



142-150 NARROW NECK ROAD, KATOOMBA

Urban Design Report
Jan 2026 Rev 1



Proposed scheme CGI (Courtesy: Antoniades Architects)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vision	3
Context Analysis	4
Urban Design Principles	17
Public Benefits	24

VISION

VISION

The vision for 142–150 Narrow Neck Road, Katoomba is to create a contemporary mountain precinct that is responsive to its escarpment landscape, heritage character, and community context.

The development responds to the current housing supply and affordability challenges identified under the NSW Housing Delivery Authority (HDA), providing a balanced mix of standard, affordable, and short-stay accommodation. By introducing a variety of dwelling types and tenures, the proposal supports intergenerational living, local workforce retention, and greater housing choice within an area constrained by topography, heritage, and environmental protections.

The site framed by three public frontages, the site offers a unique opportunity to establish an interface between architecture, landscape, and the public domain. The development is composed as a cluster of buildings nestled within a parkland setting, achieving a scale through varied heights, stepped massing, and generous setbacks that is in keeping with the urban and architectural traditions of the mountains.

The project demonstrates planetary health principles in practice — fostering sustainable living, connection with nature, and social wellbeing — through passive design, water-sensitive infrastructure, and communal open spaces that encourage interaction, recreation, and stewardship of the local environment.

Development summary

- Site area: 1.684 ha
- GFA: Total – 19,621m²
- Total Residential Units and Dwelling: 218 Units (including affordable housing), 52 serviced apartments
- Landscaping: 6,720m² (40%)
- Deep Soil: 4,426m² (26.28%)
- Land Use:
 - Mixed Use, including:
 - Residential – residential flat buildings
 - Serviced apartments
 - Food and Drinks Premises – Restaurant
 - Information centre , Art gallery public use



Proposed scheme CGI (Courtesy: Antoniades Architects)

1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

WIDER SITE CONTEXT

The site is located adjacent to the former Katoomba Golf Course, within the established township of Katoomba in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area. Katoomba is a key destination within the Greater Sydney Region, as attracts both residents and visitors seeking a unique balance between nature, culture, and lifestyle.

The site’s immediate context is distinguished by its open landscape setting, with views across the adjoining parkland. The site is well positioned within proximity to Katoomba town centre, train station, and local services, offering accessibility without compromising the character and sense of retreat that define the area.

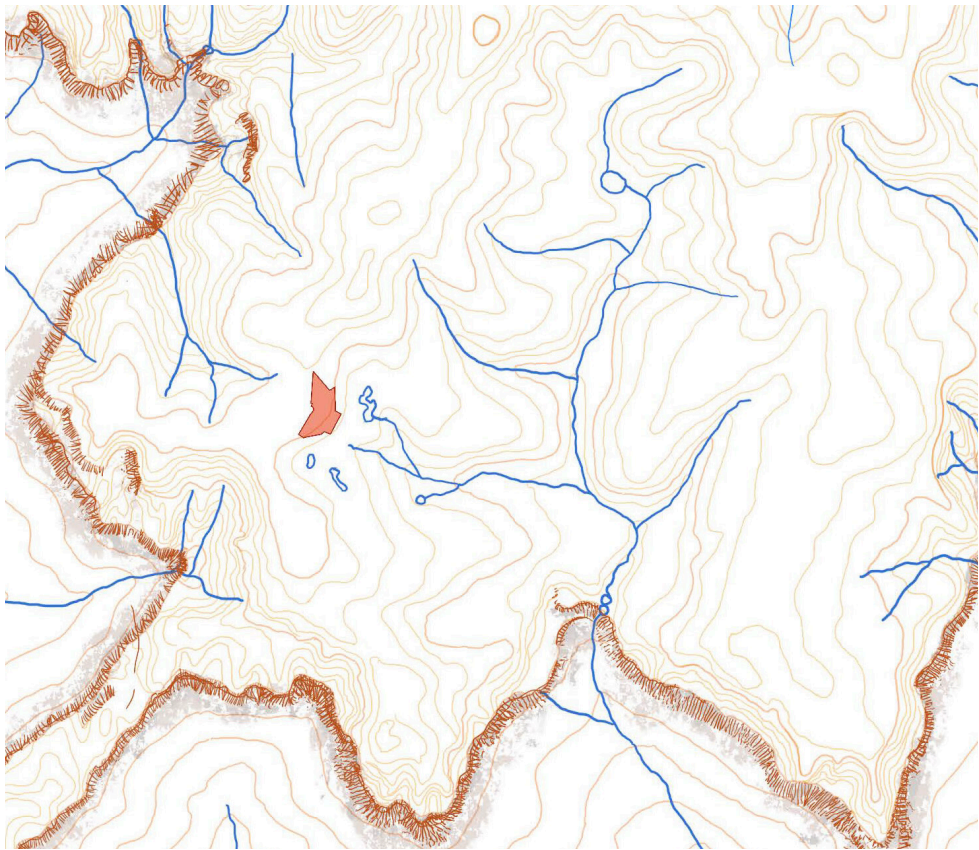
As an infill opportunity, the site has the potential to deliver a residential development that complements the natural topography and landscape qualities of the setting. It represents a unique opportunity to contribute to Katoomba’s housing diversity and respond to growing local demand for high-quality dwellings suited to both permanent residents and short-stay visitors.

Through careful design and landscape integration, the development can enhance local amenity, develop the township’s distinctive mountain character, and provide a model for contextually responsive living within the Blue Mountains.



Katoomba Town context

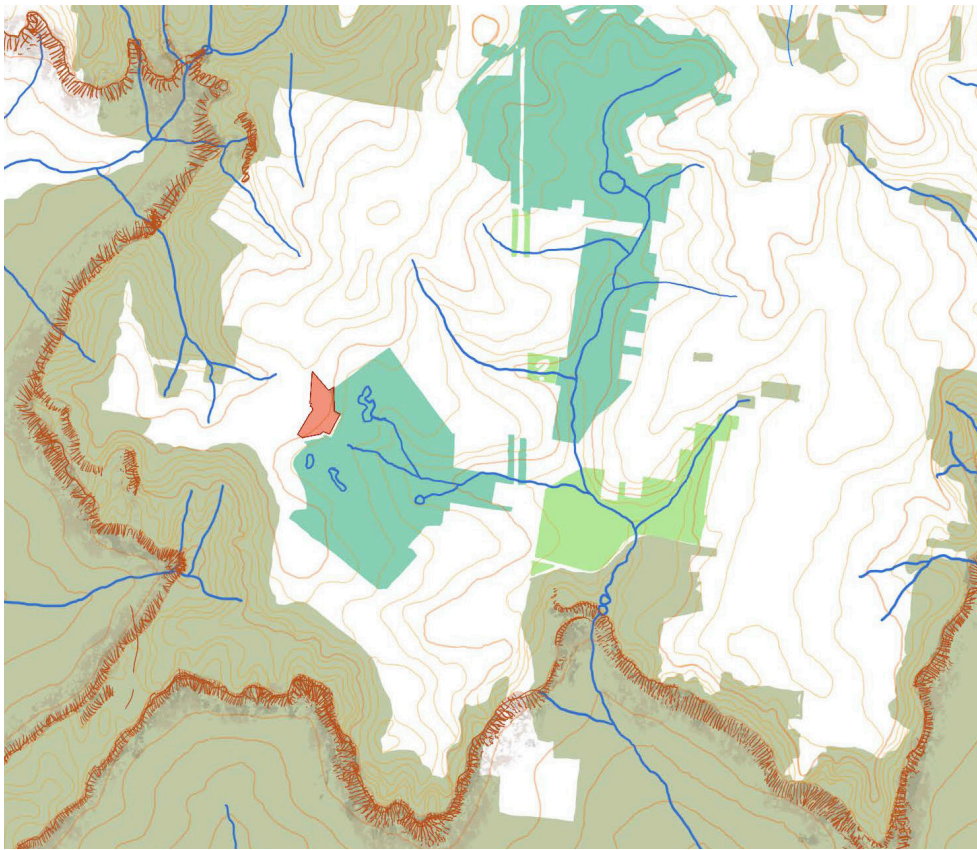
WIDER SITE CONTEXT



Topography and creeks

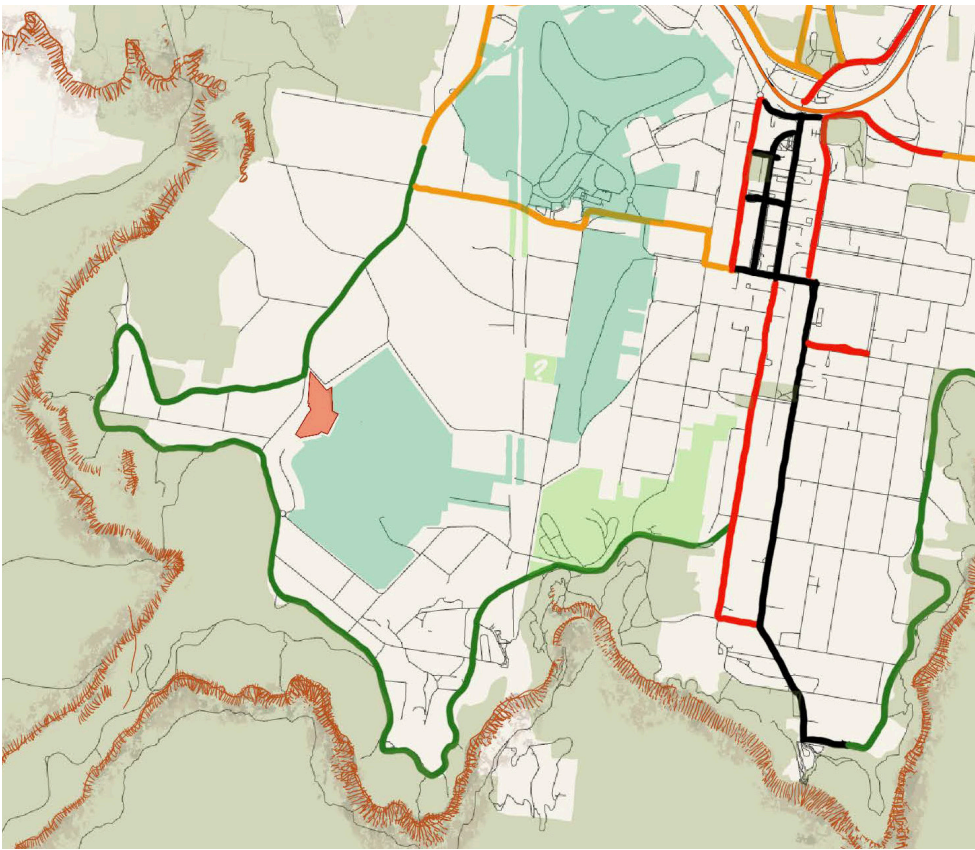
The topography of the Katoomba area is defined by its dramatic escarpments, and steeply sloping terrain.

The site is situated towards the southern end of a ridge that extends down from the main plateau in the north. To the east is the ridge that is occupied by the town centre. To the west and south are the towering cliffs of the escarpment.



Open Space

The site directly adjoins the former Katoomba Golf Course, a significant 30-hectare public open space asset bounded by Cliff Drive, Acacia Street, and Stuarts Road on Katoomba’s southern escarpment. The site benefits from proximity to established recreation facilities at Katoomba Falls Reserve, including sports ovals, playground equipment, and public amenities.

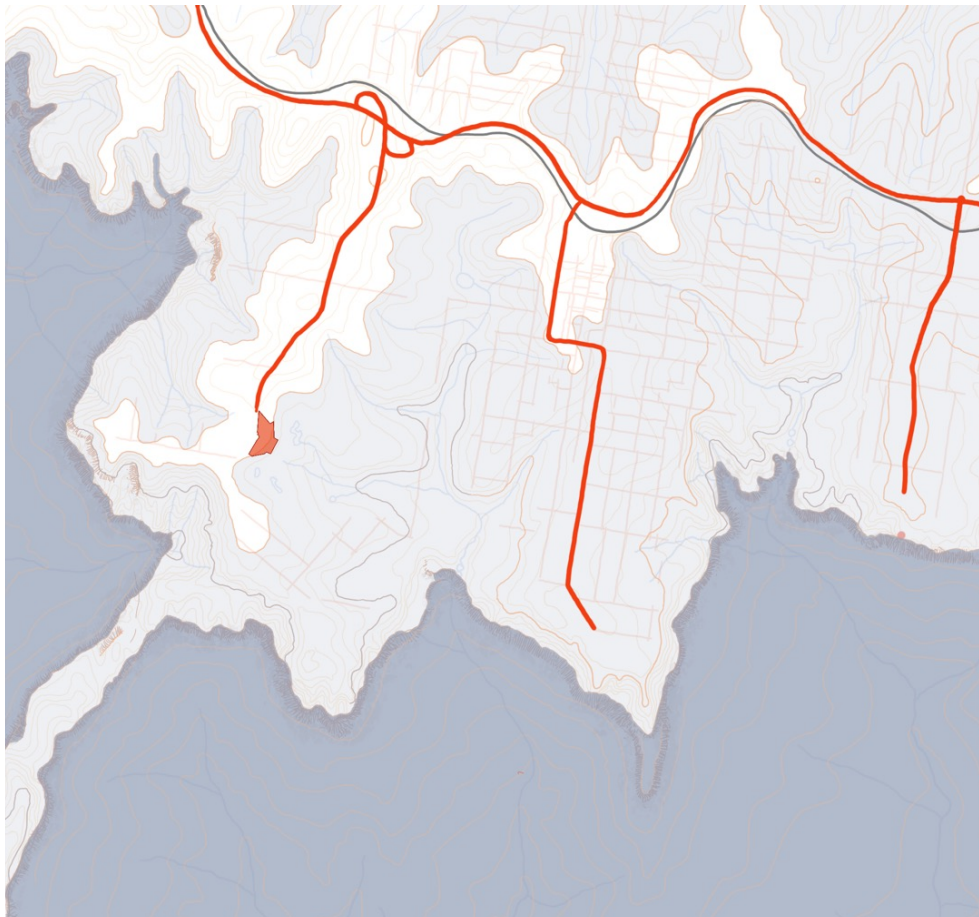


Accessibility

The development site is located approximately 1 kilometres southwest of Katoomba town centre and railway station along the scenic Cliff Drive corridor.

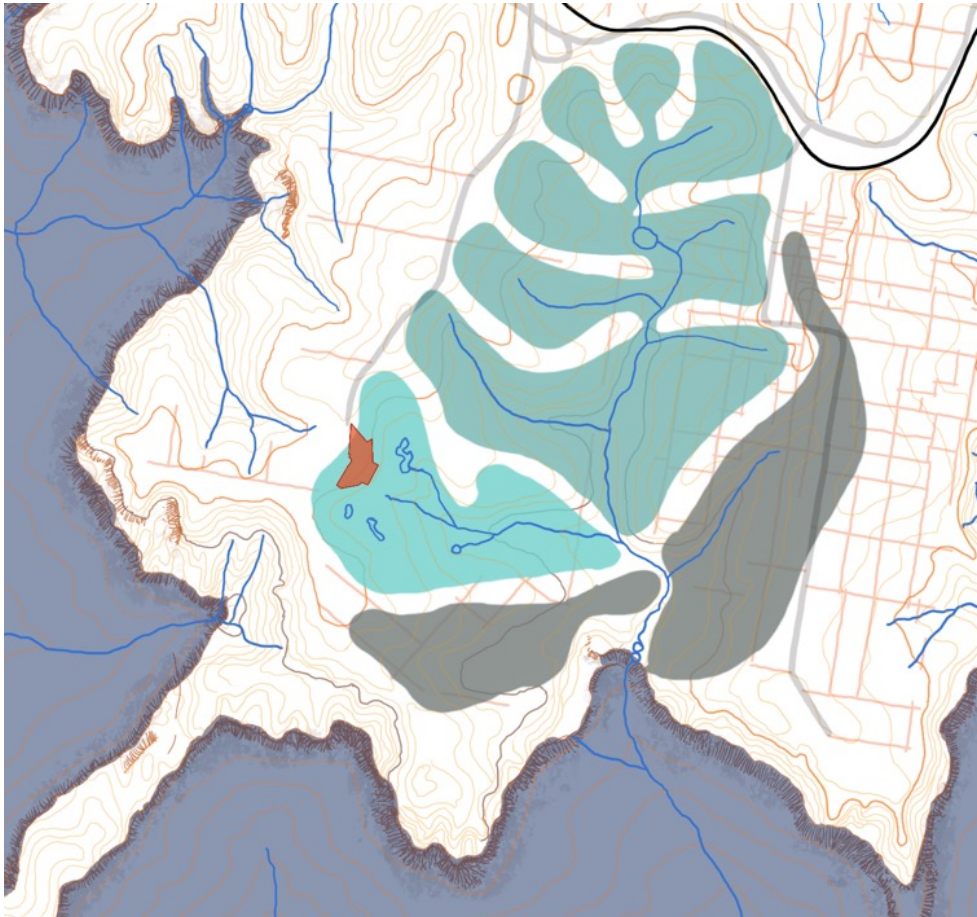
Katoomba Street, the main commercial spine, offers restaurants, cafes, retail outlets, and community facilities within convenient walking or cycling distance. The town centre is serviced by regular public transport and the station provides hourly train services to Sydney CBD.

WIDER SITE CONTEXT



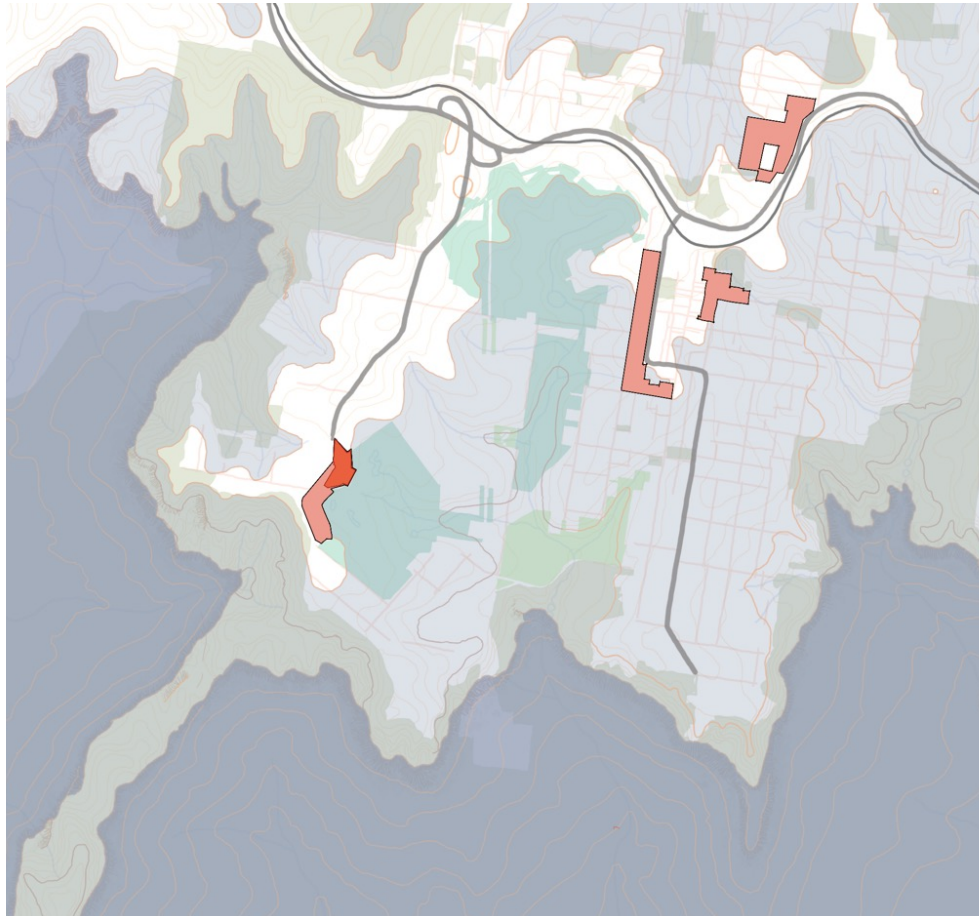
Primary Roads

The Great Western Highway traverses the plateau east-west. The primary roads extend from the highway southward along the ridge top toward the great wall of the Jamison Valley escarpment.



Sub-Catchments

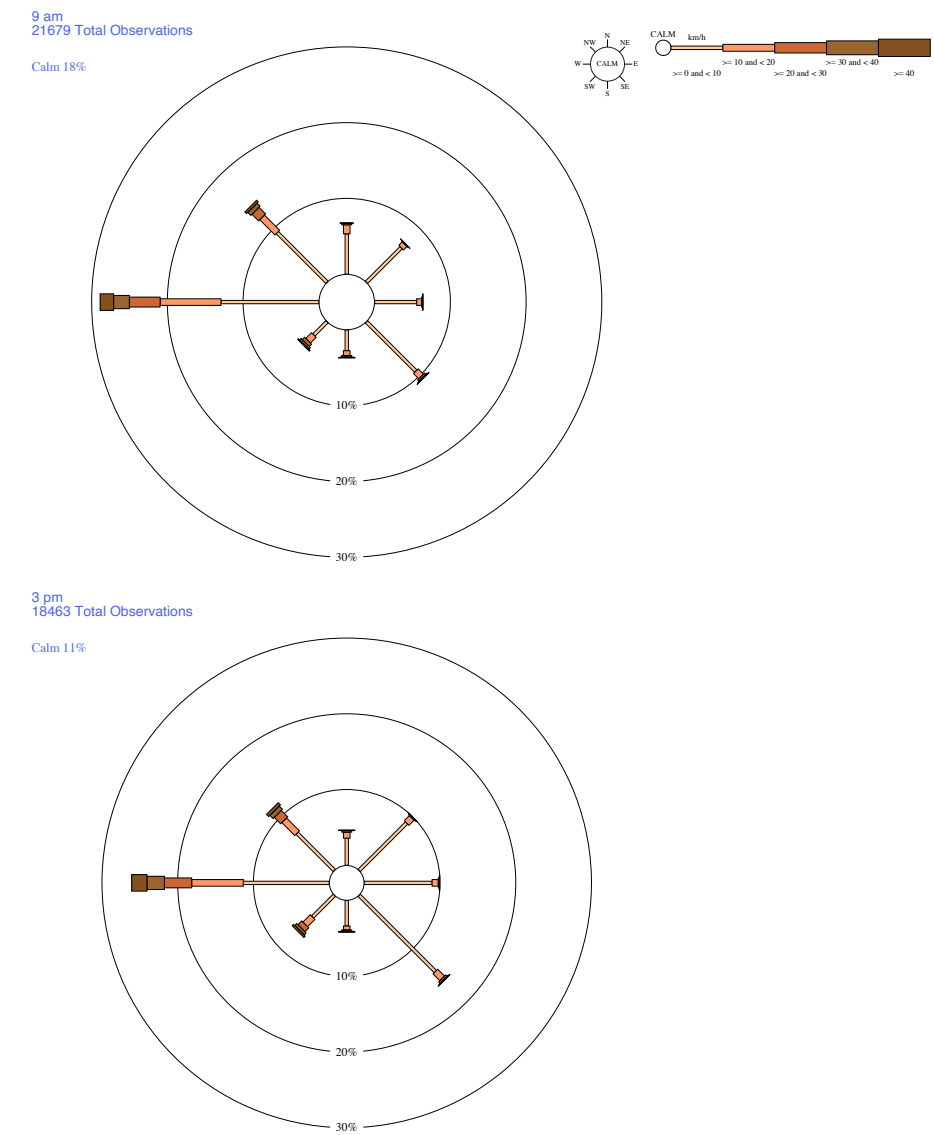
The site is at the top of the catchment for Sydney's water supply. Rain that falls on the site flows into the Kedumba River, over the spectacular Katoomba Falls in the World Heritage Wilderness area, along the Jamison Valley into Lake Burragorang, created by Warragamba Dam.



Medium Density Residential

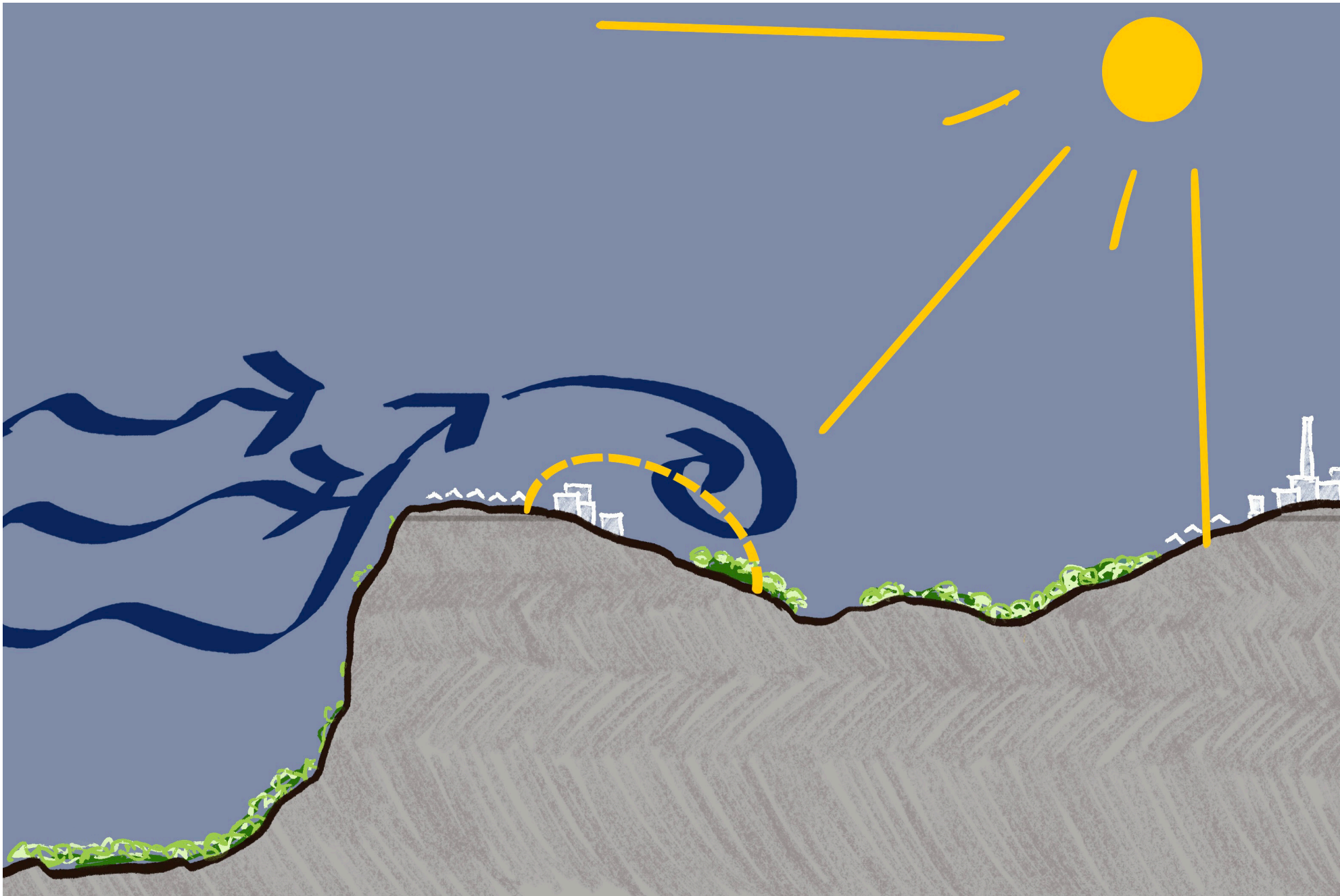
Katoomba has a very limited area for medium-density housing. It is generally located on the hilltops.

MICRO-CLIMATE



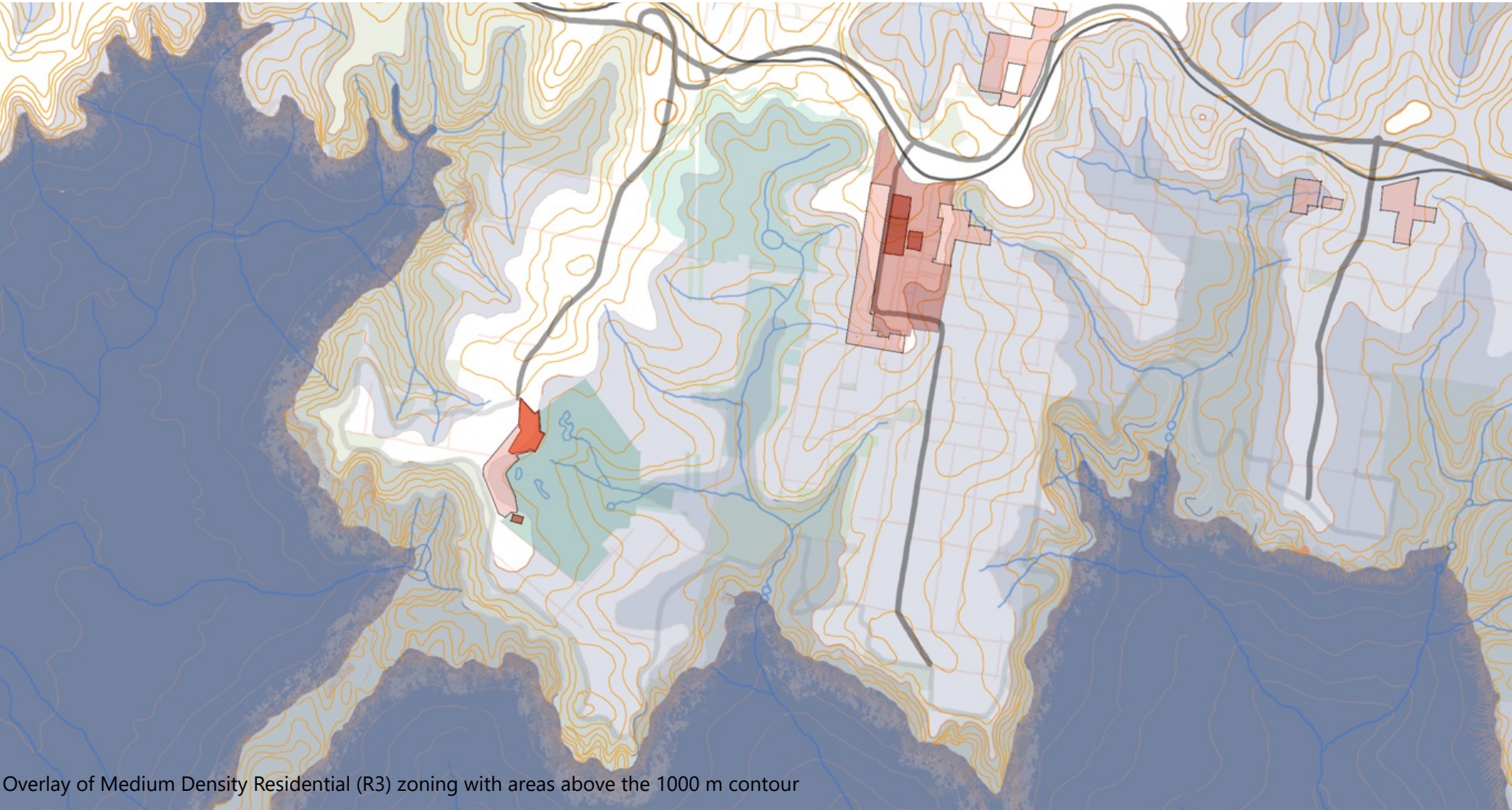
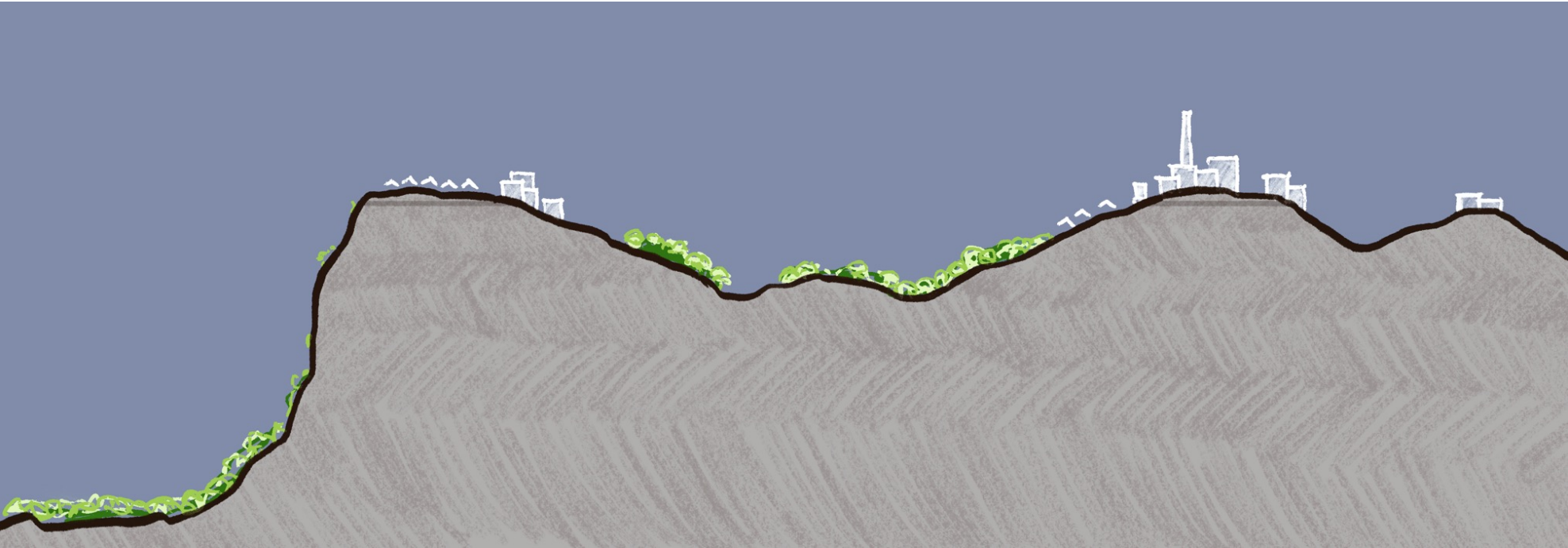
The annual average wind data for Katoomba (Farnells Road Station, elevation 1017 m) shows that the area experiences moderate to strong winds predominantly from the west and southwest.

Morning conditions are calmer, while afternoons are windier. Wind speeds typically range between 10–30 km/h, reflecting the site’s elevated escarpment position and exposure to prevailing westerlies across the Blue Mountains plateau.



The westerly winds are hot and dry in summer and cold in winter, whereas the towering cliffs of the escarpment create an effective shield. The site is located in the east-facing rim of the basin that forms a well-protected ‘sun trap’.

CONCEPT – HILLTOP CHARACTER



Overlay of Medium Density Residential (R3) zoning with areas above the 1000 m contour



The Carrington Hotel, Source: <https://thecarrington.com.au/dine-drink/katoomba-brewing/>

The historic character of Katoomba is distinctly urban. The varied 'clustered-block building forms gather and surmount the hilltop. The Carrington Hotel and the site are 1000 metres above sea level.

The proposal is on the next ridge towards the west at the same elevation of 1000 metres. The two building clusters will stand in dialogue across the valley of Kedumba Creek.

TRADITIONAL MOUNTAIN CHARACTER

The built form of the traditional mountain townscape is defined by discreet blocks of three to five storeys set in a heavily vegetated landscape or urban landscapes. Buildings are typically arranged in small groups, stepping down the terrain and oriented to capture panoramic views across the valleys.

Roof forms vary between steeply pitched gables and more formal parapeted silhouettes, creating a rhythm of vertical proportions against the backdrop of tall eucalypts and escarpment horizons. The massing is a combination of solid vertical mass and horizontal verandas, softening the visual scale and reinforcing a sense of layered composition.

Materials are robust— face brick, rendered masonry, timber detailing, and deep window reveals — reflecting both the climatic demands and the European-influenced heritage of the Blue Mountains.

Together, these elements produce a distinct architectural identity: grand yet grounded, formal and picturesque.

The buildings are deliberately placed within the undulating topography, so the built form responds to the natural landform.

This traditional mountain character offers a model for contemporary development, such as the proposal. A composition of well-scaled, view-oriented buildings, where massing and placement respond to the site to create a familiar pattern that builds on the mountain town character.

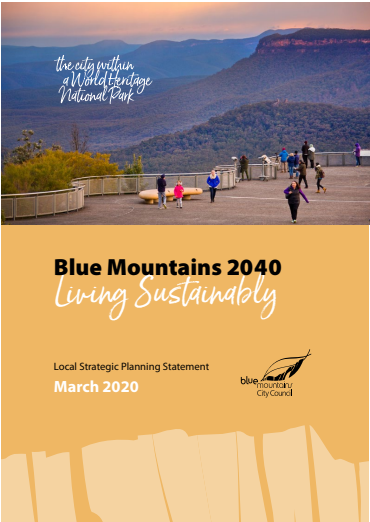


Katoomba traditional mountain character



PLANNING CONTEXT

Katoomba LSPS
The Blue Mountains Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) identifies Katoomba as the strategic centre of the region, and the Southern Escarpment area (including the former Katoomba Golf Course and Narrow Neck precinct) as a key focus for future master planning and tourism-oriented development.



Key Points :

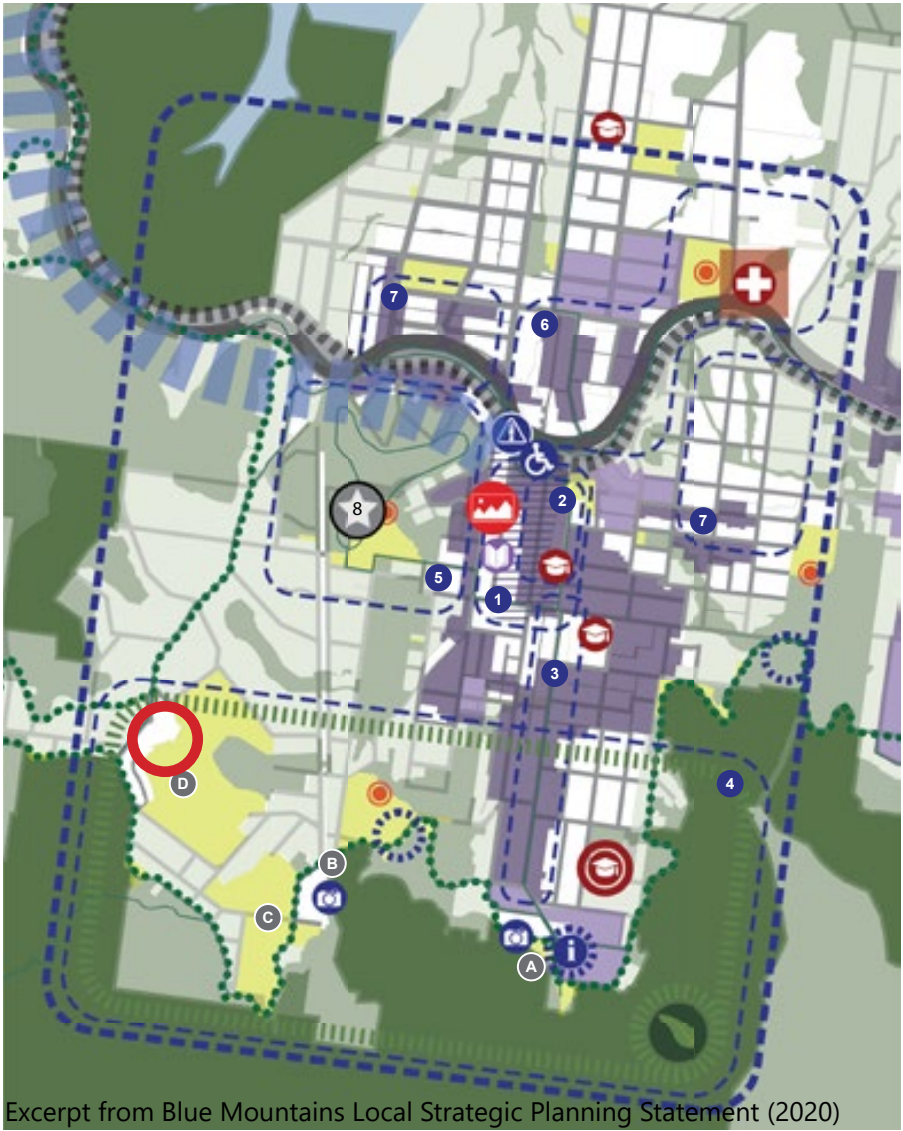
Strategic Role of Katoomba:
Katoomba is recognised as the largest centre in the Blue Mountains, providing district-level retail, health, and social services, with an emphasis on tourism, culture, and employment growth.

Southern Scenic Escarpment Masterplan:
The statement identifies a Southern Scenic Escarpment Masterplan, which includes sites such as the Katoomba Golf Course, Scenic World, Echo Point, and Christian accommodation and event precincts. These locations are seen as opportunity sites for coordinated planning to strengthen Katoomba’s tourism, recreation, and landscape connections.

Katoomba Master Plan Investigation Area:
The broader Katoomba Master Plan, scheduled from 2020–2021, includes investigation of key precincts—such as the town centre, escarpment areas, and golf course lands—to improve connectivity, visitor experiences, and integration between activity nodes like Echo Point and Narrow Neck Road.

The proposed development sits within a strategic growth and landscape interface area identified for integrated planning under the Southern Escarpment Masterplan. It aligns with Council’s goals to balance residential growth, tourism, and environmental protection, while contributing to the revitalisation of Katoomba as a regional tourism and lifestyle hub.

Investigation area for Katoomba Masterplan



National Park	School - primary	Visitor information centre
Bushland	School - highschool	Key tourist attraction
Bushland interface	School - K to 12	High visitor load
Open space & recreation	Library	Traffic congestion point
Urban area	Cultural Centre	Highway upgrade investigation corridor
Rural area	HCA (heritage conservation area)	Greater Blue Mountains Trail
Railway line	Residential character area	District sporting facility
Road	Hospital (investigation into new or upgraded facility)	District Park
Master plan investigation precincts	Green Grid project	City deal liveability program project
1 • Retail centre	Southern Scenic Escarpment Masterplan	8. Katoomba Aquatic Centre
2 • Historic guest house precinct		Southern escarpment tourism precinct sites
3 • Lurline Street (town to escarpment link)		A Echo Point and the Three Sisters
4 • Southern scenic escarpment		B Scenic World
5 • The Gully and recreation precinct		C Christian accommodation and event sites
6 • Civic and health precinct		D Katoomba Golf Course
7 • Adjoining employment lands precincts		

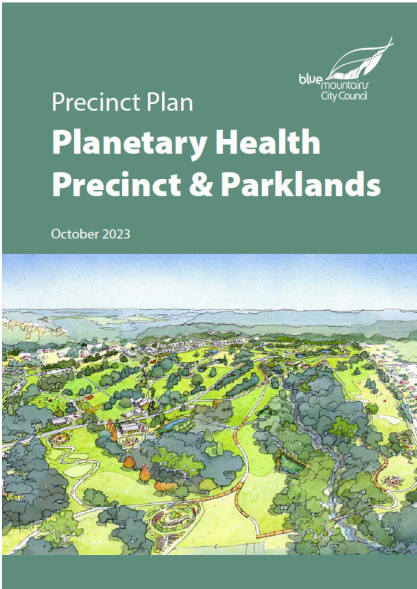
PLANNING CONTEXT

Precinct Plan

Site is directly located directly adjacent to the former Katoomba golf course.

It benefits from its integration with the surrounding residential neighbourhood and expansive green space.

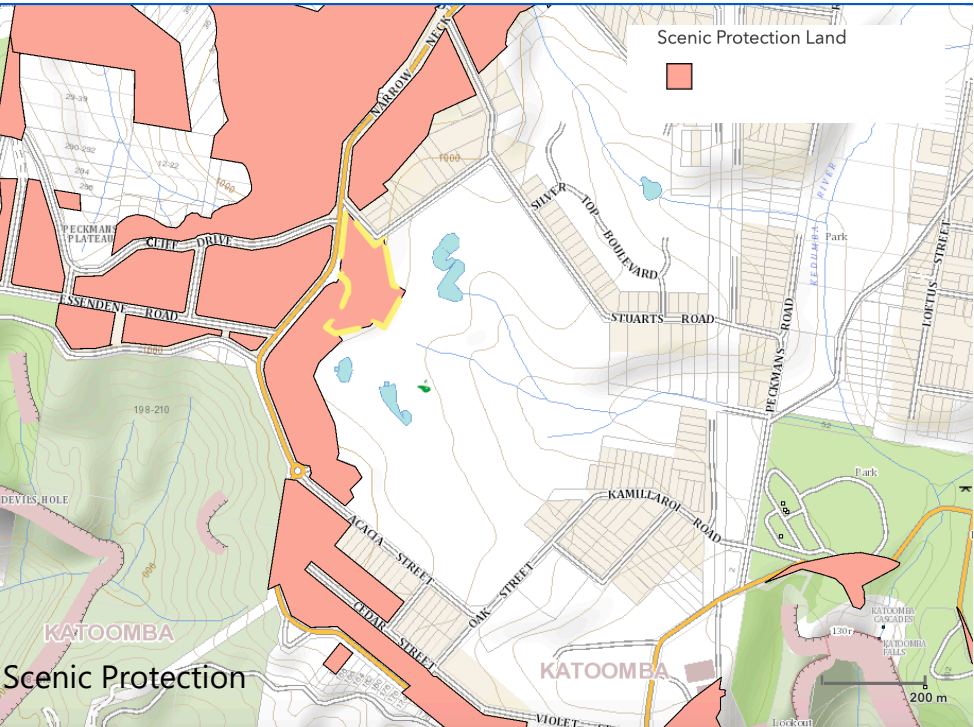
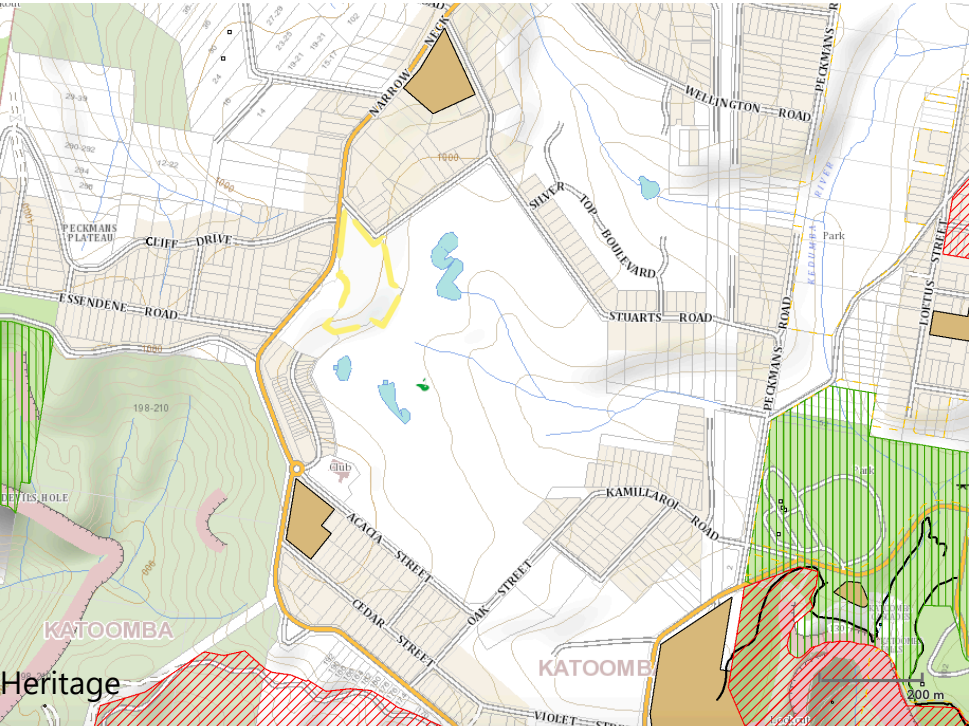
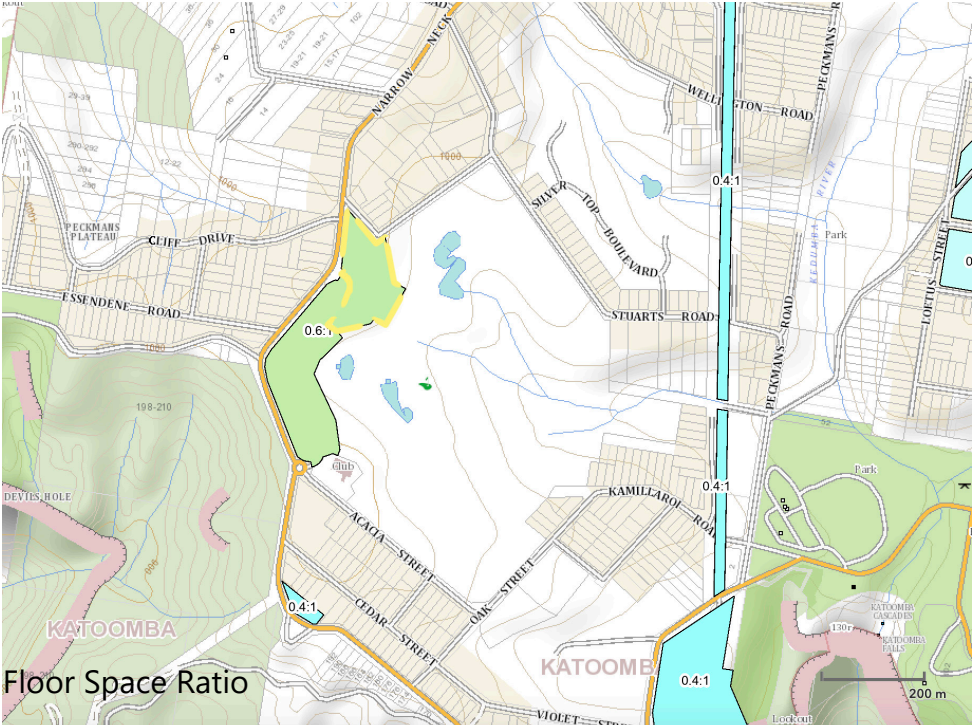
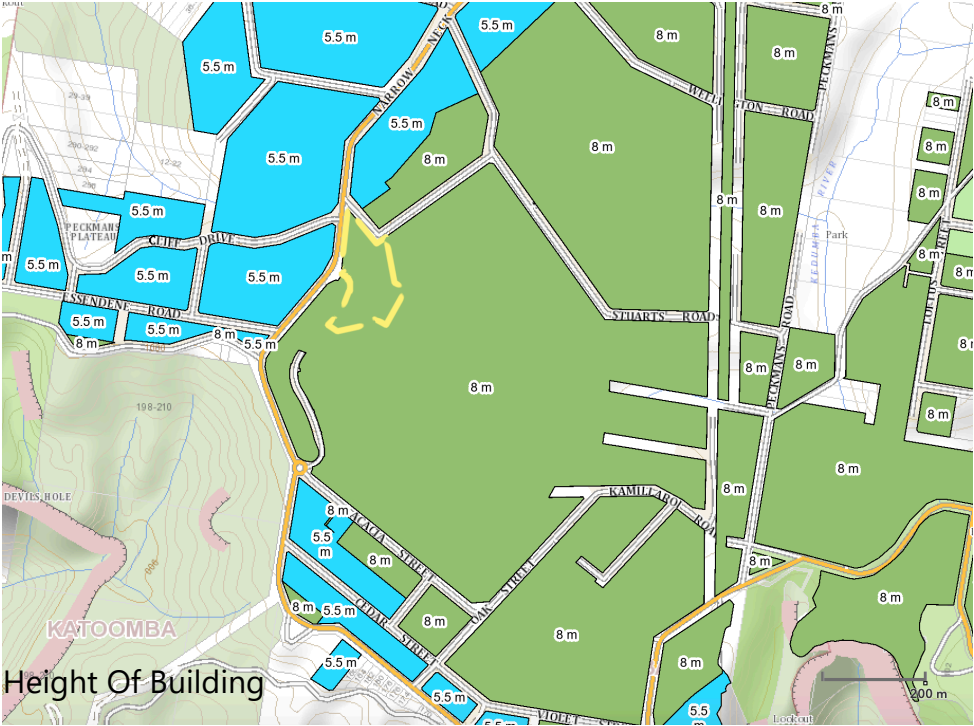
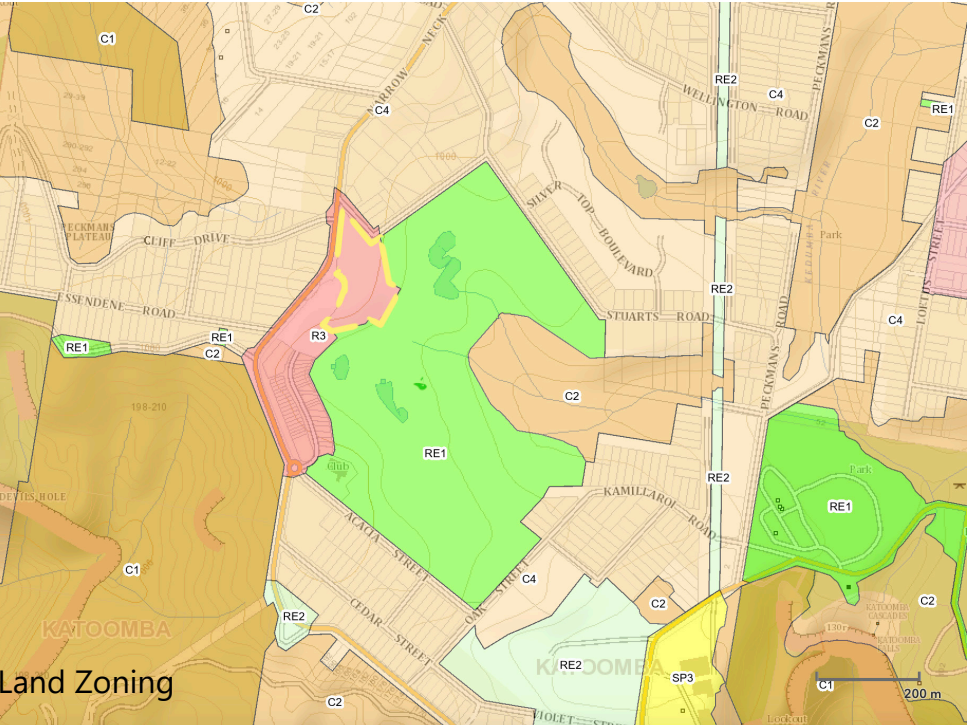
Council prepared a Precinct Plan that established the vision and strategic direction for the future of the site, to become a Planetary Health Precinct with in a parkland setting. The Planetary Health Precinct and Parklands will be a contemporary site within Katoomba, valued and used by the local community.



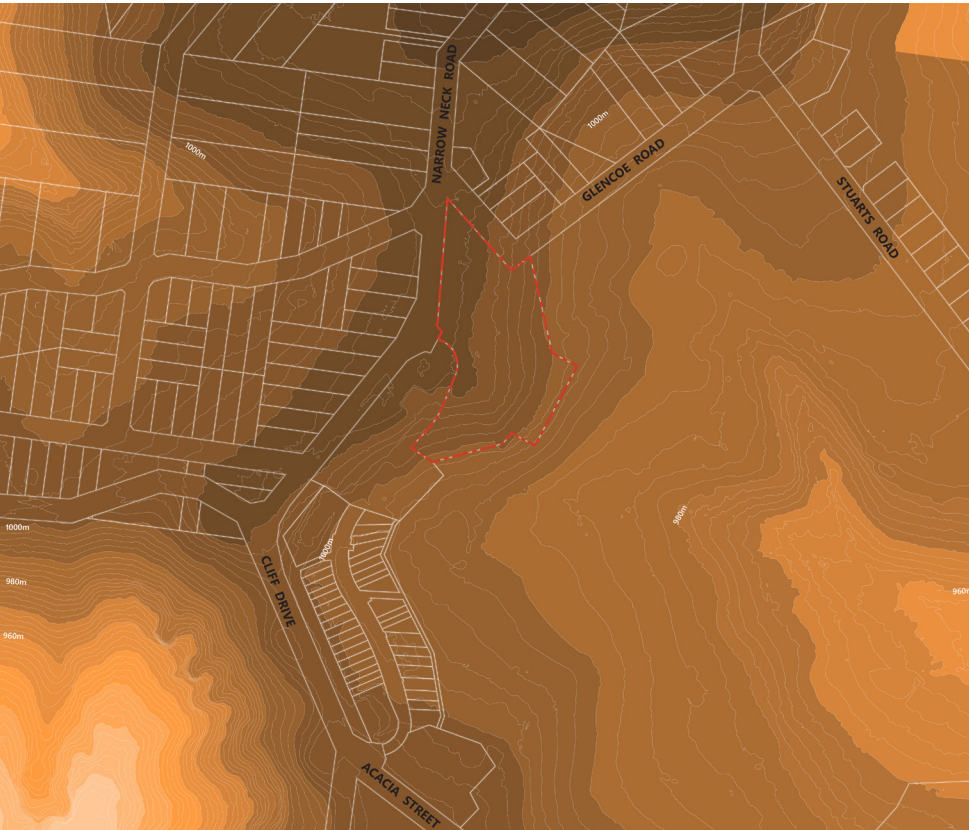
Excerpt from Planetary Health Precinct & Parklands location - Precinct Plan)

PLANNING CONTEXT

Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015	
Land Zoning	R3 - Medium Density Residential
Height Of Building	8 m
Floor Space Ratio	0.6:1
Scenic Protection	Protected Area - Escarpment
Land Terrestrial Biodiversity	Slope Constraint (>20%)

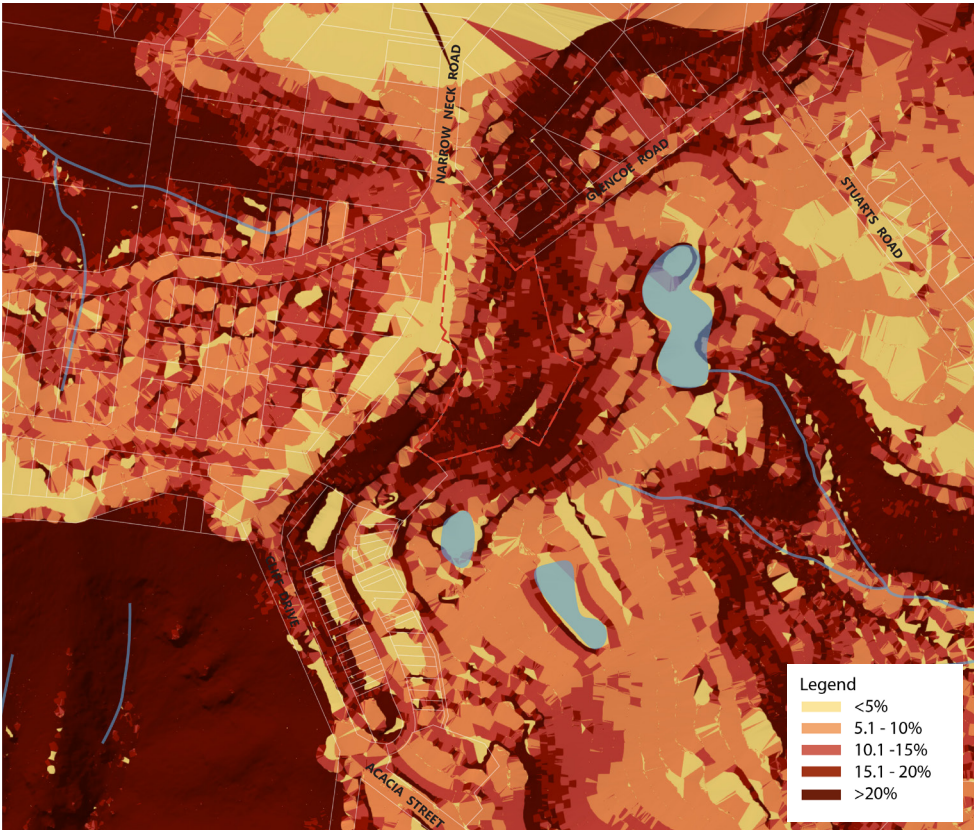


SITE CONTEXT



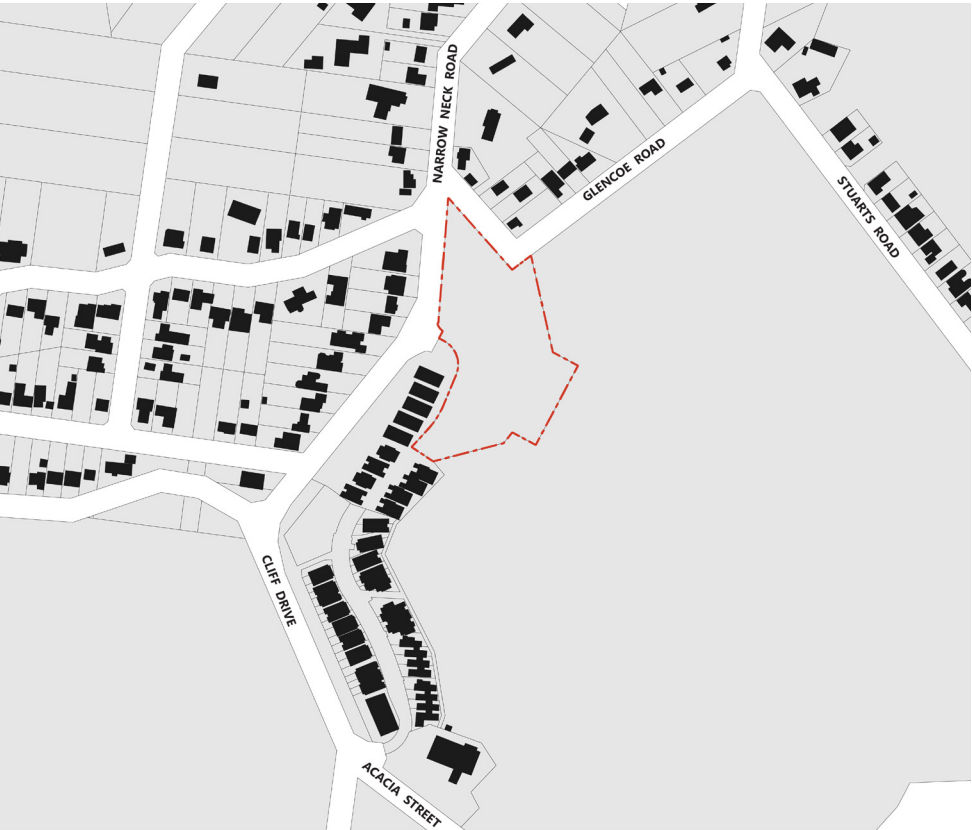
Site Topography

Within the vicinity of the site, the land generally slopes gently toward the former Katoomba Golf Course, creating a natural transition between the built environment and open green spaces. This varied topography contributes to the town’s distinctive mountain character and provides opportunities for development to accommodates both local and short term stay visitors.



Slope analysis

The slope analysis illustrates gradients in 5% intervals across the area. Flatter land (5–10%) occurs near Narrow Neck Road and Stuarts Road, where existing residential development predominates. In contrast, the subject site landform has a more varied and generally steep slope, with most of the area falling within the 15–20% gradient range.



Urban context - Figure ground

The neighbourhood in the west and north is characterised by low-density housing. To the south, “The Escarpments” development is attached and medium density dwellings. Further south, the former golf course club house currently serves as the National Park office and as a base for Council’s Planetary Health initiative. The site forms a transitional zone between the urban edge and the adjoining open landscape.

EXISTING STREETS AND NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS



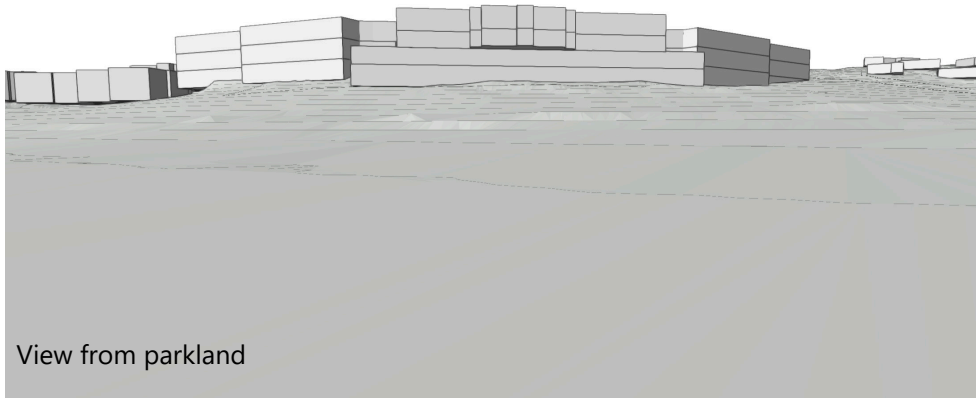
1. North looking along The Escarpments towards to site
2. South looking along The Escarpments
3. 18-21 The Escarpments
4. 22 The Escarpments
5. 1-5 The Escarpments
6. South looking aerial view showing the row house development with the former Katoomba Golf Course in the foreground

APPROVED DA

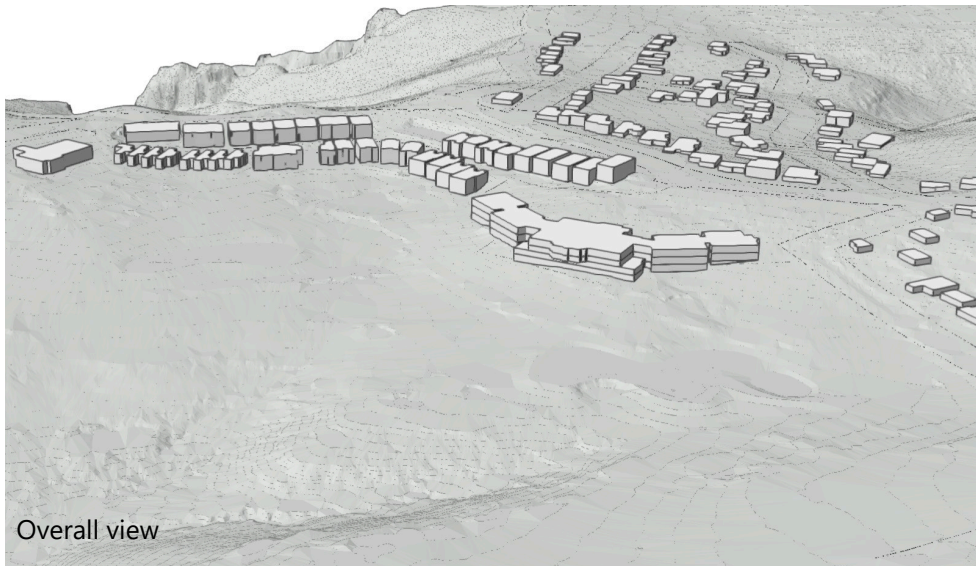
The approval on the site is for a single-building hotel that presents as a central block with function spaces and two symmetrical wings of hotel rooms. A giant formal staircase leads from the central building down to the parkland.

Along the eastern part of the site, the placement of buildings D, E, F, H, & G is similar, being broadly symmetrical. Whereas the approval occupies only the lower/eastern part of the site. The proposal includes buildings on the western part of the site, establishing an address on Narrow Neck Road.

The hotel would offer short-stay accommodation and related facilities such as a restaurant and function space. The new proposal incorporates a set of uses comparable to the hotel, including short-stay accommodation, a restaurant, and wellness services. However, unlike the hotel, it also includes apartments that will provide for a residential community.



View from parkland



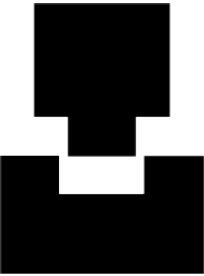
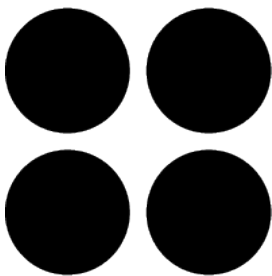
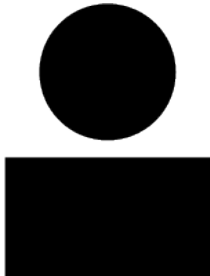
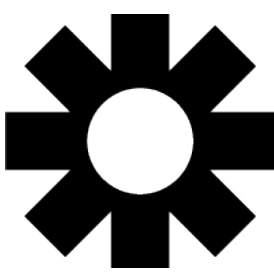
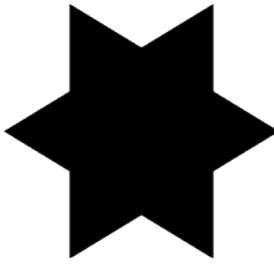
Overall view



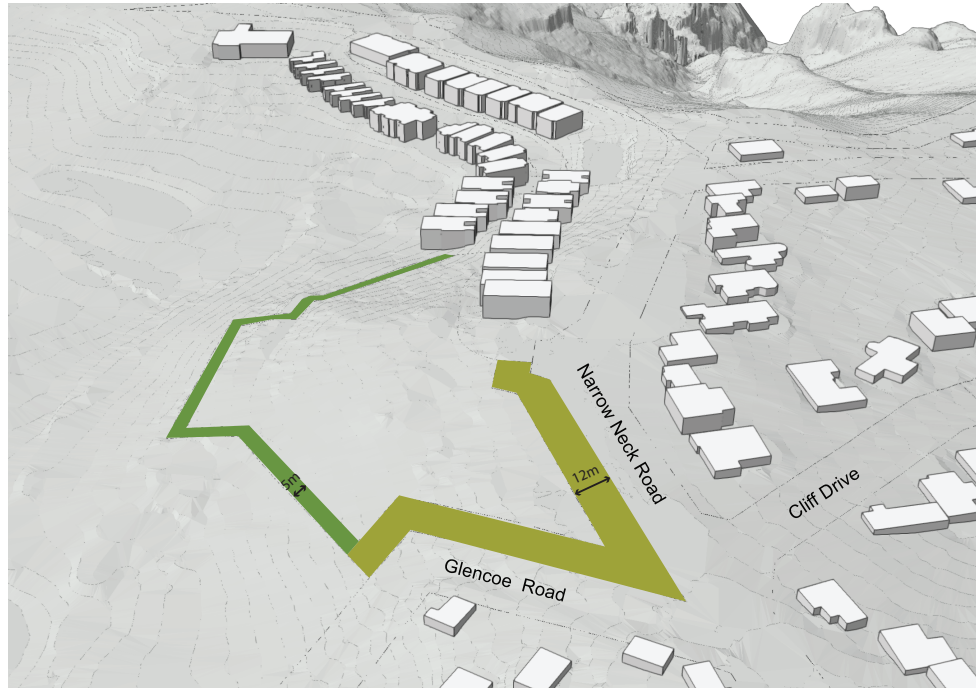
Approved Hotel Development Application

2 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ACCORDANCE WITH BETTER PLACED

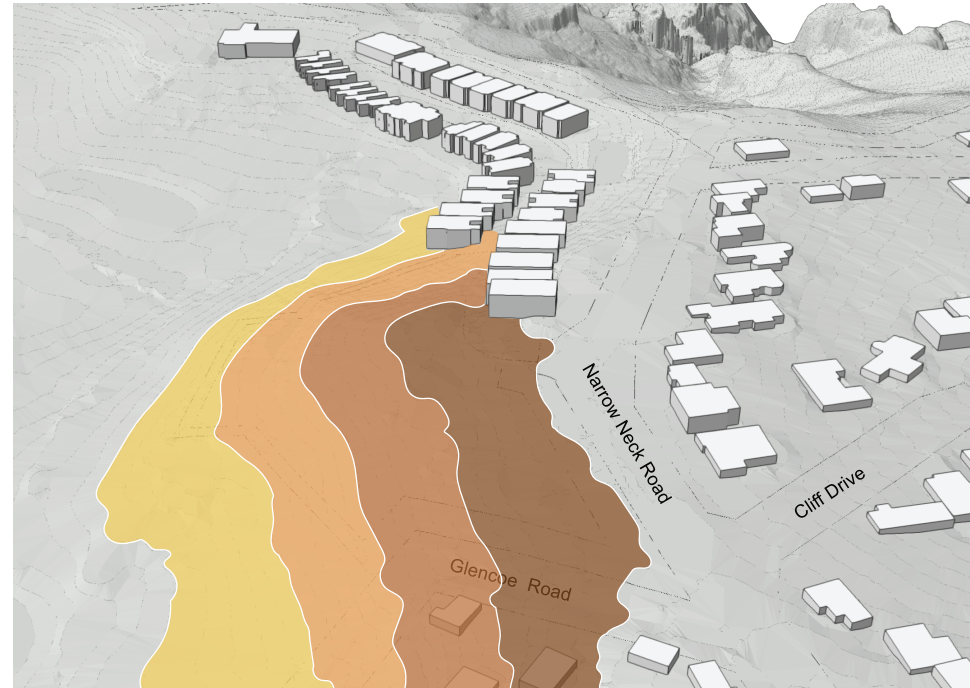
						
OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2	OBJECTIVE 3	OBJECTIVE 4	OBJECTIVE 5	OBJECTIVE 6	OBJECTIVE 7
BETTER FIT	BETTER PERFORMANCE	BETTER FOR COMMUNITY	BETTER FOR PEOPLE	BETTER WORKING	BETTER VALUE	BETTER LOOK AND FEEL
contextual, local and of its place	sustainable, adaptable and durable	inclusive, connected and diverse	safe, comfortable and liveable	functional, efficient and fit for purpose	creating and adding value	engaging, inviting and attractive
The place ‘brand’ of cities or towns and overall desirability is enhanced, attracting residents, businesses and visitors. Cohesive, integrated and well-designed places are highly desirable places to live and work and attract more investment. People and communities develop stronger affiliations with places.	Energy-efficient buildings are also more comfortable for people, in temperature, air quality, access to natural light and fresh air.	Environments which support accessibility and social interaction promote community physical and mental health, reducing longer-term health impacts and costs. Streets and public spaces which are welcoming and accessible for all are more vibrant, interesting and safe.	Safety and comfort reinforce each other: an environment which feels safe and comfortable encourages walking and activity, and more people on the street makes places feel safer and more interesting and enjoyable. Liveable spaces support people and lifestyle, promoting safety, healthy, comfort and well-being for all.	Facilities and spaces which effectively support usage will be used more frequently than less well-designed ones. Long-term functionality in buildings and spaces protects and enhances the initial investment in creating these spaces and minimises the need for change or replacement.	Investment in good design and high quality construction delivers social, environmental and economic benefits to investors and community. Good design in a location tends to support and encourage further good design in the locality or neighbouring areas, raising the standards of the wider area, and multiplying value over time.	Attractive places invite visitors, residents and business activity, bringing investment and fostering a sense of local pride and identity. Buildings that are visually attractive and engaging will be more valuable to prospective residents and commercial tenants in delivering a sense of identity and brand support.

BUILT FORM DEVELOPMENT



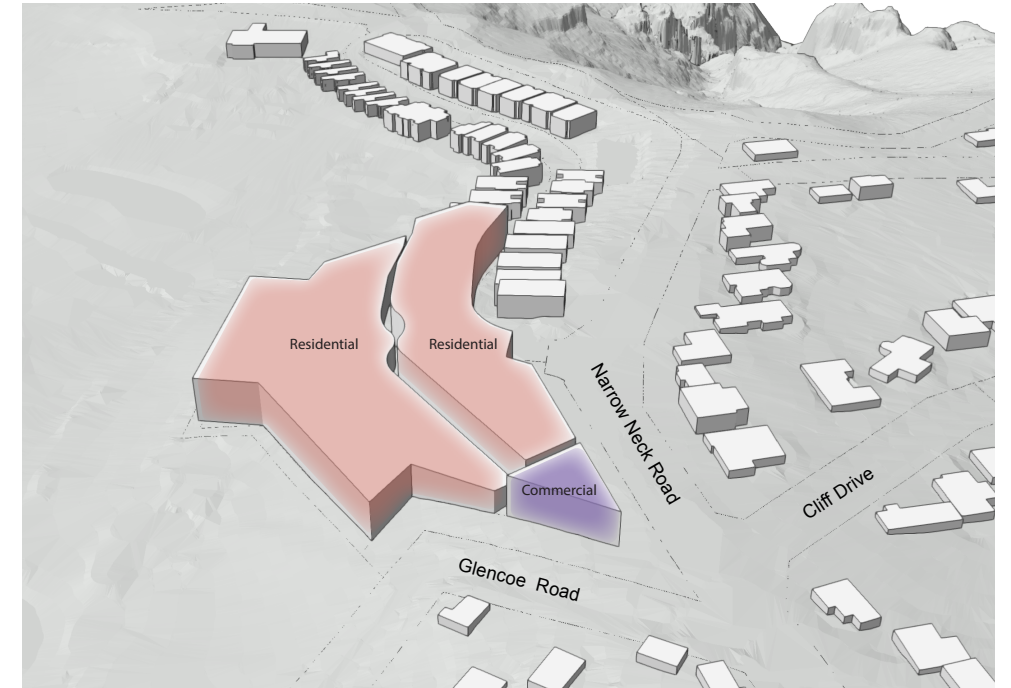
Site Setback

- A minimum 12 m setback applies to Narrow Neck and Glencoe Roads.
- A 5 m landscaped buffer is required along the golf course frontage, ensuring buildings are screened and integrated with the natural bushland setting.



Sloping terrain

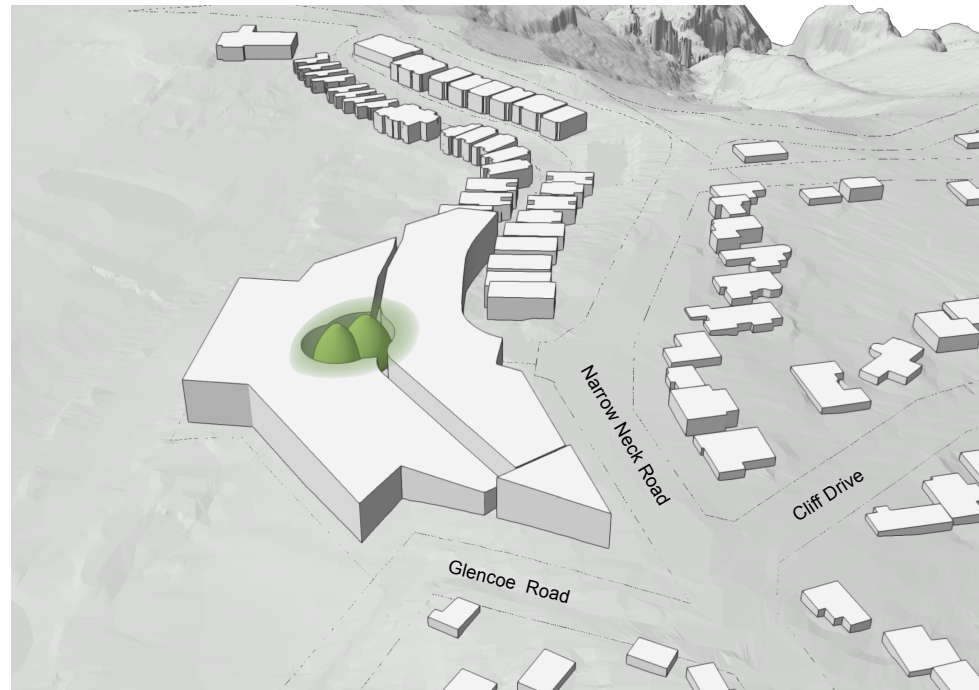
- The site slopes down from Narrow Neck Road towards the Former Katoomba Golf Course, with a level change of approximately 20 metres from west to east.
- In response to this steep topography, the building design adopts a stepped form that follows the natural contours of the land. This approach minimises the extent of cut and fill, reduces visual bulk, and allows the development to sit comfortably within the existing landscape.



Improve amenity

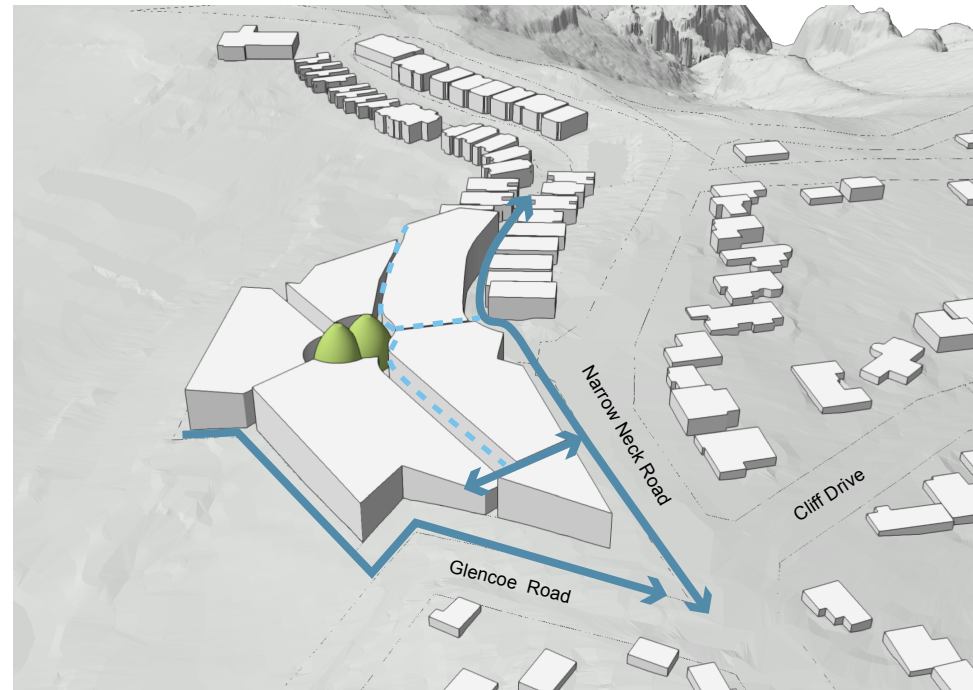
- Site positioned approximately 1.5 kilometres from Katoomba town centre, the site offers potential to enhance local amenity by introducing complementary hospitality and visitor uses alongside high-quality housing.
- This integrated approach supports both community needs and tourism, activating the area while maintaining a strong connection to its scenic and residential setting.

BUILT FORM DEVELOPMENT



Retaining existing trees

- The existing mature pine trees located at the centre of the site are to be retained as a defining landscape feature.
- The preservation will provide an established canopy, visual interest, and natural shading, contributing to the site's character, ecological value, and integration of the new development within its natural setting.



Improve accessibility

- The proposed development enhances accessibility through a continuous network connecting the site to the escarpment.
- A new internal circulation system ensures safe and efficient movement for pedestrians, linking dwellings and community facilities.
- Direct and well-defined access to Narrow Neck Road improves connectivity while maintaining the site's natural character and addressing safety and visibility requirements for both residents and visitors.



Proposed scheme

- Discreet stepped building forms.
- Orientation responds to topography and views
- Distinct buildings mark special locations (triangle and Building H)

THE PROPOSAL

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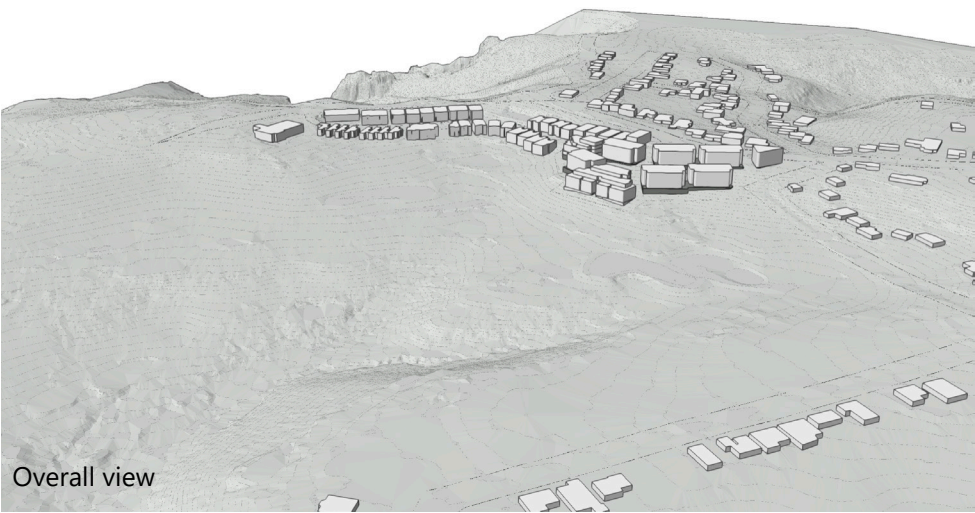
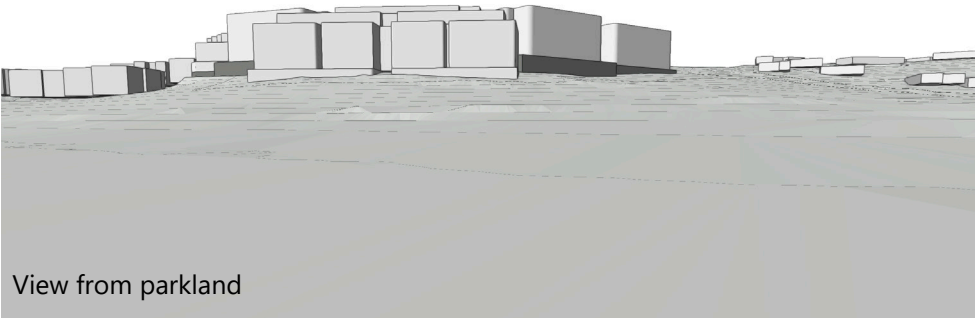


Photomontage of Proposal (Courtesy: Urbaine Design Group)

THE PROPOSAL

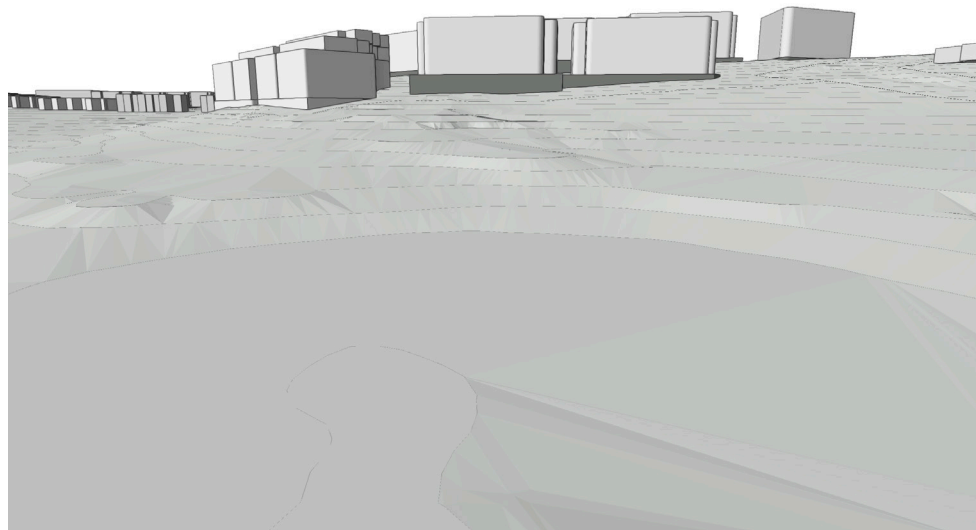
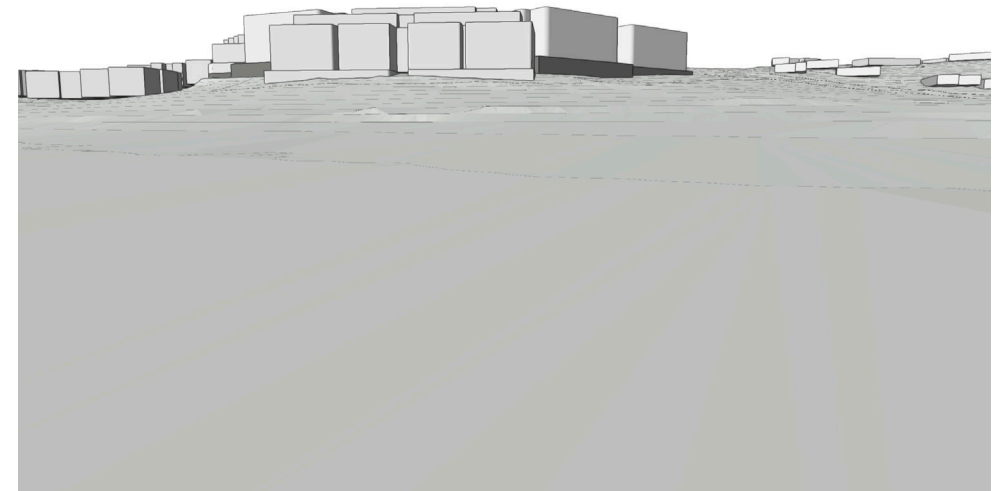
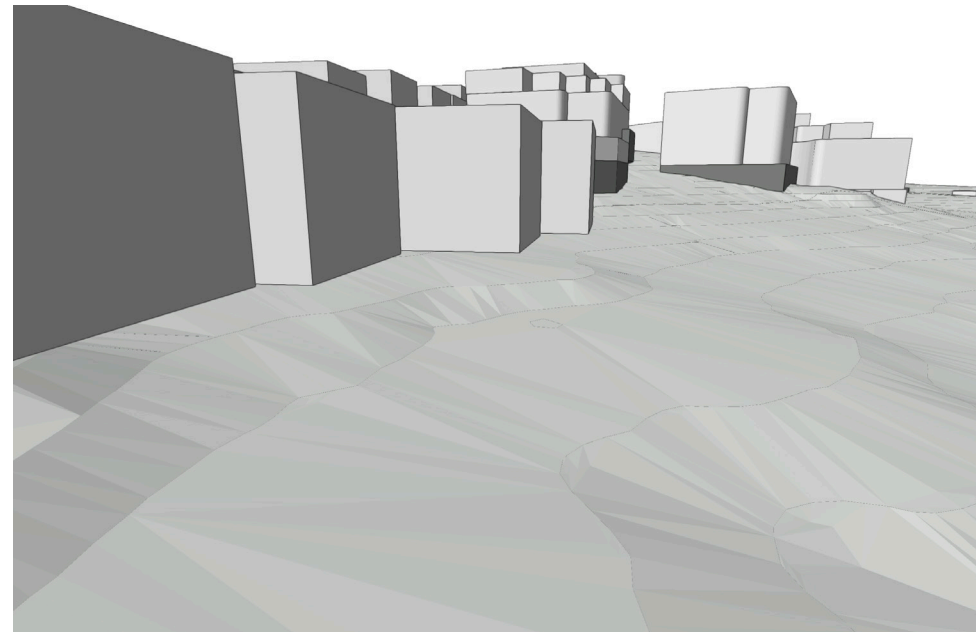
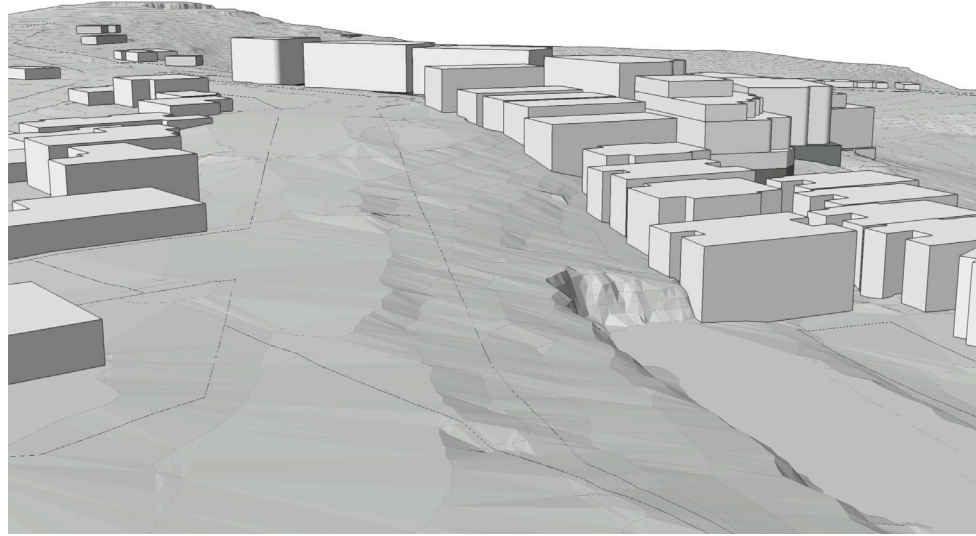
The proposal is composed of a series of paired and single forms. At the northern corner of the site.

A central communal garden forms the social and ecological heart of the site, featuring timber decks, shaded turf zones, and deciduous feature trees that evoke the character of the former golf course parklands.

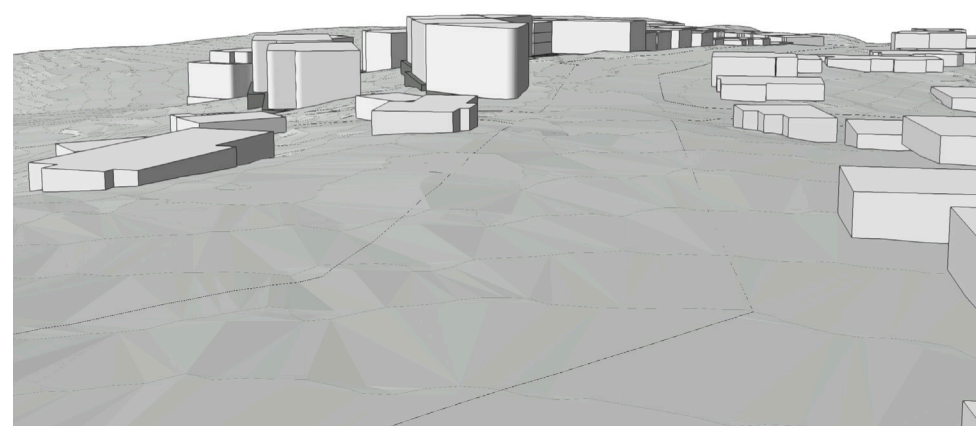


Landscape Master Plan (Courtesy: Xeriscapes)

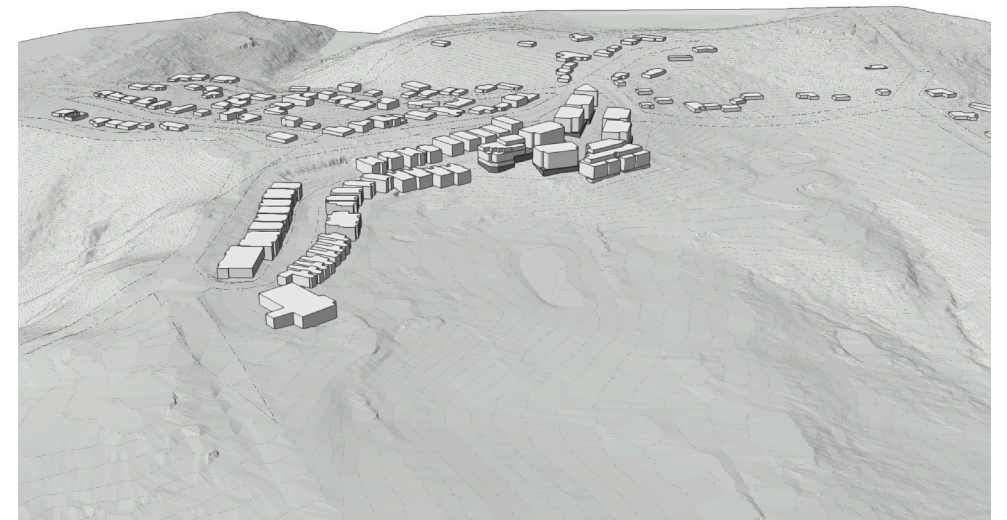
DESIGN RESPONSE



The massing responds to solar orientation and views — east- and west-facing frontages maximise daylight, cross-ventilation, and panoramic vistas of the surrounding bushland.



A landmark triangular building at the corner of Glencoe Road and Narrow Neck Road anchors the site, acting as a gateway and potential showcase for sustainability, local art, and bushfire-resilient design.



Buildings are arranged as paired and single pavilions, articulated by height, setback, and materiality to reduce visual bulk and support a finer-grained village scale.

3 PUBLIC BENEFITS

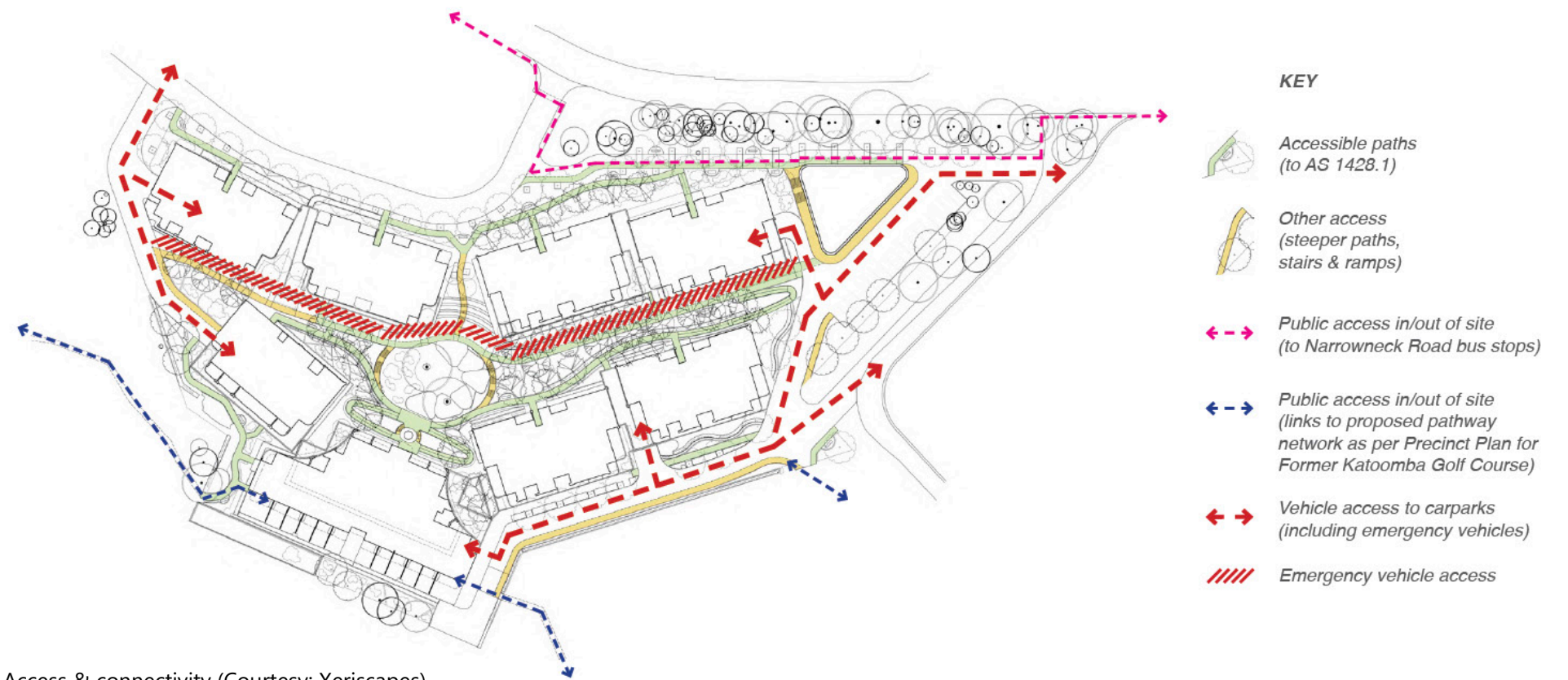
PUBLIC BENEFIT

CONNECTIVITY

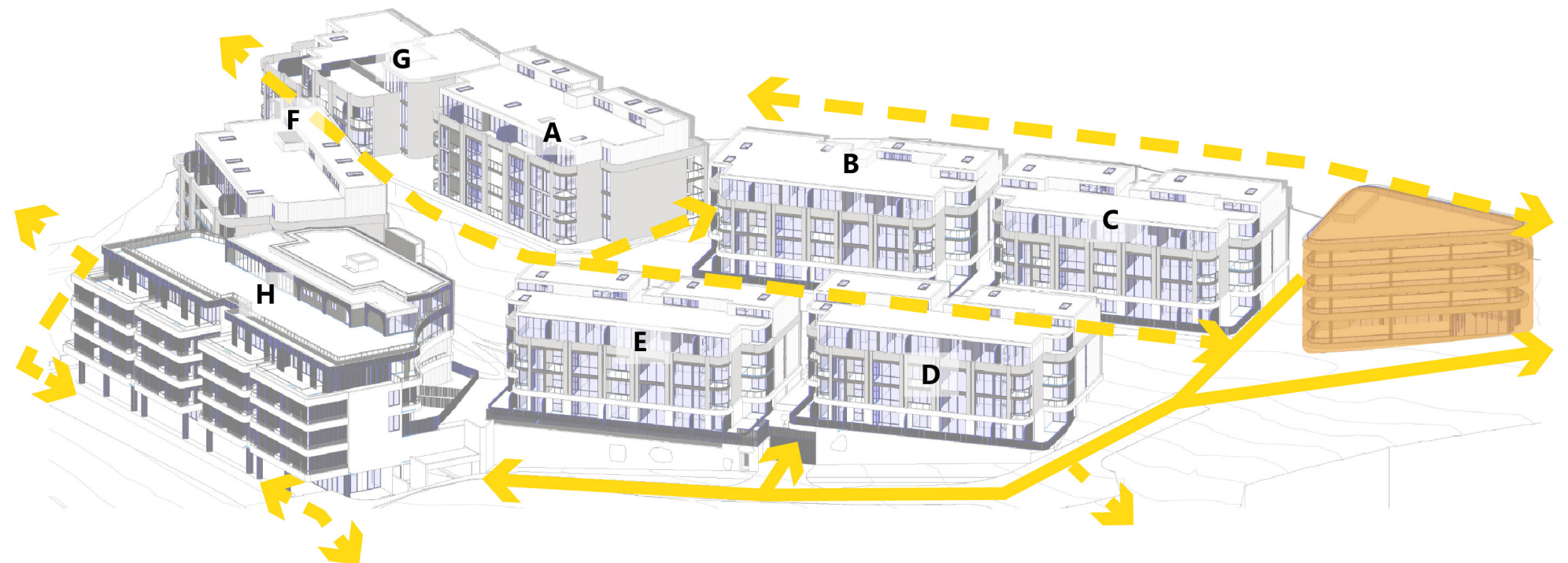
The Former Golf Course Precinct plan proposes a set of pathways and linkages through the parkland. The success of any active transport network relies on integration. This proposal offers a set of linkages into the parkland, improving parkland connectivity to Narrow Neck Road/bus stop / cliff-top walk.

The general site arrangement provides circulation along the boundaries, where desire lines are poorly served in the public domain. These valuable connections exist along the following edges:

- East (Buildings H, D, E). Walking access in a shared zone from the parkland to Glencoe Road
- North (Building D, Restaurant) Glencoe Road is steep, narrow and lacks a footpath. The scheme creates a shared zone with parking along the desire-line from the parkland to the cliff top walk and bus stop.
- West (Restaurant, C, B.) Shared zone. Narrow Neck Road is narrow and lacks a footpath. The scheme creates a shared zone that links the restaurant to the bus stop to the south.
- Potential intersection upgrade: Glencoe Road & Narrow Neck Road
- Footpath link along Narrow Neck Road to the new bus stop.



Access & connectivity (Courtesy: Xeriscapes)

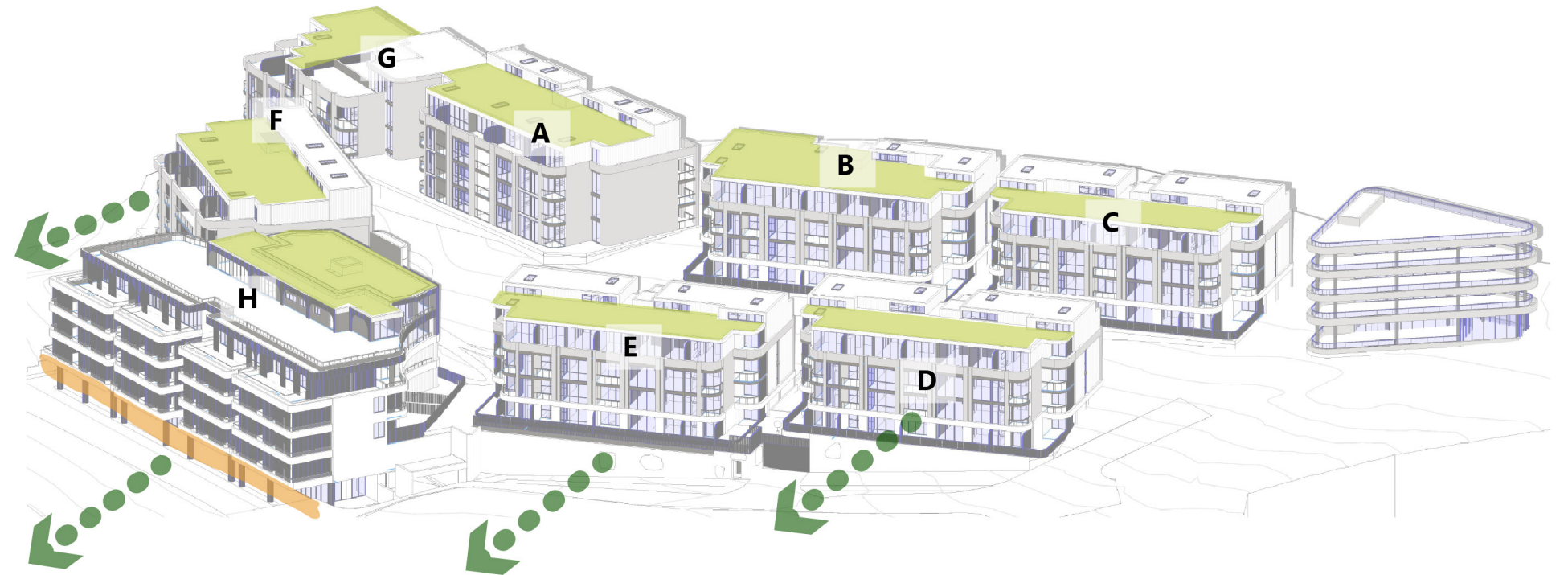


PUBLIC BENEFIT

ACTIVATION

The success of the Planetary Health Precinct will depend upon there being people present to enjoy the spaces and the programs. Development that brings more residents, visitors and facilities to the area will help to build a critical mass of activity to help it succeed. Building H includes 52 serviced apartments, offering short-stay accommodation in direct relationship with the parkland.

- The Main Restaurant in the triangle building incorporates information and education facility (art gallery), restaurant, cafe for public use. It provides an excellent, convenient position for park-users and visitors.
- Visible from the parkland, designed to be inviting with warm, Ceiling soffits, lighting
- Established as a must-visit Pitt stop (for visitors to the Planetary Health centre or as part of a Katoomba clifftop circuit, for the excellent... coffee, Baked goods, Local produce).
- Could showcase local produce
- Incorporate Bicycle parking
- On occasion, this space could be programmed to integrate events in the parkland. For example, it could become a venue for the Katoomba music festival.
- Rooftop gardens and planned to incorporate community food gardens. This initiative aligns with planetary health initiatives



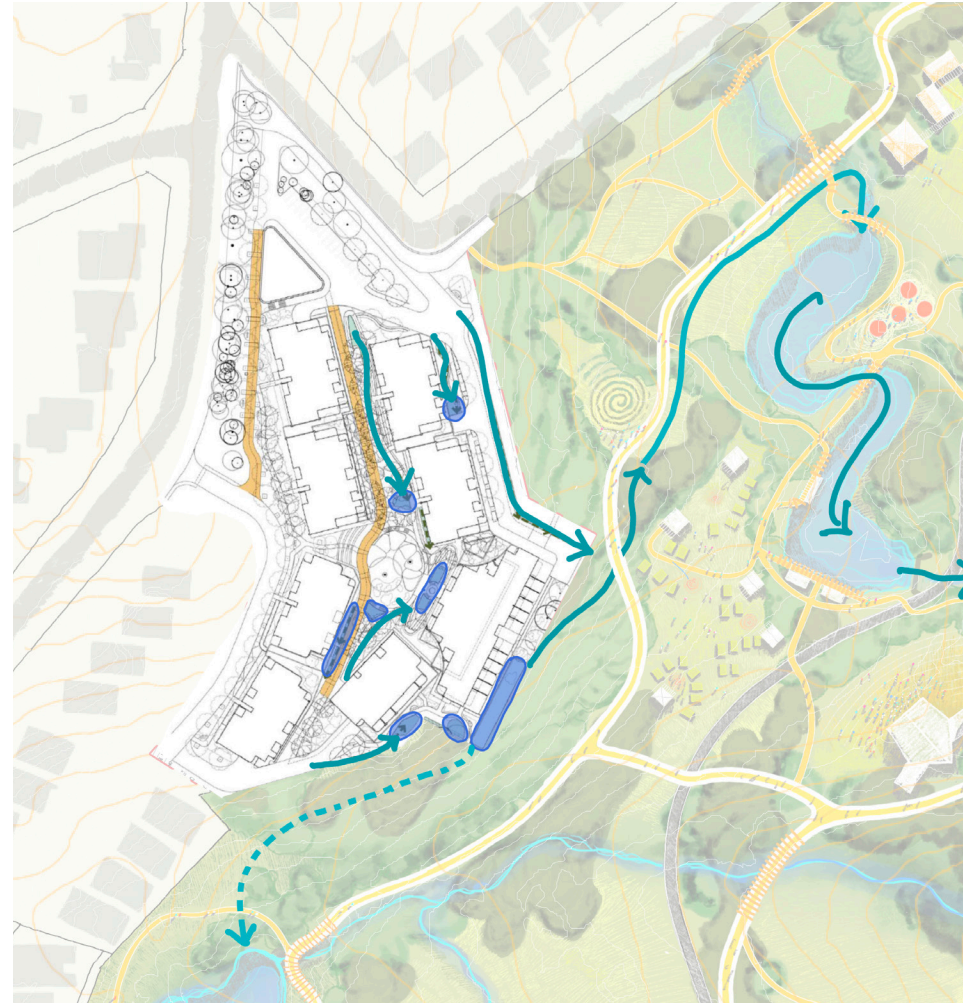
PUBLIC BENEFIT

CHARACTER

- Excellent Water Sensitive Urban Design to showcase environmental initiatives. Stormwater retention and control for managed release into rare upland swamps.
- The top triangle corner/restaurant is a highly visible corner that could also double as a place for display and artwork.
- Materials selection: Subtle earthy (brick) in keeping with character, sustainability, durability, and mountain heritage.
- Light loom management for 'dark skies initiative' protects pollinators and microbats. (World Heritage Wilderness area). and help with stargazing, a dimmed light spill for the camping area.
- Landmark building, triangular Glencoe Road & Narrow Neck Road (sustainability + wayfinding + Convenience). Potential art space to showcase local artists.
- Each apartment building (or pair) develops a distinct character/story based on its location, outlook, address, and position.

The marker building that is visible along the narrow neck from both directions is an important opportunity as an Architectural showcase for:

- design for bushfire /
- sustainability energy /
- construction materials (may include sustainable timberlow embodied CO2, or rammed earth.)
- Landscape character paths and links to take cues from the 'best of' NPWS design. Stone steps, elevated paths.
- Water cycle management incorporates rain gardens for ecology, cooling, and water quality



Water management concept diagram (refer to detailed Services & Infrastructure Report)



Existing artwork in Katoomba Town Centre