

85-91 Thomas Street Parramatta Residential Development Landscape SSDA Design Report

Prepared for: Century 888 Pty Ltd
By: Site Image Landscape Architects
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SITE IMAGE
Landscape Architects

Project Overview

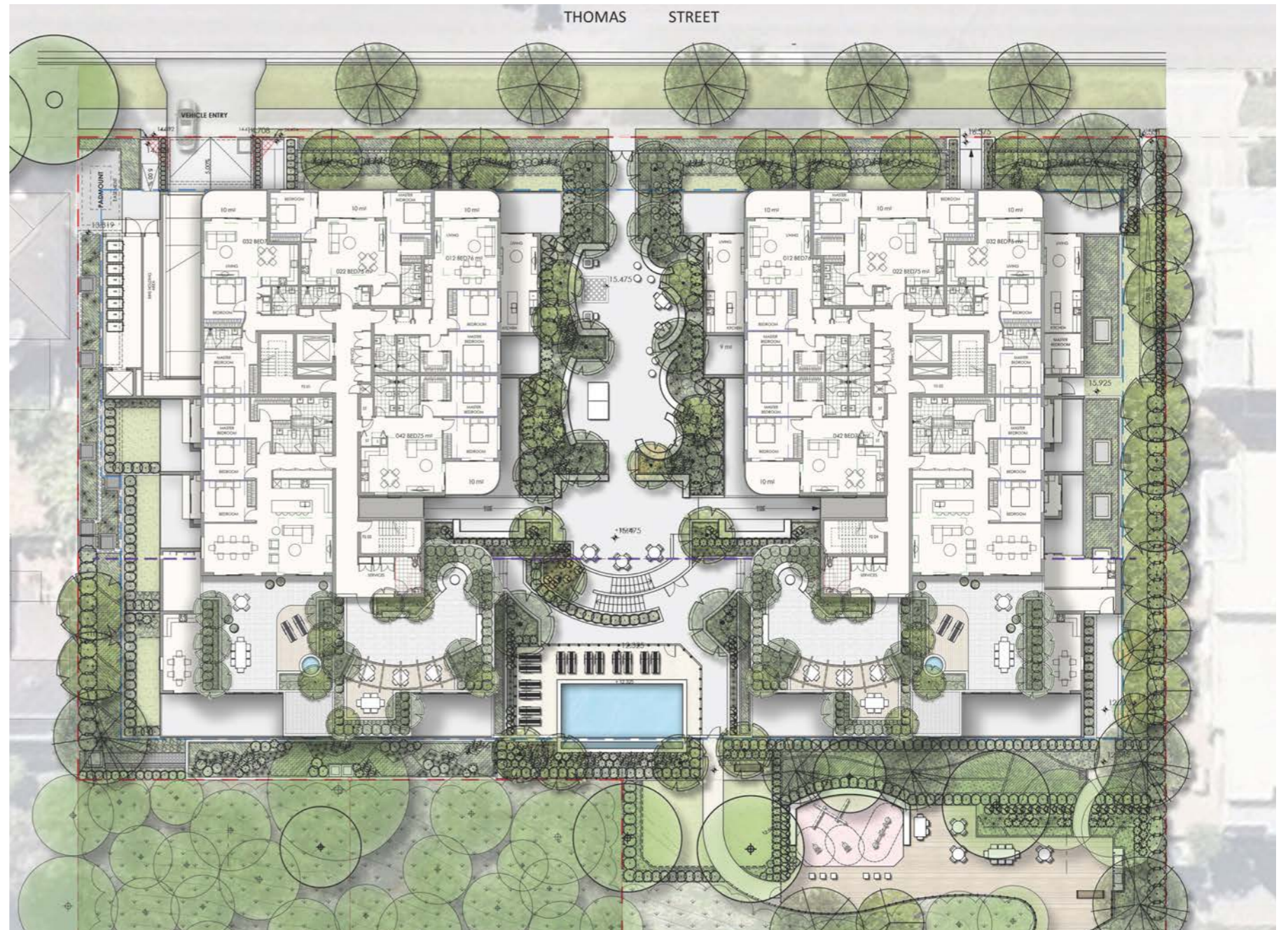
Site Image have been engaged by Century 888 Pty Ltd to work in conjunction with the project team lead by PTI Architects on design proposals in support of SSSA documents for the residential development at 85-91 Thomas Street, Parramatta.

The site is located on Thomas Street and adjoins the Parramatta River Corridor on its Southern Boundary. It sits in an elevated position and well located to take advantage of the continued renewal of the area with new developments occurring west towards Parramatta CBD.

The whole site currently consists of 4 low density residential lots, which will be consolidated and redeveloped to provide the following:

- western tower of 63 residential apartments,
- eastern tower of 63 residential apartments
- communal landscape areas at ground level including gathering spaces, outdoor deck, pool and playground area
- shared basement levels for carparking
- retention and protection of canopy trees to the south of building footprints
- pedestrian access to Parramatta Valley Cycleway boardwalk
- rooftop communal open spaces to each tower
- a vegetation management plan (VMP) for a portion of the site adjoining the Baludarra Wetland

This report provides a description and analysis of the site and context, noting that the lower part of the site will be retained and protected where it adjoins the Baludarra Wetlands, an area of high ecological value connecting to the Parramatta River. The report then describes the landscape design with SSSA plans, specific site area plans and supporting design imagery to illustrate proposals.



Site Context

The site is located in the suburb of Parramatta in the Parramatta Council LGA. It consists of four residential lots located on Thomas Street with medium density residential development adjoining its western and eastern site boundaries. The Parramatta River environs occurs on its southern site boundary. The site is accessible via major arterial roads including James Ruse Drive to the east and Victoria Road to the north. It connects to Parramatta CBD via Macarthur Street.

A number of new multi-storey residential units occupy sites nearby towards the west nearer to Parramatta CBD. Western Sydney University's Parramatta Campus occurs on the eastern side of James Ruse Drive, a 10 minute walk, whilst the Parramatta CBD is approximately 1.6km to the west. Macarthur Girls High School is also located on Thomas Street further west towards Parramatta CBD.

In terms of public transport, the site is served by the 545 bus route with the nearest stops located in nearby Macarthur Street taking passengers into the heart of Parramatta and linking with the Parramatta Train Station, a major transport hub and Parramatta Ferry Wharf. The bus route is also in close proximity to the Robin Thomas Light Rail stop.

The site is well served by passive parkland, due to its prime location adjoining the Parramatta River corridor and its substantial open space network. The site is immediately north of the Baludarri Wetland which, in turn, connects westwards to Rangihou Reserve, Stewart Street Reserve and the River Foreshore Reserve in the heart of Parramatta itself. River foreshore connections continue eastwards under James Ruse Drive to provide a contiguous regional open space network which also accommodates the Parramatta Valley Cycleway, a major shared transport link.



Understanding Country

The NSW Government Architect’s Connecting with Country policy establishes a framework for embedding First Nations knowledge, values, and design thinking into the built environment. The policy recognises that Country is a living, interconnected system of land, water, culture, and story, and that meaningful engagement with Traditional Custodians must inform all stages of planning and design. Within this context, the following analysis explores the First Nations cultural heritage of the Parramatta area—particularly in relation to the river corridor.

85-91 Thomas Street, Parramatta is intrinsically linked to the Parramatta River, occupying an elevated position immediately above the riverine corridor. Situated on the Country of the Burramattagal people, a clan of the Darug Nation, the river is considered a vital artery of life. The name “Burramatta” (meaning “place of eels”) reflects the deep cultural significance of the river and its ecosystem. This Country holds ceremonial, spiritual, and ecological value that continues to be recognised and respected by local Aboriginal communities today. The river supported eel and fish harvesting and informed seasonal movement with surrounding wetlands managed through sensitive land stewardship practices.

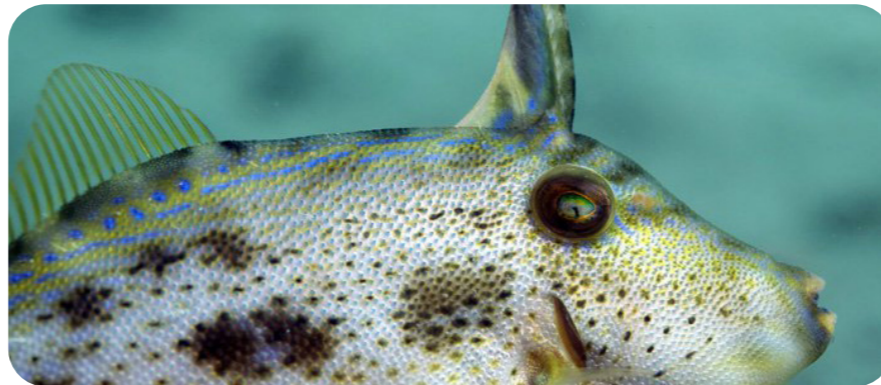
Today the Baludarri Wetland forms a key component of the riverine corridor. Located directly below the Thomas Street escarpment, this constructed but ecologically valuable wetland has been designed to filter stormwater runoff and enhance biodiversity through the reintroduction of native wetland species. It also provides refuge and foraging habitat for waterbirds, frogs, and aquatic life, contributing to the functioning of the Parramatta River’s green-blue network. The name “Baludarri,” acknowledges the eldest son of Burramattagal elders and means “leatherjacket fish” which would have been caught along the river, highlighting the wetland’s significance in providing sustenance for local clans. Baludarri was one of the first indigenous persons to develop friendly relations with early colonists and was considered a friend of Governor Phillip. Landscape design for the proposed development should respond sensitively to this important cultural and environmental asset, by minimising downstream impacts, supporting riparian planting, and incorporating interpretive connections to local ecology and First Nations heritage.



Image of Baludarri Source: City Of Parramatta- Research & Collections



Historic Map of Parramatta Region



Leatherjacket Fish Source: Australian Museum



Eel



Baludarri Wetlands



Honeyeater



Boardwalk

Site Character

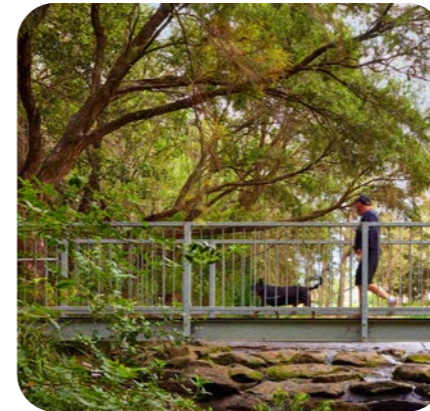
Biodiversity and Vegetation

The broader landscape setting includes a mix of highly modified urban vegetation and remnant native species associated with riparian and floodplain ecological communities. Historically, this area supported *River-Flat Eucalypt Forest* and *Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest*, both of which are listed as endangered ecological communities under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. While much of the native vegetation has been cleared or altered due to urbanisation, fringing vegetation on the sites southern boundary contributes to connecting vegetation communities along the river.

Mapping as indicated in the Ecological Assessment Report, (Travers Bushfire and Ecology May 2024) indicates the site is dominated by exotic vegetation with Regenerated Native Vegetation planted as a part restoration works for Baludarrri Wetland. This interfaces with PCT 4097 Samphire Saltmarsh and to a much lesser extent PCT 4091 Grey Mangrove. Remnant and regrowth species such as *Casuarina glauca* (Swamp Oak), *Melaleuca spp.* (Paperbarks), and native grasses persist along the riverbank and open space corridors.

Local Topography

The site occupies an elevated position that naturally falls to the west and more dramatically southward towards the Parramatta River, dropping around 11 metres overall. This descending topography reflects the broader fluvial valley system that characterises much of the Parramatta landscape, with alluvial terraces and floodplain deposits along the river edge. Geologically, the area is underlain by the Wianamatta Group - Ashfield Shale. The soil profile is typically shallow to moderately deep, comprising of red brown podzols on upper ground and yellow podzols in areas of poor drainage. The landform provides both visual and physical connectivity to the river and drains overland into the Baludarrri Wetland and adjoining Parramatta River.



Site Character

Frontage and Streetscape

The site occurs in an area which supports a mix of low to medium density residential development, with medium density unit developments occurring to its immediate western and eastern site boundaries. Thomas Street is typical of historic urban patterns of development with a generous road carriage framed by a mix of exotic and native street trees of varying age and quality. Tree canopy cover is constrained on one side due to the prevalence of overhead powerlines. Pedestrian footpaths occur to both sides of the street and the road is marked as shared for cyclists.

The development will address Thomas Street. The street runs perpendicular to James Ruse Drive, a major six lane arterial road. Access to and from Thomas Street from the drive is confined to northbound traffic only. A small reserve beside James Ruse Drive allows for pedestrian connectivity to the riverfront and under the drive itself. These links provide continuity of access to the river's open space network for both pedestrian and active transport use.

Views

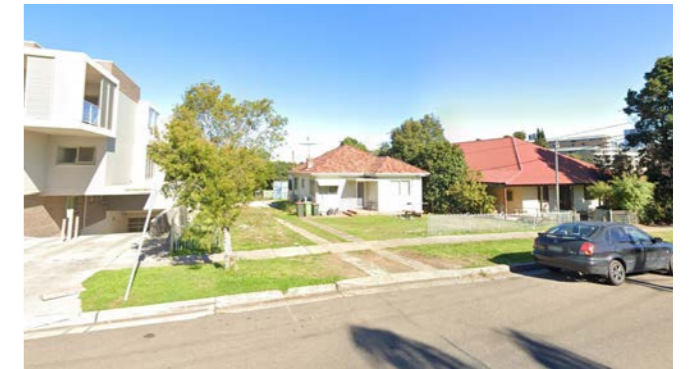
The site offers good views west towards the Parramatta CBD and excellent vegetated views south towards the Buldarri Wetland and river beyond. Locally, the site can be viewed from James Ruse Drive as you travel in a northerly direction when crossing over the Parramatta River. It is also visible from the lower Buldarri Wetland.



Nearmaps



Thomas Street looking east



No. 91 Thomas Street



No 87 Thomas Street



No 85 Thomas Street

Relationship to Parramatta River Corridor

The majority of the site addressing Thomas Street is currently occupied by single storey residences with exotic vegetation surrounds. In contrast to this, the southern portion of the site (with the exception of Lot 87A) supports predominantly regenerated native vegetation and Samphire Saltmarsh (PCT 4097) to lower elevations. It adjoins an area highlighted for its biodiversity values, including the Baludarri Wetland situated within the 1:100 year flood zone which has undergone substantial restoration. Ongoing restoration will further enhance its hydrological functions and flora and fauna habitat values. A section of the publicly accessible boardwalk also traverses the lower site area and this forms part of the broader Parramatta Valley Cycleway, a key regional active transport link.

Landscape Strategy

In terms of the overall site, the landscape management strategy can be divided into the following zones:

- Communal rooftops areas
- Street address and ground level communal areas
- Southern site area adjoining Parramatta River Corridor (to boardwalk)

It is intended that the southern site area as indicated on the diagram opposite will be managed under the guidance of a separate but complementary Vegetation Management Plan which would work collaboratively with the adjoining Baludarri Wetland VMP.

In principle, this approach, allows for:

- Alignment of a vegetation management plans with the management of Baludarri Wetlands holistically
- Extension of biodiversity conservation and management activities to create a connected ecological community reducing fragmentation
- Identifying opportunities to share, complement and/or replicate successful strategies which benefits from “lessons learnt”
- Positive management of on-site stormwater including the use of WSUD to ensure water quality outcomes are markedly improved.



Plant Community Types On Site



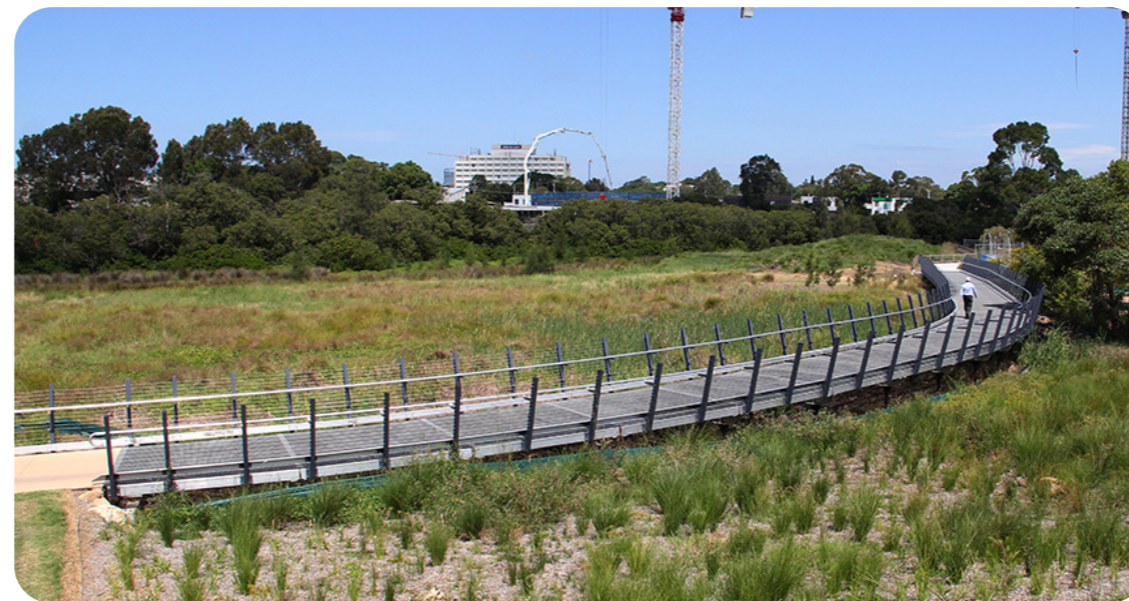
The site located on the upper slope above the bushland leading down the the river.



Looking north towards the site from James Ruse Drive



Typical samphire saltmarsh



Baludarri Wetlands below the site



Grey mangroves

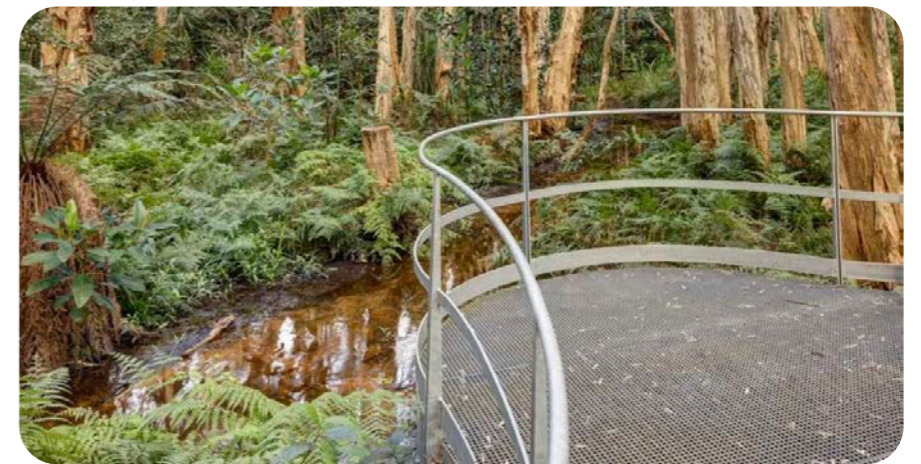
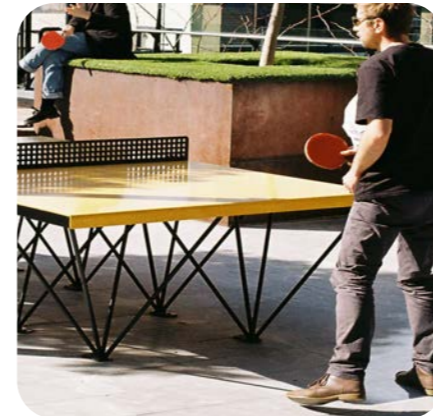
Landscape Vision and Design Principles

Vision

To make a connected living environment that is vibrant, accessible and offers a diversity of spaces and uses for residents that celebrates its riverine setting. A place to live where the landscape design engages sensitively with the Parramatta River Corridor and facilitates broader community connections. A place that respects the Indigenous heritage on the site and its surrounds and retains the special landscape character of Parramatta River.

Design Principles

- Create a connected and cohesive site that integrates sensitively with its surrounds
- Create an attractive landscape setting for built form
- Provide a range of amenity, spaces and clear journeys supported by intuitive wayfinding
- Retain existing trees and vegetation where possible to enhance the ecological connectivity and habitat values



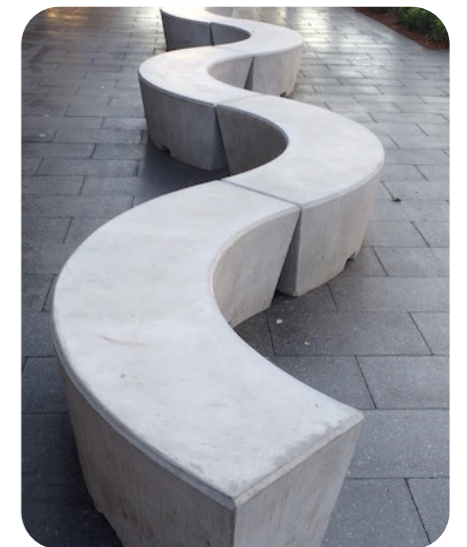
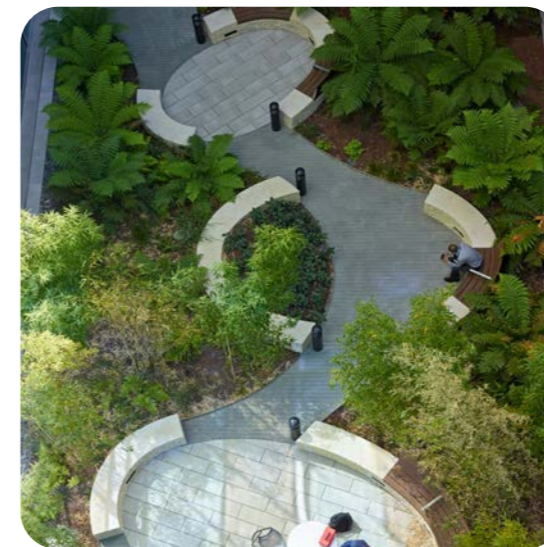
Landscape Design Principles - Connecting with Country

The design approach is informed by the NSW Government Architect's Designing with Country policy, which encourages projects to embed First Nation's cultural values, knowledge, and connection to place within the built environment. This site design responds in several ways including;

- Retention, protection and ongoing management of regenerating native vegetation and saltmarsh where possible
- Ecological connectivity with river environs including a sensitively managed interface with Baldurri Wetlands
- Pedestrian through-site link to Parramatta River Corridor
- A consistent design language which take its cue from the sinuous nature of the river and patterns of flowing of water
- Use of natural local materials, colours and motifs
- Creation of an elevated platform which visually connects the viewer with the river and natural environment
- Selection of indigenous vegetation species, particularly to the site boundaries and southern portion of site

The central spine of outdoor communal space is designed to align views with the bushland below. The spine is a functional route, with its riverine style "meanders", referencing the flow of the Parramatta River, guiding you through the space. These meanders are also used as defining elements to create separate use areas. The spines gradual descent reflects the natural topography – a transition from the structured site to the natural environment of the Parramatta River below, setting up a series of level changes which further define spaces and uses. A pause point occurs midway, which invites the viewer to linger and contemplate the view to the south. Further along, a pool is located on axis, with the wet edge treatment visually layering the spilling water against the bushland backdrop.

Materials, planting, and textures are selected to evoke a tactile and sensory connection with place. This includes elements like imprinted "meander" curved seating, intended to utilise patterns which are meaningful and reinforce connection with Country. This approach will be further explored and refined with the project team and CwC Consultant.



Landscape Master Plan

Ground Level

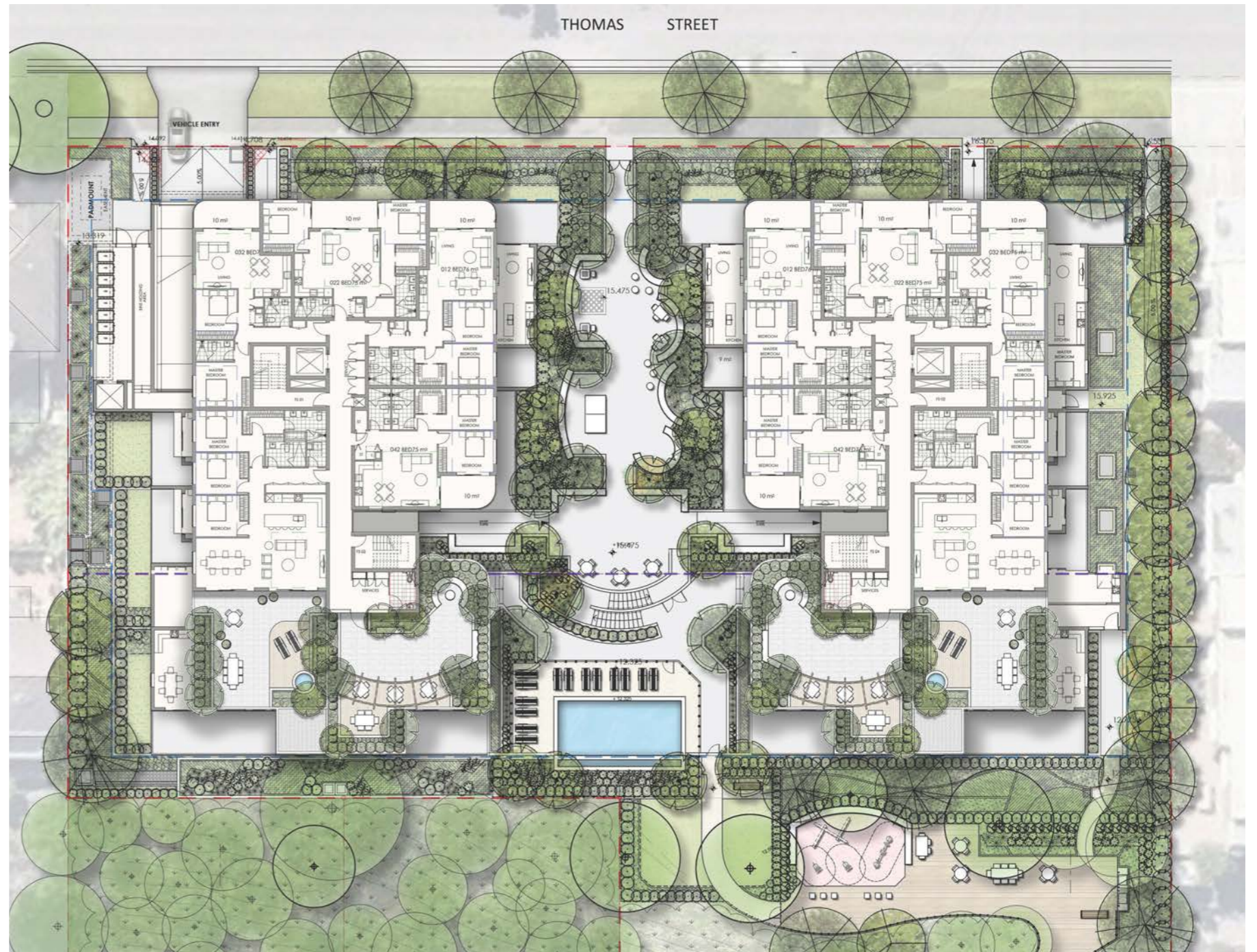
Separate pedestrian and vehicular entries address the Thomas Street frontage with generously layered planting of trees, shrubs and groundcovers reinforcing this primary street address.

The design considers connections to the Parramatta River Corridor to the south, with the central spine's north/south orientation allowing for solar access and a direct visual and functional link to the vegetated southern boundary and river beyond. The communal open space provides a series of flexible, activated spaces for gathering and socialising including chess boards and outdoor table tennis. These spaces also connect to communal indoor areas like the gym. Midway, an elevated platform with seating encourages residents to enjoy the southward facing view towards the river. The lower platform accommodates a wet edge pool, offering a place to swim and relax in the sun along with more private, shadier lounging zones nestled in planting.

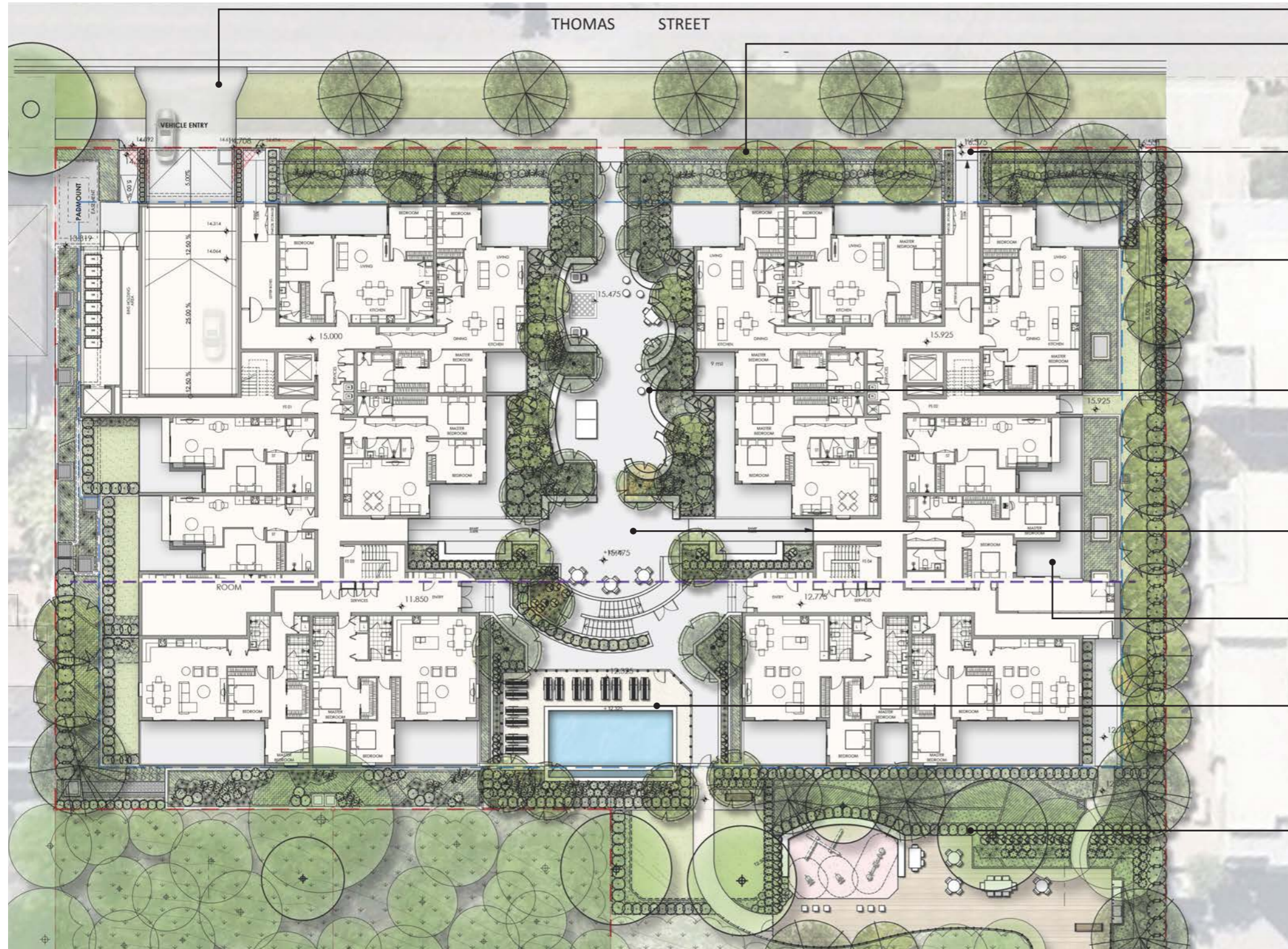
The central spine pathway leads residents beyond the built form to the outer edge of activation, which has been designed to include a flexible lawn area, a compact childrens playground and an elevated deck for outdoor lounging and dining including BBQ's. The intention is to immerse users within a natural canopied setting to fully appreciate the site's attributes, relying upon shade from surrounding mature trees.

Rooftops

The rooftops enable residents to enjoy extensive district views westwards to the Parramatta CBD, east and more immediately south, highlighting the natural landform of the Parramatta River Valley. The rooftops mirror each other and provide casual break out spaces with seating under shade intended for flexible use and capable of accommodating both groups and individuals at any one time.

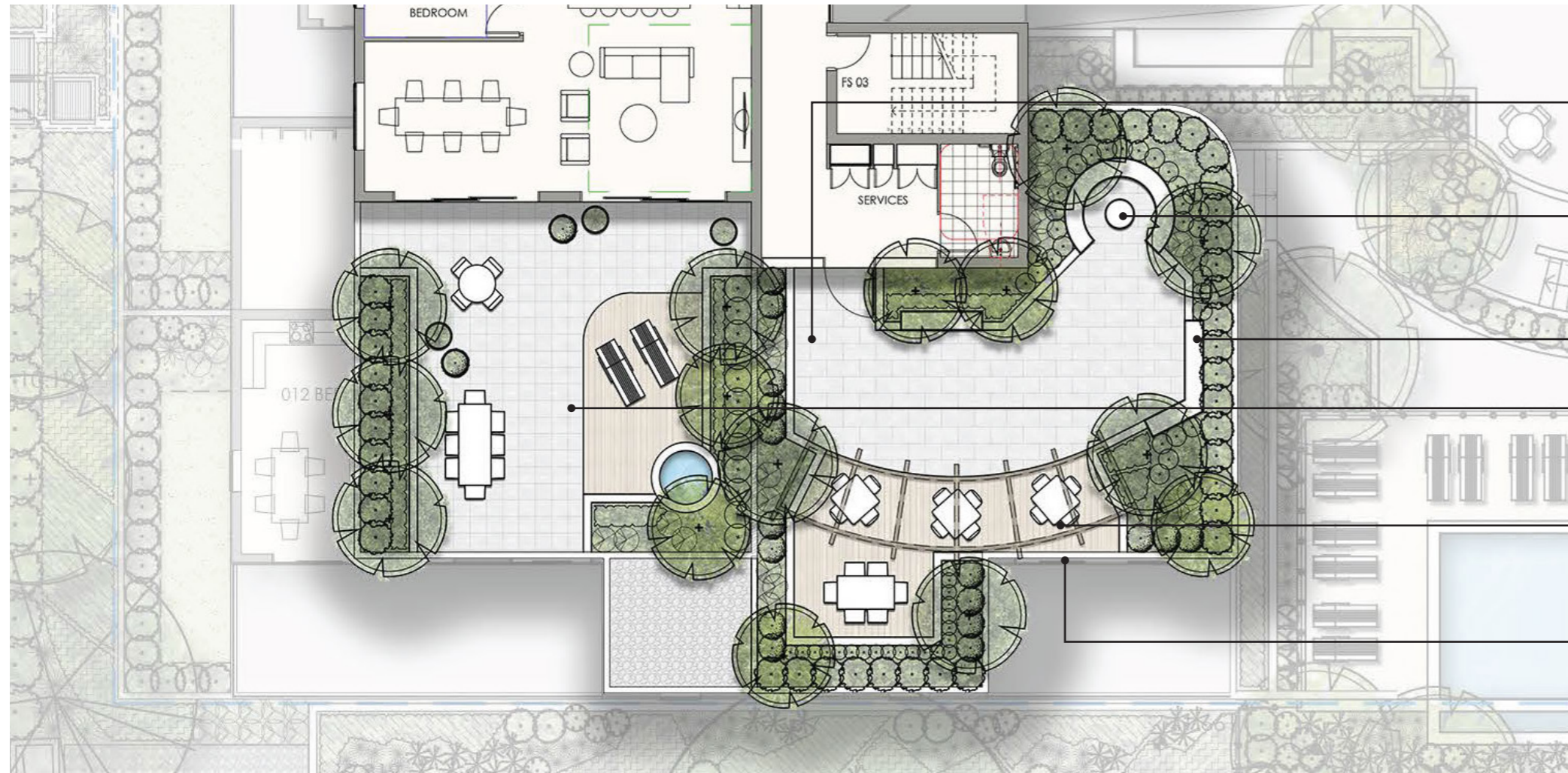


Landscape Master Plan - Ground Floor



- Building vehicular entry
- Street Address includes garden frontage of layered planting of trees, shrubs and groundcovers to create an attractive development.
- Separate Pedestrian building entry points highlighted with feature tree planting for i
- Screen planting to side boundaries provides a consistent vegetated edge of mixed, layered planting for privacy and outlook
- Communal Open Space - Ground level central spine with generous raised planters creating separation between communal and private zones and activated use areas
- Elevated Viewing Platform with seating allows for views to Parramatta rRver Corridor
- Private open space
- Lower Pool Area and lounging zone
- Lower Communal Open Space with compact play, outdoor BBQ and dining, flexible lawn space. Area takes advantage of the river views.

Landscape Master Plan - Typical Rooftop

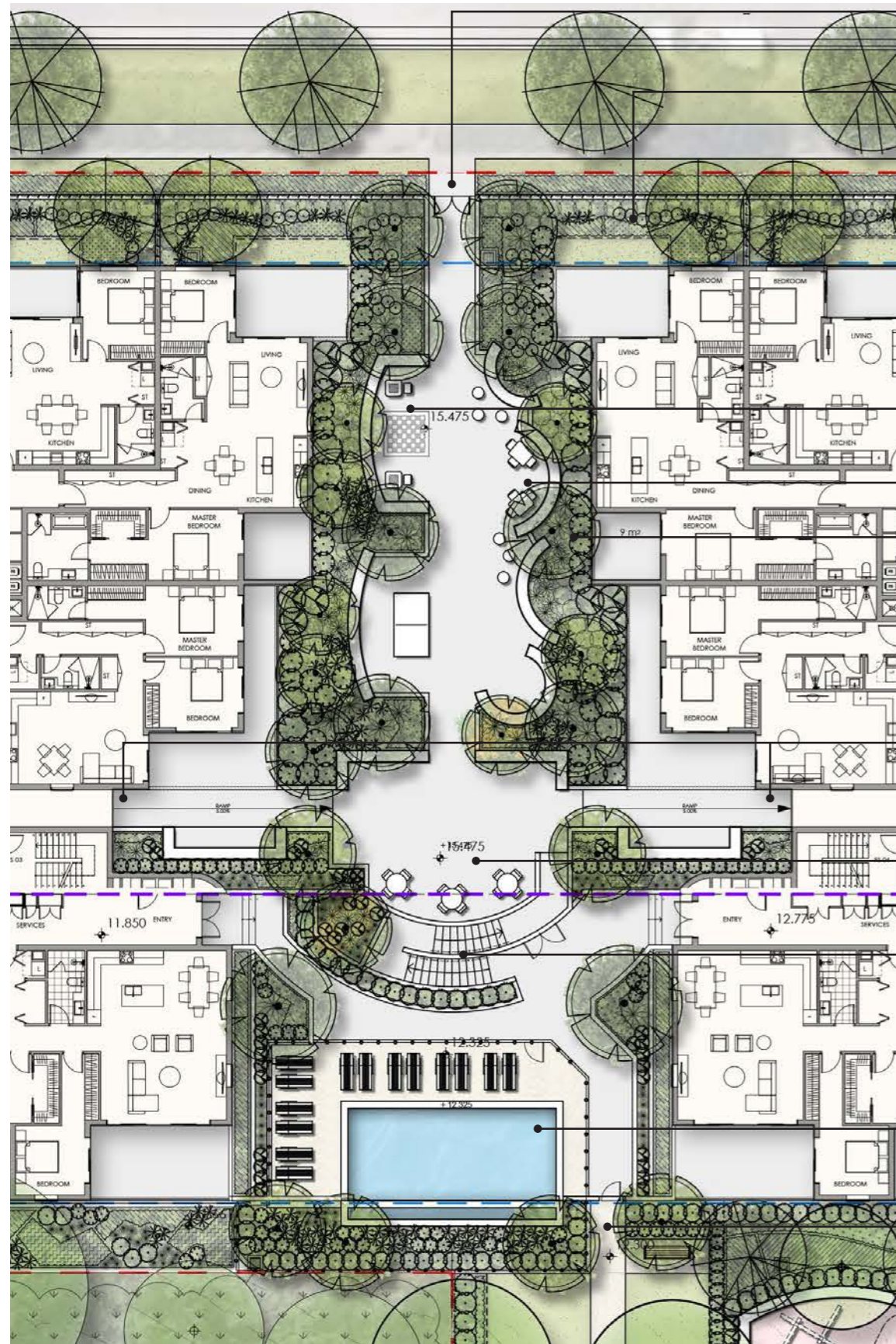


- Communal rooftop space with raised planters to edge for privacy and separation to private rooftop space
- Conversation pit
- Seating areas
- Private rooftop space with lounging deck area, outdoor dining zones, and spa
- Table settings for outdoor dining under pergola structure
- Access to edge to take advantage of views to Parramatta River

Design Precedent Imagery



Landscape Key Areas - Central Amenity



Separate pedestrian access directly to ground level communal open space

Articulation of edge to create distinct use areas

Outdoor games area including table tennis and chess sets

Social spaces with seating

Generous raised planters to create separation between private and communal open spaces.
 Raised planters support a mix of planting to create variation in texture, colour and height to provide sense of scale

Main building connections to communal open space

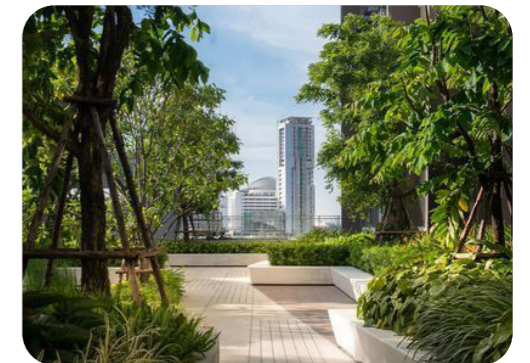
Elevated view platform with seating creates a pause point to take advantage of views south to Parramatta River

Level change

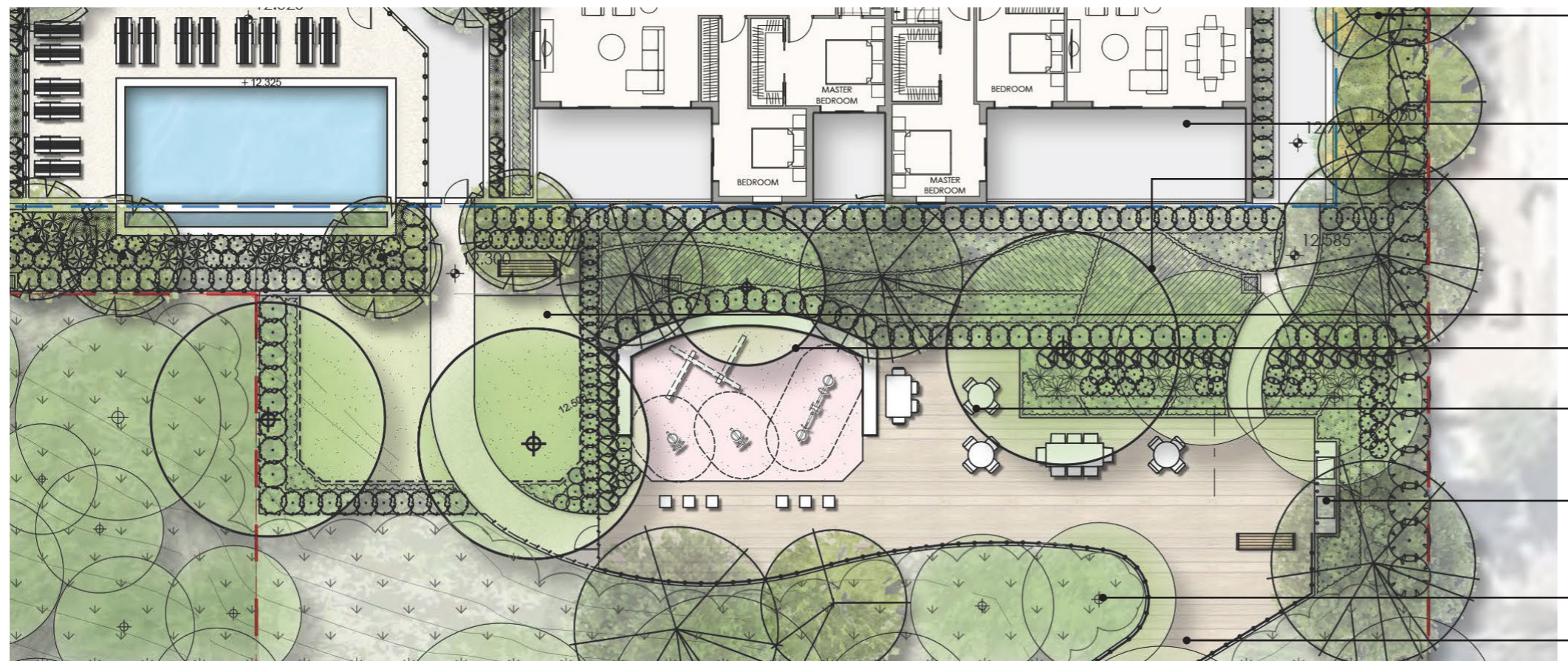
Lower pool deck with lounging zones including more private lounging areas

Access to Southern Communal Open Sapce

Design Precedent Imagery

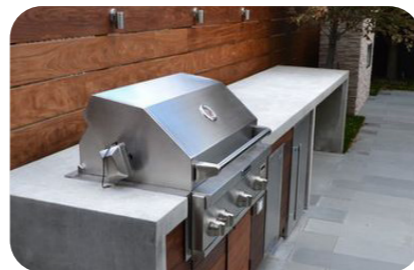


Landscape Key Areas - Southern Communal Area

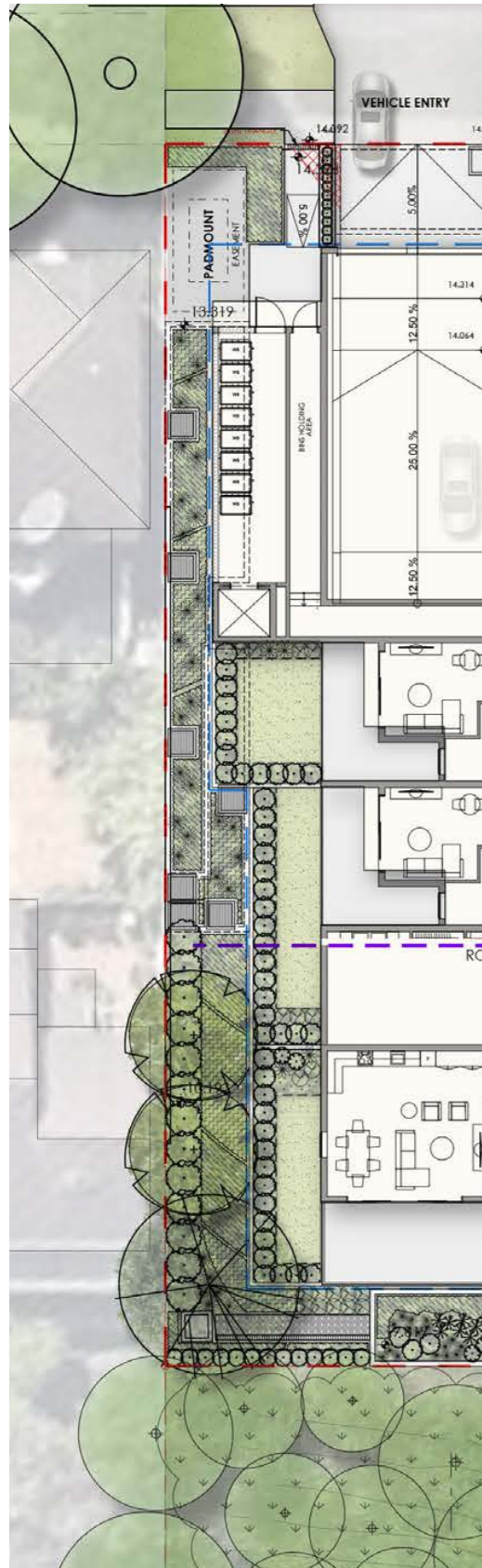


- Side Boundary Planting using predominantly native tree species and screening shrubs
- Private open space
- Generous depth of planting on grade includes a mix of shade trees, screening shrubs and groundcovers for adequate separation between private and communal areas
- Flexible lawn area /spill out zone
- Compact play space
- Elevated deck area to minimise impact on existing trees offers outdoor dining and lounging zones with views to river
- BBQ Area with outdoor dining for larger groups
- Trees to be retained and protected
- Step access to public boardwalk below

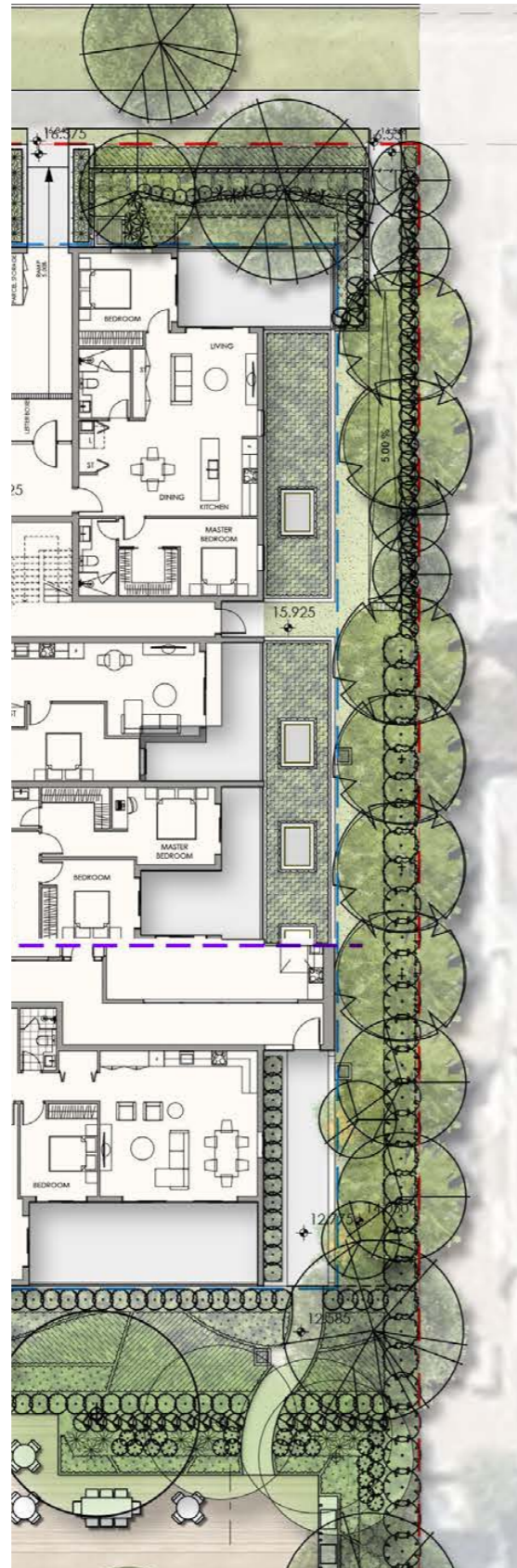
Design Precedent Imagery



Landscape Key Areas - Side Boundary Screen Planting



Western Side Boundary



Eastern Side Boundary

Generous provision of boundary screening will protect the privacy and green the outlook of new residents and adjoining neighbours. It is intended to use a mix of predominantly native screen planting of various heights to achieve good foliage cover from the ground to suitable screening heights.

Suggested Species



Waterhousea floribunda
Weeping Lilly Pilly



Elaeocarpus eumundi
Smooth-Leaved Quandong



Magnolia grandiflora 'Little Gem'
Little Gem Magnolia



Acmena smithii 'Sublime'
Sublime Lily Pilly



Callistemon sp.



Photinia x fraseri 'Robusta'
Robusta Photinia