

Macquarie Park Commerce Centre

Landscape Design Report



BRISBANE MELBOURNE SYDNEY SHANGHAI SHENZHEN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN DESIGN PLANNING DIGITAL MEDIA
ASPECT Studios Pty Ltd ABN 11 120219551

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Landscape Statement Macquarie Park Commerce Centre

Project Summary

ASPECT Studios was commissioned by Winten Property Group + Australand to prepare a landscape concept master plan for the Macquarie Park Commerce Centre.

Macquarie Park Commerce Centre is a new commercial and retail development located in Macquarie Park, bounded by Lane Cove Road, Waterloo Road, Coolinga Street and Giffnock Avenue. The site is located in a prominent position on arterial major roads and adjacent to the new Macquarie Park Railway Station.

The scope for the project includes design of a series of publically accessible courtyards, upgrades to street frontages, and the urban plaza around the existing train station.

The landscape areas include;

- The civic frontage and streetscape upgrades to Waterloo Rd and adjacent the train station
- The streetscape upgrades to lane Cove Rd, Coolinga St and Giffnock Ave
- The courtyard 'links' between the buildings
- The central courtyard to the rear of the site

Design Principles

The aims for the project are to;

- provide high quality landscape spaces in accordance with Ryde Councils' planning documents including Macquarie Park DCP and Technical Manual
- protect significant existing trees, and supplement with new trees of significant scale
- maximize the potential for deep soil, soil volume and permeable surface
- create rich and memorable courtyards that provide a variety of uses
- provide a civic frontage to the building facing Waterloo Rd and adjacent the station
- respond to the existing site levels and site features
- encourage WSUD through use of raingardens and infiltration zones within the landscape
- provide a landscape that is accessible for all

Civic Frontage (Waterloo Rd)

The civic frontage of the development is the setback to Waterloo Road and the areas adjacent the Macquarie Park Train Station.

The intent of the Civic Frontage is to create a wide urban pedestrian priority space that links with the Train Station plaza and serves as a formal entry to the development.

The materiality of the civic space includes high quality pavement (granite) extending throughout the setback and under the colonnade to the building line, as a unified and generous public pedestrian space. A wide band of ecotrihex pavement is proposed along the Waterloo Rd frontage to ensure continued health and vigor of a row of significant existing *Eucalyptus* trees. Within the grove of trees adjacent the train station, bands of porous pavers are proposed within the granite to encourage optimum health for new trees proposed as part of the development.

Transport connections include a new bus stop proposed closer to the train station entry, with a new bus shelter. A kerb layback is proposed centrally along Waterloo Rd as a taxi drop-off area and 'kiss and ride' at the main entry to the development. A 2.5m wide paved zone is located on the kerb line for pedestrian and cycle movement. The zone has the potential to be modified to a dedicated cycleway (asphalt, in accordance with the Macquarie Park Technical Manual) if future demands warrant. The pedestrian path would subsequently be encouraged within the site boundary area to retain the stand of existing significant trees.

Furniture includes bench seating within the plaza space and along the Waterloo Rd civic setback. Rows of bicycle racks are proposed along the Waterloo Rd frontage and adjacent to the station, providing parking for 52no of bicycles.

Planting includes the retention of significant Eucalypts along Waterloo Rd, with new *Eucalyptus saligna* street tree planting. Adjacent to Building A and B, *Lophostemon confertus* are proposed, and within the station plaza, a grove of *Waterhousia floribunda* 'Sweeper' is suggested. The majority of trees are located within generous tree pits planted with native grasses and ground covers. All plants have been selected for their site suitability, hardiness, tolerance to low water conditions and appropriateness for inundation in raingardens where required.

The grading of the civic frontage has been proposed to encourage equal access, to protect existing trees, and to enable stormwater to flow to raingardens located between Building B and C and within the station plaza area. A series of stairs are required to the front of Building C to accommodate the existing steep level change on this corner. A series of benches and planting is proposed to break the regularity of the stairs and encourage inhabitation on the edges.

Streetscapes (Lane Cove Rd, Coolinga St, Giffnock Ave)

Streetscape upgrades are proposed for Coolinga Street, Lane Cove Road and Giffnock Avenue adjacent the site area. The streetscape design has been proposed in accordance with the Macquarie Park DCP and Technical Manual, with any modification from the guidelines and the reasons noted below.

Coolinga Street includes trihex footpath pavement with Trees in planted tree pits. The guidelines call for a turf verge, but given the proposed active frontage and spill-out potential, the pavement has been extended to maximise the hard paved usable space. Within the site boundary, a high quality concrete unit paver is proposed. Street trees are suggested as *Eucalyptus microcorys*, with a native grass and groundcover understory. Two rows of bicycle racks provide parking for 39no of bicycles.

Giffnock Avenue includes granite unit pavement to the footpath, with a planted/ turf verge with *Angophora floribunda* street tree planting. Existing trees are proposed for retention where possible, and the setback includes mass planting of native species. All works are proposed in accordance with the guidelines.

Lane Cove Road consists of granite flagstone pavement to the footpath and the setback to the building line. Stairs with bench seating and planted bands are proposed to accommodate the level change from the footpath to the building level. One row of bicycle racks provides parking for 20no of bikes adjacent to the bench seating. Although street tree planting is proposed within tree pits within the guidelines, we have suggested that *Lophostemon confertus* street trees be planted within a continuous planted verge to provide a physical barrier for pedestrians from a fairly busy section of road.

Courtyard Links

The courtyard links include the wide public spaces between the proposed buildings and the through site link running east-west from Coolinga St and Lane Cove Rd. All of these spaces contribute to the public domain by encouraging pedestrian movement and visual permeability through the site.

The courtyards are shaded spaces that will be viewed down upon from the adjacent developments, as well as offer opportunities for cafe spill-out on the ground floor. The courtyard links consist of a series of hard-paved and permeable surface spaces under groves of trees to provide for spill-out opportunities, particularly where north facing and receiving more direct sunlight.

The rainforest gardens meander through the courtyards, and 'break' through the regularity of the paved areas as informal green fingers. These gardens are intended to be lush spaces that provide respite as wandering gardens that one moves through, or simply beautiful gardens that will be viewed upon. A series of bench seats move through the courtyards, with the level change on the Coolinga St Courtyard providing a range of smaller courtyards and informal seating opportunities. The garden species consist of predominantly native species chosen for their shade tolerance and lush, textural form.

The opportunity exists to utilise these garden spaces for additional WSUD infiltration beds if required for stormwater management under further design development.

Central Courtyard

The central courtyard is a publically accessible garden space to the rear of the development site. The garden is intended to facilitate a number of roles; the primary space for storm water filtration, capture and management; the main lunchtime gathering space; offer opportunity for a range of passive and active recreational activities; and provide an 'escape' from the work environment.

The courtyard consists of a rainforest garden to the northern end, with slightly elevated timber boardwalks and bench seating forming a meandering path through the garden. The decks are large enough for small groups to gather, and a series of rooms are provided for separate small group events. The plant species include textural and broad-leafed plants that are chosen for their shade tolerance, with the majority being indigenous to the Ryde area. To the north of the courtyard, where the courtyard through-site links collide, there is the opportunity for an artwork to be considered. We suggest that this could draw on the site's natural geological characteristics of sandstone outcrops within a forest setting. This may involve the use of sandstone plinths used sculpturally for seating, a water feature, or pavement inlay. The resolution should be developed by an artist in future stages of works in accordance with Council.

To the southern end of the courtyard, a generous area of turf is proposed. This is the area to receive the most sunlight, and offers opportunities for use for corporate/ company events or gym or crèche spill-out. It is also a private area setback from busy roads that is ideal for lunchtime respite.

Running adjacent the eastern boundary is a linear raingarden that collects the stormwater overflow from much of the development site area. The water will be directed to the ponds, filtered through a series of stepped planted beds, and collected in an underground tank for re-use.

Adjacent the boundary, existing trees are retained where in good health, and supplemented with new tree and screen planting. The majority of plants selected are indigenous to the area.

Integrated and Sustainable Landscape

The landscape proposal for the development provides green space with amenity for staff, worker and public use. Apart from providing amenity, the landscape areas also have a role in collection and reuse of stormwater as well as mitigation of large stormwater flows. Porous pavements allow infiltration and limit stormwater flows across the site, and a series of raingardens, filter and direct water to underground storage for re-use for toilet flushing and irrigation.

Materials for use in the landscape have been selected for minimal environmental impact. All the soil used in landscape areas will include a significant component of recycled green waste, or from stockpiled site top soil. Plant species (80% native – refer to plant schedule) are selected to be hardy, requiring minimal irrigation or chemical sprays once established.

A significant amount of the landscape area is on deep soil, with the majority of garden courtyards on sufficient soil depth over slab to support larger tree planting. To ensure optimum conditions for the proposed planting areas above podium slab, all planting beds will have a minimum of 500mm depth of growing medium and a minimum of 1300mm where trees are grown above slab. All podium level massed planting areas have been designed to be accessible for ongoing maintenance..

Much of the pavement material in the deep soil zone is porous to maximize the quantity of available soil volume to for new and existing trees. The porous paving (unlike permeable paving) allows gaseous exchange and water infiltration across the whole volume of paved area.

Best practice water conservation is proposed such as the use of mulch, elimination of turf areas, and flow regulators on hoses subject to construction certificate detail. All soft landscape areas will be drip irrigated using recycled water that is harvested and stored on site

Lighting of the landscape areas

In addition to area lighting of footpaths required for safety (which could be discretely mounted on the buildings where possible to reduce clutter in the pedestrian areas) feature lighting is proposed to be included in the landscape areas. Linear LED lights are proposed to be located under the base of some benches throughout the site, to provide a scattered strip lighting effect. Feature lighting would also be integrated with any sandstone plinth/water feature elements (as described in the Central Courtyard section above) to highlight these features at night.

ASPECT Studios Pty Ltd – Landscape Architecture.
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