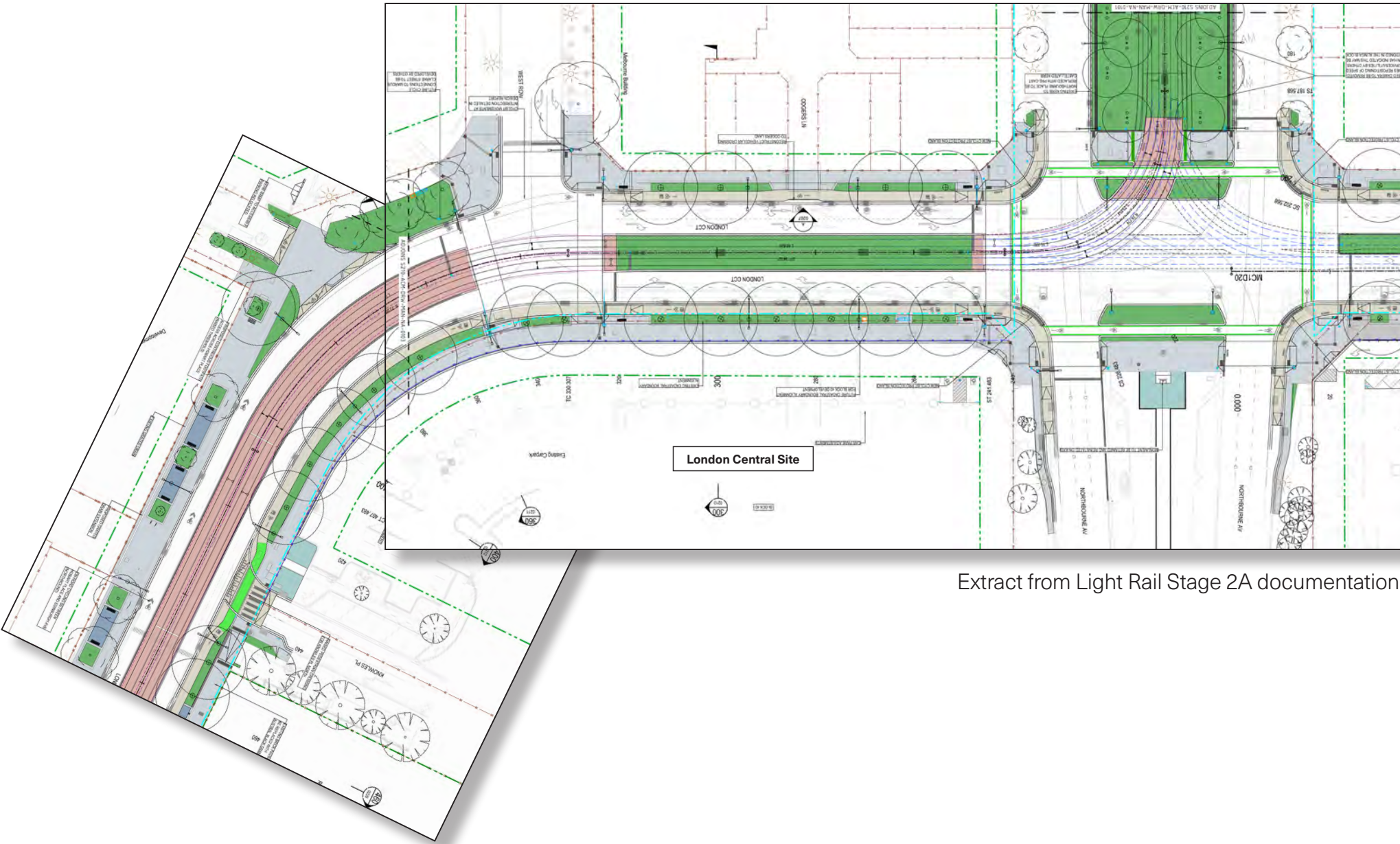
Light Rail Stage 2A

The expansion of Canberra's existing Light Rail network along London Circuit will greatly enhance the connectivity and urban character of this important street, and support increased activity in this part of the city centre.

London Central will integrate this piece of urban infrastructure, through coordination of setbacks, street trees, cycleways and pedestrian street crossings, materials and other elements.



Image from ACT Government website



Extract from Light Rail Stage 2A documentation

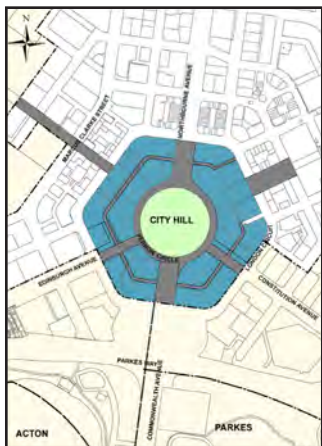
2 Place & Context

Planning Controls

National Capital Plan

The National Capital Plan (NCP) is the strategic plan for Canberra and the ACT. London Central is subject to the City Hill Precinct Code of the NCP.

The following are key diagrams from the National Capital Plan that govern and inform development proposals for the site.



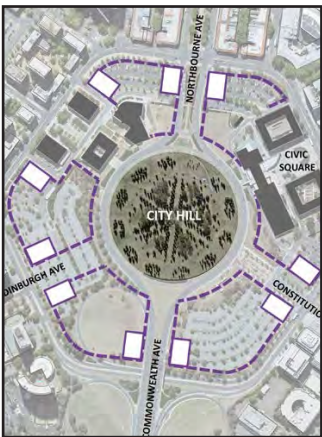
Land Use



Indicative Development



Avenue Connection and Vistas



Landmark Towers

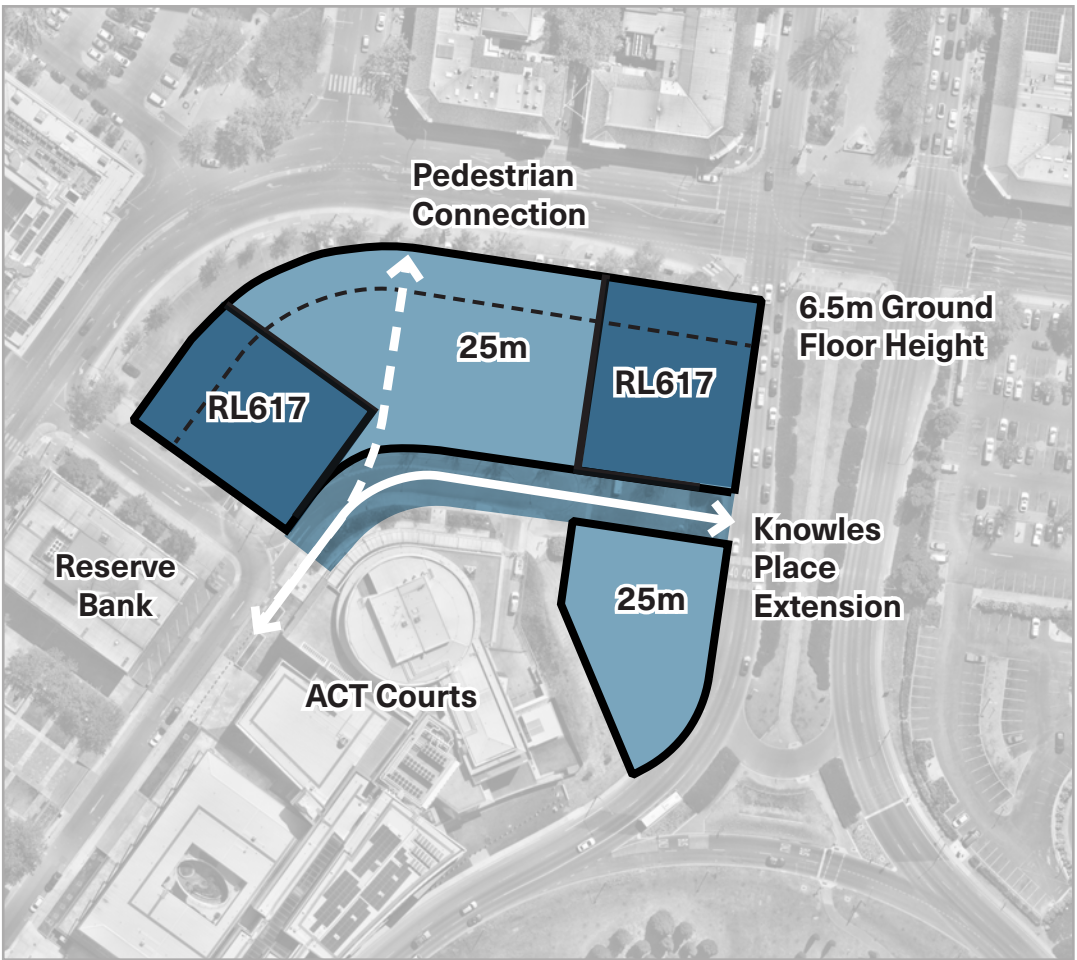


Laneways



Pedestrian Links

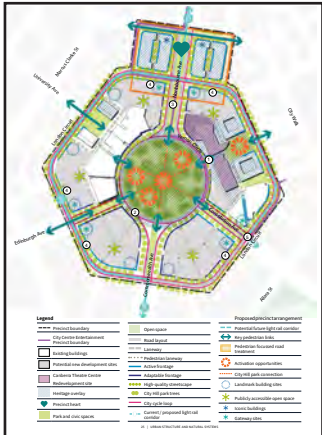
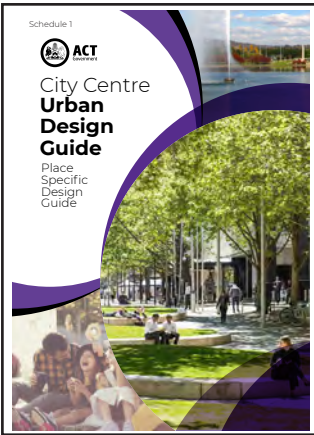
The diagram below overlays key NCP controls governing the site, including height, assignment of landmark buildings, land use (e.g. roads), through site connections and ground floor heights.



These controls form the basis of the site strategy for the London Central Precinct Masterplan.

ACT City Centre Urban Design Guide

The ACT City Centre Urban Design Guide communicates the ACT Government's intent to deliver high quality best-practice design outcomes for the City Centre.



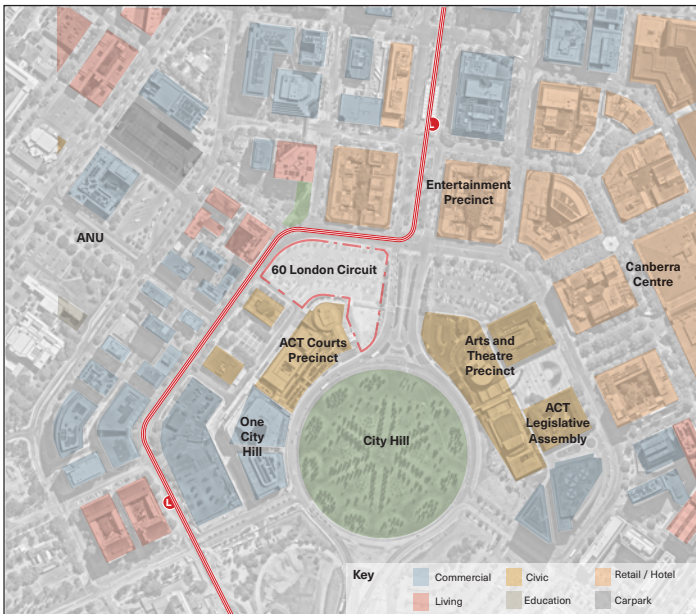
Pages 24-25 of the Guide relate specifically to the City Hill Precinct, identifying key moves such as reducing vehicle speed along Vernon Circle to 40km/h, improving public space along Northbourne Avenue, and providing active uses along London Circuit to address its role as the primary active street spine through the City Hill precinct, and improving connectivity between precincts.

The proposal for London Central directly addresses key moves identified in the ACT City Centre Urban Design Guide.

2 Place & Context

Urban Analysis

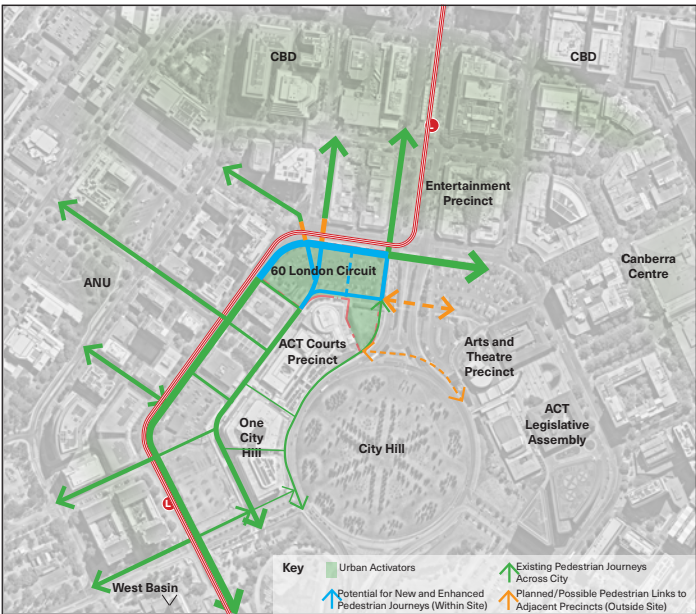
Land Use



The site is surrounded by a diverse mix of land uses.

London Central will enhance this diversity through its own functions and contribute to the vitality of the city throughout the day and evening.

Pedestrian Movement



The site will perform as an Urban Connector by establishing a new civic destination within the CBD, enhancing existing pedestrian desire lines through the city, and establishing new vital links between adjacent precincts.

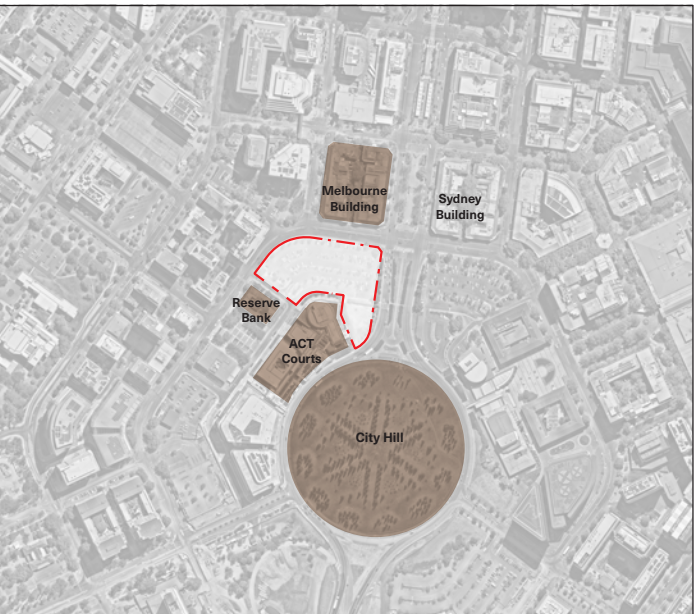
Environmental Context



The site slopes down gently to the north with excellent solar access throughout the year. Key urban parklands are located immediately adjacent the site.

Prevailing summer winds are mostly from the northeast and east to southeast direction. In winter, winds are predominantly from the northwest with secondary winds from the southeast to south direction.

Heritage Context

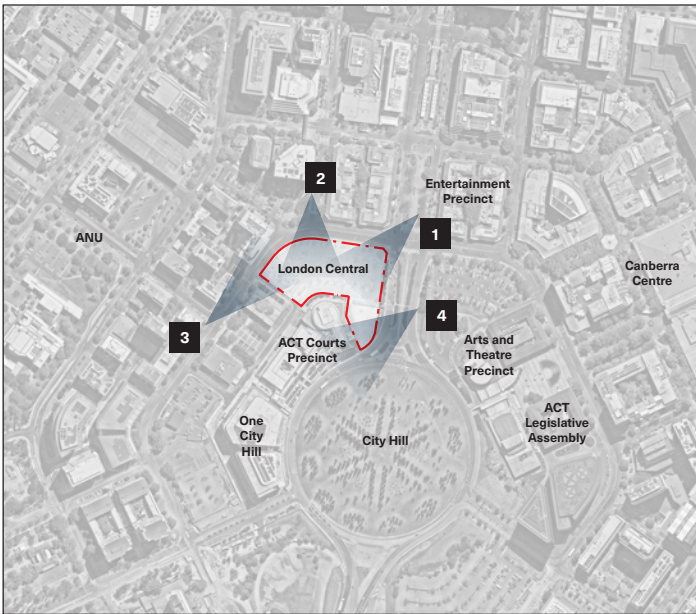


The site is located directly adjacent several heritage listed buildings and significant public spaces.

2 Place & Context

Urban Analysis

Urban Vistas

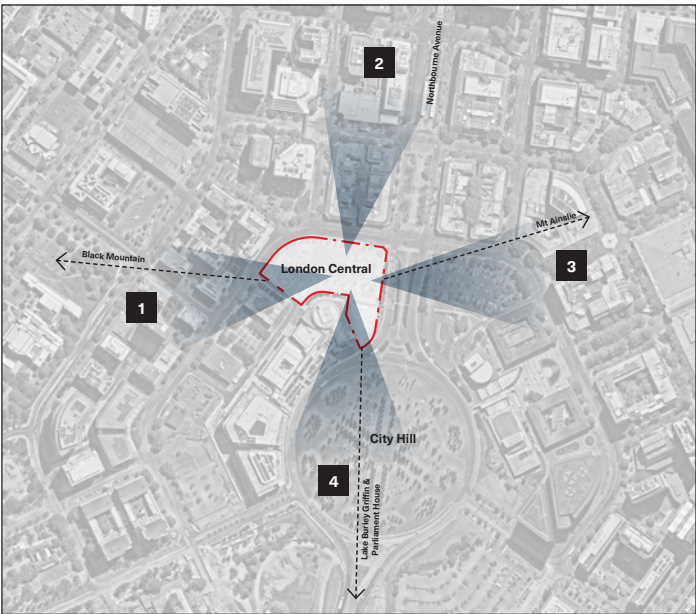


The site's prominence presents opportunities for quality urban vistas, inviting approaches and stronger definition of the precinct's public space network.

- 1 Vista toward the site from Northbourne Avenue, near the intersection of London Circuit. Melbourne Building to the right of the image.
- 2 Vista towards the site from London Circuit, west of the Reserve Bank Building (in foreground).
- 3 Vista towards the site from London Circuit, west of the Reserve Bank Building (in foreground).
- 4 Vista towards Vernon Circle with 60 London Circuit site on the right of the image.



Views



The site has the potential to capitalise on excellent views in all directions.

- 1 View west over ACT Courts Precinct and Reserve Bank towards Black Mountain, Brindabella Ranges beyond.
- 2 View north over Melbourne Building and up Northbourne Avenue
- 3 View east over the Theatre Precinct, across the city towards Mount Ainslie.
- 4 View east over the Theatre Precinct, across the city towards Mount Ainslie.

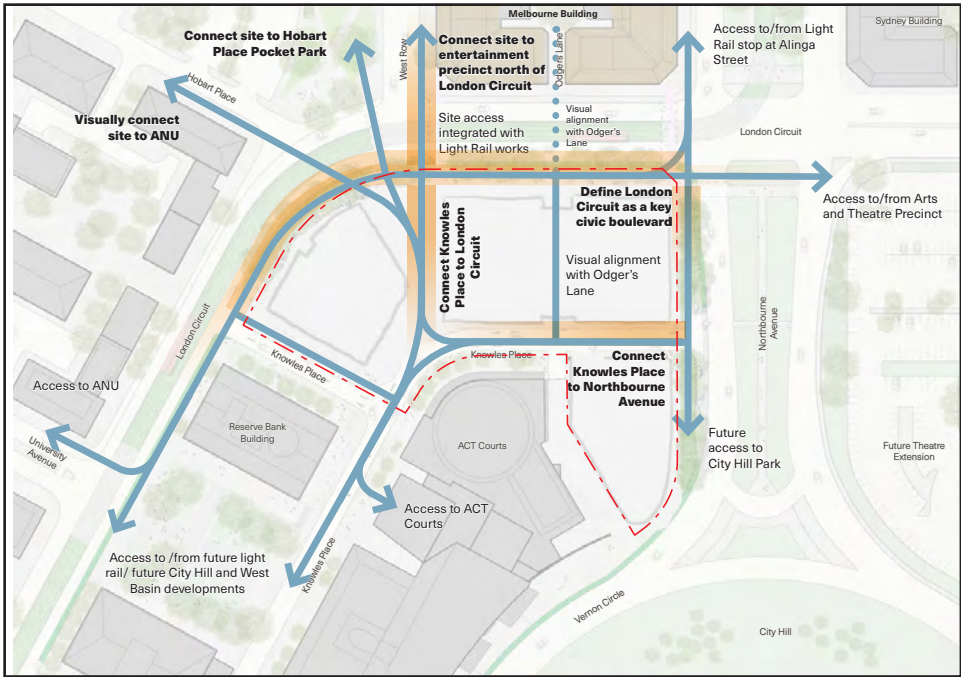


3 Precinct Masterplan

Design Principles

The site context has informed the following Design Principles for the London Central Precinct Masterplan.

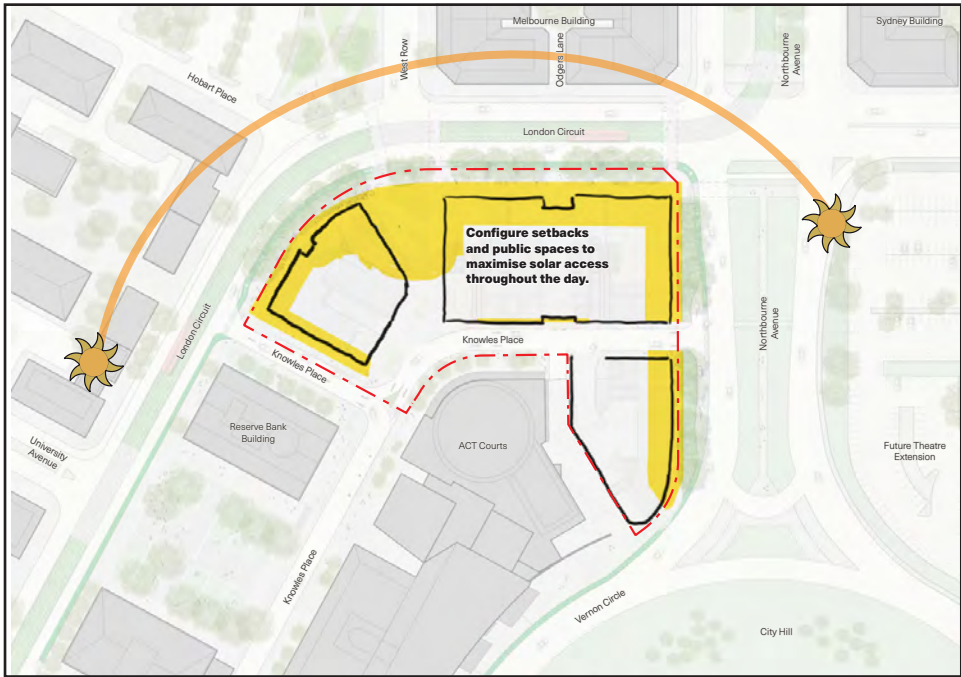
1 Site as an Urban Connector



Establish permeability through the site by extending Knowles Place to Northbourne Avenue, and creating visual and physical connections from Knowles Place and London Circuit.

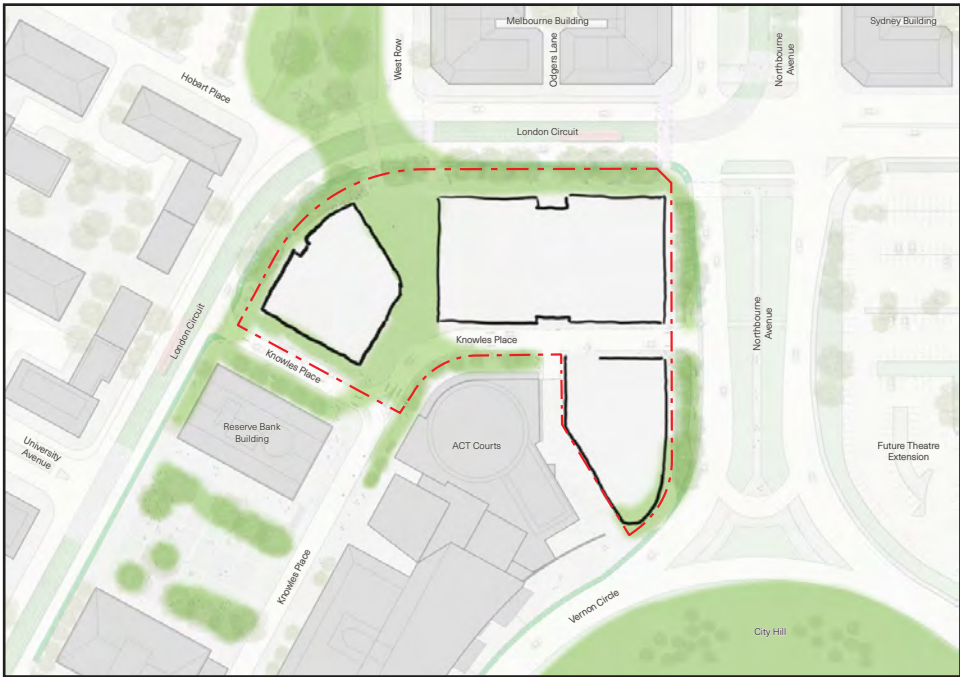
North-south connections to London Circuit to align with future pedestrian crossings to be realised as part of Light Rail Stage 2A, linking the Melbourne Building and entertainment precinct to the north, and reinvigorating London Circuit as a vital civic boulevard within the city.

2 Maximise Solar Access



Configure building alignments and setbacks to maximise solar access to public spaces along all building frontages and through the site.

3 Extend Green Public Space into the site

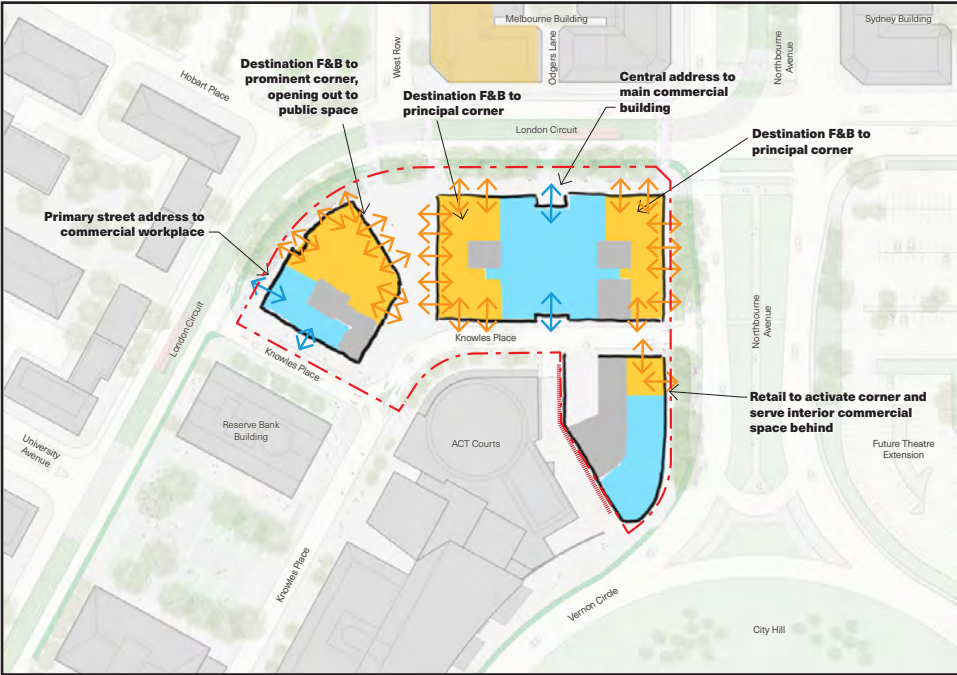


Extend green public spaces through the site that links Hobart Place Pocket Park and green infrastructure to be delivered as part of the Light Rail works, with upgraded landscaped interfaces with the ACT Courts, integrated with the London Central development.

3 Precinct Masterplan

Design Principles

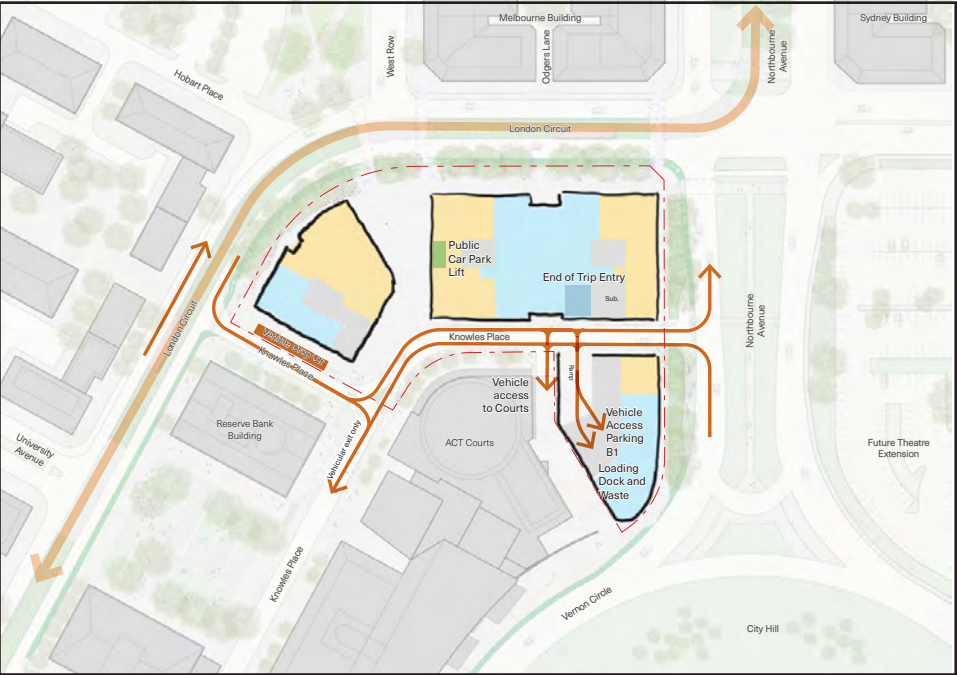
4 Diverse Uses to Activate Ground Plane



Allocate uses at the ground plane that take advantage of the northerly aspect, prominent corners and adjacency to proposed public spaces to activate the urban environment.

Ensure diversity of uses at the ground plane to engage with different user groups throughout the day and evening.

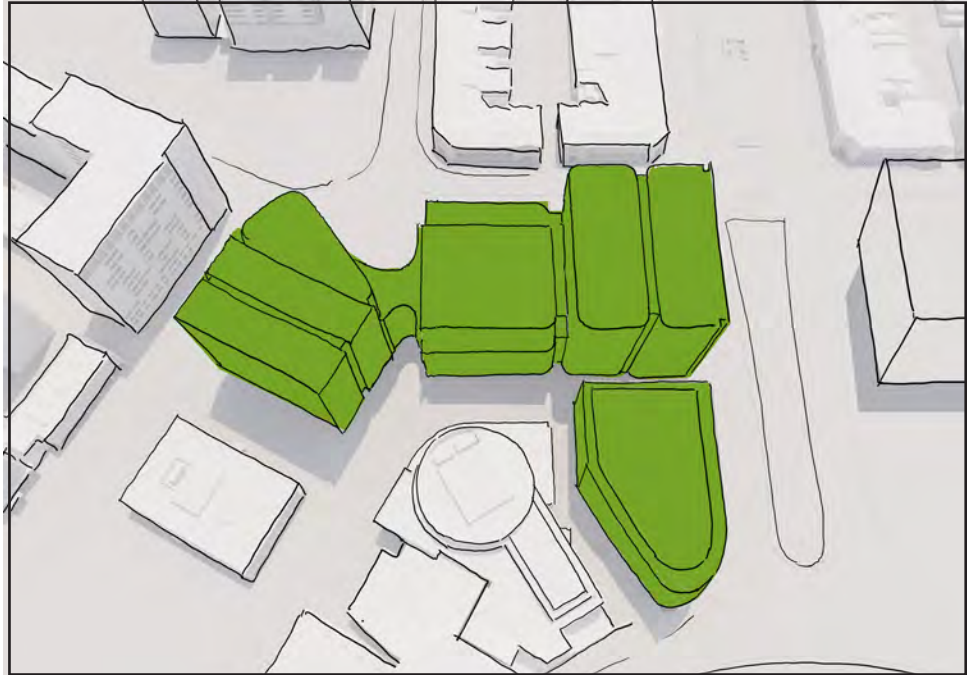
5 Considered Plan for Traffic and Access



Consider the introduction of Light Rail to the road network, and opportunities to mitigate vehicular congestion along Knowles Place and across the city by providing alternative connections to Northbourne Avenue.

Design Knowles Place to be a safe, accessible and inviting environment for pedestrians.

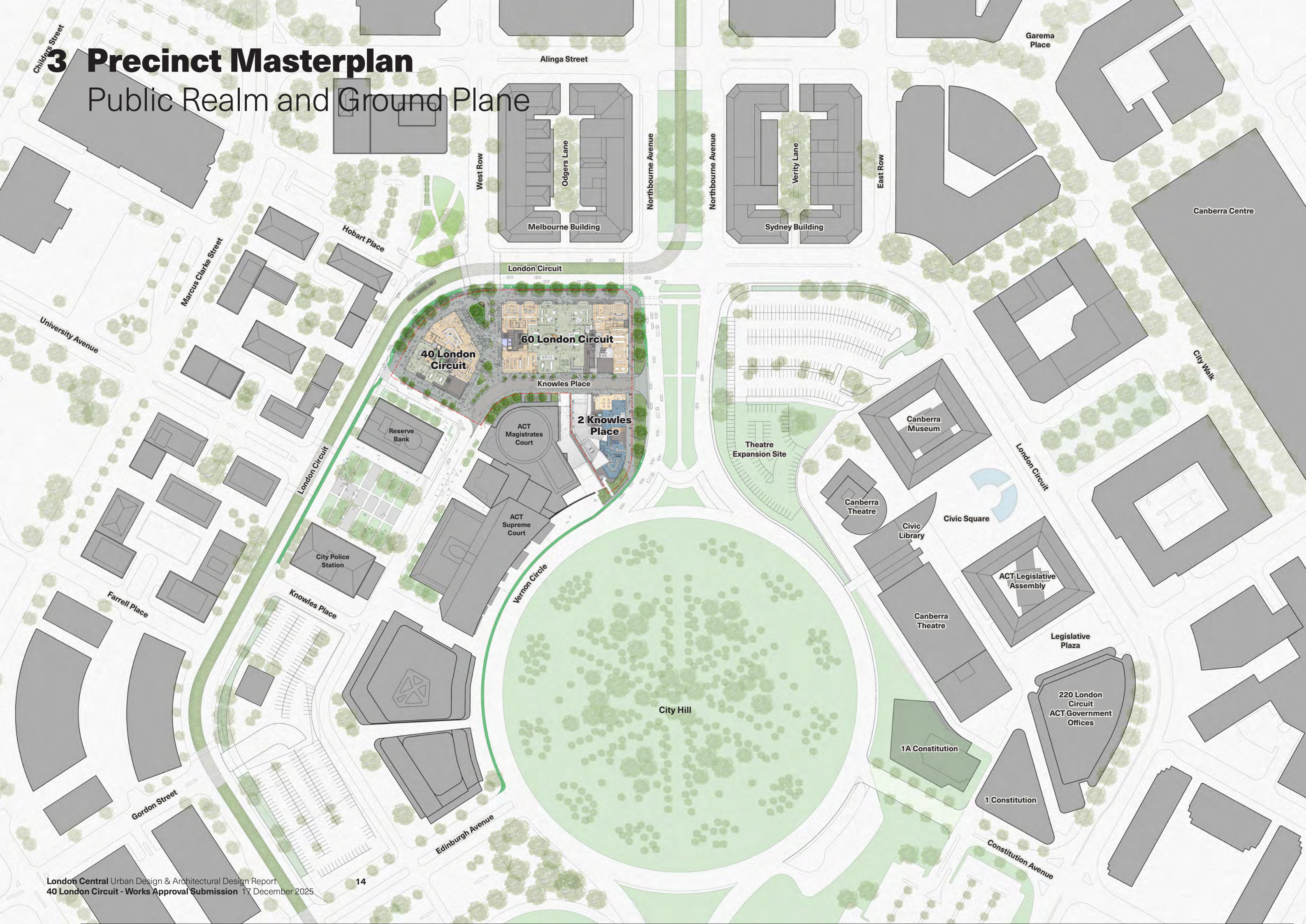
6 Sustainability and Resilience



Establish high benchmarks for sustainability and resilience in the design of all elements within the precinct, with respect to both construction and operation.

3 Precinct Masterplan

Public Realm and Ground Plane

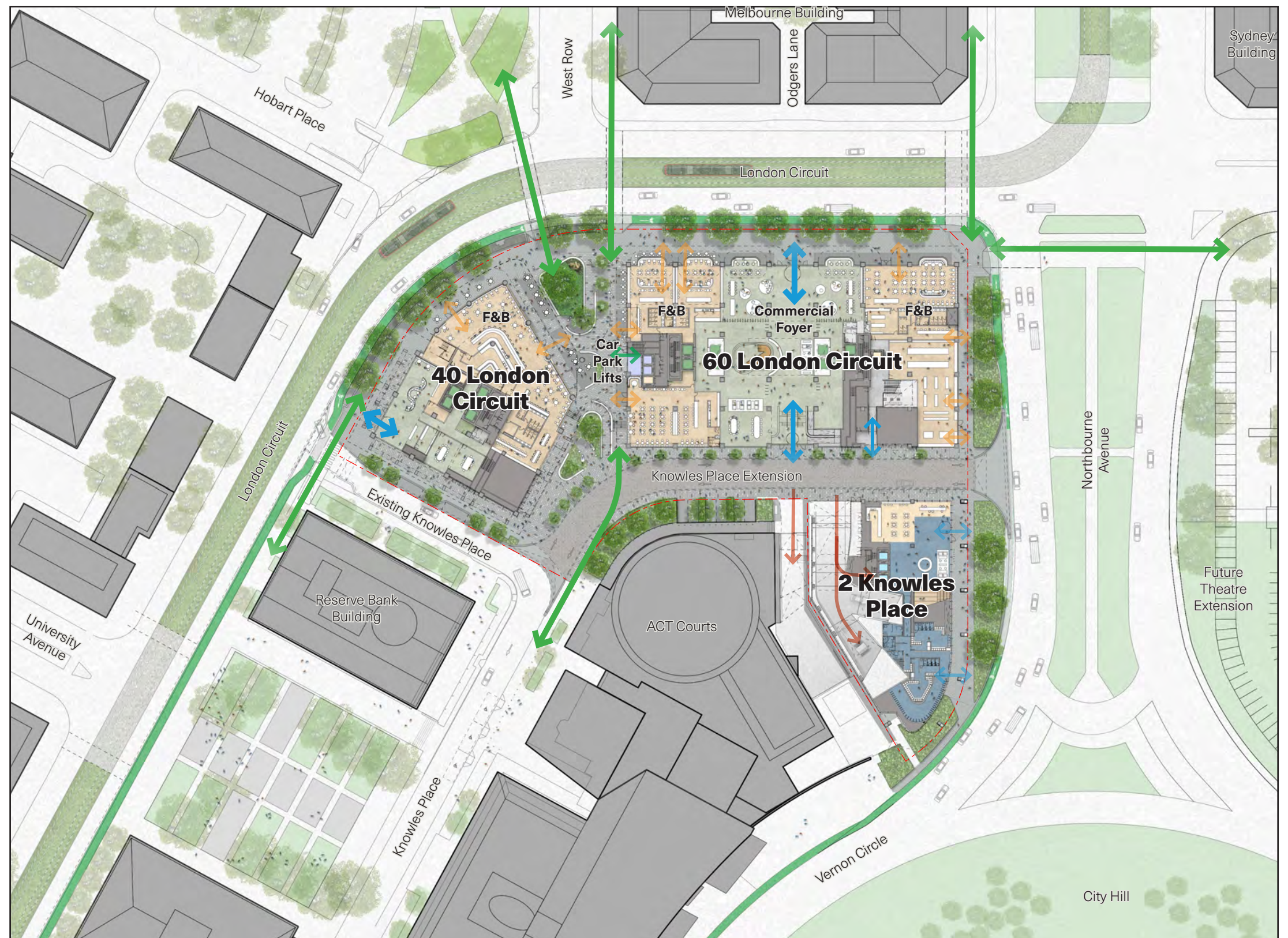


3 Precinct Masterplan

Public Realm and Ground Plane

Vibrant, successful cities are often characterised by pedestrian environments that are accessible, tuned to climate, and activated by a diverse range of uses.

London Central translates these factors into a contemporary design solution that creatively responds to Canberra's climate and character to create a unique urban outcome that will be seamlessly connected to place, and be a vibrant destination in its own right.



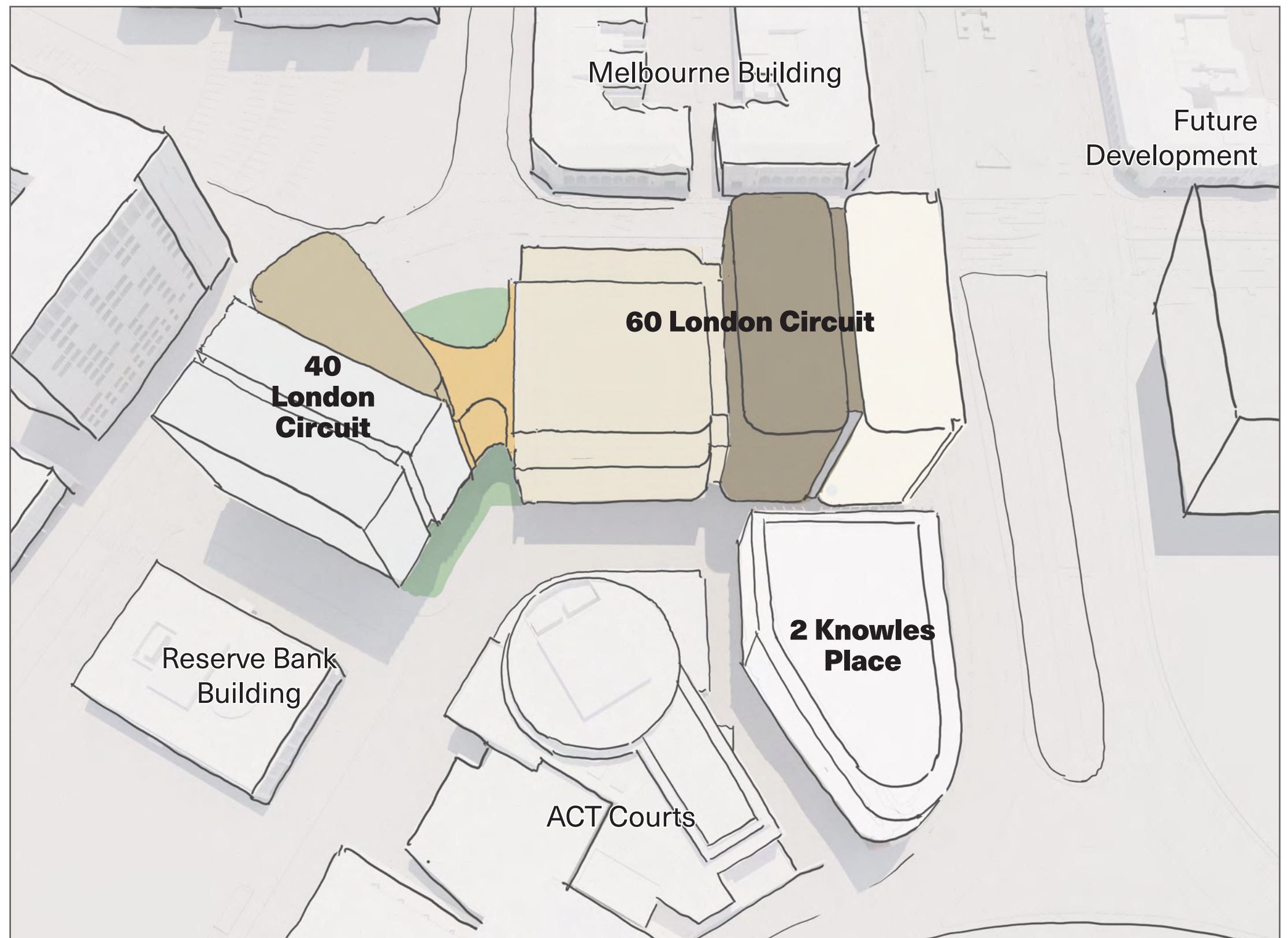
3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form

The masterplan proposes three distinct building forms that respond directly to their immediate urban and environmental contexts.

The proposed built form composition aligns with the National Capital Plan and defines generous and desirable urban spaces with excellent amenity and distinctive character.

40 London Circuit will be connected to **60 London Circuit** from Level 2-7 via striking dynamic form that responds to the surrounding urban geometry, key vistas and nature to enhance the role of London Central as a desirable destination within Canberra City.



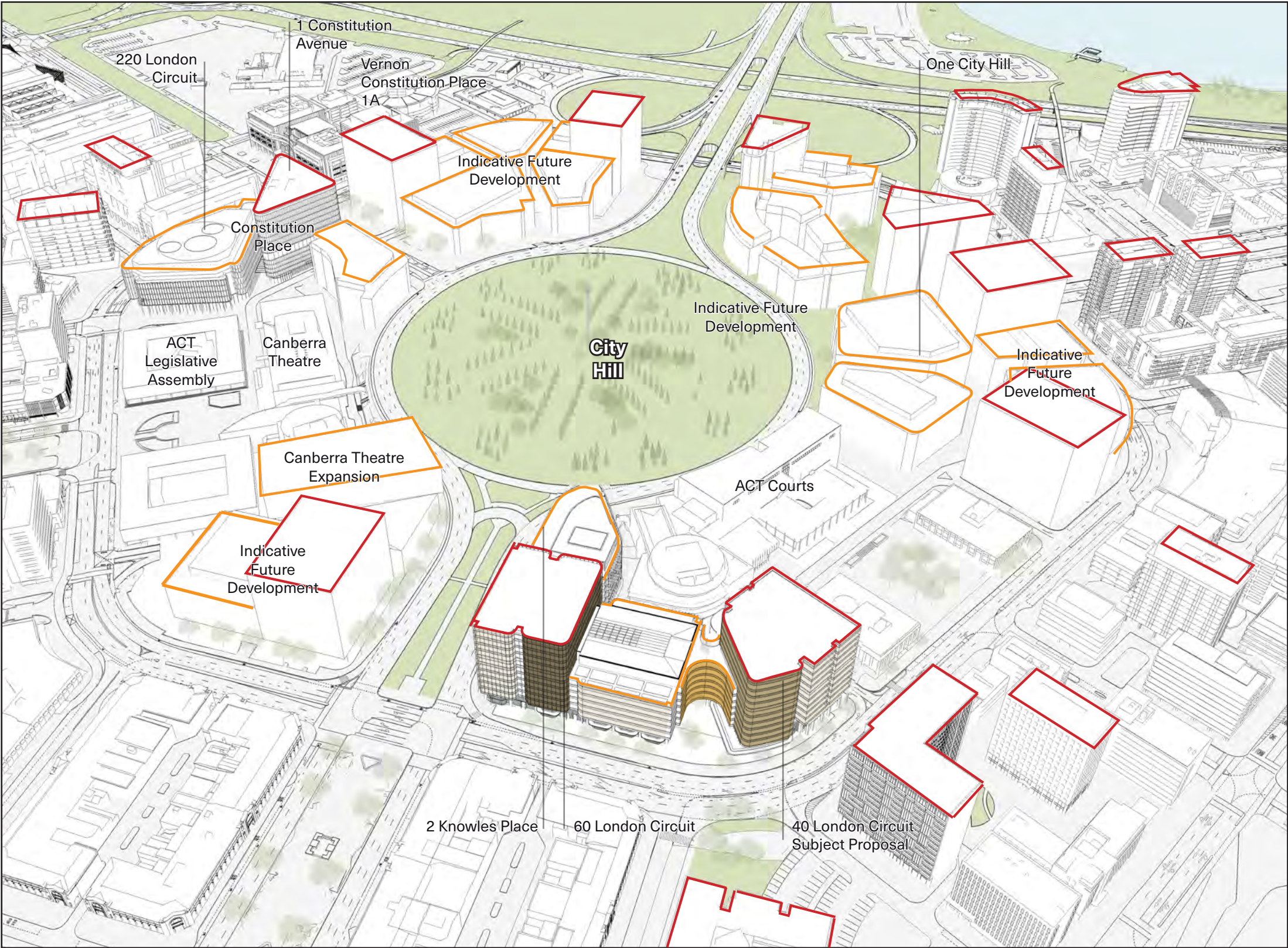
3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form

Neighbouring Context

The image to the right illustrates the proposed built forms for 60 London Circuit in the context of existing neighbouring built forms within the City Hill Precinct, as well as indicative future developments consistent with the controls within the National Capital Plan.

- Key
- RL 617 Height
 - 25m Height



3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form



3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form



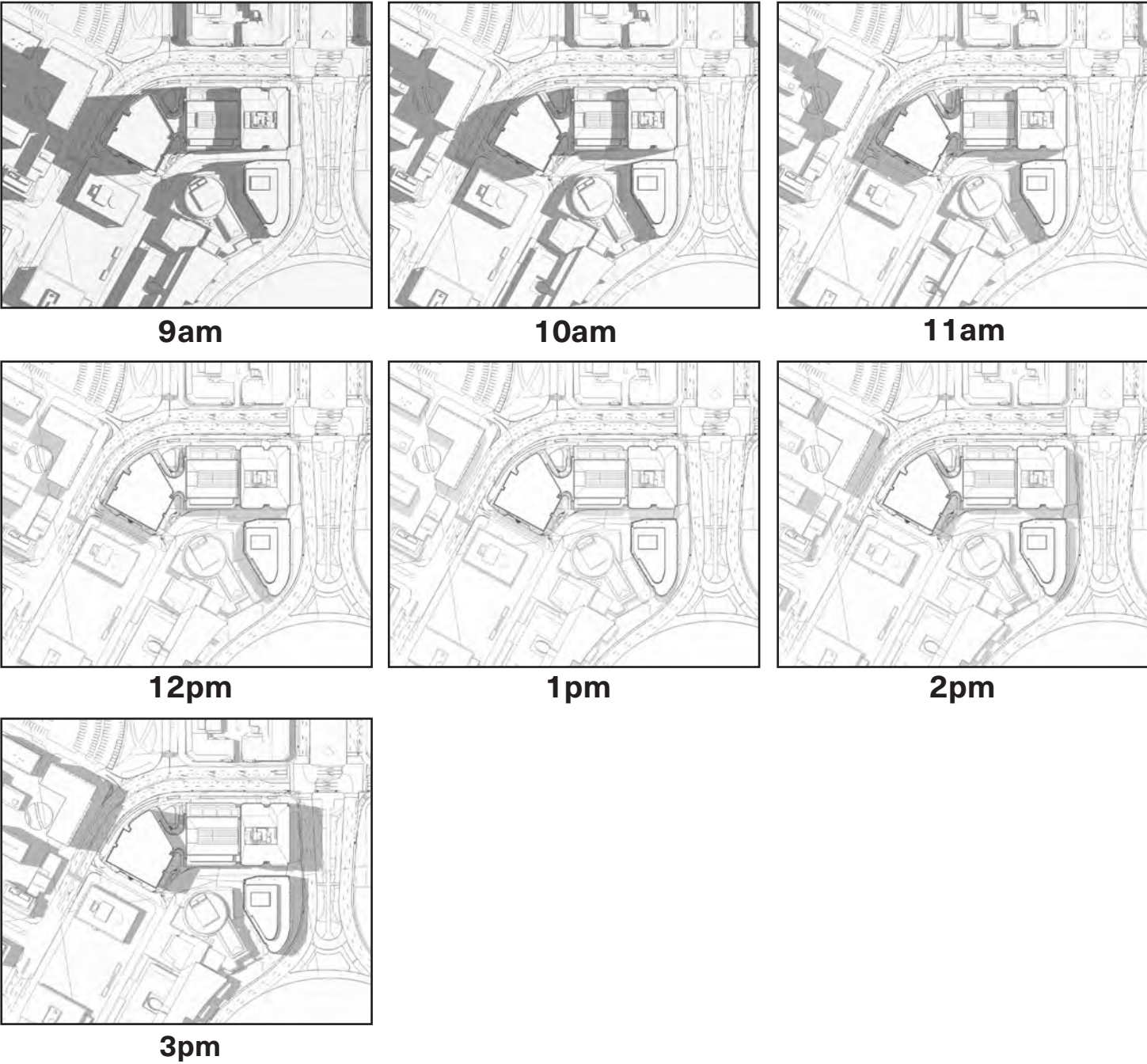
3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form

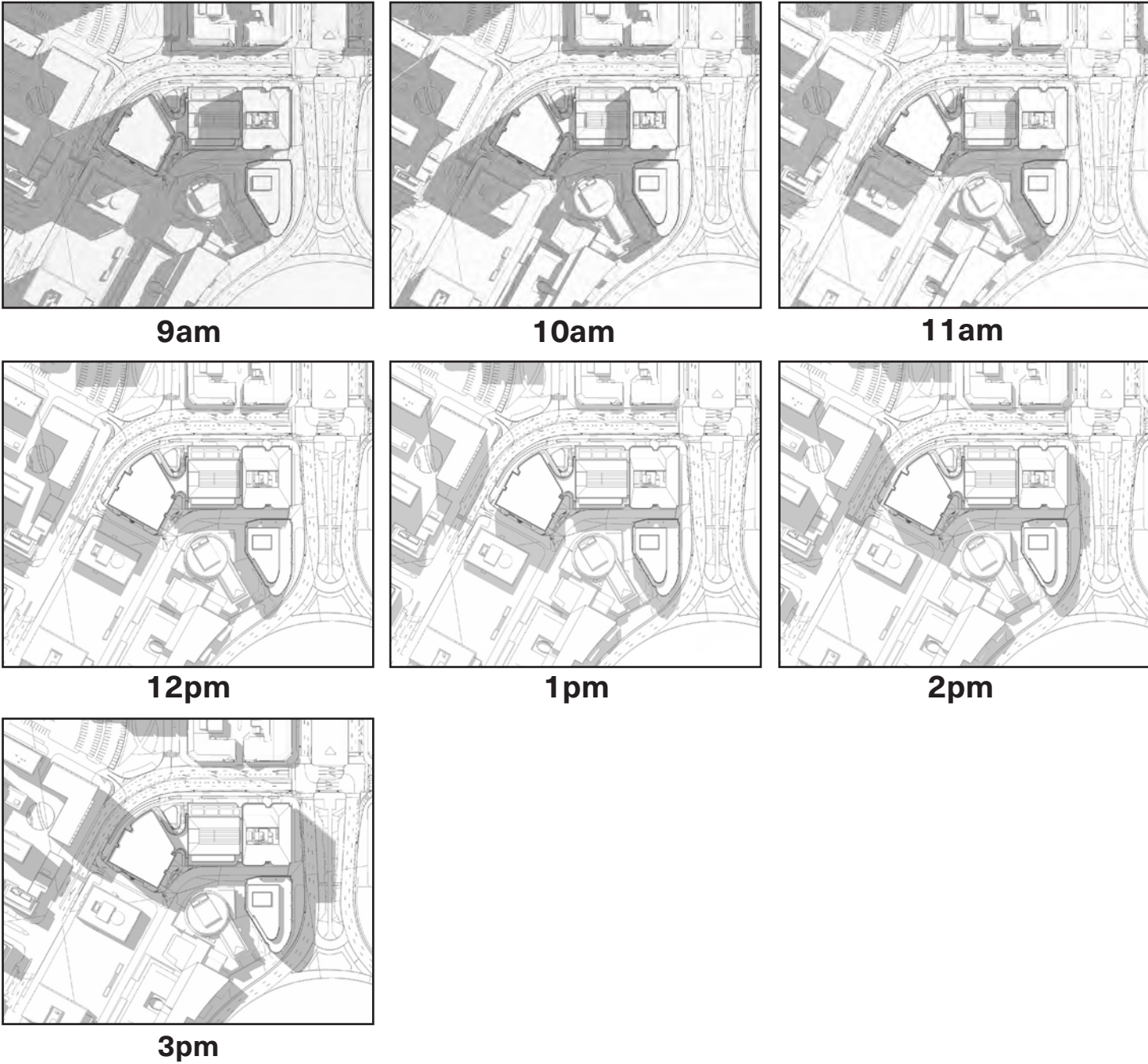
Solar Access

Key public spaces and active frontages benefit from the site's northerly orientation.

Mid Summer - 22 December



Equinox 21 March (Daylight Savings Time)



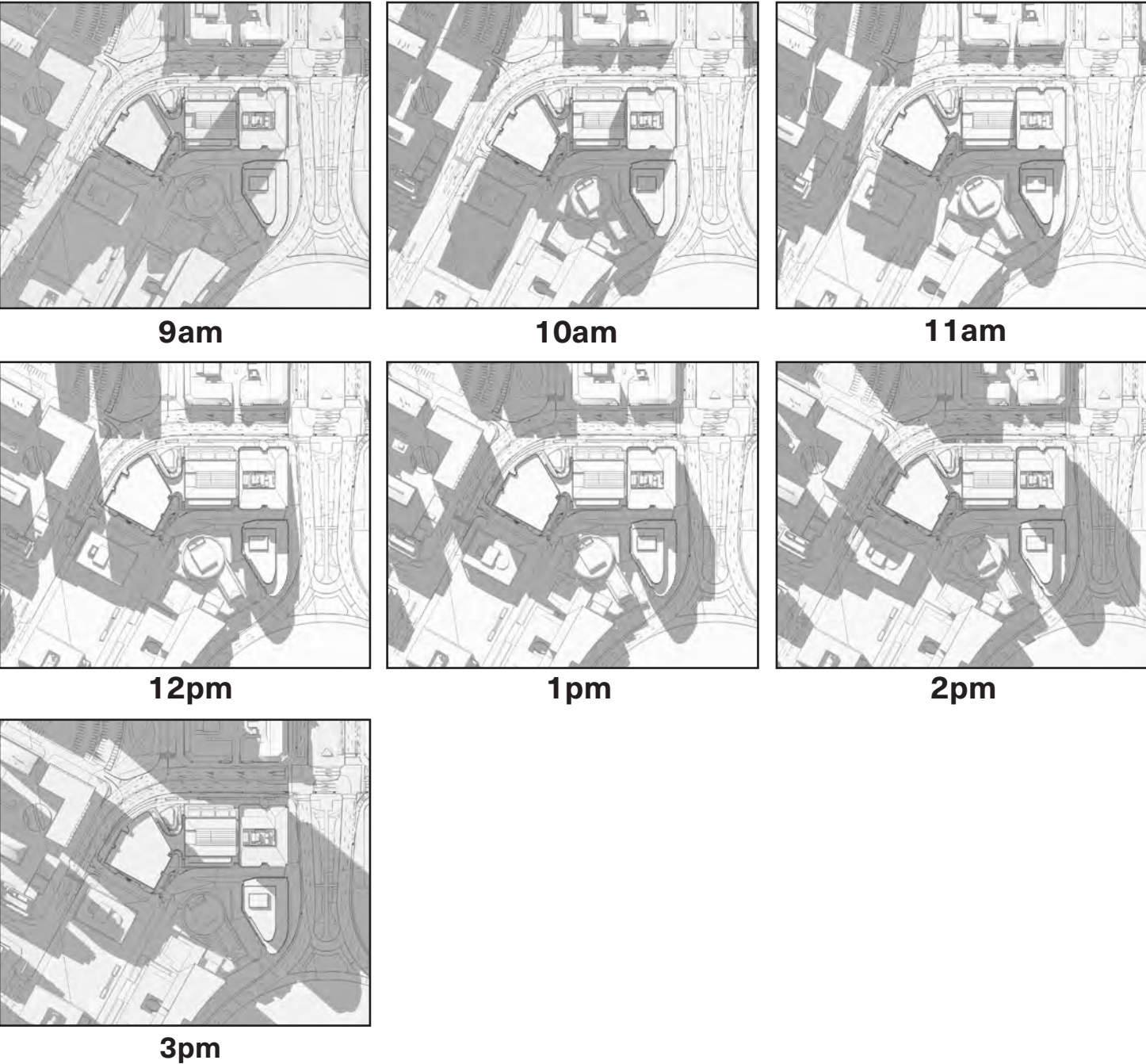
3 Precinct Masterplan

Massing and Built Form

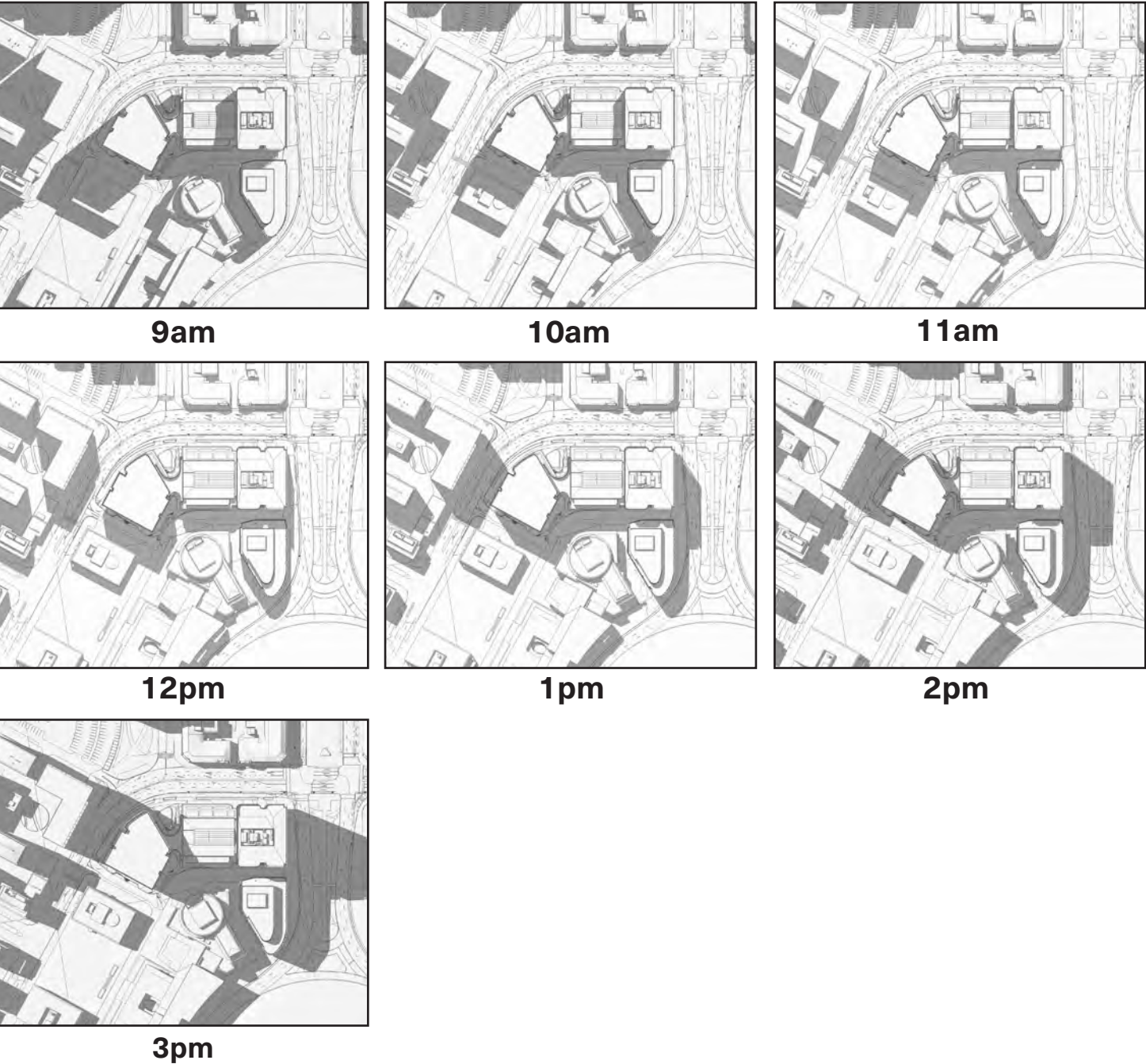
Solar Access

Key public spaces and active frontages benefit from the site's northerly orientation.

Mid-Winter - 21 June



Equinox - 21 September



3 Precinct Masterplan

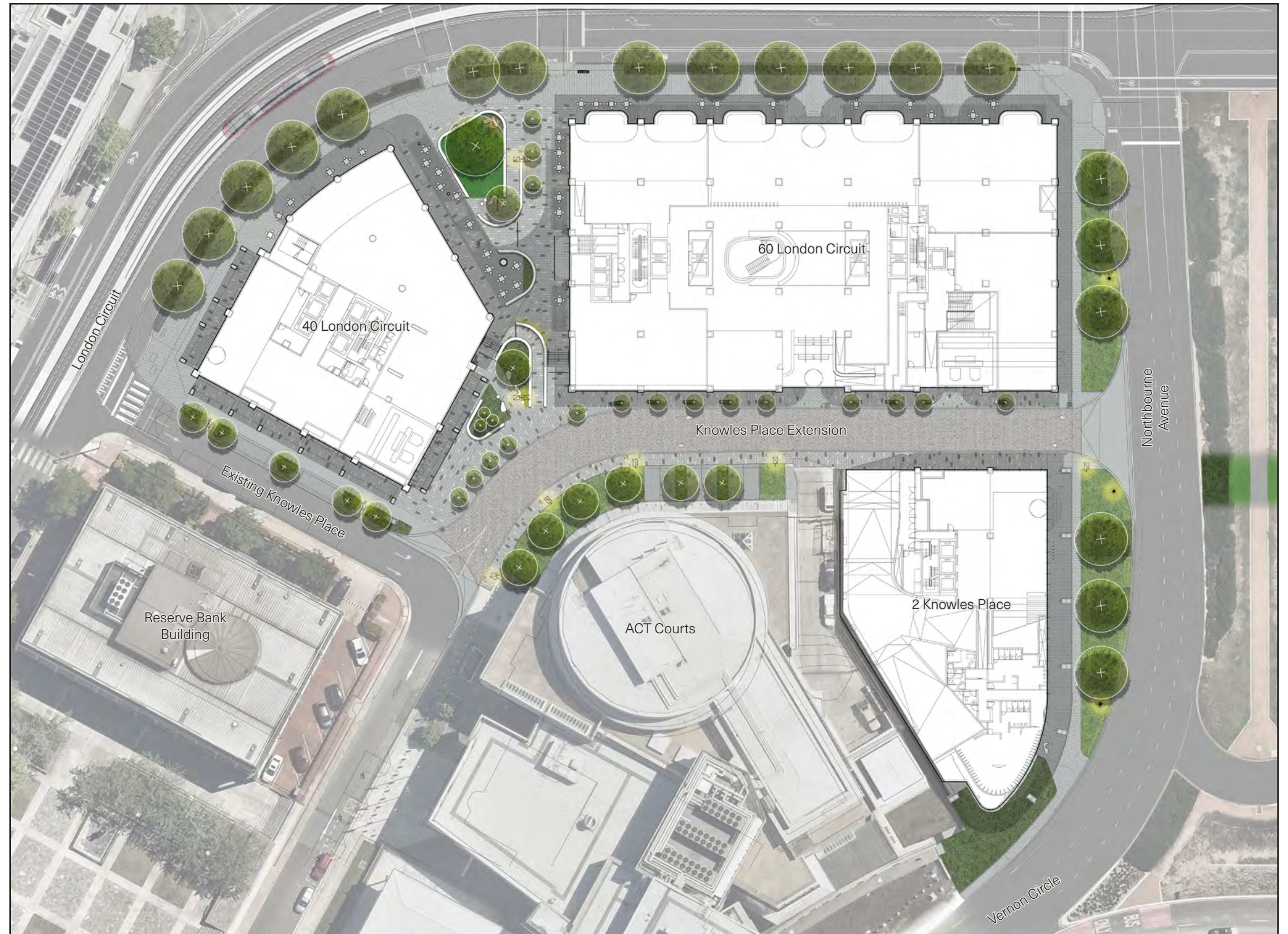
Landscape Design

Site

A comprehensive landscape masterplan supports the precinct objectives of pedestrian connectedness, activation, site specificity, and microclimate enhancement.

The ground plane is conceived as a series of legible and interconnected spaces, characterised by high quality finishes, richly textured pavements, artworks and public seating and congregation nodes integrated into a dynamic landscape setting for the buildings.

Each street frontage responds positively to the character and potential of the urban street network, and proposes upgrades and enhancements which will benefit the cityscape for generations.



3 Precinct Masterplan

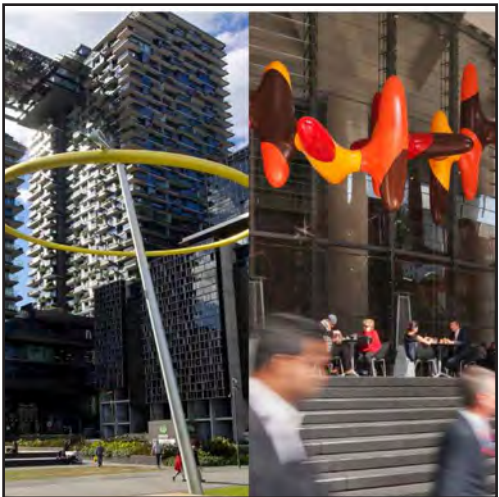
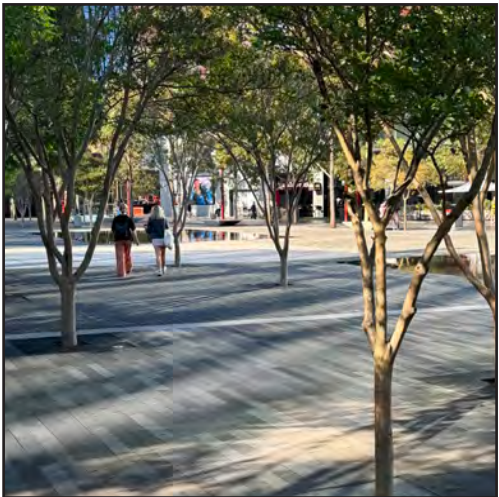
Landscape Design

Plaza

A generous public outdoor arcade connects East Row and the Courts precinct, combining public walkways, sitting nodes, alfresco dining and building access and providing a visual and social focus for the precinct. Finely detailed forecourts featuring public artwork mark the space at London Circuit and Knowles Place, contributing to street life and offering an alluring invitation to explore the link space.

The plaza is characterised by a fine-grained shaded linear walkway, sculpted sitting edges, a sheltered undercroft, turfed island, extensive planting and shade trees benefiting from deep soil build-ups and passive stormwater capture for irrigation.

Service vehicles and frontages are integrated invisibly into the ground plane.



3 Precinct Masterplan

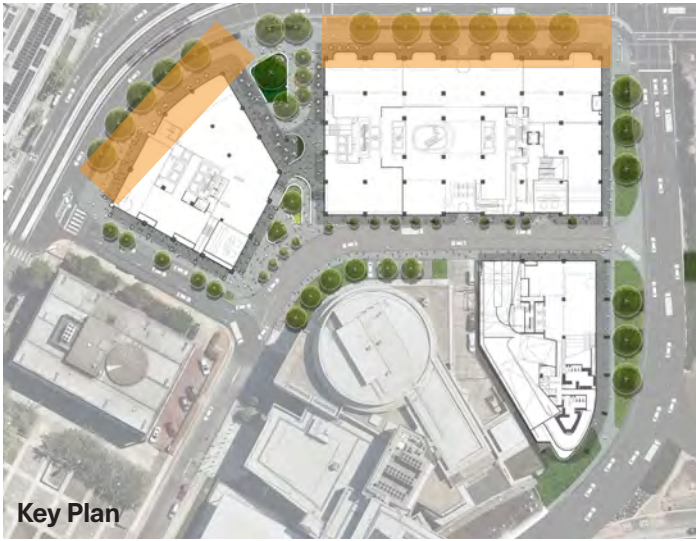
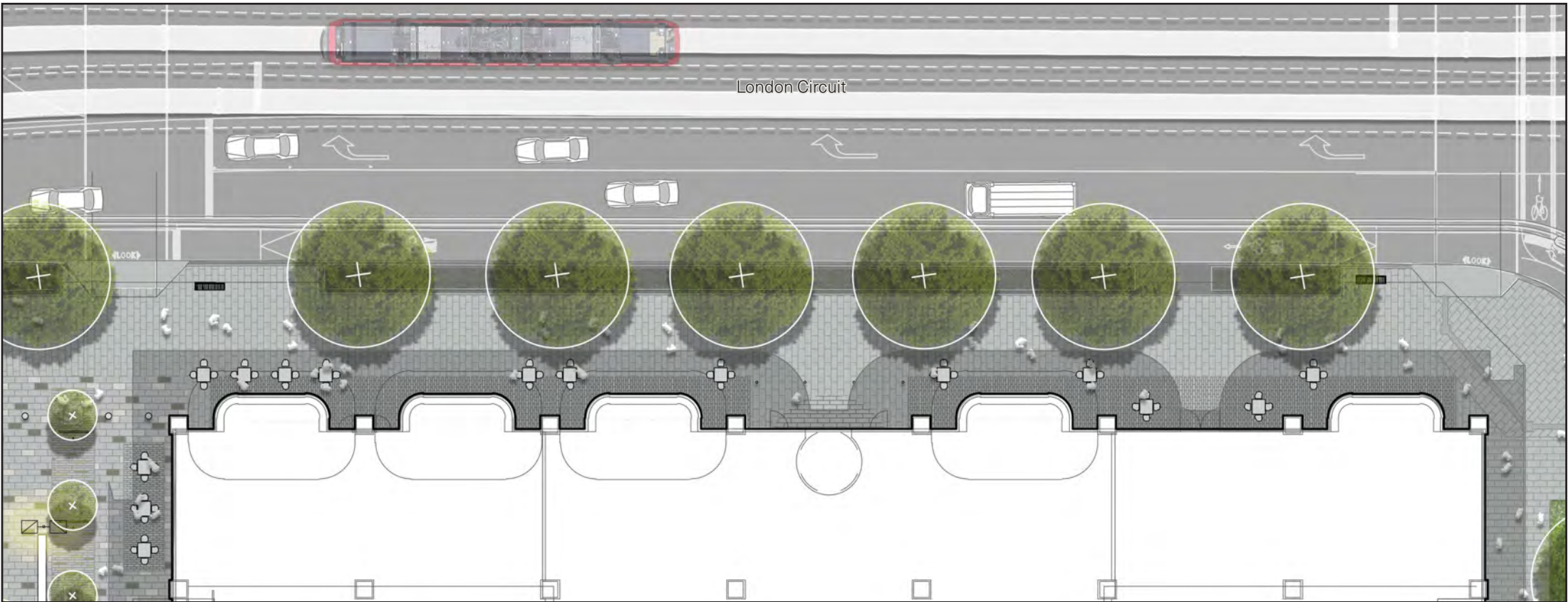
Landscape Design

London Circuit

The Territory's ambition for a contemporary and climate-ready urban boulevard along the Light Rail transit corridor connects seamlessly to the precinct edge.

Ground finishes will extend from the light rail work to buildings, adopting the palette and pattern of high quality stone paving.

Paving accents introduce a subtle shift in scale and surface texture at key moments along the Avenue such as the plaza forecourt, building lobbies, alfresco dining edges and intersections. .



3 Precinct Masterplan

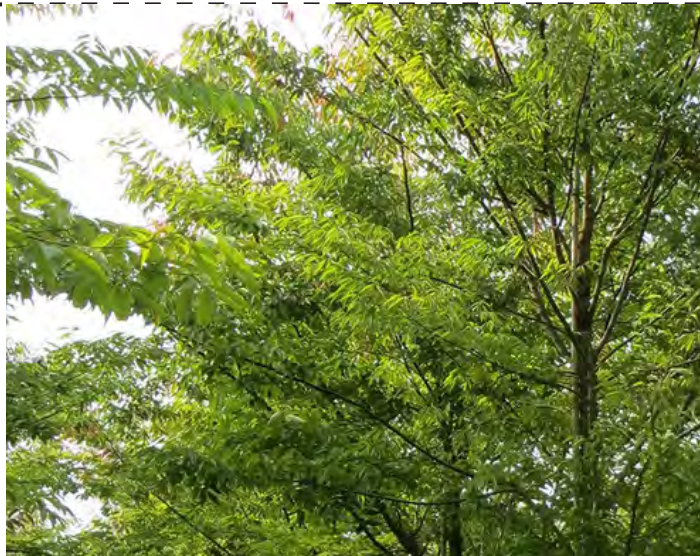
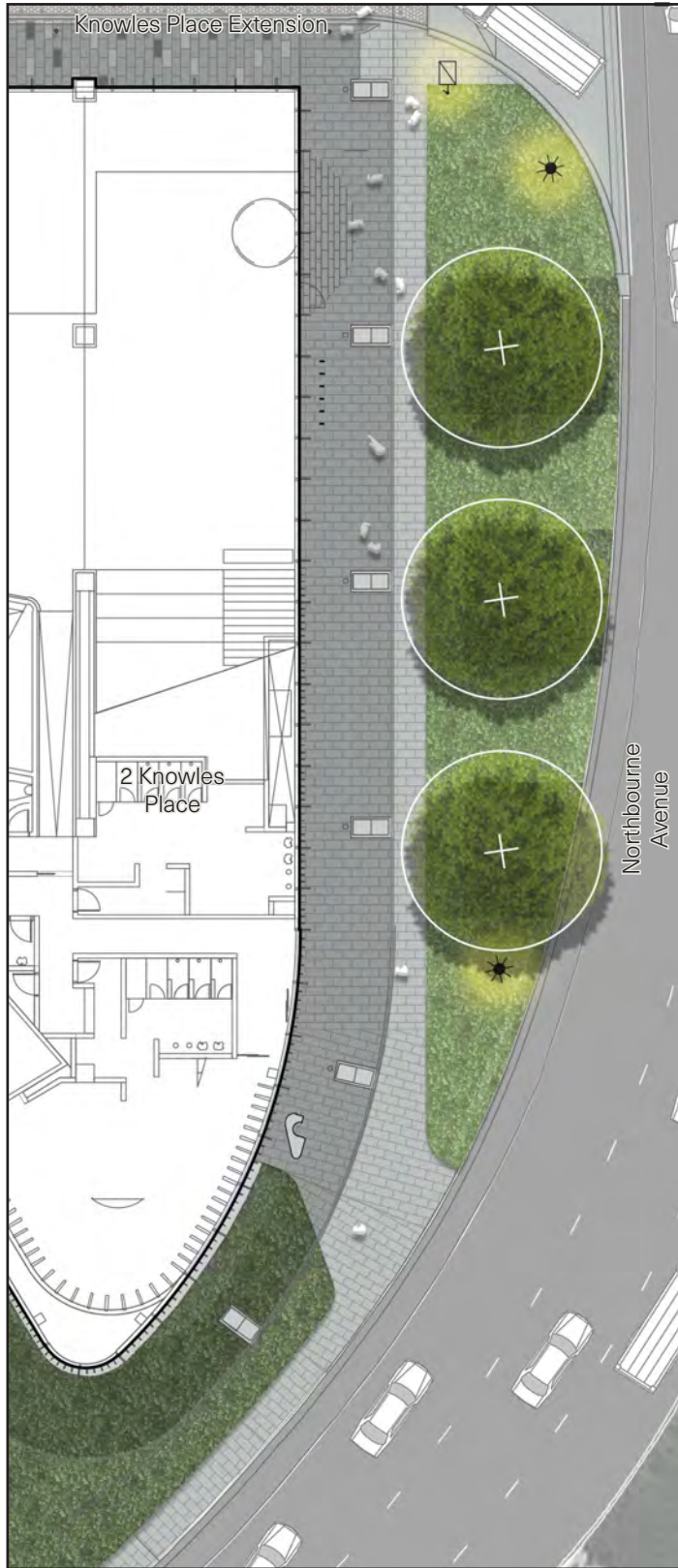
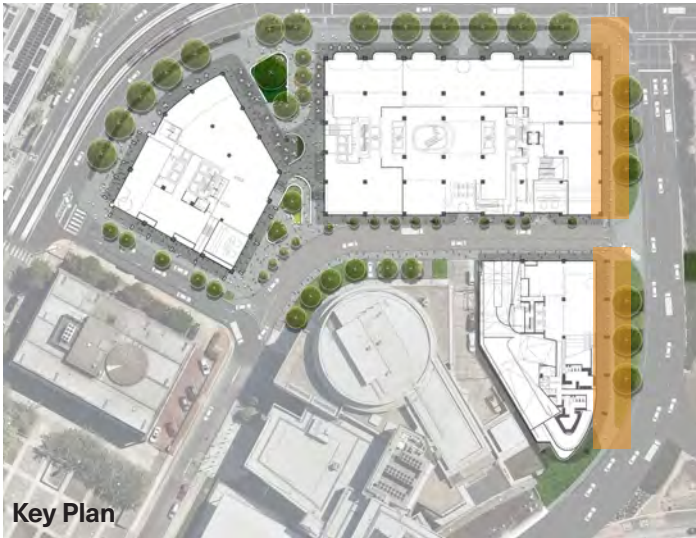
Landscape Design

Northbourne Avenue

A comprehensive re-imagining of the current verge condition has been undertaken, leading to a bold proposition for new pedestrian corridor and soft landscape at this significant approach to City Hill.

A new, stone-paved pedestrian way integrated with the paved colonnade repositions pedestrian away from the kerb line for pedestrian safety and precinct access, and continues southward to tie in with the Vernon Circle condition.

The verge will be planted with low ground cover plantings, with species acknowledging the coniferous low cover of the median and City Hill plantings. New advanced tree plantings of Zelkova, informed by past inputs from the Urban Treescape Unit and utility providers, are intended to establish a dignified and garden-city character to this southern limit of Northbourne Avenue.



3 Precinct Masterplan

Landscape Design

Existing Knowles Place (RBA Interface)

As the point of arrival at Knowles Place for motorists and many pedestrians, this space has been re-created as a landscaped edge comprising new verge trees (supported by permeable pavement and structural soil vaults beneath car parking bays), urban furniture, softscape and high quality stone pavement.

As with the London Circuit edge, this area will integrate with the urban design character of the broader city through implementation of the Canberra Central Design Manual and other current urban design guidelines, through further discussions with the CRA, CED, and LRS2A teams.



Key Plan



3 Precinct Masterplan

Landscape Design

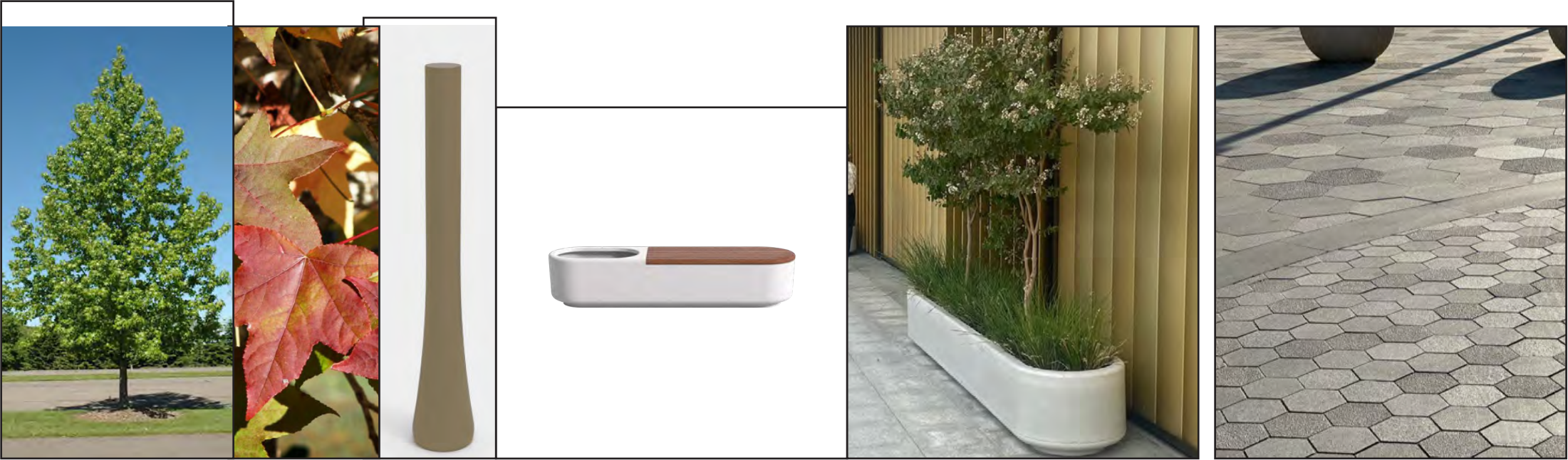
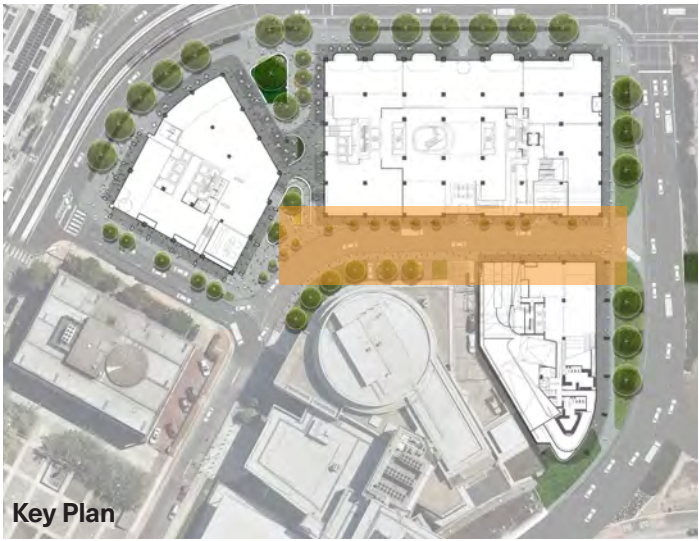
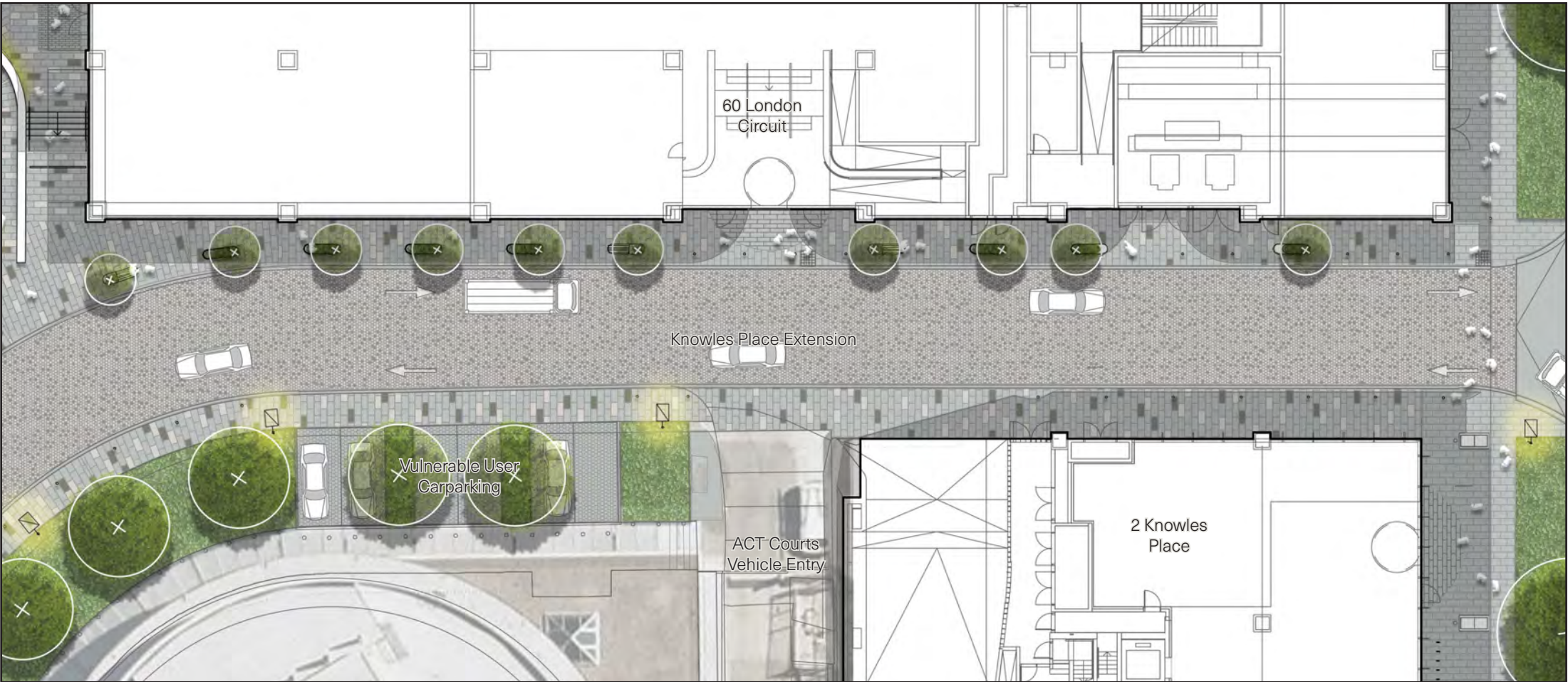
Knowles Place Extension

This city-defining space has been designed as an urban landscape corridor, applying principles of pedestrian-priority, movement and place to create a shared zone of unrivalled quality and amenity.

Informed by the success of the Constitution Place treatments, the shared way is defined by fine-grained hexagonal unit pavers, raised transitions, flush kerbs and landscape furniture in a low-speed environment.

Shade trees and landscape plantings will be reinstated along the southern edge within the ACT Courts block, unified with vulnerable user carparking incorporating structural soil vaults and permeable pavements.

Widely spaced architectural bollards and sittable planters loosely define the roadway edge, with a return to the large format precinct stone pavement defining these areas of pedestrian-only thoroughfare. An seamless engagement with the plaza space at the laneway 'elbow' is achieved with landscape furniture, shade trees walkways and feature lighting, which combine to offer a publicly accessible open space focus not only for the new buildings, but the wider 'town and gown' precinct.

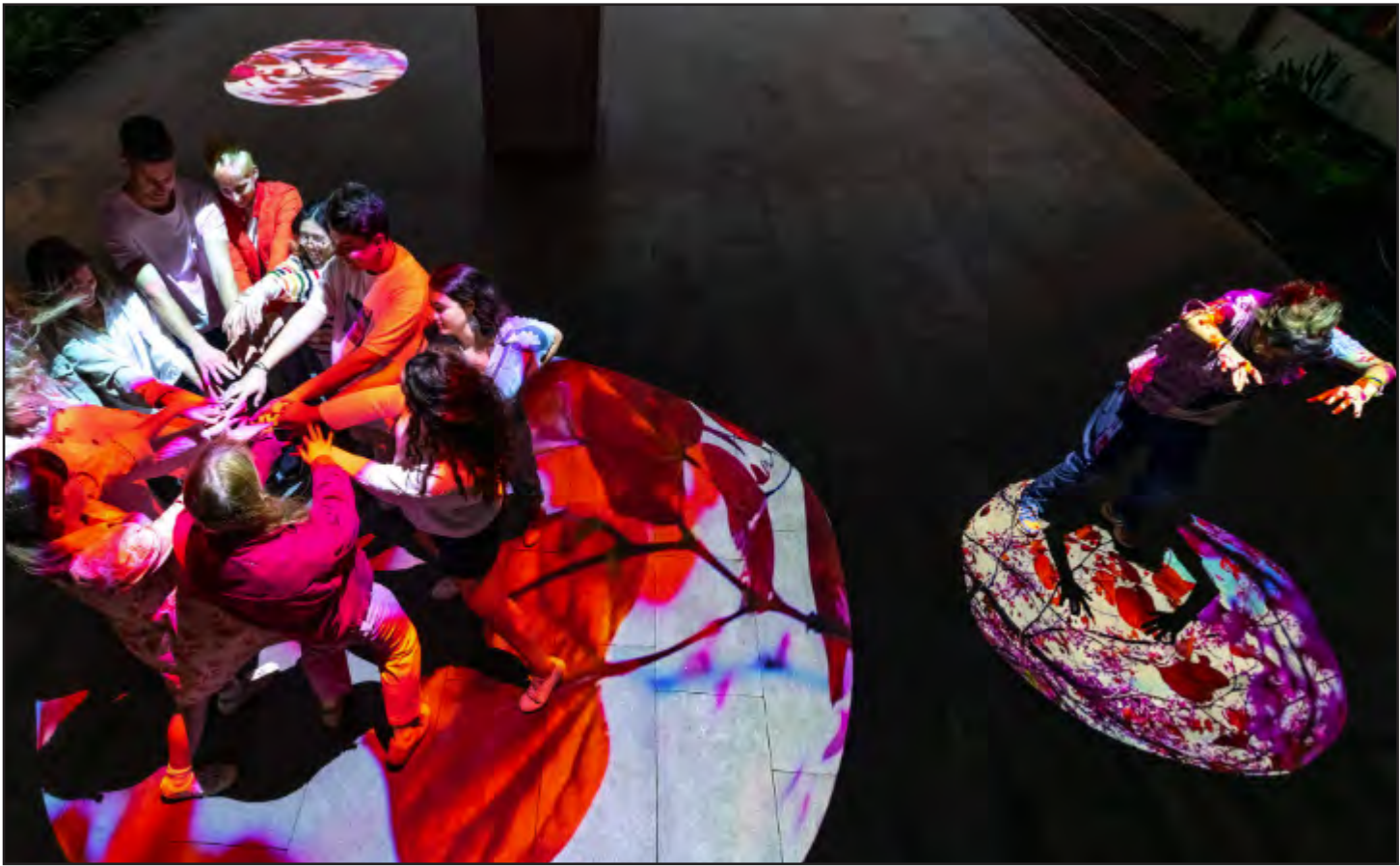
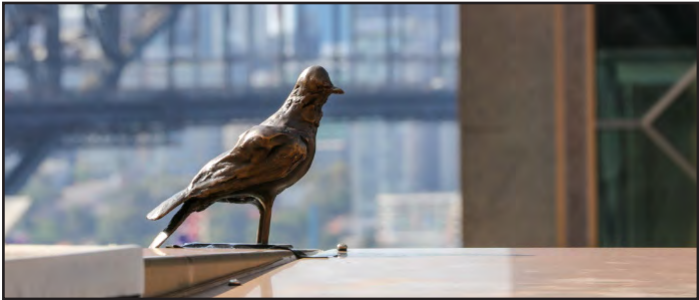


3 Precinct Masterplan

Public Art

Public art for this important site will be creatively integrated into the masterplan design to celebrate and explore the histories and personalities that distinguish it from others across the National Capital.

Themes and media responding to the context and nature of the public spaces may include illumination, exploration of minute to grand scales, and reflections on the purpose and culture of the initial commonwealth tenant agency.



3 Precinct Masterplan

Sustainability

Sustainability is fundamental to the London Central Masterplan.

The buildings will target leading sustainability benchmarks and standards (refer below), to be achieved through a broad range of design, construction and operational initiatives (refer right):

NABERS Energy
Minimum 5.5 stars with potential for 6 stars.

NABERS Water
Minimum 4 stars with potential for 5 stars.


Renewables
Large solar arrays across rooftops.


All Electric Building
Carbon neutral operation.


Construction Waste Recycling
Minimum 90% of waste will be recycled.


Operational Waste
The building will support recycling of all waste through its operational life, in line with the ACT's recycling objectives.


Embodied Carbon
By using industry recognised and supported tools, production processes and systems, the building will minimise embodied carbon.


- 


Leading sustainability credentials across all relevant ratings systems
- 


Rooftop photovoltaics
- 


All electric buildings
- 


Recycled materials used where possible
- 


Water efficient sanitary fixtures and fittings
- 


Locally sourced and manufactured materials where possible
- 


Accessible through site link to support precinct integration
- 


Interconnecting stairs from GL encourage staff interaction and health
- 


COVID-Safe environment with initiatives to manage IEQ
- 


Rainwater capture and re-use
- 


Facade shading balances views, performance, amenity and comfort
- 


Excellent public transport links
- 

Comprehensive recycling systems
- 

Food and beverage retail activates streetscape and encourages precinct integration
- 

Pocket park to enhance biodiversity and microclimate
- 

Vehicle charging in tenant and public car park
- 

Generous End of Trip facilities directly linked to Canberra's active transport network
- 

Car share opportunities within basement



4 Scope of Works Approval Submission

The primary subject of this Works Approval submission is for 40 London Circuit, as well as proposed minor modifications to 60 London Circuit, 2 Knowles Place and the Basement, to enable holistic integration across the precinct.

Existing proposals for 60 London Circuit, 2 Knowles Place and Basement have been submitted/approved under separate Works Approval submissions.

