



MELBOURNE ARBORETUM RETURN BRIEF

www.MelbourneArboretum.com

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A botanical garden devoted to growing trees for conservation, scientific research and educational purposes.

Historically arboretums have been a place of testing and research. They were established in Australia to trial trees from Europe and America to see what would grow well in the 'new country'. This is far less relevant now in the 21st Century.

So what is the relevance of an Arboretum in this time and place?

Located on the edge of the suburban growth corridor, the "Melbourne Arboretum" must be relevant to its changing context and create an experiential and tourist offering to Melbourne's growing population.

In establishing a vision for what the Melbourne Arboretum could be we have considered:

Types of Arboretum – the different focus of international arboretums as precedent

- Nature Experiences – the varying experience an arboretum can create
- Farm Experiences – what is the experience of the site as it transitions from farm to arboretum?
- Eco-tourism - Consideration to tourism activation that can be integrated into an arboretum



THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM, CANBERRA

RETURN BRIEF

TYPES OF ARBORETUMS



Various international arboreturns have developed a different focus or emphasis on what its purpose and public offering is. From diverse collections of genus, conservation, research, education, garden display, sports and leisure, adventure, specimen display, picturesque and event spaces.

How is this project different?

For the Melbourne Arboretum, it is a project that will be in a state of transition over many years from being a farm to becoming an arboretum. The process of transition is an opportunity to provide a range of experiences that are part of this transition.

- Nature experience
- Farming experience
- Ecotourism / activation

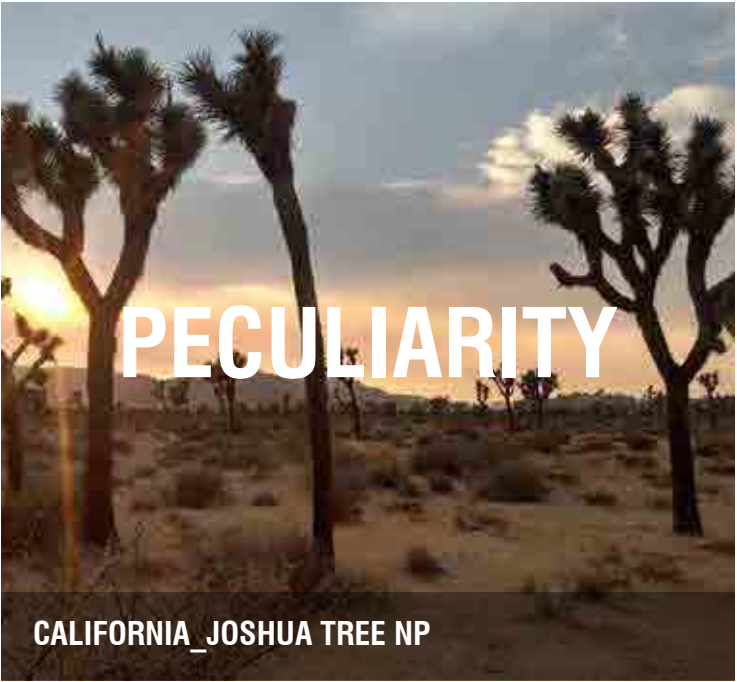
These experiences are what will attract people to the site, and seeing the project as a farm in transition to an arboretum will help encourage visitors to return to see the change and development in the site, which in turn brings a new experience.



BENCHMARKS NATURE EXPERIENCES

Alongside the expansion of suburban development in this area, there is a rare, unique and desirable opportunity to create a place of contrast to the suburban environment. A forested site of respite and escape, and a place to engage with nature for people of all ages.

The Melbourne Arboretum can set the scene for a range of nature based experiences that can be playful, artistic, immersive, peaceful, engaging and regenerative. This will be achieved through the spaces created by the trees, the varying micro-climates and spatial qualities they will form.



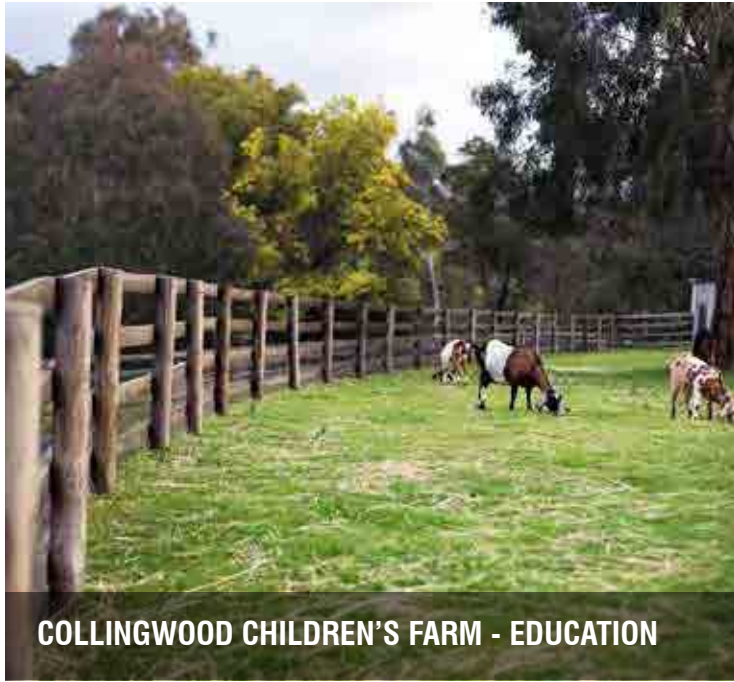
BENCHMARKS FARM EXPERIENCES



CERES - COMMUNITY / SOCIAL SETTING



COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM - EVENTS



COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM - EDUCATION

As a working farm that will be transformed into an arboretum there is an opportunity to draw upon the farming aspect of the property as an attraction for visitors. There are numerous opportunities and experiences that could be created on the site to create a range of educational, child focused or food and cultivation focused experiences.

There are precedents in Victoria such as Ceres – food production garden and community space in an urban context. The Collingwood Children's Farm that gives children an exposure to animals as well as being an event place for families. The Buxton trout farm where visitors can catch their own fish. Or native plant nurseries which can be coupled with the tree production, sales to the public and have associated retail offerings such as cafés, restaurant and event spaces. For example, a hops production field with a small onsite brewery that makes beer from the hops grown onsite?



PAMBULA OAKLANDS - FARM_BREWERY_CAFE



MAIN RIDGE DAIRY - TOURS



BUXTON TROUT FARM -



RED HILL CHERRY FARM - DIY



PAMBULA OAKLANDS - NURSERY

BENCHMARKS ECO-TOURISM / ACTIVATION

As the property transitions from a farm to an arboretum, the ongoing establishment of trees, forests and new naturalistic environments will create the opportunity for a range of Eco-tourism and nature-based adventure activities.

These may include activities such as:

- Rope and tree course located in the forests once established.
- Glamping in the new landscape environments
- Refurbishment of heritage structures located within the arboretum that can be re-purposed for visitor / retail functions.
- Opportunity for bird watching – as the environment changes, it will attract new ecologies and bird life from the nearby Plenty River environment.
- If thermal ground water is accessible, then there is an opportunity to create hot springs in the forest.
- Adventure and nature play for children
- The establishment of walking and cycling trails within the arboretum
- The creation of a select number of cottage retreats within the forests, building on the success of the current AirBnB business on the property.



OTWAY ECO TOURS_TREE ADVENTURES



GLAMPING TORQUAY



HERITAGE BUILDINGS



TWO BEANS AND A FARM_MERENDA PRODUCE



PLENTY GORGE_BIRD WATCHING



PENINSULA HOT SPRINGS_RELAXATION



MACEDON_WALKING TRAILS



ALLENVALE COTTAGES_FARM RETREATS

BENCHMARKS PLAY / EDUCATION

The Melbourne Arboretum offers a unique opportunity to create a strong community building asset for Mernda, Whittlesea and the greater northern region. This project aims to become an inclusive, educative, nature-based experience that can accommodate varying levels of education, physical challenges and mental respite.

These may include activities such as:

- Environmental process based learning
- Direct physical challenges through engaging adventurous play.
- Play is vital in the development of children - teaching about the identification of risk and reward from an early age.
- Scientific environmental discovery
- Engagement for people of all ages and abilities
- Providing an accessible space that combines this range of facilities will have far reaching benefits for the community's mental and physical health.



MELBOURNE MUSEUM_FOREST GALLERY



IAN POTTER CHILDREN'S WILDPLAY



ADELAIDE ZOO PLAYGROUND



POD PLAYGROUND_CANBERRA



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS_MELBOURNE



EDINBURGH GARDENS RAINGARDEN_FITZROY



ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND_ROYAL CHILDREN'S



TIDBINBILLA DISCOVERY PLAYGROUND



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS_CRANBOURNE

BENCHMARKS CULTURAL / ENGAGING

There are many examples of projects, parks and public spaces that operate a range of programs centred around the arts and culture. The Melbourne Arboretum seeks to eventually integrate a wide-range of permanent and programmed activities and events.

These may include such as:

- Integrated Public Art
- Events programming to build a sense of community for the people of Whittlesea
- Regionally significant landscapes for visitation



MOONLIGHT CINEMA



HEIDI MUSEUM_OUTDOOR ART SPACES



ASHCOMBE MAZE_SHOREHAM



HERONSWOOD HOUSE AND GARDEN



RHODODENDRON GARDENS_DANDENONG



SUNSET SOUNDS_STONNINGTON COUNCIL



MCLELLAND SCULPTURE PARK



MELBOURNE FOOD TRUCK FESTIVALS



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS_OUTDOOR THEATRE

BRIEF VISION

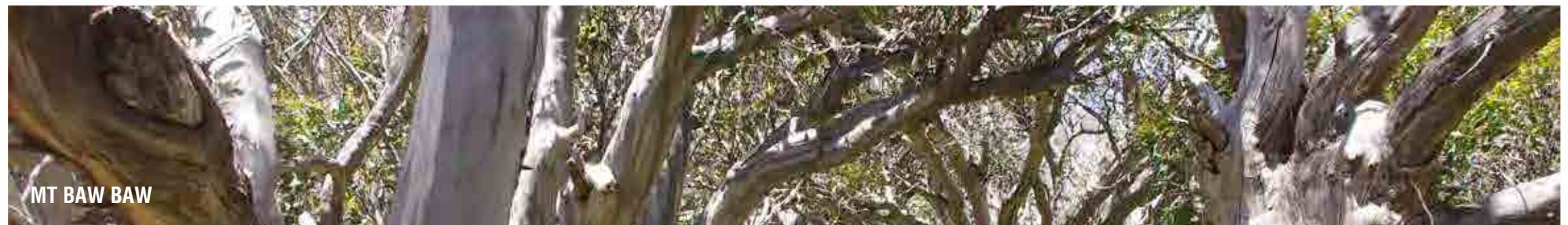
The project's ambition is to transform a farm into an arboretum as a tourism destination for people of all ages to have both a farming and nature based experience embedded in emergent forests.

With a focus on Australian native trees, this will be the largest and most diverse arboretum focused on Eucalyptus Trees – Melbourne Arboretum, the worlds largest collection of Eucalypts.

As a long term vision, the site will be covered in the most diverse collection of Eucalypts that are grouped in forests based on site conditions, narratives for education, and creating immersive environments for a range of forest / nature based activities. Associated with the forests will be understory planting of native species associated with each forest type, creating seasonal colour, texture and scent.

As the trees are being planted to create the arboretum, the farm will be diversified to show case regenerative agriculture practices, educational experience for children and “farm to plate” offerings for foodies.

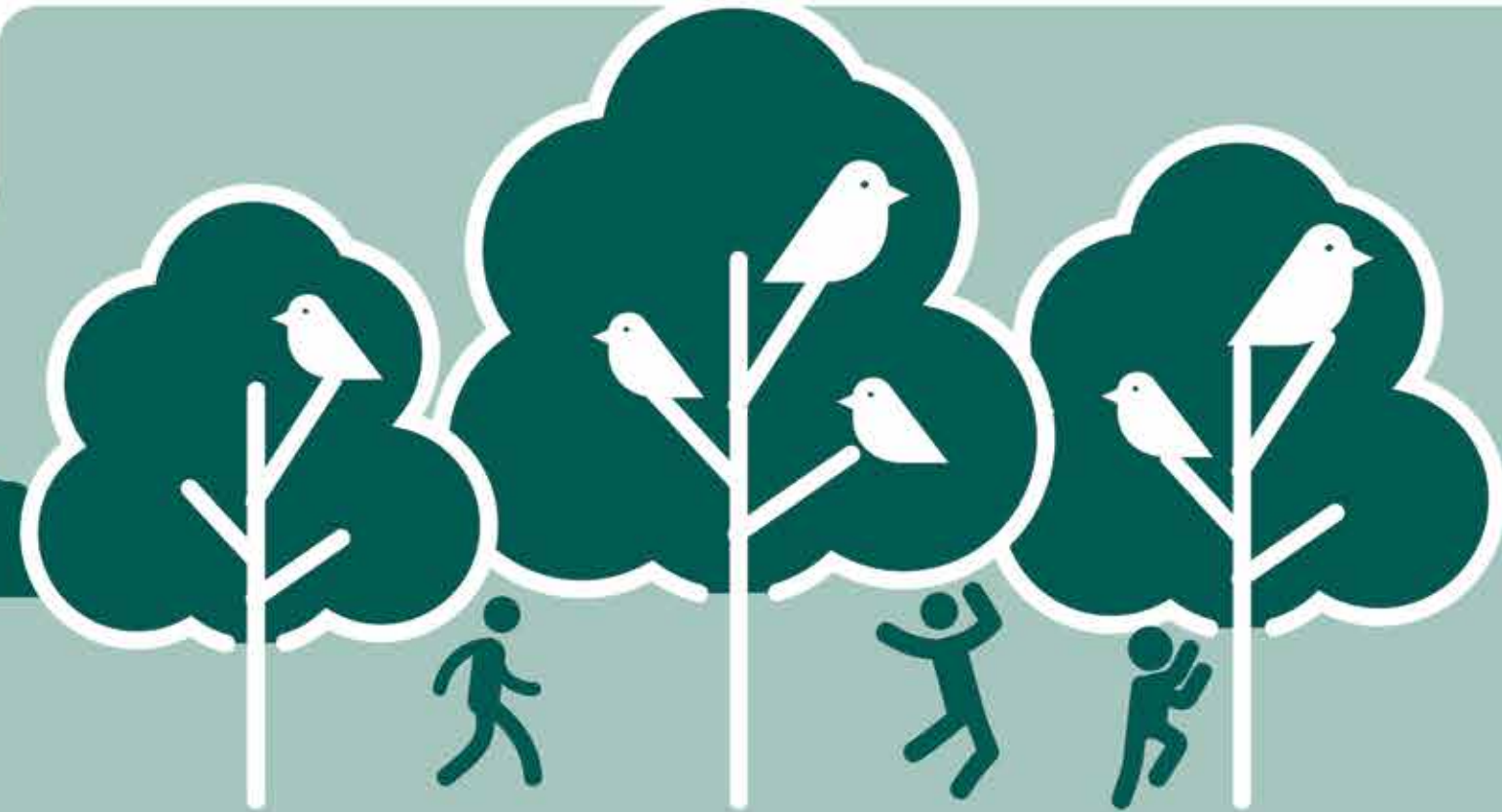
The Melbourne Arboretum is a long-term proposition that will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits to the region.



BRIEF BENEFITS OF TREES

Trees have long been recognised in the scientific field for the benefits they provide both to the environment and people, such as:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Improve air quality and absorb CO₂
- Store water and increase atmospheric moisture
- Provide habitat / resources for flora and fauna
- Create microclimate and reduce heat island effect
- Reduce wind and evaporation from ground plane
- Bank carbon in wood and roots
- Help prevent soil erosion
- Provide products including timber, honey, oil, cut flowers, etc.
- Accommodate community engagement events, e.g. Tree Planting Days and tree care group
- Good for mental health and well being





CONTEXT

CONTEXT

URBAN CENTRES

WATER BODIES

GREEN OPEN SPACE

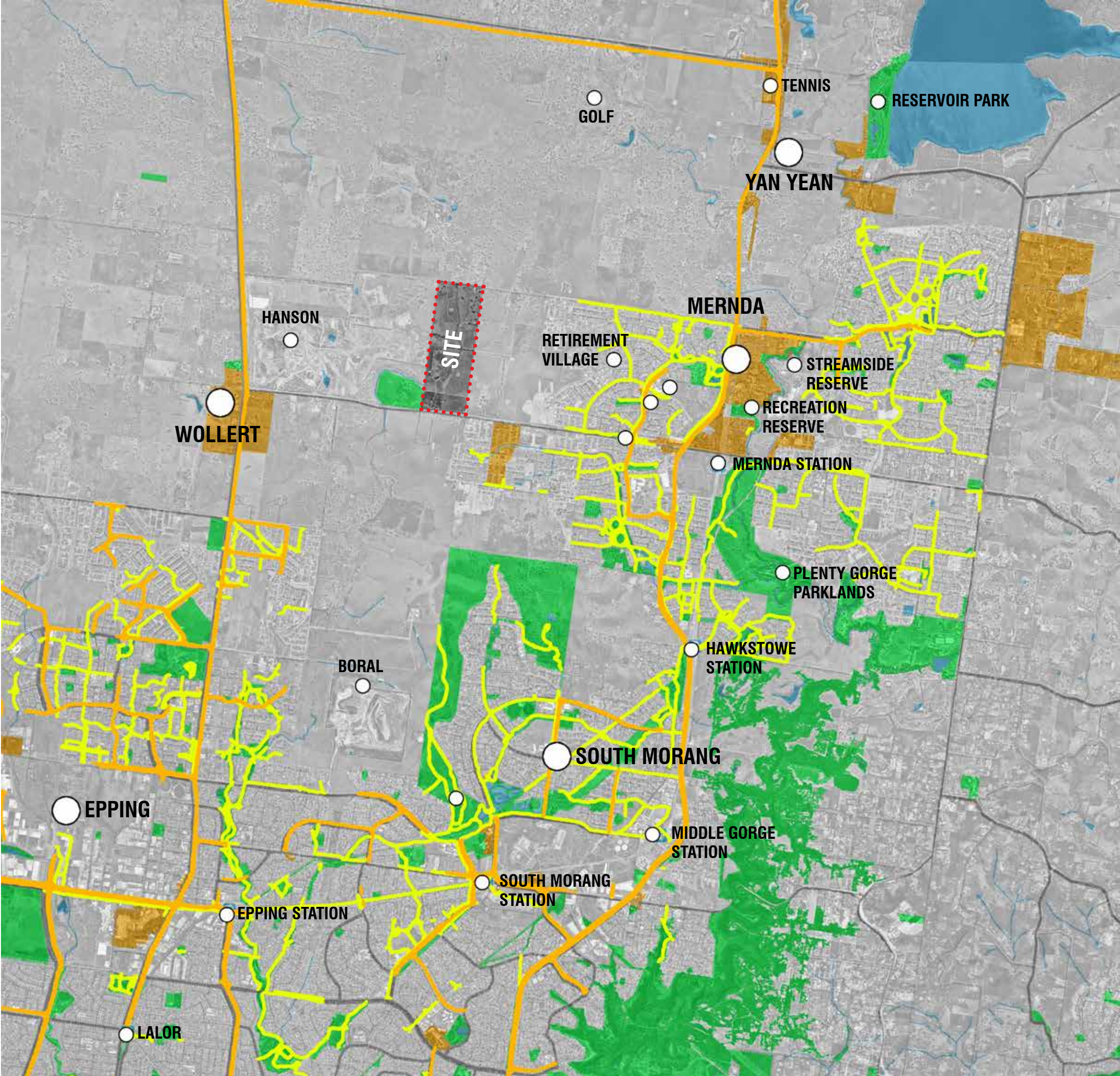
ON-ROAD CYCLE PATHS

OFF-ROAD CYCLE PATHS

This project's importance lies in its context. Surrounded by industry and a dense, expanding residential urban context, there is very little room for significant open-space environmental projects. This project has potential to contribute to the Labor government Suburban parks package with additional provisions such as pedestrian trails and cyclist connections, water quality improvements, and environmental works.

The project should aim to engage with both its immediate physical surroundings and greater social contexts to provide a space for respite, rejuvenation and activity for local residents, visitors and tourists. The Melbourne arboretum project could provide the public with connections to nature whilst simultaneously acting as a living laboratory, a testing ground, and an educational facility.

The Farming, Eco-tourism, and Nature experiences combined should attract a range of site programs to allow people to engage with and activate the site through events, accommodation and develop a sense of their activities contributing towards the forests for the future. This could be achieved through further engagement with schools, universities, local councils, environmental groups, developers and businesses.



CONTEXT

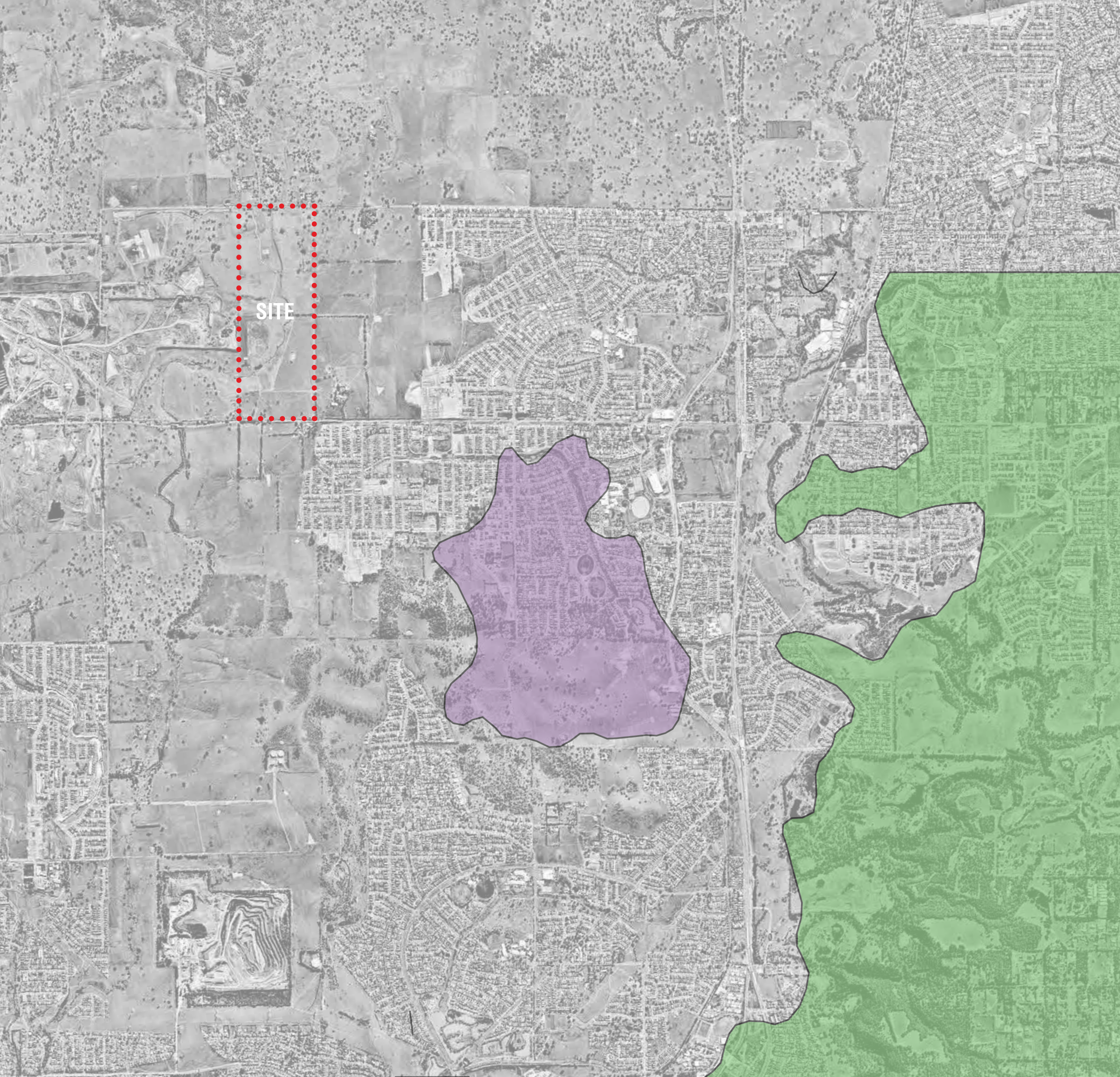
BIO-REGIONS

CENTRAL VICTORIAN
UPLANDS

HIGHLANDS - SOUTHERN
FALL

The local bio-regions will play a vital role in guiding what can be achieved environmentally. The City of Whittlesea area has a specific climate that will allow for various species and landscape typologies to thrive.

The planting palettes will be developed with consideration to the information provided in the Ecolink Consulting land management plan, the initial assessments by Practical Ecology, as well as the Whittlesea Native Vegetation Guides.



CONTEXT TOPOGRAPHY

The site has a number of key existing assets that will be utilised to create distinctive spaces. From Darebin Creek as the valley line and the high point in Karool (south east sector) will allow for varied micro-climates, landscape typologies, and characters to be created. Natural points of interest will need to be balanced with contextual view-lines and corridors that should be highlighted, diminished or muted depending on their inherent contribution to site characters.

We will aim to create strong vegetated buffers between the quarry and adjacent residential developments to suppress noise, dust and enhance a sense of immersion within green space. Detailed view line analysis will be completed to ensure we amplify the assets of the site, that can contribute to the positive psychological effects of perceived natural surroundings.

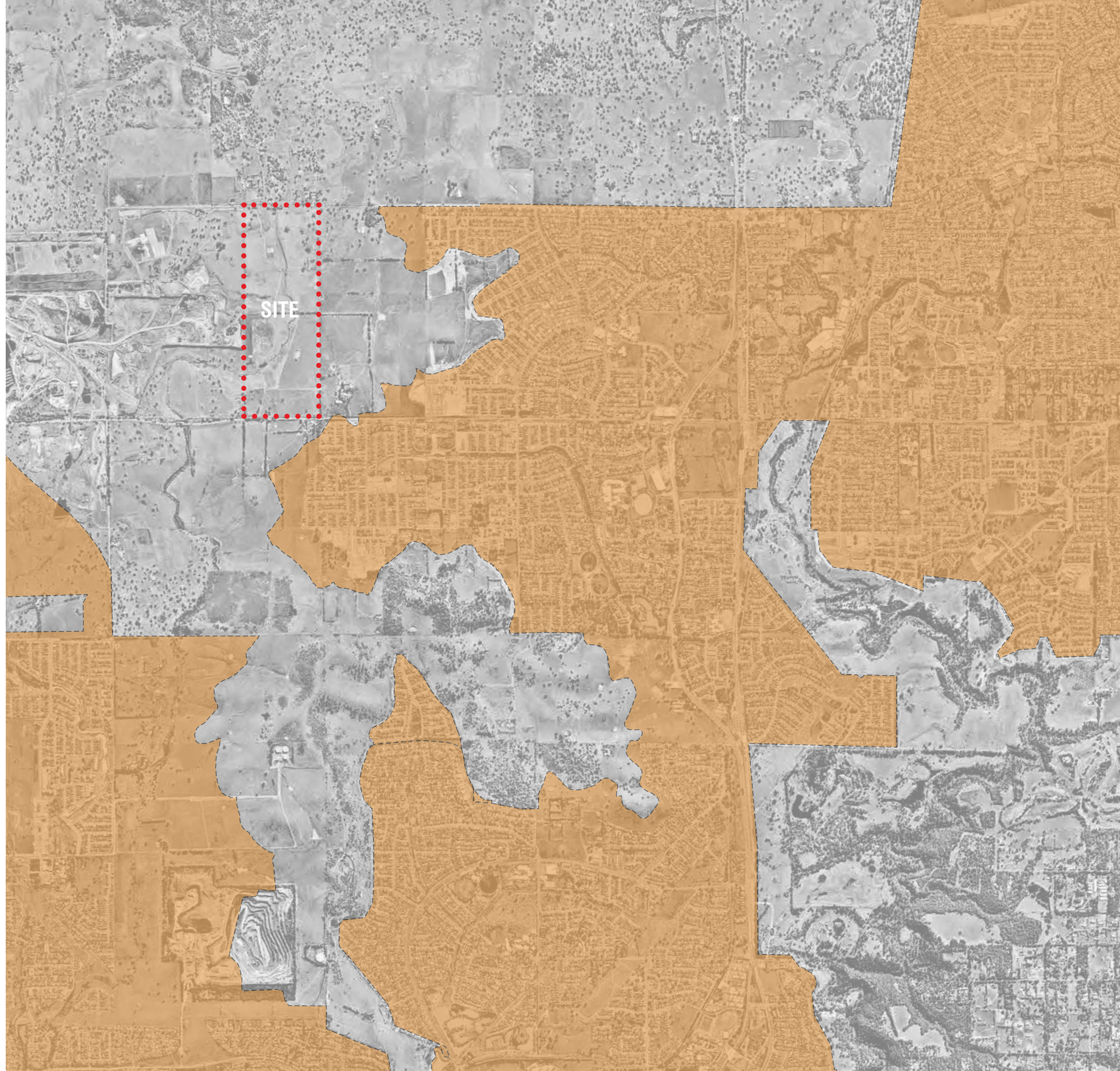
Potential contextual assets:

- View-lines to Mount Macedon
- View to Kinglake NP
- View across plains to Lancefield
- Granite Hills Park
- Eagle Lookout



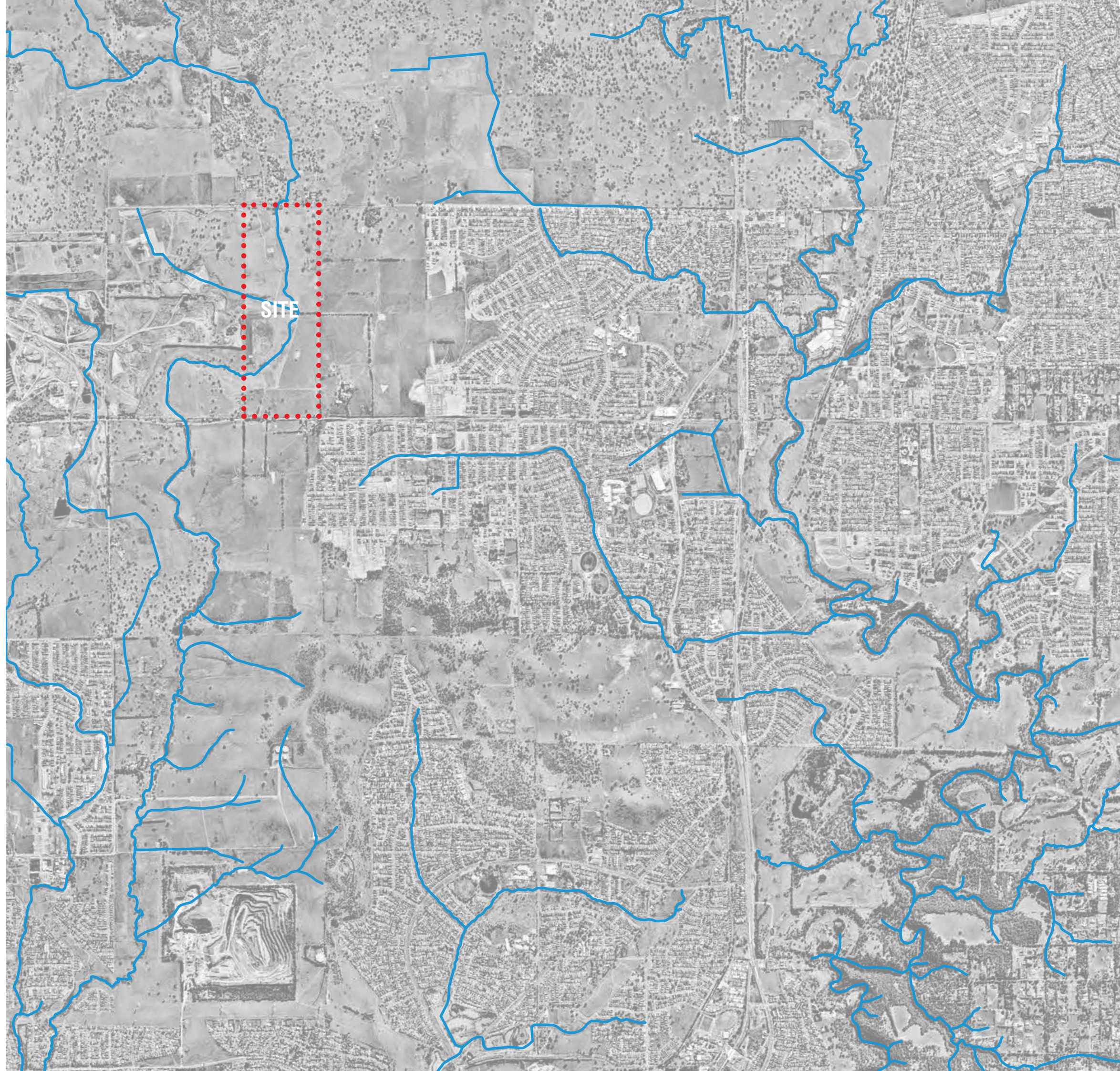
CONTEXT URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY



CONTEXT WATER

WATER BODIES



CONTEXT
AERIAL

SITE
223A



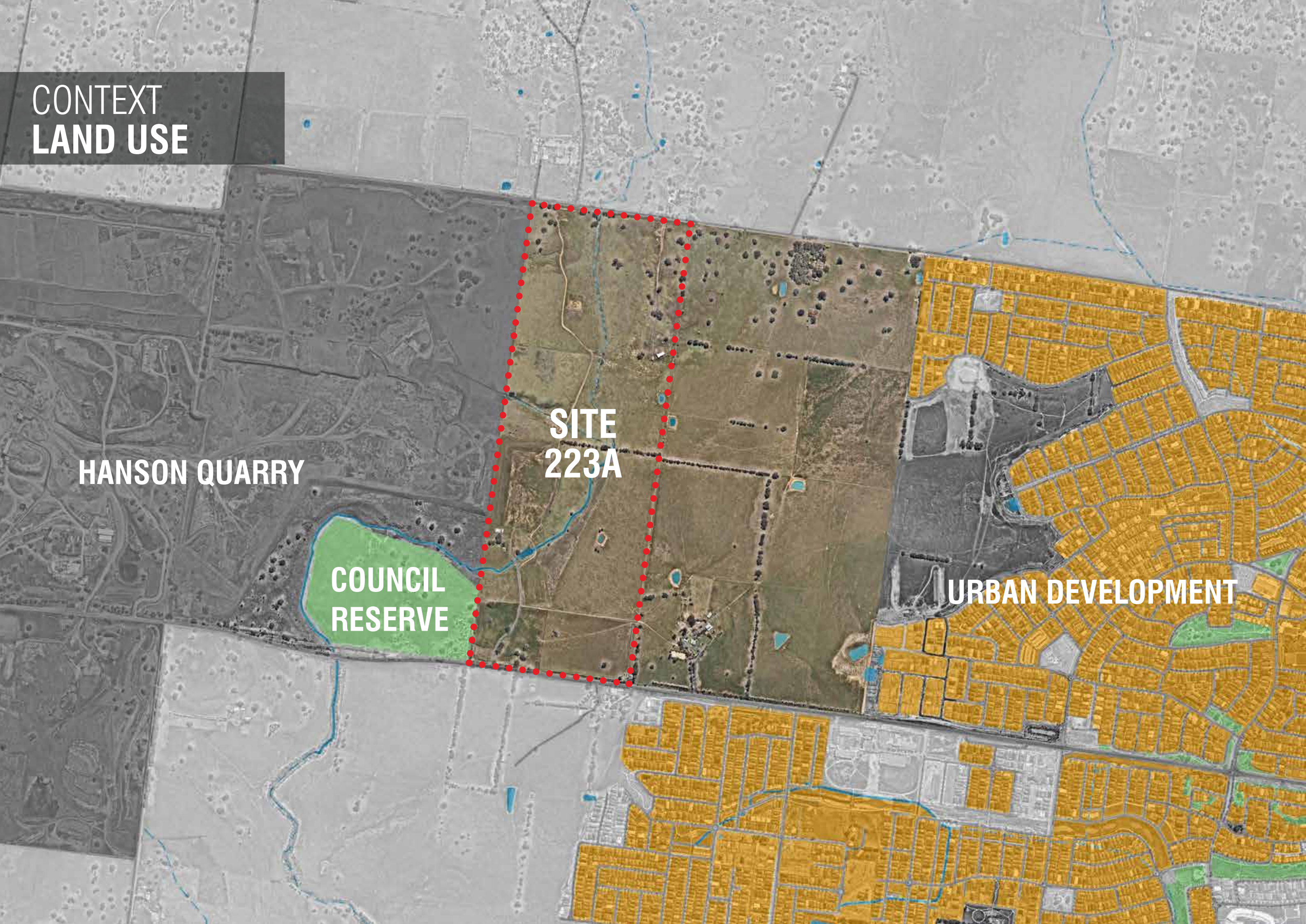
CONTEXT LAND USE

HANSON QUARRY

COUNCIL
RESERVE

SITE
223A

URBAN DEVELOPMENT



CONTEXT TOPOGRAPHY

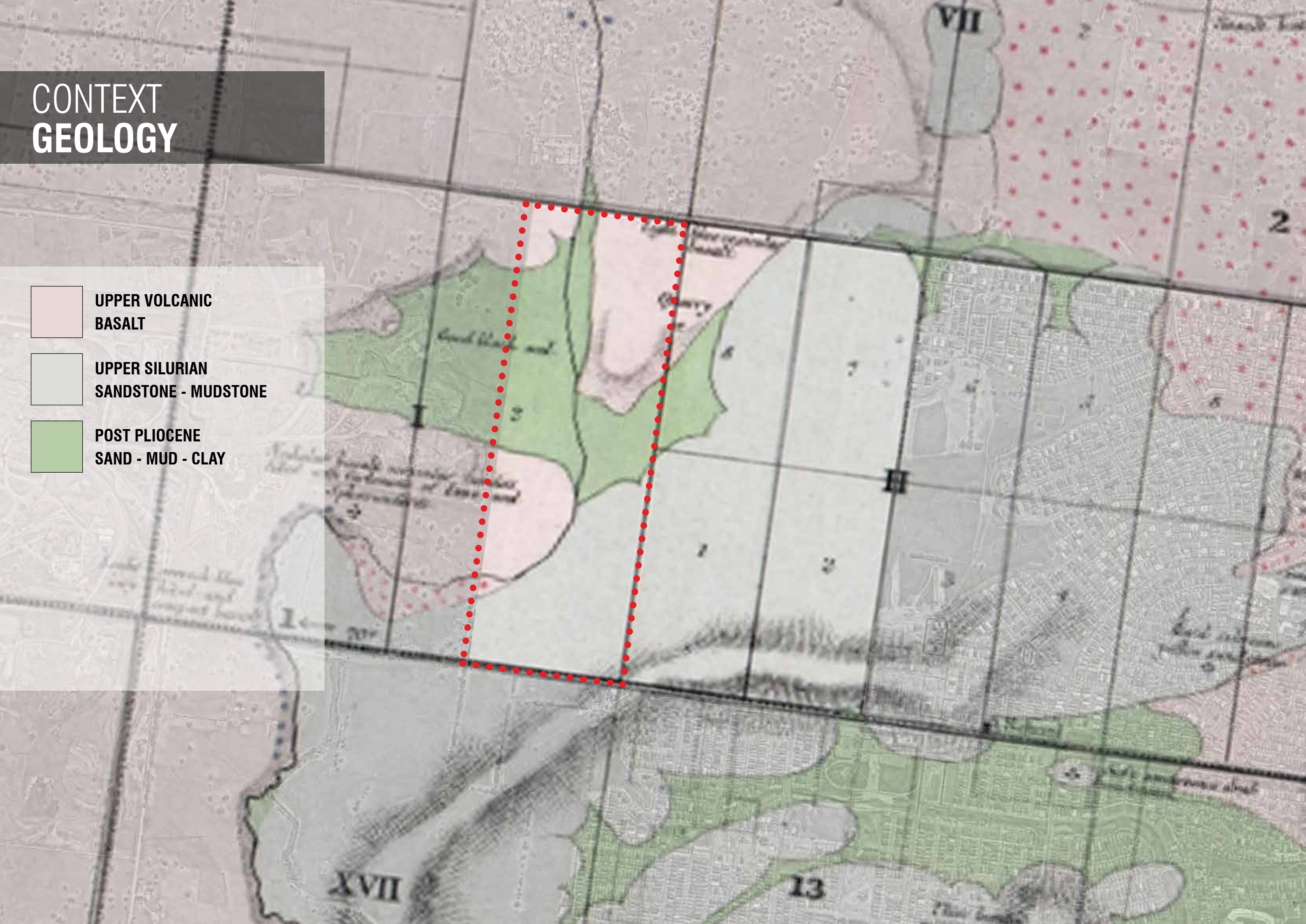
**SITE
223A**

A grayscale aerial photograph of a landscape with topographic contour lines overlaid. A rectangular area in the center is outlined with a red dashed line and labeled 'SITE 223A'. The site is situated on a hillside, with contour lines indicating elevation changes. To the right of the site, there is a dense residential area with many small buildings. The overall terrain is hilly and uneven.

CONTEXT GEOLOGY

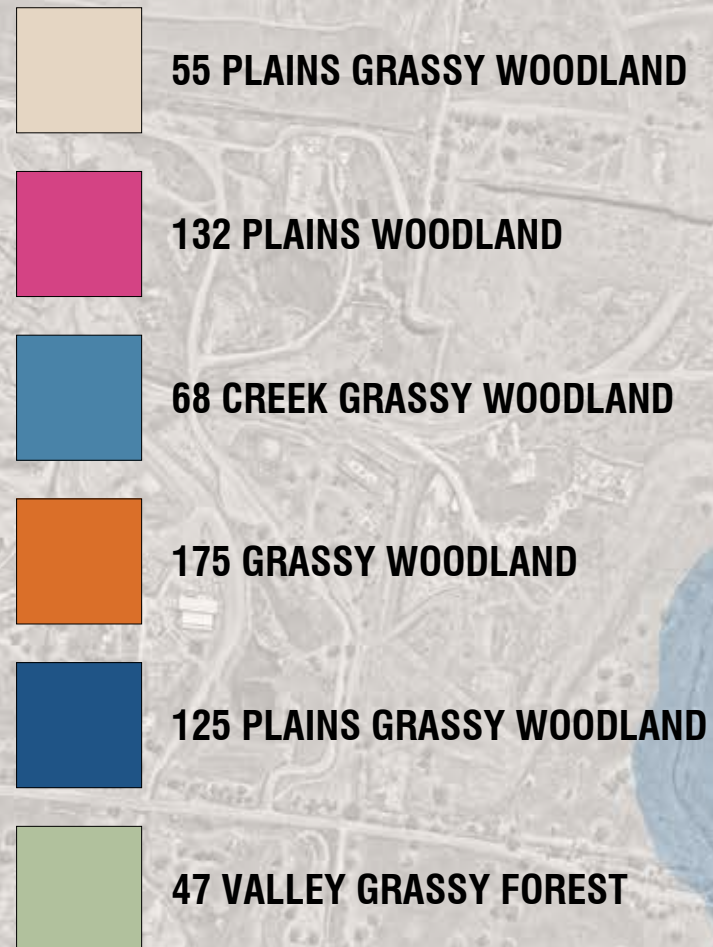


**POST PLIOCENE
SAND - MUD - CLAY**



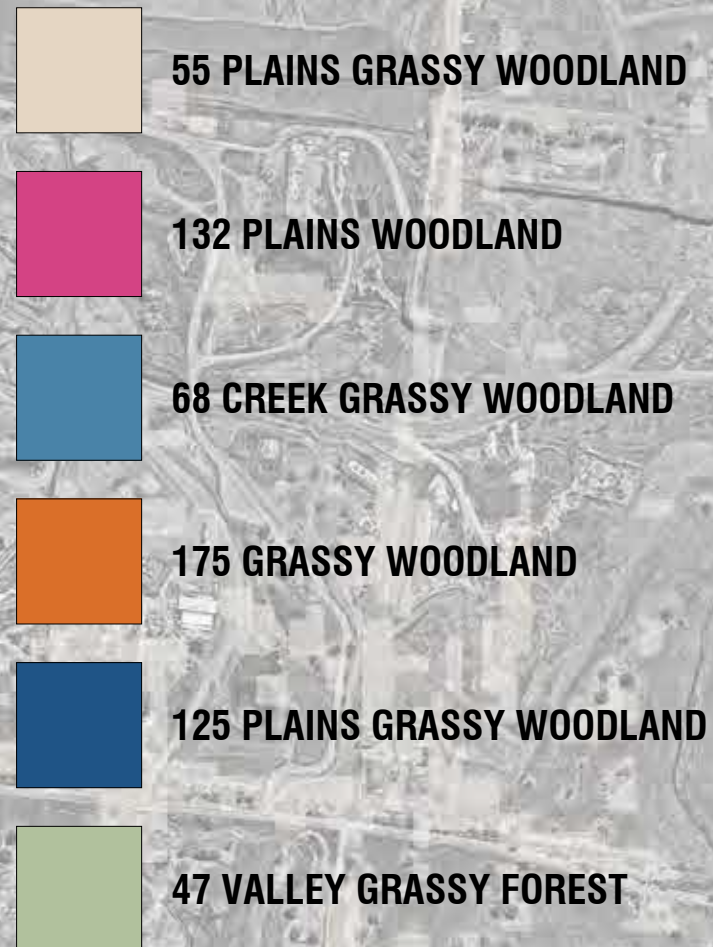
CONTEXT EVC'S 1750

ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES



CONTEXT EVC'S 2005

ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES



**SITE
223A**





SITE

SITE AERIAL



SITE HERITAGE

The site has a number of Heritage buildings of varying condition. There are existing heritage cottages that have been sensitively refurbished to a high standard. These existing cottages are frequently used for accommodation and could act as the catalyst for the creation of a heritage precinct.

There are other existing buildings and historical remnants of heritage value that could be refurbished in order to perform new functions and gain public appreciation.





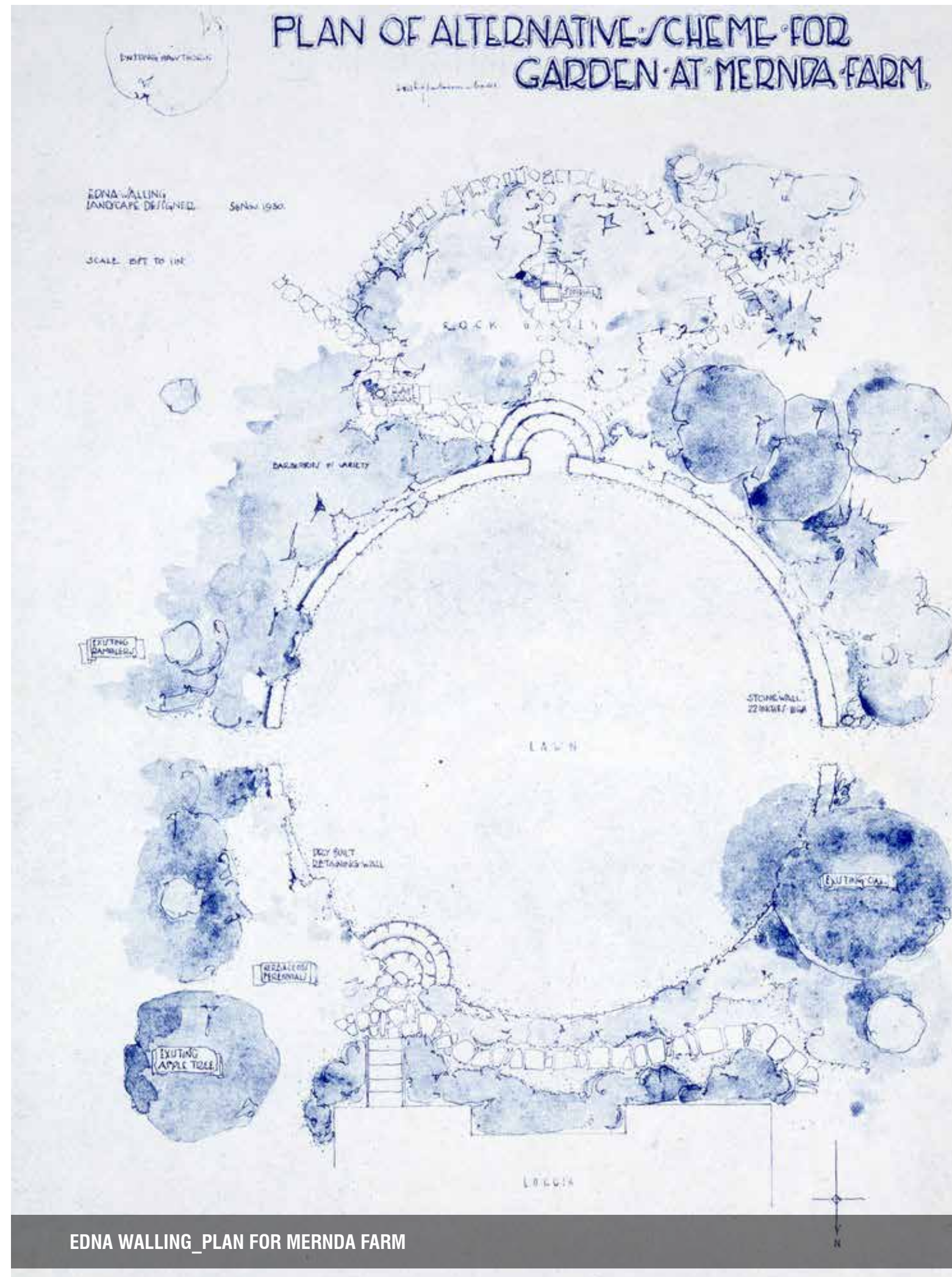
BRIEFING

BRIEFING EXISTING IDEAS

The Melbourne Arboretum is a once in a lifetime opportunity for a 4th generation farmer to transform farmland into an arboretum with a focus on eucalyptus.

There is a diverse range of existing ideas that inform the briefing for the project. Throughout the flowing phases, we will further refine the possibilities for what the site could become. The primary intent is for the creation of an Arboretum with the site programming seen as an opportunity to support and evolve the Arboretum over time.

- Arboretum
- Re-vegetation / Restoration
- AirBnB - Heritage Cottage
- Brewery
- Venue Hire / Weddings
- Parks / Gardens
- Tourism
- Education



EDNA WALLING_PLAN FOR MERNDA FARM

RETURN BRIEF HIERARCHY / STAGING

As part of the key moves we must consider the appropriate zoning and staging of the project. There are a number of key areas that will require different approaches. Consideration should be given to the programming of different spaces, their existing status and complementary services should be carefully planned through the masterplanning phase to ensure balance and avoid clashes of site programs.

Residential and accommodation areas should be kept private, quiet and offer a verdant, peaceful environments to enhance the perception of the “retreat” for both owners and visitors. Detailed site programming opportunities will follow through the workshops and masterplanning phases.

Tourism activity and event spaces should have distinct individual characters that can offer a variety of settings capable of catering for a range of events. Event spaces have inherent infrastructural requirements that will be further explored following our initial workshops once the site programming is further refined.

The Rehabilitation and Re-vegetation of the landscape is the central focus and the aim of the project with other programs intended to support and activate the Arboretum. This will need to be a staged process. This project will be seen as a work in progress with the land use slowly transitioning from working farm to Arboretum over a series of phases. These two programs will have overlaps, and complement one another at different times throughout the project life-cycle.

Importantly, we should aim for these different stages to be mutually beneficial to one another. This can be achieved through Regenerative Agriculture principles as described by leading figures such as Alan Savoury and Charles Massey, careful site programming, and thoughtful infrastructural staging.

There are a number of opportunities for strategic partnerships at all stages of the project with a range of research agencies that would potentially be interested.



RETURN BRIEF

ZONING

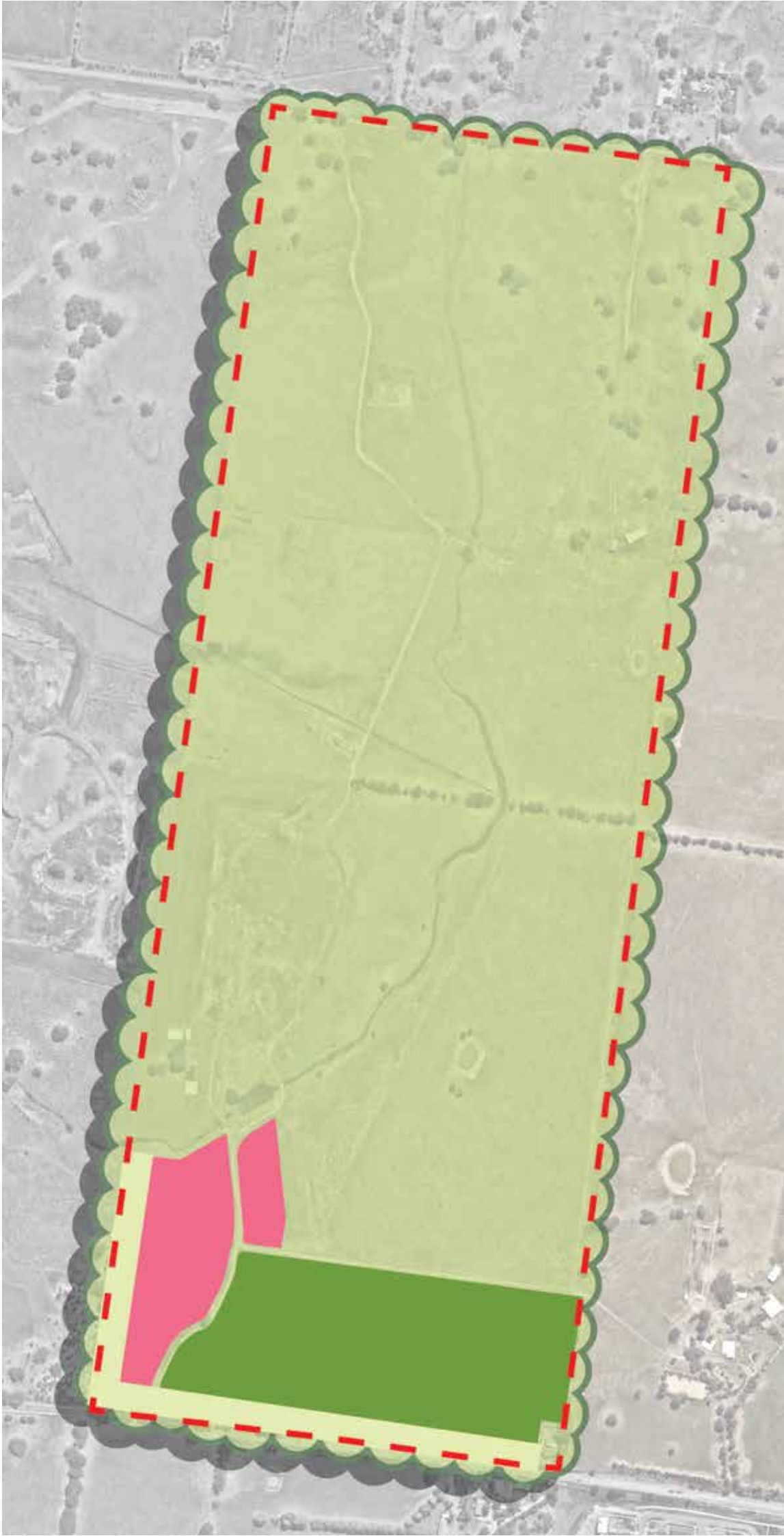
The masterplan is centred on creating the largest Eucalypts collection in the world. It grows out of the very real issues of sustainability, biodiversity and public environmental concern.

The arboretum not only provides a unique experience of being enveloped in a forest of Eucalypts, but are also seed banks for the future. As it develops into the future, the Melbourne Arboretum will build links across the world, an exchange of knowledge and actual plant material that will work towards reversing the planet's loss of biodiversity. It is therefore a strategy, a program and an ongoing event, not merely a design based primarily on aesthetics.

The tourism zone within the arboretum hosts a variety of activities including mini golf, children's garden, education and research area, accommodation, arts and events venue.

Legend

- Extent of Work
- Arboretum
- Tourism zone within the arboretum
- Driving range / mini golf (future stage of arboretum)



RETURN BRIEF

ZONING

There is an existing bluestone house on the site. It is proposed that this be retained and refurbished for a future tourism tenant.

The adjacent quarry has a number of bluestone buildings that need to be relocated to expansion of the quarry operation. It is proposed that these structures be relocated to the tourism area within the arboretum. These building would be then refurbished to meet the requirement of future retail tenants, such as accommodation, event venue, food and beverage.

Legend

- Extent of Work
- Arboretum
- Tourism zone within the arboretum
- Driving range / mini golf (future stage of arboretum)
- Existing bluestone building to be retained and refurbished
- Possible sites for relocation of heritage building from adjacent properties



Existing bluestone building to be retained and refurbished



Existing bluestone building to be retained and refurbished



Existing bluestone building to be relocated from adjacent quarry site



Existing bluestone building to be retained and refurbished

RETURN BRIEF

NEXT STEPS

Workshops

- Initial client workshops / Site discussions
- Detailed existing asset analysis
- Site conditions, qualities, opportunities
- Environmental analysis
- Site surveys / base material
- Define Report Purpose / Business case

Key Moves

- Refinement of Landscape Narrative
- Define and represent initial ideas
- Define site programming, tourism
- Visitor experiences
- Report DRAFT
- Client feedback

Masterplan

- Rendered site Masterplan
- Refine narrative and opportunities
- Infrastructure requirements
- Suggested Upgrades and Restoration
- Masterplan Report FINAL
- Client feedback
- Refinements as required

