

FOREST LODGE SENIORS LIVING
2-32 JUNCTION STREET
FOREST LODGE NSW 2037

PUBLIC ART
Strategy

FOR CORIO PROJECTS PTY LTD
REVISED / NOVEMBER 2025
SHANNAN SNOWBALL
WITH AILEEN SAGE ARCHITECTS

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to culture, community, land, waters and sky. We specifically acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal Peoples who have long cared for this Country. We pay our respect to Elders and Knowledge Holders past and present, and express our gratitude for their continued sharing of knowledge and culture.

We pay respect to the First Nations peoples of the Sydney area, who have strived to retain and reclaim their cultures, languages, identities, and connections to Country despite colonial forces. We recognise the valuable contribution made by First Nations peoples in Sydney to community, narratives, spaces and places. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and these lands remain a contested space for many First Nations peoples.

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INTRODUCTION

Development Description

This Public Art Strategy has been prepared by curator and advisor Shannan Snowball in collaboration with Aileen Sage Architects as part of a State Significant Development Application Seniors Living Development at 2-32 Junction Street, Forest Lodge, NSW.

The State Significant Development Application seeks consent for the construction and operation of a Seniors Housing Development comprising;

- earthworks involving cut and fill;
- augmentation of existing services and infrastructure such as water, power, and sewer;
- construction of car parking comprising 79 car parking spaces on Lower Ground Floor and Ground Floor;
- construction of a 5-storey building containing a Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) and Independent Living Units (ILUs), including:
 - 71 ILUs including 4 one-bedroom units, 43 two-bedroom units and 24 three-bedroom units, split across Levels G - 5;
 - Residential Care Units comprising 12 beds, located on Level 1;
 - staff administration areas; and
 - amenities including cinema, hair salon, café, courtyard, and multipurpose space;
- construction of publicly accessible open space located at the rear of the building and expanding on the existing Larkin Street Reserve;
- construction of a paved accessway along the north boundary of the subject site;
- construction of a dedicated pedestrian laneway along the south boundary of the subject site; and
- provision of associated landscaping.

The following key principles for the development and delivery of public art for the Forest Lodge Seniors Living Development site are:

- foster engagement with art and nature for health and wellbeing;
- recognise and support community values;
- represent knowledges and connections to and of Country; and
- represent local Aboriginal culture and values.

This Strategy is to be read in conjunction with garigarra's *Connecting with Country Research Report: Forest Lodge Seniors Living June 2025*.

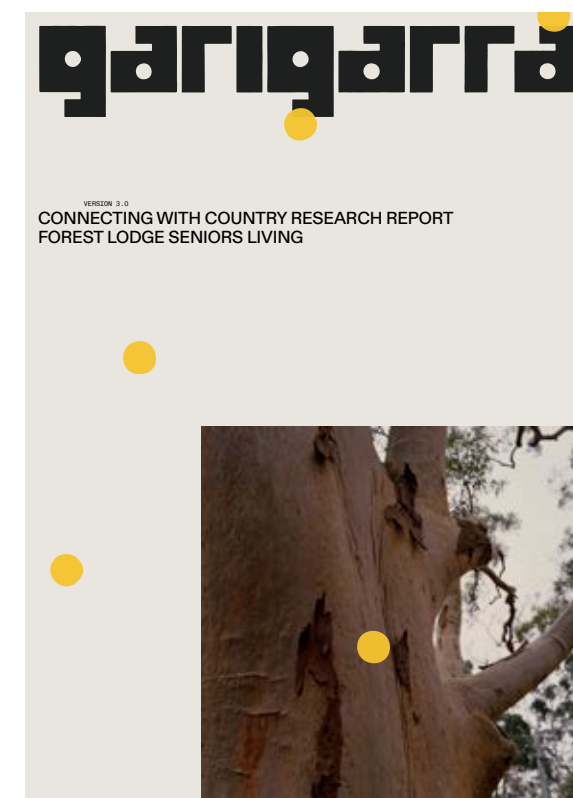
This report, and in particular, the Connecting with Country Principles identified within it, have directly informed and supported the Vision and Ambitions of this Public Art Strategy.

This Public Art Strategy demonstrates the commitment of the Developer, Corio Projects, to the commissioning, implementation and management of high quality and considered public art that is in line with State and Local Government ambitions and regulations.

Corio recognises that the integration of high quality, accessible public art into the urban fabric of a development can provide significant benefits to the health and wellbeing of its residents and the broader community within which it sits.

To ensure these benefits are maximised, this Strategy has been developed collaboratively with the project architects, landscape architects, First Nations Design consultant and client. This approach, together with broader engagement with consultants and community envisaged in future stages, will ensure the type of artwork and location/s proposed are culturally appropriate, integrated and complementary to the overall vision and design ambitions for the site.

The theme for the proposed public art recognises the natural environment and layered histories of the area and as well as its future. The artwork types and locations have considered the broader context of other public artworks within the local area.



VISION

“...public art provides the means for making connections and fostering belonging, for respecting cultural heritage, and for contributing to public discourse... new collaborative models of art and curatorial practice can promote more empathic ways of inhabiting the planet.”

Felicity Fenner, 2024
Chair of the City Art Advisory Panel and
Barangaroo’s precinct-wide curatorial
advisor for Infrastructure NSW
(Interview, University of NSW)

The Curatorial Vision is for an artistic outcome that reflects the site’s histories, landscape and community; from First Nations people, to others long established, and to the newly arrived. It will also be for those yet to come. It is anticipated that this commission be of a calibre and significance to add to the local area’s outstanding public art, with the artist team contributing to the diversity of the cultural and artistic landscape of the area. The Vision is encapsulated by the following ideas.

A Sense of Place and Belonging

This development will create new (and potentially final homes) for older members of the community. The artwork commissioned for the site will help establish a sense of place and social culture for incoming residents, connecting them to the local area, as well as creating connection points to welcome, and join with, members of the surrounding community.

Art Unifying and Uplifting

Art can be an opportunity to unify people, whether in the process of its development or through its ongoing presence. The commissioned artwork will give residents and community an opportunity to share stories, experience and knowledge and to be part of a collective experience that offers both personal and public gains. It will seek to enhance the lives of older residents through exposure to art that conveys a sense of optimism, wonder and joy, but also, by offering residents, their families, and local community, moments to unite with each other in the process.

Connecting with Nature

The artwork will enhance aspects of the development’s design that are public facing and seek to connect with, and contribute to the landscape and adjoining public spaces. Artwork that celebrates the site’s natural surroundings and conveys respect for the local ecology may support resident’s interaction with nature, bringing benefits for their wellbeing. Honouring the local natural environment through art, can also show respect for local community values, contributing to social cohesion and consequently, the wellbeing of residents and community alike.

Commitment to First Nations Artists & Perspectives

Country now known as Forest Lodge, and its immediate surrounds, holds deep and ongoing significance for First Nations Peoples; including Ancestral and contemporary communities connected to this place. Resilient caretaking practices and associated knowledge systems continue to sustain the area’s waterways, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Since colonial settlement, these life-sustaining systems have been significantly disrupted. However, growing public awareness and renewed commitments to Caring for Country practices, present an opportunity for repair and cultural resurgence. This development seeks to contribute to that effort through the integration of First Nations perspectives, led by local Knowledge Holders and artists. The Vision includes a commitment to engaging local First Nations artist/s and Knowledge Holders in a process of deep collaboration, cultural exchange, and shared authorship. Their leadership will inform the artwork and cultural framework within which the project is realised. This process will uphold cultural protocols, embed Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protections, and prioritise long-term relationships with local community.

The alignment with Connecting with Country Principles articulated by garigarra is detailed at Connecting with Country Research Report: Forest Lodge Seniors June 2025: 3.6 Connected Country: Public Art.

A Collaborative Community-engaged Process

The Curatorial Vision is for artwork that supports social integration and connection with the surrounding community – achieved through measures both passive (visually appealing, inviting, themes) and active (enabling artist/community collaboration). Through authentic curatorial/artistic engagement and collaboration, the advocacy, research, action and future aspirations of the dedicated local community in recent history and ongoing, may be explored, celebrated and supported by the resulting artwork theme, approach and outcome.

Art as Future Shaping and Legacy

Artwork can be an expression of the future that is aimed for. It may play some role in shaping that future. The artwork in this development provides an opportunity to reflect a collective responsibility to inhabit the environment in sustainable ways. Residents living with the artwork may benefit from a resulting sense of purpose and contribution to community and beyond, particularly in the latter years of their lives. The recognition of responsibility can be supported by an artistic outcome that evokes timelessness, uses enduring design finishes and materials, and creates a legacy where the art will be contemporary to its time but equally valued across generations.

02

CONTEXT

PLANNING CONTEXT Ageing Population

“Australians are going to be living much longer and seniors housing developers need to provide a built environment that encourages wellness with the greater purpose of bringing people together.”

NSW Government Planning & Environment
Seniors Housing Design Guide, 2023

The NSW Government *Planning & Environment Seniors Housing Design Guide 2023* in conjunction with the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021* (‘Housing SEPP’) sets out the NSW Government’s policy direction for seniors housing in NSW.

The Housing SEPP has informed this Public Art Strategy and its approach to delivering an optimal development for the particular setting and purpose. It notes the intention:

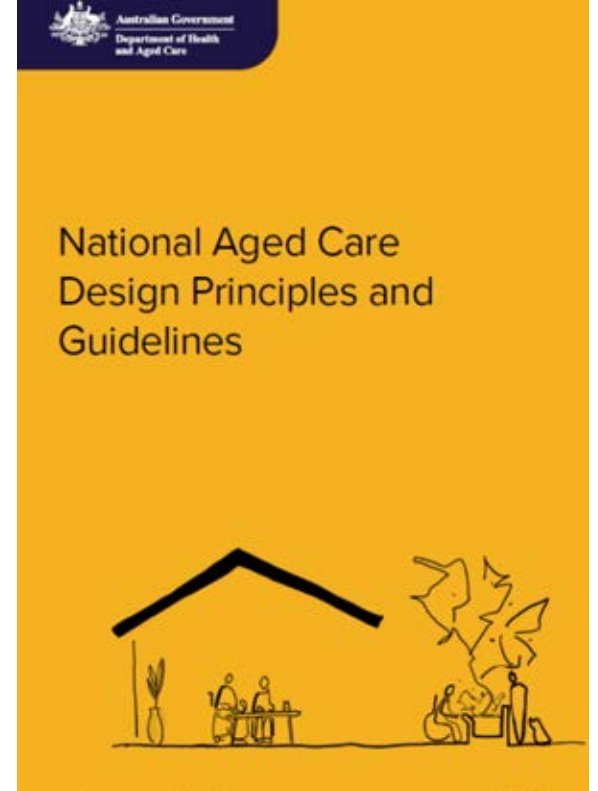
“... to inspire developers and design professionals to improve building design and delivery that will contribute positively to neighbourhoods and be recognised as noteworthy contributions to the built environment. Well considered urban design and good architecture have the power to influence the common preconceived negative perceptions of aged care, to create a wider acceptance of this building type and the essential good they provide to communities...”

NSW Housing SEPP

The *National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines 2024*, builds on existing evidence and reflect internationally recognised approaches to designing environments for older people.

With specific relevance to artwork placement, form and intention, the Principles and Guidelines are structured around four overarching principles, being:

1. Enable the person: to support people living in a place that maintains their health, wellbeing and sense of identity
2. Cultivate a Home: to create a familiar environment in which people have privacy, control and feel they belong.
3. Access to Outdoors: to support people seeing, accessing and spending time outdoors in contact with nature.
4. Connect with Community: to encourage people to connect with family, friends and community, continuing to participate in meaningful activities.



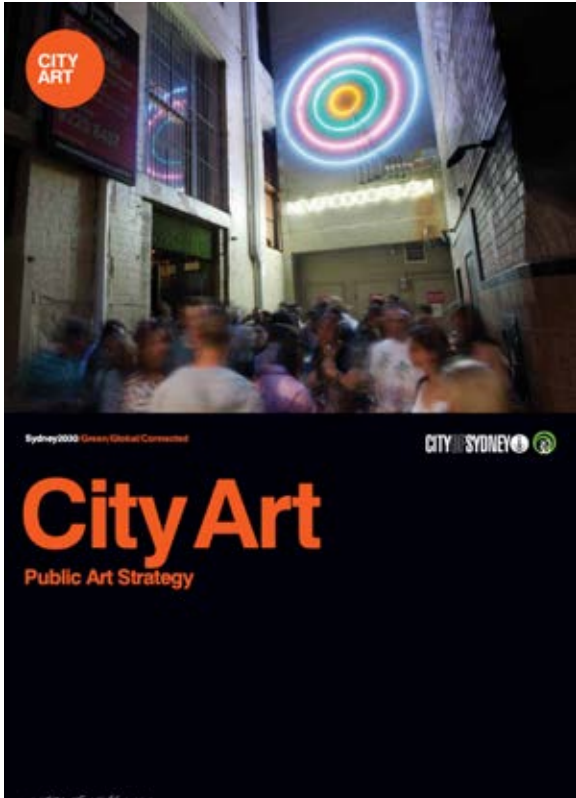
Seniors Housing Design Guide

November 2023



“Art or cultural activity in an urban landscape is a mechanism by which living memory can be activated, maintained and amplified to embrace our contemporary experience... It transforms Space into Place.”

Hetti Perkins, member of the Arrernte and Kalkadoon Aboriginal peoples, curator and writer in French, B. & Loxley, A. (eds) (2017) Civic Actions; Artists’ Practices Beyond the Museum



Public Art

As the subject site is located in the suburb of Forest Lodge and the City of Sydney Local Government Area, this Public Art Strategy has been developed with reference to the following policy frameworks:

- *City of Sydney Interim Guidelines for Public Art in Private Developments* September 2006;
- *City of Sydney Public Art Policy* January 2016;
- *City Art: Public Art Strategy* 2011;
- *Sustainable Sydney 2030 Community Strategic Plan* 2013;
- *Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision* 2023;
- *A City for All: Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney* (Social Sustainability Policy & Action Plan 2018-2028);
- *City of Sydney Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan* supporting the *Environmental Action 2016 – 2021 Strategy and Action Plan* 2017;
- *Sydney Local Environmental Plan* 2012; and
- *Sydney Development Control Plan* 2012

These guidelines and strategic policies provide a relevant reference upon which to build a framework for the implementation, care, acquisition and management of public art for the precinct, recognising in particular the City of Sydney **DCP 3.1.5 Public Art**:

“Public art is a defining quality of dynamic, interesting and successful cities. The City recognises the cultural and economic benefits by integrating public art into the urban fabric. Well integrated ecologically sustainable public art is encouraged in new development. Ecologically sustainable public art can be embedded into essential infrastructure to carry out vital processes for new development such as stormwater treatment, water collection and the generation of power in creative and innovative ways.

Developers, architects, landscape architects and artists should be involved in producing public artworks. The City of Sydney Guidelines for Public Art in Private Development will assist developers to provide high quality artworks that benefit the City and businesses, residents, tourists and visitors. Developers should refer to these guidelines when planning a development so that public art is integrated into the fabric of the building and the public domain.”

The following objectives of the City of Sydney **DCP 3.1.5 Public Art** are also recognised in this Public Art Strategy, and will continue to guide the development of the artist briefs, engagement and commissioning process in the next stages of the project:

- Increase the number and improve the quality of public artworks in private developments.
- Promote sustainability through public art in new development.
- Ensure that public art is an integrated and cohesive part of new development.
- Deliver essential infrastructure in creative and innovative ways through the use of public art.
- Recognise former uses through interpretive public art.

“For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, culture defines us and makes us who we are. Our cultural identity and sense of belonging to places and communities is strongly linked to our overall health and emotional wellbeing.”

Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country, 2023¹

“Supporting biodiversity represents a significant opportunity to connect with Country and foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to ensure sustainable and resilient outcomes.”

Government Architect NSW Biodiversity in Place, 2024

Designing with Country

“Country is living, constantly changing, and evolving. Many ecosystems exist across different realms of Country including both living and non-living elements.”

NSW Housing SEPP

The NSW Government *Planning & Environment Seniors Housing Design Guide 2023* adopts *Connecting with Country* (GANSW, 2023) - a framework providing good practice guidance on how to respond to Country in the planning, design, and deliver of built environment projects, including seniors living, in NSW.

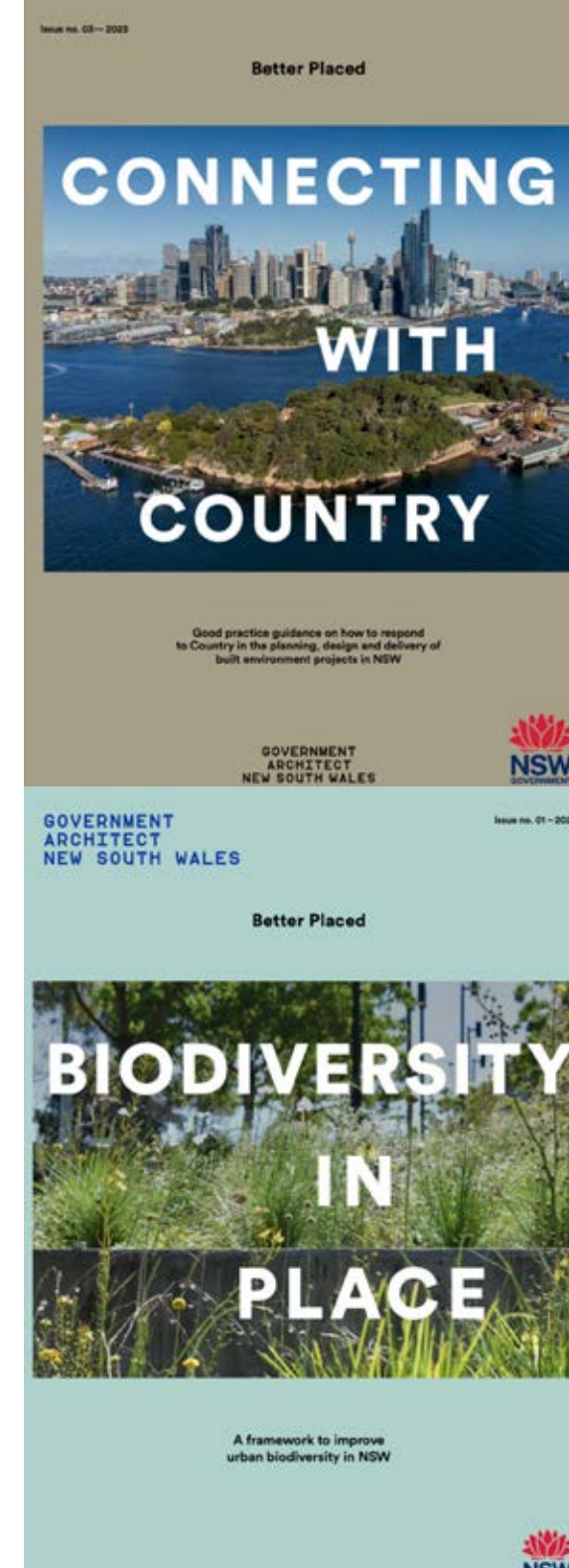
This Public Art Strategy acknowledges the framework’s five key outcomes for Designing for Country:

- Healthy Country
- Healthy Community
- Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- Cultural Competency
- Better Places

The GANSW framework outlines design considerations for special and small-scale projects, including:

“... how public art projects will be activated by Aboriginal community, for example, through ceremony, recreational activities and social gathering. This will make the work more meaningful.”

¹ DPMC (2018) Closing the Gap, Prime Minister’s Report 2018, Australian Government department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Commonwealth of Australia.



Caring for Country

“If built environment projects can help Aboriginal people to fulfil their obligation and responsibility to care for Country, then Country will care for us all.”

Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country, 2023

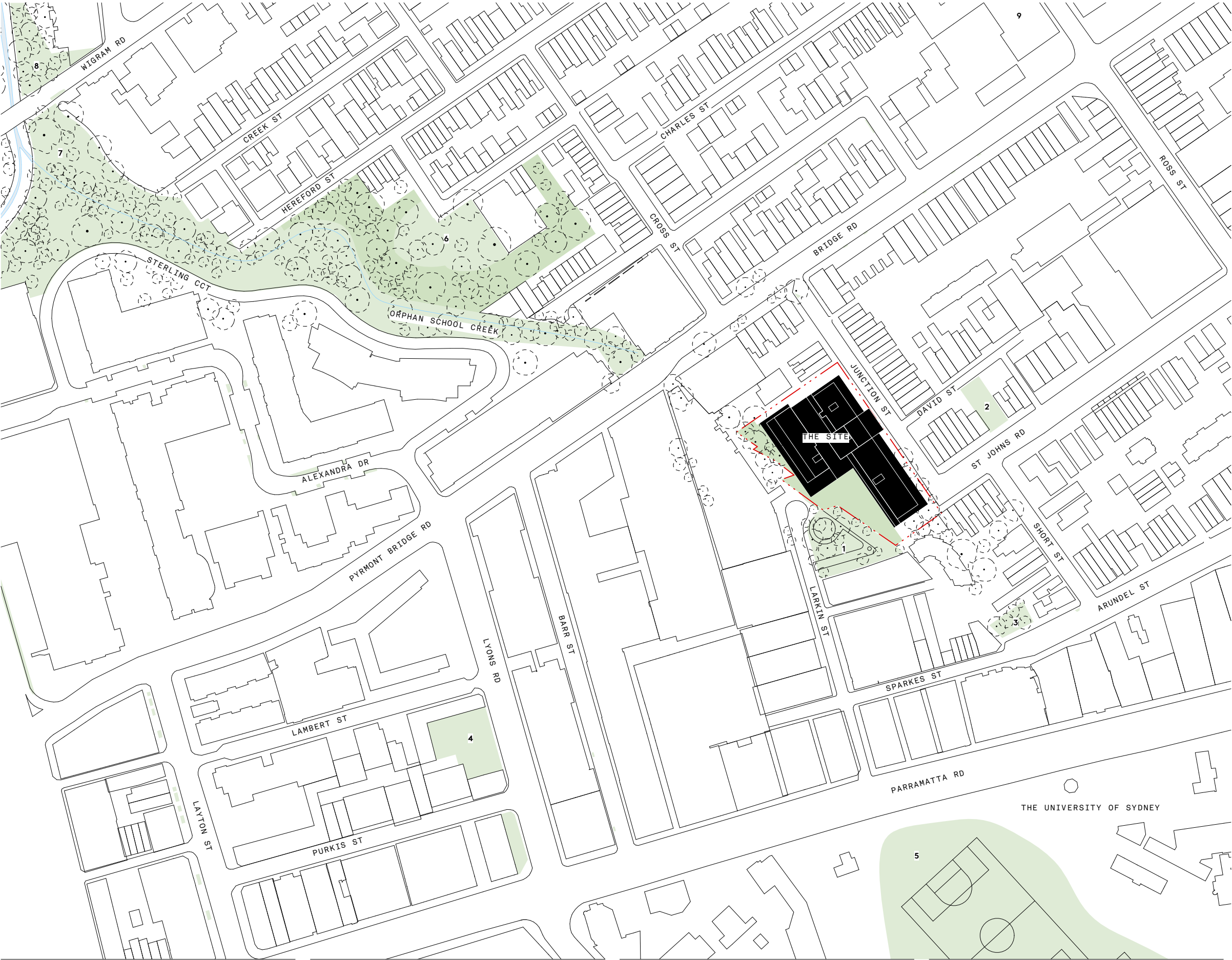
A synergetic framework is the Government Architect NSW *Biodiversity in Place*, 2024 that seeks to improve urban biodiversity in New South Wales. The objectives and recommendations are relevant reference points for this Public Art Strategy.

“[C]ommunities, policymakers and industry can assist in reshaping nature-positive urban environments to reconnect people with larger natural systems. This will create cooler places, provide wildlife habitat and food, support biodiversity, improve mental health and beautify our living spaces.”

Government Architect NSW Biodiversity in Place, 2024

PROPOSED SITE PLAN & SURROUNDING CONTEXT

- 1 Larkin St Reserve
- 2 May Pitt Playground
- 3 Arundel St Reserve
- 4 Lyons Rd Park
- 5 St Johns Oval
- 6 Wood St Playground
- Orphan School Creek Playground
- 7 Caldwell Reserve
- 8 Canal Reserve
- 9 Forest Lodge Public School



COLONIAL & INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT



Glebe, Camperdown, Newtown, Macdonaldtown and Darlington, circa 1890; City of Sydney Archives

Forest Lodge

“a romantic association with nature and notions of a leafy seclusion”

Dictionary of Sydney

Forest Lodge owes its name to the house of pharmacist Ambrose Foss built in 1836 at what is now Bridge Road. The expansive house, garden orchard and landscaped grounds sat amongst native tall trees and lush undergrowth. The idyllic setting inspired the name Foss gave to his home. He went on to acquire surrounding land including a large grant in 1840, creating a 40-acre woodland estate, stretching from the grounds of his residence in the north-east to Orphan School Creek and Parramatta Road.

Forest Lodge Estate was soon a self-sufficient community with its own shops, pubs, churches, schools, workshops such as blacksmiths, followed by larger businesses. An omnibus (and later, tram) service via Ross Street provided transit to the city. Records describe it as a very socio-economically diverse area, something that remains visible in the mix of particularly small housing together with very large residences.



Reuss, F.H., Plan of the Forest Lodge Estate, Glebe, Parish of Petersham, County of Cumberland, 30 May, 1863 (Heritage Assessment, 2017)



Atlas of the Suburbs of Sydney, Glebe 1886-1888



Trams, cars and trucks Parramatta Road from Arundel Street
1930. University of Sydney on left: City of Sydney Archives

Initially part of the Municipality of Glebe, proclaimed in 1859, Forest Lodge became a separate ward in 1871 following petitioning by ratepayers.

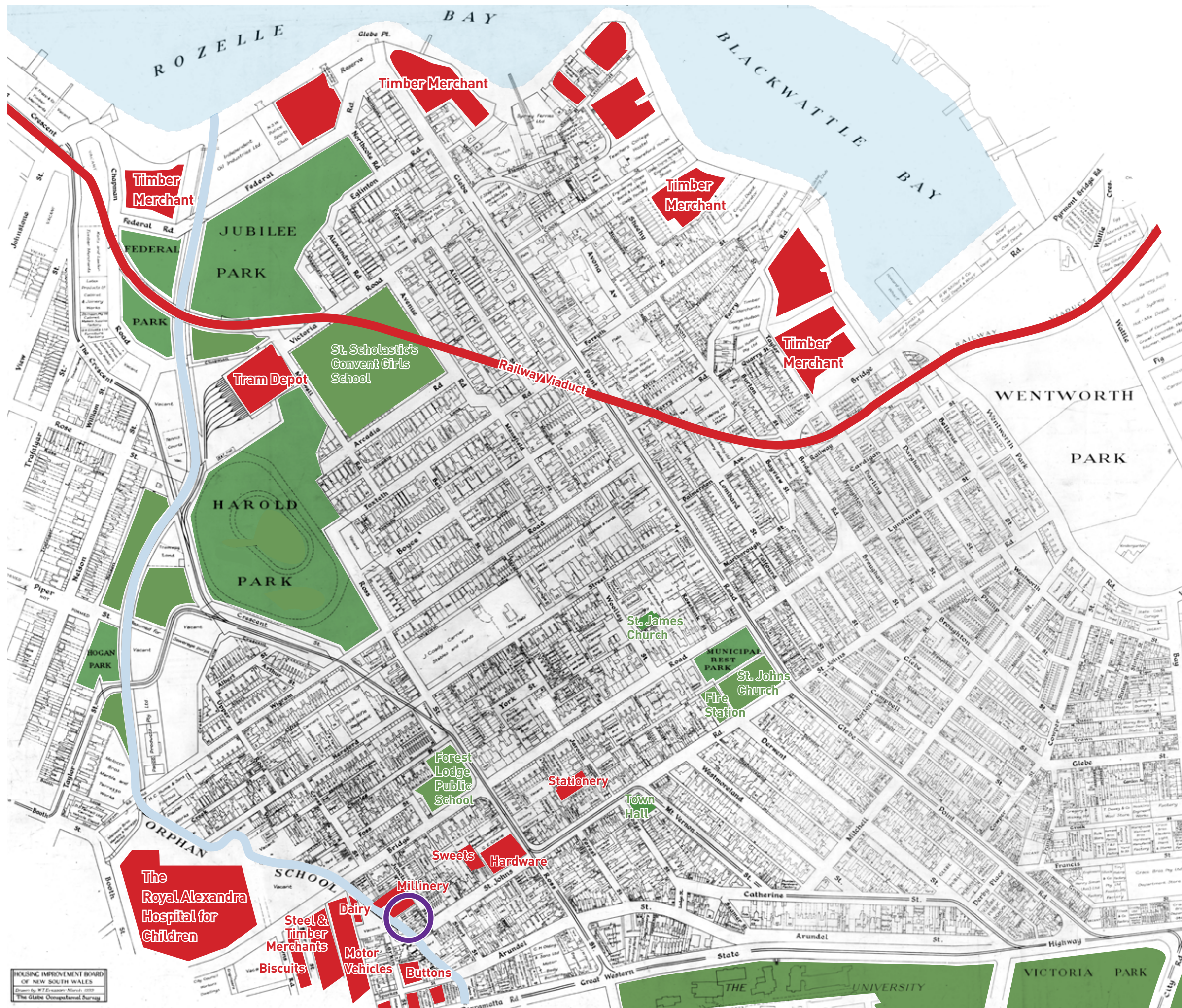
The boundaries between Glebe and Forest Lodge have been fluid over time; they now lie mainly along Ross Street including the Harold Park site at one end and Forest and Lodge Street plus Arundel Street and Catherine Street at the other.

The property relevant to the development was part of land settled in the latter part of the 19th century, some being a portion of a Land Grant to John Wood in 1856. This was later transferred to M.A. Kimber; Kimber Lane now being the adjoining laneway on the site's northwest boundary.

The circa 1900 warehouse on the subject site is a reminder of the local industrial development during the Federation through to the Post World War II period. Like other small- scale industries on the outskirts the former Municipality of Glebe (including factories for coaches and munitions, Arnott's biscuits and macaroni), it operated as a straw-hat factory owned by W. & A. McArthur and later Wilkinson & Adamson (later J.P. Adamson Ltd), who manufactured hats on the premises.

“It is typical of the modest-sized clothing factories that thrived in the inner-city suburbs during the protectionist environment of the Federation and Interwar periods.”
(Heritage Assessment, 2017)





Key:

- watercourses
- early colonial industries and significant sites
- current context remaining significant sites / features
- subject site

The subject site lies within the Hereford and Forest Lodge Conservation Area where there remain significant institutional or civic buildings alongside evidence of early 20th century industrial development in the form of large, merged allotments, some now residential sites. The primarily Victorian architecture exists amongst signs of other historic layers. This diverse character has become emblematic of this small suburb.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Just 4km from the Sydney CBD, the small suburb of Forest Lodge boasting rich architecture and parklands, is also known for its community. Popular with families, professionals and students and staff from nearby university and hospital sites, it is arguably a quieter alternative to bustling neighbouring Glebe. Aspects of the local social history are relevant to stories and changes associated with the unique natural environment and therefore considered by this Public Art Strategy.



Trams, cars and trucks Parramatta Road from Arundel Street 1930. University of Sydney on left: City of Sydney Archives

The Orphan School

The early colonial governors handed out grants for worthy and charitable purposes. In 1803, Governor King established a Female Orphan School to provide shelter for orphaned and abandoned children where the University of Sydney now stands. This land was relinquished by the orphan institution for land considered more desirable at Cabramatta and so this was where the orphans were sent. Nevertheless, the creek that flowed through the granted land thereafter came to be known as Orphan School Creek.



The Sydney Hospital for Sick Children at Glebe Point Road: Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children Archives

Children's Hospital

The land around the Orphan School Creek reserve and the creek's meeting point with the larger Johnston's Creek, south-west of the subject site has a long history for use as a hospital. Founded in 1880, The Sydney Hospital for Sick Children was originally located at the corner of Glebe Point and Wigram Roads. It was renamed The Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in 1904 and having outgrown its original site, was relocated to the land 100m from the Orphan School Creek in 1906. This hospital for children remained for 89 years before relocating to Westmead in 1995.

While streets, homes and public buildings that were in the Forest Lodge locality or ward in the 19th century are now on the Glebe side of the boundary (a prominent example being the Glebe Town Hall), Forest Lodge Public School established in 1863 continues to operate today, located approximately 250m from the subject site.



Johnston's Creek, The Crescent near Rozelle Depot line Harold Park, 1958: City of Sydney Archives

Industrial Action - The Great Strike

At the start of the Orphan School Creek reserve stands a plaque to carter, Merv Flanagan, who was shot dead during The Great Strike of 1917, one of Australia's largest industrial conflicts. On 2 August 1917, NSW railway and tramway workers from Eveleigh Railway Workshops and Randwick Tramsheds walked off the job. The protest spread with almost two-thirds of railway and tramway employees in New South Wales striking, include those from the Rozelle Tramway Depot near Johnston's Creek. Altercations, verbal abuse and violence between strikers and strike-breakers ensued along picket lines across the city. Strike-breaker Reginald Wearne shot unionist Flanagan during an altercation on Bridge Road on 30 August 1917. The impact of the strike in terms of working conditions and political consciousness was felt for years to come.



Forest Lodge Public School 1863 (below) and 1962 (above) City of Sydney Archives

The Glebe Society

By the 1950s, urbanisation had transformed much of the colonial character of Glebe and Forest Lodge into an area likened to slums. Some saw this as an inevitable consequence of 'progress', but the 1960s saw the start of organised resident action within inner city Sydney and a growing appeal for inner-city living. In March 1969, as the area's social demographic was changing, residents established The Glebe Society, seeking "to improve Glebe's liveability and to preserve and enhance the natural and architectural character of Glebe." Also encompassing Forest Lodge, The Glebe Society's vibrant community action and impact continues to this day, with its members and sub-committees focussing on the key areas of "protecting heritage, encouraging a sense of community, and caring for our environment", creating a range of benefits over time. (The Glebe Society website)

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT Orphan School Creek

The physical identity and biodiversity of the site and its surrounds has been altered over time, but more recent community and public action has strengthened collective understanding that ecology has vital significance. It is the ecology that belongs to this place and supports its future.

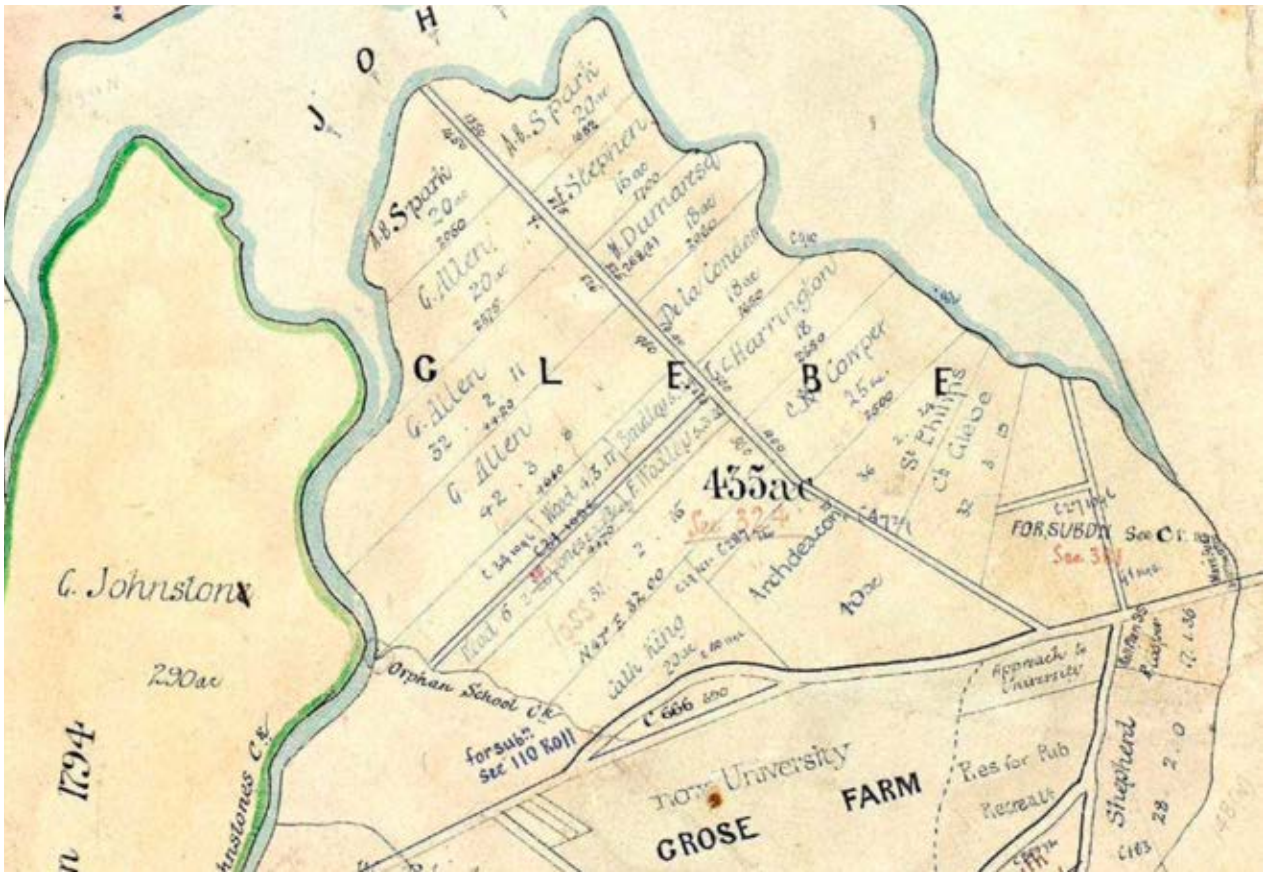
Progress and sentiment are clear, and this Public Art Strategy sees the artwork commission as a valuable opportunity to further focus attention and engagement in positive ways, bringing both individual and civic benefits.

The most significant natural feature in the site's vicinity is Orphan School Creek which, while now modified by human intervention, runs along the site's south-west boundary and Larkin Street Reserve adjacent to the proposed southern land dedication area. The creek is connected, although heavily disrupted, to natural systems both locally and regionally.



Orphan School Creek Gully Restoration path commencing from Bridge Road

A 100m walk north from Larkin Street Reserve, across Bridge Road connects to Orphan School Creek Gully. The proposed laneway on the development's north west boundary also connects Junction Street to the Larkin Street Reserve path.



Petersham Parish Map c1840s Glebe land grants: NSW LPI

Formerly named Grose Farm Creek, Orphan School Creek once rose within Grose Farm (now University of Sydney) in the south and flowed across Arundel Street Reserve (old Parramatta Road) through Forest Lodge into Johnstons Creek at Wigram Road. Johnston's Creek flowed into Johnston's Bay (now Rozelle Bay) via Jubilee Park located at the northern boundary of Forest Lodge.

Refer to additional mapping of the broader context and Orphan School Creek corridor in garigarra's *Connecting with Country: Forest Lodge Seniors Report* June 2025.

Nature reclaims habitat

Residents discover 'miracle' of neglect

by NATALIE DAVISON

Although still referred to as a creek, the Orphan School waterway has been buried and contained in stormwater pipes since the mid-1920s because of concerns about flooding.

The gully now is home to a vast species of native fauna, including birds, insects, reptiles, and small mammals. It is also a haven for native plants, including eucalypt, banksia, and acacia.

Mr Johnston said the gully, which is now a natural habitat, had helped spread a native species that was considered a pest in the area.

Group co-ordinator Robert Johnston said the gully was a natural habitat and was the only thing keeping the area alive.

Residents have been working with Leichhardt and South Sydney councils to preserve the gully.

Mr Johnston said although the site had been left vacant since the closure of the hospital in November 1997, South Sydney Council had agreed to preserve the gully.

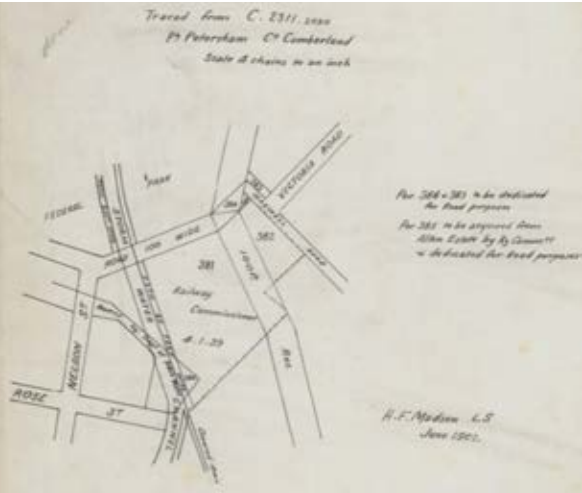
Mr Johnston said the gully had been a natural habitat since the 1920s and was the only thing keeping the area alive.

She said the creek, named after an orphan school once on the site, had an interesting history. It is believed that gully used to drain the gully and was used to feed the creek.

FRUGGS, which is a group of people who are interested in the gully, has been working to preserve the gully.



Friends, Residents and Supporters of the Gully (FRUGGS) co-ordinator Robert Johnston ... mankind's neglect has allowed nature to take its course



1902 plans for culvert: State Library NSW

Glebe newspaper 1997 (City of Sydney)

The area now known as Forest Lodge and the Orphan School Creek Gully is Country of the local Gadigal or Wangal Peoples for whom the creek would have been an important source of drinking water and food as it supported plants and marine life. Johnston's Creek once spread across the

valley with mudflats, estuarine wetlands and mangrove forests. We acknowledge the complex kinship systems that define relationships to this Country and recognise that many Aboriginal peoples maintain deep cultural, spiritual, and historical connections to this place.

“Flowers of the many eucalypt, banksia, acacia and shrub species provided a rich nectar that was eaten by Aboriginal people and the wide variety of vegetation provided a food source for animal species, such as small marsupials and birds, which are associated with the Aboriginal diet. The large trees provided bark and wood for coolamons (a shallow carrying vessel for food or water), shields, spears and canoes (Low 1989).”

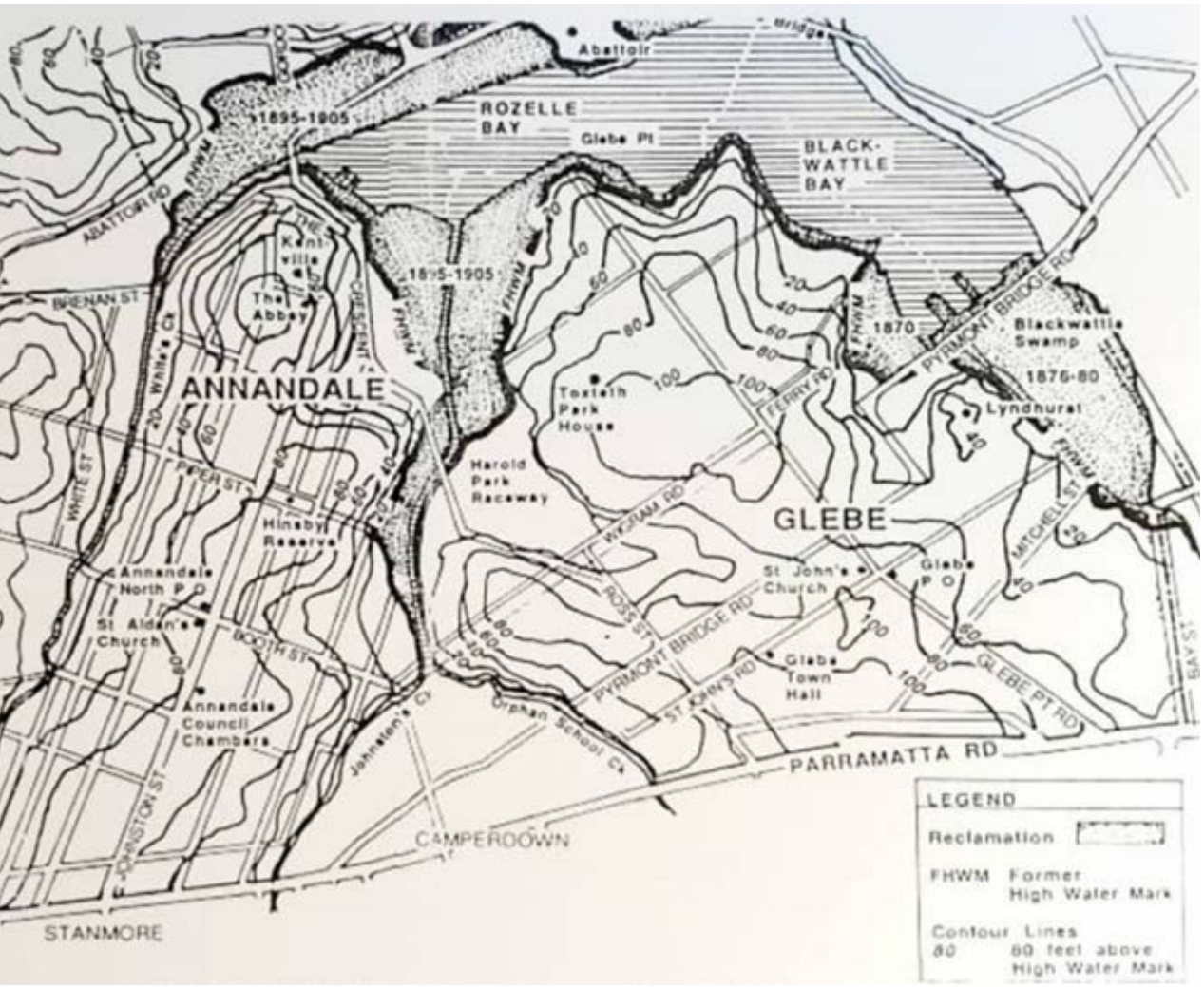
Draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, 2024

Records refer to “Glebe [being] divided from the neighbouring borough by the Orphan Creek, over which is built a substantial structure called the Camperdown Bridge” (Australian Town and Country Journal 24 July 1880). Built around 1859-1860 as a toll bridge for pedestrians and vehicles, the bridge was demolished in 1912.

Colonial intervention had left the Orphan School Creek polluted and unvalued, and in 1887 it was described as “not much more than a sewer”. No records show when it was first covered but an 1889 survey depicts it as a covered wooden drain (Heritage Assessment, 2017).

Since 1926, it has flowed largely within a culvert or storm water channel beneath its original creek bed, except after heavy rain when it flows briefly on the surface between Parramatta Road and Pyrmont Bridge Road. From 1906, The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital was located around 100m south of the previous Orphan School Creek. The gully remained and was used for public recreation. By 1996 the hospital closed and the Department of Public Health released land at its rear including offering a portion to Leichhardt Municipal Council in exchange for an adjacent property. This land, however, was situated downgradient from a site where leaking underground storage tanks had contaminated the surrounding soil.

Topographical map of Glebe original shoreline – Johnston's Creek: Glebe Society





Urban Ecology & Biodiversity

A major rehabilitation of the Orphan School Creek gully habitat was ultimately completed by City of Sydney Council in 2009.² Weeds and polluted soils were replaced with plantings based on Sandstone vegetation and Turpentine- Ironbark Forest once found naturally in the area.

A pathway gives access and guidance to community and visitors along the creek bed reserve. It features historical and habitat signs, maps, seating and a children’s playground.

Urban ecology is recognised as an important part of building a vibrant and sustainable inner Sydney. In 2014, the City of Sydney recognised a continuing need for habitat connectivity and linkages and prioritised Glebe’s Foreshore Walk East to Orphan School Creek due to its relatively high biodiversity values. The native Superb Fairy-wren, once common to the area (and one of the first birds described by European settlers) was also made a priority fauna species.

Local community groups continue to advocate for habitat and wildlife in Orphan School Creek area. The rehabilitated reserve is so far limited to part of the creek’s original length and notably excludes the area alongside the subject site and towards its origin at on the grounds of the University of Sydney.

Most recently, the Blue Wren subcommittee of the Glebe Society championed a project documented in Glebe’s Hill Unravelling Its Biodiversity Secrets and Potential, a 2024 report by University of Sydney Integrative Ecology Research Group for the Glebe Society and the City of Sydney. The potential for engagement with this work (including with reference to the City of Sydney’s aims to protect, expand and maintain locally indigenous vegetation via bush restoration sites, as well as enhance habitat for a range of priority fauna species) is recognised by this Public Art Strategy.

² Orphan School Creek Master Plan was adopted by Leichhardt Council in May 2003. The project was inherited and delivered (in amended form) by City of Sydney in 2009.

“[This] is a call to action to support nature recovery and enhance biodiversity. We must meet the growing demand for housing. But we must also continue ‘greening’ our cities, bringing the benefits of this and an enhanced biodiversity to our communities... Historically, urban environments have posed a threat to biodiversity and natural ecosystems. But they can – and must – also be part of the solution. Our cities play an important role in supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna, while providing critical habitat for endangered species.”

Government Architect NSW Biodiversity in Place, 2024



Sweet Bursaria (Bursaria spinosa) attracts butterflies and native bees, Carrum Indigenous Nursery



Left: Fiddler Beetle (Eupoecila australasiae), Australian Museum. Right: Eastern blue-tongue Lizard (Tiliqua scincoides), National Parks NSW



Left: Superb Fairy-wren (Malurus cyaneus). Right: Sivereye (Zosterops lateralis) Australian Museum



Plasterer bee (Leioproctus sp.) and Australian Paper Wasp (Polistes humilis) visiting the inflorescence found in visitor surveys Spring 2024 Glebe Hill and Federation Park (Glebe Hill Project)

“Biodiversity is crucial for ensuring the environmental, social and cultural health of a city.”

City of Sydney



PUBLIC ART & PUBLIC DOMAIN CONTEXT

- 1

Harold Park + Playground
- 2

Tramsheds
- Immerge, Studio Chris Fox*
- 3

Jubilee Park, Oval + Playground
- 4

Bicentennial Park
- Time Rings, Jennifer Turpin and Michaelie Crawford*
- Earth v. Sky, Allan Giddy*
- 5

Federal Park, Playground + Skate Park
- 6

Federal Park Wetlands
- 7

Rose St Reserve
- 8

AV Henry Reserve
- 9

Piper St Reserve
- 10

Smith Hogan and Spindlers Parks
- 11

JV McMahon Reserve
- 12

Minogue Crescent Reserve
- 13

Lewis Hoad Reserve
- 14

Canal Reserve
- 15

Wood St Playground + Orphan School Creek Playground
- Caldwell Park
- Untitled artwork, Adrina Khobane*
- 16

Larkin St Park
- 17

Arundel St Reserve
- 18

May Pitt Playground
- 19

Badu Reserve
- 20

Douglas Grant Memorial Park + Playground
- 21

Mathieson St Reserve
- 22

Lyons Rd Park
- 23

Medical Foundation Building (USYD)
- 24

Forest Lodge Public School
- 25

Ross St Playground
- 26

Seamer St Reserve
- 27

Residents Park
- 28

Glebe Public School
- Skippedy Skip, Nuha Saad*
- 29

Victoria Park + Pool
- Swimming a Line, Sue Callanan*
- 30

The University of Sydney
- Spine Series, Dale Harding*
- The Echoing it Knowledge from Confrontation,*
- Michael Jalaru Torres*
- Garabara, Robert Andrew*
- jugama, Judy Watson*
- 31

Chau Chak Wing Museum
- 32

Glebe Town Hall
- 33

HJ Foley Park + Glebe War Memorial
- Wireless, Nigel Helyer*
- 34

Woolley St water gums
- 35

St James Park + Playground
- Glebe Tennis Courts
- 36

John St Reserve
- 37

York St Reserve
- Arther (Paddy) Gray Reserve
- 38

Jean Cawley Reserve
- 39

St Helen's Community Centre + Garden
- 40

Glebe Library
- 41

St. Scholastica's College
- 42

Ernest Pedersen Reserve + William Carlton Gardens
- 43

Blackwattle Bay Park
- 44

Sydney Secondary College
- 45

New Sydney Fish Market
- 46

Wentworth Park + Soccer Fields
- 47

Paradise Reserve
- 48

Camperdown Park + Oval
- 49

Camperdown Commons + Pocket City Farms
- 50

Bridge Rd School



Public Artworks in the Area

The City of Sydney has commissioned and co-commissioned a small number of public artworks in Forest Lodge, and neighbouring Glebe, over the past twenty-five years, guided by its Public Art Policy and City Art Strategy and associated initiatives. The existing artworks can be seen to explore and celebrate the local community, history and natural environment, and their connectedness, in different ways.

Forest Lodge and its immediate surrounds however has not received significant attention as a site for public art making in recent years, nor is it the subject of known future projects involving public art beyond the broader aims of the City of Sydney public art policies and guidelines. Nevertheless, the existing artworks reflect a long-standing and ongoing commitment to the creation of outstanding public art.

This Public Art Strategy envisages the subject development as an opportunity to reinforce and extend that commitment, making a positive and significant contribution through artistic and community collaboration to the vitality and cohesion of the local Forest Lodge area; its present and future residents, visitors and ongoing Traditional Custodians. This Strategy seeks to ensure the Forest Lodge Seniors Living Development will contribute to an equally high standard of curatorial and public art excellence as has been established.



Immerge 2021
Studio Chris Fox
Harold Park Tramsheds, Forest Lodge
City of Sydney and Mirvac
Photographs: Josh Raymond

This heritage interpretation artwork has been created using retained elements from the former Rozelle Tram Depot water tank, which once stood near the site of the artwork's installation. It is a reimagining of the local industrial history and takes its name from the way in which the structure appears to emerge from beneath the surface, evoking ideas of growth, renewal but also decay.



Untitled 2009
Adrina Khobane
Caldwell Park (Orphan School Creek), Forest Lodge
Photographs Shannan Snowball and Richard Glover

An under-documented artwork created by Kamilaroi artist Adrina Khobane. This three part artwork is a response to the Orphan School Creek that ran through the gully and alongside where the artwork now stands albeit now an engineered storm water channel. The work was created as part of the City of Sydney's restoration of the area alongside the former Orphan School Creek at the time.



Time Rings 1988
Jennifer Turpin and Michaelie Crawford
Bicentennial Park, Glebe
Leichhardt Council
Photographs: Mark Pokorny, City of Sydney

Described as an environmental interactive sculpture, this artwork consists of rings of pre-cast and inscribed concrete that have been embedded in the base of eight fig trees. Each ring represents a decade, with the smallest being for the 1990s when the trees were planted to the largest for the 2060s when they will be fully mature. An additional stone was added to each ring in sequence increasing its diameter to symbolise the passing of time and the growth. The intention is that the as the trees grow, their roots will cause the rings to shift and become dislodged, provoking park visitors to connect with and reflect upon their lives, memories and future.

The City of Sydney’s Glebe Point Road art program was an important initiative informed by feedback from the local Glebe community in 2006. It culminated in the following three public art projects being selected, commissioned and installed permanently:



Earth v Sky 2012
Allan Giddy
Bicentennial Park, Glebe Point Road, Glebe
Photograph: City of Sydney

This dynamic installation sees two majestic Moreton Bay fig trees bathed in coloured light that changes in response to the sky during sunset. It uses digital solar-powered technology to repeatedly sample the colour of the sunset and calculates the reverse colour, which is then projected onto the trees. It has been described as “a poetic environmental artwork that connects the heavens and earth” (City of Sydney).



Skippedy Skip 2008
Nuha Saad
Glebe Public School, Glebe
Photograph: City of Sydney

Created in honour of Glebe Public School’s 150-year celebrations, this eighty metre long brightly coloured metal school gate is a joyful and welcoming addition to Glebe’s public space, reinforcing positive connections between the school and the community. Its design reflects Glebe’s contemporary culture and speaks to its lively architecture and social history.



Wireless House 2009
Dr Nigel Helyer
Foley Park, Glebe
Photograph: City of Sydney

Through creativity and conservation, sound artist Nigel Helyer has reactivated Glebe’s historic Wireless House; a place where daily radio programs were enjoyed by locals from 1934 to the early 1950s. In collaboration with the National Film and Sound Archive and members of the Glebe community, Helyer’s artwork means oral histories of the community can be enjoyed by today’s locals, reviving the use of this significant place, enriching contemporary local experience and the social fabric of the area.

Planned Artworks for the Wider Area

The City of Sydney has a large and ongoing capital works program to provide community facilities that support the Sustainable Sydney 2030 Plan and its Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050, Continuing the Vision Plan.

Other projects are underway or in planning within areas surrounding Forest Lodge and Glebe and which share some characteristics. These are to be enriched by the integration of carefully considered public art outcomes. They too can inform the approach to public art in the subject site. They include:

- Blackwattle Bay Arts and Cultural Strategy, Infrastructure NSW, 2021;
- the new Sydney Fish Markets, Infrastructure NSW;
- Barangaroo Art Implementation Plan, Infrastructure NSW, 2023;
- Yananuralla – Walking on Country, City of Sydney’s Eora Journey: Recognition in the Public Domain, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050; and
- University of Sydney, Art in the Public Realm, 2018

PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES

“...the critical dimension... [is] in the ability of artists to propose new solutions and bring us to a new understanding of complex issues. Whether it’s urban planning, the environment, ...waste disposal or coming to terms with our history in Australia, artists can bring us to a new awareness and offer alternatives to conventional outcomes.”

Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE in Civic Actions; Artists’ Practices Beyond the Museum, 2017

Contemporary public art can take many forms. It may be a discrete object or a fixture upon or above a surface. It may be integrated into the fabric of the architecture, ground or landscape. It may care for natural systems of Country. It may be simple, bright, bold, or possess intricacy that invites closer inspection and discovery. It may be static or have elements that move or change in response to their environment or use.

Appropriately selected and supported artists with strong community connections, or practices that seek to establish community connections, have incredible capacity to innovate and collaborate in ways that give rise to entirely new and exciting possibilities.

This Public Art Strategy identifies the following Key Principles for the development of public art for the Forest Lodge Seniors Living Development.

Recognise and Support Community Values

The development’s local area is thriving with community-spirit and organised resident action. There is a valuable opportunity for the artist team to engage in knowledge and cultural exchange in collaboration with community, both in the conceptualisation and creation of the public art and to promote its activation and ongoing engagement of residents and their neighbours. They in turn, will turn enjoy the wellbeing benefits derived from being part of a socially cohesive community.

Foster Engagement with Art and Nature for Health and Wellbeing

Balancing aesthetic appeal and functional, sustainable design, the art will enhance the amenity and enjoyment of the site, while provoking meaningful contemplation. It will create a welcoming and respectful atmosphere that inspires use, community connection, pro-social behaviour and healthy activity.

Art can serve as a focal point for gatherings, discussions, and shared experiences among residents, visitors, staff, and community. It may impart knowledge about important ecosystems by which they are surrounded, connected and affecting. Art integrated into the land dedication area can encourage residents and community to green space, captivating them and delivering multiple benefits.

Represent Local Aboriginal Culture and Values

Consultation for the Draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (2024) confirmed the importance of Orphan School Creek to local and broader Aboriginal communities, recognising its historical significance as a vital resource zone.

Further consultation and collaboration with First Nations Knowledge Holders will guide the development of the site-specific artwork, ensuring that any representation, interpretation, or sharing of Aboriginal culture and heritage is led by Aboriginal people. This will provide a meaningful opportunity to share stories, knowledge, and cultural significance connected to Country on which the development is proposed.

The process will follow appropriate cultural protocols and protections of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP). Engagement will be ongoing and relational, grounded in trust and reciprocity rather than limited to transactional input.

“By committing to First Nations leadership in the conception, making and interpretation of the work, the project ensures cultural authority, local relevance and embedded knowledge systems guide the process. The acknowledgement of disrupted waterways, caretaking practices and ICIP protections shows a strong commitment to truth-telling, repair and cultural resurgence enabling the artwork to serve as a living thread between past, present and future.”

Connecting with Country Research Report: Forest Lodge Seniors Living June 2025, Section 3.6
Connected Country: Public Art

Overarching guidance will also be derived from the Government Architect NSW Connecting with Country, 2023 and NSW Health Infrastructure Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2024, which notes:

“The success of our reconciliation journey starts with our people’s ability to listen to, and learn from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders through effective and respectful engagement.”

PUBLIC ART AND HEALTH
AND WELLBEING

“Connection with the arts and culture is beneficial to health and wellbeing, and contributes to achieving health equity across communities... Exposure to the arts has profound benefits on patients’ health and wellbeing through direct engagement with the social determinants of health.”

NSW Government Health and the Arts
Framework 2024-2032

“It is critical for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that connections to Country, culture and community are restored, strengthened and protected.”

NSW Health Infrastructure Reflect
Reconciliation Plan 2023-2024

Public art has long been recognised for its ability to enrich public spaces. There is also growing evidence that the integration of public art into seniors living communities and health care environments is a powerful tool to enhance residents’ quality of life. This Public Art Strategy identifies the artwork as having potential to support residents’:

- emotional wellbeing and mental health;
- cognitive stimulation;
- time outdoors and physical activity;
- social interaction and community building and;
- personal cultural enrichment.

Responsive to State and Federal
Guidelines

The value of public art in healthcare and aged care settings is highlighted in government resources including; guidelines and related policy documents, the *National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines 2024*, *NSW Health and the Arts Framework 2024-2032*, *NSW Health Infrastructure Reflect Reconciliation Plan 2023-2024*, *National Health and The Arts Framework*, Dementia Australia’s Dementia-friendly environments and many others.

Principle 4 of the *National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines, 2024* aims to create opportunities for residents to connect to each other socially within the larger home, to welcome and promote connection with families and friends, and to engage with social life in the local neighbourhood. Guidelines outlined as being supportive of this Principle will inform the commissioning of artwork in this development.

An outdoor artwork that invites ongoing active engagement by residents can strengthen social bonds, enhance communication, and provide a sense of accomplishment and pride. Such shared moments (and or endeavours) can break down social barriers and encourage interaction among residents who might otherwise remain isolated. Additionally, involving family members and the local community in these projects can create intergenerational connections and foster a supportive and inclusive environment.

Principle 3 of the *National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines, 2024*, notes:

“People living in care homes typically spend very little time outdoors, despite the evidence-base linking access to outdoors to a range of health, psychological and social outcomes. Access to gardens and balconies contribute to maintaining fitness, regulating circadian rhythms, maintaining bone density, increasing social interaction, increasing vitamin D levels,, reducing falls risk and agitation, and improving outlook on life. This is a cumulative positive effect hard to replicate in other ways.”

The artwork may explore and support biodiversity, noting World Health Organisation findings on the benefits of diverse bushland and green spaces for human physical and mental health; diversity of plants, being shown to reduce stress and assist healing.

“There is an urgent need to create high quality greenspace in our cities. These spaces not only support nature in urban environments but contribute significantly to the wellbeing of residents exposed to them.”

Glebe’s Hill Unravelling Its Biodiversity Secrets and Potential, 2024

Co-design & Participation

The *National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines 2024* and *NSW Health and the Arts Framework 2024-2032*, support co-design through the participation of all stakeholders (residents, families, staff and management). Co-design helps ensure that a shared vision is developed and that design approaches and responses are suitably adapted for local contexts including the diverse social, cultural and geographical contexts in which aged care homes operate. This Public Art Strategy acknowledges the broader context for the Arts in health and aged care settings and the value of participation.

During the Artwork Development stages, opportunities to create participatory activities with current local community members or future workshops or self-directed activities for incoming independent living residents could be explored as part of the commission’s ongoing legacy.

“[A]ged care homes can create community hubs to provide a public space experience for residents of the home and as an opportunity to connect with local residents.”

National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines, 2024

CURATORIAL THEME

Guided by the Key Principles, the following multi-facted Curatorial Theme gives a direction for how the Vision for public art in the Forest Lodge Seniors Living Development may be achieved.



Orphan School Creek Reserve Path



Blue Triangle butterfly (Graphium choredon) visiting the inflorescence of lantana: Glebe Hill Project

CONNECTION

Connecting to Country

Artwork may foster an understanding of the land as Gadigal/Wangal Country and the significance for the Gadigal and Wangal Peoples and other connected First Nations communities to this area to celebrate and maintain connections to this Country. The artwork provides an opportunity for these connections and knowledge to be shared, allowing visitors and the local communities to gain a greater understanding of First Nations cultural connections to Country and to this place. It is an opportunity for local First Nations communities to engage in cultural reclamation and intergenerational knowledge exchange. As noted in garigarra’s Connecting with Country Report, the public artwork outcome for the project:

“...can act as a living archive of intergenerational knowledge, embedding stories, gestures and cultural teachings into built elements, surfaces and materials. These interventions should celebrate the continuity of knowledge while encouraging public engagement across age groups and cultural backgrounds.”

Connecting with Nature

Artwork placement and form may enhance physical connections and wayfinding on the site; welcoming and guiding residents, community and visitors from inside to outside, around landscape/park spaces and linking/ extending the nearby green corridor and connecting to nature.

Taking inspiration from the visible and documented progress within the Orphan School Creek Gully reserve and ongoing community advocacy for further renewal of habitat and species even closer to the subject site, the project may explore how public art can engage with regenerative and responsive practices to positively impact local ecosystems. The wonder, significance, interconnected and fragile nature of the ecosystem and its biodiversity that benefits both human and non-human life may be highlighted, and potentially cultivated, through the interdisciplinary collaboration and public art outcome.

Connecting People

Artistic expression may deepen awareness of and meaningful connection to the site and locality. It may create space for interaction, conversation and shared experiences, building and nurturing connections for all who engage with it and a sense of home and community.

PUBLIC ART AMBITIONS & LOCATIONS

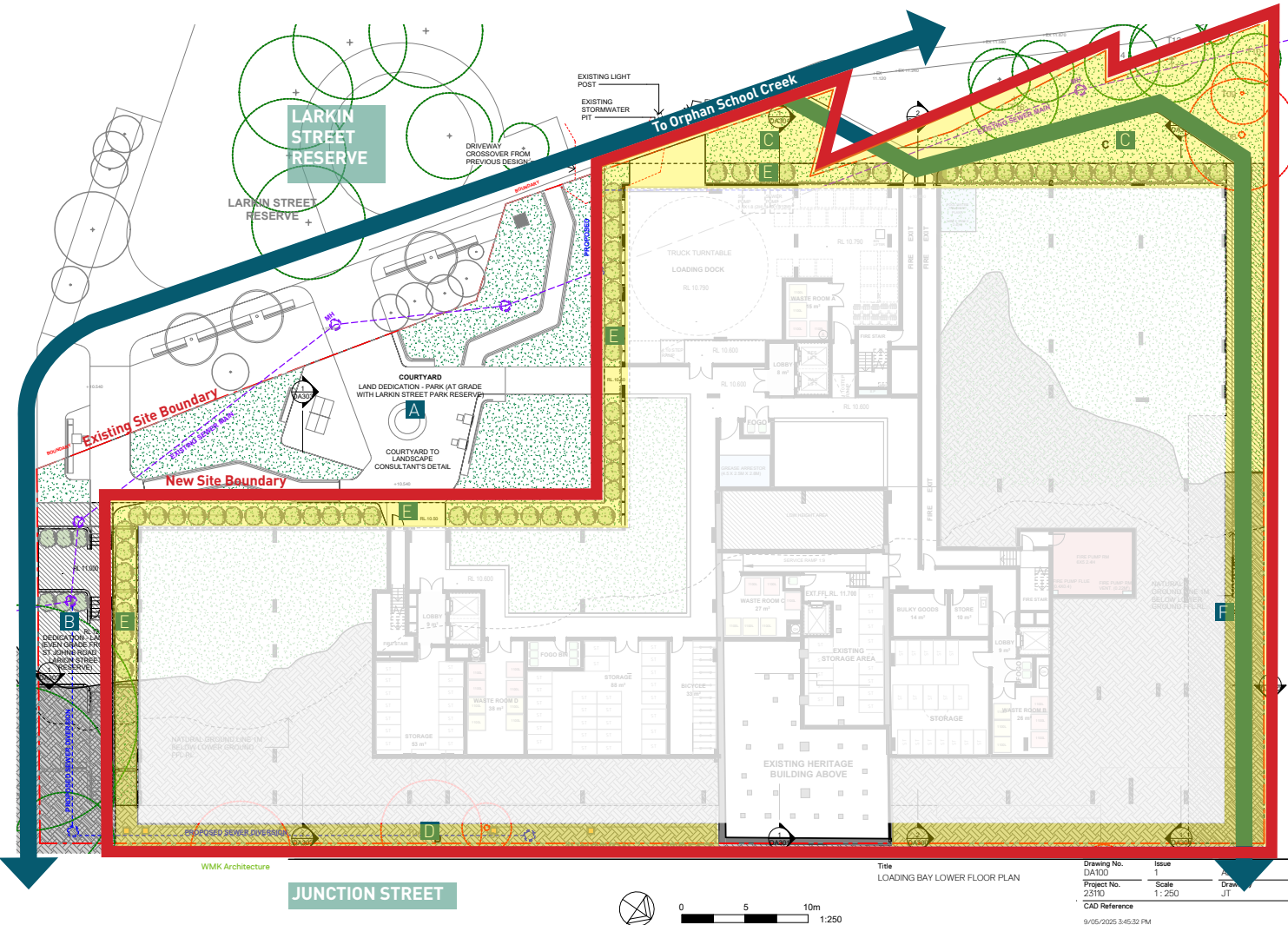
Recognising the significance of the natural environment surrounding the development, this Public Art Strategy proposes the commissioned artist team explore the development’s pathways and public facing built/landscape architecture as sites for the public artwork.

The landscaped areas including setbacks, port cochère and pedestrian paths indicated in the accompanying plans at C, D, E and F have all been identified as opportunities for the public artwork.

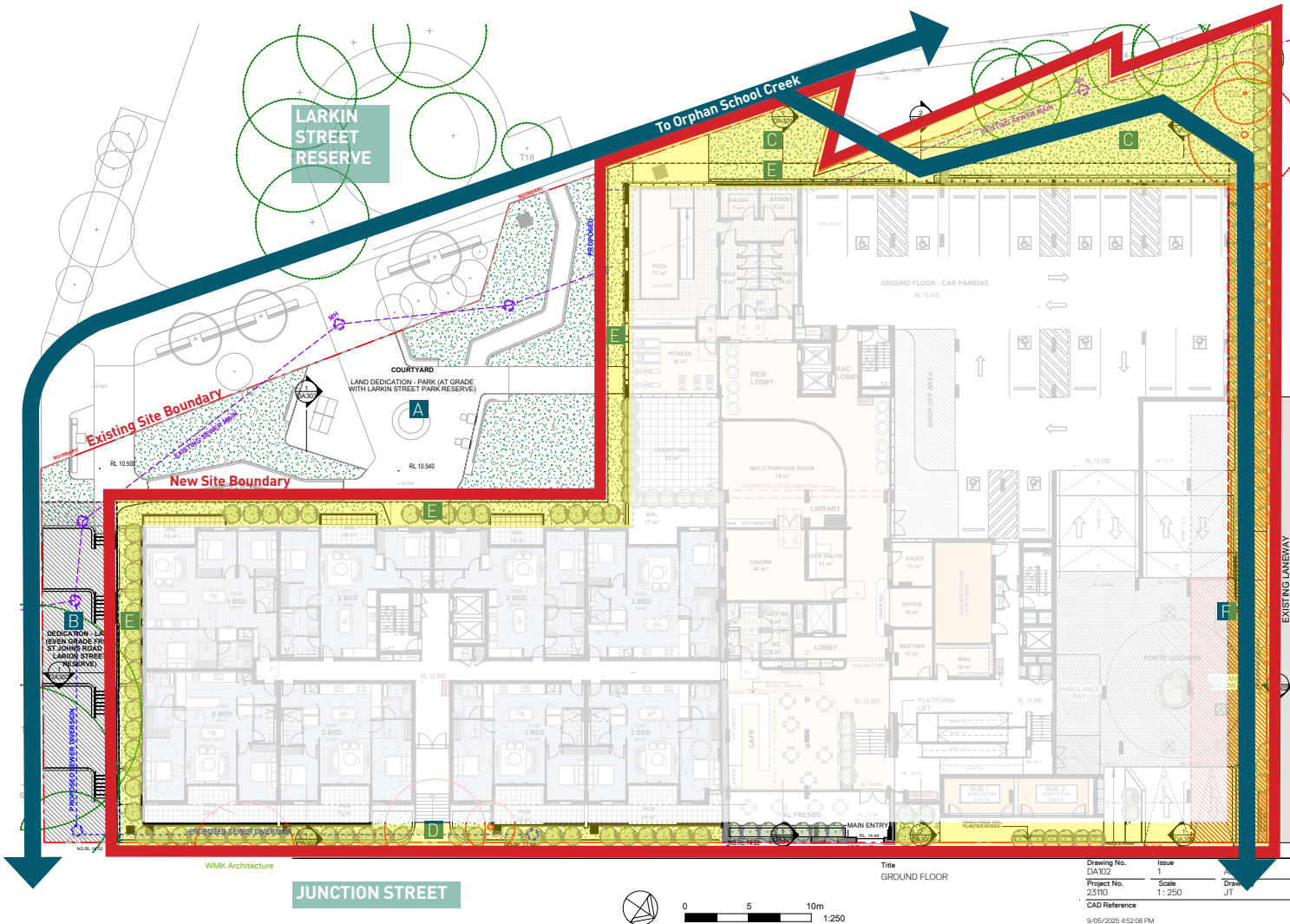
Due to the sloping gradient of the site, the architectural Loading Bay Lower Floor and Ground Floor Plans below illustrate the context and accessibility of these potential sites for public art.

Key:

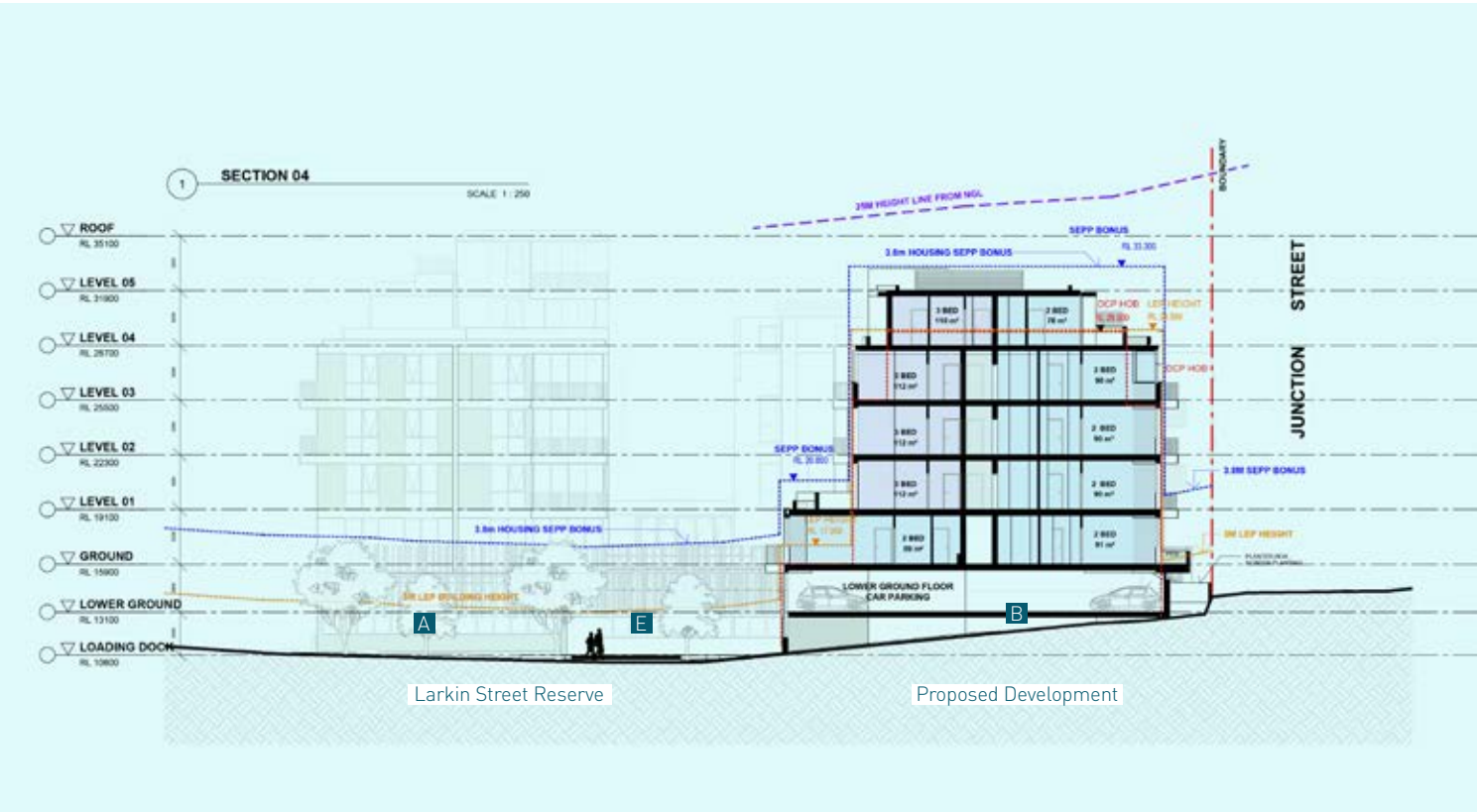
- A** : Dedication – Park at grade with Larkin Street Reserve
- B** : Dedication – Lane even grade from St John’s Road to Larkin Street Reserve
- C** : Easement for public access – Larkin Street Extension
- D** : Primary setback 3m
- E** : Above ground parking screen planting 2m
- F** : Paved driveway and pedestrian access – includes landscaped screening



WMK Architecture: Loading Bay Lower Floor Plan



WMK Architecture: Ground Floor Plan



WMK Architecture: Section 04



WMK Architecture: Junction Street Photomontage

CONTEXT

This Strategy envisages scope and flexibility and for public art to be dispersed throughout the development in different forms, material and scale. This approach may enhance the cohesiveness and impact of the public artwork outcome overall.

Peripheral sites within the development that border the Junction Street facade (D), existing northwest pedestrian laneway (F) and laneway dedication from St John’s Rd to Larkin Street Reserve (E) are opportunities for public art that can also invite resident and community discovery of what lies down the pathways and in the greenspaces at (A) and (C) and beyond.

Elements of public art may lie within the peripheral site (E) as it continues along the border facing onto the southern land dedication (A) that is the largest communal green space where residents will enjoy time outdoors and connecting with nature. This is a significant interface with the local community and natural environment as it adjoins Larkin Street Reserve and access to the existing path to Orphan School Creek gully reserve in the west.

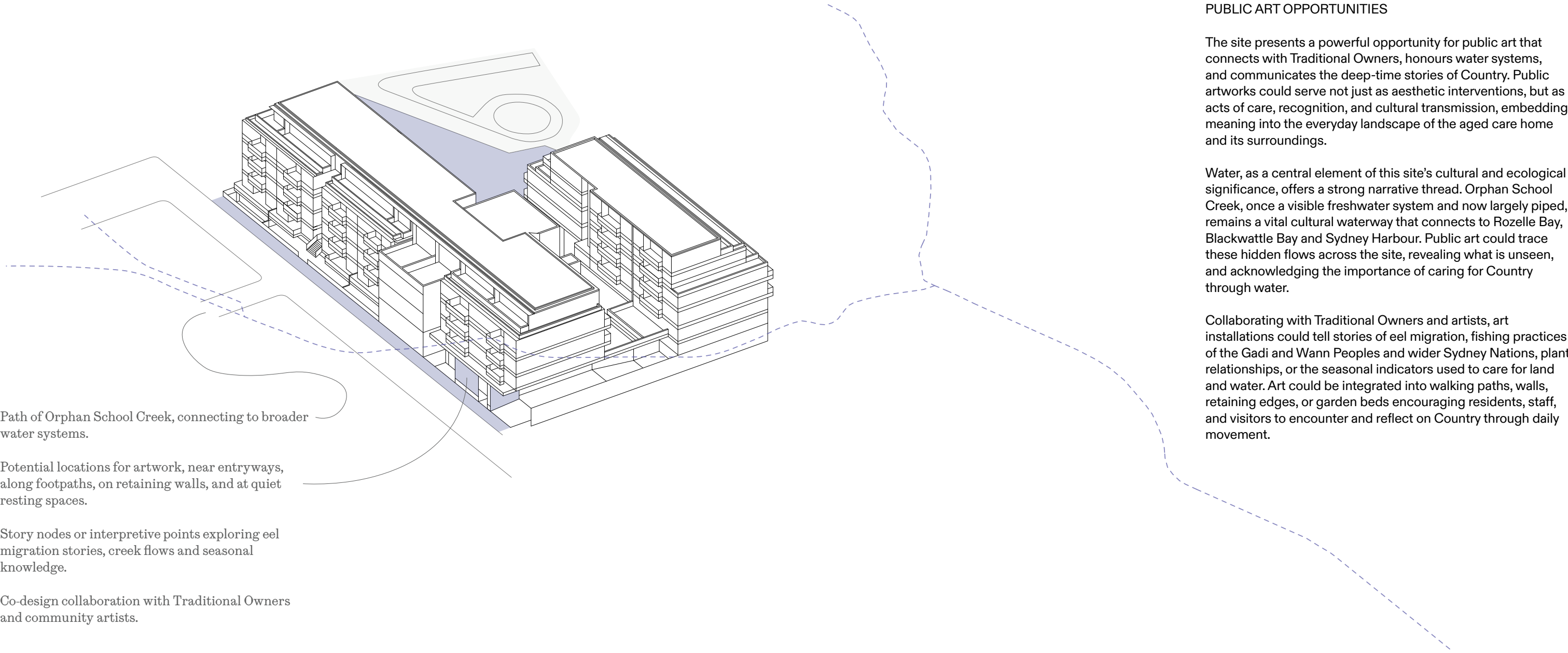
Area (C) provides green space for the development’s residents and includes a pathway as part of the easement for public access across the site to reach the southern land dedication (A), adjacent Larkin Street Reserve and existing pedestrian pathway from Larkin Street Reserve/ Larkin Street towards Bridge Road, across which the Orphan School Creek gully reserve is

found. Site (C) represents the more expansive opportunity for public art to be enjoyed and activated by residents and community and for its impact to extend and link the Orphan School Creek green corridor.

A public crossing and or signage at the intersection of Bridge Road may be appropriate to support public access from the existing pathway between Larkin Street Reserve and the entry point of the Orphan School Creek gully reserve.

Refer to the development’s architects’ and landscape architects’ further documentation. See also garigarra’s Connecting with Country Research Report: 3.2 Building with Country identifying how the project must be understood within its broader ecological context and the public art strategy must equally respond to this. The following extracted page (3.6 Connected Country: Public Art) shows the identified public art opportunities relationship to the Connecting with Country Principles for the project.

3.6 CONNECTED COUNTRY: PUBLIC ART



Ambition

The local community commitment to protecting and restoring the ecological features surrounding the subject site is evident. The public artwork is an opportunity to contribute to the unique local natural environment, connect residents, visitors and community with it, and to extend and link the green corridor associated with Orphan School Creek.

Each identified opportunity provides multiple options for precise location and typology of artwork. The artwork's form will be developed and determined through interdisciplinary art-making practices guided by this Public Art Strategy. The artist team will collaborate and consult with the development's architects and landscape architects, local First Nations design collaborators and Knowledge Holders, experts in local ecology and horticulture, together with the local community, to produce a public art outcome that creates an authentic connection between the urban development and its adjoining green space.

The potential for the artwork to specifically engage with the University of Sydney's Integrative Ecology Research Group as well as The Glebe Society and the Forest Lodge and Glebe Coordination Group (FLAG) should be explored. This includes the Friends of Orphan School Creek Bushcare local volunteer group that endeavours to support the protection and sustainable management of the wildlife habitat revegetation sites of Orphan School Creek in Forest Lodge. From a pool of around 20 volunteers, at least 5 to 10 volunteers meet for a couple of hours every month to work on regenerating areas along the creek line with native planting aligned with best practice. They also seek to engage and educate the community about the values of the site and its contribution to the liveability of the local area. Meaningful collaboration between the artist team and these dedicated members of the community will support the contribution, longevity and ongoing custodianship of the artwork.

The artwork will serve as an attractive welcome to the development and contribute to its distinctive and contemporary identity in the local area. It may aid wayfinding and encourage residents, visitors and community towards the southern park areas. It is envisaged the artwork will enable individuals to find small moments of connection with nature and other living creatures in their daily lives and enhanced appreciation for local ecology. It may provide a rich base for workshops and other forms of personal and group interaction, learning and physical activity to enrich community life.

An artwork that can engage both residents and community alike in this zone of public/private interaction can strengthen new residents' sense of belonging and the embrace of the local community. Encounters with the artwork, perhaps incidentally but regularly, and the experiences, thoughts and conversations generated can support community cohesion.

“Artworks can trace the memory and rhythms of water through visual or sensory installations, grounding residents and visitors in its cultural and ecological significance. These works can offer places to sit with, reflect on and honour water as a living being.”

Connecting with Country Research Report: Forest Lodge Seniors Living June 2025: Section 3.6
Connected Country: Public Art



Orphan School Creek Bushcare volunteer: NSW Landcare

Heritage Material Reuse and Interpretation

The potential to conserve and repurpose heritage materials salvaged in the site demolition process will be explored as part of the artwork development process. In particular, in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement that “The stone retaining wall along the eastern boundary of the site... will be carefully dismantled and the stone reused in selected locations in the new buildings and in the site works” (p 104), the artwork development



Sandstone from existing retaining wall along eastern boundary



Timber posts from ground floor 'Building 1' per Heritage Assessment Report



Bricks from 'Building 2' per Heritage Assessment Report

Artwork Typologies and Precedents

The artwork may explore and deliver innovative ways to support local biodiversity. Its typology and precise location should be informed by the consultation and collaborative process and scope for integration into the landscape design. While bearing in mind the capacities and safety needs of older generations, the artwork will offer opportunities for ongoing observation, contribution/participation and wide-ranging wellbeing benefits for all who encounter it.

The following images and brief descriptions reference public artworks that align with the Vision, Themes and Ambitions for a public artwork across the identified primary and secondary opportunities.



Photographs Shannan Snowball and City of Sydney. (<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/installations/barlow-street-forest>).



Barlow Street Forest 2021-22
Dirt Witches for the City of Sydney, Haymarket Sydney.

A biodiverse urban microforest installed in the central Sydney suburb of Haymarket. The work features over 30 local species to mimic the layers of an endemic ecosystem in the middle of this urban environment. It incorporates the endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and coastal swamp forests that once existed in inner and eastern Sydney. Also featured are as beehives containing sugarbag stingless native bees.

The Dirt Witches are a cross-disciplinary collective of environmental and climate activists using their skills as artists, curators, writers and academics. In this project they seek to enhance both aesthetic appreciation and ecological understanding of Banksia Scrub by recontextualising it within the city.



Incorporating, and or interaction with, carefully selected native vegetation to support the health and regeneration of the local ecosystem may be a feature. Activation through community participation, daily or seasonal engagement and ownership may be central to realising its form and benefits.



The Birds 2024
Jen Berean, Callum Morton and Linda Tegg, Monash Art Projects, Ian Potter Sculpture courtyard, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne.



A temporary installation artwork exploring how public art can contribute to the health of the flora and fauna of the sites within which it sits.

At the base of an urban canyon, once an active habitat for migratory and nomadic bird species, sculptural forms inspired by birdbaths are placed at the service of the local avian population. Rocks originally from the surrounding uplands, plains, and rivers (but sourced from a stone yard where they awaited processing into urban materials such as gravel, pavers and curbs) have been used to create sculptures offering water or shelter.

<https://www.monash.edu/muma/public-art/IPSC/temporary/birdbaths-for-a-sculpture-court> and <https://instagram/callummorton>. Photographs Linda Tegg



Freestanding or integrated sculptural forms made from durable natural or repurposed site materials may serve as new habitat, places of refuge and water sources for birds, frogs, lizards, insects and native plants in the area. Residents and community can also enjoy the cooling and visual impact of the artwork.

Insect City 2020
Ivan Juarez, Linz Austria

Geometric wooden pieces create an abstract housing complex for cohabiting insects - wasps, bees, beetles or bugs. While located close to the Danube River and its industrial port, and bounded by a disused railway and elevated highway, the site for the artwork is an unused urban meadow with rich biodiversity due to surrounding houses with orchards and community gardens.

The work aims to raise awareness and understanding of ecological and biodiversity values; expanding dialogue and approaches to the diversity of plant and animal life in urban habitats.

The project was developed in collaboration with architects and leading insect biologists together with neighbourhood consultation as part of the process.



(<https://www.metalocus.es>. Photographs Gregor Graf)



The artwork may be a singular piece or a series of interrelated components.



<https://www.greytogreen.org.uk/art>



Grey to Green 2016-2022

Contributing artists Richard Dawson, Anthony Downing, Eleven Design, Mark Hetherington, Steve Roche and Owen Waterhouse, commissioned by Sheffield City Council, United Kingdom.

A two-phase project featuring totem-like structures filled with sculptures and carvings has helped nature to thrive, enhancing the sense of connection between Sheffield's city centre and the natural environments beyond.

Phase one artworks are made from stone and metal and incorporate stories of the area and captivating mirror and lighting effects. Phase two artworks are wooden habitat shelter sculptures that provide nesting and hibernation space for wildlife (such as ladybirds, lacewings, bees and wasps) returning to the area. Bird boxes within the habitat sculptures become a space for diverse bird species to nest and raise their young.

The project has created a sustainable environment where a diversity of insects can feed, roam and shelter. By integrating innovations in both water-sensitive urban design and planting design biodiversity has increased by over 500%, consequently benefitting the ecosystem and the city's liveability.

Colour may be employed for functional benefits such as attracting species while also providing aesthetic appeal for residents and community.

See further relevant case studies and projects included in garigarra's *Connecting with Country Research Report: Forest Lodge Seniors Living* June 2025 at 3.7 Precedents.

04 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY & BUDGET

Artwork Budget

The anticipated public art budget will, at minimum, represent 0.5% of the Estimated Development Cost (EDC). This will be inclusive of all artist fees, gallery commission (if applicable), curatorial fees, artist's sub-consultant fees, artwork project management, site visits, fabrication and installation, inspections, design meetings, client presentations, all design stages, all fabrication, storage (if required), transportation, installation costs, travel, disbursements and insurances insurances.

Artist Team Selection

Art curator and advisor, Shannan Snowball, has been engaged to work in collaboration with Aileen Sage Architects ('The Curatorial Team') and the broader design team on the development of this Public Art Strategy for the site.

In the next stages of the project, the artist team will be established. The artist team will work as an interdisciplinary collaborative group, ideally continuing the existing team that has been established for this Public Art Strategy.

The artist team will need to meet the following criteria:

- Level of experience and appropriate skills, including with specific materials, relevant to the physical site and or nature of public art making;
- Quality of the previous work demonstrating a high standard of excellence in contemporary art and/or delivery of work related to the themes and opportunities outlined in this Strategy;
- Suitability of the team members' work, knowledge and or skills and experience relating to the historic, cultural, social and or environmental context;
- Suitability to represent community priorities, concerns and stories;

- Team members should possess an area of specialised expertise or a particular way of working that will contribute to realising the Vision for the public art opportunity;
- Interest, availability and commitment to the project;
- Capacity and willingness to collaborate and work with the broader design and consultant project team; and
- Capacity and willingness to meaningfully and appropriately engage with local First Nations community members and Knowledge Holders where required and appropriate, as well as with key local community groups – where relevant to the artwork opportunity ambitions and themes.

Artist Team

The proposed artist team will comprise:

- Lead Curator, Researcher and Design Team including local First Nations design collaborators and Knowledge Holders.

This team would ideally continue the existing team of Shannan Snowball (curator and researcher), Aileen Sage (project lead) in collaboration with First Nations Designer (Matte Ager-McConnell of garigarra) with possible additional relevant local community First Nations collaborators identified throughout the process (for example Indigigrow, First Hand Solutions, Wildflower Gardens For Good or Gadigal Pathways).

The Artist Team will look at opportunities to collaborate with local groups which may include representatives of:

- The University of Sydney, Integrative Ecology Research Group (School of Life and Environmental Sciences);
- City of Sydney Urban Ecology Team;
- Local community greening/biodiversity volunteer groups (in particular, Friends of Orphan School Creek and The Glebe Society's Blue Wren subcommittee); and
- Local craftspeople and fabricators and specialist designers or consultants as relevant to producing/fabricating the final proposed artwork.

Following the engagement of the interdisciplinary artist team, clear roles and responsibilities will be assigned to the members according to discipline and/or expertise to develop a collaborative proposal for the artwork.

Artwork Development Process

The artist team will additionally develop their proposal in consultation with the Client, to meet the ambitions outlined in the Public Art Strategy and to meet the project budget. This will be in close consultation with the precinct architects, landscape architects, and other project consultants to ensure coordination with the design, structure and services of the public domain and, where integrated with specific built elements or infrastructure, will be coordinated with the architects and services consultants of those areas.

Working Closely with the City of Sydney

The proposed Concept Design will be presented to, and confirmed with, the City of Sydney Public Art Team and Public Art Advisory Panel. Feedback from the City's Team and Panel will be taken on board and integrated into the detailed design and developed concept proposal prior to formal submissions for Development Approval.

The proposed artwork will meet the following criteria:

- Relevant and responsive to the site, including having potential for integration with the landscape, materials, use or function or public movement;
- Of a scale appropriate to the development;
- Responsive to the site and engaged with the themes and opportunities identified in this Public Art Strategy;
- Demonstrates a high standard of excellence in contemporary art, design and sustainability;

- Aligns with relevant local policy frameworks for planning, heritage, environment, public art and culture;
- Demonstrates a capacity to be achieved within budget (including commissioning, fabrication and installation);
- Considerate of maintenance requirements and associated ongoing costs; and
- Demonstrates that it contributes to the amenity of the public domain and enhances community connection to place, including potential for ongoing and or future activation and public or community engagement and appreciation.

Detailed Development, Agreements & Commissioning

Once concepts and cost plans are confirmed for the artwork, the artist team will undertake detailed design and delivery of the work in the Detailed Design, Construction & Commissioning and Post-Construction Stages.

The approved detailed design will inform the drafting of a subsequent Commissioning Agreement to be entered into between the precinct developer and the Artist Team. This Strategy recommends adopting an Agreement based on the Arts Law Sample Commissioning Agreement - Public Visual Artwork endorsed by the National Association for the Visual Arts, or similar.

Both the Project Brief and Commissioning Agreement will establish the rights, obligations, conditions and expectations of each party at each stage of the process as they work collaboratively on developing and delivering a high standard public art project outcome. These mechanisms, together with continual engagement of, and consultation with, technical experts, stakeholders and community throughout the process as required, will ensure excellence insofar as artwork execution and integrity, achieving the overall development Vision and Aims and balancing the interests of the Commissioner, artist and community.

PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

Art Planning		Design		Construction / Delivery	
Artist Team Procurement	Concept Design	Design Development	Construction Documentation	Delivery	
8 weeks	10-12 weeks	12-16 weeks	12-16 weeks	12-16 weeks	
- Engage artist team Lead Curator/Researcher and Design Team and confirm availability of all artist team representatives/collaborators; - Confirm ability of team to meet the selection criteria; - Confirm roles, responsibilities and deliverables for all team members; and - Confirm Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Agreements & protocols.	- Research and site investigations; - Work as a collaborative interdisciplinary team to develop concept options and proposals including concept development, material selection and scale; - Prepare preliminary cost plan, construction methodology, program and plan of integration with the broader project design development; - Prepare concept design visualisations and presentation models (as required); and - Management of review, feedback and confirmation with Client and all relevant project consultants and stakeholders.	- Detailed design development, materials, fabrication and installation research; - Integrate detailed engineering and/or any other required specialist consultant advice; - Developed drawings, models, materials selection and visualisations (as required); - Updated project budget including fabrication costs, construction and installation program; and - Management of review, feedback and confirmation with Client and all relevant project consultants and stakeholders.	- Full construction documentation including all co-ordinated engineering and services documentation and certifications (as required); and - Updated project budget review with Client.	- Project management and budget control throughout fabrication, installation and finalisation work; - Management of fabrication process; - Management of Client approvals during construction; - Quality control; - Transportation to site; - Maintenance advice and development of maintenance and management manuals; and - Co-ordination of attribution plaques and project attribution and information in accordance with any relevant ICIP protocols.	

LIFESPAN, SUSTAINABILITY
& MAINTENANCE

Lifespan

It is intended that the artwork for the development should be robust, durable and with a longevity and maintenance needs comparable to the rest of the built fabric of the development and or as appropriate to the conceptual objectives of the artwork.

The artwork will be required to consider environmental and social sustainability from concept stage through to completion and the ongoing life of the artwork.

Artwork will be expected to have a lifespan commensurate to the endurance of the affiliated development’s architecture and materiality. They should be designed, detailed and fabricated to an equivalent level of durability to that of its location whether it be a building or an area within the public realm.

Where artwork includes technology elements with expected lifespans shorter than a minimum of 25 years, the future owner of the artwork may choose to conduct a review of the artwork before the intended expectancy is reached to determine if the work may require the updating of certain components or an overall review of the artwork concept and how technology has been used to express the intent.

Sustainability

Site-responsive design should minimise ecological disruption, incorporate low-impact or recycled materials where appropriate, and ensure that any interventions near waterways do not compromise the health of surrounding ecosystems. A sustainable approach also involves planning for repair, adaptability, and eventual decommissioning (if appropriate), reducing the need for resource-intensive replacements over time.

Considerations that will be included with in the artist brief will include:

- selection of materials that include recycled content and or have the ability to be recycled;
- low embodied carbon;
- local materials wherever possible and consideration for material origin and environmental and social impact;
- engagement of local suppliers, fabricators, craftspeople and consultants wherever possible;
- use of sustainable technologies and where technology elements are incorporated, they must be of high quality, warranted components and fittings that are easily accessible for replacement, consider longevity and energy efficiency;
- consideration for how water and energy will be used and managed (eg. water collection, reuse and impact on nearby waterways; energy efficient systems or the ability to generate energy or connect with existing on-site energy generation as part of the artwork); and
- consideration for any microclimatic effects that may result from the artwork (eg. heat ‘island’ effects; heat radiation or absorption; cooling effects; light reflectivity, shading or intensification; wind tunnelling, deflection or noise; water run off, ponding or absorption; evaporation or humidity, etc.)

Maintenance

Maintenance and the long-term care of the public artworks is a key consideration. This will be taken into account from Concept Design stage in the material selection and proposed construction.

Additionally, the development of a maintenance program will ensure that the public benefits of the artwork are maintained and the burden of any ongoing maintenance costs are minimised and considered within the overall sustainability strategy for the work.

The maintenance plan will consider the long-term environmental impacts of materials, durability in changing climate conditions, and resilience to water exposure and potential flooding.

Included within the Artwork Maintenance Manual for the/each artwork will be:

- contact details for the artist team;
- contact details for the construction company or companies involved;
- materials and finishes specifications and supplier details;
- detailed instructions for any required treatments, aftercare works, processes and inspection timeframes;
- all construction documentation drawings and specifications including design, engineering and any services drawings or documentation and or as-built drawings (including locating any service provisions to the artwork);
- expected lifespan of components and any associated warranties;
- cleaning program outlining processes, recommended products, methods and frequency; and
- any specific specialist maintenance requirements

It is recognised that a level of maintenance is required for all permanent artwork to ensure their longevity and to reduce any potential replacement costs in the future.

In commissioning these works, the maintenance responsibilities of the artwork owner are acknowledged and the ongoing maintenance regime will be clearly established from the outset and will be approved and considered at each stage of the development process.

It is also acknowledged that any maintenance work which may be required for the artworks in the future will need to be carried out with respect to the artist team’s original intent and permission must be sought from the artist team for any major maintenance work that could result in the artist team’s intent being significantly altered.

The ongoing care and maintenance of the artwork must be understood as a cultural responsibility, not just a technical task. From a First Nations perspective, artworks sited near water require particular attention to the cycles of Country including seasonal changes, flooding, and the shifting behaviour of waterways. These natural rhythms should inform both material selection and long-term stewardship strategies. Maintenance should involve continued dialogue with Knowledge Holders to ensure the work remains in respectful relation with Country and is not left to deteriorate or be disconnected from its intended meaning.