

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT

THE SITE

This sloping site is located on a hill with views over of the estuaries of the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers and distant views of the Blue Mountains. The site is an amalgamation of ten separate residential lots, surrounding the cul-de-sac at the end of Nield Avenue which is located off the Pacific Highway and in close proximity to the “Waterbrook” Aged Care facility and the Royal North Shore Hospital. Topographically the site is steep, forming a valley north to south and falling from east to west. Contextually it is located in the midst of a residential environment surrounded by 4 - 5 storey medium density unit blocks to the north and east; 2 – 3 storey residential unit blocks to the south and a group of residential houses to the west at the lower end of the site. One of the finest features of this site is its the leafy character particularly to the west where a significant blue gum and other well established trees flourish.

DESIGN INTENT

1. To produce a high quality private hospital development, located in proximity to existing facilities and serving the needs of the existing community.
2. To provide a successful scale relationship to the surrounding neighbourhood, and minimise environmental impacts.
3. To take advantage of the leafy outlook and natural features of the site.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal has been designed in response to the topography of the site. The scale of the building has been carefully modulated in bulk, height and spatial separation to form a “U” configuration which provides a focus to a landscaped central courtyard and embraces the natural landscape to the west.

The development contains an Admissions Clinic and 147 hospital suites catering for infirm, disabled and dementia specific wards. All the occupants will rely on the provision of professional health care services. The central point of the “U” has a large atrium. It is the address, public entry and central focal point of the complex that spatially integrates the separate arms of the “wings” that move along and step down the slope. The atrium is the functional connection between the separate wings and the 3 - level service vehicle and 91 car parking basement located under and to the east of the main building. The Admissions Clinic has entries from both the Reception Level and via the first level – Upper Garden Level – basement. The three lifts are located to facilitate good public, patient and serviceable access throughout and the corridors are wide, articulated and naturally lit for both service access and to create interest. Consideration has been given to the provision and location of balconies, dining, meeting and sitting rooms to maximize views, cross ventilation and solar access. Facilities included in the development include a café, meeting rooms, chapel and a Rehabilitation Centre.

A great deal of attention and consideration during the design process has been paid to the impact of the built form on the surrounding residential dwellings in regard to set back, scale, height, privacy and overshadowing. The form has been sensitively shaped and configured based on these impacts, distributing or deleting bulk and increasing separation where required.

The topography and natural features of the site have on one hand proved a challenge, but have at the same time provided inspiration in addressing issues relating to the articulation, aesthetics, material and colour selection of the building and the landscape design. For example, the connection to the courtyard and the natural environment at the entry is strong from all levels through the glazed atrium; the suites are distinguished by variations in balcony expressions on the elevation; timber materials are used in combination with a natural palette of colours and landscaping harnesses the natural features, providing screening by enhancing the existing condition. Principally, the approach has been to blend in, and reduce the built form in an organic manner.

It is envisaged that the materials used to construct the facility will be elemental and transportable. The palette selected provides the variation and texture necessary to layer and break down any perceived bulk, as well as seeking to blend harmoniously into the residential context.

CONCLUSION

The site presents a unique opportunity to propose a high quality private hospital in an area that has proximate and complementary facilities. It has been borne of a need for the site to take advantage of natural features and location. The opening of the centre of the site has allowed the natural beauty of the existing landscape to be exposed and enhanced, creating a focus. The built form is successful by not having adverse impact on the surrounding residential area. Landscaping is a vital element in the proposal, providing the connecting water features, softening the edges and merging with the architecture to develop a rich and harmonious scheme.