

NORTH PENRITH

URBAN DESIGN JUSTIFICATION

Vision

The Vision for the North Penrith site is:

To create a “Cool” Transit Oriented Village with:

- strong placemaking
- dense shade in the public domain
- expressed water
- diverse housing for all segments of the market

Urban Design Principles

The major drivers for the Urban Design Concept are as follows:

Express the Rich Heritage of the Site

i.e. Conserve Thornton Hall, Combwood and curtilages, use the cricket oval and former speedway to generate the urban form, interpret through public domain and public art works.

Work with the Site

The site is very flat and consequently engineering works will be required for drainage and infrastructure. Use these works to generate site features.

Expressing the Water

Drainage/hydrological works should incorporate state of the art “Water Sensitive Urban Design” and these works should be used to create amenity and natural “air conditioning”.

Transit Oriented Development

The site provides a major opportunity for creation of ‘Transit Oriented Development’ because of its proximity to Penrith Railway Station, bus interchange and Town Centre.

The site should connect strongly to the rail station and the Penrith CBD, and integrate with buses arriving from the north.

The site should be developed in a dense mixed-use manner to facilitate transit use, both for residents (out - commuters) and employment (in - commuters). The site should also aspire to a strong degree of self containment.

In this context dense housing forms should be sought along with diverse local employment types.

Placemaking

The Concept Plan focuses on “placemaking” i.e. creating a variety of interesting places and spaces from soft and green, to bold and urban, to be enjoyed by the local community and by visitors. These places provide the heart and soul of the community.

Connective, Walkable Community

The Concept Plan seeks to facilitate social engagement and community building by developing a highly connective and walkable public domain. The public domain in this context must be safe, attractive, well connected and climatically comfortable.

Future Proofing

The Concept Plan is based on a distorted grid system which creates very flexible blocks able to accommodate a wide variety of uses over time.

Thus, whilst blocks can be developed in a diverse manner with a wide variety of medium density dwellings, they can also be developed as mid-rise apartment buildings, mixed-use (commercial/retail/residential) or indeed as intensive commercial office buildings or urban educational or medical establishments.

Housing Density and Diversity

In a 'Transit Oriented' situation it is desirable to generate the highest densities possible. This, however, is controlled by the depth of the market for density product (apartments) and by the cost/price ratio. At the moment it is very difficult to build economically viable, multi-storey, apartment buildings in Penrith.

Thus, the project has pushed densities wherever possible and left room for increased apartment buildings if and when they become viable.

The Concept Plan also promotes a very wide variety of quite dense, but low rise, residential solutions which we believe will find ready acceptance in the market, based on location, amenity and affordability.

Retention of Existing Landscape

There are some excellent remnant species of Cumberland Woodland remaining on the site. Most of the significant species and groupings occur at the eastern edge of the site and around the oval. There are also some very large and mature trees located close to the railway station.

Attempts have been made to conserve significant remnant vegetation wherever possible whilst noting that engineering works (primarily depth of fill) will prohibit retention in some areas (e.g. around the station).

Connection with Station (and Penrith CBD)

The Village Centre is located immediately adjacent to the railway station in order to engage with residents and commuters who will be accessing the station by foot, bus or by car (commuters from the wider Penrith community).

The Village Centre engages with the station, the commuter carpark and with bus set downs via a Village or Transit Square. This Village Centre and Square will provide sheltered access to the station (and to the CBD) for commuters and locals and will be a vital hub for the local community.

The bridge connection across the railway from the Transit Square needs to engage strongly with land use and place on both the north and south sides of the railway line. This can be reflected in public space, landscape, public art and in the architectural form of buildings (and their use) which enclose these spaces.