

# GRAYTHWAITE

PLANNING PARAMETERS

Prepared for

Sydney Church of England  
Grammar School

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# Foreword

The land containing Graythwaite house and outbuildings is a rare survivor of a late Victorian estate. The park-like setting, of expansive lawns and large fig trees, and the large Victorian-era house, built in several stages, conveys and something of the wealth and stature of the Dibbs family. Sir Thomas Dibbs, a key figure in Australian banking, gave the house and grounds for use as a convalescent hospital towards the end of World War I. This gesture effectively preserved the entity for the next 90 years. However by the 20th century the site no longer satisfactorily served a public health role and fell into disrepair and after a Community Presentation process was offered for sale with proceeds to be applied for aged care in the spirit of the original gift.

Through a tender process it was purchased by the major adjoining and historic landowner, the Shore School, in 2009. The School intends to use Graythwaite house for an administration role and occasional gatherings which complement the formal rooms of the house. The School also intends to maintain the majority of the land as an open parkland, as it was originally. Schools are among the few enterprises which can use landscaped open space as a resource for educational enhancement and informal forms of recreation. It is Graythwaite's good fortune that the contiguous location of Graythwaite with the School has enabled Shore to justify the purchase of the site for future enhancement of the school in a highly satisfactory way at its central North Sydney site, and as a result justify the considerable costs of conservation, restoration and maintenance of this property.

Traditionally the School turned its back on the convalescent hospital, and it now proposes to face and link its buildings across the boundary to integrate the whole site as one collegiate entity. New buildings are proposed to the east, north and west of Graythwaite house, all positioned with consideration of height, scale, and built form and retention of the park-like landscape.

This document illustrates the principles and approaches that have been applied to the design process to achieve the School's aims while simultaneously respecting the heritage of the site as encapsulated within the new Conservation Management Plan. The long term well-being of both Graythwaite and of the Shore School is at the heart of these proposals.

# Introduction

This report accompanies a Part 3A application to the Department of Planning for proposed works at Graythwaite, North Sydney. Originally developed as a grand residential estate in the late nineteenth century, and subsequently converted for use as a hospital for returned soldiers in the early twentieth century, Graythwaite was purchased by the adjacent Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore School) in 2009.

In addition to the School's proposed works for the conservation and adaptive use of the historic buildings – Graythwaite House, the former coach house and stables – a number of new buildings are proposed for the site to accommodate its use for school purposes.

This document provides detailed guidelines that have guided the preparation of the 3A application documents for the scale, materials, expression and form of new buildings, their relationship with the retained historic buildings, and the preferred treatment of the various areas of the site.

The report should be read in conjunction with the 2010 'Graythwaite Conservation Management Plan' (CMP) prepared by Tanner Architects, which provides a heritage assessment of the site and its components, provides conservation policies for its future management and identifies the key constraints and opportunities. The 2010 CMP, while a new document, has been informed by the earlier 2000 CMP prepared by Graham Edds and Associates.

# Site History

Graythwaite is a place of exceptional heritage significance. Located at 20 Union Street, North Sydney, and originally known as Euroka, the site comprises expansive park-like grounds which provide a landscaped setting for the nineteenth century house and its associated outbuildings.

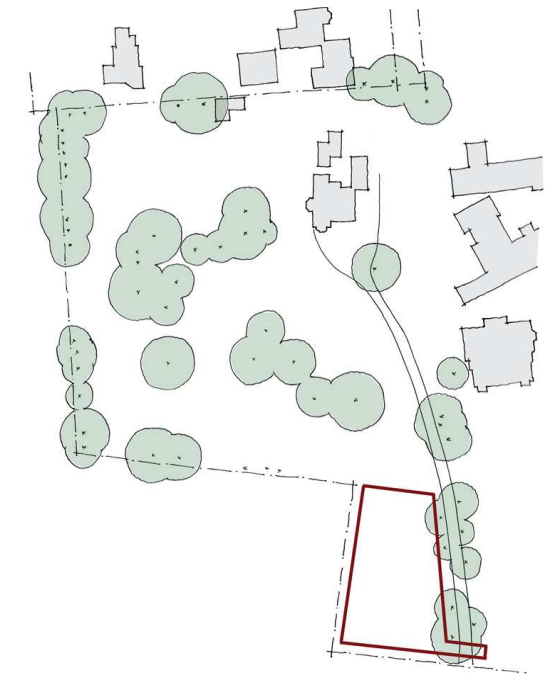
The history of the development of the property commences in 1832 when the land was first granted to Thomas Walker. Walker erected a sandstone cottage ('Euroka') and terraced the site for vineyards and an orchard. Subsequent owners in the following decades continued to develop the property and enlarge the house before its sale to Thomas Dibbs, a prominent banker, in 1873. The earlier sandstone buildings were substantially remodelled and extended and the house had largely reached its present form by 1875.

As a concerned response to World War I, Dibbs bequeathed the house and property to the State for use as a convalescent home for returned soldiers, to be managed by the Red Cross, later becoming a hospital. It continued to operate as a hospital until its sale to the Sydney Church of England Grammar School in 2009.

Significant buildings on the site include the house (1850s – 1890s), the former stables (1830s) and the coach house (1890s). Major hospital-era buildings remaining on the site include the Ward Building (1918) and the Tom O'Neill Centre (1919).

# 01 Gates / Union Street Frontage

Figure 1 Historic Image of Driveway from Graythwaite House



## Development Parameters / Goals

- > Note development of Union Street Frontage endorsed in earlier CMP.
- > Note preference to leave as open ground, enabling traditional visual link between Union Street and Graythwaite House. With the proposal to retain as open ground, site drainage improvements are required which may also involve some grading and levelling.
- > Historic evidence of Union Street Gates and fencing to guide provision of new fences and gates. Refer to Figure 2 for detail of proposed new fencing and gates



## 01 Gates / Union Street Frontage

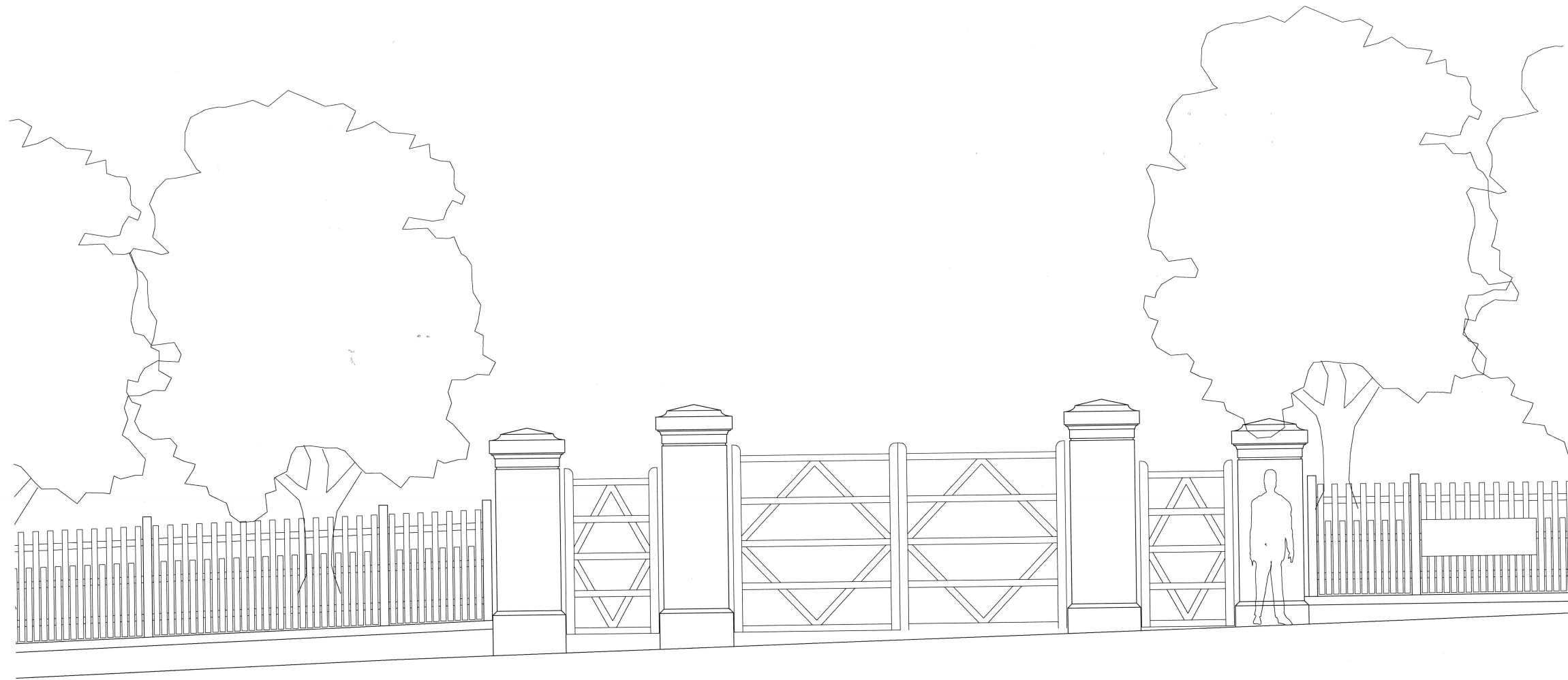


Figure 2 Architects drawing of proposed new gates and fence along Union Street Frontage



## 02 Driveway & Associated Planting

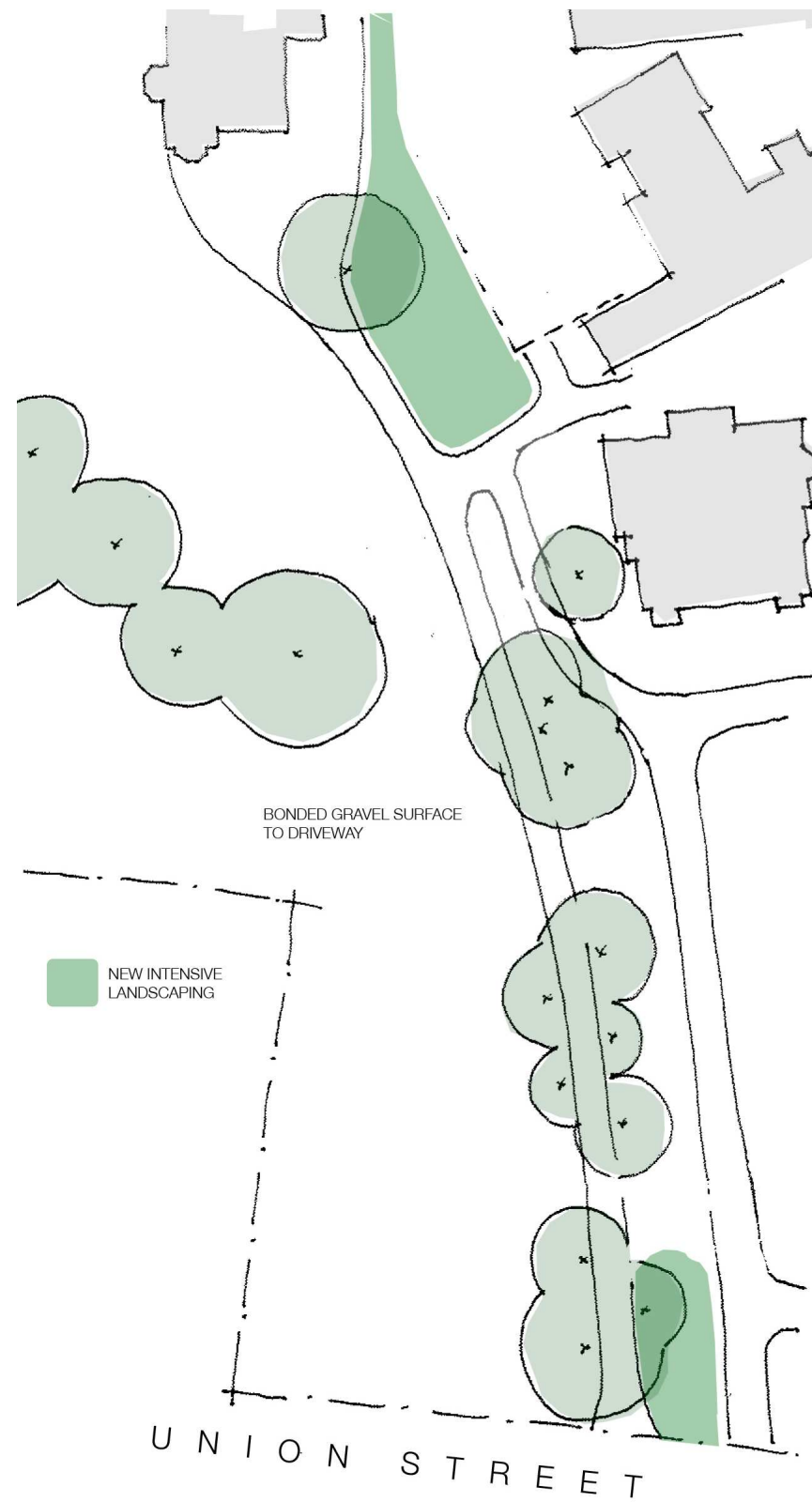


Figure 3 Diagram outlining extent of upgraded planting

### Development Parameters / Goals

- > Existing character to be maintained with upgraded planting
- > Driveway to be bonded gravel
- > Western side of driveway to include reinforced grass areas for two-way traffic passing bays

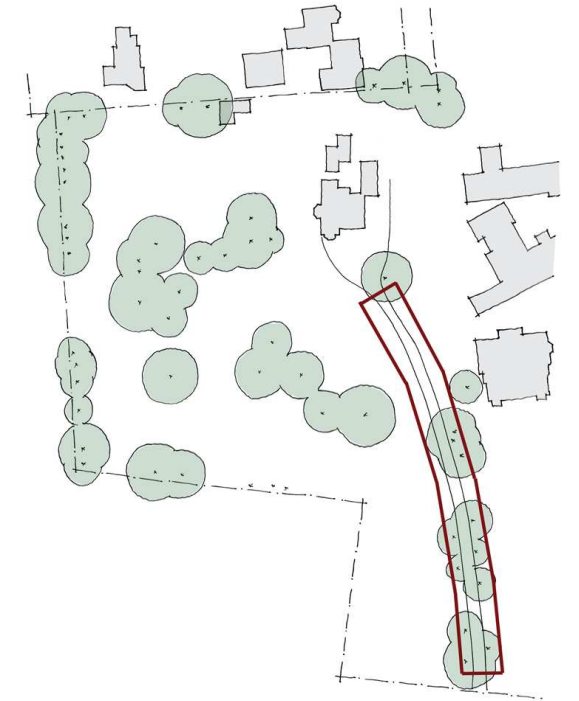


Figure 4 Historic Image of Driveway (Attributed)



## 03 Tennis Court Terrace

### *Development Parameters / Goals*

- > Important levelled terrace with vista to brush box tree and bamboo clump
- > Planting to be amended to regain original parklike garden formation

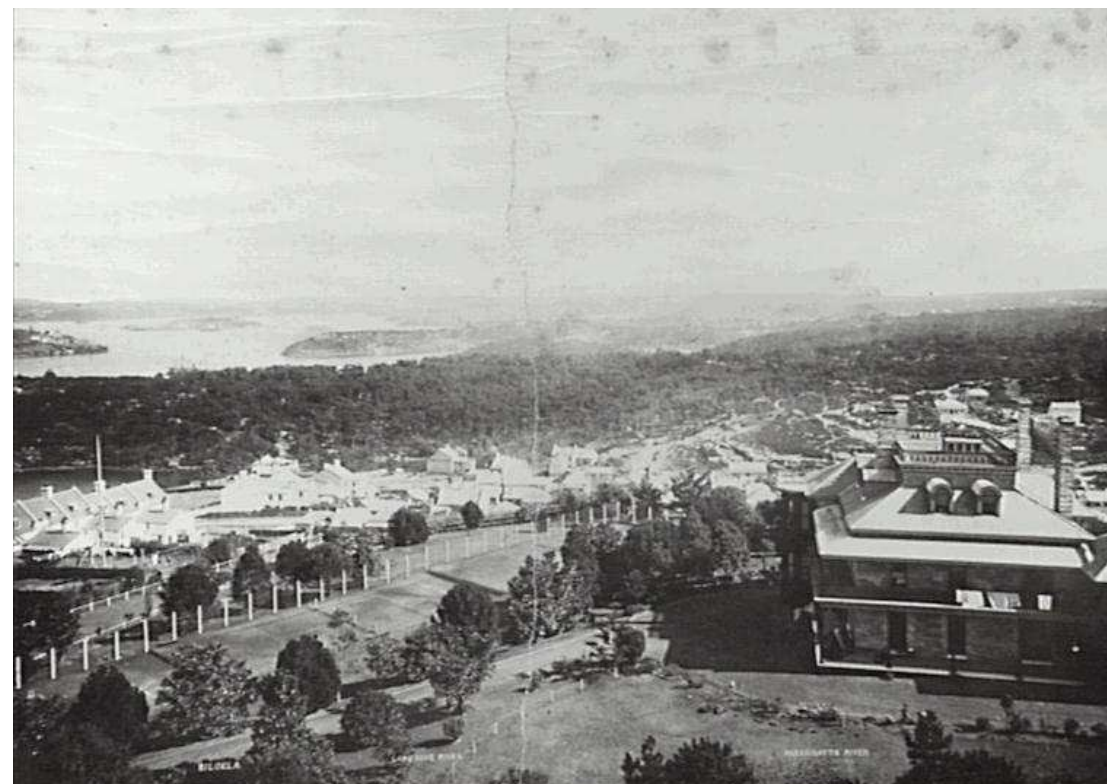
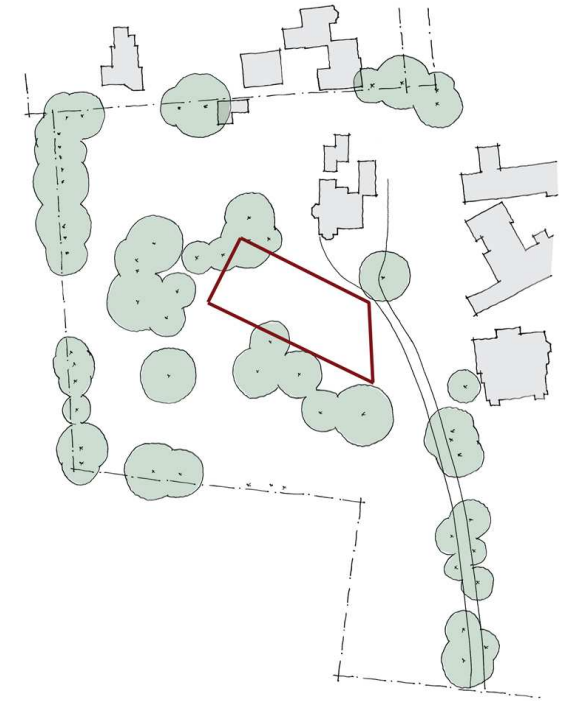


Figure 5 Historic Image of Tennis Court Terrace and Graythwaite



Figure 6 Current Image of Tennis Court Terrace

## 04 Lower Garden

### *Development Parameters / Goals*

- > General landscape rehabilitation proposed
- > Area capable of being used for botanical field studies and similar educational roles
- > An area of potential future development beyond this application exists as indicated in Figure 7. This is a site unrelated to Graythwaite House and its primary landscape setting.

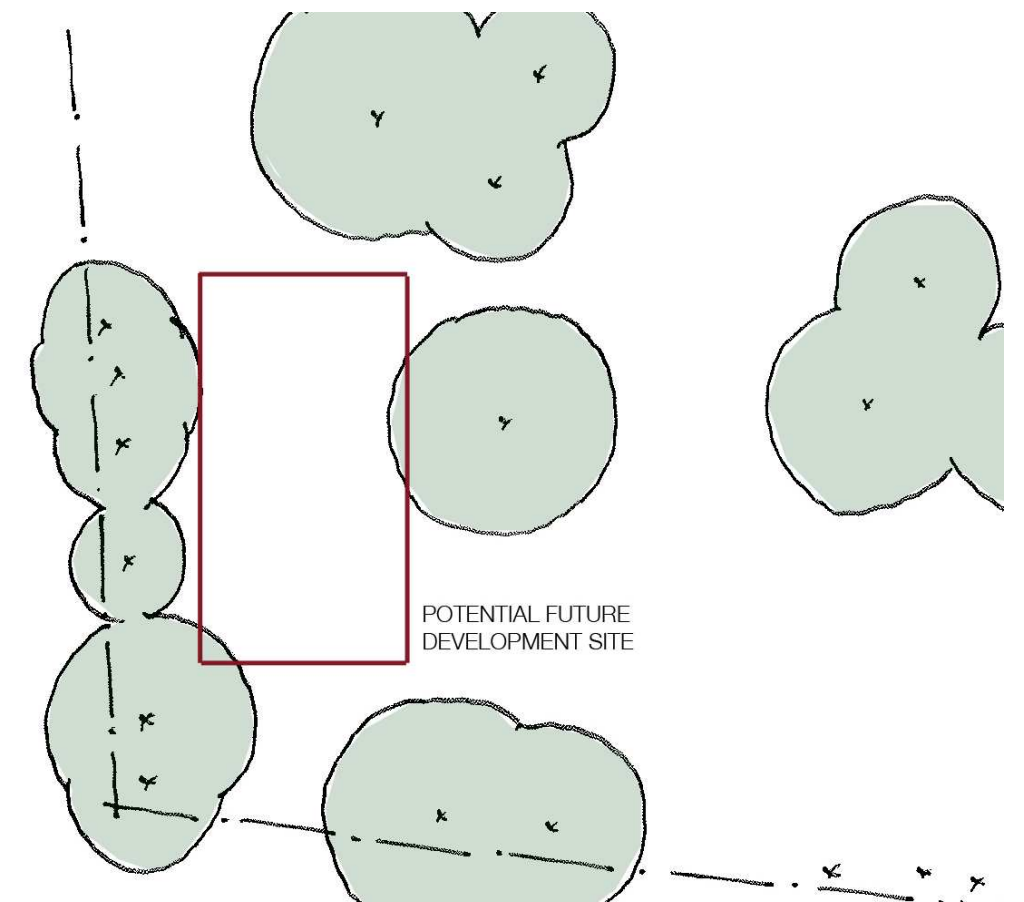
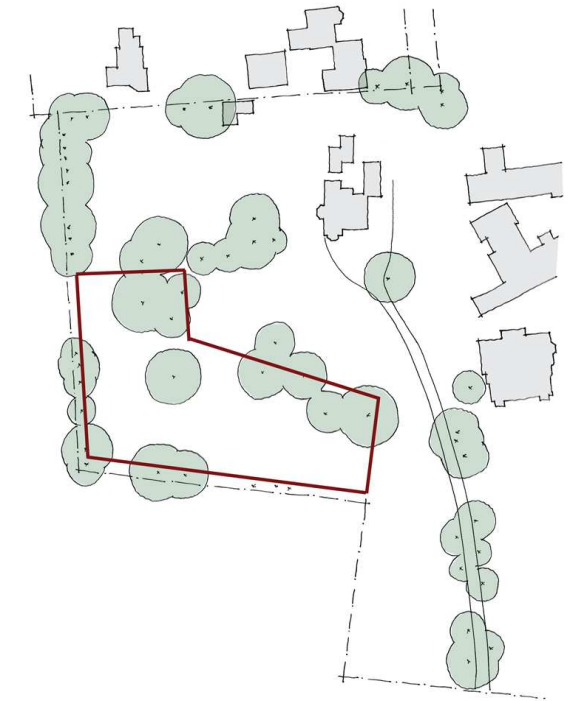


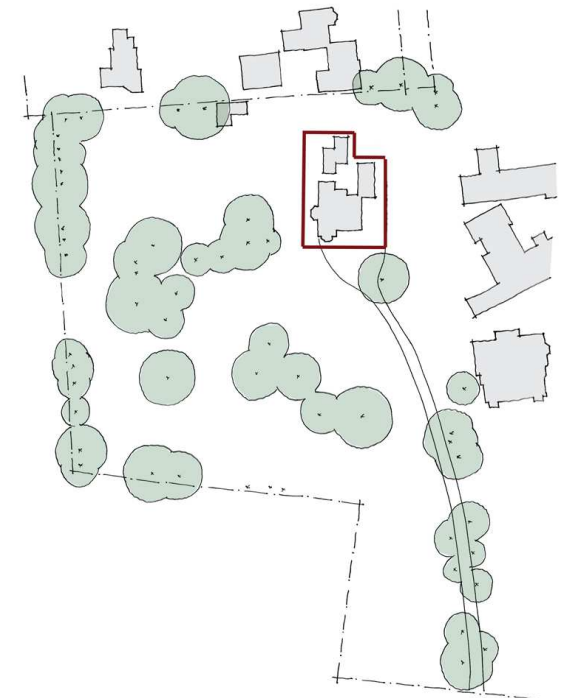
Figure 7 Potential Future Development Site

# 05 Graythwaite House

## Development Parameters / Goals

- > The sandstone house with its mansard roof and widows walk is to retain its strong individuality in the landscape and its ability to be seen in the round
- > Shore School Reception, Administration and cultural role is proposed for the house. These uses have been selected as they can be introduced into Graythwaite House with minimum impact on the conserved fabric.
- > The house is in poor condition as issues of stormwater management, roof condition and rising damp have not been addressed. The services throughout the house are in poor condition and require replacement.
- > There is no permanent parking available, 6 visitor car spaces are to be provided to the south of the House.
- > Key conservation initiatives include:
  - Measures to reduce ground damp
  - Repair of roof structure and restoration of original slate and metal roofing, including provision of new rooftop balustrade and new stormwater systems.
  - Restoration and conservation of external stonework and pointing
  - Repair and upgrading of all external joinery, especially window and doors, verandahs and eaves
  - Insertion of new lift, and subtle amended planning to enable disabled access.
  - Structural verification of stability and condition of all chimneys

- Verification of timber structures and flooring, and related repairs
- Reconstruction of entry hall tiled floor
- Extensive repair of historic plasterwork





## 06 Landscape East



Figure 8 Diagram showing location of new intensive planting adjacent new buildings

### Development Parameters / Goals

- > Forecourt to house and side driveway to be in bonded gravel. The Eastern planting to the drive to feature a grass verge and intensive shrub planting and several large trees to establish a garden belt between the drive and the main school buildings
- > Limited Vehicular access to this area only – cars directed under proposed East Building (south). Refer to Figure 08 and Section 07 East Building.
- > This landscape provides a setting from Graythwaite House and a foreground to new East Buildings for the Shore School. The new buildings are to be partly on the site of the former Ward Building (which by this stage is demolished) and partly on the established Shore School grounds. The use of the existing school grounds enables the new construction to be set back further to the east, away from Graythwaite House, and opens up new sightlines from the driveway to the House.
- > The present Shore School buildings on the Graythwaite frontage turn their backs on Graythwaite. New buildings and related landscaping are to provide a suitable interface between the school and Graythwaite.
- > The proposed planting will have a Victorian/Edwardian character appropriate for Graythwaite House environs.
- > The bonded gravel surface will be suitable for intensive pedestrian traffic, yet also be capable of handling occasional use by vehicular service traffic.

