



SCOTTISH HOSPITAL

URBAN DESIGN REPORT



two cooper street paddington nsw

november 2010



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We acknowledge the contribution of JPR Architects, Aspect Studios (Landscape Architects) and photomontages.

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1. INTRODUCTION

GM Urban Design & Architecture (GMU) has been appointed by CERNO Management Pty Ltd to provide an Urban Design Report for the proposed Project Application (PA) for the Scottish Hospital redevelopment in Paddington, Sydney. The proposed development falls under Part 3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 and will need to address the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements.

The Scottish Hospital site is situated in the Sydney inner city suburb of Paddington and occupies an area of approximately 1.46 ha. It is surrounded by Cooper, Brown and Stephen Streets with Dillon Street public reserve along its northern boundary. The site remains a symbol of subdivision of the early land grants that occurred in Sydney and the early suburbanisation of the suburb of Paddington. It is listed in the NSW State Heritage inventory and is identified for its heritage significance in the Woollahra LEP 1995.

In considering this Project Application it is relevant to consider also the development history of this site. The site is currently used for Seniors Living and is occupied by an existing nursing home of questionable architectural value, a disused operating theatre on Stephen Street that is an aggressive and unattractive built form and a historic dwelling – The Terraces, which is the old house built originally on the site and currently in a state of disrepair.

The site is also occupied by numerous heritage listed trees of a venerable age that contribute a strong landscape character to the site and to the local area. The application seeks to adaptively reuse and upgrade the existing heritage houses in a manner that is sensitive to its significance, to retain the heritage trees on the site wherever the health of the trees allows and to replace the existing obsolete buildings with a new nursing home and independent living units.

The application seeks consent for:

- The construction of a new Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) accommodating 100 beds.
- 82 Independent Living Units (ILUs) accommodated within 5 different buildings including the heritage item, The Terraces.
- Other new services proposed for residents use include a cafe, reading library, gym and hydrotherapy pool as well as games room, meeting room and on site car parking.

The site has been subject of a previous Development Approval. This approval has lapsed due to the requirement for an additional Development Application (DA) consent for the remediation of potentially contaminated soil on the site. This previous approval granted development of 19 self-care dwellings, 182 hostel/nursing care flexible units (providing up to 207 beds), on site support facilities and amenities, parking for 73 cars which amounted to an approximately Gross Floor Area (GFA) of 17, 229.15m². The consent also approved the removal of one heritage listed Norfolk Island Pine at the southern end of the site which has been proposed for retention within the new PA.

To date GMU has been involved in a consultative design process for this project working within the project team as well as at various community open day and workshop events. GMU was appointed to undertake an initial context and site specific analysis. Inclusive of information provided by other expert consultants GMU then determined a set of urban design related constraints and opportunities for the Scottish Hospital site. The analysis work was integrated into a number of design options which were developed in association with the project team and refined throughout an on-going community consultation process. This lead on to inform the final master plan which designated an appropriate location, height and scale for new built form within the constraints and opportunities of the site.



Aerial view showing Scottish Hospital and surrounds

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider the urban design qualities of this proposal and its likely impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. This report will address the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements in relation to Urban Design issues for this Part 3A Application. In addition, this report also considers the compliance of the proposal with SEPP 65 and Seniors Living Design Policy Urban Design Guidelines for infill development.

As part of this assessment GMU have reviewed the following documents:

Project Application drawings by JPR Architects including:

- PA drawings 101 - 463
- Photomontages images
- Solar Analysis drawings
- Shadow Analysis diagrams
- Master plan GFA calculations
- Unit Area Schedule

Draft Landscape Plan & Landscape Statement by Aspect Studios September 2010

Draft Environmental Assessment Report prepared by Urbis August 2010

Conservation Management Plan by Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners Pty Ltd June 2006

Draft Landscape Assessment Report prepared by Musecape Pty Ltd August 2000

Preliminary Arboricultural Advice prepared by Tree Wise Men Australia, November 2009

State Environmental Planning Policy 65

Seniors Living Design Policy Urban Design Guidelines for infill development

Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 1995

Paddington Heritage Conservation Area DCP 2008

Woollahra Residential DCP 2003

3. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REQUIREMENTS

The requirements from the Director General for this proposal that are urban design based concerns are as follows:

- Height, bulk and scale of the proposed development within the context of the locality and the visual impact on heritage buildings and elements on and in the vicinity of the site and the conservation area
- Comparable height study to demonstrate how the proposed height relates to the height of the existing/approved developments surrounding the site
- View analysis to and from the site from key vantage points
- Options for siting and layout of the building envelopes
- Topography of the site and height relation of the buildings to the natural ground levels of the site and surrounding land
- Design quality of the development – facades, massing, setbacks, articulation, colours, materials, landscape and public domain
- Environmental and residential amenity including solar access, privacy, view loss including the siting of the development in relation to the existing significant landscaping

These requirements are dealt with through the response to context and analysis that underpinned the development of the master plan for the site and through consideration of the Project Application against the principles of SEPP 65 and the Seniors Living Design Guidelines.

4. RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

4.1 Regional Context



The site is located within the Woollahra Local Government area in the suburb of Paddington. Paddington is a highly sought after location that is characterised by high density living in the form of terraces, semi-detached dwellings, apartments and some detached dwellings. The suburb is located between Darlinghurst, Woollahra and Double Bay. The suburb is generally serviced by bus routes which travel to the city and Bondi Junction. The closest railway station to the area is Edgecliff Railway Station but that is approximately 1km to the east.

Paddington was developed in the latter part of the 19th century and reflects this era in its housing and street pattern. Generally the area has narrow small lots which are occupied by terrace housing up to 3-4 storeys in scale with smaller cottages and single storey detached houses intermingled. The streets are narrow and often heavily constrained by resident parking. Few lots have on site parking so the streets are often congested with cars. The street pattern through the area is generally a simple grid skewed occasionally to a different orientation mainly due the topography of the area which is generally sloping down towards the harbour with a number of ridges which run to the south of the area.

4.2 Local Context

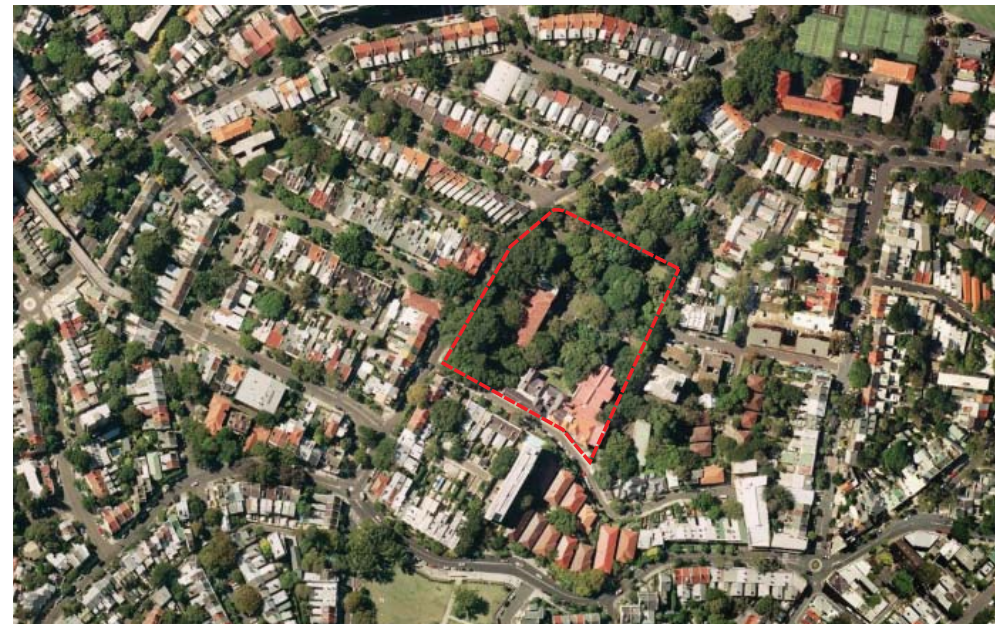
The site itself is located on Brown and Cooper Street. It is quite close to White City and to Paddington Green. The site sits within an area of small lots, narrow streets and laneways.

Surrounding the site to the south is the residential suburb of Paddington which extends up to Oxford Street. The local Five Ways Shopping Village on Glenmore Road provides the closest retail facilities. These are within walking distance from the site. The built form along Cooper Street is characterised by a mix of terrace houses and apartments. The scale ranges from 2 storeys to 4 storeys.

There are a number of much taller apartment buildings in close vicinity to the site including along Cooper Street which introduce a different scale of 9 -10 storeys. These buildings jut up into the skyline, well above the tree canopy and are an aggressive form due to their impact on the silhouette of the area.



Aerial showing fine grain character in Paddington



Local context

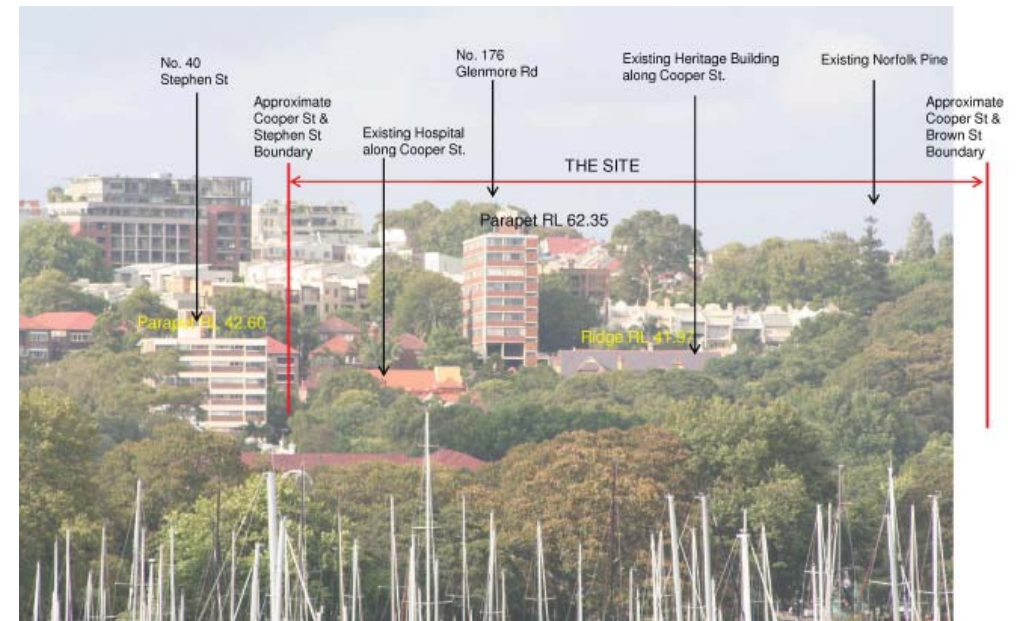
The land slopes up from the site towards the south so the backdrop behind the site is comprised of terraces along Cooper Street and larger new development along Glenmore Road. This can be seen in the view on the adjacent picture.

To the west of the site is a more even built form. It comprises a range of terrace houses of varying scale from 2 storeys to 4 storeys. Immediately adjacent to the site are terraces up to 3 storeys with an effective 4 storey scale which address Brown Street and the side walls of other terraces that address the east west streets and laneways.

To the east is a mixture of scale and development types. There are the taller 1960s apartment buildings at some 48 metres in height down to single storey cottages on narrow lots which face onto Stephen Street. The taller development tends to be located towards the southern end of the street where the topography rises towards Cooper Street. The grain changes noticeably once past Glen Street towards the north where the fine grain terraces and cottages are located.

To the north of the site is a public open space called Dillon Street Reserve. It is a narrow park that extends between Brown and Stephen Streets containing a small playground, some vegetation and seating. Beyond the site are more fine grain low scale residential lots which vary in height between 1-3 storeys. This playground park is a valued community asset and is well used by residents.

To fully understand the local context around the site GMU carried out a site analysis and mapped the key characteristics of the locality. These characteristics are documented and discussed in the following subsections.



Looking across water towards site (courtesy of JPR Architects)



Development along Brown Street



Tall 60s development on Cooper Street



Images of Brown Street



Built form on Cooper Street

4.2.1 Existing Built Form, Height and Figure Ground

As discussed above, the existing built form has a predominant 3 - 4 storey fine grain scale to the western side of the site along Cooper and Brown Streets. The lower scale development of cottages and terraces tends to be located further to the north once past Glen Street and Dillon Reserve. The lot pattern to the north exhibits shorter and narrower lots and a generally tighter street pattern with laneway systems. To the south, the development pattern changes with the more recent developments occupying larger footprints and in some instances amalgamating land parcels. This introduces a different grain from the north to the south with the south as a mixture of narrow lot frontages, deeper lots and then wider lots and larger buildings to the south.

The building typology also changes with the smaller terraces and cottages to the north giving way to larger apartment buildings from a number of different eras. This occurs to the south of Stephen Street and along Cooper Street particularly to the eastern end of the street and the site.

The most recent apartment developments have introduced a very different scale from 8 - 9 storeys at the street and are elongated along the lot.

The development on the site itself contrasts sharply with that of the surrounding area. The character is of buildings within a landscape setting where the site is viewed from Brown, Stephen Streets and Dillon Reserve with a low scale but almost continuous frontage to Cooper Street. The heritage hospital and house on Cooper Street are located very close to the street boundary and present quite a dominant built form in contrast to the terrace dwellings on the southern side of the street.



Figure - ground relationships



Apartments along the Eastern side of Cooper Street



Site and buildings as seen from Brown and Stephen Streets

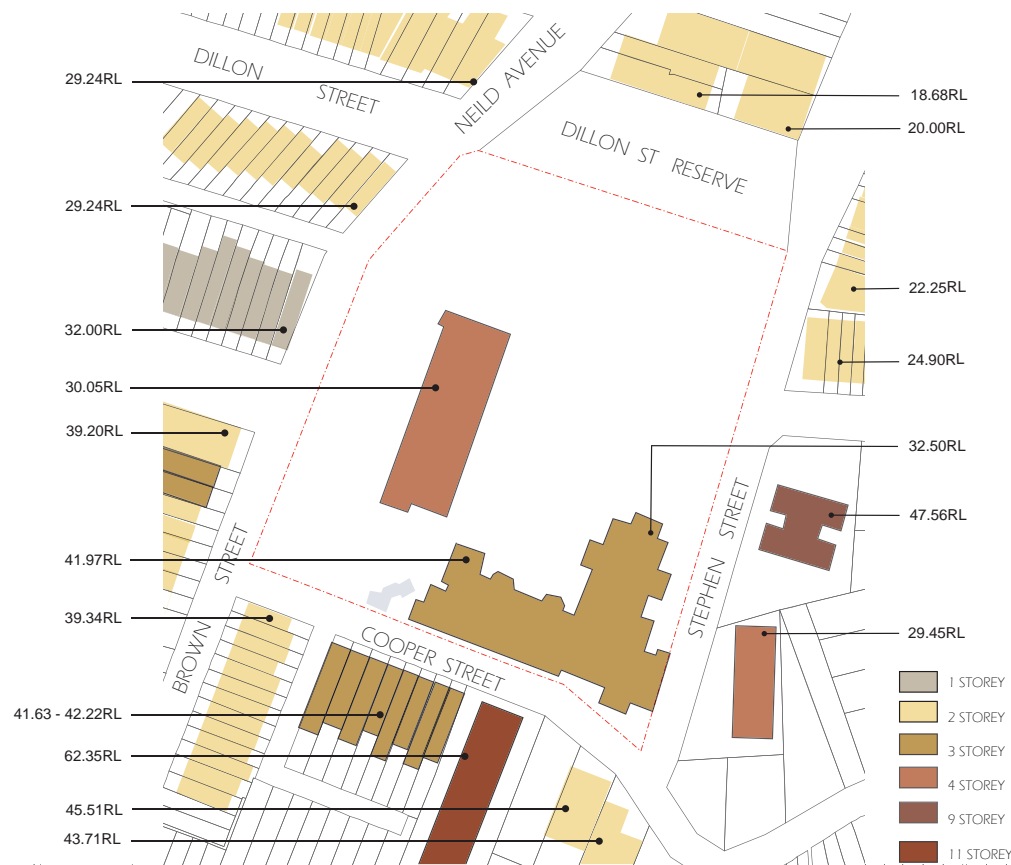


Site and buildings as seen from Cooper Street and Dillon Reserve

In terms of the height of existing built form in the surrounding context the diagram below illustrates these heights.

It can be seen that the existing development on the site ranges from the lower scale hospital and house at 2-3 storeys to the 4 storey nursing home and the 6 storey operating wing. The bulk and footprint of these buildings is more in character with the more recent development where lots have been amalgamated. Even the footprint of the heritage items is quite considerable when compared with the fine grain of the area around it.

The scale of the site itself also contrasts with the small lot character of much of Paddington. The site is a considerable landholding and provides a visual 'relief' to the more intense lot pattern around it. Therefore, it has an existing and historic built form that was appropriate to its larger land holding and contrasted with the fine grain and character of the terrace housing around it.



Existing built form heights

4.2.2 Connectivity

The topography of the site and the area creates issues for connectivity. The site has development cut into the slope and therefore there is a significant grade change from Stephen Street through the site and across to Cooper Street. This change in topography on the site fragments the street pattern and pedestrian connectivity within the site.

The surrounding street pattern follows a simple grid with changes in alignment. Close to the site the predominant pattern is east-west streets that provide local access and laneway access to the narrow lots linked by wider connector streets which run down the slope. The street pattern to the west is closely spaced due to the lot dimensions but this changes to the east of the site where the streets are further apart and there are far less east-west streets. There the depth of the lots increase with linked laneways for vehicle access. Therefore the connectivity is excellent to the west of the site using the local street systems although pedestrian movement is somewhat hampered by the steep slope from near the reserve rising up to Glenmore Road. To the east the connectivity is reduced in an east-west and north-south direction for vehicles but pedestrian connections are maintained through stairs where the topography changes.

The local retail facilities to service the site are to the south east at the Five Ways Shopping Centre which is within 400m of the site, however, the access is via a pedestrian laneway off Cooper Street.

Public transport is available to the south west of the site along MacDonald Street which links passengers to the city and Bondi Beach via Bondi Junction. The Holdsworth Community bus provides a drop off/pick up on demand point at the corner of Brown and Cooper Streets.

For the site the vehicular access is limited to a single driveway entry along Brown Street in the north western corner of the site. This driveway location appears to be in the original location for the house. There also used to be a vehicle entry point from the southern end of Stephen Street to the disused operating theatre building that has since, been blocked off.

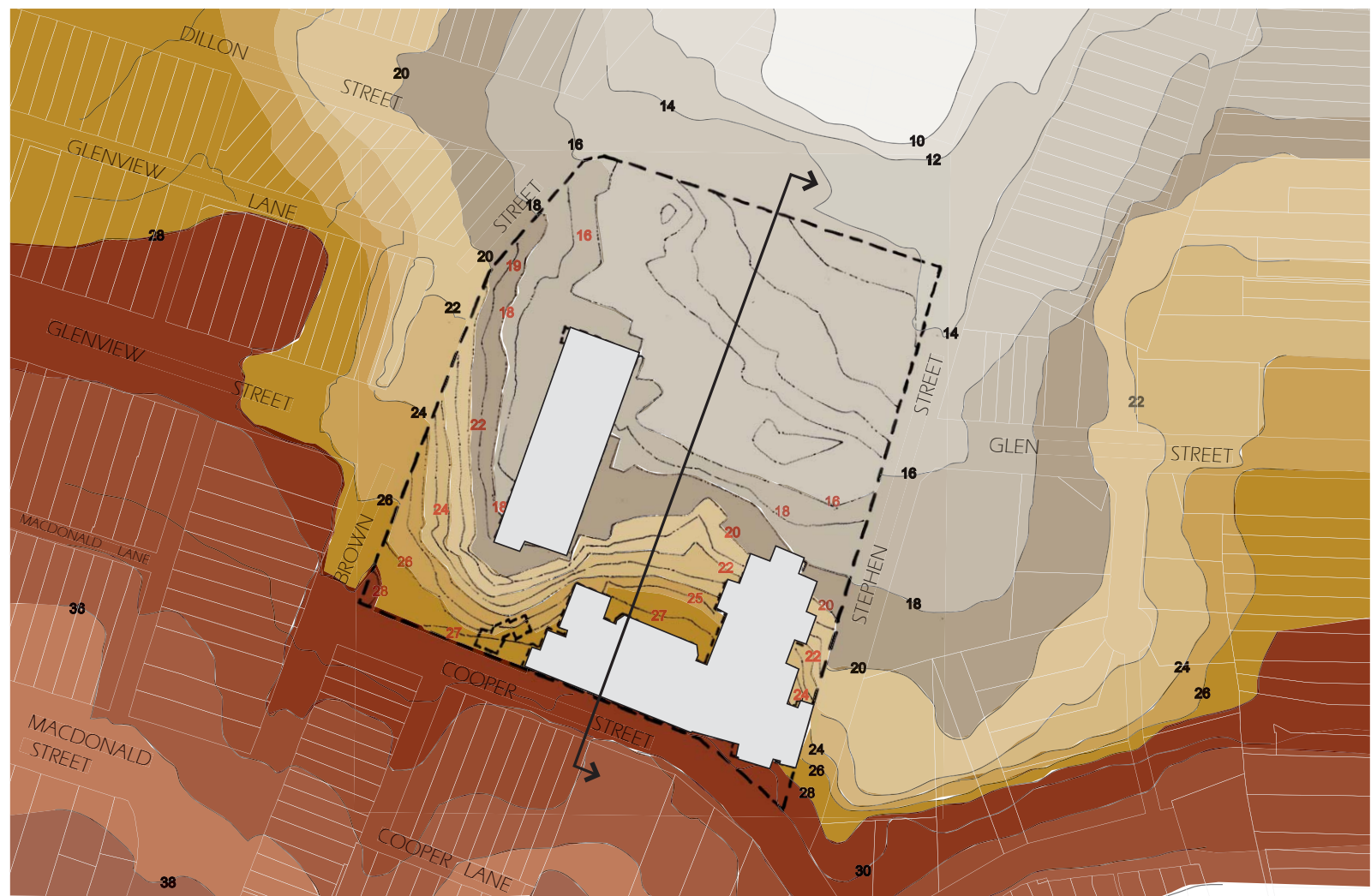
On-road bicycle lanes are provided along Lawson Street, MacDonald Street & Glenmore Road north and south of the site



Connectivity

4.2.3 Topography

The site falls dramatically away from Cooper Street with the fall becoming more gradual and levelling out toward Dillon Reserve, approximately 14m difference in level overall.



Topography

The existing Scottish Hospital building has been positioned on the highest land on the site sitting proud within the surrounding tree canopy with its address and frontage to Cooper Street. The operating theatre straddles both the higher land to Cooper Street and the gully cut into the site on Stephen Street. This results in large columns which are visible supporting the built form above and severely compromising the amenity of Stephen Street.

The existing nursing home is located to the west of the site behind the existing trees, set down in the gully. Consequently, its location within the gully reduces its apparent height relative to the streets around the site.

The site benefits from considerable landscape which was established, it is believed, as part of the planting for the original dwelling. These trees are mature and rise out of the gully presenting their canopies to the streets and breaking up the scale and visual connection from the streets to the buildings. Landscape terraces have been formed in front of the Scottish Hospital building to absorb the level change and fall toward the harbour to the north.

Along Brown Street is a variety of mature trees including figs, Camphor Laurel and pine trees that start on the gully floor near Cooper Street and continue to the flatter ground on the site near the Dillon Reserve.

The grade difference from Cooper Street to the base of the gully is from RL 30 at Cooper Street down to RL 20 roughly one third of the way into the site. A stone retaining wall runs along the western boundary and maintains Brown Street at a higher level to the site. There is a more significant level change toward the intersection with Cooper Street where paved terracing has been constructed. The streets around the site do not have a similar gully and sudden change in level. Both Brown and Stephen Streets follow the topography and fall more gradually to the north. Brown changes from approximately RL 23 close to the site at Cooper Street down to RL 16 at the north west corner of the site as a gradual grade. Stephen Street falls from RL 30 at Cooper Street to RL 14 at the north east corner with a quick grade change to the south accommodated by stairs and then a gradual grade change from RL 22 to RL 14.



Gully on site



Gully on site



Landscape terraces as seen from within the site



Trees as seen from Brown Street



Operating theatre on Stephen Street



Nursing home looking in from Brown Street



Brown Street looking due north



Stephen Street looking due north