

BARTON Block 13 Section 9 ACT

Landscape Masterplan Report

Introduction

The Landscape Masterplan for Block 13 Section 9 involves the development of an understanding of the landscape opportunities and constraints for the site. This understanding is based on site information, an evaluation of the existing landscape features and settings together with the landscape context of the surrounding area.

The sites current primary use is as an uncontrolled car park utilised by surrounding office workers during office hours. A distinctive single story restaurant/cafeteria building is located outside the site boundary but visually appears to be homogenous as it sits within the confines of the street layout. A single access drive off Macquarie St allows entry into the uncontrolled car park with entry points off Blackall St. Random carparking is causing significant damage to the existing trees.

Nature of the site

Because of the visual mass of the uncontrolled car parking and the un-maintained surfaces the surrounding streetscapes provides the only elements of landscape quality for the site. The site generally slopes uniformly from the high point at the southeast corner to the northwest corner. Trees at this site range from two large Blue Gums to median and small size Plane and Oak trees which would have been planted around the original buildings and car parks on the site.

The Existing Surrounding Landscape Character.

The broader surrounds of the site are characterised by formal and mature street tree plantings. Verges are generally non-irrigated grass and well maintained. Setbacks to buildings vary between five and ten metres and have provided opportunity for well-maintained private gardens, which add to the overall 'parklike' setting of the area.

The site is bounded by medium density residential complex, office buildings and small pocket parkland. The site is also within walking proximity to Parliament House, the Parliamentary Triangle and Lake Burley Griffin. The location allows elevated views to Lake Burley Griffin and Parliament House at selected points along the northeast and

northwest boundary respectively. Prevailing northwesterly winds affect the site through Macquarie and Blackall St. especially in spring and winter months.

Block 13 Section 9 is centrally located within one of Canberra's oldest areas. Surrounding sites are developing as mixed-use character including distinctive government and residential buildings. Building styles vary from the single story heritage listed Kurrajong Hotel to 2-4 story median density residential and office buildings.

Two groupings of trees have been identified as having the potential to be integrated in future landscape schemes. The first grouping of trees follow the pedestrian path adjacent to the café and include Pin Oak and a semi mature Cedar tree of medium quality. The second include six Plane trees of medium quality that follow along the central pedestrian path leading from the centre of the site. Trees are described in detail in the Vegetation Assessment Report carried out by dsb Landscape Architects.

Existing Streetscape Analysis

West Boundary-Macquarie St

Spatial Characteristics: limited canopy, sparse, even planting, open.

- Winter sun exposure throughout day
- Pedestrian access via paths at verge
- Verge scrappy and not well maintained
- Facing generous open space park
- Generally flat street level
- Scale of adjacent buildings consistent

Opportunity

- Develop a streetscape character along west boundary in order to provide continuity with the established northern sections of the street
- Develop setback to accommodate possible mixed use frontage incorporating possible seating area
- Establish and widen pedestrian pathways to priorities pedestrian access from surrounding buildings into site
- Enhance visibility and status of pedestrian crossing

North Boundary-Broughton St

Spatial Characteristics: Dense canopy, intimate/ enclosed, shaded.

- Parallel parking both sides of street
- Pedestrian access via footpath provides access to car park and Restaurant /Café
- Facing Plane trees which gives partial screening to Edmund Barton Building
- Flat level street
- Setback to Ottoman Restaurant is wide with well maintained gardens

- Busy morning, midday and evening pedestrian traffic
- Plane trees (south verge only) allow for winter sun to fall on the entrance of the Ottoman Restaurant and provide shade for pedestrians AND parallel parking
- Dominate Blue Gum street planting (north verge only) provide deep shade and screening to Edmund Barton Building
- Whilst providing shade for car parking Blue Gum does produce debris and fallen gum nuts can be hazardous for pedestrians

Opportunity

- Plant out set back with trees of mixed height to contrast symmetry of street trees and add visual interest
- Develop pocket park between restaurant /café to provide amenity for surrounding office workers
- Retain mature trees along main pathway into restaurant
- Increase connectivity between Edmund Barton Building and major entry point s to building with pedestrian crossings
- Slow traffic buy way of raised traffic crossings
- Retain double row of Plane trees at verge for significant visual continuity

East Boundary -Blackall St

Spatial Characteristics: No canopy, open and airy, light filled, dominant vertical presence of facing residence requires screening and reducing of dominate building height.

- Flat street level
- Lunchtime pedestrian traffic
- Pocket park between restaurant and verge includes substation
- Setback generous
- Possible views to lake from elevated north easterly aspect
- Service entry into Otter man/café
- Streetscape lacks consistent street trees

Opportunity

- Opportunity to plant trees of mixed height to reduce symmetry of opposing residential development adding to the visual interest
- Quite street provides opportunity for main access into residential site
- Replacement of poor quality street tree specimens with stronger seed stock to establish visual unity with existing street trees

South Boundary- AMA and Tourism House

Spatial Characteristics: open, dominated by vertical presence of adjacent buildings

- Adjacent office buildings dominate and have varied setback
- Few trees

Opportunity

- Introduction of trees to soften views of adjacent building elevations

Existing Site Landscape Features

The existing site during Office hours is dominated by the mass of informal carparking. Outside office hours the unstructured surface elements are visible and include deteriorated bitumen, kerbs, and pedestrian paths (from previous site usages). Unmaintained grass areas and medium to poor quality trees provides an unattractive overall landscape setting. The site generally slopes from the south east corner down the north west corner with a change of level of 5 meters over 195 meters.

The existing trees on the site vary in condition and value.

- Three large Blue Gums, *Eucalyptus bicostata* are deteriorated in health and quality resulting from a combination of uncontrolled parking surrounding the trees, the recent drought years and the lack of landscape maintenance to the surrounding area
- Groupings of medium size Plane trees, *Platanus acerifolia* are of average health and quality due to the same issues as have been previously mentioned
- Grouping of four median size Pin Oak *Quercus palustris* are of average health and quality
- Single Poplar, *Populus nigra* median size is of average health and quality
- Cedar, *Cedrus libani* is of average health and quality
- Street tree plantings along both Macquarie and Blackall Street include *Quercus palustris* and *Ulmus parvifolia* respectively are generally deteriorated in health and quality resulting from recent drought and lack of landscape maintenance. Upgrades to street verge and ongoing maintenance may restore them to health.

Further recommendations associated with trees are detailed in the Vegetation Assessment Report carried out by dsb Landscape

Landscape Master Plan

Design Concepts

The overall design concepts are based on the surrounding streetscape character, existing infrastructure and proposed building layout and usage. The sites opportunities and constraints identified from the landscape analysis provided a further framework.

A1 AND A2 Office Building.

- Formalized entrance defined by feature paving and feature planting
- Low shrub plantings required for security and define building podium limitations
- Plantings to integrate site landscape and streetscape

B1, B2, B3 Apartments.

The 'L' configuration of the three residential apartment blocks provides an area for green space, which will primarily be utilized by the residence. This space has been landscaped to create a pedestrian access point from the north-south path and is quality open space for the residential precinct.

- Pergola structure works to provide a formal entrance to the residential park and create a separation of the public and private open space
- Plane trees will visually enclose the garden setting and the space will provide for possible residential community based activity
- Entry points to apartments from Blackall St defined with feature plantings and paving treatment

C, Carpark.

- Planting provides screening in order to minimize the impact of the carpark on surrounding and on looking office and residential blocks.

D, Commercial.

- Proposed area fronting commercial shops has been designed to promote an active frontage
- Small deciduous trees are planted to allow winter sun and provide a buffer to the street frontage.
- Raised planter beds enhance the landscape setting in line with surrounding buildings and provide a sense of enclosure.
- Connectivity to pedestrian crossing on Macquarie St provided access to commercial frontage.

Central Park

The configuration of the residential apartment blocks provides a central park that is available for use by residents and office workers. The space has been landscaped to retain existing trees, to augment the shared pedestrian/short term parking areas and to provide a quality open space for the precinct. The central park area provides a landscape link between adjacent developed areas that contributes to the Barton landscape setting and structure. Passive and active recreational pursuits are provided for within the park