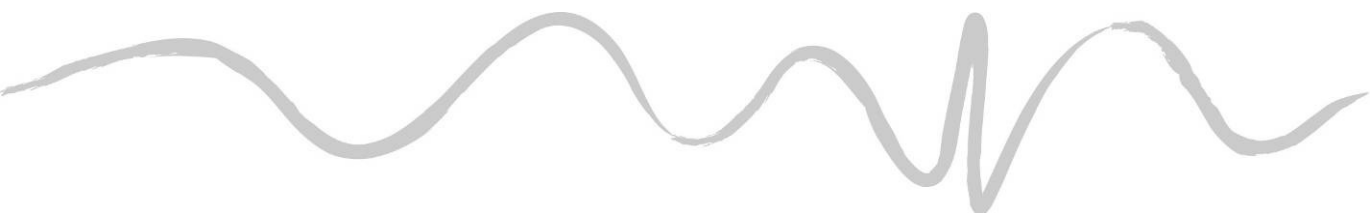


**Preliminary
Environmental
Assessment Report**
Coffs Harbour Base Hospital
Site Redevelopment



Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report

Coffs Harbour Base Hospital Site Redevelopment

Prepared for: Huntercorp Properties Pty Ltd

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Ref: 1139536

Date: May 2009

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Appendix A

Concept Architectural Plans

Executive Summary

Preliminary Environmental Assessment Coffs Harbour Base Hospital Site Redevelopment

Location	<p>The site is described as Lot 20 DP 1050895 and is located on Victoria Street. The rear of the property adjoins Harbour Drive, approximately 1.7 km from its intersection with the Pacific Highway.</p> <p>The land is approximately equidistant between the Coffs Harbour CBD, to the west, and the Jetty area and beach, to the east.</p>
Site Area	<p>The site has a total area of approximately 2.583 hectares.</p>
Site Features	<p>The site is roughly a full suburban block, bounded by Harbour Drive to the north, Boambee Street to the east, Victoria Street to the south and Dibbs Street to the west. It was previously the site of the Coffs Harbour Base Hospital, which has relocated to new premises elsewhere. It is largely vacant, apart from a dwelling located in the north-western corner.</p> <p>There are two existing uses of land directly adjoining the site. The first is the Legacy Nursing Home, located adjacent to the south-western corner of the site. The other is the Galambila Aboriginal Health Centre, located adjacent to the north-eastern corner.</p> <p>The site slopes in a northerly direction from Victoria Street to Harbour Drive. Elevation ranges from approximately 28 mAHN along Victoria Street to 6 mAHN on Harbour Drive. Slopes range from 10 to 15 degrees across the site.</p> <p>The site is mostly cleared, with some trees remaining, generally located along the Harbour Drive frontage. Significant native trees will be retained.</p> <p>Soils on the land are part of the Ulong Landscape Unit, which contains loamy topsoil grading to a clay or silty clay at depth. The clayey soils show evidence of compaction, in particular the 'terraced' areas on which previous buildings have been located.</p>
Zoning	<p>The majority of the land is currently zoned Residential 2C Medium-High Density, pursuant to the provisions of the <i>Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000</i>, with a smaller area in the north-east corner zoned Special Uses 5A.</p> <p>The proposed development is permissible in the Residential 2C zone.</p>
Planning Controls & Policies	<p>The following planning controls are relevant to the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mid North Coast Regional Strategy; ▪ Settlement Planning Guidelines: Mid and North Coast Regional Strategies; ▪ North Coast Regional Environmental Plan; ▪ Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000; ▪ various State Environmental Planning Policies; ▪ NSW Coastal Policy; ▪ relevant Coffs Harbour City Council Development Control Plans; ▪ relevant Developer Contribution Plans.

The proposal will generally comply with all development standards applicable to the site, with the exception of the height controls contained in the existing Coffs Harbour Medium-High Density Housing Development Control Plan. This DCP limits the height of buildings in this area to a maximum of 10m. Some building elements within the site will be proposed with a greater height.

In this case, the departure from this DCP control is justified because the nature of the design, particularly how it includes higher elements downslope, is such that the perception of height is minimised when viewed from external public places.

Further, the context of the new City Plan project is to promote a greater scale of development for this locality.

This has been recognised by Council and the department of Planning, who have both provided in-principle support for increased height at this site (see **Section 1.2** for further discussion).

Proposal

The Part 3A Application will seek Project Approval for the residential development of the site, involving a number of stand-alone and attached residential buildings. Whilst detailed design is yet to be finalised, it is anticipated that the development will result in a total of around 250 to 300 individual dwellings. This will include a mix of unit types and sizes.

Underground car parking is proposed, with separate access points from Dibbs and Boambee Streets. There will not be any vehicular access from either Harbour Drive or Victoria Street, although pedestrian / cycle access will be provided to these streets.

The proposal will also involve communal recreational facilities and extensive landscaping. The clustering of dwellings within the individual taller buildings has been designed to maximise deep soil zones and open space within the site.

In accordance with discussion with the Department's Urban Design Branch, and with Coffs Harbour City Council, higher buildings, up to six-storeys, will be located more centrally within the site, taking advantage of the fall of the land away from Victoria Street. In this way, apparent height, as observed from Victoria Street and residences to the south, will be consistent with a significantly smaller development. Further, two-storey building elements will be located adjacent to the Victoria Street frontage, again reflecting a consistency with surrounding development.

It is intended that the development site would be subdivided, potentially using a combination of Community and Strata title, to achieve development lots that would allow the logical staging of construction.

Preliminary Consultation

There have been detailed design discussions with both Coffs Harbour City Council and with the Department of Planning's Urban Design Branch. More recently, these discussions have been in the context of the recently announced City Plan Project, wherein the State Government and Council are working together to promote Coffs Harbour as a regional growth centre.

As part of these discussions preliminary Urban Design Principles for the site were developed by Council and the Department of Planning and communicated to the proponent. Subsequent discussions have refined these principles and the proposal herein reflects the results of that refinement.

**Justification for
'Major Project'**

The proposed development is designated as a 'project' to which Part 3A of the Act applies through clause 6 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005*. This is through the effect of:

- paragraph 13 of Schedule 1 of the SEPP, in that it constitutes a residential development with a capital value in excess of \$50 million; and
- paragraph 1(g)(ii) of Schedule 2 of the SEPP, in that it will include buildings greater than 13 metres in height, located outside the metropolitan coastal zone.

Preliminary discussions with officers of the Department of Planning have also confirmed that the status of the proposal as a 'Major Project' is warranted in this case given the recently announced City Plan project for Coffs Harbour. This project is being undertaken jointly by the Department of Planning and Coffs Harbour City Council and will establish Coffs Harbour as a regional growth centre.

The project is initially concentrating on the CBD / Jetty Precinct area and will create new planning instruments that will promote higher densities and significant urban design improvements.

The site is ideally placed in the context of the CBD and Jetty precinct to provide a real, tangible catalyst for this 'new Coffs Harbour'.

It is also unique in being one of the only large development sites in the centre of Coffs, and the Department and Council have recognised the value of this in being able to achieve a quality development, of a large scale, that can lead the future growth of the City.

As a catalyst project, it is therefore appropriate that it be assessed at State level with, of course, appropriate input from Council, so that, in conjunction with the strategic / statutory planning work that is underway, the project can set an appropriate direction for future development in this key part of the City.

Key Issues

The following key issues are relevant to the proposed project:

- height and design
- visual amenity; and
- traffic and access.

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

GeoLINK, in partnership with Crone Partners Architecture Studios, have been engaged by Huntercorp Properties Pty Ltd to prepare an application seeking approval under Part 3A of the EP&A Act 1979 for the redevelopment of the Coffs Harbour Base Hospital site.

This report is submitted to the Department of Planning to:

- seek confirmation that the proposal is a 'project' to which Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* applies;
- apply, under Section 75E of the Act for the approval of the Minister to carry out the project;
- provide a preliminary environmental assessment of the project; and
- request that the Director-General provide environmental assessment requirements for the project, under Section 75F of the Act.

To assist this process, this report describes the project and the subject site, provides an assessment of relevant planning provisions and outlines potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed development.

1.2 Preliminary Consultation

Preliminary discussions have progressed over a twelve-month period, initially with officers of Coffs Harbour City Council and, more recently, including both Council and the Urban Design Branch of the Department of Planning, in the context of the recently commenced City Plan project.

Council agreed, in principal, that the nature and location of the site are such that an increased height could be considered, subject to detailed design and consideration of views, visual impacts etc. Preliminary discussions indicated that Council would consider a site-specific DCP, to be incorporated into the proposed Jetty Area DCP. This has subsequently been somewhat superseded by the City Plan project, which will result in the development of a range of new controls that will establish this central city areas as a regional growth area.

In the context of this City Plan project, the Department provided ideas and concepts for the development of the site, particularly focusing on acceptable height for the various elements within the site.

Illustration 1.1 contains the Principles Plan provided by the Department. It shows indicative building heights increasing in the middle part of the site, taking advantage of the slope of the land, falling away from Victoria Street, which provides the opportunity to site taller buildings where their perceived height in relation to Victoria Street will be diminished.

A meeting of the proponent and these parties was held in March 2009 to discuss these principles and aspects of the concept design. At this meeting, the Department and Council advised of the nature of the City Plan project and it was agreed that redevelopment of this site presents an opportunity to provide a real catalyst for this project.

The principles were refined during that meeting. A fundamental change was the agreed deletion of the proposed 'village shops' area.

The concept masterplan contained in **Appendix A** has been prepared as a result of these discussions, to address the key principles as further refined at the March meeting. These include:

- higher buildings downslope, more to the middle of the site;
- height of building elements on Victoria Street to reflect the residential scale of the street (i.e. two storey)
- maximization of useable open space within the site by limiting building footprint; achieved by increasing height so that a relatively high density / yield can be achieved (in recognition of the need for urban consolidation and increased densities in this 'inner-city' area);
- setbacks to reflect the residential scale of the local streets; and
- internal vehicular access should not connect through the site.

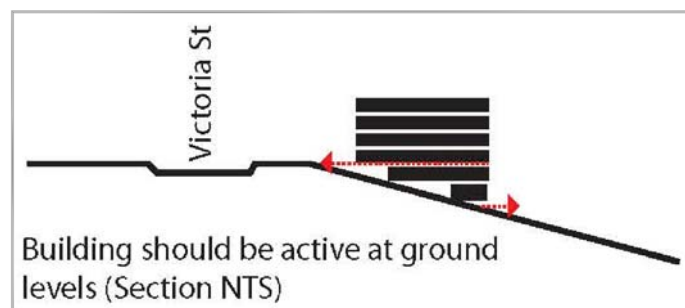
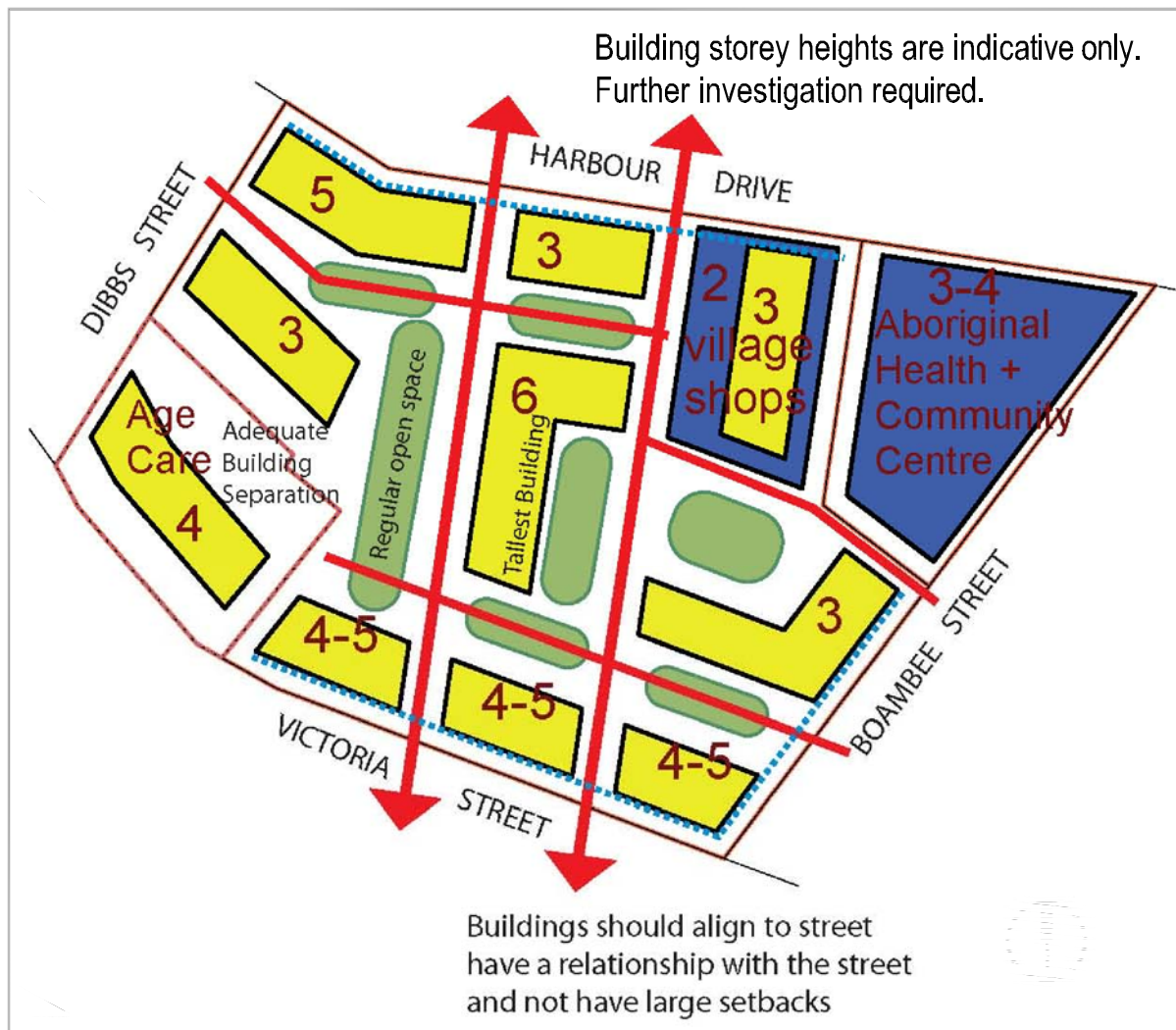
1.3 Further Information

Should additional information be required in relation to this application, please contact **Rob van Iersel** of GeoLINK on 02 6687 7666 or 0419 237 988.

Principle Drawing

Hospital site and surrounds for Coffs Council (draft / internal use)

Department of Planning



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The Site and Its Context

2.1 Cadastral Description

The subject site is described as Lot 20 DP 1050895. **Illustration 2.1** shows the cadastre information for the site overlayed on an aerial photograph.

As shown, the land has an area of 2.583 ha, with frontage to Harbour Drive, Boambee Street, Victoria Street and Dibbs Street. A variable width drainage easement is located in the south-western corner of the land, apparently conveying stormwater from the adjoining aged care facility to Dibbs Street. No other easements or encumbrances exist on the land.

2.2 Site Context

The subject site is located on Victoria Street and backs onto Harbour Drive, the primary road linking the Coffs Harbour Town Centre and the Jetty precinct and main beaches. The site is approximately 1.7 km from the intersection of Harbour Drive and the Pacific Highway and approximately 1.4 km to the jetty and surfing beaches.

Coffs Harbour City Council and the State Government recently announced the City Plan Project, which aims to establish Coffs Harbour as a regional growth centre. A new City Centre Local Environmental Plan will be developed to facilitate this future growth.

The site is strategically located within this City Plan area, providing a link between the commercial town centre and the residential / tourism Jetty precinct. It also provides the only undeveloped site of this size within this future growth area.

As such, the development of the site should be seen as a catalyst for the future Coffs Harbour, rather than a continuation of the 'old' Coffs.

The site comprises almost all of a 'city block', being bounded by four streets. There are only two other existing uses within this block; the Legacy Nursing Home, on the corner of Dibbs and Victoria Streets, and the Galambila Aboriginal Health Centre, on the corner of Harbour Drive and Boambee Street.

Illustration 2.2 shows the locality of the subject site, identifying the subject land and its relationship to adjoining land uses.

2.3 Built Form in the Locality

As highlighted above, the site is located in the central part of the City. Existing development around the site is quite diverse in terms of land use, building type, scale and age. Examples of adjoining and nearby development are shown below. A key to the photographs is shown in **Illustration 2.3**.



Plate 2.1 **Aboriginal Health centre in foreground – site behind**



Plate 2.2 **Boambee Street – looking south**



Plate 2.3 The site from Aboriginal Health Centre boundary



Plate 2.4 Victoria Street – looking west



Plate 2.5 **Victoria Street – Opposite the site**



Plate 2.6 **Victoria Street – Along site boundary**



Plate 2.7 **Victoria Street – Aged Care facility**



Plate 2.8 **The Site – From western boundary**



Plate 2.9 **Dibbs Street Panarama**

As shown in these photos, there is a wide diversity of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, from the four storey walk-ups in Dibbs Street to the older single dwellings in Boambee Street. It is also apparent that most of the existing building stock within Victoria Street is at a scale that is well below the intended medium-high density of this area. It is reasonable to surmise, therefore, that some of the existing stock will be replaced over time with more dense forms of development.

The majority of this area, however, consists of single lots in the 600-800m² range. It will therefore be very difficult to achieve well designed and efficient increases in density without significant amalgamation of existing lots.

This makes the subject site, with its large cleared area, all the more important in that it provides one of the few opportunities to effectively reach target densities for the area.

2.4 Site Analysis

2.4.1 Visual Amenity

Victoria Street is constructed along a ridge line, with the site falling from this street to Harbour Drive. This elevation provides a level of visual prominence for the site, although this is mitigated by topography elsewhere, particularly other elevated lands to the east and west, and by existing vegetation in the area.

Existing residences on the southern side of Victoria Street enjoy views to the north, across the site.

2.4.2 Topography and Existing Land Uses

The site slopes to the north, from a high point adjacent to Victoria Street at around 28.0mAH to Harbour Drive, at an elevation of around 6.0 mAH. Slopes range from 10 to 15 degrees.

The site contains a number of informal drainage channels and a small detention basin at its lowest point. We understand that these were installed to control site run-off after the previous hospital buildings were removed.

All buildings that were previously on the site have been demolished, apart from one dwelling remaining in the north-western corner.

Adjoining the site to the south-west is the Coffs Harbour Legacy Nursing Home. This is a single / double storey brick building containing 49 high-care beds and associated facilities. Adjoining the site to the north-east is the Galambila Aboriginal Health Centre, which operates on a full time basis and treats over 650 persons per month. The Centre building is also a low set, brick construction.

2.4.3 Soils

The site falls with the Ulong landscape unit, which contains a loamy topsoil grading to a clay or silty clay at depth. The clayey soils show evidence of compaction, in particular the 'terraced' areas on which buildings have formerly been located.

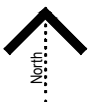
2.4.4 Vegetation

The site has been cleared of most vegetation, with the exception of a small number of remnant Eucalypts and Camphor Laurel in the centre of the site, and a dense row of trees along the Harbour Drive boundary. These trees include mature Camphor Laurels (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Brush Box (*Tristania conferta*), Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) and Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium* spp).

In general, the trees on site are of poor health and contain a high proportion of weed species, except for the trees in the north east corner of the site (on Harbour Drive). Significant native trees will be retained.

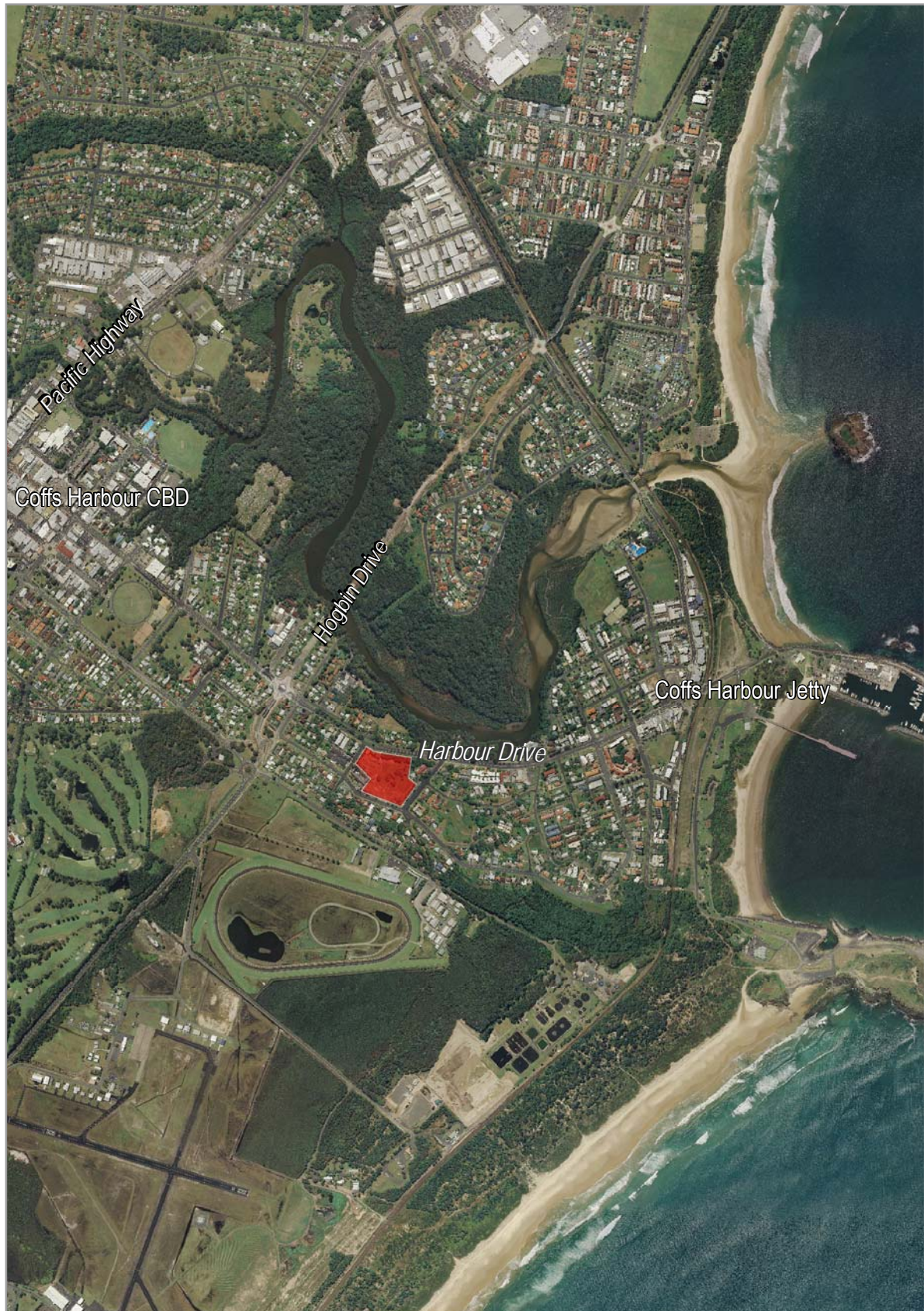
2.4.5 Aspect and Climate

The site generally enjoys a northerly and westerly aspect with good solar access throughout the year. The climate is typical of the north coast region and has long been recognised as being attractive to residents. As the land is sloping and given the design of the buildings, views to the north are available from most parts of the site.



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LEGEND

 The site



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Project Description

3.1 Description of Proposal

Project Approval is sought for the residential development of the site, involving the construction of thirteen individual buildings within the site, as shown in the layout plan prepared by Crone Partners architecture studios (see **Appendix A**).

The individual buildings will be of variable heights, with two storeys adjacent to Victoria Street, graduating to six storeys more centrally within the site and four to five storeys on the lower parts of the land.

The plans developed by Crone Partners Architect Studios, contained in **Appendix A**, include an indicative site section and a plan showing overall design analysis / intent.

The section indicates how the buildings utilise the slope of the land to step down the site. In this way, the apparent height, as observed from Victoria Street and residences to the south, will be consistent with a significantly smaller development. As shown, two-storey building elements have been located adjacent to the Victoria Street frontage, reflecting a consistency with surrounding development

The mix of individual dwellings is currently being determined, but it is expected that the development will provide in the order of 250-300 individual dwellings, comprising a mix of types, configurations and sizes. The dwellings are clustered in the individual buildings to maximise deep soil / open space zones, with a total of around 7,700 m² communal open space provided (approximately 30% of the total site area). The dwellings will be located to provide for view corridors and pedestrian links through the site from east to west. These corridor will also be the location of communal facilities, such as visitor car parks, a swimming pool and landscaped seating areas.

The project has an estimated capital investment value of around \$80 million and is likely to result in around 100 full time equivalent construction jobs and 25 full time equivalent operational jobs.

3.1.1 Residential Dwellings

The development will consist of a variety of unit types and sizes. Market research is currently being finalised to determine the most appropriate mix, particularly in relation to the future of Coffs Harbour as a regional growth area.

Private open space will be provided for all dwellings, primarily in the form of balconies. All residents will have access to communal open space and associated facilities at ground level. Car parking will be provided, predominantly at basement level, with the quantum of spaces to be sufficient to cater for the demand generated by the dwelling types and mix.

3.1.2 Access/ Internal Roadways

Vehicular access to the development will be provided off Boambee and Dibbs Streets, where both crossovers will act as entrances and exits. There will not be an internal connection between these accesses, leaving a clear open space area roughly in the middle of the site. Visitor car parking spaces will be at ground level, with the majority of resident spaces provided in basement car parks, directly accessible off the internal access roads.

3.1.3 Landscaping

The site of the proposed development will be comprehensively landscaped to provide a high level of amenity and privacy for occupants and also to reduce the visual impact of the development.

3.1.4 Internal Pedestrian Paths

Throughout the development, a series of pedestrian and bike ways will be provided, linking the apartment buildings with the internal road and surrounding roads. Some of the bike ways will be for recreational use and some have been designed for the commuter.

3.1.5 Stormwater, Sewer and Reticulated Water Infrastructure

The development will be provided with all urban services. Stormwater will be disposed of via contemporary Water Sensitive Urban Design measures, designed to maximise on-site infiltration.

Detailed design of all services will be undertaken in accordance with Council's contemporary standards, and relevant State and Australian standards.

3.1.6 Subdivision

It is intended that the development site would be subdivided, potentially using a combination of Community and Strata title, to achieve development lots that would allow the logical staging of construction.

Planning Framework

4.1 Justification for the Application of Part 3A

The proposed development is designated as a 'project' to which Part 3A of the Act applies through clause 6 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005*. This is through the effect of:

- paragraph 13 of Schedule 1 of the SEPP, in that it constitutes a residential development with a capital value in excess of \$50 million; and
- paragraph 1(g)(ii) of Schedule 2 of the SEPP, in that it will include buildings greater than 13 metres in height, located outside the metropolitan coastal zone.

In this case, the proposal is not excluded from the provision of 1(g)(ii) because it does not comply with the relevant local development standard relating to height within the *Coffs Harbour Medium-High Density Housing Development Control Plan* (see **Section 4.3.4** below).

Preliminary discussions with officers of the Department of Planning have also confirmed that the status of the proposal as a 'Major Project' is warranted in this case, given the recently announced City Plan project for Coffs Harbour. This project is being undertaken jointly by the Department of Planning and Coffs Harbour City Council and will establish Coffs Harbour as a regional growth centre.

The project is initially concentrating on the CBD / Jetty Precinct area and will create new planning instruments that will promote higher densities and significant urban design improvements.

The site is ideally placed in the context of the CBD and Jetty precinct to provide a real, tangible catalyst for this 'new Coffs Harbour'.

It is also unique in being one of the only large development sites in the centre of Coffs, and the Department and Council have recognised the value of this in being able to achieve a quality development, of a large scale, that can lead the future growth of the City.

As a catalyst project, it is therefore appropriate that it be assessed at State level with, of course, appropriate input from Council, so that, in conjunction with the strategic / statutory planning work that is underway, the project can set an appropriate direction for future development in this key part of the City.

The project will have a capital investment value of around \$80M and provide significant employment, reinforcing its importance and status as a 'Major Project'.

4.2 Mid North Coast Regional Strategy (MNCRS)

The MNCRS identifies that the population of the Mid North Coast is facing a high growth rate that needs to be very carefully managed to preserve the things that make the area such an appealing place to live. The Regional Strategy is based on a potential population increase of 94 000 between 2006 and 2031, growing from 330 600 to 424 600. This equates to an increase greater than 28 per cent. The strategy acknowledges that the greatest population growth pressure will be experienced around Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Great Lakes/ Taree. Coffs Harbour is expected to require an additional 19 000 dwellings.

The strategy acknowledges that the new dwellings that will be needed should include an increased amount of attached or multi-unit housing, from its 2006 level of 20 per cent to 40 per cent. There is an identified need to prevent urban sprawl and consolidate existing urban areas.

The MNCRS has specific guidelines and principles for settlement and housing. Preliminary assessment indicates that the project is generally consistent with these principles and guidelines, particularly given that the proposal:

- provides a mix of housing types, catering to a range of household sizes;
- provides much needed multi-unit housing;
- is in a central location; and
- is not located on land with significant environmental, coastal or cultural heritage values.

4.3 Statutory Planning Framework

4.3.1 Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000

Current Zoning

The majority of the land is currently zoned Residential 2C Medium-High Density, pursuant to the provisions of the *Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2000* (CHLEP 2000). The primary objectives of this zone are:

- *to enable housing development and other development that is compatible with a medium-high density residential environment.*
- *to provide for development that is within the environmental capacity of a medium-high density residential environment and can be adequately serviced.*

The proposed development would be defined as 'multi-unit housing' for the purposes of the LEP. The LEP defines 'multi-unit housing' as:

three or more dwellings in a group, whether attached or not, but does not include a hotel or motel.

Multi-unit housing is permissible with development consent with the Residential 2C Zone.

Illustration 4.1 shows the current zoning of the site pursuant to the LEP.

As shown, a small area of the site, located in the north-east corner, is zoned Special Uses 5A. This area is noted as a special use for drainage purposes. The concept design has taken this 5A area into account and there will not be any buildings proposed within this part of the land. A detailed hydraulic assessment will be undertaken for the Environmental Assessment, dealing with stormwater management and the potential for localised flooding. It is likely that any stormwater treatment / detention infrastructure that may be required will be sited in this part of the site.

The following provision of the LEP is likely to be the only directly relevant 'special provision' of the LEP, and will be a consideration for the assessment of the proposed development.

Clause 14 – Services

Consent shall not be granted to the carrying out of any development on land to which this Plan applies unless:

- (a) *a water supply and facilities for the removal or disposal of sewage and drainage are available to that land, or*
- (b) *arrangements satisfactory to the consent authority have been made for the provision of that supply and those facilities, or*

- (c) *the consent authority has formed the opinion the development proposed does not require that supply or those facilities.*

Preliminary investigations indicate that the development can be adequately serviced by way of existing infrastructure, subject to more detailed design.

4.3.2 North Coast Regional Environmental Plan

The North Coast Regional Environmental Plan (NCREP) specifies objectives and provisions to be considered in the assessment of development applications.

There are a number of provisions within NCREP that directly relate to the proposed development and will need to be considered by the Department when it assesses the Part 3A Application. The key provisions relate to issues including coastal lands, residential development, and servicing of development.

4.3.3 State Environmental Planning Policies

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 – Design Quality of residential Flat Development

The concept design has been undertaken in the context of the 10 'quality design principles' outlined in the SEPP. The detailed design of the project will, likewise, adopt and address these principles, and be undertaken in accordance with the Residential Design Code. It will also be subject to the design verification certificate required by Clause 50(1A) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*.

State Environment Planning Policy No. 71 – Coastal Protection

The site is located within the coastal zone, although it is not directly adjacent to any foreshore or coastal hazard area. The provision of Clause 8 of the SEPP will be addressed in detail in the environmental assessment.

State Environment Planning Policy (Major Projects 2005)

This policy specifies a range of development types that are considered to have State environmental planning significance. Development of the type specified will be dealt with under the provisions of Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, with the Minister for Planning as the consent authority.

As outlined above, the proposed development will constitute a Major Project due to 'triggers' under both Schedules 1 and 2 of the SEPP.

4.3.4 Development Control Plans

A number of DCPs apply to the project, including:

- Access and Mobility;
- Medium-High Density Housing;
- Notification;
- Off Street Car Parking; and
- Waste Management.

The Medium-High Density Housing DCP provides a range of controls that will be relevant to a consideration of the proposed development. The key matters are:

- Density – will depend on the mix of units.
- Setbacks – a building height plane is combined with the front setback control to ensure that buildings 'step back' into the site as height increases. The proposed development will comply.
- Height – a maximum height of 10m is set. Some elements of the development will exceed this limit. The environmental assessment, therefore, will need to justify this departure.

- Private open space – will depend on the final mix of units.
- Car Parking – the proposal will comply, with most resident parking provided at basement level.

The proposal is likely to comply with all of the relevant development standards, apart from the control of building height. In this case, the design of the development reflects the likely future controls / requirements, as they are likely to develop in the context of the City Plan project, which will seek to achieve greater density of development.

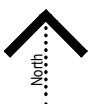
The site, being the only large development site in the City Plan area, also offers a unique opportunity to achieve improved urban design outcomes while still maximising density. In this case, the foundation for achieving this is to consolidate the floor space in smaller individual building footprints, to create larger internal areas of deep soils zones and communal open space, rather than spreading the density across a greater proportion of the site simply to meet the arbitrary 10m height limit.

The slope of the site also allows this increased height to be achieved in a way that will not create significant visual impacts or significant impacts for existing views across the site.

4.3.5 Other Council Policies

Coffs Creek Floodplain Risk Management Plan

The formulation of this policy is a result of a long history of flooding on Coffs Creek that has caused significant damage to the natural and built environment. The management plan indicates that in a 1 in 100 year flood event, 308 residences and 111 commercial buildings would be flooded above floor level. The site is not flood prone land. According to the plan, the current estimated extent of maximum flooding extends southwards from Coffs Creek as far as Harbour Drive but flood waters will not enter the site.



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environmental management and design

Preliminary Environmental Assessment

4.4 Biophysical Issues

The Environmental Assessment to be prepared for the Part 3A Application will investigate all potential biophysical impacts of the project. This investigation will include a comprehensive review of the existing site and a review of any relevant previous reports and studies. It will also involve necessary additional investigations to ensure that all potential impacts of the proposed development are identified, assessed and addressed. The potential biophysical impacts are summarised below.

4.4.1 Ecological Values

The site is the former location of the Coffs Harbour Base Hospital and accordingly the land is highly modified. There are some established trees on site, the most significant located in the north-eastern corner. These trees will be retained. Other trees on site are generally in poor health and many are weed species. There is very limited ecological value in the site in its current state.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for protection of the ecological values of the site are:

- retain all significant vegetation on the site; and
- seek to add to local values and connectivity through landscape design and planting, using locally endemic species.

4.4.2 Stormwater and Drainage

A comprehensive stormwater management plan will need to be prepared as part of the environmental assessment. This plan will need to address all potential impacts associated with stormwater runoff from the development and internal roads and footpaths, as well as any erosion and sedimentation impacts from construction of the buildings and associated infrastructure. The stormwater management plan will need to substantiate that there will be no net impact on adjoining properties as a result of the proposed development.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for stormwater management / treatment are:

- manage nutrients and pollutants such that there will be no net increase in pollutants in waters leaving the site above that occurring in its pre-developed state; and
- manage post development flow volumes and discharge frequency to ensure no change in hydrological conditions.

4.5 Socio-Economic Issues

4.5.1 Visual Amenity

The redevelopment site is quite visible in the local area as it is relatively elevated and is located on one of the main access ways to the Harbour. Victoria Street, which forms the southern boundary of the site, runs along a ridgeline and currently views to the north are able to be gained from this Street. It is the impact on views from Victoria Street that requires the most consideration.

The development has therefore been designed to respect both the visual prominence of the site and the existing views from adjoining development, being mindful of the future development potential of those areas.

The development is therefore stepped down from Victoria Street, with highest buildings located downslope distant from the road frontage. This will achieve compliance with the 30 degree building height plane, minimising any impacts on existing views. The buildings will be designed to be visually soft through high levels of articulation throughout, very limited lengths of blank walls, light weight building materials where possible and a suitably soft colour palette. The development will be further softened through extensive landscaping works.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles relating to visual amenity:

- ensure the visual impact of the proposed development is mitigated by implementing quality design principles, particularly in relation to the siting of building elements within the site; and
- prepare and implement a comprehensive landscaping plan that specifically deals with visual impacts of the development.

4.5.2 Traffic and Access

Access is proposed via two entrances, one off Boambee Street and the other off Dibbs Street. The Environmental Assessment will need to provide an assessment of traffic impact associated with the proposed development. This assessment will look at potential impacts on the current road network, road uses and road standard and assess compliance of the proposed development with the RTA publication *Guide for Traffic Generating Development*, and Council's relevant Development Control Plans.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for traffic and access are to:

- design access to the site to ensure road safety;
- implement required road safety measures, particularly in relation to the intersections of Dibbs and Boambee Streets with Harbour Drive; and
- integrate with the existing users of the road.

4.5.3 Public Interest

The proposed redevelopment, given it is on a visually prominent and well known site, will be of interest to the local community.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles in regard to public interest are:

- ensure that the development complies with relevant local controls and policies;
- provide a complete and thorough assessment of the project that will allow the community to understand all aspects of the proposal; and
- work collaboratively with the likely effected parties to seek acceptable solutions.

Conclusion

This Preliminary Environmental Assessment describes the project, identifies the planning framework that will be relevant to the proposed project and identifies potential environmental and socio-economic impacts from the proposed project. It is considered that the key matters that require further investigation as part of the Environmental Assessment relate to:

- visual impacts;
- height and density;
- urban design quality; and
- stormwater management.

The proposed residential development is considered to be generally consistent with the relevant planning EPIs, DCPs and relevant policies, other than proposing some building elements with a height greater than that anticipated by the Medium-High Density DCP. This additional height has been the subject of much discussion and it is considered that it is warranted / acceptable in the context of the Coffs City Plan project and the strategic importance of the site.

It is considered that the identified potential impacts will be able to be successfully mitigated by quality design outcomes and management measures.



Rob van Iersel
Principal / Planner



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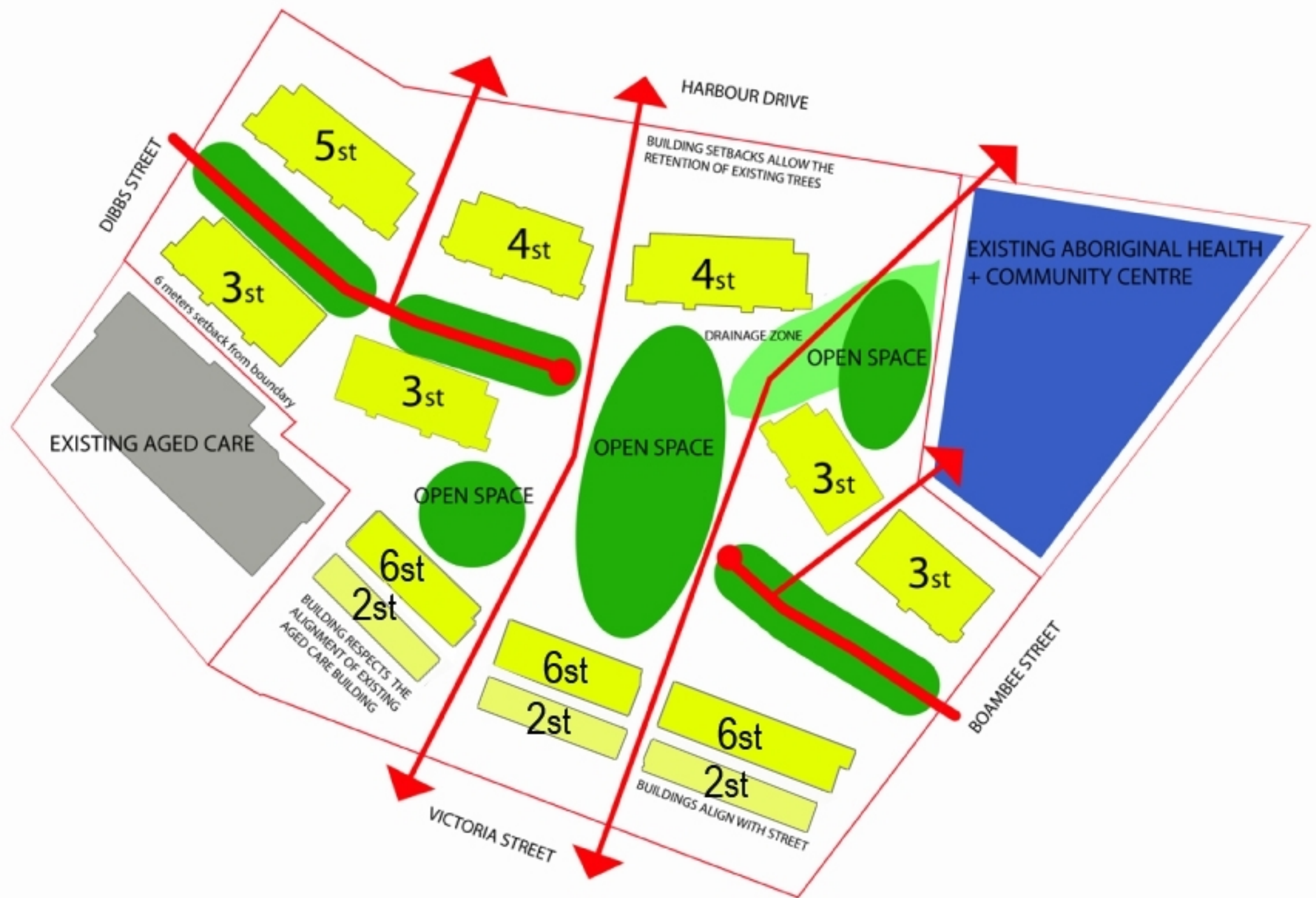
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Appendix A

Concept Architectural Plans



Coffs Harbour Base Hospital Site

12 May 2009



