

**Landscape Design Statement Section 75W Application
Royal Far West Manly**

Landscape has been imagined as a series of spaces that weave through the cluster of existing, heritage and new buildings of the Royal Far West (RFW) proposal, tying edges to the street and contextual landscape; giving expression to RFW’s rich cultural history and significance; making a series of courtyards at ground floor, and a series of usable and green spaces on roofs. These spaces respond to the spatial qualities created by the buildings; aspirations of the client for the use of the spaces, and the rich coastal landscape.

Response to Country

We recognise that the site is on the land of the Gayamaygal people, and that there are many other Aboriginal nations and cultures using the facilities of the RFW. We expect that future meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities as laid out in the RFW Consultation with Community Plan, together with the local knowledge that RFW has attained through its RAP engagement activities, will enrich design development and our understanding of this place and community specific cultural interpretations and practices. RFW’s knowledge holders and local Aboriginal leaders will contribute to the more detailed design development.

Our approach to design is guided by a response to place, thinking about landscape as a connective ground, and all the elements that make a place – soil, geology, plants, animals, air, water and people. In past projects, the Aboriginal people that we have worked with have encouraged this approach as a way of building on a sense of place, and with that prior knowledge and RFW’s cultural advice and guidance, our thinking is guided towards:

- working in a way that prioritises caring for Country through repair
- planting to reflect seasons
- the idea of individual connection to nature
- providing opportunities for continuing engagement of Aboriginal people with the place, including potential economic opportunities
- the opportunity to acknowledge local Traditional Owners and their customs, culture, heritage and the local history of the area
- honouring all First Nations people and their contribution to Country



Streetscape

Wentworth Street

There are three street frontages along Wentworth Street – the RFW Centre for Country Kids, Drummond House and the proposed apartment building that defines the corner of Wentworth Street and South Steyne. Wentworth Street currently supports three mature Norfolk Island Pines.

Currently, the façade and courtyard gardens of Drummond House are dissociated from the street by a tall fence, restricting visibility in and out. Drummond House will be restored to the street, with a garden edge that better reflects past character, and allows views of the building façade. This series of gardens will extend north and south along the street, tying all the RFW buildings together, and weaving the character of Drummond House into all.

A generous opening separates the RFW buildings from the apartment building that fronts South Steyne. A change in character occurs here, with the interior spaces visually more open to the street, and the ground plane defined by landscape.



A series of medium height trees planted within the site edge supplement the existing street tree framework of very tall and widely spaced Norfolk Island Pines, improving shade and amenity at the street front - creating a transitional scale between building and street, and a threshold from public to private.

An arborist report was commissioned to determine the health and Useful Life Expectancy (ULE) of trees on the site, and existing street trees adjacent to the site on Wentworth Street - 3 x Araucaria heterophylla – identified as trees T1, T2 and T3. The report investigates the potential impact on these trees of proposed excavation for expansion of the subsurface car park. It found potential impact to be negligible for tree T1, and low to moderate for trees T2 and T3, based on the degree of potential encroachment into the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ).

The report recommends the management requirements for work near these trees to minimise potential for impact. Determining management requirements for trees T2 & 3 has been somewhat difficult due to existing site conditions that may have restricted root encroachment within the site. Further detailed investigation of the root zone is proposed by the arborist, to tailor the recommendations to the particular conditions. Investigations and further detailed protection measures will be carried out by the arborist.

South Steyne

The streetscape of South Steyne is dominated by the broad coastal landscape, and the bold continuous planting of Norfolk Island Pines that emphasis the sweep of the beach. There are a series of openings along this edge, alternating with planted landscape that responds to the coastal conditions – this edge will in effect become a dune landscape edging the street. The design carefully balances the visual connectivity through the site, to the beach and horizon with the sensitivities of RFW privacy needs.

The planted and material character draw from the landscapes of the coast: dune planting, and the sandstone outcrops and gully planting found along the Manly to Shelly walk. Dune planting is selected for resistance to the often harsh conditions of the coast, particularly the north eastern orientation.



Courtyards

A series of internal spaces form courtyards that link and separate buildings, provide activity and breakout space, and link the site to both Wentworth Street and the coastal landscape. The courtyards are united by a view from the existing building on the western edge to South Steyne beach and the horizon, and by a consistent landscape character. However, the design allows for the internal courtyard at Drummond House to be closed off and provide a protective sanctuary whilst RFW families are in occupation. Visual and physical privacy is paramount for the kids and an essential part of the institution’s philosophy.

These spaces are protected somewhat from coastal winds by the building and landscape South Steyne edge. The reference for the courtyards is the landscape of semi protected sandstone gullies, that occur along this part of the coast, dominated by *Angophora costata*. The *Angophoras* are a strong foil for the architectural character, and offer a high canopy that provides shade while allowing views.

In the partially exposed places, trees rise from the paving; in protected and intimate places trees are supplemented with understorey gully planting of ferns and, shrubs and groundcovers, making lush spaces at edges and small spaces, reinforcing a spatial contrast.

A floor of sandstone clothes ground level, undulating to accommodate planting, and varying in tone and pattern to define spaces and paths.

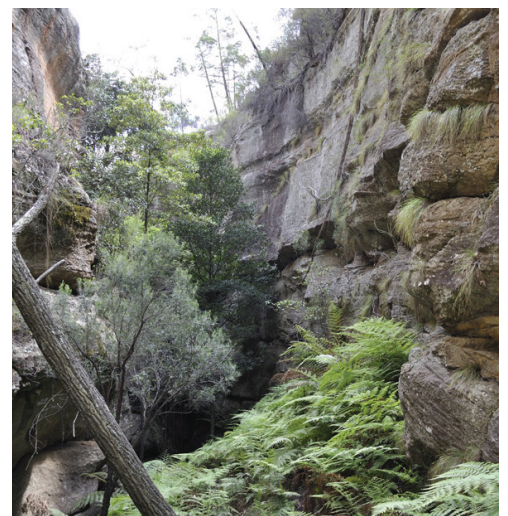
Rooftops

Each of the 4 rooftops in the proposal will have a landscaped roof of varying degrees of accessibility.

The new portion of the Drummond house rooftop on the northern side is envisioned as a versatile semi-outdoor activity area for Royal Far West. Generous planter boxes around its perimeter will support hardy fragrant and edible plants for the children to engage with. The roof will connect across to the L3 play space in the Caring for Country Kids (CCK) building to improve circulation through the campus.

On the southern frontage, the roof of the RFW building will have robust mass plantings of species that require little maintenance or attention, providing a screen to the mechanical infrastructure and a vegetated outlook from surrounding buildings.

Building D – on the South Steyne frontage – has an extensive green roof that won’t be generally accessed by residents of the building. The low-profile planting medium will support a mix of hardy succulents and sedums, as well as natives to support habitat for wildlife. It will be predominantly a visual landscape for the residents and visitors of Building C, softening the urban outlook and providing a detailed foil to the ocean views. The extensive green roof also provides multiple environmental benefits of reducing the thermal heat load, filtering stormwater, and providing urban habitat for birdlife.



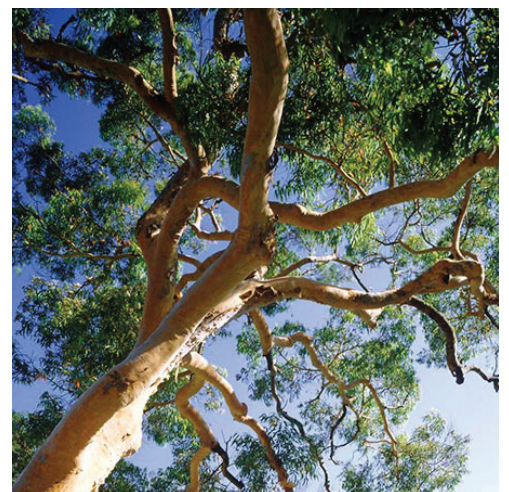
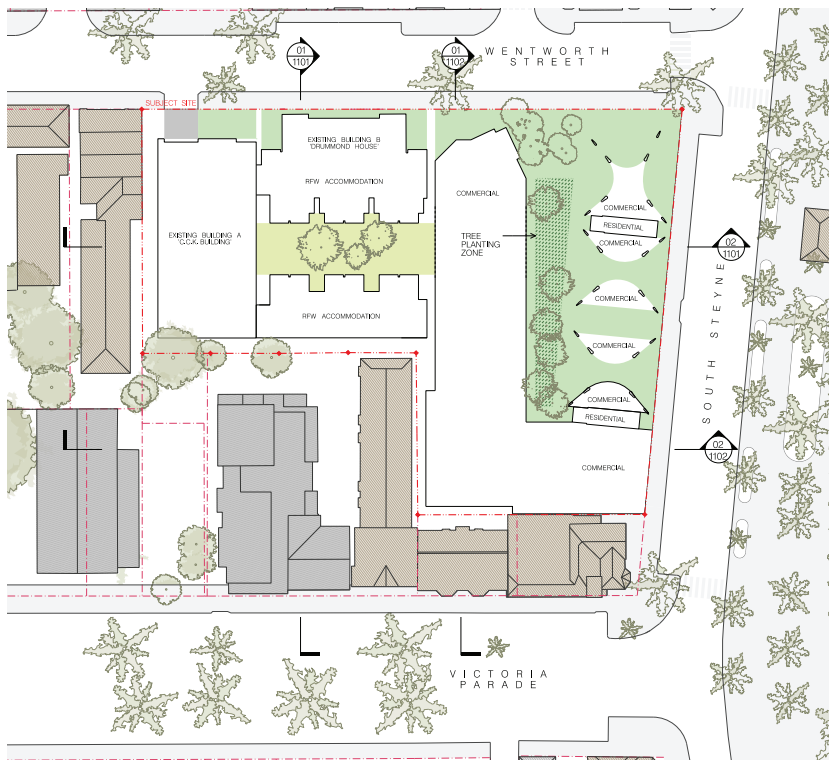
Building C rooftop will be a generous communal open space for the tenants. Simple linear planter boxes are proposed along the edges with mass plantings of two species for impact. The eastern edge will have a monoculture of hardy Aloe sp. as a dramatic feature. Along the western sides, Callistemon hedges to match existing plantings on the ground floor will protect the communal open space from late westerly sun, harsh south-westerly winds, as well as obscuring the mechanical units behind.

Planted character

Attention has been given to providing optimum planting conditions for landscapes:

- Drummond House has the majority of deep soil planting, and the proposed medium trees are placed to take advantage of it. The planting is reminiscent of similar Sydney coastal heritage buildings, with a collection of specimens and a reinstated Callistemon hedge.
- Internal courtyards are all on structure, with a series of undulations to create substantial soil volume to support the larger trees. Minimum depth of growing medium over structure for the trees will be 900mm with additional 200-300mm for drainage and waterproofing. All other planting areas will have growing medium of 600mm. The planting has been selected based on locally occurring species, as well as proven performers in shaded coastal settings.
- Southern boundary with the school has a selection of shade-loving species that will thrive in the conditions, with some tall thin trees to supplement the existing trees along the boundary.

Generally, the plant list is a rich mix of species that have a focus on hardiness, and biodiversity, with plants to excite the senses within the RFW courtyards and Drummond frontage.



Jane Irwin