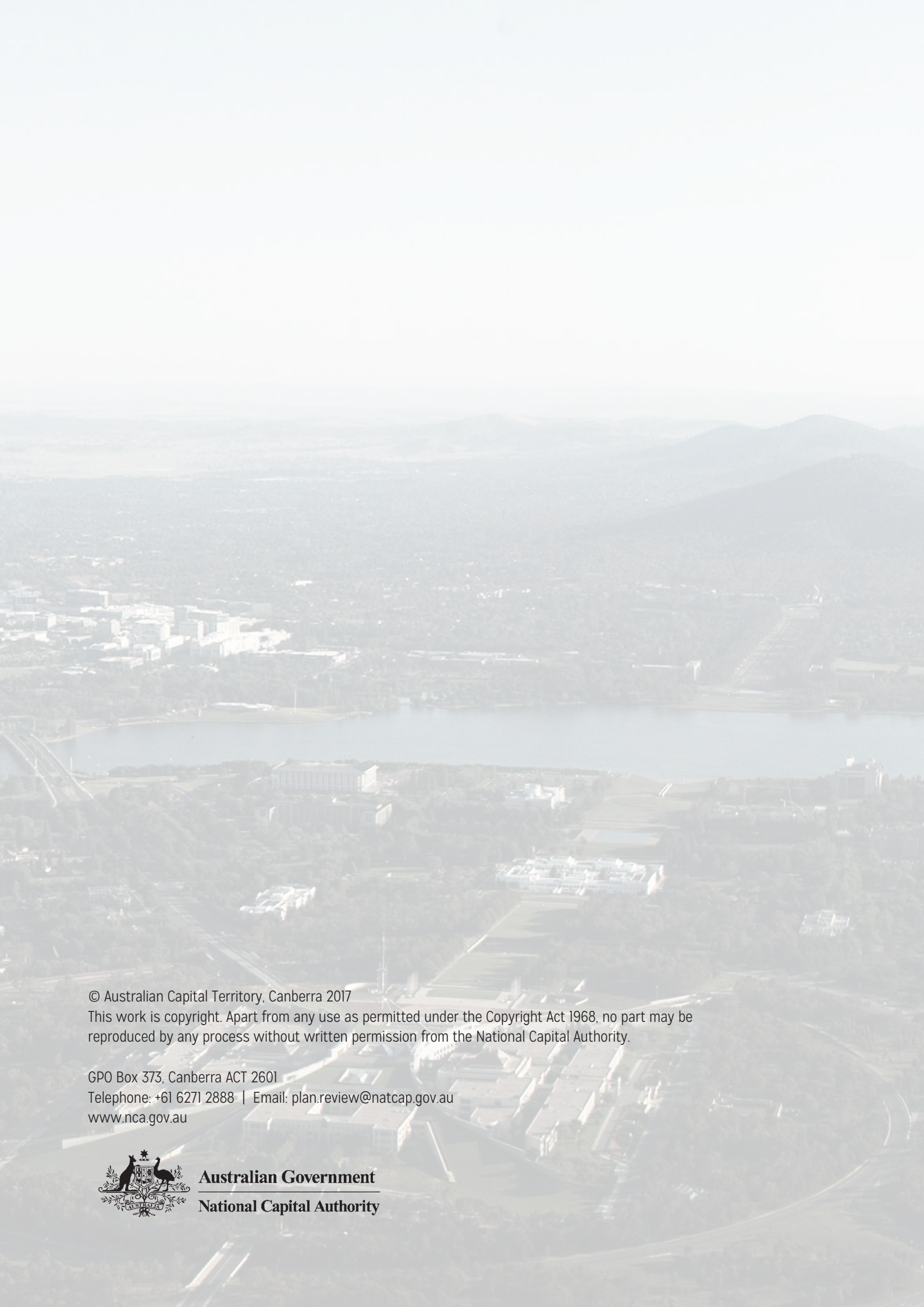




Australian Government
National Capital Authority

KINGS & COMMONWEALTH AVENUES DRAFT DESIGN STRATEGY





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Australian Government

National Capital Authority

PREAMBLE	
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 BACKGROUND	4
2.1 HISTORIC INTENT	4
2.2 DEVELOPMENT HISTORY	5
2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AVENUES	6
2.4 CURRENT PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	8
2.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	9
2.6 EXISTING CONDITIONS	10
3.0 VISION AND PRINCIPLES	14
4.0 FRAMEWORK	16
4.1 THE AVENUE TEMPLATE	19
4.2 APPLYING THE TEMPLATE	24
5.0 AVENUES IN DETAIL	26
5.1 KINGS AVENUE	26
5.2 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE	32
6.0 STRATEGIES	39
6.1 TREES AND PLANTING	39
6.2 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	46
6.3 PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS	48
6.4 MATERIALS AND FURNISHINGS	50
6.5 LIGHTING	51
7.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS	52
GLOSSARY	53



PREAMBLE

Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue are two of Canberra's most important boulevards. They are key structural elements in Walter Burley Griffin's formal plan for Canberra, performing an all-important transport network role.

The avenues embody the planning heritage that gives identity to the National Capital, forming the National Triangle around which the city's axes are arranged. Along with Constitution Avenue, the base of the National Triangle, Kings and Commonwealth avenues serve an important ceremonial and symbolic role by connecting key areas, including Parliament House (on Capital Hill), City Hill (Civic), Anzac Parade and Russell Defence Precinct.

The current nature of Kings and Commonwealth avenues does not consistently reflect these crucial roles. This is even more evident with the recent upgrade of Constitution Avenue. Over the years, the evolution of both avenues has resulted in a fragmented landscape reflecting different eras and characterised by ageing assets in need of renewal. While the avenues' basic geometry has remained intact, their character has been eroded by the increasing dominance of vehicular traffic; each day more than 20,000 cars, buses and trucks travel along Commonwealth Avenue alone.

To address these issues, the National Capital Authority (NCA) has developed a design strategy that presents a long-term vision for Kings and Commonwealth avenues – the *Kings and Commonwealth Avenues Draft Design Strategy* (the draft design strategy) – and that will guide their development and evolution well into the 21st century. The design seeks to restore their status as boulevards that are both memorable and functional, as originally conceived by Griffin.

The draft design strategy introduces a strategic framework intended to ensure the long-term integrity of both avenues. Its key principles include:

- respect for the Griffin principles and the work of Charles Weston
- the identification of uniform elements which thread through and reinforce the broader avenue character
- the prioritisation of pedestrian amenity through the re-structuring of the road verge and intersection treatments
- ensuring that avenues are flexible enough to accommodate future sustainable forms of transport.

The Design Strategy seeks to boldly redefine systems of circulation, accessibility and landscape structure, thereby improving both the general amenity of the avenues and the ways in which people understand and use the National Triangle.



▲
Realised avenue views



BLACK MOUNTAIN

NORTHBOURNE AVENUE

MT AINSLIE

CIVIC

CITY HILL

ANZAC PARADE

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

ACTON PENINSULA

WEST BASIN

CANBERRA CENTRAL PARKLANDS

CONSTITUTION AVENUE

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

CENTRAL BASIN

PARLIAMENTARY ZONE

RUSSELL

KINGS AVENUE

PARKES WAY

EAST BASIN

AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CAPITAL HILL

ADELAIDE AVENUE

JERRABOMBERRA WETLANDS

KINGSTON FORESHORE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Formed from the existing topography, Kings and Commonwealth avenues terminate at the natural high points of City Hill, Capital Hill and Mount Pleasant. Along with Constitution Avenue, these three connecting points were the functional centres of the Griffin Plan, and have evolved to accommodate significant city structures including Parliament House and the Defence Precinct.

The draft design strategy provides the framework that will guide future works and ensure that the avenues' character is both memorable and functional. It re-establishes the important symbolic role of the avenues; repairs and re-conceptualises their layout, form and character; and is intended to guide the detailed design, and the development – and ultimately the implementation – of improvements.

The goal is to bring the avenues back to life by:

- re-establishing a robust long-term layout for the avenues
- investing in infrastructure, including establishing a sustainable tree canopy
- increasing public access to the avenues for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as vehicles
- creating a world-class destination characterised by vibrant public spaces.

Kings and Commonwealth avenues are important symbolic roads within the National Capital. The avenues define two sides of the National Triangle, a core element of the Griffin Plan.

Griffin's original design envisioned the avenues to be:

...elegant tree-lined thoroughfares lined with prestigious architecture [which] would provide direct access between the principal destinations of the city. The greatest intensity of activity and mix of land uses ...occurs on these main avenues. At the hubs, where the spokes of radiating avenues converge, are business centres – '... polygonal centres of the liveliest businesses where popularity is essential at all times of the day'.

NCA, *The Griffin Legacy* (2004)

Currently, the dominant characteristic of the avenues are thoroughfares for vehicles. Their role as landscaped corridors has only been partially realised. Griffin's intentions with respect to the density of buildings within the National Triangle, and in the areas lining the avenues, have been slow to develop. Buildings sit in isolation and the public realm is overwhelmingly dominated by surface car parking.

The future development of the avenues must reflect the recognition that they form key links within Canberra's transport network, and their role as active boulevards and as a future home to an array of new social, business and recreational uses.



Griffin Legacy Plan, 2004

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 HISTORIC INTENT

Kings, Commonwealth and Constitution avenues were identified early in Canberra's development as a city; they are a key structural element in Griffin's 1918 plan for Canberra. Broadly, the design intent for Kings and Commonwealth avenues was to create direct connection between the 'three business centres' and to provide a 'framework' that maintained the 'final scale of a capital city from the outset'.

Griffin described the avenues as three-lane roadways sufficient to handle traffic. He highlighted the importance of trees in softening the expanse of roadways:

The street area, if reduced to three roadways, is a desert, dangerous and unpleasant to traverse, so in a sunny country of stately open-branched broad-leaf evergreen avenue trees additional space is required for ... at least quadruple rows and supplemental shrubbery parkways for shade and shelter, wind and dust arresting. From considerations also of architectural setting, ventilation, fire stop, command of crossings and the eventual rapid transit, a uniform width of 200 feet [60 metres] is adopted.

WB Griffin, *The Federal Capital: Report Explanatory of the Preliminary General Plan* (1913)

Landscaping and construction of the avenues commenced in the 1920s, well before Lake Burley Griffin was created in the 1960s. Early photographs of Canberra dating from the 1940s show roads complete with kerbs, trees and formal gardens and street-lighting. The avenues established an early presence of the city layout within the Limestone Plains concurrent with the construction of the first public buildings within the National Triangle.



▲ Commonwealth Avenue, 1928



▲ Kings Avenue nearing completion, early 1960s

2.2 DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



A PLANNED CITY

In conjunction with Constitution Avenue, Kings and Commonwealth avenues established the order that defined both the National Triangle and the subsequent development and arrangement of government and institutional buildings.



WESTON PLANTINGS

Charles Weston was a horticulturist who was crucial to establishing the landscape vision for Canberra. Weston worked with Griffin to produce the planting plan for the avenues and the National Triangle. The layout and species of the chosen trees and hedges, planted in the 1920s, define the formality of the avenues and, more practically, provide shade and windbreaks and prevent soil erosion.



NATIONAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

In the 1960s, the NCDC dammed the Molonglo River, thereby realising a key focal aspect of the Griffin Plan for the capital: the creation of Lake Burley Griffin. The bridges over Kings and Commonwealth avenues were completed by 1963, bringing about a new sense of connection between north and south Canberra. However, modification to the carriageway, with the addition of the cloverleaf entry and exit ramps, necessitated the removal of trees Weston had planted.

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AVENUES

Kings and Commonwealth avenues offer a unique vantage point from which to view the buildings and institutions that fulfil the capital's various Commonwealth functions. In conjunction with Constitution Avenue, Kings and Commonwealth avenues connect the city to the landscape, including the surrounding hills. They help to integrate the city's functions, providing the place where governance, commerce, recreation and nature come together as Australia's capital.

Other significant boulevards that symbolise and identify some of the world's great cities include Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC and

Confederation Boulevard in Ottawa. Both of these great avenues symbolise concepts of national governance, identity, democracy and ceremony.

Pennsylvania Avenue and Confederation Boulevard are specifically designed to be places for all people. They share various characteristics: they allow for 24-hour use, fit their contexts and are responsive both to their edges and to adjacent land uses. They are straightforward in their layout and design, and are well maintained and well managed.



▲
Top: Captain Cook jet and Commonwealth Ave Bridge; Bottom left: aerial view of the National Triangle; Bottom right: Commonwealth Ave towards Parliament House



PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON DC, USA

The design of Pennsylvania Avenue maintains the centre of the road as a cycle lane, rather than a landscaped median, which is currently found on Kings and Commonwealth avenues. This feature allows unimpeded views to the White House, and preserves its longstanding tradition as a democratic

space, a focus for inaugural events and a transport connection for the city. A simple order of historic Washington light fixtures, stone benches and discreet bollards subtly reinforces the long history of Pennsylvania Avenue as a public place.



CONFEDERATION BOULEVARD, OTTAWA, CANADA

This 'ceremonial discovery route' is a loop that connects both shores of the Ottawa River and the downtown areas of Ottawa (in Ontario) and Gatineau (in Quebec). Consisting of a number of streets, avenues and two bridges, the route is connected visually through the use of consistent street paving, lamp posts adorned with bronze maple leaves,

and distinctive street furniture. Art exhibits and interpretation panels can also be found along the route. Each opposing side of the boulevard was designed somewhat differently, to emphasise the relationship between the 'Town' (normal urban space) and the 'Crown' (federal government space).

2.4 CURRENT PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

The National Capital Plan (the Plan), first gazetted in 1990, is the primary policy document relevant to Kings and Commonwealth avenues. The Plan defines Commonwealth and Kings avenues as Main Avenues with the following objectives:

- to reinforce and express the integrity of the Griffin Plan's visual structure by strengthening the geometry and form of the main avenues, vistas and public spaces
- to improve the urban design and streetscape qualities, and enhance the sense of arrival to the Central National Area.

The Plan also sets out a number of general policies and detailed conditions of planning, design and development:

- The avenues should be realised as multi-use boulevards providing corridors of higher-density mixed-use development, public transport, and broad tree-lined footpaths with potential for outdoor dining.
- Road pavements, medians, footpaths, grass verges and formal tree plantings will be developed and maintained to consistently high quality and standards.
- Traffic is to be managed to ensure the continued effective function of the Main Avenues and Approach Routes. The Main Avenues will provide

access to buildings that front the avenues where practicable and where traffic safety and flows are not adversely affected.

HERITAGE POLICY

As Kings and Commonwealth avenues are integral elements of the Griffin Plan, they are identified as having heritage significance because they represent:

- a significant part of Canberra's – and the nation's – planning history and development
- a distinctive aesthetic in the Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue bridges
- the landscape design of the entire city
- evidence of an unusual process of a planned city
- part of a period of planning development in Australia.

Legislative protection of these heritage values is provided under *The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which defines relevant provisions relating to heritage places generally, and especially those relating to places on the Commonwealth Heritage List. Kings and Commonwealth avenues are not currently on the list, but they have been found to have Commonwealth heritage value. The avenues have clear heritage significance and, as such, should be treated as if listed.



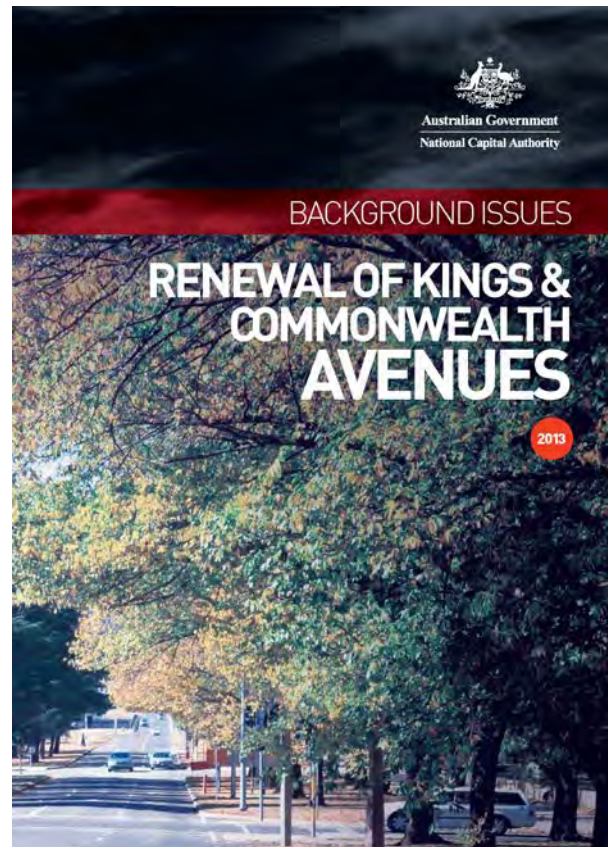
▲ Rendering of the National Triangle towards the city, *The Griffin Legacy*, 2004

2.5 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation has been a part of the development of the background issues and the *Kings and Commonwealth Avenues Design Strategy*.

An earlier consultation process gathered feedback from relevant experts, professional associations, community organisations, the ACT Government and the general public. There was broad support for the renewal of the avenues and the key issues that have been incorporated into this design strategy include:

- a streetscape character that highlights the avenues as destinations as well as through routes
- a consistent 'design language'
- the need for the National Triangle to look and feel connected
- the selection of appropriate tree species and the need for a sustainable tree planting environment
- changes to the road user hierarchy with improved provisions for pedestrians and cyclists.



2.6 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Today the character of Kings and Commonwealth avenues do not fulfil the role of primary city boulevards. Neither the landscape nor the urban form provides the conduit of city life that was originally envisaged. The avenues are lacklustre and run down in appearance, and provide little support either for the buildings fronting them or for the uses to which these spaces are put. They act as a barrier rather than as a connector between the National Triangle and its surrounding uses. The southern sections of the avenues allow for little or no interaction between the adjacent buildings and the avenues themselves.

While parts of the avenues, constructed in the 1920s, have a park-like feel, the sections north of Lake Burley Griffin are open and visually dominated by traffic and carparks. In effect, traffic takes precedence; the avenues are difficult to cross, and the environment is neither pedestrian nor cyclist-friendly, and has only minimal amenities.

The current tree plantings are incomplete, with large sections missing from the medians and verges. While Kings Avenue has a more continuous stretch of plantings, Commonwealth Avenue contains large stretches of median without trees. Overall, there is a lack of a consistent landscape character for the avenues.

Griffin's and Weston's designs for the avenues established a strong and recognisable landscape prior to any buildings being constructed. The draft design strategy builds upon this original guiding vision by emphasising the avenues' role not just as key structural elements in the city's design, but also as destinations in their own right.



Key views – primarily from the bridges across the lake to local landmarks such as the National Museum of Australia on Acton Peninsula, National Carillion, Captain James Cook memorial jet and long-range views to the Brindabella Ranges, Mount Bimberri and local surrounding peaks

Key landmarks that terminate the avenues: City Hill, Parliament House, the Australian American memorial, provide symbolic nodes connected by the avenues



EXISTING AND POSSIBLE FUTURE BUILT FORM

- Current built form
- Indicative future development derived from planning policy documents



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- 1960s and later plantings - mainly elms on edges
- 1920s Charles Weston plantings; some replaced with Elm trees on edges
- No street trees - landscape character from lake edge plantings
- No landscape character - mainly dryland grass and road way
- Heritage areas - Sir Thomas Blamey Square and City Hill



CYCLE LANES

- On road cycle lanes
- Off road strategic cycle network
- Shared path network



BUS ROUTES AND STOPS

- Coverage route (30-60 mins)
- Rapid route (15 mins)
- 5 minute walking distance
- Bus stop



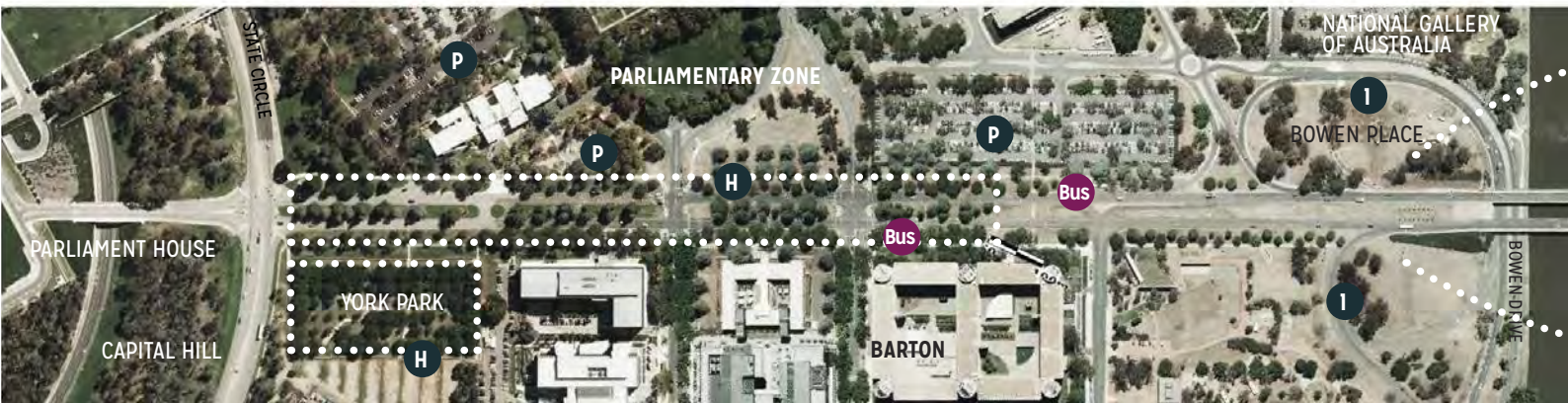
EXISTING ROAD HIERARCHY & SPEED

- Arterial (70-80 km/h)
- Distributor (60-70 km/hr)
- Street (50-60 km/hr)

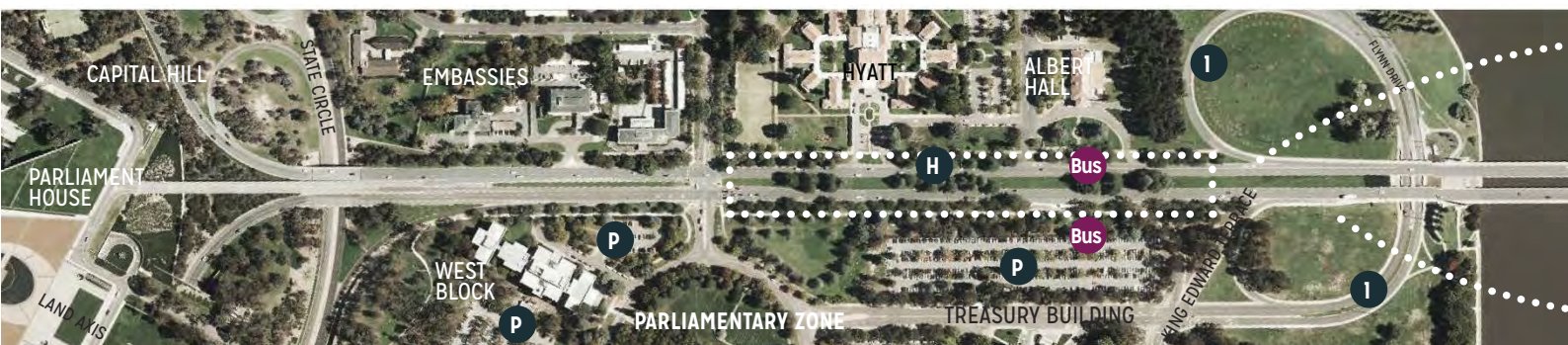


AREAS OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

- Areas of historic importance
- Historic landscape areas










KINGS AVENUE EXISTING



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE EXISTING

KEY

-  Bus Stop
-  Existing surface carparking
-  Major entry into the Canberra Central Parklands
-  Historic landscape areas
-  Existing loop roads connecting to the avenues
-  Kings Avenue overpass
-  Kings Avenue wide central median at Russell





1. Amenity and comfort: Kings Avenue footpath
2. Embankments: adjacent to the lake
3. Landmarks: Kings Avenue wide median looking up to Blamey Square, Russell
4. Edges: Commonwealth Avenue footpath
5. Interface: Commonwealth Avenue adjacent the Hyatt and embassies
6. Accessibility: pedestrian & cycle movement, Kings Avenue
7. Key structural axes: City Hill to Parliament House vista



3.0 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

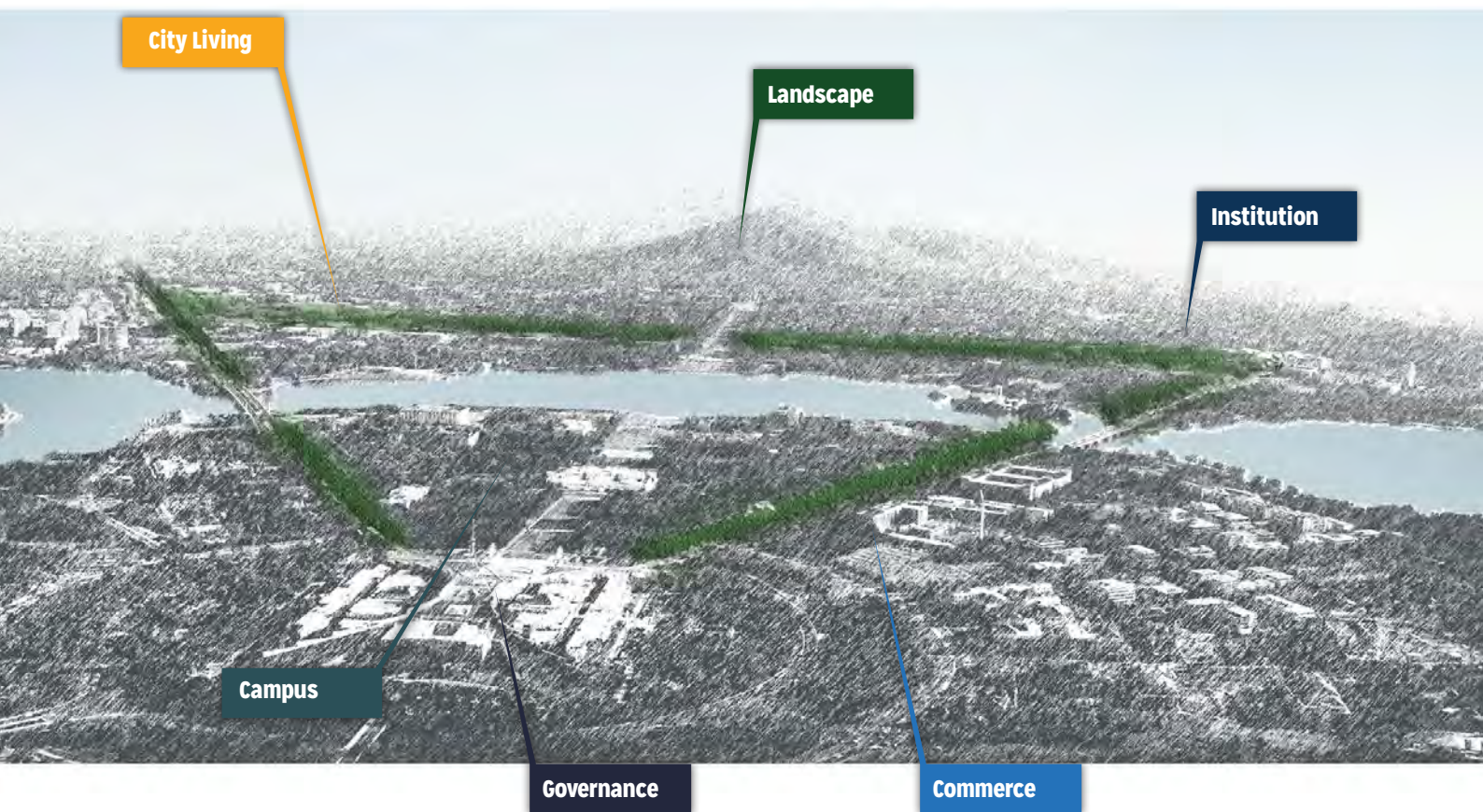
3.1 VISION

The status of Canberra as Australia’s National Capital and its character as a planned city within a unique and carefully managed natural Australian landscape setting are central to the urban design qualities of the city, and of the avenues.

The vision for Kings and Commonwealth avenues is to transform them into destinations and landmarks in their own right, accentuated by their character and special qualities. The structure of the avenues will unify the public realm and the buildings that line them, while providing a sense of formality, celebration and liveliness.

As the avenues evolve, and their key symbolic role in the Griffin Plan and the National Triangle is strengthened, so too will their importance as desirable street addresses. Their renewal will encourage development both at Acton and Russell and within the Parliamentary Zone. With increased use comes greater demand for high-quality public spaces in which people can meet and experience a vibrant civic life.

The avenues integrate a mix of functions

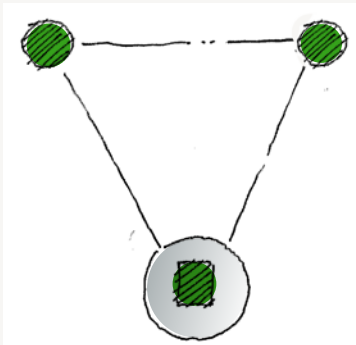


3.2 PRINCIPLES

Enshrined in the draft design strategy is a set of principles that provide the planning and design framework to guide and articulate a long-term vision for the avenues.

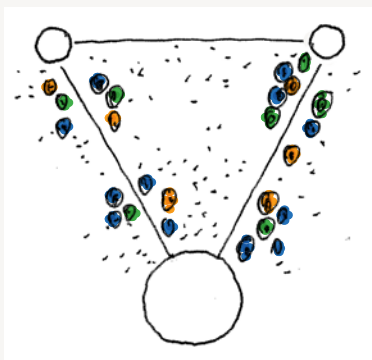
A UNIFIED EXPRESSION OF THE NATIONAL TRIANGLE

The character of the avenues will be renewed and unified from end to end. The layout of the avenues will reinforce the symbolic points of the National Triangle at City Hill, Parliament House and Russell and enhance the views from these locations.



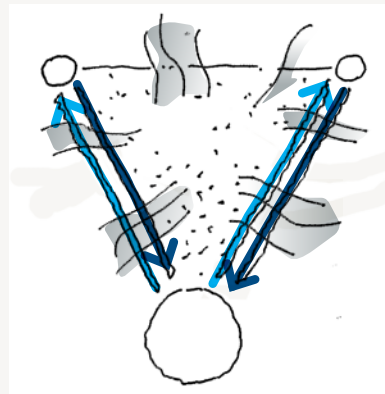
HIGH-QUALITY URBAN STREETSCAPES, BEFITTING THEIR STATUS AND USE

New public spaces will add richness and create a unique identity through high-quality design and materials. A consistent palette will ensure that a formal elegance is achieved, while allowing a variety of new uses within the space. The ongoing management and maintenance of the avenues will continue to reflect their importance.



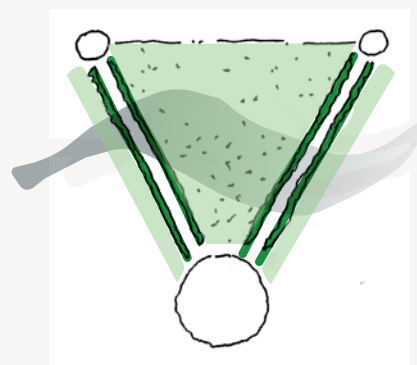
EFFECTIVE MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIONS FOR ALL

The avenues will maintain their important roles as traffic routes and as integrated public transport systems, including buses and light rail, while giving priority to pedestrian and cyclist connections.



A ROBUST LANDSCAPE CHARACTER THAT IS CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINABLE

The landscape character of the avenues will contain formal, continuous, unified street trees, shrubs and groundcover plantings using a range of species that respect the historical context of the avenues, and that ensure the longevity of the landscape into the future.



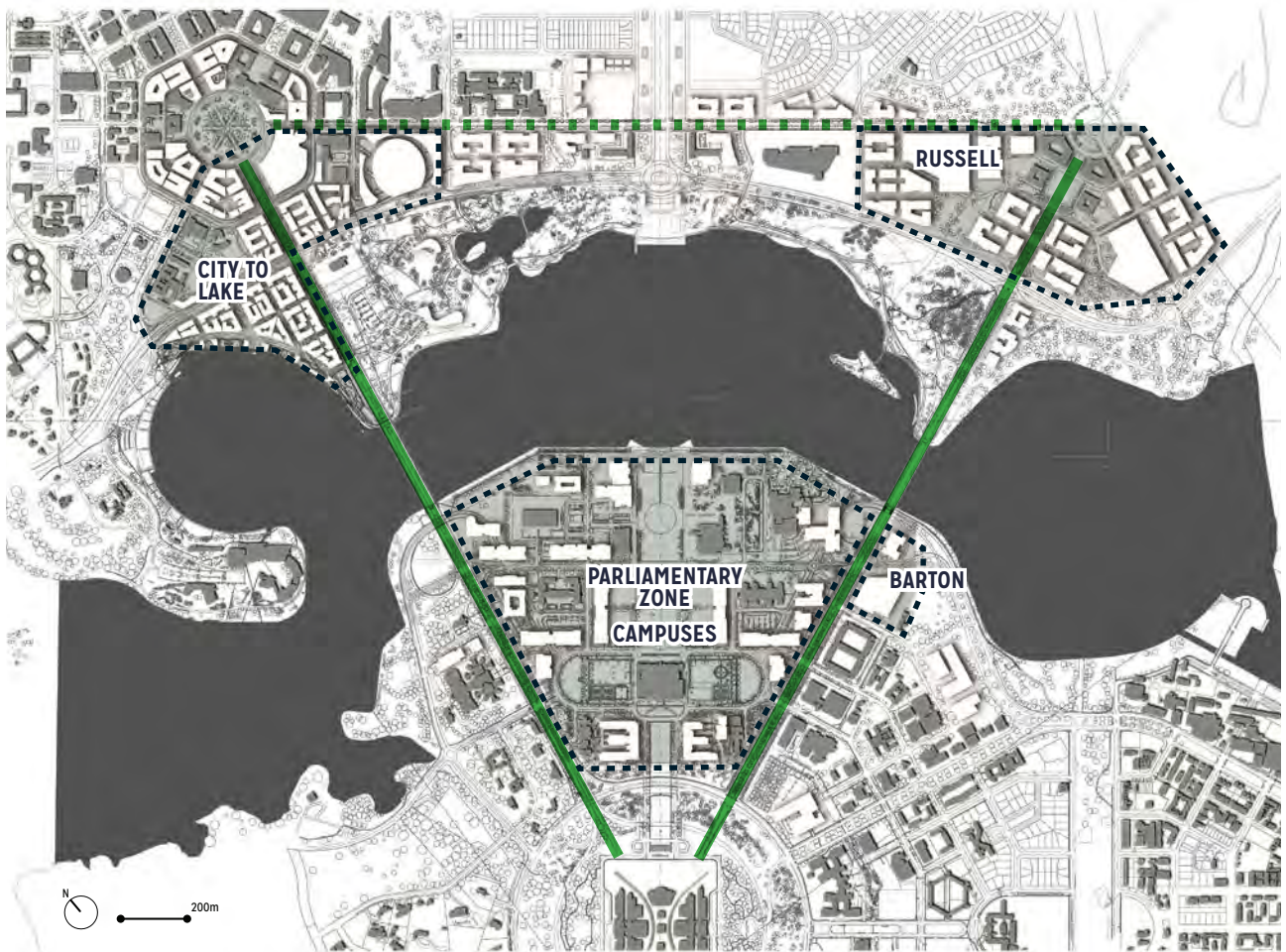
4.0 FRAMEWORK

The draft design strategy re-establishes the role played by Kings and Commonwealth avenues within Canberra's urban structure. Redevelopment of the avenues will provide the catalyst needed to attract new uses and buildings. In time, it is anticipated that development will occur in four main areas around the avenues:

- Commercial and residential uses will be extended from the city centre to Lake Burley Griffin, as provided for in the National Capital Plan. Commonwealth Avenue will represent an important civic edge to this development.
- The recent redevelopment of Constitution Avenue, which provides the third edge to the National Triangle, will also introduce new commercial and residential uses. The character of Kings and Commonwealth avenues, being more ceremonial in nature, will complement that of Constitution Avenue.
- Within the Parliamentary Zone, new development is likely to include new civic and institutional buildings fronting Kings and Commonwealth avenues.
- In Russell, provision will be made for new buildings fronting Kings Avenue.

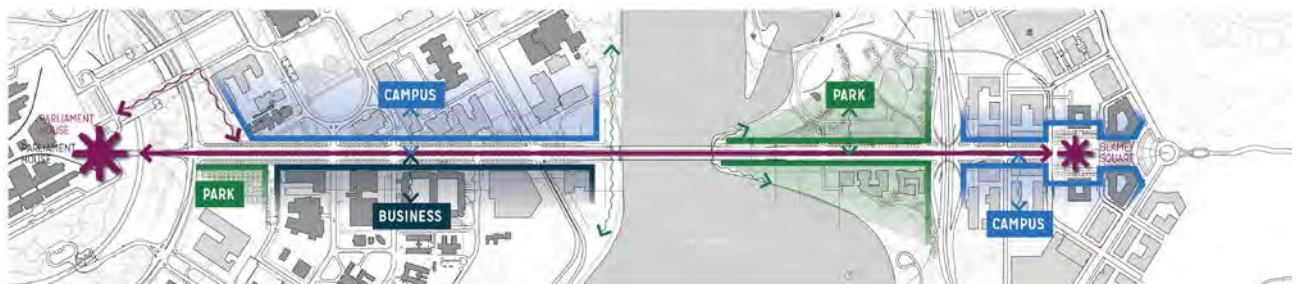
Canberra context, existing aerial photograph



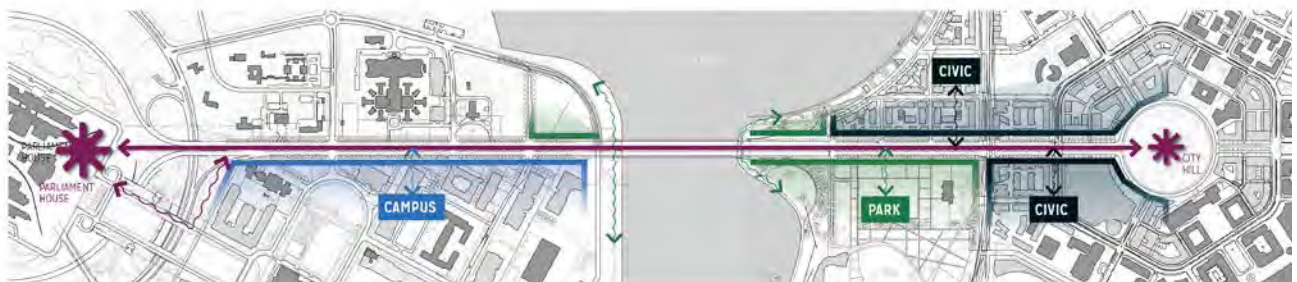


Future Canberra growth

Activity along the avenues will increase as their transformation occurs and the opportunities for new uses are realised. The diversity of uses are many and varied, including activities focussed on everyday use as well as major ceremonial events, interpretation and experimentation, active recreation, walking, jogging and cycling, art display, and other cultural and social activities that contribute towards the identity and life of the Canberra community.



KINGS AVENUE



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE



4.1 THE AVENUE TEMPLATE

A major objective of the design strategy is to restore the status of the avenues as an integral part of the National Triangle. The avenues carry key symbolic weight: they are a place of procession leading up to Parliament House, and they link the city's National Capital and its territorial functions. But they are also key destinations in themselves.

To assist in realising the vision for the avenues, an 'avenue template' has been developed. In a manner consistent with the original formal layout of Kings and Commonwealth avenues, the avenue template sets out the key attributes required when upgrades are being implemented.

The renewed avenues will retain a consistent wide median and pedestrian verge on both sides. The verges will be laid out in a manner that will create a paved pathway on the outer (roadside) edge; a variable zone for lawns, paving, gardens, fountains and public art; and an inner path that extends spatially to adjacent building forecourts.

Overlaying this template will be a formal grid of trees, further enriched by lighting, street furniture, gardens, public art, and signage and wayfinding information. This configuration re-establishes the formal geometry of the avenues, at the same time as it substantially improves intersections and enables ease of pedestrian crossing.



Illustration from Kings Avenue to Blamey Square landmark

Illustration from Commonwealth Avenue to City Hill



CROSS SECTION OF THE AVENUE TEMPLATE



This configuration re-establishes the formal geometry of the avenues, at the same time substantially improving intersections and ease of pedestrian crossing

VERGES

The verge will comprise:

- a paved wide outer path, adjacent to the kerb, to accommodate trees and avenue lighting
- a central zone to accommodate lawns and gardens
- an inner path extending into, and becoming part of the various forecourts and plazas associated with the buildings fronting the avenues.

The verge configuration will be applied on both sides, along the length of the avenues to allow for a symmetrical arrangement of avenue trees and for the placement of lighting, furniture, bus shelters, signage and walls.

- INNER PATH
- LANDSCAPE VARIABLE ZONE
- OUTER PATH
- CYCLEWAY
- ROAD



MEDIAN

The existing cedars in the medians and verges are to be retained, and new trees will be planted where these are currently absent. The median planting will stop short of the bridges to ensure unimpeded views of Lake Burley Griffin and, at the avenues' northern and southern ends, of City Hill, Sir Thomas Blamey Square (Blamey Square) and Parliament House.

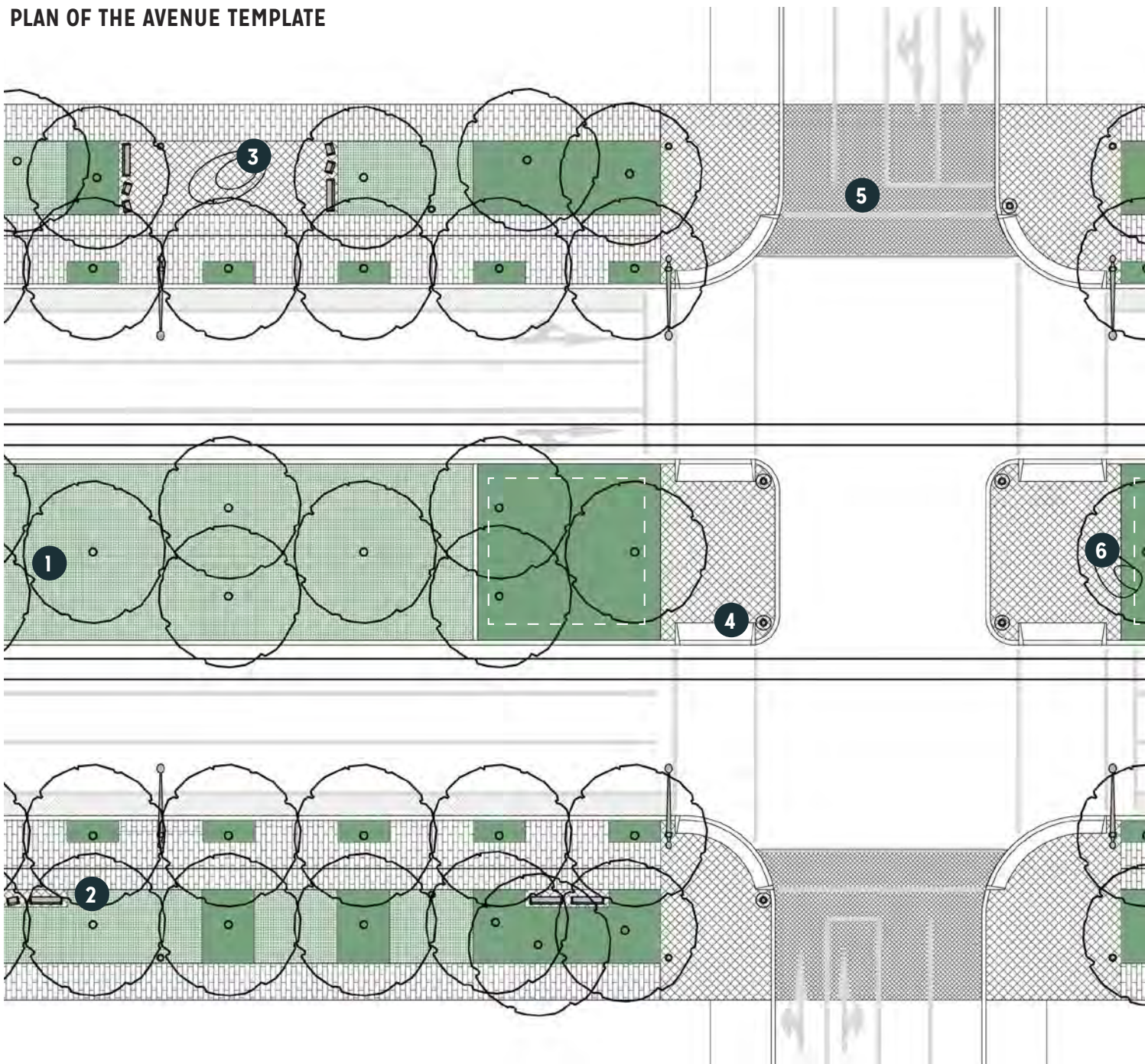
ROADWAYS

The existing road cross-sections through Kings and Commonwealth avenues vary: Kings Avenue consists of a 9-metre-wide carriageway with a 12-metre-wide median, and Commonwealth Avenue consists of a 10-metre carriageway with a 12-metre-wide median.






The proposed road cross-sections will maintain a constant width for the carriageways and for the medians. Both carriageways will include wider dedicated cycle paths. With the possible introduction of light rail, the lane widths will be capable of being reconfigured within the overall road width.

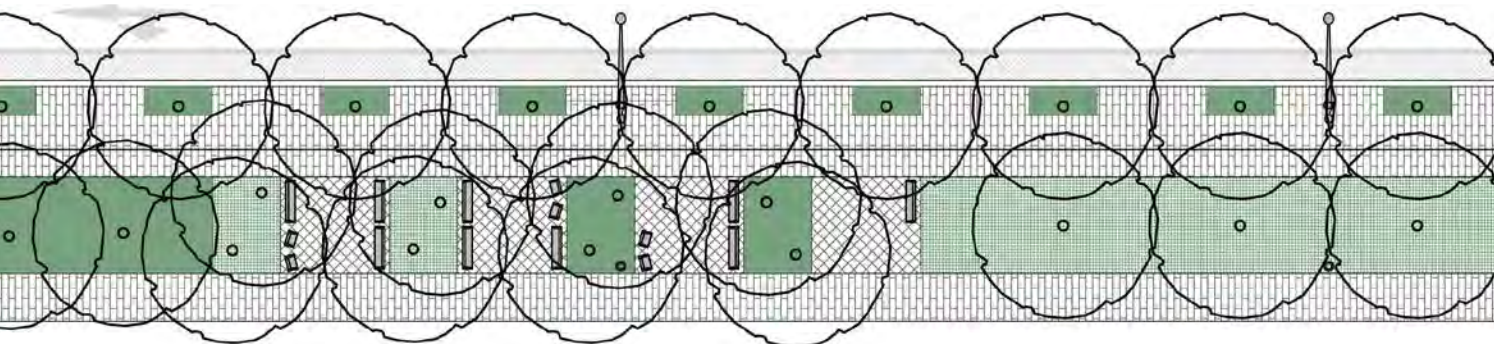
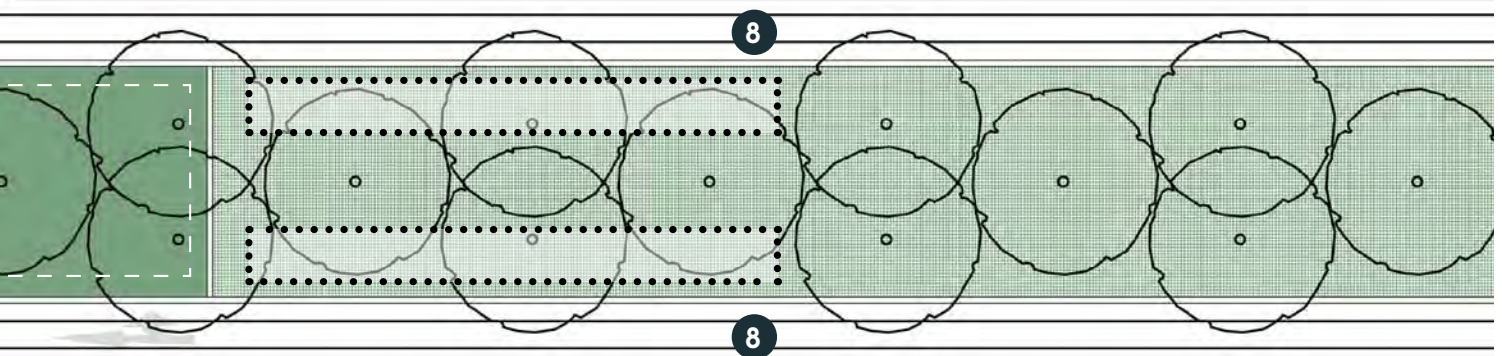
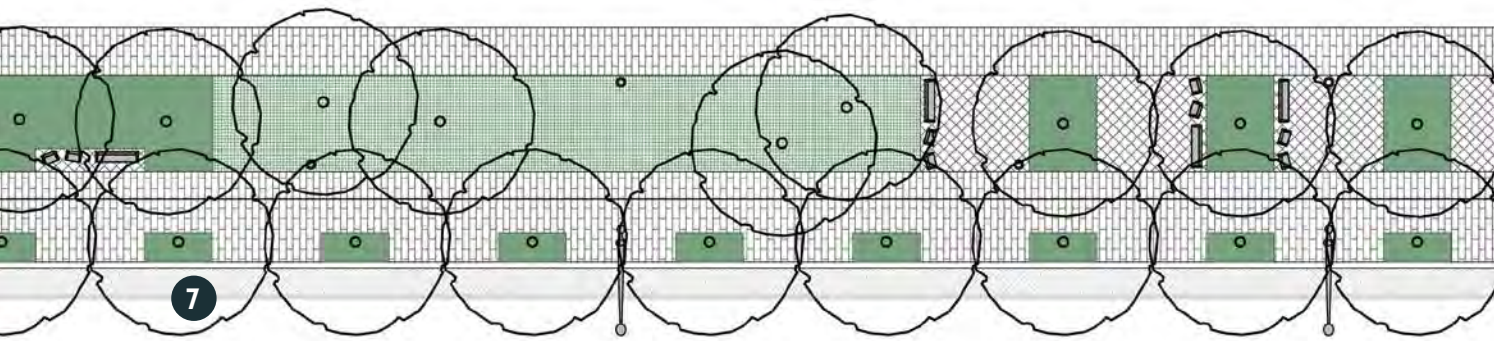
On-street car parking is not permitted along the avenues, and the outermost of the three travel lanes will be configured to accommodate bus stops and drop-off zones.

PLAN OF THE AVENUE TEMPLATE



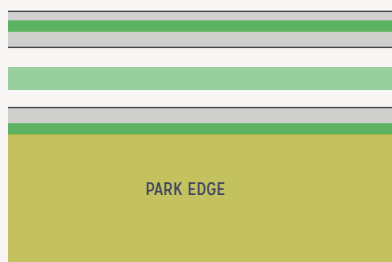
KEY FEATURES

-  Paving - avenue paths
-  Paving - transition zones
-  Paved road threshold - cobble
-  Lawns
-  Gardens



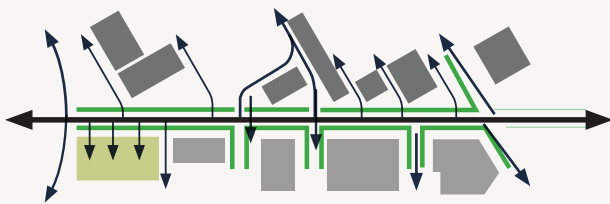
- 1 Central median tree planting - retain existing trees of value and infill with new formally organised tree planting
- 2 Avenue seating and furnishings flanking the primary path
- 3 Opportunity for fountains and art within variable zone
- 4 Avenue intersection geometry favours pedestrians and cyclists. Refuge areas paved and smart poles combining street lighting, traffic lights and signage declutter the avenue
- 5 Cobbled intersection thresholds define the avenue geometry and prioritise pedestrian movement along the avenues
- 6 Avenue gardens distinguish the intersections, and the avenues themselves. Opportunities for art and interpretation
- 7 Dedicated on-road cycle lane
- 8 Indicative Light Rail Alignment (road lane adjacent median). Light rail stops located within central median adjacent to pedestrian crossings.

4.2 APPLYING THE TEMPLATE



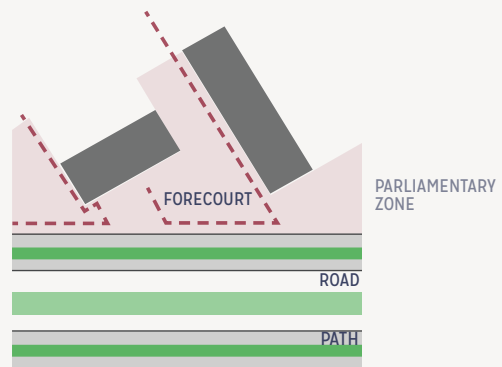
PARK EDGES

The landscape quality of the avenues is given full expression in the Kings, Commonwealth, Grevillea and York Park frontages. At present, none of these spaces have clearly defined entry points that identify the parks and distinguish them from Canberra's natural bushland.



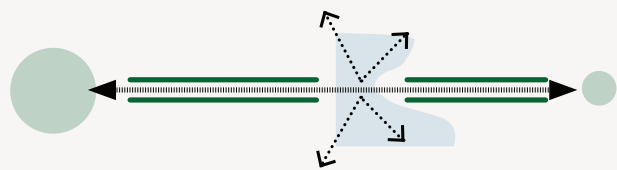
CROSSLINKS

The proposed arrangement will support a lively dialogue between the National Triangle and adjacent civic, institutional, commercial and emerging residential areas; for example, from Acton to Commonwealth Park. The geometry of intersections will be reconfigured to improve the crossings along the entire length of the avenues.



FORECOURTS AND BUILT FORM EDGES

On the Parliamentary Zone side of the avenues, buildings are to be orientated at an angle of 45 degrees to the line of the road. The spaces arising from this geometry will become forecourts that serve to bring uses such as cafés from inside to outside, thereby activating the street frontages.



VIEWS, VISTAS AND AXES

Those passing over Kings Avenue Bridge and Commonwealth Avenue Bridge will be able to take in views over Lake Burley Griffin and Canberra's broader landscape, and enjoy distant views to the Brindabella Ranges. A new layer of formal avenue trees will accentuate the way the avenues are experienced in the approach to City Hill, Blamey Square and Parliament House.

Illustration from Commonwealth Avenue with West Basin to the right and Commonwealth Park on the left



5.0 AVENUES IN DETAIL

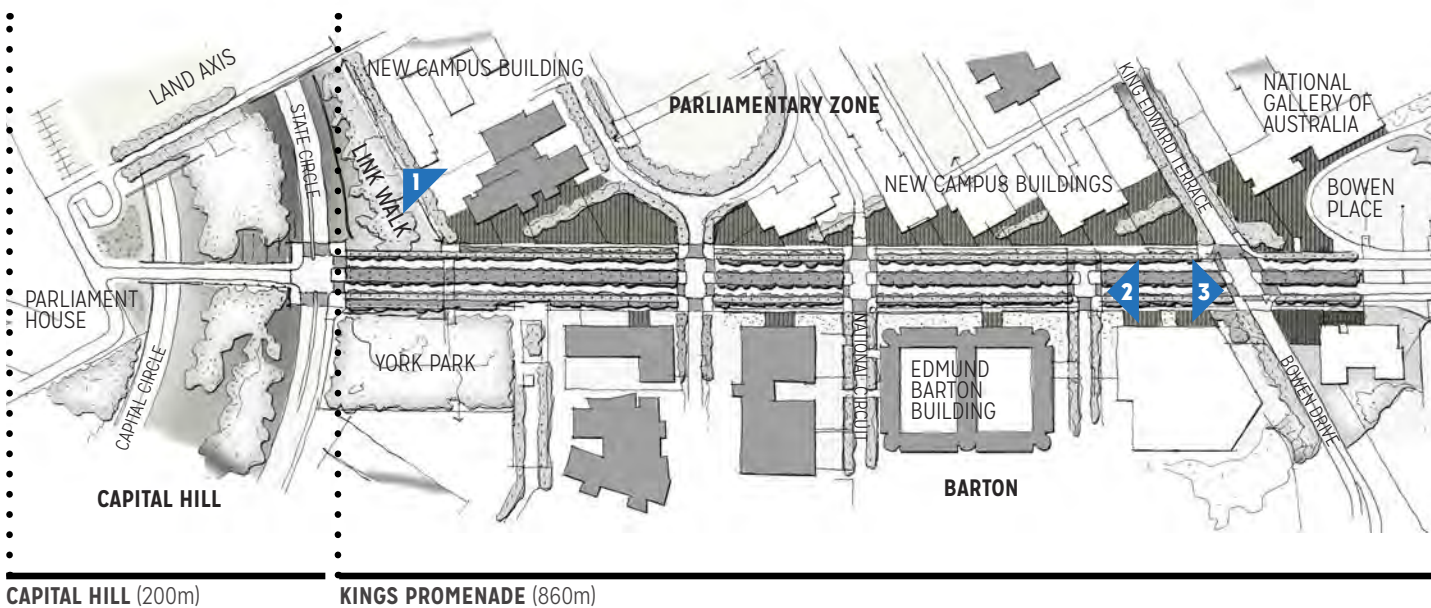
The following section describes in more detail the key stages for achieving the principles and vision for Kings and Commonwealth avenues.

5.1 KINGS AVENUE

At two lanes wide in each direction, Kings Avenue carries less traffic than Commonwealth Avenue, but is equally important within Canberra's broader metropolitan transport network.

The built form structure - buildings, roads and landscape - south of the lake, and east of the avenue at Barton, is already well established, reinforcing a visual and spatial enclosure that is formal yet in keeping with the width of the avenue. Currently, this is visually the most successful section of the avenue, and the most comfortable for pedestrians to use.

Kings Avenue will be unified both visually and functionally by reconfiguring intersections, planting new avenue trees and creating spacious pedestrian promenades. The avenue template defines new building frontages and makes provision for new courtyards, plazas and gardens. At its northern end, the avenue terminates at Blamey Square, which will be reconfigured to enable it to become one of the National Capital's important symbolic and ceremonial spaces.





View 1 Link from Kings Avenue to Parliamentary Zone



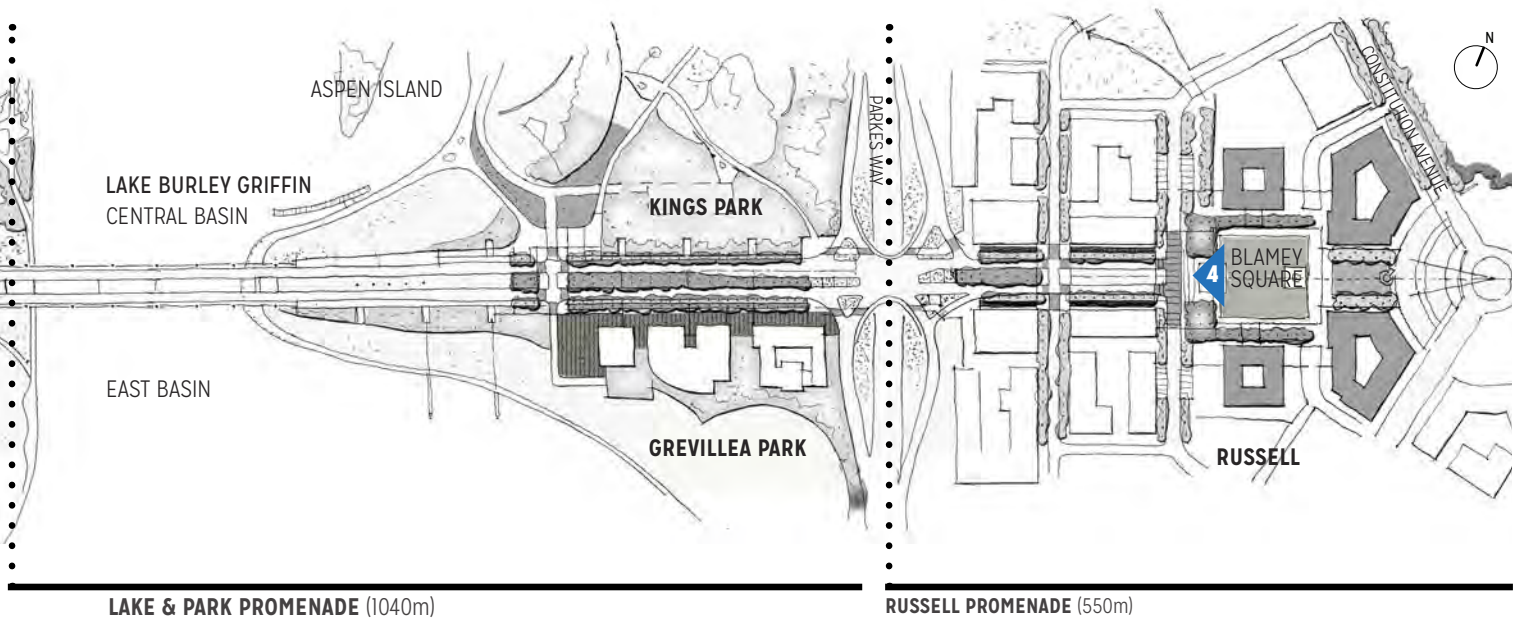
View 2 New intersection within Kings Promenade



View 3 Looking towards Kings Avenue Bridge and Russell






View 4 From Blamey Square looking west

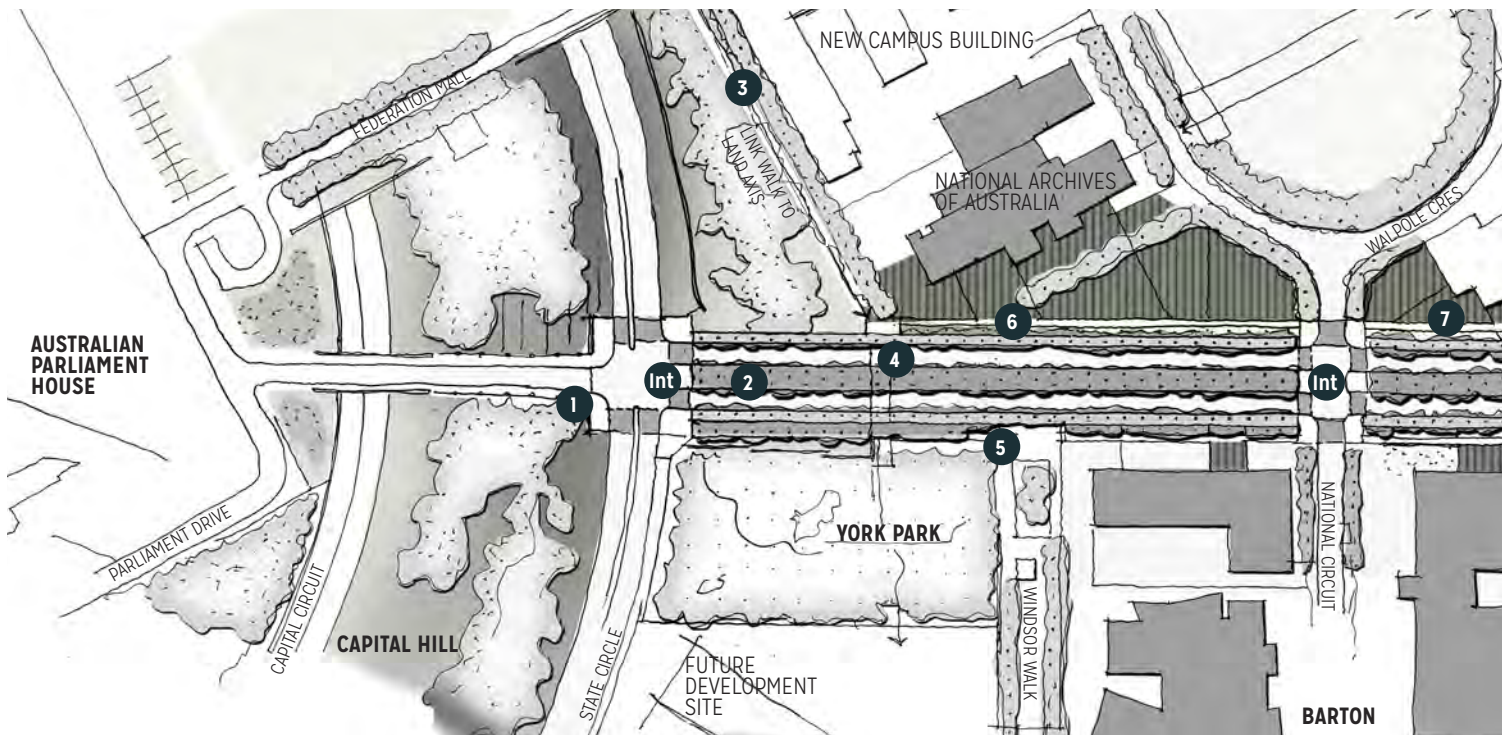


KINGS AVENUE (SOUTH)

The southern section of the avenue expands on the built form structure established on the eastern side by York Park, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet building and the Edmund Barton building. The built form on the western side of the avenue is currently poorly defined and dominated by surface car parking.

The design strategy makes provision for a new suite of intersections and roads to open up new sites for future development and increasing the density of buildings and activity within the Parliamentary Zone. At the northern end of the avenue, an opportunity exists for the National Gallery of Australia to expand towards Kings Avenue.

-  Current built form
-  Indicative future development derived from planning policy documents
-  Indicative forecourt



CAPITAL HILL (200m)

KINGS PROMENADE (860m)

KEY MOVES

Int Reconfigured intersection

Bus Indicative Bus stop

1 Reconfigured intersection at State Circle. Path leading to Parliament House widened.

2 'Avenue Template' applied along Kings Avenue to central median and verge.

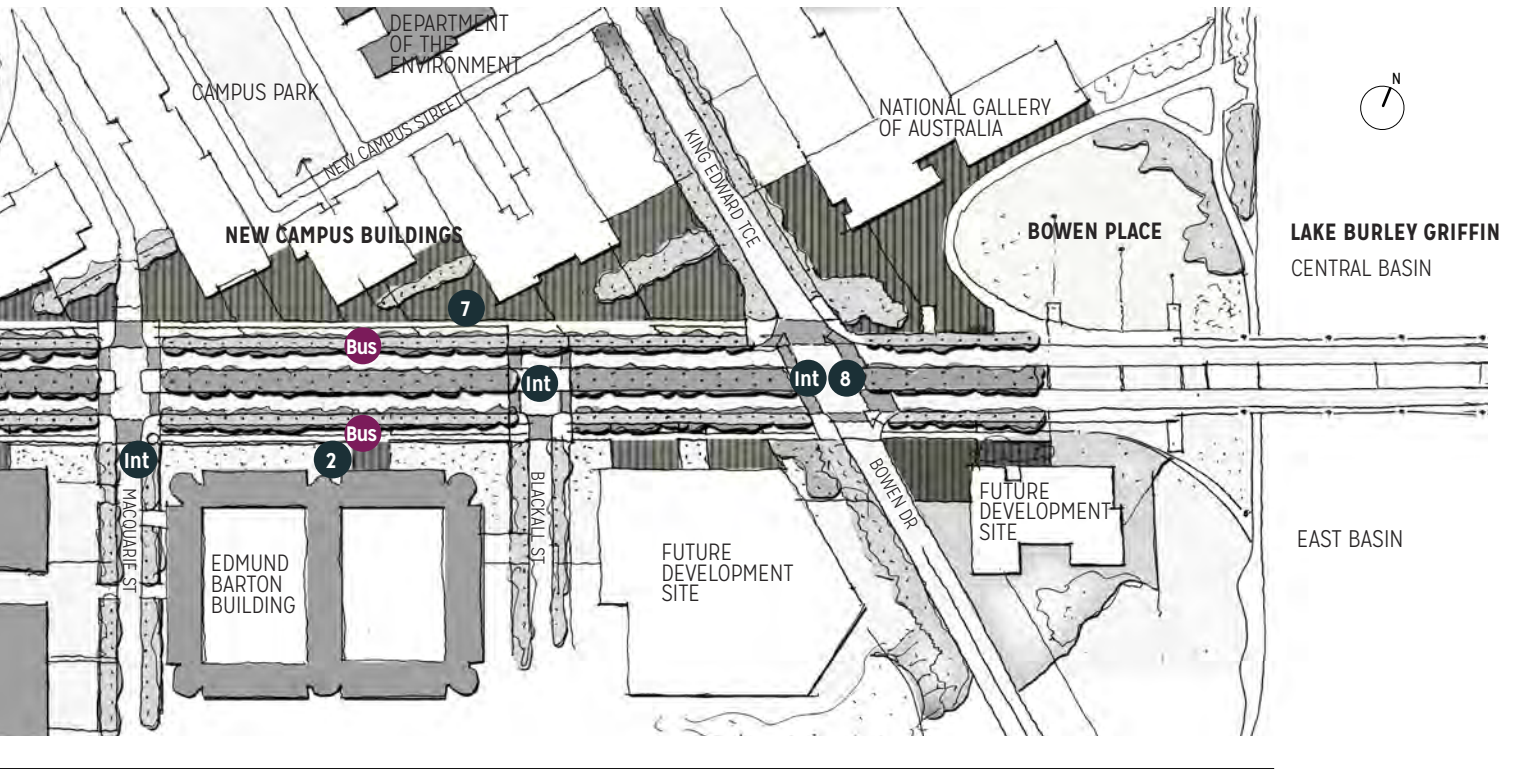
3 New Link Walk connecting Kings Avenue to the land axis and Commonwealth Avenue.

4 New pedestrian crossing linking Windsor Walk to the Land Axis.

5 Improved frontage and visibility of York Park and Windsor Walk from the Avenue.

6 Existing entry to the National Archives of Australia removed. Access provided from Queen Victoria Terrace.




7 Forecourts established as part of new development sites to front the Avenue.

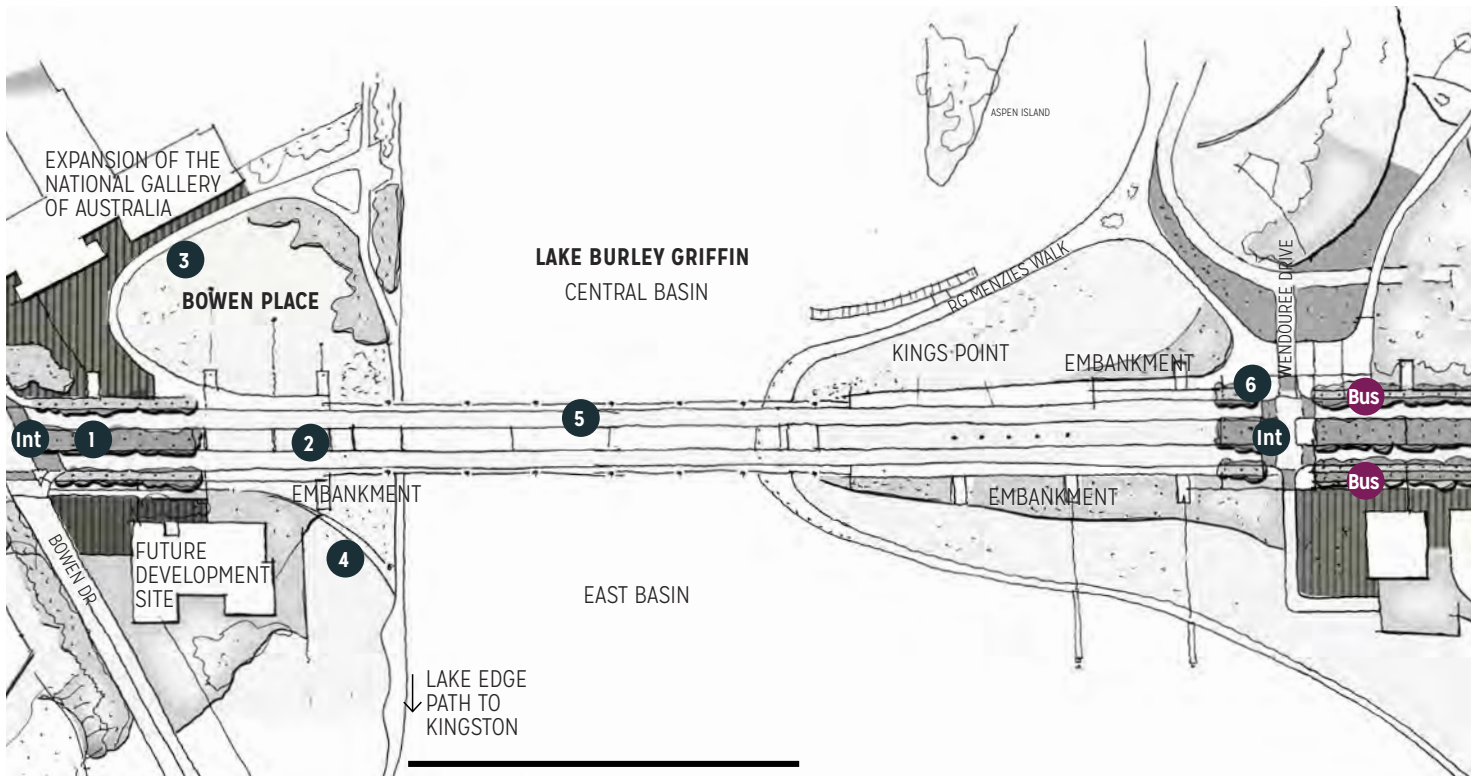


KINGS AVENUE (NORTH)

The section of the avenue north of Lake Burley Griffin is fronted by Kings and Grevillea parks, extending up to Parkes Way. The avenue continues through a revitalised Blamey Square and terminates at the intersection with Constitution Avenue. There are two distinct precincts here: the Russell Defence Precinct and the Kings Avenue Bridge.

The Russell Defence Precinct has a planned geometrical arrangement of buildings and spaces established by Kings Avenue and Blamey Square. The views from the Kings Avenue Bridge precinct reveal Black Mountain to the west and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands to the east, with Kings and Grevillea parks providing frontages that establish a natural landscape setting for the lake.

-  Current Built Form
-  Indicative Future Development derived from planning policy documents
-  Indicative Forecourt



LAKE & PARK PROMENADE (1040m)

KEY MOVES

Int Reconfigured intersection

Bus Indicative bus stop

1 'Avenue Template' applied along Kings Avenue to central median and verge

2 No avenue tree planting. A series of viewing points reveal lake views

3 Expanded National Gallery and associated sculpture park frontage onto Kings Avenue

4 Existing loop roads removed. Widened lake edge path and new connection from lake edge path to Kings Avenue Promenade

5 Bridge footpaths widened, barriers and lighting improved.

6 Improved entry into Kings Park integrating improved ramp connecting Kings Avenue to RG Menzies Walk

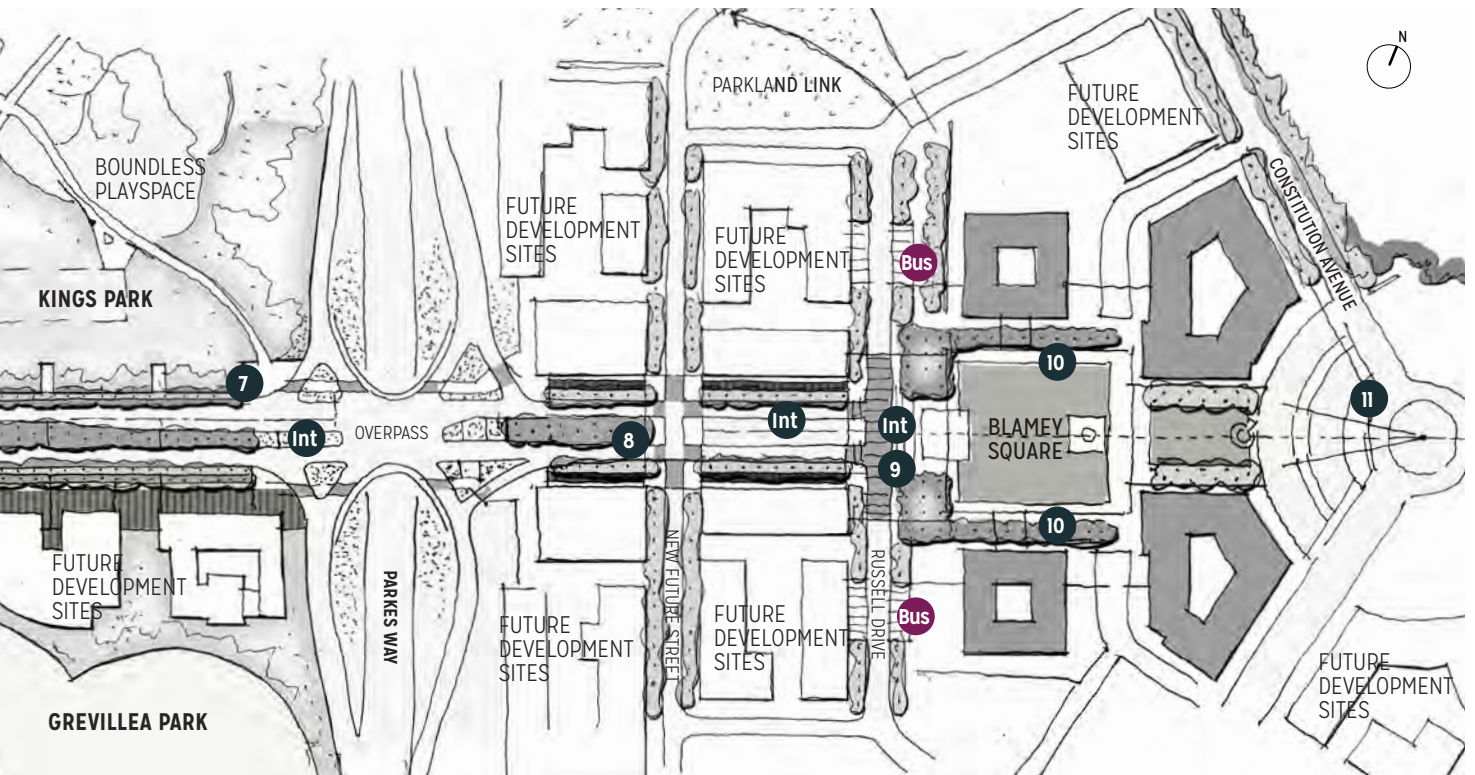
7 Establish Kings Park Entry and minor adjustments to Kings Avenue/Parkes Way intersection to enable better pedestrian connectivity

8 'Avenue Template' applied along Kings Avenue to central median and verge - existing wide verge narrowed

9 Russell Drive/Kings Avenue paved crossing. Establish new terraced plaza and alongside tree planting associated with Blamey Square

10 Carparking removed and gardens established flanking Blamey Square's central lawn

11 Integrity of the Axis and definition of National Triangle refined connecting into the upgraded Constitution Avenue



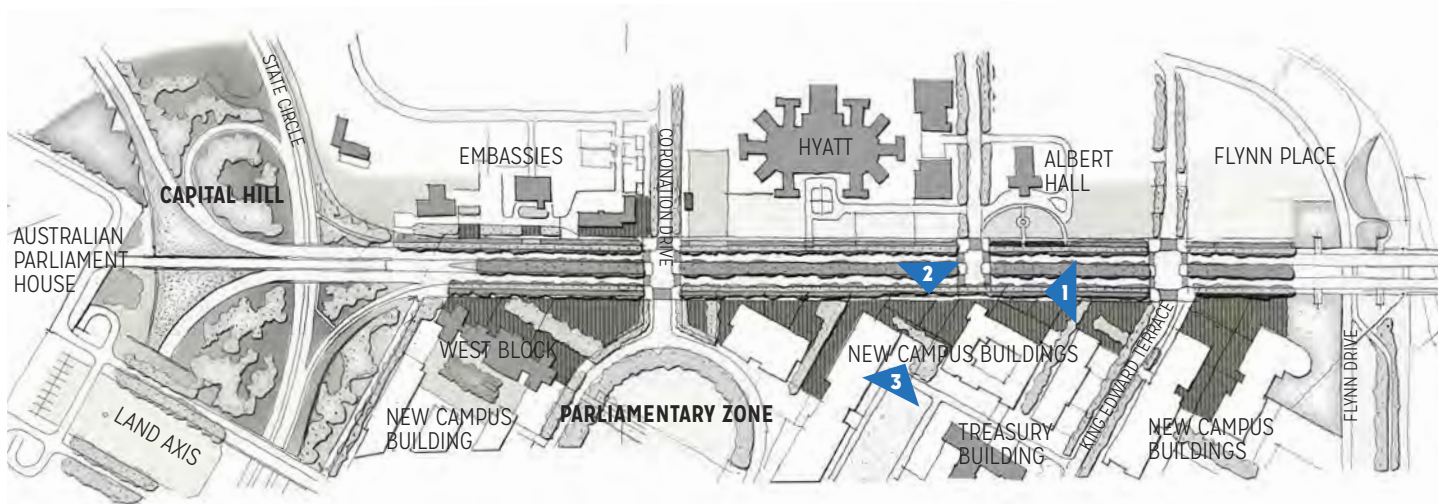
RUSSELL PROMENADE (550m)

5.2 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

The avenue template established for Kings Avenue will also apply to Commonwealth Avenue, resulting in similarly reconfigured intersections, new avenue tree plantings, wide pedestrian walkways and new building frontages to the avenue.

To the north, the vista of Commonwealth Avenue culminates at City Hill and serves as a point of orientation within Canberra's broader city structure. Access for pedestrians to City Hill will be achieved by drawing them into the Commonwealth Park median so that they can safely cross Vernon Circle.

At the other end of the avenue, the Parliament House flagpole stands over this iconic building, dominating the city's landscape. Ironically, the current configuration of roads prevents direct pedestrian access from Commonwealth Avenue to Capital Hill. The design strategy proposes a new route for pedestrians and cyclists heading south along the avenue that will allow them to gain access to the parliamentary land axis and then to Capital Hill and Parliament House.



CAPITAL HILL (320m)

COMMONWEALTH PROMENADE (850m)



View 1 Commonwealth Promenade



View 2 Variable zone of gardens, lawns, paving, artwork, seating, on-road cycle lane



View 3 Active forecourt areas



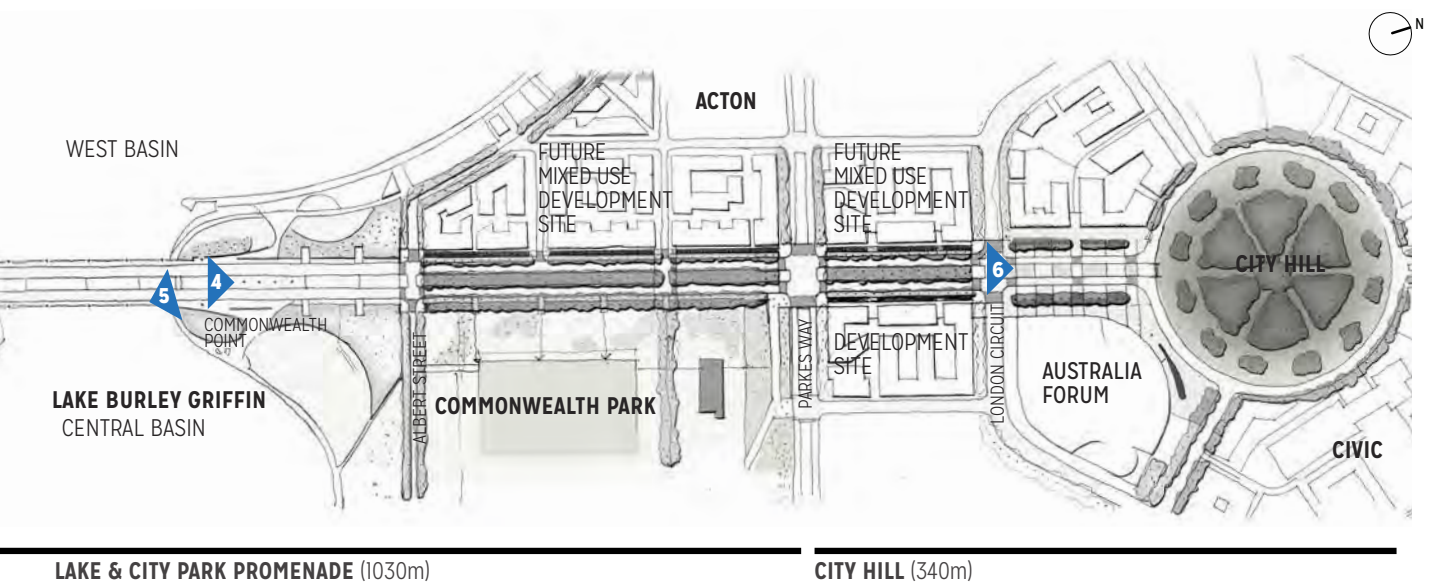
View 4 Remade Lake and City Park Promenade



View 5 Expanded pedestrian and cycle connection over the bridge






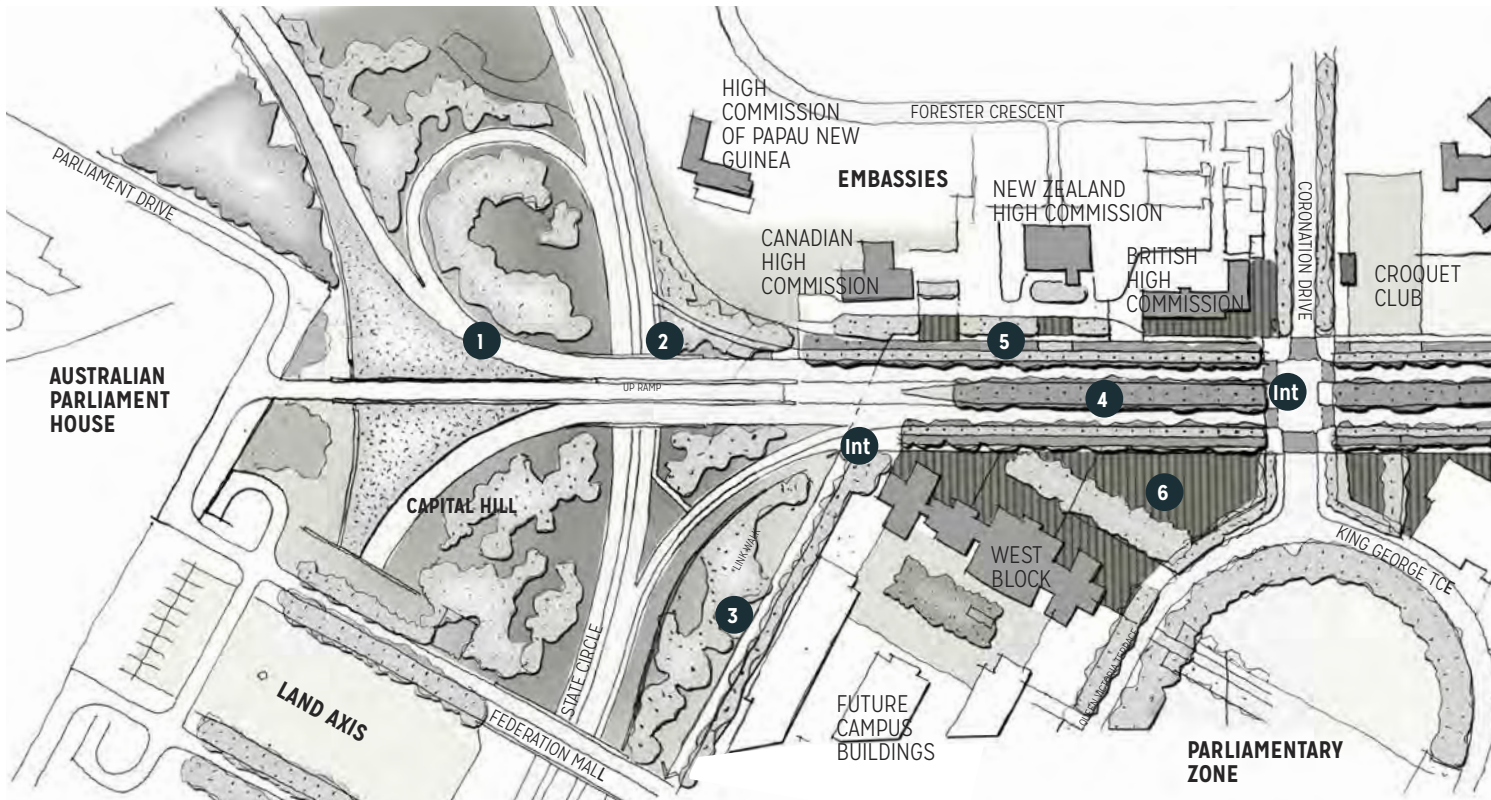
View 6 New City Hill approach



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE (SOUTH)

The section of Commonwealth Avenue between Capital Hill and Lake Burley Griffin is characterised by cedars in the median and by established buildings and gardens on the western side of the avenue. The built form structure of the eastern side is currently less well established; it is dominated by surface car parking and has an undefined edge. By reconfiguring the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and King Edward Terrace, new sites can be created; these sites will be orientated on the same Parliamentary Zone campus grid as the existing West Block and Treasury buildings.

-  Current Built Form
-  Indicative Future Development derived from planning policy documents
-  Indicative Forecourt



CAPITAL HILL (320m)

COMMONWEALTH PROMENADE (850m)

KEY MOVES

Int Reconfigured Intersection

Bus Bus Stop: Remove existing pedestrian underpass through provision of new pedestrian crossings at intersections

Light Rail Possible light rail stop

1 Slow traffic approaching Commonwealth Avenue from State and Capital Circles to 60km/hr

2 Strengthen native tree planting to emphasise Capital Hill and frame views to Parliament House. Improve connections to existing path network.

3 New Link Walk connecting Kings Avenue to the Land axis and Commonwealth Avenue

4 'Avenue Template' applied along the avenue to central median and verge

5 Entries to Embassies consolidated to allow 'Ceremonial' access

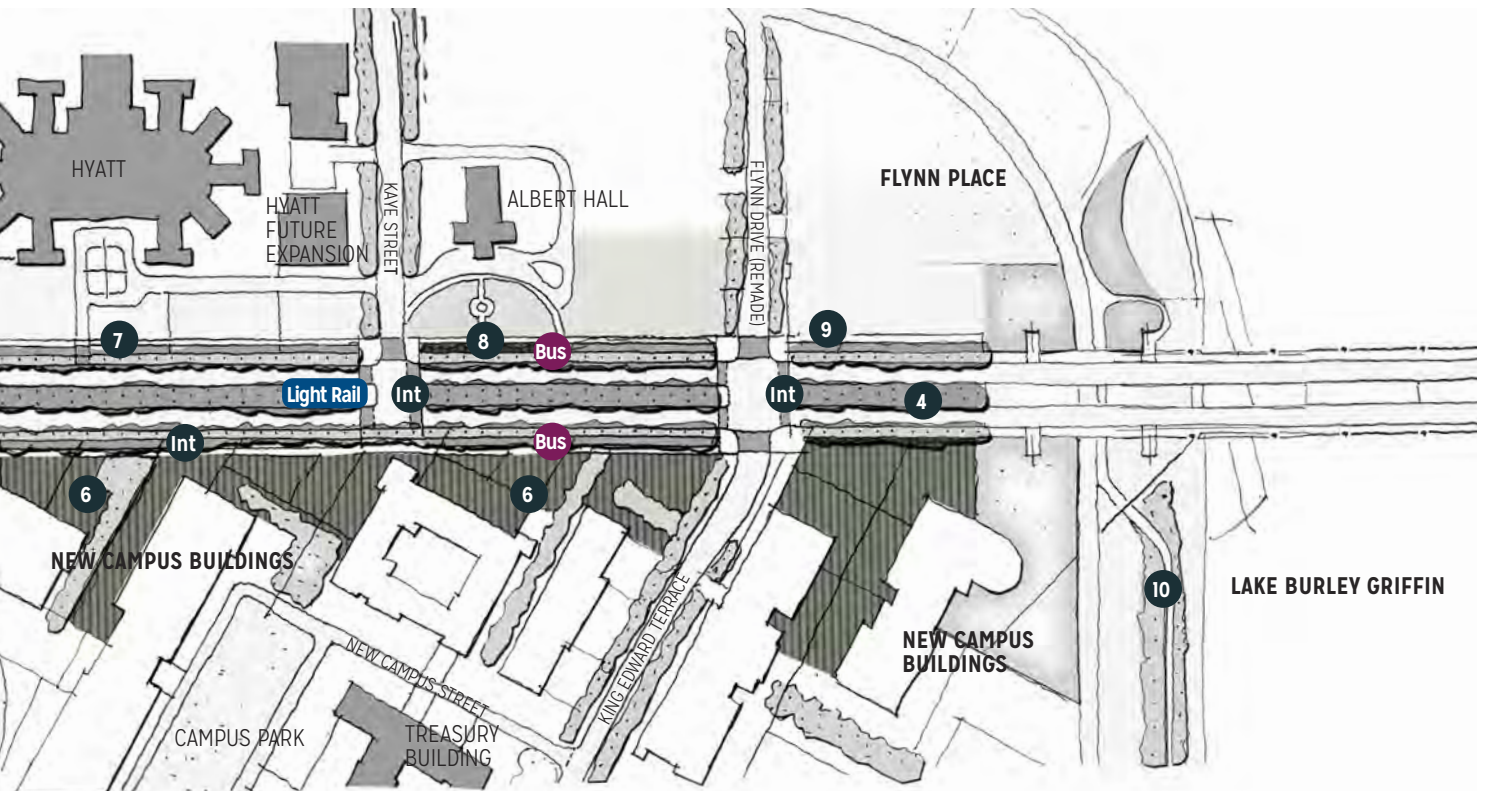
6 Forecourts established as part of new development sites to front the Avenue

7 Hyatt Hotel entry consolidated

8 Albert Hall Civic Gardens addressing the Avenue




9 Existing road loops removed and King Edward Terrace/Flynn Drive/Commonwealth Avenue intersection remade

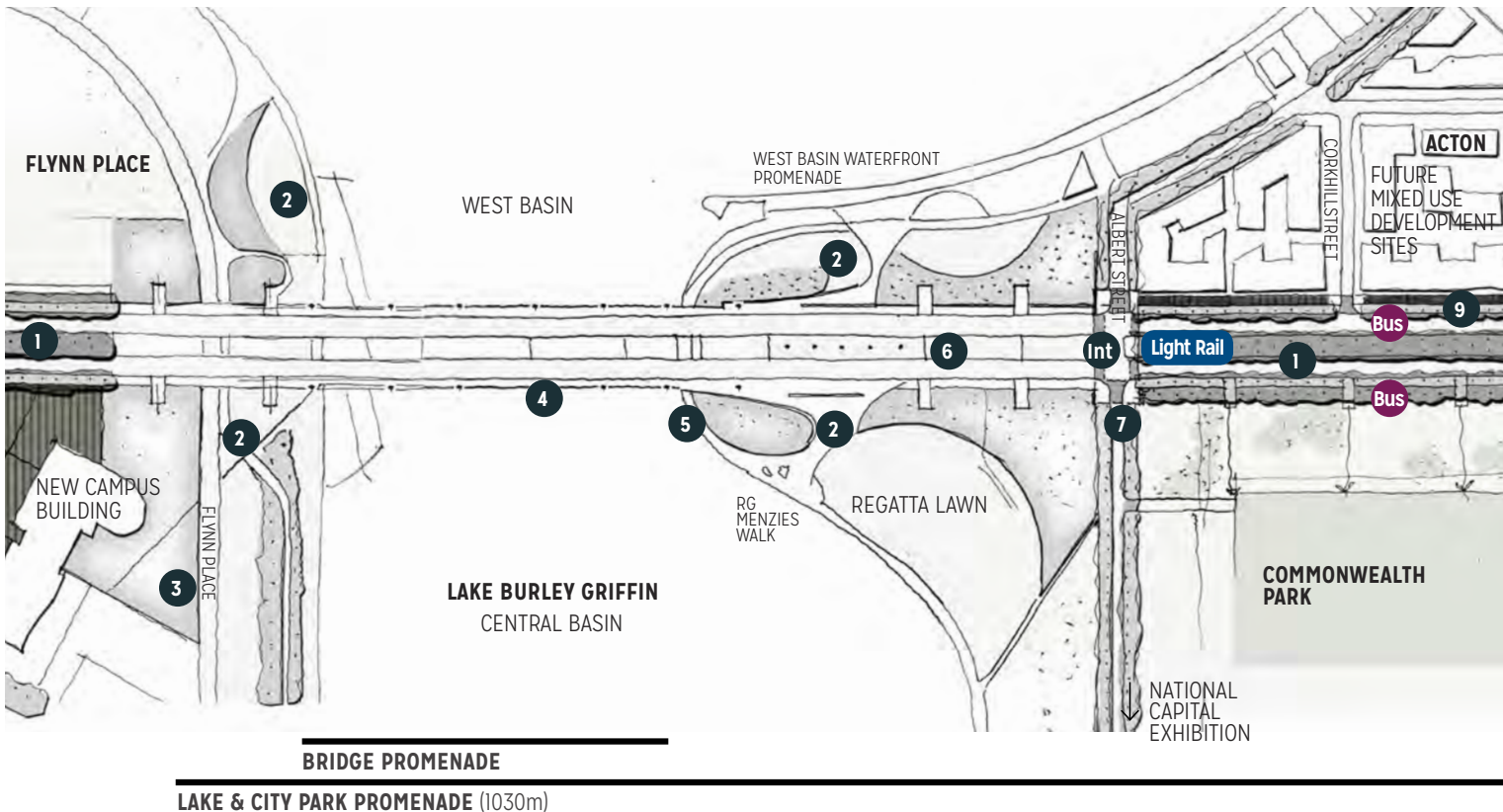
10 Flynn Drive road loops remade as Flynn Place service road.



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE (NORTH)

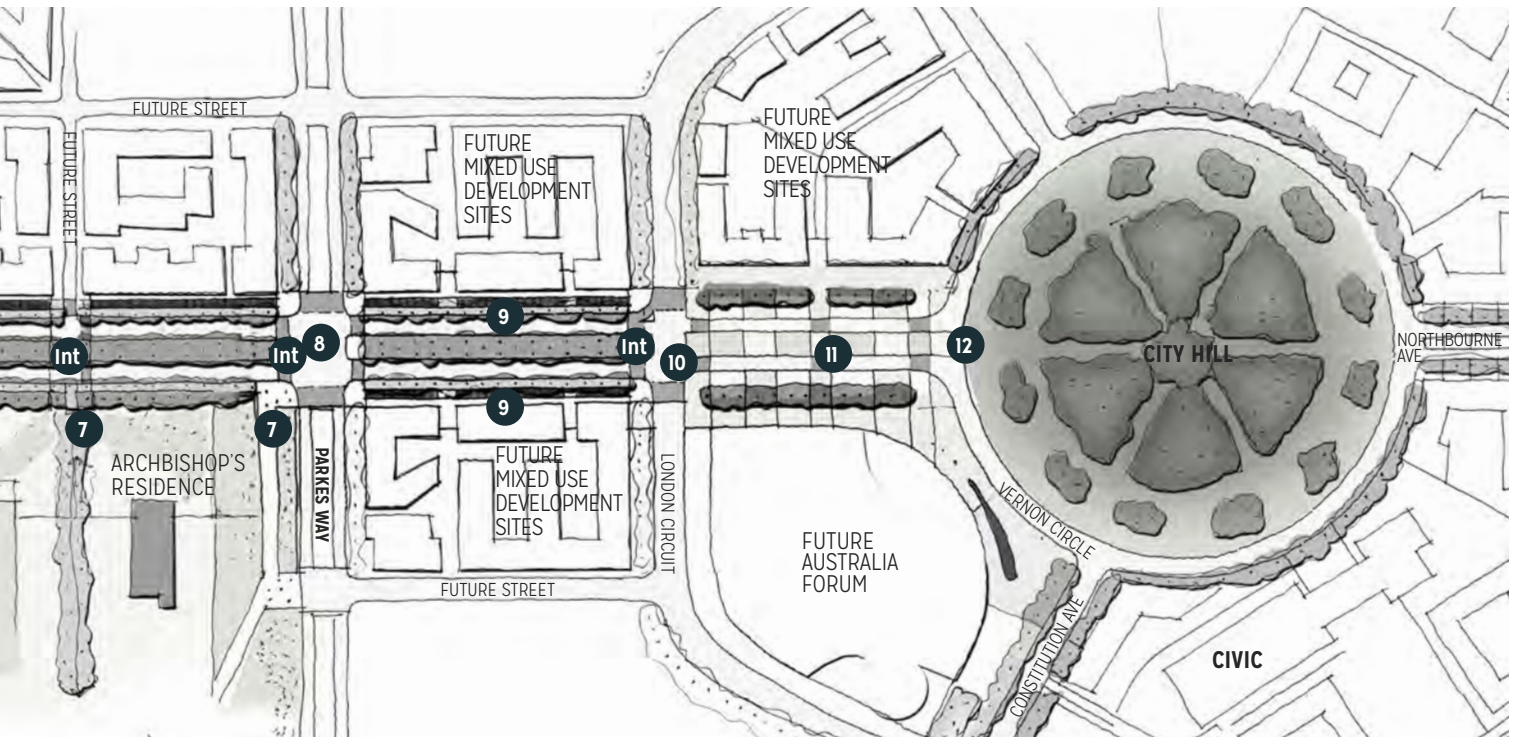
By reconfiguring the road intersections north of the lake to remove the existing high-speed free-left turns and replace them with signalised intersections, the avenue template will be established along the northern section of Commonwealth Avenue. Pedestrian and cycle use will be greatly improved, and new sites for mixed-use development within West Basin will be made possible.

-  Current Built Form
-  Indicative Future Development derived from planning policy documents
-  Indicative Forecourt



KEY MOVES

- Int** Reconfigured intersection
- Bus** Bus stop
- Light Rail** Possible light rail stop
- 1** 'Avenue Template' applied along the avenue to central median and verge.
- 2** Accessible connections linking lake edge pathways to the Avenues.
- 3** Flynn Place service road
- 4** Bridge footpaths widened, barriers and lighting improved
- 5** Barrine Drive returned to park, viewing deck lighting, art opportunity under the bridge.
- 6** No avenue tree planting. A series of viewing points reveal lake views.
- 7** Commonwealth Park entries
- 8** Parkes Way intersection remade promoting good pedestrian and cycle connectivity
- 9** Variable zone articulated with paving, gardens and lawns to suit new built form frontages. All carparking and drop off associated with new developments is from side streets and back lanes
- 10** London Circuit raised. New signalised intersection
- 11** City Hill approach. No central median tree planting. New trees flank the avenue with set back buildings to allow open views to City Hill. Road reduced to two lanes each way. Dedicated off-road 'Copenhagen-style' cycle lane linking from London Circuit to Constitution Avenue.
- 12** Pedestrian crossing point and access to City Hill



CITY HILL (340m)





6.0 STRATEGIES

The strategies outlined in the following section describe elements which will contribute to the character of Kings and Commonwealth avenues as a whole. They can be achieved through a series of stages, either funded separately or through a shared-cost arrangement with adjacent built form projects.

6.1 TREES AND PLANTING

TREES

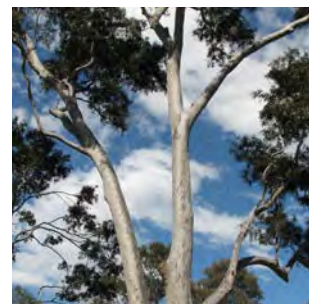
Canberra's relatively high elevation and poor soils restrict the number of species of trees that are suitable for a grand avenue. Within these constraints, the draft design strategy proposes plantings that are intended to be sustainable over a very long timeframe. The overarching planting strategies are:

- to retain existing trees of value but supplement them with new trees to replace those in poor health or those that only relatively short-lived
- to plant for the future, choosing species that are very long-lived
- to make connections with adjacent open spaces and planted areas
- to plant large trees in scale with the wide corridor and the height of adjacent buildings
- to use deciduous and evergreen trees to create light and shade, with an aim to unifying the avenues while also creating variety.

Currently, the avenues are planted with a variety of tree species that includes English elms, Chinese elms and cedars. Other species, such as cypress, sequoia and eucalyptus, are also present as individual species and smaller groups. The cedars remain from early plantings by Weston, but the English and Chinese elms were planted later in the 1960s when Lake Burley Griffin and the Kings and Commonwealth bridges were constructed. These later plantings have not been as successful or as long-lived as the cedars, and so lack the expected grandeur, spatial structure and character.

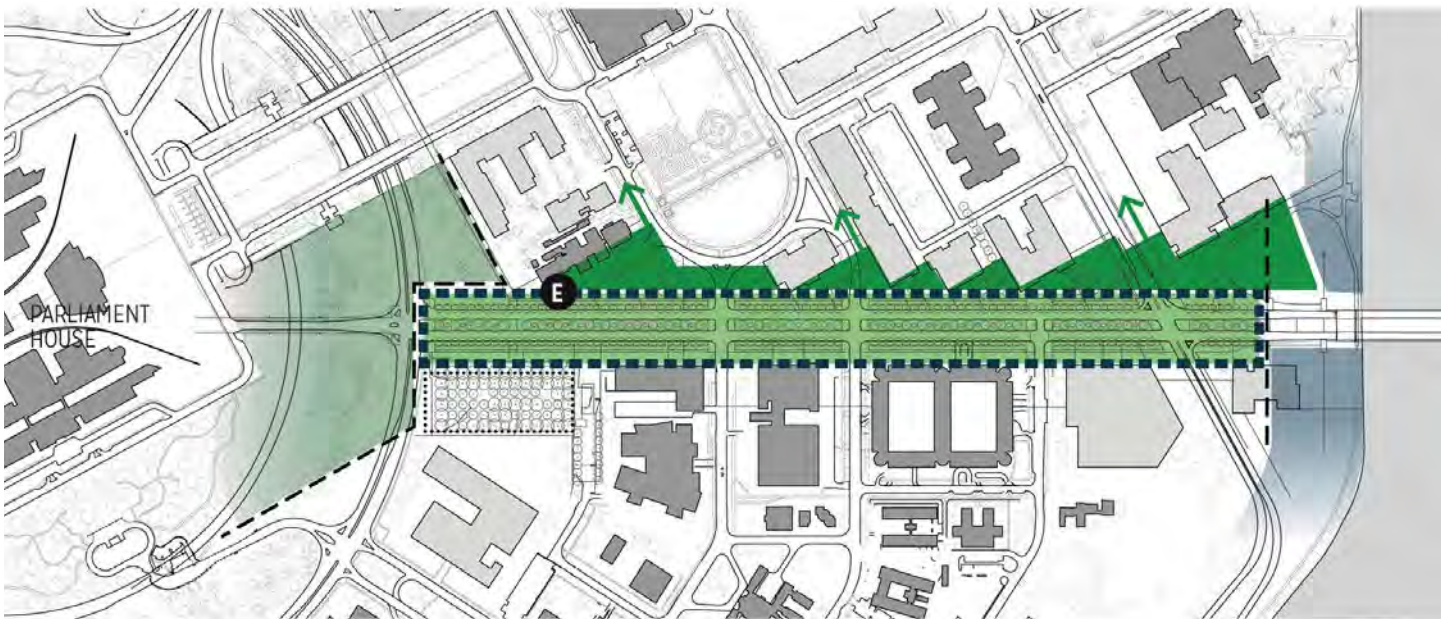
To achieve the vision for these avenues, the elms will gradually be replaced by oaks in a staged succession plan. Any tree removal will be undertaken following the establishment of new trees. These trees will be a key element of the grand avenue experience, creating a cohesive and unified landscape character along the avenues.

A secondary layer of trees provide diversity and interest along the avenues making connections to the existing adjacent open spaces, and planted areas

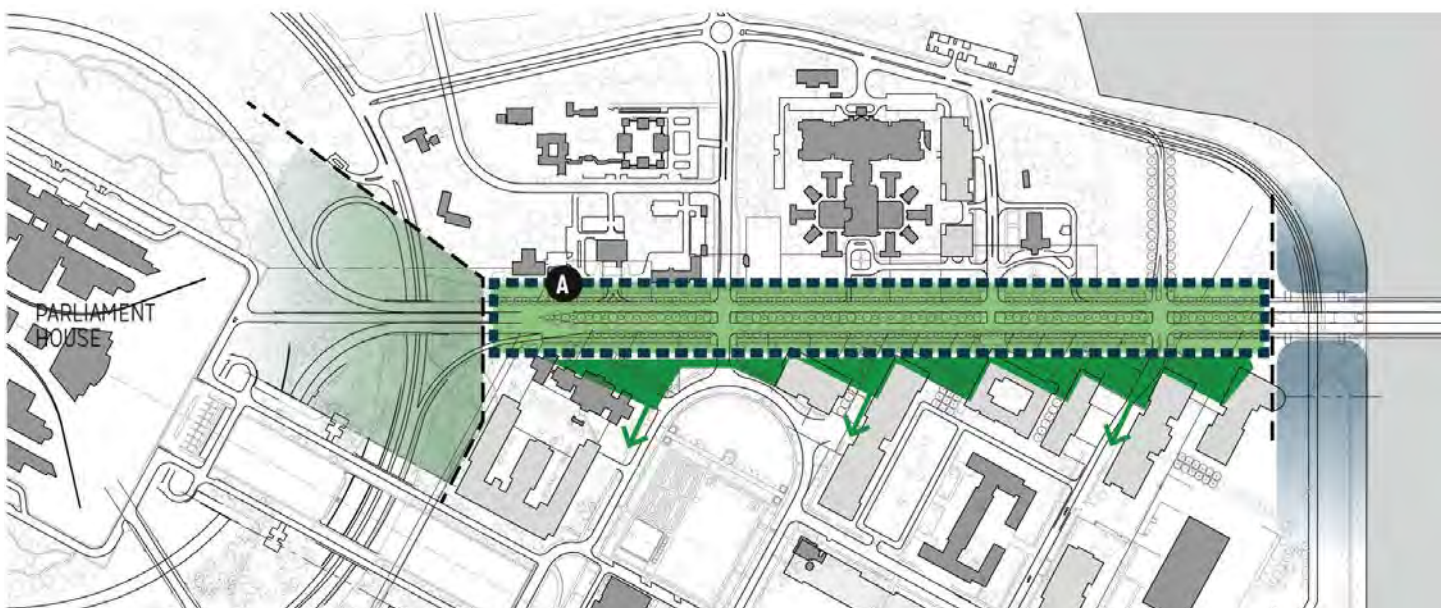


TREES

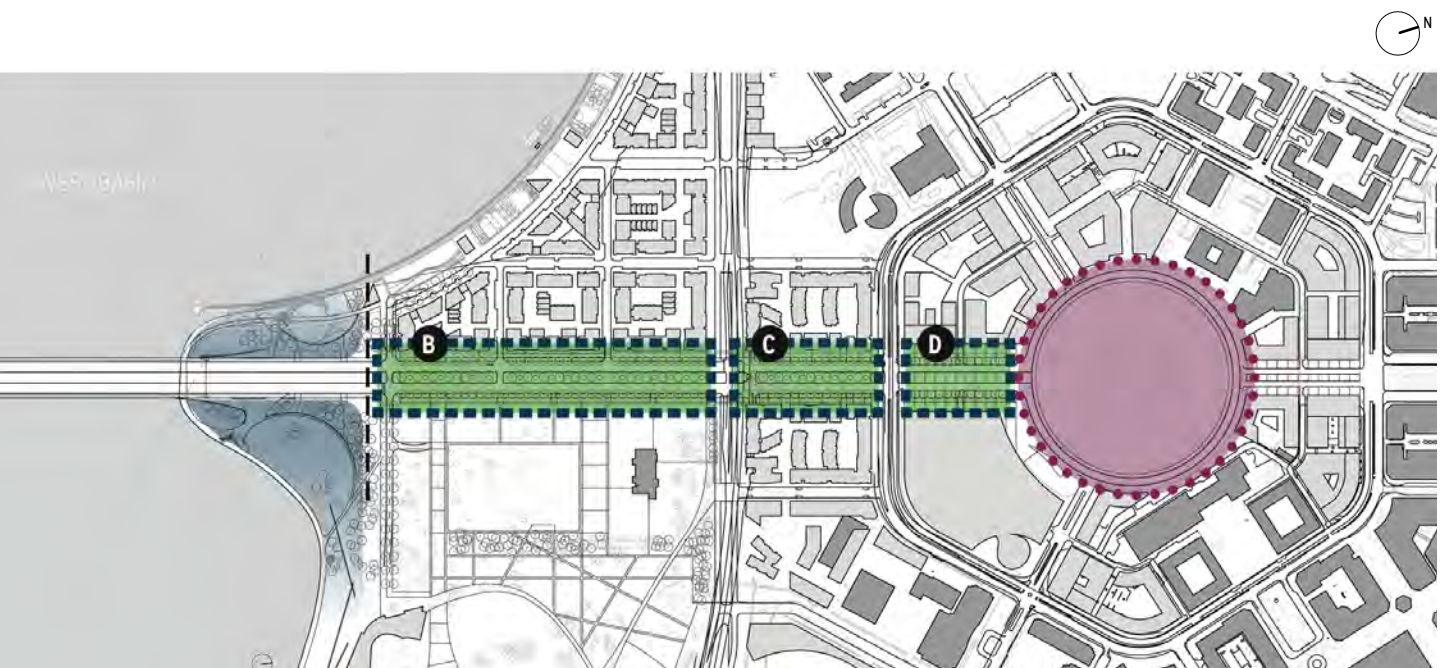
-  Avenue Trees
-  Heritage / Special Tree Planting
-  Borrowed lake edge plantings (No formal plantings along the Avenues)
-  Tree planting associated with Capital Hill
-  Tree planting associated with Forecourts



KINGS AVENUE



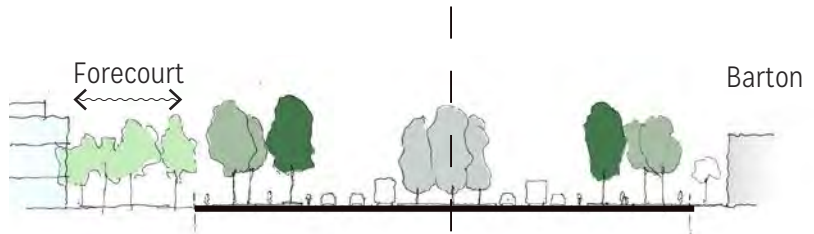
COMMONWEALTH AVENUE



KINGS AVENUE

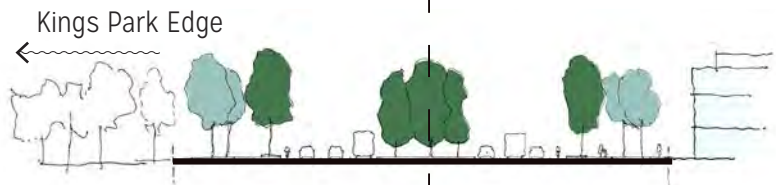
SECTION A

- Remove existing trees to allow for new avenue trees (oaks)
- Central median: retain existing cedars and infill with new cedars
- Retain existing trees of value (elms and cedars) manage to replace elms as new oaks establish
- Forecourt planting associated with new built form



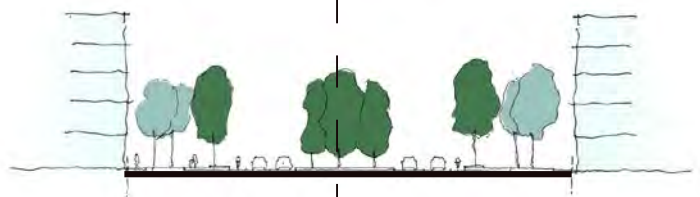
SECTION B

- Remove existing trees (small elms) to allow for new avenue trees (oaks). New median Planting (none currently exists)
- New avenue flanking planting.



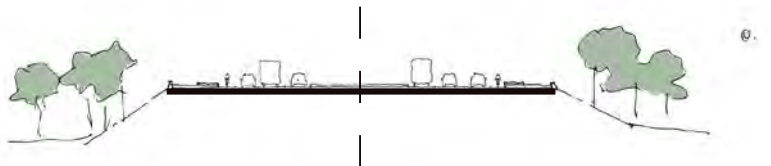
SECTION C

- No planting currently exists. New avenue and median tree planting (oaks).
- New avenue flanking planting.



TYPICAL FORESHORE INTERFACE

- Borrowed lake edge plantings



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

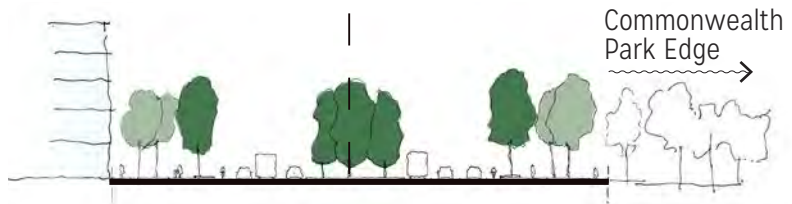
SECTION D

- Remove existing trees to allow for new avenue trees (oaks).
- Central median: retain existing cedars and infill with new cedars.
- Retain existing trees of value (elms and cedars) manage to replace elm as new oaks establish.
- Forecourt planting associated with new built form.



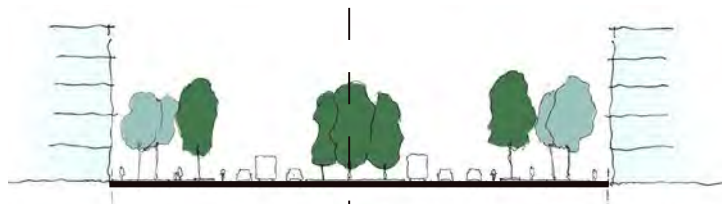
SECTION E

- Remove existing trees to allow for new avenue trees (oaks). New central median planting (no median planting currently exists).
- Retain existing trees of value (elms) manage to replace as new oaks establish.



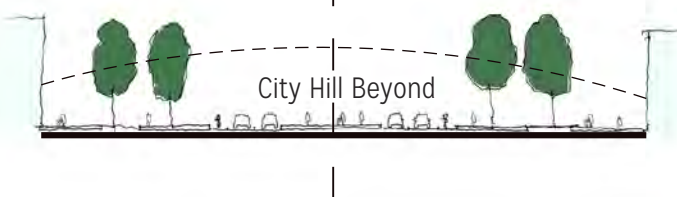
SECTION F

- No planting currently exists. New avenue and median tree planting (oaks).
- New avenue flanking planting.



SECTION G

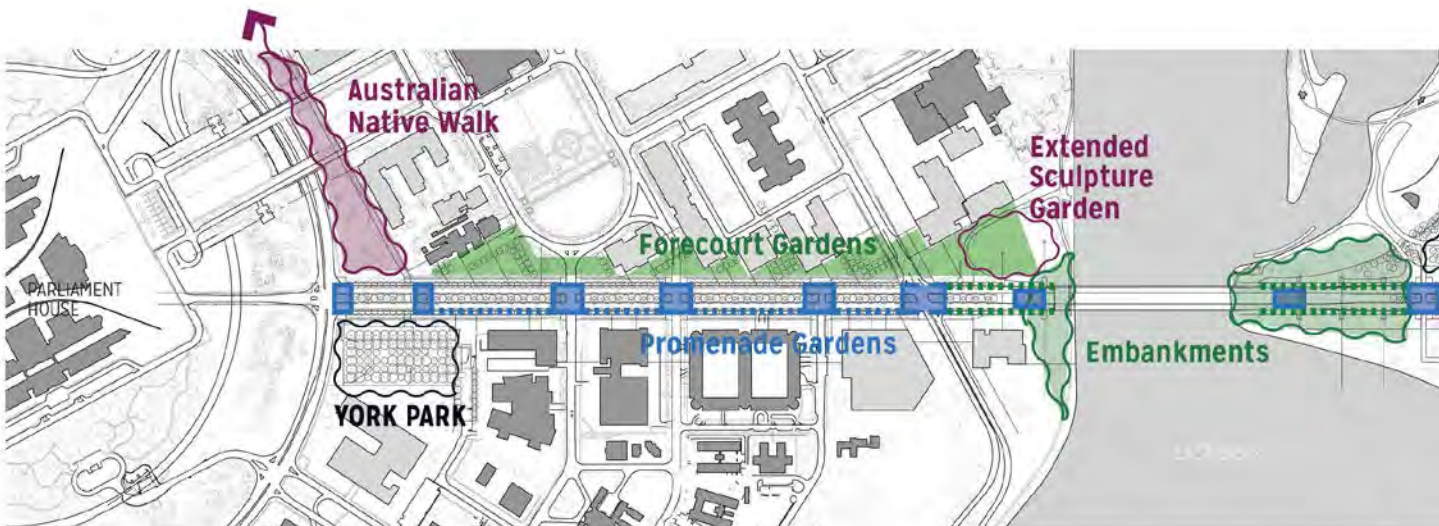
- New avenue trees (oaks). No median planting to allow clear viewing of City Hill.



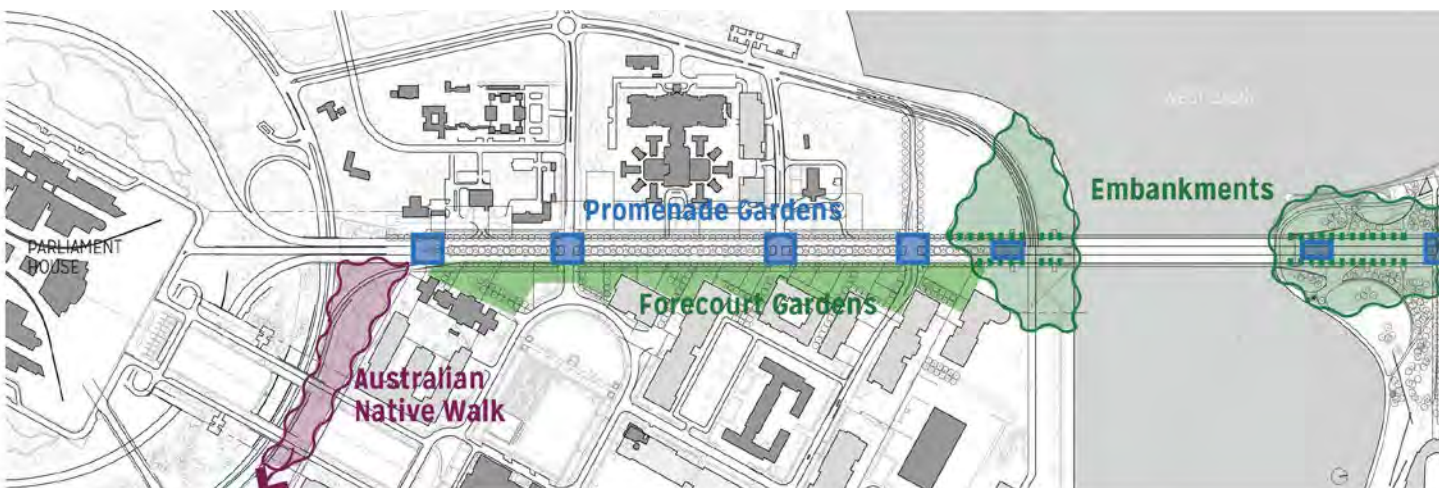
PLANTING

The planting scheme for the avenues requires a core selection of easy-to-maintain trees, shrubs and ground covers specifically chosen to thrive in Canberra's climatic conditions and soils, and expresses the formal elegance appropriate to the National Capital. This strategy reinforces the potential of the avenues as a destination, as well as formally demarcating the edges of the National Triangle.

Plant species selection will be based on a consideration of environmental conditions (including the region's microclimate), to assure long-term plant health, and the overall design intent for the avenues. Plant choices will seek to celebrate the seasonality of species, their rich and varied potential for use in Canberra and the sense of joy and well-being gardens can deliver. Overall, the mix of planting will be complex, with varieties selected for their form, their seasonal interest and their textures. The planting palettes act as a unifying element across various habitats, including the open spaces adjacent to the avenues.







KINGS AVENUE

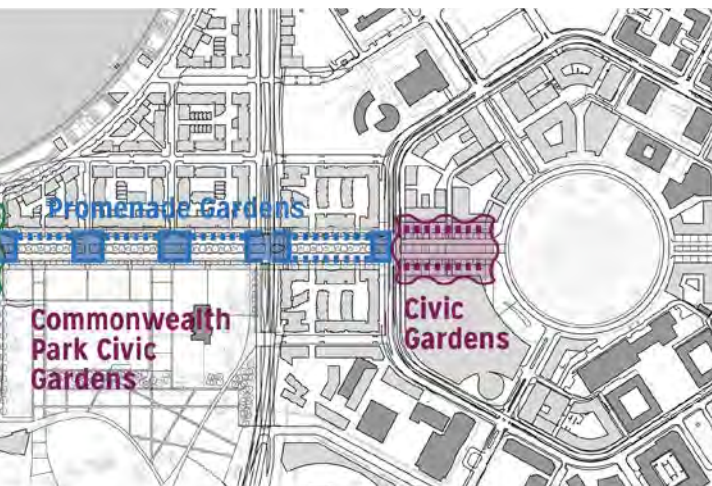
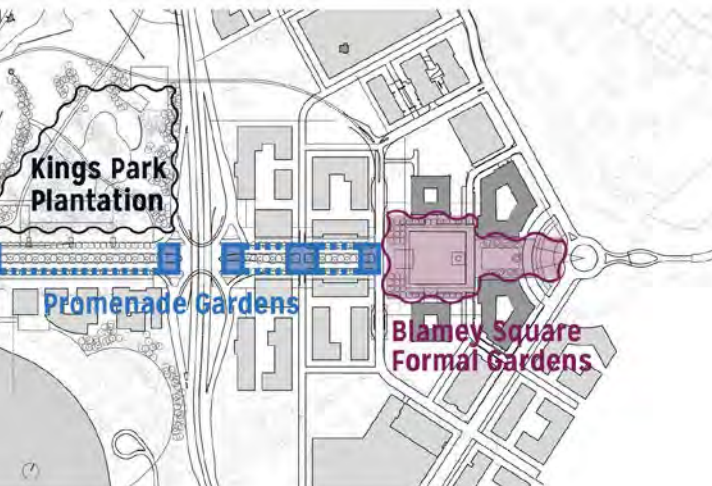


COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

Water-wise landscape design principles in the selection of plants are to be emphasised. A wide palette of species will be identified in the next phases of detailed design.

PROPOSED CIVIC GARDENS

-  Promenade gardens highlight intersections and entries to the National Triangle
-  Special gardens
-  Embankment planting
-  Gardens associated with forecourts fronting the avenues



6.2 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

ROAD DESIGN CONTRIBUTING TO THE PUBLIC REALM

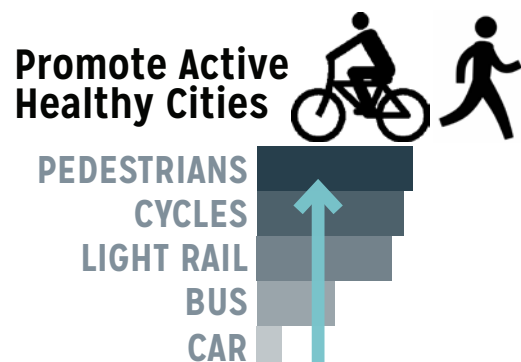
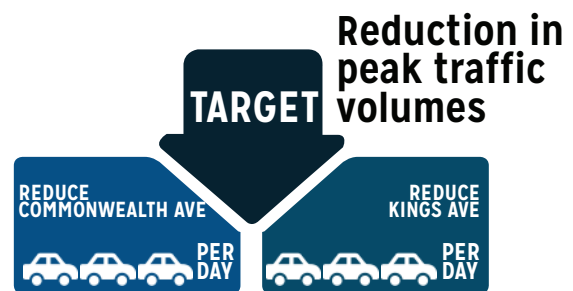
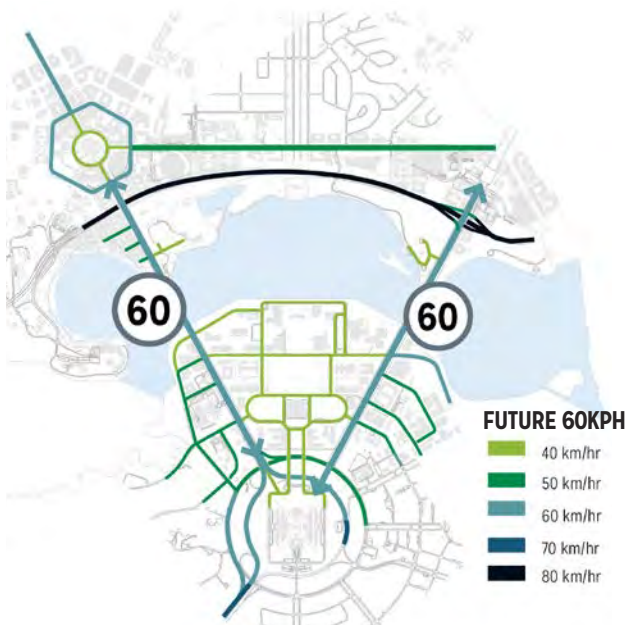
The draft design strategy has reviewed movement across the areas defined by the avenues in an integrated way that takes into account the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. It ensures the coordination of road design and pedestrian movement in various ways, such as giving priority to pedestrians at intersections and minimising the turning radii for large vehicles.

AVENUE CONFIGURATION

The avenues will be configured to achieve a continuous three-lane roadway allowing for left and right turning movements onto side streets, on-road bus stops and a dedicated public transport lane able to accommodate future modes such as light rail.

The intention is to reduce the speed on both avenues to 60 kilometres per hour by:

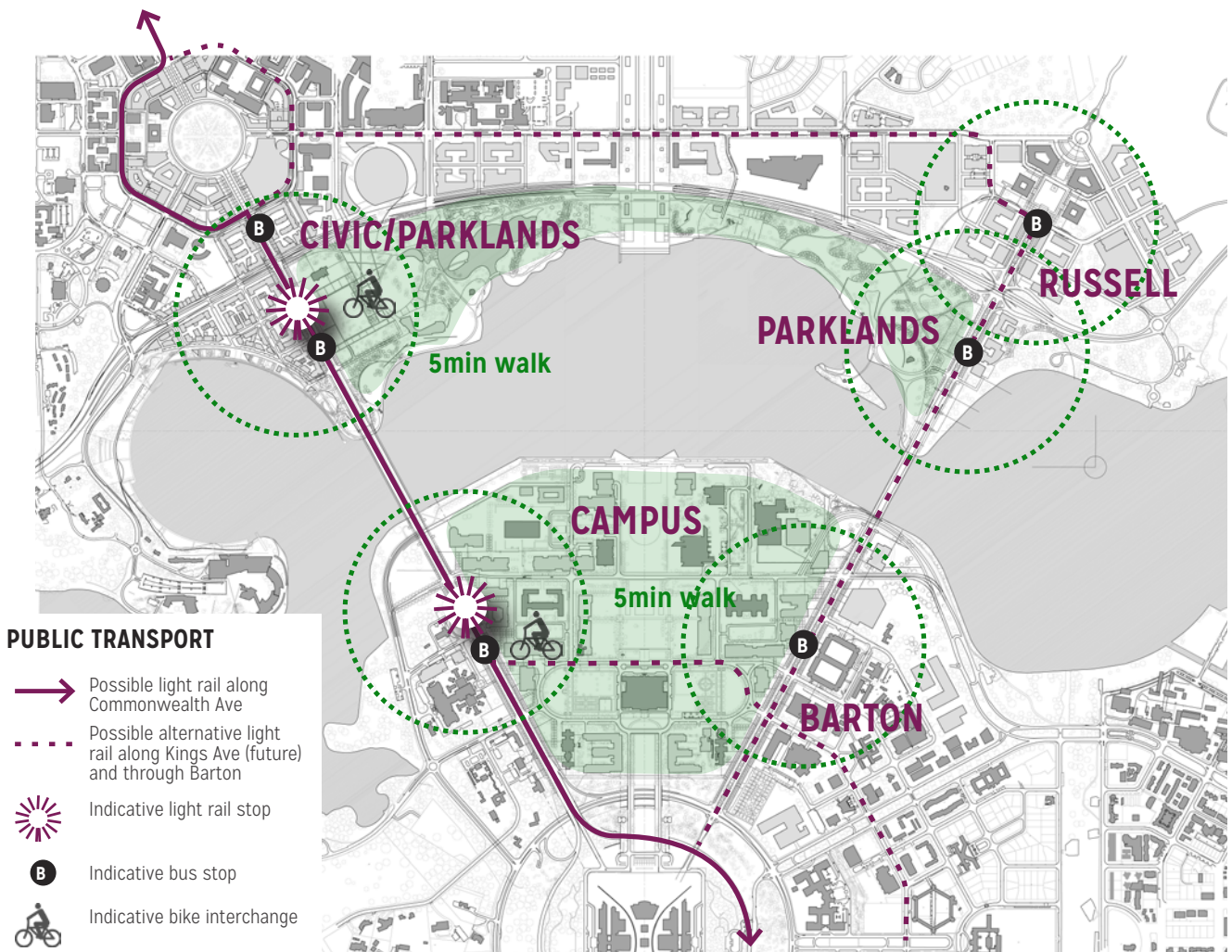
- narrowing lane widths for the central and median lanes
- removing the dedicated right-turn lanes and replacing them with shared right-turn and through-traffic lanes
- removing the left-turn slip lanes and replacing them with shared left-turn and through-traffic lanes
- tightening the geometry of the kerb returns to achieve a more urban feel to the avenues
- adding new signalised intersections, thereby reducing the speed for traffic and increased crossings for pedestrians
- replacing on and off ramps with more conventional urban intersections that reduce approach and departure speeds.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS

Kings and Commonwealth avenues will remain important public transport routes within the Canberra metropolitan network. Kerb lines along both avenues can be arranged to accommodate public transport, with flexibility in the cross-section to allow for various future scenarios and configurations. The traffic arrangement along the avenues will encourage increased use of public transport by making provision for additional bus and light rail stops.

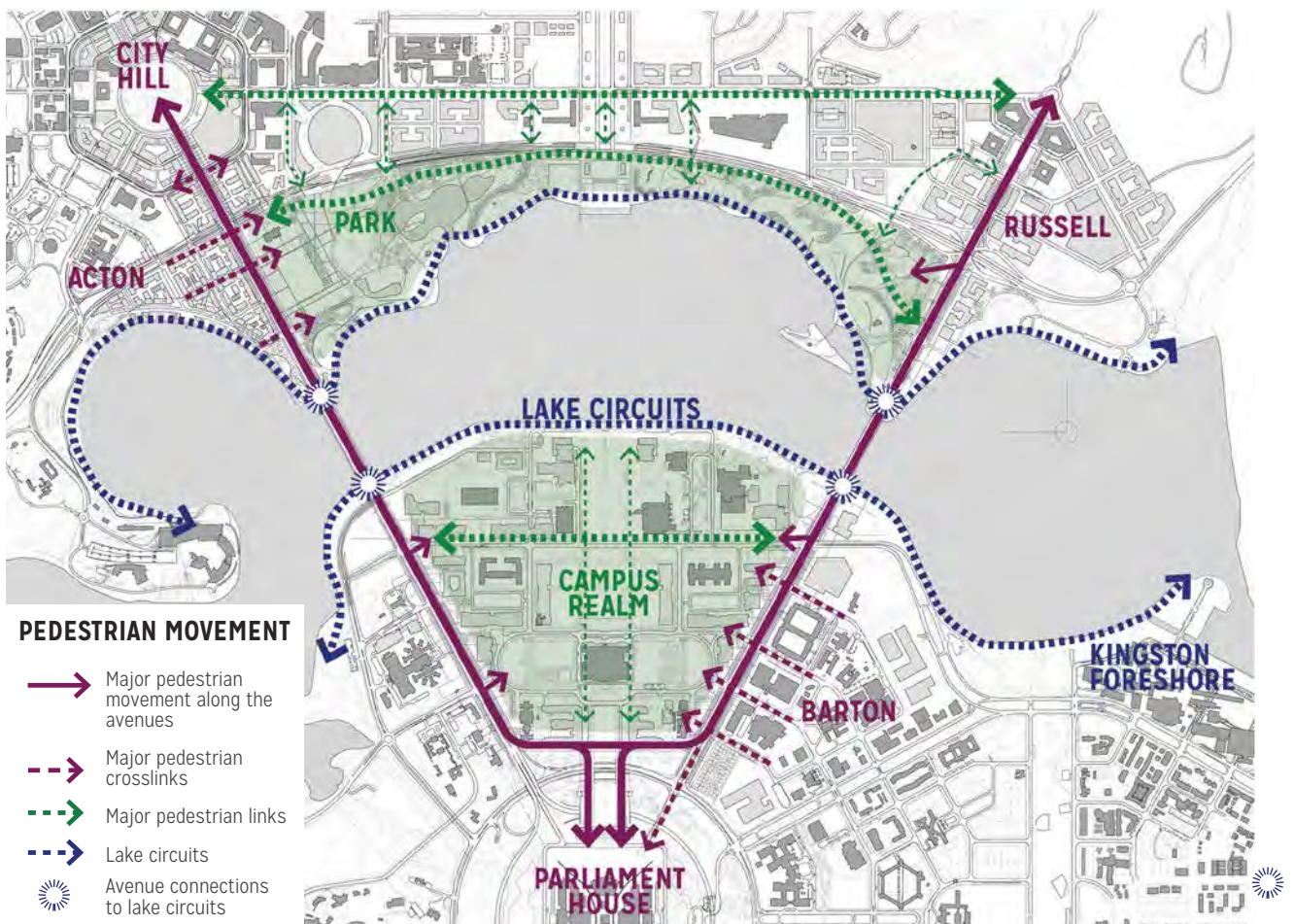
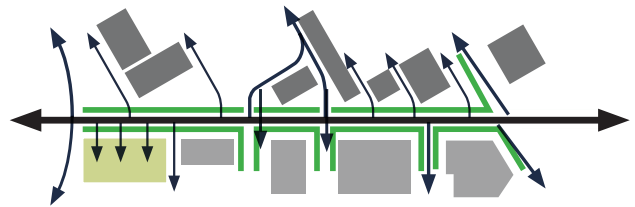
Public transport stops will be located near existing and new signalised pedestrian crossings. The existing underpass adjacent to Albert Hall is to be retained until the avenue template has established new pedestrian crossings. New paths and forecourts will connect with adjacent buildings and open spaces.



6.3 PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

PEDESTRIANS

The avenue template encourages safe and comfortable pedestrian movement along the avenues by promoting connections with the broader pathway networks adjacent to the Lake Burley Griffin shoreline, through the Canberra Central Parklands and into the Parliamentary Zone and the major employment areas of Acton, Civic, Russell and Barton. Pedestrian pathways will be wide and protected, both visually and physically, from vehicular traffic through the installation of raised kerbs and a line of trees running along the length of the avenues. Footpaths will be of high quality, and of a size and texture sufficient to assist pedestrian movement and meet accessibility codes. Pedestrian amenity will also be enhanced by shade from the avenue trees and by the use of high-quality street furniture.

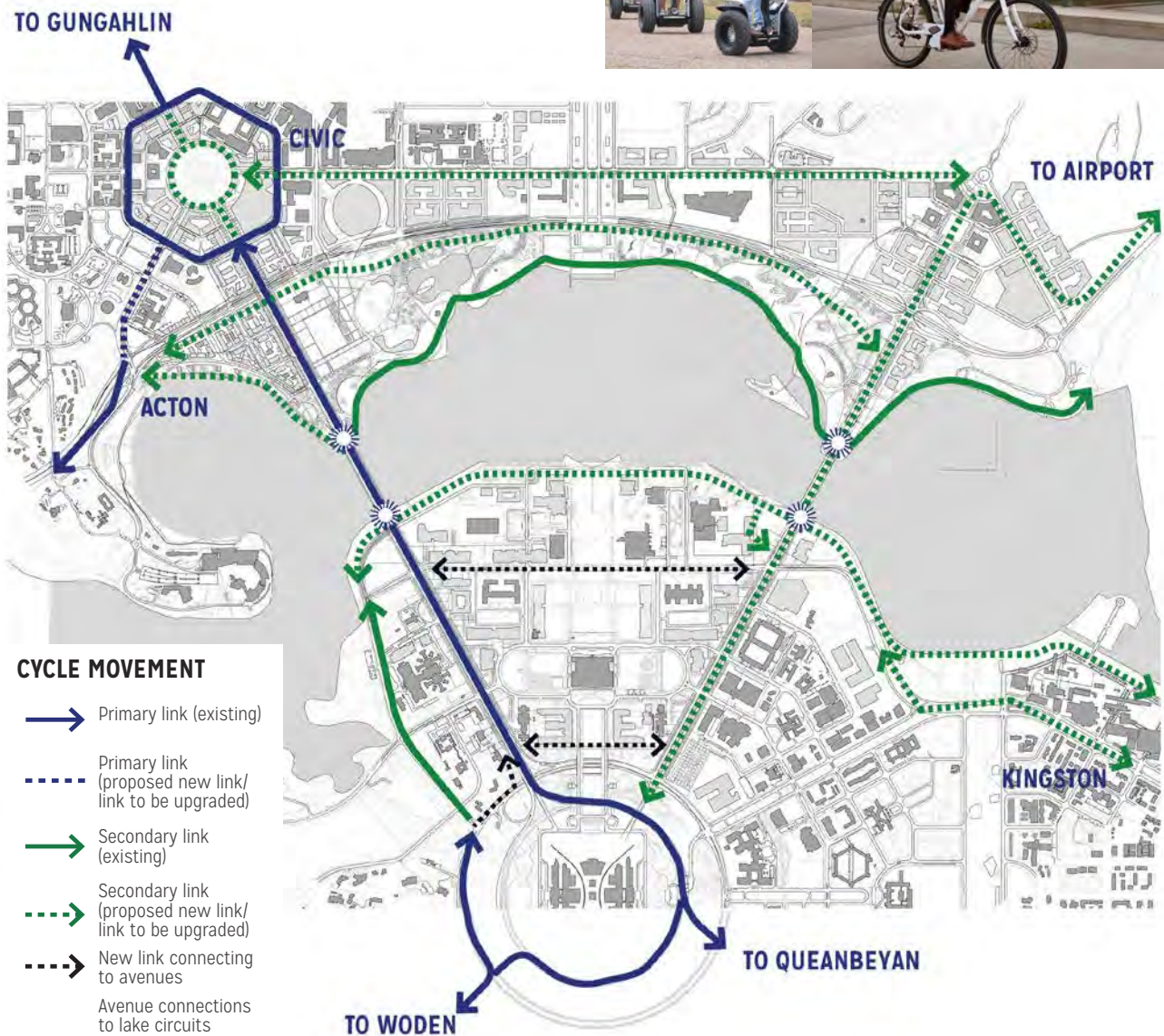


CYCLIST FACILITIES

Commuter cyclists are to be accommodated on-road through a wide dedicated cycle lane extending along:

- the full length of Kings Avenue on both carriageways
- the full length of Commonwealth Avenue on the eastern side, and from Vernon Circle to Coronation Street on the western side.

Slower, recreational cyclists will be accommodated on the avenue verges within the shared paved footpath zone.



6.4 MATERIALS

Materials will be chosen to reinforce a sense of place that is distinctively Australian.

PAVING

The avenues' main promenades will be paved with natural stone pavers whose size and aesthetic qualities are appropriate to their intended use. Typically, pavers will be consistent in size and laid perpendicular to the line of the avenues. Smaller-format pavers and smooth-faced cobbles will be used to mark gathering and seating areas or those adjacent to fountains and public art installations.

A natural, warm-coloured and textured stone displaying brown, cream and grey tones has been chosen as the predominate paver. Special-feature areas, headers and road crossings will use a black granite cobble with a non-slip exfoliated face. These types of surfaces are attractive, very hard-wearing and easily cleaned, but also comfortable and safe for pedestrians, wheelchair users, people with strollers and cyclists. In those places where vehicles and cycles will need to traverse them, the pavers will be laid on a reinforced concrete base. In other locations, used only by pedestrians, pavers will be laid on a specialised sand-and-rubble base for maximum cost-effectiveness.

FURNISHINGS

A suite of contemporary and robust furnishings form an integral component of a well-designed and well-maintained public domain. Individual elements that are functional and attractive, and that make use of high-quality materials, will define a consistent and distinctive character for the avenues.

Well-designed and well-located furniture is crucial to the comfort and enjoyment of public places, and will also help to reinforce the character and feel of these avenues. The chosen furniture must also be highly functional in terms of maintenance: to this end, it should be robust, durable and easy-to-clean, and make use of components that can be cost-effectively replaced.



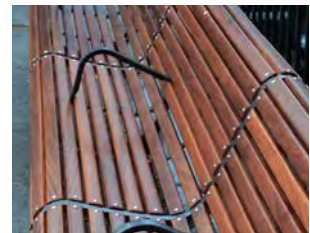
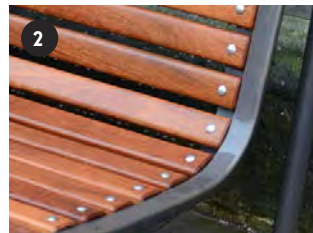
1. Canberra's Limestone Plains
2. Local Weejasper stone
3. Main footpaths: natural stone unit paving
4. Feature paving: natural stone black granite unit paving
5. Road thresholds: black granite, cobble
6. White concrete (in-situ/precast) and tertiary paving: compacted decomposed granite
7. Natural stones and special metals for public domain features such as fountains

Custom-designed furniture for these spaces will draw inspiration from the symbolism of the National Capital and the city's location on the Limestone Plains. For example, railings and motifs could incorporate references to Bogong moths and their importance to the Aboriginal people who inhabited this region.

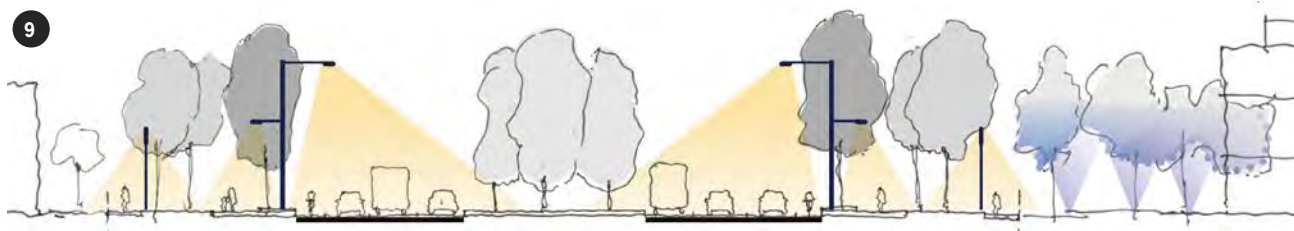
6.5 LIGHTING

Lighting along the avenues is to be consistent with the strategies outlined in the *Outdoor Lighting Policy* (2012), including the need to reinforce the urban geometry of the National Triangle, to provide a safe night time environment, to minimise the obtrusive effects of lighting on the natural environment and to conserve energy.

Overall, the lighting plan will establish a consistent rhythm of street lighting in relation to the spacing of the avenue trees. A conscious effort has been made to correlate lighting treatments with the character of the avenues' different sections, their uses and the experiences users will have.



1. Motifs to reference Bogong moths
2. Long bench seats, bronze with timber and armrests
3. Elegant inner pathway pole top lighting
4. Elegant smart pole street lighting
5. Low seating walls
6. Cycle racks, bronze
7. Precast single seats
8. Etched bronze etched interpretive, wayfinding, signage
9. Street lighting diagram.



7.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Realising the vision for Kings and Commonwealth avenues will establish the infrastructure that sets the framework and provides the incentive for future private and public sector investment. Significant capital investment is needed to renew the avenues and the timing and magnitude of commitments for funds will inform the project’s staging. The timing of other developments adjacent to the avenues will also influence the staging of delivery.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the design strategy will occur over numerous years and in stages, both as a stand-alone project and concurrently with other private and public sector capital works projects along, and adjacent to, Kings and Commonwealth avenues. The key drivers behind the staging of works are the need to upgrade the existing geometry, to reconfigure the intersections and to improve the amenity of the avenues for pedestrians and cyclists.

With this in mind, and subject to ongoing coordination of adjacent works, the first stage of implementation focuses on the northern section of the avenues. This stage establishes the avenue template ‘on the ground’, including landscaping, paving, furniture, and street and pedestrian lighting. Subsequent stages will focus on the southern sections of the avenues between State Circle and Lake Burley Griffin.

NEXT STEPS

After the public consultation process, feedback will be incorporated into the design strategy for final release. Following this, the next steps towards realising the vision for the avenues will be:

1. to set the avenue template in place; design proposals will be developed in parallel with an implementation plan that tests the design against the actual site conditions, transport models, current and anticipated use, and construction budgets
2. to establish a development plan which includes detailed actions that take into account heritage, approvals, technical requirements, construction staging and budgeting
3. to deploy a landscape strategy that will address the assessment, replacement, planting and management of the trees and vegetation along the avenues
4. to coordinate new capital works and management programs for the avenues with other built form, road infrastructure and landscape initiatives adjacent to, and affecting the avenues.

Illustration of improved pedestrian and cycle path along Commonwealth Avenue bridge



GLOSSARY

Built form	The combined physical elements of a group of buildings, including style, size, scale; how they sit in relation to the street, other buildings and/or the public domain.
Central National Area	As per the National Capital Plan, the Central National Area includes the following precincts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parliamentary Zone 2. Barton 3. Deakin/Forrest Residential Area 4. City Hill 5. West Basin 6. Constitution Avenue and Anzac Parade 7. Australian Defence Force Academy, Royal Military College Duntroon and Campbell Park Precinct 8. Australian National Botanic Gardens 9. Jerrabomberra Wetlands 10. Lake Burley Griffin and Foreshores 11. Acton Peninsula 12. Diplomatic Precinct (Yarralumla, Deakin and O'Malley) 13. Australian Institute of Sport 14. Australian National University 15. CSIRO Black Mountain 16. Canberra Airport (within the Central National Area however not within Designated Areas).
Character	Special physical characteristics of a structure or area (e.g., architecture, landscaping, natural features, open space, types and styles of buildings and landscape structures) that set it apart and contribute to its individuality.
Density	The number of buildings or uses on an area of land.
National Capital Plan	The strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory. In accordance with section 10 of the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (the Act), the Plan sets out the broad planning principles and policies for Canberra and the Territory, and the detailed conditions of planning, design and development for the Designated Areas because of their particular importance to the special character of the national capital.
NCA	National Capital Authority – established under the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988. The NCA performs a special role as the trustee of the National Capital, and in this capacity serves the interests of the Australian Government, the nation and its people.
The Griffin Plan	For the purpose of this document, the Griffin Plan comprises a suite of plans produced by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin over nearly a decade, from their original 1912 Competition Plan to their 1918 Plan.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Public consultation on the Kings and Commonwealth Avenues Design Strategy will close at midnight on 3 July 2017.

You can provide feedback in a number of ways:

- fill out the survey on our website
- send an email
- write a letter to National Capital Authority - Plan Team.

More information:

- visit our website to read the strategy and access other information
- follow us on Facebook and Twitter updates
- contact the NCA via email or phone.

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