



REF: MT/ND – 19-042s

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LANDSCAPE DESIGN STATEMENT

ST MATTHEWS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1) The Proposal

The new campus for the proposed St Matthews Catholic High School is located on a green field site on the eastern periphery of the township of Mudgee. The concept of the school campus design is to cater for the anticipated enrolment growth, facilities and open space requirements for the school in the 21st Century. The school will cater for 680 secondary school students (4-Stream Year 7-12) and will comprise of a cluster of five low-rise school buildings in a landscaped setting. The design of the school masterplan is based on the association of spaces, groupings and functional relationships set within a series of landscaped spaces that facilitate views and connections to the broader landscape setting. Further, the underlying principles for the design of the open space reflect the policies and principles as set out in the publications of prepared by the Government Architect NSW (GANSW), being GANSW Better Placed, GANSW Greener Places, GANSW Design Guide for Schools and the Design Principles on Schedule 4 of the Education SEPP as they apply.

2) The Landscape response

In delivering an appropriate landscape design and outcome for the school, the Design Principles of Integration, Connectivity, Multifunctionality and Participation were applied to the landscape strategy and outcomes. These principles were implemented and realised through a landscape design that was inspired by the broader rural context and setting of Mudgee and its surrounds. By applying the “Better Fit” principle of a contextual response for the landscape, the landscape design provides a sense of place that is contextual, local and of its place, The use of native trees indigenous to the area continue this design principle, enhancing the overall amenity of the area and providing a vegetated interface to the adjacent and proposed residential areas.

In applying the design principles of “Better look and feel” and “Connectivity”, the landscape strategy of native and cultural planting was interwoven through the school grounds, creating a series of memorable and functional spaces generating a suitable amenity and character for the educational requirements of the school.

The “Integration” design principle is demonstrated with the carpark and vehicular access areas incorporating WSUD principles including tree planting and shrubs, maintaining moisture infiltration and reducing impacts on the existing environment.

To the centre of the site and to pedestrian entries, the use of deciduous trees as connectors to spaces provides seasonal interest, assists in the legibility of the site, allowing for solar access in the winter and much needed shade in summer. These planting patterns recognise the cultural landscape patterns of Mudgee and its surrounds and responds to the extremes of climate experienced in inland areas of Australia thus satisfying the “Better Performance” design principle that provides for sustainable, adaptable and durable outcomes.

The operational functionality of the building relationships has required that a small number of trees will need to be removed. Existing trees are retained on the boundaries (Northern and Southern) of the site where site levels permit, maintaining the screening and canopy to the curtilage of the site.

The trees retained to the Broadhead and Bruce Road boundaries maintain the continuation and connection of the vegetated amenity along these roads, enhancing the setting of the school and strengthening the outcomes of the Design Quality Principle 1 of the Education SEPP being “context, built form and landscape”. Further, an intermittent stream, Sawpit Gully runs diagonally across the site and is identified as a riparian zone. This gully is external to proposed landscape works and is retained in its present form, thus reinforcing the natural and ecological values of the site.

3) School Precincts

The school precincts are described in the attached plans.

3.1) Outdoor Student Assembly Area and COLA

The school’s heart is focused around the gathering area of the COLA that provides an extensive shelter from the elements and is complemented with key shade trees located through this paved area. These trees and shrubs create a framework and a sense of enclosure and scale within the carefully modulated built form and structure. To the centre of the heart is located a generous artificial turf zone suitable for a range of school activities with equal opportunity access facilitated across the external environment. Links from this core area are facilitated by paths and open grassed areas with carefully located trees framing views to the prominent hills of Mount Knowles and Mount Frome, these hills defining the broader landscape setting to the school.

Between the proposed school hubs, students’ free play/ outdoor classroom areas with trees planting and seating are provided, achieving the “Connectivity” design principle through the school. These spaces, designed as breakout areas integrate nature through the use of natural materials into the design. This project approach is designed to enhance school programs inviting teachers and students to engage in environments that are close to nature, “Better for People” and “Better for Community”

3.2) Yarning Circle (Outdoor learning area)

The “Participation” design principle of involving stakeholders is exemplified in the consultation

with the Local Aboriginal Land Council where a Yarning Circle is incorporated into the overall landscape design. This Ceremonial Area also functions as an outdoor learning space for medium to large groups, strengthening “Connectivity” “Better for people”, “Better value” design principles to the Yarning Circle and across the site. Seating rocks and paving areas are to be sourced from local materials with endemic planting species complementing this design approach. This Yarning Circle also forms an extension of the Chapel for outdoor Mass when desired.

4) Passive recreation and outdoor learning areas

A range of open spaces are located between and around the classrooms. These spaces facilitate outdoor learning, passive recreation, informal gathering areas and transition spaces to the broader grassed areas that surround the school. These areas feature a range of landscape surfaces, plantings, seating and elements that encourage and develop a sense of place for the school. Shade is provided with trees and covered ways between and adjacent to the classrooms, modulating transitions from the internal teaching environment, moderating the gradation of light from internal to external educational and recreational spaces.

5) Education SEPP Design Quality Principles

The landscape design for the school addresses and fulfils a number of the design quality principles that include the following:

Principle 1 Context, built form and landscape

Principle 5 Amenity

Principle 6 Whole of life, flexible and adaptive

Principle 7 Aesthetics

5.1) Principle 1 Context, built form and landscape

A clear and developed relationship of the school and its setting has been carefully designed so that the spatial organisation of the buildings and the spaces in between take advantage of the microclimate generated by the built form and landscape treatment. Cultural plantings inspired by the rich traditions of both Aboriginal and Post Occupancy cultural heritage find expression on the campus.

A formal avenue of deciduous trees highlights the pedestrian entry that leads to the heart of the school where a range of plantings provide shade, colour, texture, modulating the space and incorporating the Ceremonial Area as an integral part of the overall landscape expression of place. A rich cultural response articulates the values of place, the immediate landscape, the broader landscape setting and the acknowledgement of the layering of history through cultural expression and form.

5.2) Principle 5 Amenity

The campus is designed with pleasant and engaging spaces where a range of educational and recreational activities are encouraged as an integral part of the educational syllabus. An understanding of the inland climate of the Mudgee region with its seasonal and diurnal temperature range and prevailing winds has led to the creation of a series of outdoor spaces.

These spaces take advantage of an understanding of the climate and provide access to outdoor learning areas and play spaces with appropriate access to sunlight, shaded areas and strong and clear associations to the land. Clear site lines and environmental guidelines using CPTED performance factors create a safe and secure series of outdoor spaces with suitable supervision to educational guidelines and programs undertaken within educational curriculum.

5.3) Principle 6 Whole of life, flexible and adaptive

The strategic and spatial planning of the school integrates a life cycle approach that acknowledges the role of landscape and vegetation in the amelioration of excesses of climate, the creation of sheltered spaces that complement the architectural intent and layout and the importance of sheltered links between the built forms. External spaces are designed to accommodate a number of uses, with the focus on shelter, flexibility for evolving educational curriculums and provide welcoming texture with the expression of warmth of nature flowing through and around the built form.

5.4) Principle 7 Aesthetics

A welcoming and positive external environment is essential to the ongoing sustainability of St Matthew's Catholic School as a centre of excellence. Continuing community support can be realised through the engagement in the school's grounds. This is encouraged through incorporation of the cultural landscape patterns (deciduous and ornamental trees, flowering shrub and groundcovers) of Mudgee and its surroundings, inspiring an engagement and ongoing association with the school.

6) Conclusion

The landscape environment created for St Matthew's Catholic School provides functional and aesthetic spaces that can be utilised in the learning and wellbeing for staff, students and the broader community. A diversity of cultural and native plantings links the external learning environments creating a distinctive and memorable experience for all users. The school's landscape design acknowledges the broader context and setting, supplementing the existing environment and maintaining the overall character of surrounding rural landscape.

This landscape design statement has demonstrated the design principles as laid out in the GANSW guidelines and the Education SEPP Design Quality Principles have been addressed and fulfilled in relation to the landscape design for the school.

Yours faithfully,



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