

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne

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01/ Introduction	03
02/ Urban Context Analysis	07
03/ Masterplan Design	14
04/ Architectural Design	20

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners, the Bunurong/Boonwurrung Peoples. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.



01/ Introduction

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1.0 Introduction

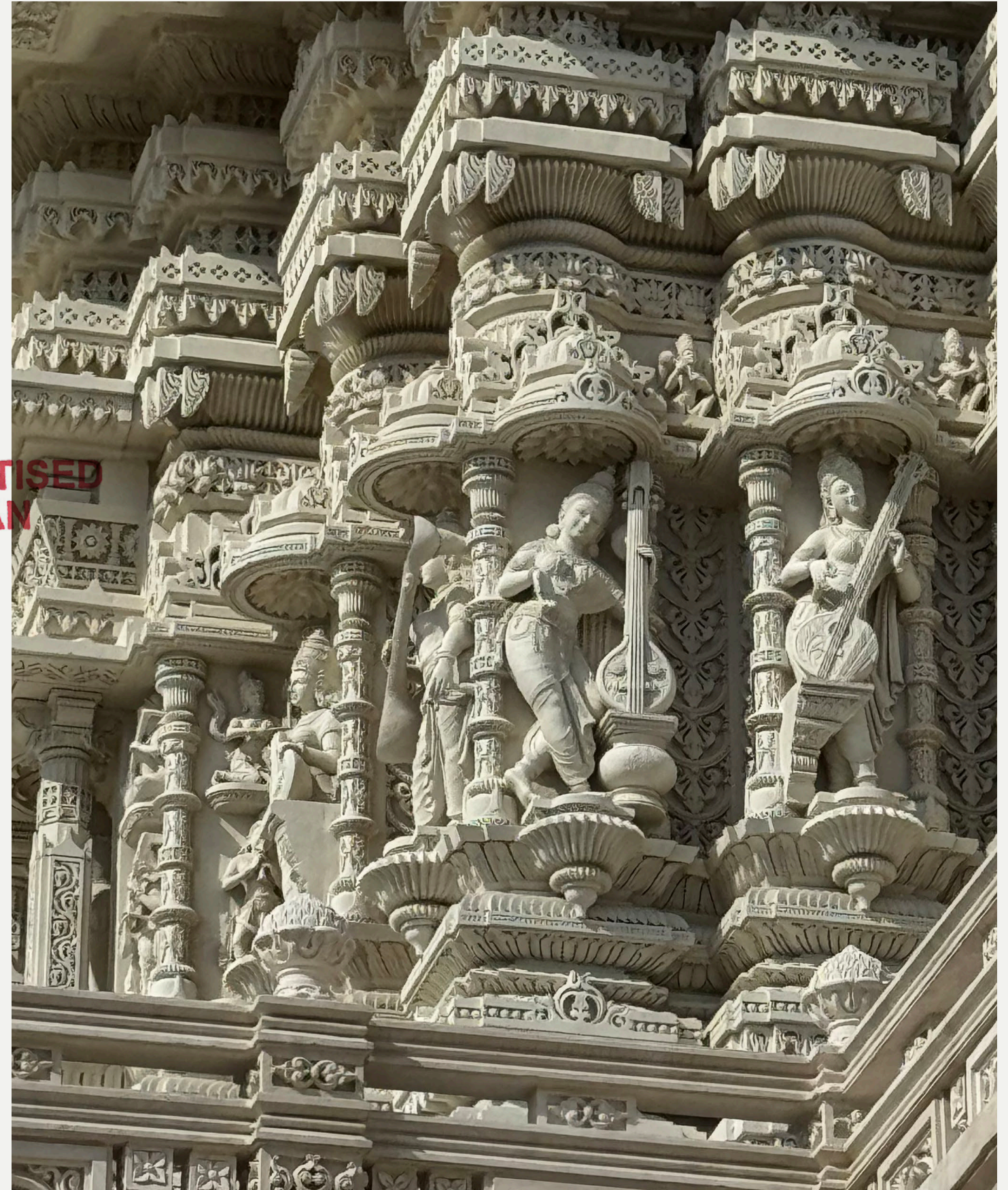
The BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, presents an opportunity to reinterpret a revered architectural tradition within a contemporary Australian context.

While grounded in the timeless principles and motifs that connect Mandirs worldwide, the design approach acknowledges and responds to the unique conditions of Cranbourne South.

Positioned within the Green Wedge Zone, the project seeks to embed itself in the landscape through an ecologically sensitive design strategy. Indigenous planting will contribute to habitat creation, shade provision, and urban heat reduction, while the built form will be shaped to address Melbourne's highly variable climate.

The Mandir will serve as a place of worship, supporting reflection, learning, and devotion, contributing positively to the surrounding community. The project aspires to establish a temple precinct that is authentically BAPS and distinctly Melbourne, fostering a respectful dialogue between tradition, environment, and contemporary civic life.

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1.1 Research & Learnings

Site visits to the **Robbinsville** and **Chino Hills BAPS** provided valuable insights into how traditional Mandir design is interpreted and embedded within a local cultural and environmental context.

Our architectural team, together with BAPS representatives, undertook a study tour in the United States of two temples to understand how they are embedded within their respective contexts. Both temples demonstrate a careful balance between adhering to classical architectural principles and responding to their regional settings. Key observations included the integration of heritage motifs, the use of high-quality natural materials, and the articulation of spaces that support both ritual and community.

The Robbinsville Mandir exemplifies how sacred architecture can coexist with suburban surroundings through sensitive landscaping, scale modulation, and a clear hierarchy of spaces that guide visitors from public entry to the spiritual sanctum. The Chino Hills Mandir highlights the importance of creating a cohesive precinct that supports ritual practices and associated cultural and educational activities, while maintaining cultural authenticity and aesthetic continuity.



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1.2 Design Collaboration

A series of workshops were conducted with the full consultant team to establish the macro-scale layout and strategic framework for the BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir.

A series of workshops were conducted with the full consultant team to establish the macro-scale layout and strategic framework for the BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir. These collaborative sessions allowed input across architecture, landscape, civil, structural, and services disciplines, ensuring an integrated approach to site planning, circulation, and spatial hierarchy.

Through these workshops, key decisions were made regarding the positioning of the temple, supporting facilities, and public spaces, aligning functional requirements with cultural and community objectives. The process established a cohesive masterplan framework, providing a clear basis for detailed design development and ensuring the site responds effectively to its local context, environmental conditions, and the needs of the growing BAPS community.



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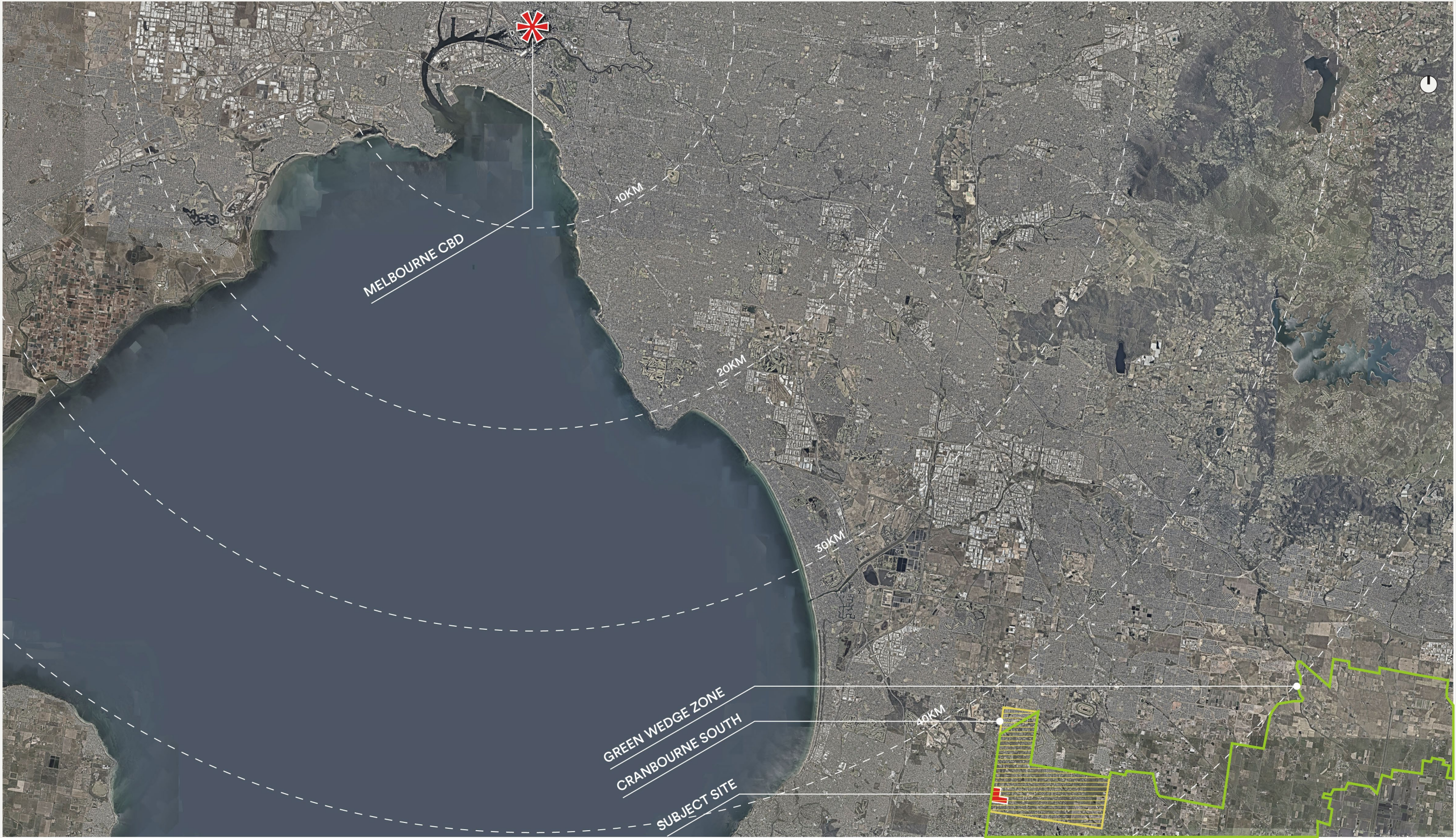


02/ Urban Context Analysis

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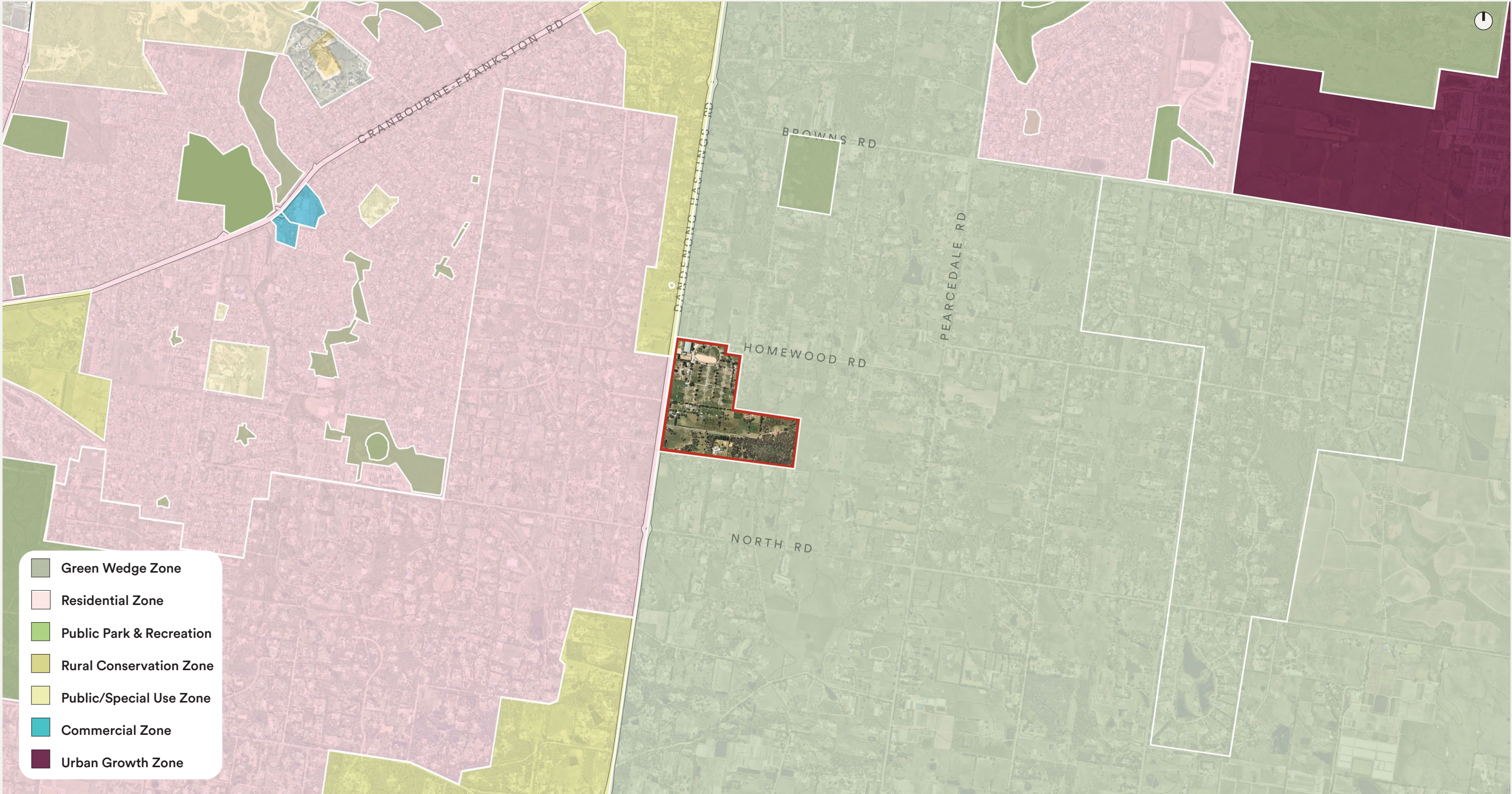
2.0 Site Location Plan

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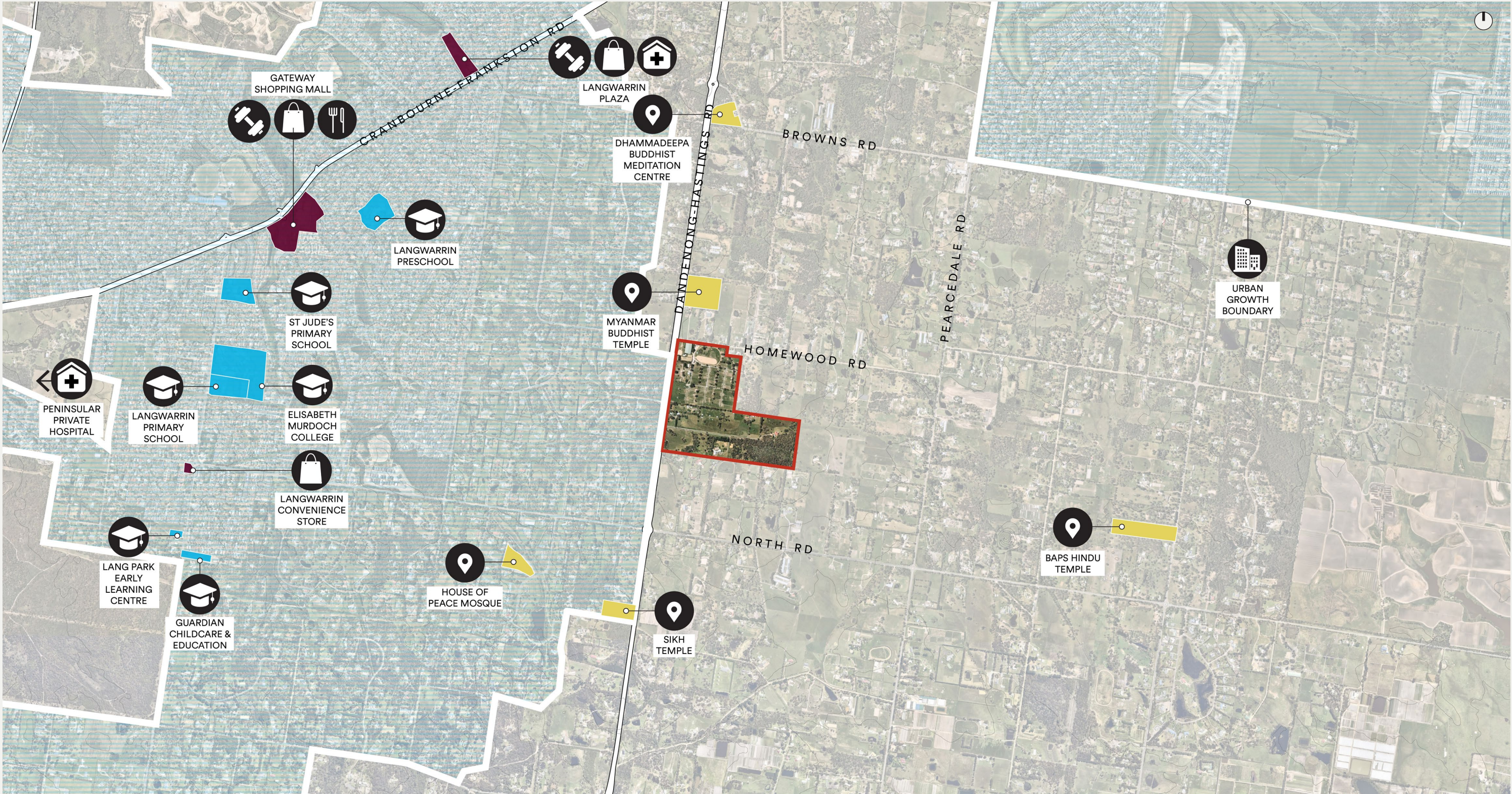
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Zoning



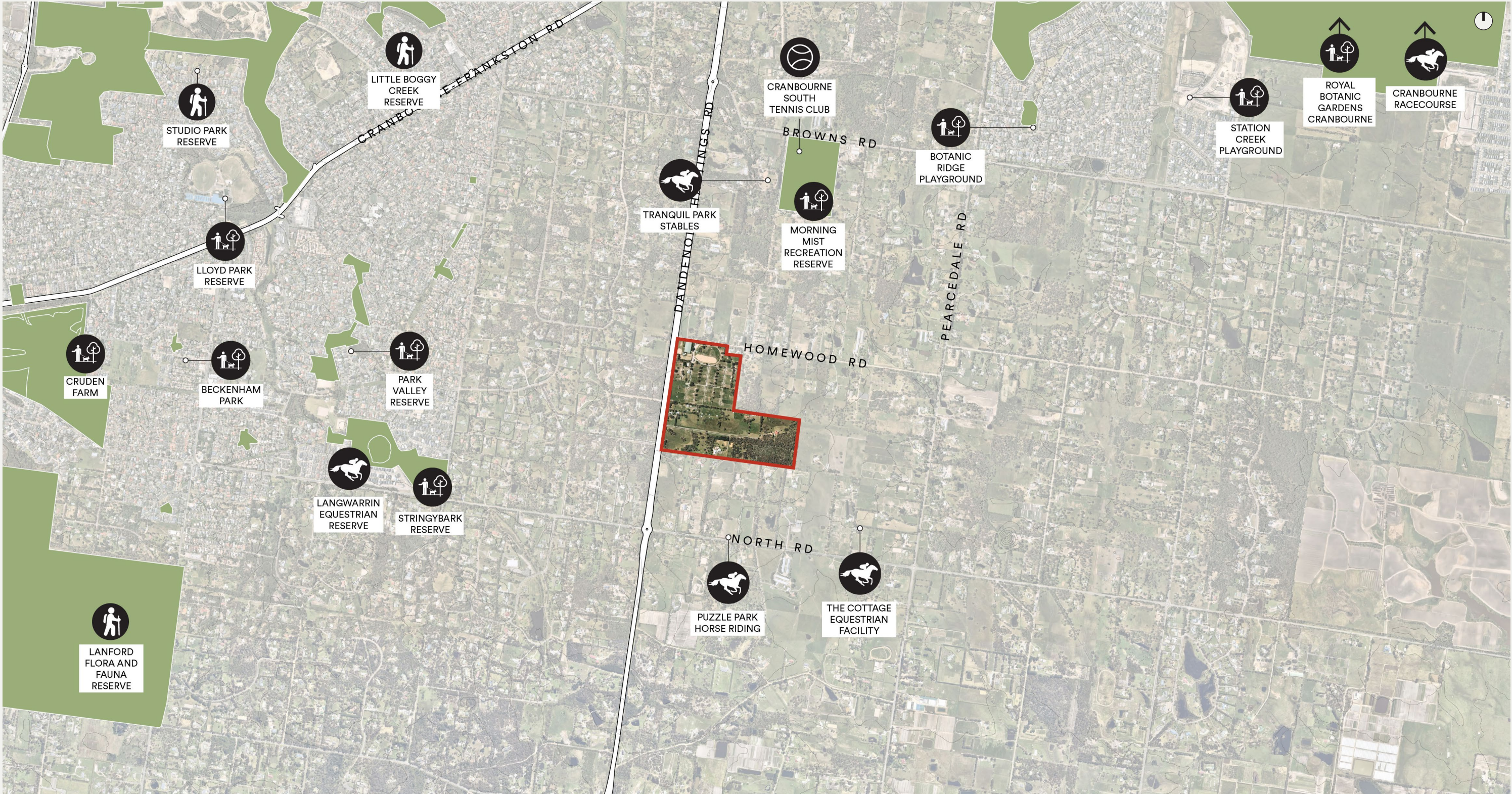
Context Use

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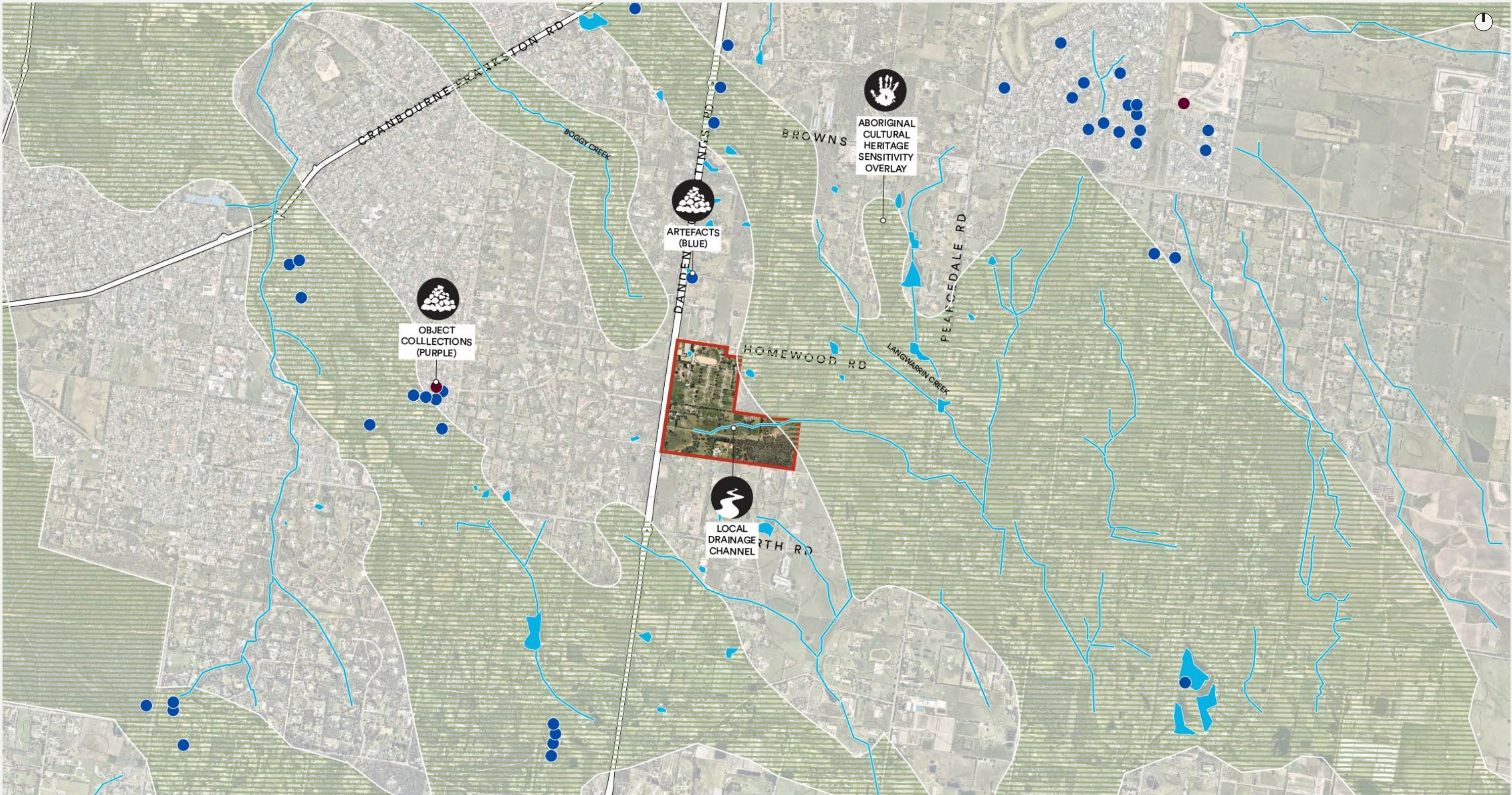
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Parks & Recreation



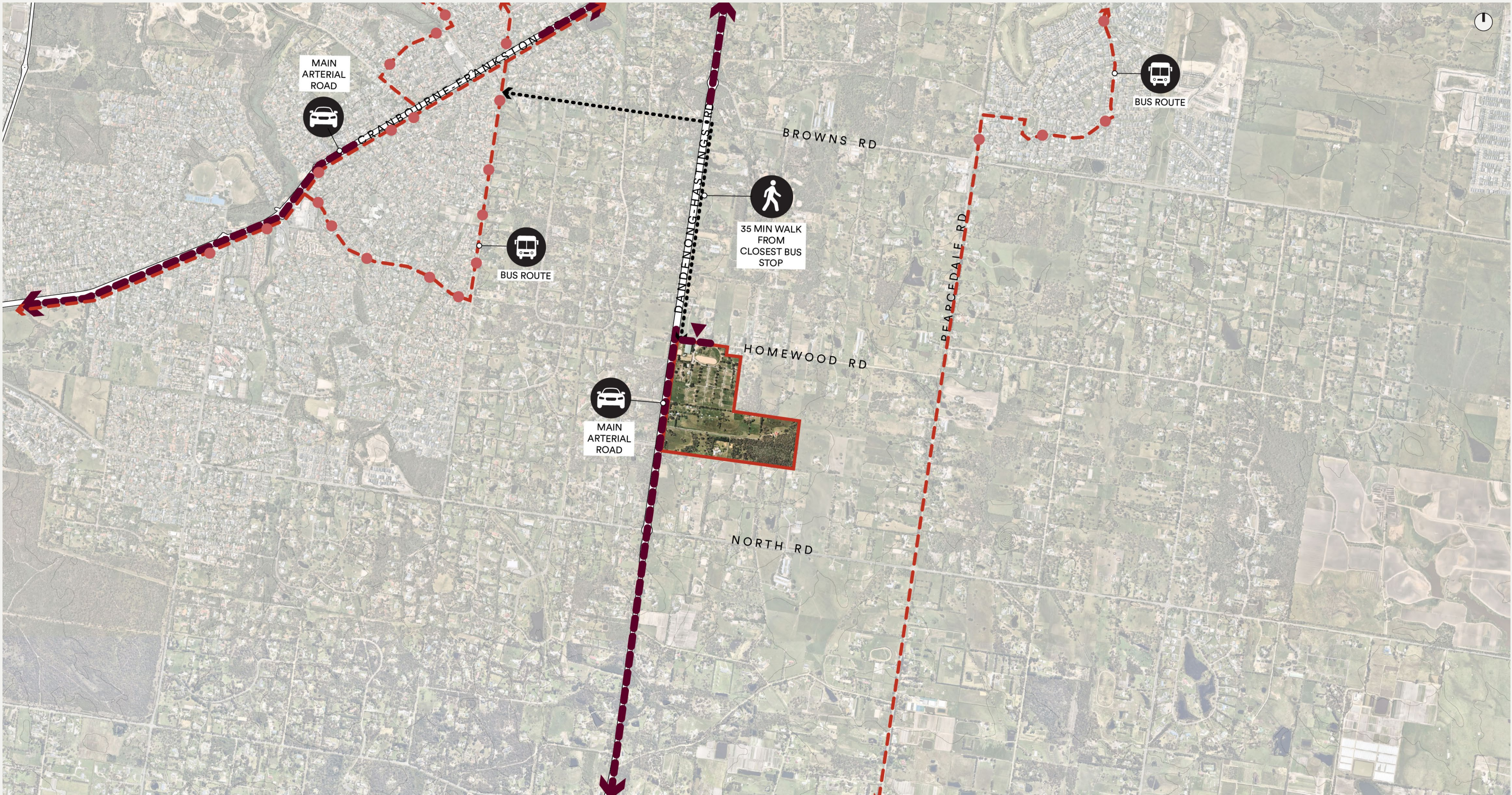
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Cultural Heritage



Transport

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03/ Masterplan Design

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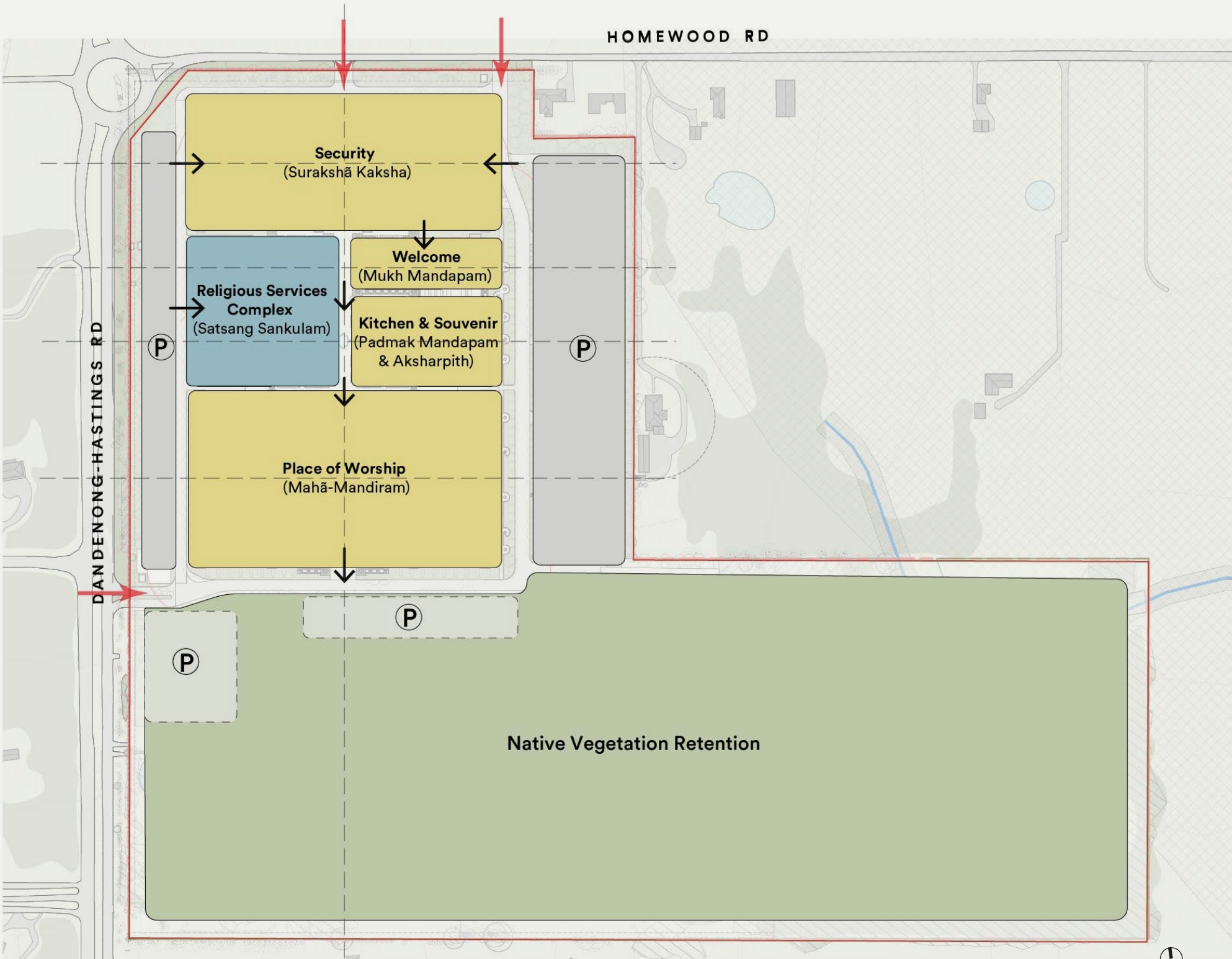
Zoning

Zoning of the precinct was undertaken as a collaborative process, building on the detailed site analysis to determine the most appropriate positioning of key program elements. The Place of Worship Complex (Mahā-Mandiram) requires a larger plot within the site, while the Religious Services Complex (Satsang Sankulam) provides different religious activities.

Placing the primary buildings towards the centre of the site allows for the retention of existing vegetation and creates capacity for new planting. This approach provides natural screening, supports site greening, and accommodates acoustic treatments where required along sensitive interfaces.

The southern and south-eastern portion of the site will be maintained in a natural state, retaining native vegetation and incorporating a new wetland system. This will enhance ecological value through improved vegetation cover and biodiversity.

- Place of Worship Complex (Mahā-Mandiram)
- Religious Services Complex (Satsang Sankulam)
- Native Vegetation Retention
- Parking
- Overflow Parking



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PEDDLE THORP

Zoning

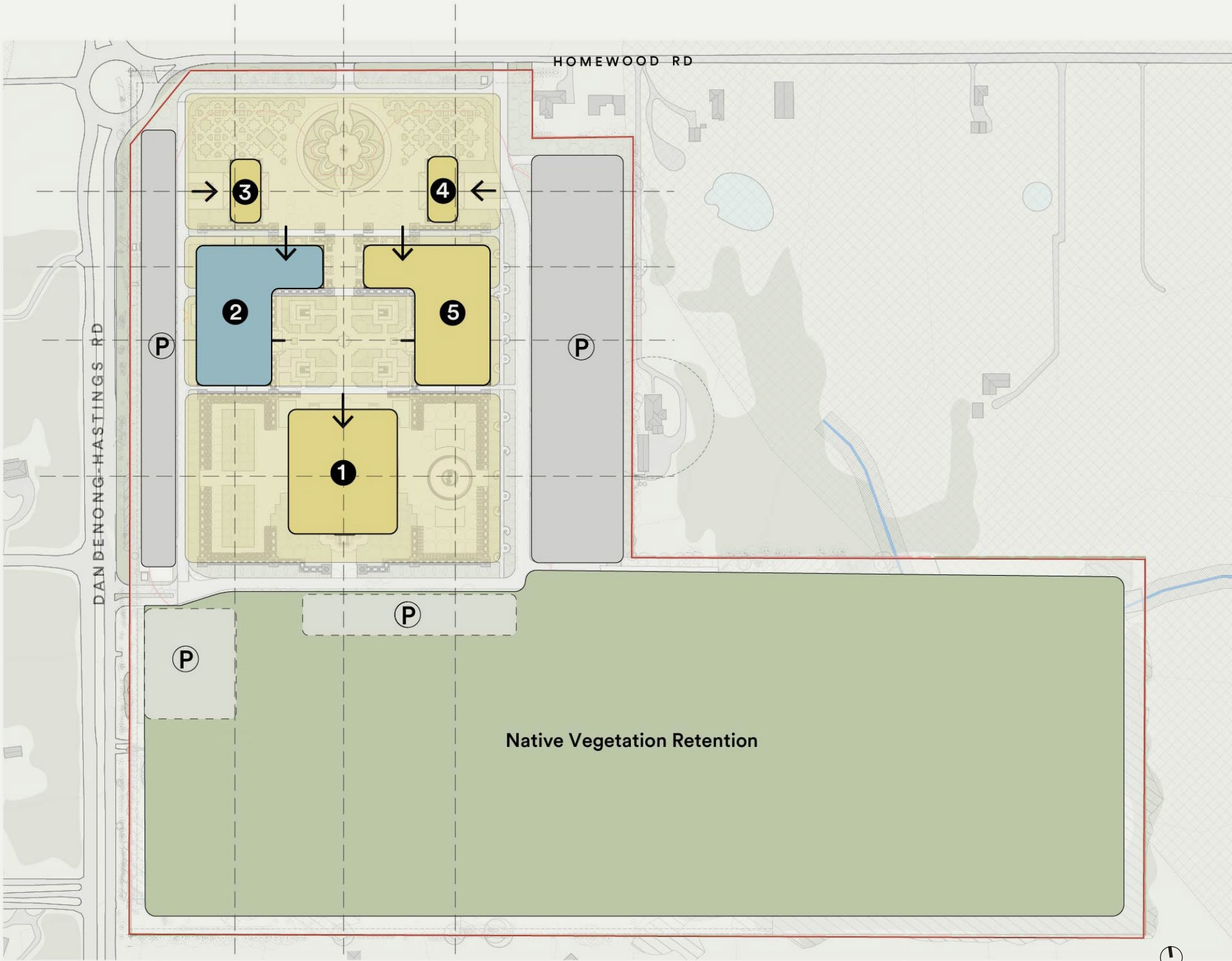
The BAPS Melbourne site is zoned to establish the Mahā-Mandiram as the central landmark, supported by a series of lower-scale buildings within a landscaped setting. The layout balances religious needs with sensitivity to surrounding properties and the environment.

The Mandiram is the focal point of the site. The design follows traditional Sanskrit principles of harmony and symbolism, with detailed carvings of Bhagwān Swāminārāyan, people, and nature. Centrally located on the site, it benefits from generous setbacks that allow for screening, landscaping, and reduced visual impact.

The Religious Services Complex is a modest two-storey building that supports community and devotional gatherings for BAPS devotees. It is carefully sited to retain existing native vegetation and incorporates new planting to enhance ecological value and soften the built form.

The zoning strategy positions the Mandiram at the heart of the site, with supporting facilities designed to remain modest, landscaped, and integrated. This approach ensures a balanced response that creates a spiritual landmark while respecting the ecological and community context.

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Place of Worship Complex

1. Grand Temple (Mahā-Mandiram)
3. Security Building 1 (Suraksha Kaksha)
4. Security Building 2 (Suraksha Kaksha)
5. Welcome Centre, Hindu Kitchen & Souvenir Shop (Mukh Mandapam, Padmak Mandapam & Aksharpith)

Religious Services Complex

2. Religious Services Building (Satsang Sanknlam)



Building 1: Grand Temple (Mahā-Mandiram)

- Ground Floor

 - Shoe Storage
 - Hindu Learnings Centre (Vithikā Mandapam)
 - Religious Souvenir Shop
 - Fellowship Admin Storage
- Level 1

 - Prayer & Rituals Hall (Pujā Mandapam)
 - Rituals Rooms
 - Adornments Store



Building 2: Religious Services Building (Satsang Sankulam)

- Basement

 - Hindu Religious Kitchen (Padmak Mandapam)
 - Decoration Workshop
 - Waste & Loading Storage
- Ground Floor

 - Religious Assembly Hall (Sabhā Mandapam)
 - Prayer & Ritual Halls (Pujā Mandapam)
 - Religious Admin (Karmashālā)
 - Dining Hall (Prasād Mandapam)
- Level 1

 - Religious Admin (Karmashālā)
 - Rectory for Sevaks (Pārshad Gruham)
 - Rectory for Sādhus / Swāmīs (Siddha Mandapam)
 - Hindu Youth Learning



Building 3: Security Building 1 (Surakshā Kaksha)

- Ground Floor
- Cloak Room
 - Security Scanning
 - Break Rooms
 - Storage



Building 4: Security Building 2 (Surakshā Kaksha)

- Ground Floor
- Cloak Room
 - Security Scanning
 - Break Rooms
 - Storage

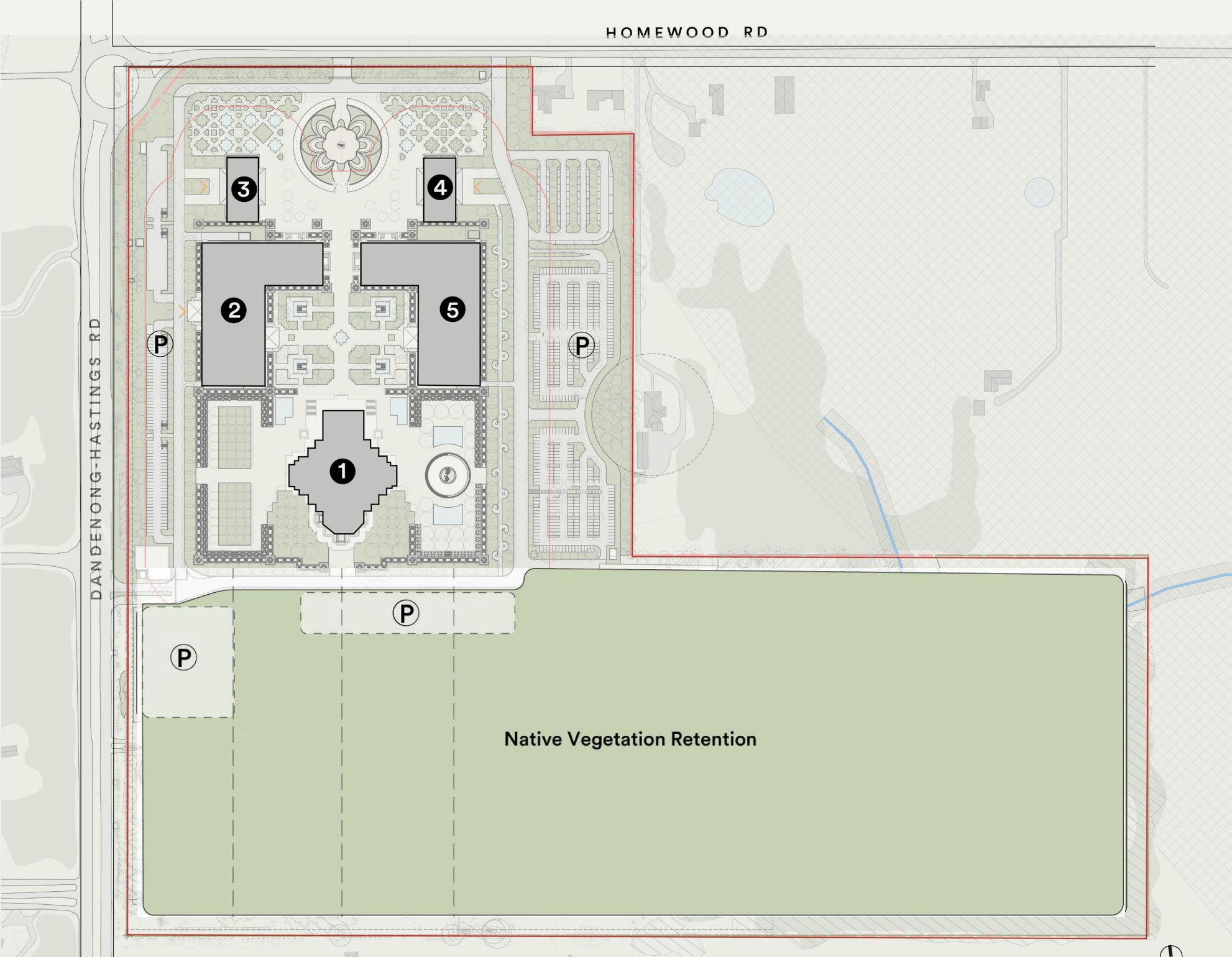


Building 5: Welcome Centre, Hindu Kitchen & Souvenir Shop (Mukh Mandapam, Padmak Mandapam & Aksharpith)

- Ground Floor

 - Reception
 - Orientation Rooms
 - Guest Rooms
 - Fellowship Admin (Indrashālā)
 - Religious Bookstore & Souvenir (Aksharpith)
 - Indoor Visitor Dining
 - Hindu Religious Kitchen (Padmak Mandapam)
- Level 1

 - Accommodation for Sevaks (Pārshad Gruham)
 - Fellowship Admin (Indrashālā)
 - Religious Meeting Rooms (Indrashālā)
 - Religious Ritual Rooms (Vimarsh Mandapam)
 - Religious Conference (Vimarsh Mandapam)
 - Indoor General Public Dining
 - Indoor Sevak Dining (Prasād Gruham)



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Vehicle Access

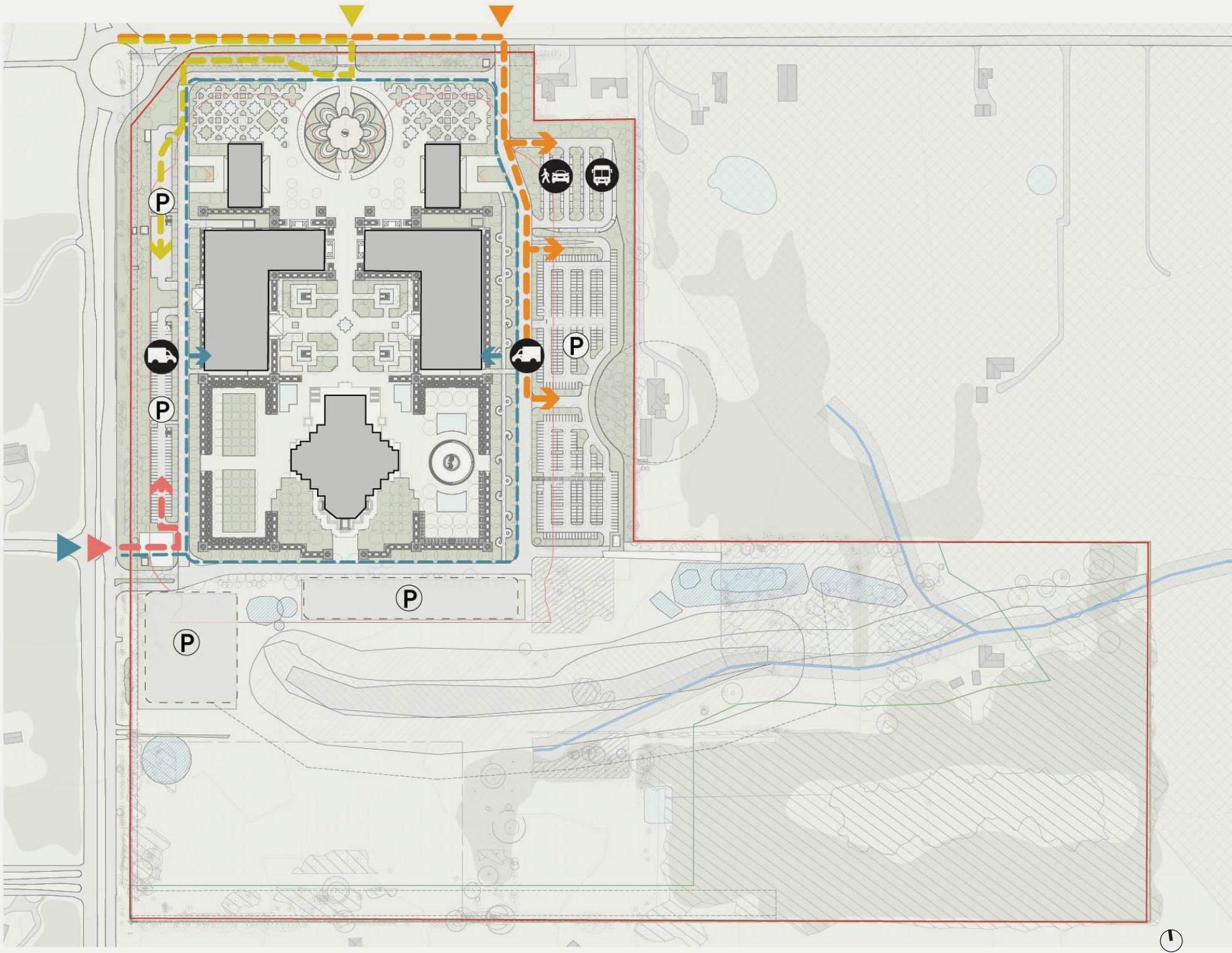
Access to and from Western Port Highway is proposed, separated a minimum of 150m from the intersection of Homewood Road and Western Port Highway to allow for a deceleration land to be provided within Western Port Highway

Further, the location of the access point along Western Port Highway means much of the roadside vegetation can be retained, which will assist with addressing visual impact to the west

A total of 642 formal (sealed) car parking spaces will be provided, including 49 short-term drop-off spaces. In addition, 5 bus parking spaces are proposed. A further 450 spaces will be accommodated within informal (unsealed) overflow parking areas, to be utilised during holiday periods and special events. These provisions are in accordance with the parking rates identified by Traffic Group for peak hourly patronage.

Please refer to Urbis Planning Report and Traffic Group Traffic Report for further information.

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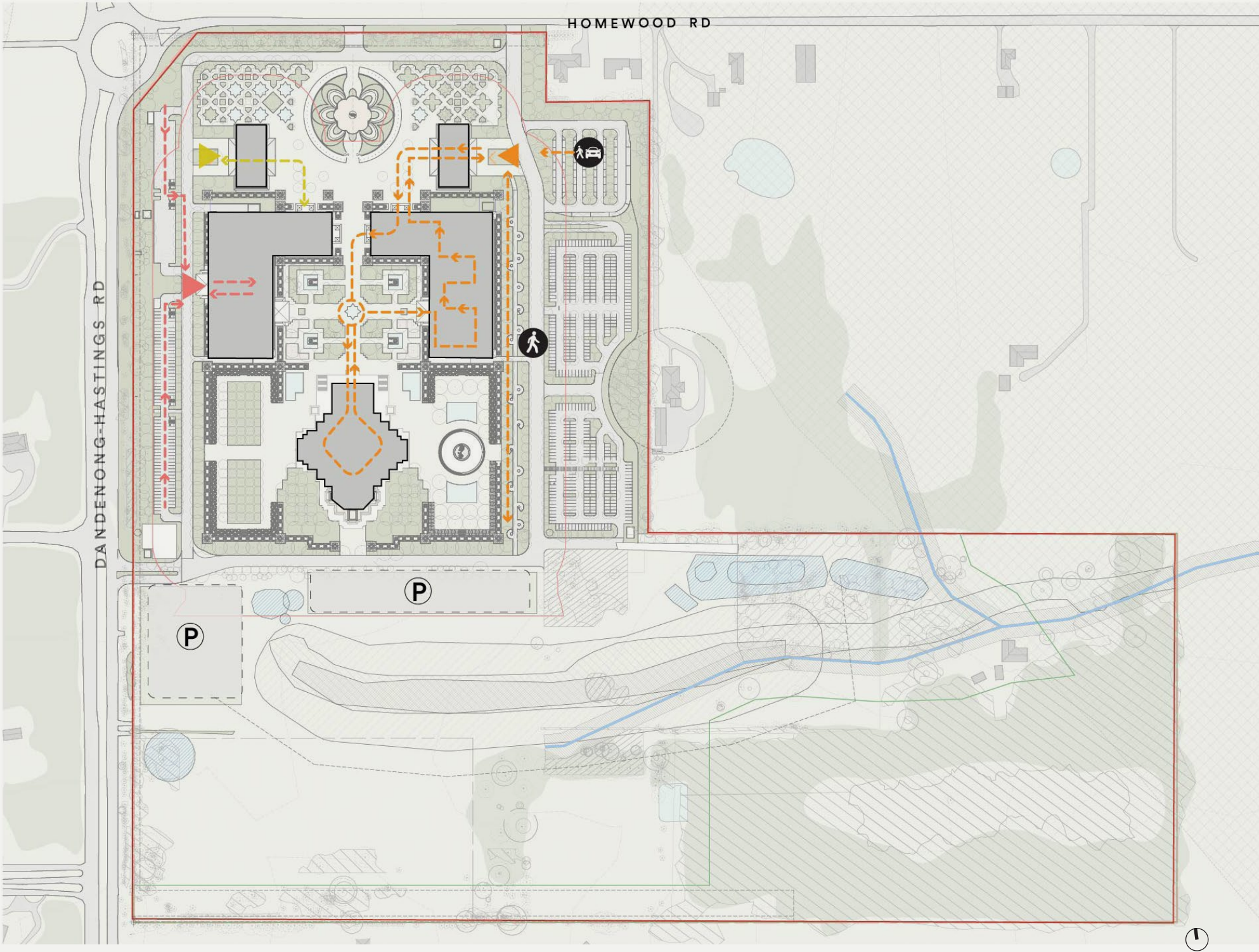
- Invited Guest Access
- General Public Access
- BAPS Community Access
- Service Access
- Overflow Parking

Pedestrian Access

There are clearly defined entry and exit points to the Place of Worship Complex, accessible via Security Building 1 & 2. Signage and way-finding will play a critical role in guiding pedestrian flow and will be carefully developed in collaboration with a specialist consultant. The Religious Services Complex will be more familiar to BAPS devotees, offering a sense of orientation and comfort within the site.

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- Invited Guest Access
- General Public Access
- BAPS Community Access

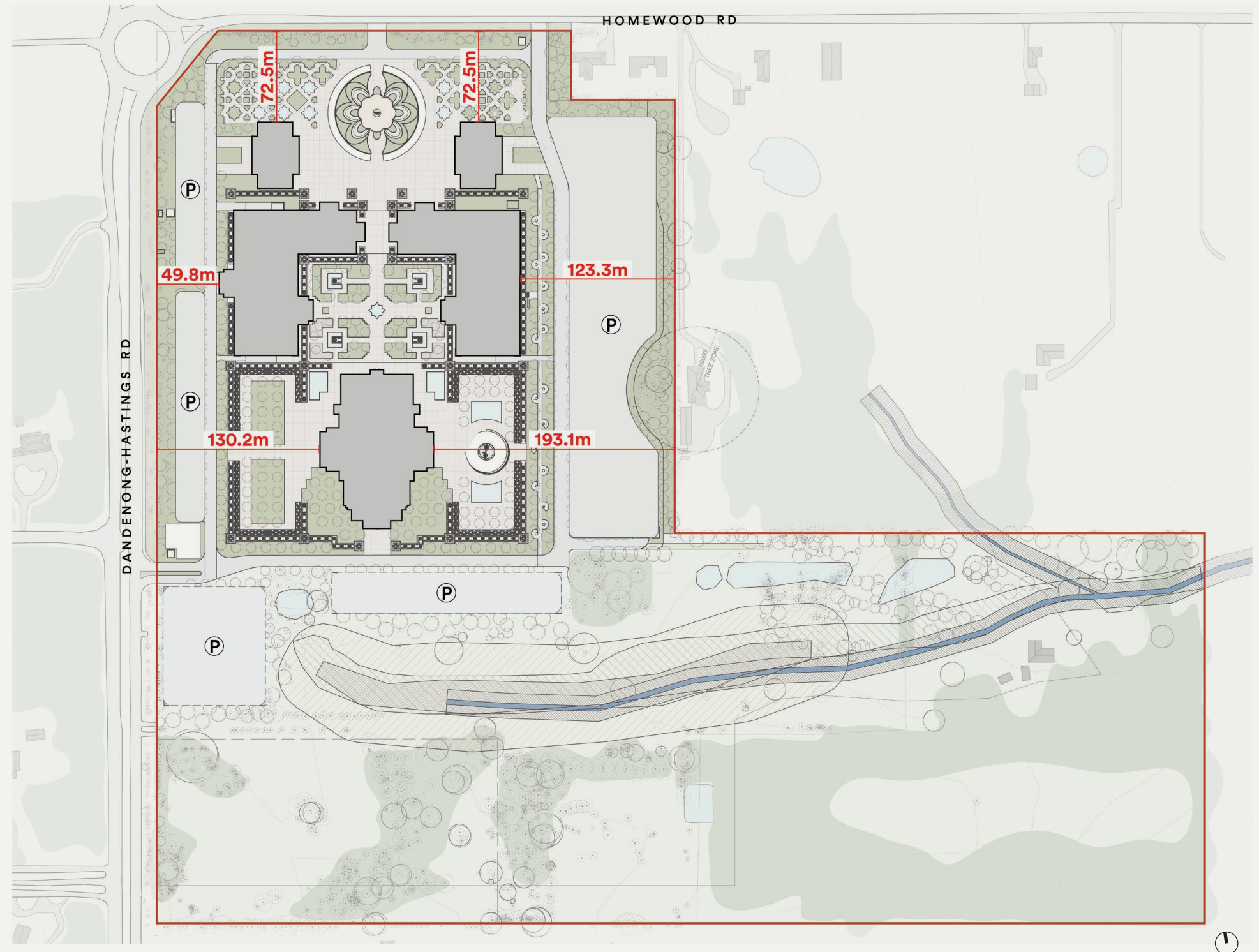


3.4 Masterplanning

Setbacks

The proposed built form maintains substantial setbacks from surrounding interfaces, including approximately 130 m to the Western Port Highway from the Maha Mandir, 73 m to Homewood Road, 193 m to the eastern rural residential boundary from the Maha Mandir, and 123 m to the supporting buildings along the eastern interface. These setbacks provide generous separation from adjoining land uses and reinforce the site's landscape setting.

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04/ Architectural Proposal

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4.0 Architectural Intent

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne

Architectural detailing throughout the site is significant, with each carved element **carrying symbolic, religious, or philosophical meaning.**

The BAPS community has long fostered a deep connection between spirituality and the built environment. This connection is expressed through the development of BAPS precincts across the globe, which serve as centres for worship, cultural celebration, and education. These facilities are not only important places of religious practice for BAPS devotees, but also function as inclusive cultural landmarks that attract and inspire a broad and diverse audience.

Each BAPS project is designed to integrate traditional Hindu temple architecture with modern religious, educational, and cultural amenities. This architectural approach ensures the projects remain grounded in spiritual heritage while also meeting the evolving needs of contemporary diasporic communities, including Australia's growing Hindu population.

At the heart of the proposed site is the Mahā-Mandiram, a 64 metre stone temple dedicated to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the principal deities of Hinduism's major denominations. Drawing upon principles outlined in ancient Sanskrit texts and the Shilpa Shastras (traditional Hindu architectural treatises), the Mandiram has been carefully designed to reflect ritual geometry and cosmic symbolism. Its layout, orientation, proportions, and carvings are all aligned with traditional spiritual principles, enhancing the experience of worship and meditation.

Architectural detailing throughout the project is significant, with each carved element carrying symbolic, religious, or philosophical meaning. These intricate features serve both as spiritual focal points for adherents and as educational and cultural expressions accessible to the wider public, promoting cross cultural understanding and appreciation.

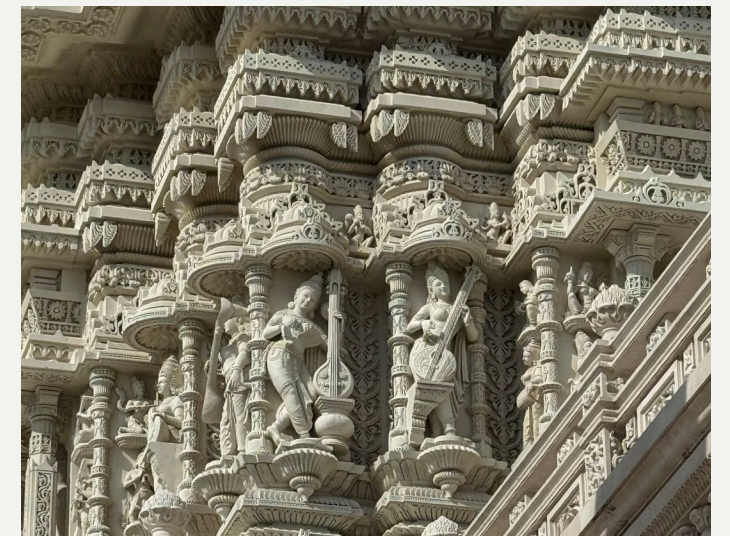
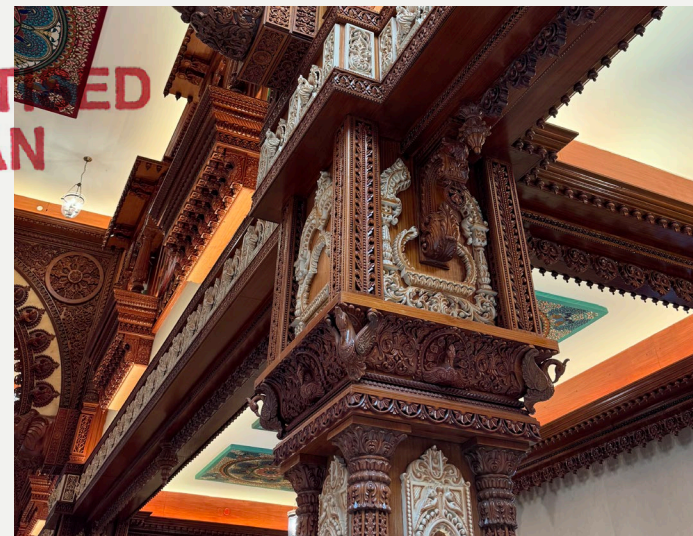
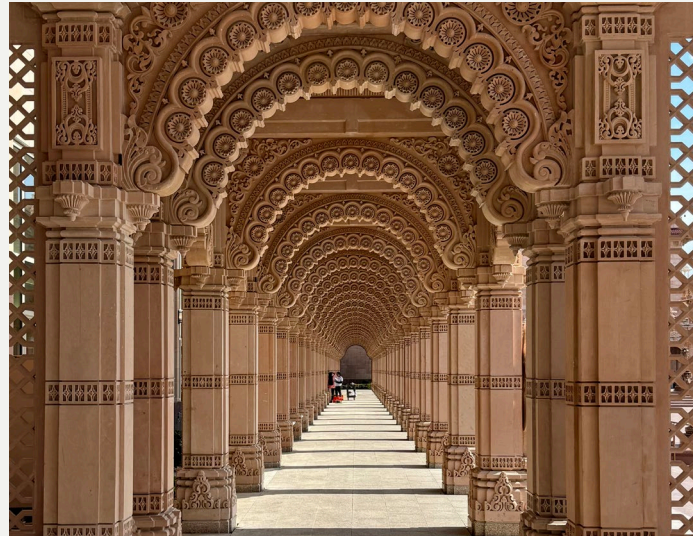
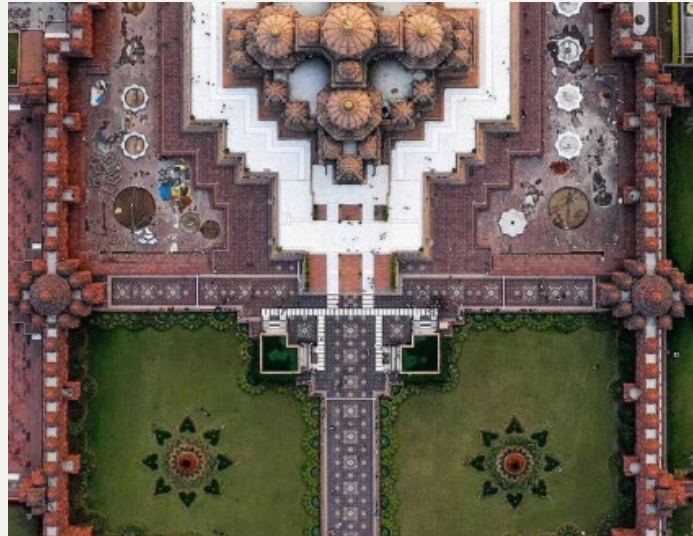
The landscape design of the site is also a vital component. Gardens, water features, and open spaces have been planned to promote a tranquil, contemplative atmosphere and to reflect the importance of harmony with nature in Hindu philosophy. The landscape strategy incorporates environmentally sustainable design principles and contributes to the site's overall sense of serenity and inclusivity.

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4.1 Indian Temple Architecture

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne



Gateways and Thresholds

Decorative gateways, or toranas, play a central role in temple architecture by marking the transition from the external world into a sacred precinct. These gateways are often framed with arched openings, richly adorned with sculptural details and symbolic motifs. They serve both as physical entrances and as ceremonial thresholds, establishing a sense of procession and reverence as visitors approach the temple.

Screens and Light

Intricate jali screens, or perforated stone latticework, are another defining element. Traditionally carved with geometric or floral patterns, they filter natural light into interior spaces, casting dynamic patterns while providing ventilation and privacy. Beyond their functional role, jali screens embody the spiritual metaphor of revealing and concealing, offering a subtle boundary between the sacred and the everyday.

Tiered and Layered Structures

Many temples are articulated through a tiered structure, where layered elements step upward to create rhythm, hierarchy, and visual interest. This composition establishes a clear order, drawing the eye from the base toward the pinnacle, symbolising an ascent from the earthly to the divine. The tiered form also contributes to the sculptural richness of the temple, allowing for narrative reliefs and decorative articulation.

Rhythmic Proportions

Historic precedents such as the Sun Temple at Modhera illustrate the importance of rhythm and proportion in temple facades. The temple's exterior is divided into carefully modulated bays and vertical layers, producing a sense of balance, repetition, and harmony. These rhythmic divisions provide a framework that retains the essence of traditional design while responding to modern programmatic and contextual requirements.

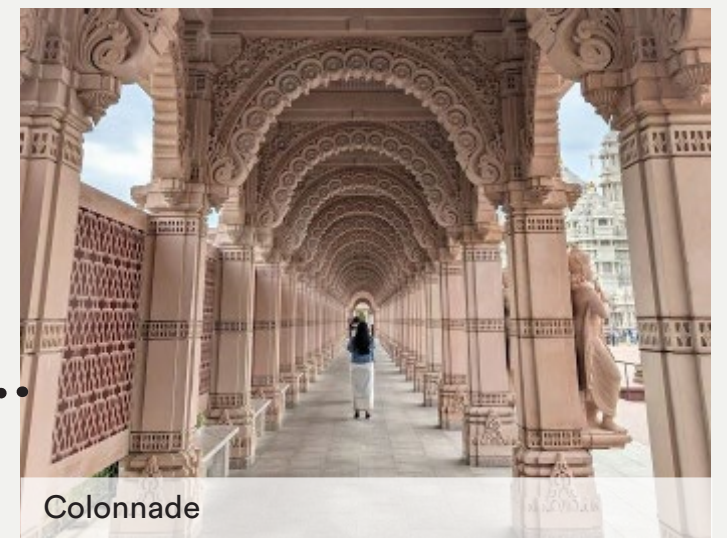
4.2 Indian Temple Architecture

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne

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Mahā-Mandiram



Colonnade



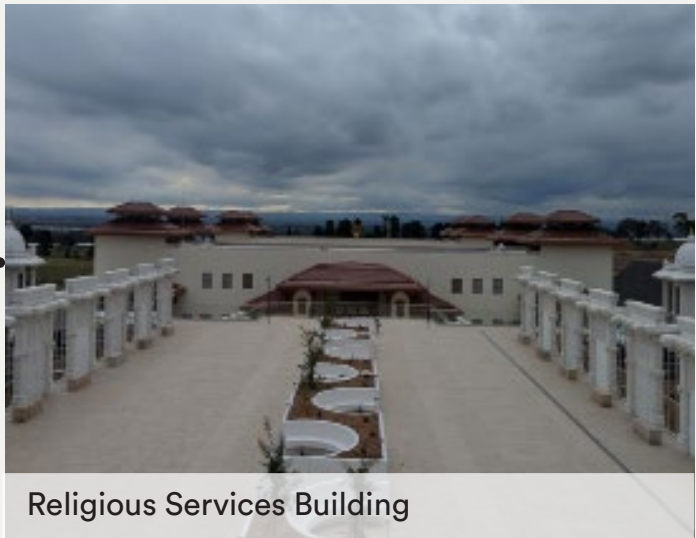
Welcome Centre

4.3 Indian Temple Architecture

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Decorative Entries



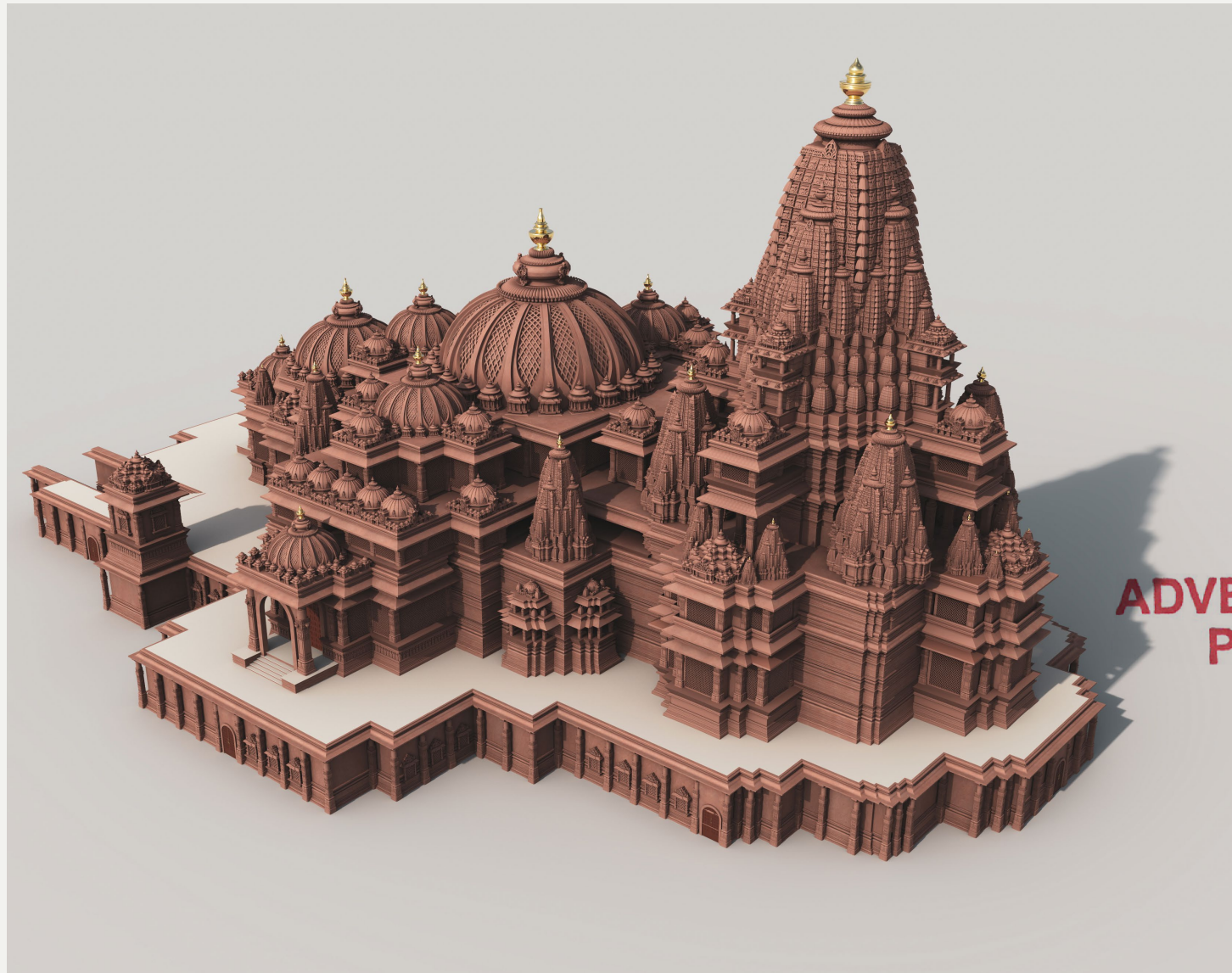
Religious Services Building



Gardens & Statue

4.4 Architectural Response

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne



A Place of Worship

A Mandir, or Hindu temple, is foremost a sacred space dedicated to spiritual practice, ritual, and devotion. It provides a physical and symbolic link between the worshipper and the divine, guiding visitors from the everyday world into a realm of contemplation, prayer, and community. Within the Mandir, carefully planned sequences of spaces from gateways and courtyards to sanctums create a sense of journey, reflection, and reverence. The temple is also a social and cultural centre, bringing people together for festivals, learning, and community worship.

Architectural Language

The architecture of a Mandir is deeply rooted in traditional principles, drawing on sacred geometry, proportion, and symbolism. Axial alignments and symmetrical planning create order and clarity, while decorative detailing enriches both exterior and interior experiences. The temple's verticality often symbolises the ascent from the earthly plane to the spiritual, expressed through layered elements, spires (shikharas), and domes that crown the sacred space.

Craft and Materiality

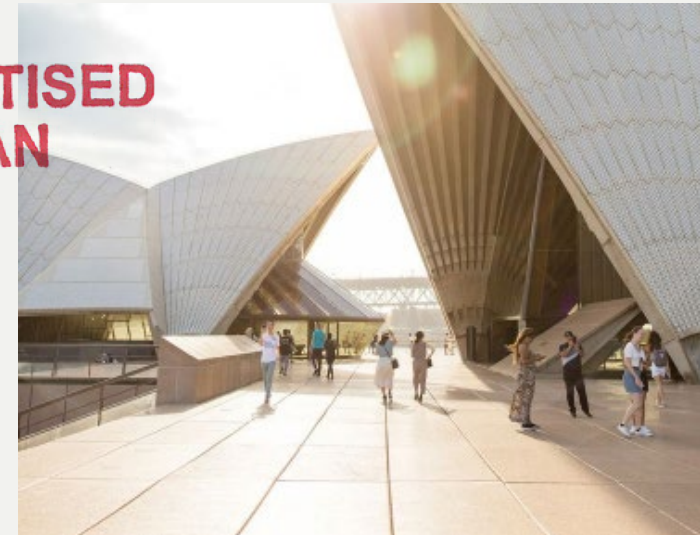
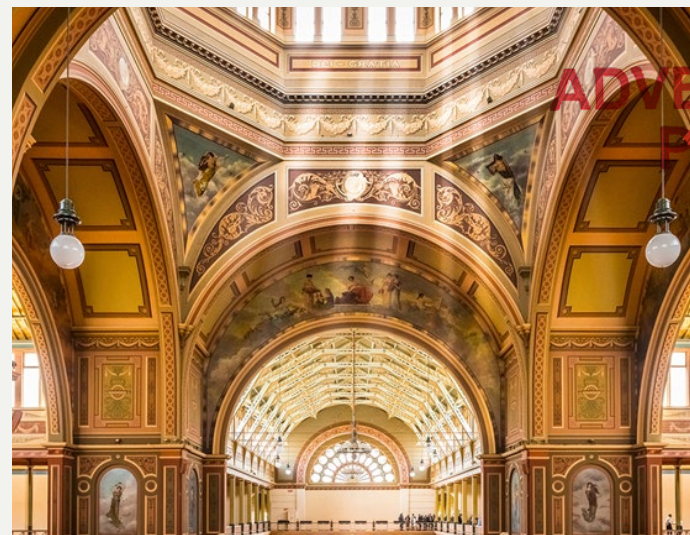
Mandir architecture is distinguished by intricate stone carving, latticework (jali), and sculptural ornamentation that narrate stories, express cultural identity, and enhance spiritual meaning. Natural materials most commonly stone and timber are selected for their durability, authenticity, and connection to tradition. These elements are often combined with landscaping, water features, and open courtyards to create a holistic environment that supports religious ritual.

Contemporary Context

While grounded in centuries old traditions, modern Mandirs adapt to their local setting. This includes responding to climate, ecology, and urban conditions, while ensuring accessibility and comfort for diverse users. In a contemporary city such as Melbourne, the design of a Mandir becomes both a continuation of an ancient architectural lineage and a contribution to the civic and cultural fabric. It offers a place of worship for devotees and a welcoming destination for the broader community.

4.5 Contextual Architecture

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne



Indigenous Culture

The masterplan and architectural response carefully considers the Indigenous culture and the broader context of the site, acknowledging traditional connections to the land while embedding cultural awareness, respect, and sensitivity into the design approach.

Cultural Significance

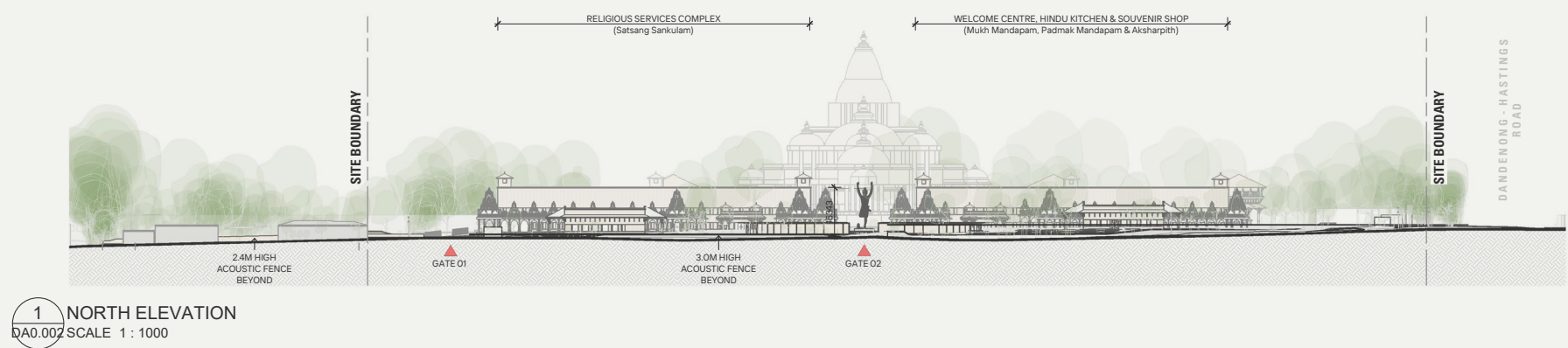
Referencing historic buildings of significance throughout Australia, the design draws on their architectural language, materiality, and cultural importance.

Public Realm

Reviewing and refining the plaza design will enhance the public realm by improving its functionality, accessibility, and visual quality, creating a more welcoming, contemplative, and connected setting that supports visitors and the temple environment.

Contextual Design

Looking contextually at the area of Cranbourne involves considering its unique cultural identity, history, and landscape, ensuring that the design response is sensitive to place and reflective of the community it serves.



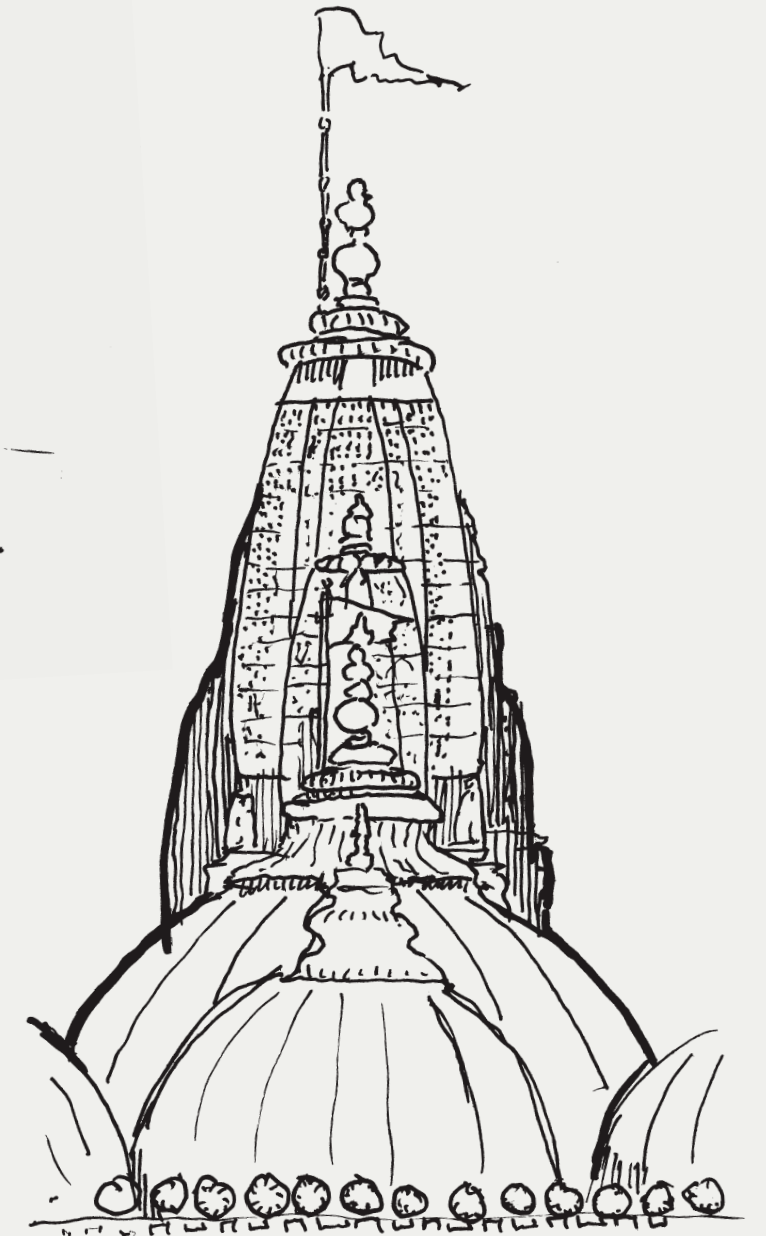
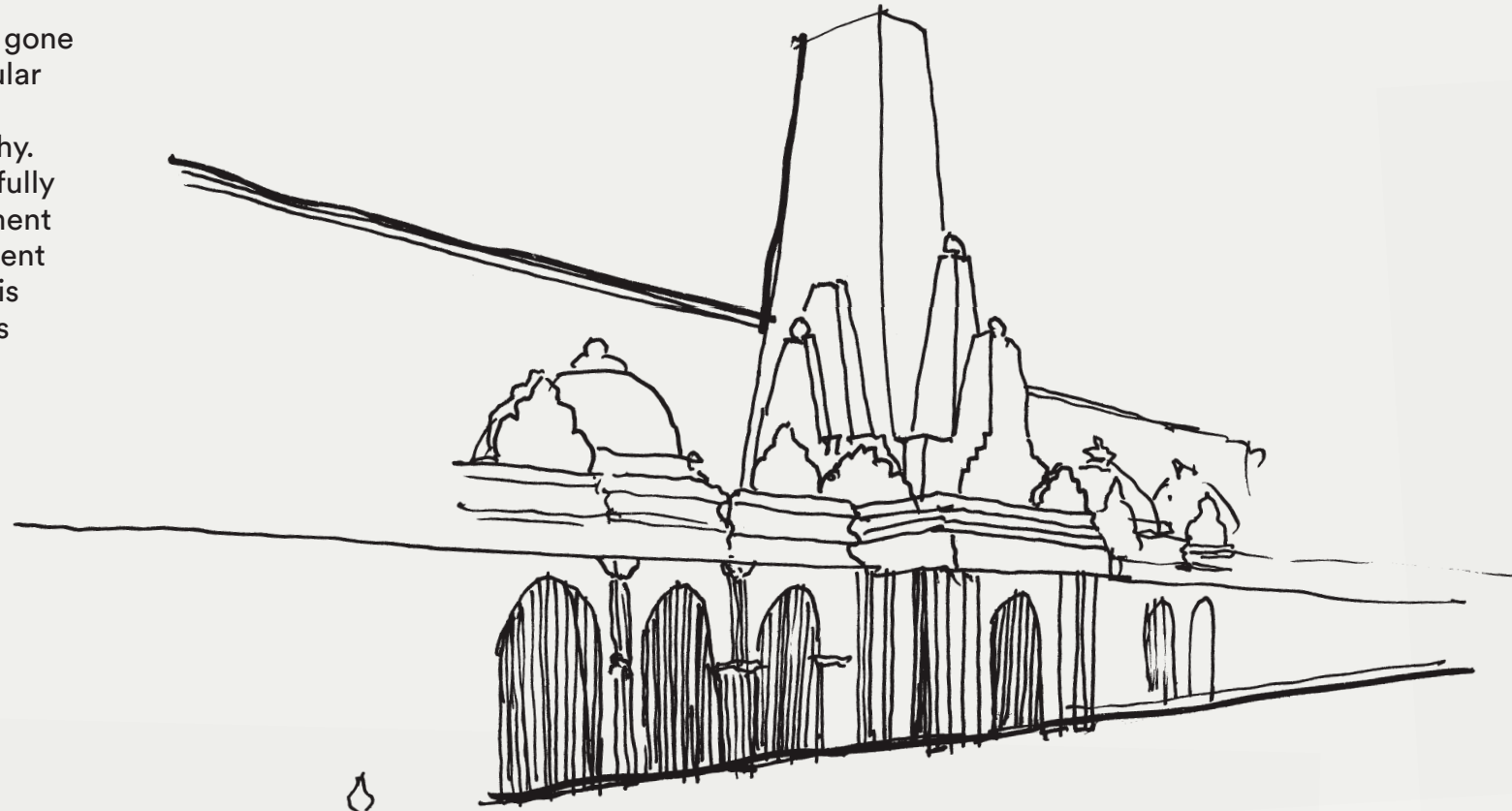
Tree Canopy Height

The overall bulk and scale of the proposed development have been carefully designed to sit comfortably within the established height of the mature tree canopy. This approach ensures that the built form remains visually unobtrusive within the surrounding landscape, avoiding any sense of visual dominance or disruption to the natural character of the site and its context.

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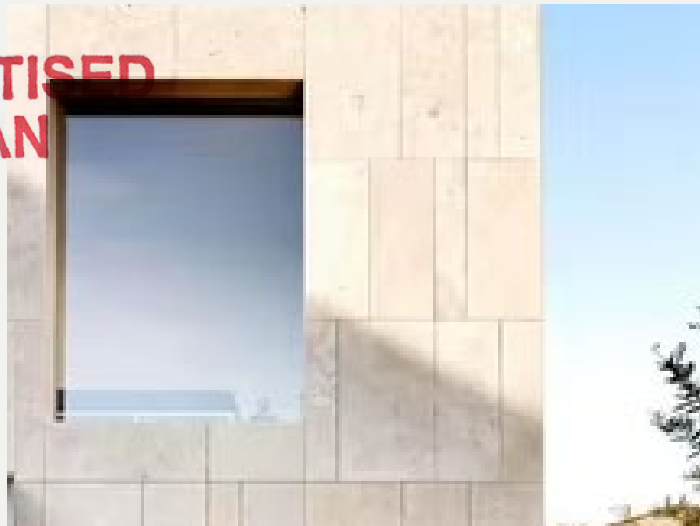
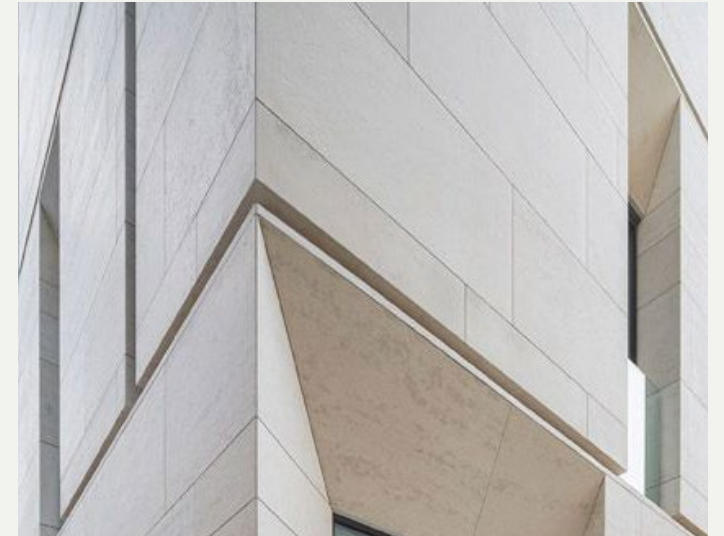
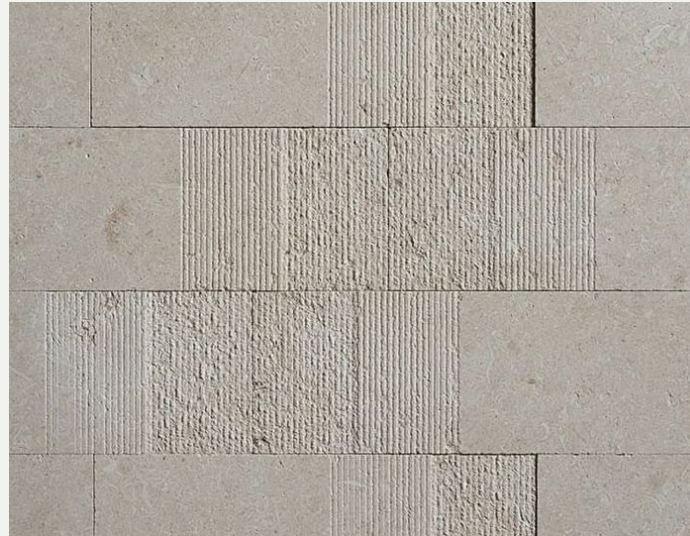
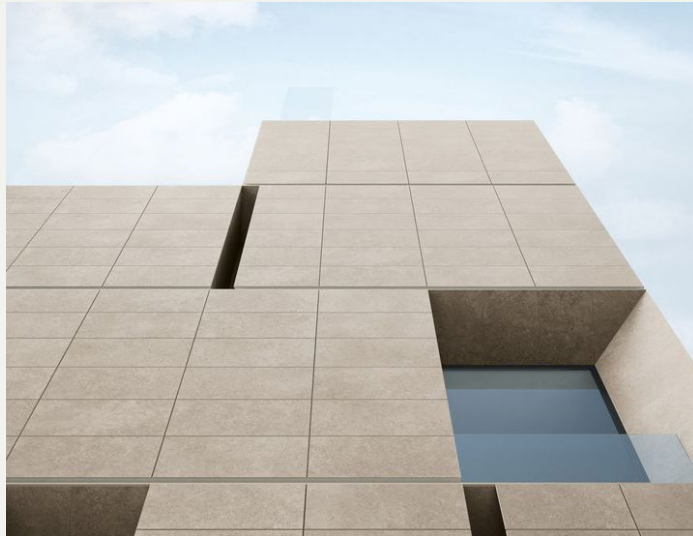
4.7 Facade Design

Significant study and understanding have gone into the design of the temple, with particular attention paid to traditional principles of symmetry, proportion, and spatial hierarchy. Each architectural element has been carefully analysed and interpreted to ensure alignment with sacred geometry and the spiritual intent inherent in Indian temple architecture. This rigorous design process honours centuries of tradition while adapting these timeless principles to the context of the site.



4.8 Materiality

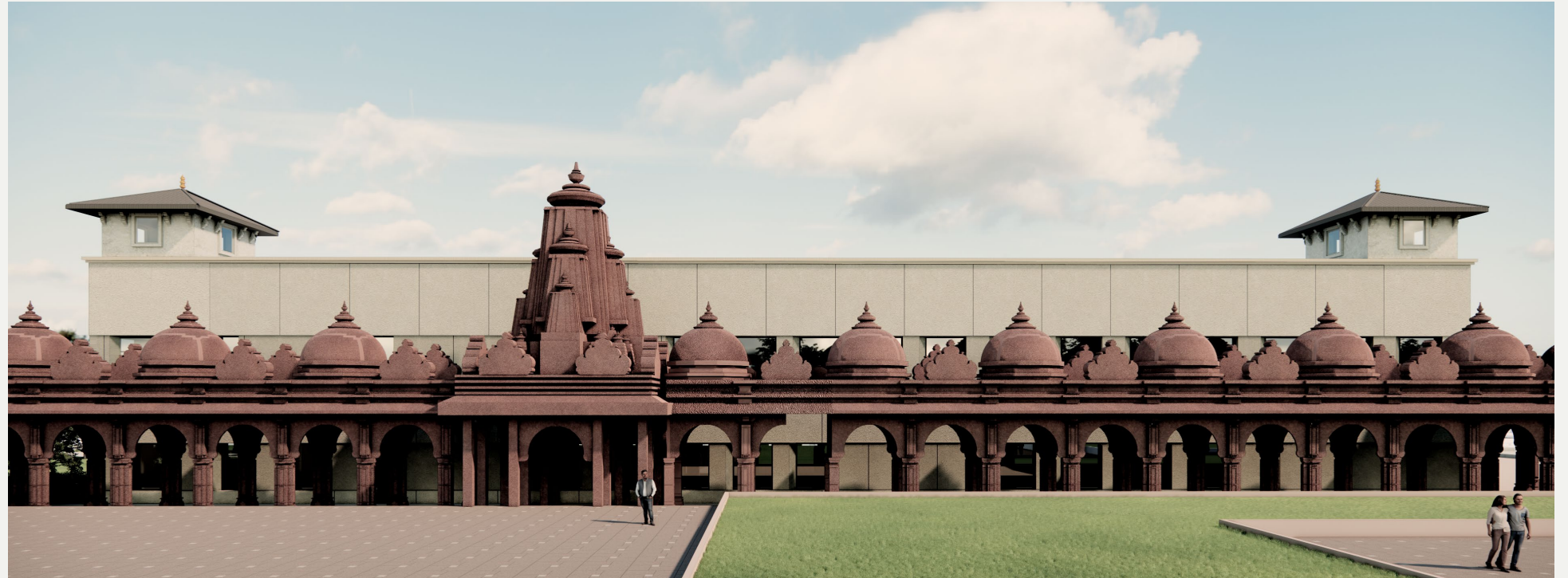
BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne



The material palette will be carefully curated to reflect spiritual and environmental harmony, drawing on stone complemented by a subdued colour palette that reinforces a sense of calm, connection to place, and respect for the surrounding landscape.

4.9 Facade Design

The architectural response is deeply informed by the Australian context, with a strong emphasis on understanding local materials, construction practices, and environmental conditions. Locally sourced materials have been carefully selected to ensure durability, authenticity, and visual harmony with the surrounding landscape. The design also reflects a sensitivity to Australia's climate through passive design strategies such as orientation, shading, and natural ventilation that enhance thermal comfort and reduce environmental impact. By integrating these locally relevant considerations, the buildings are not only grounded in place but also perform efficiently and sustainably over time.

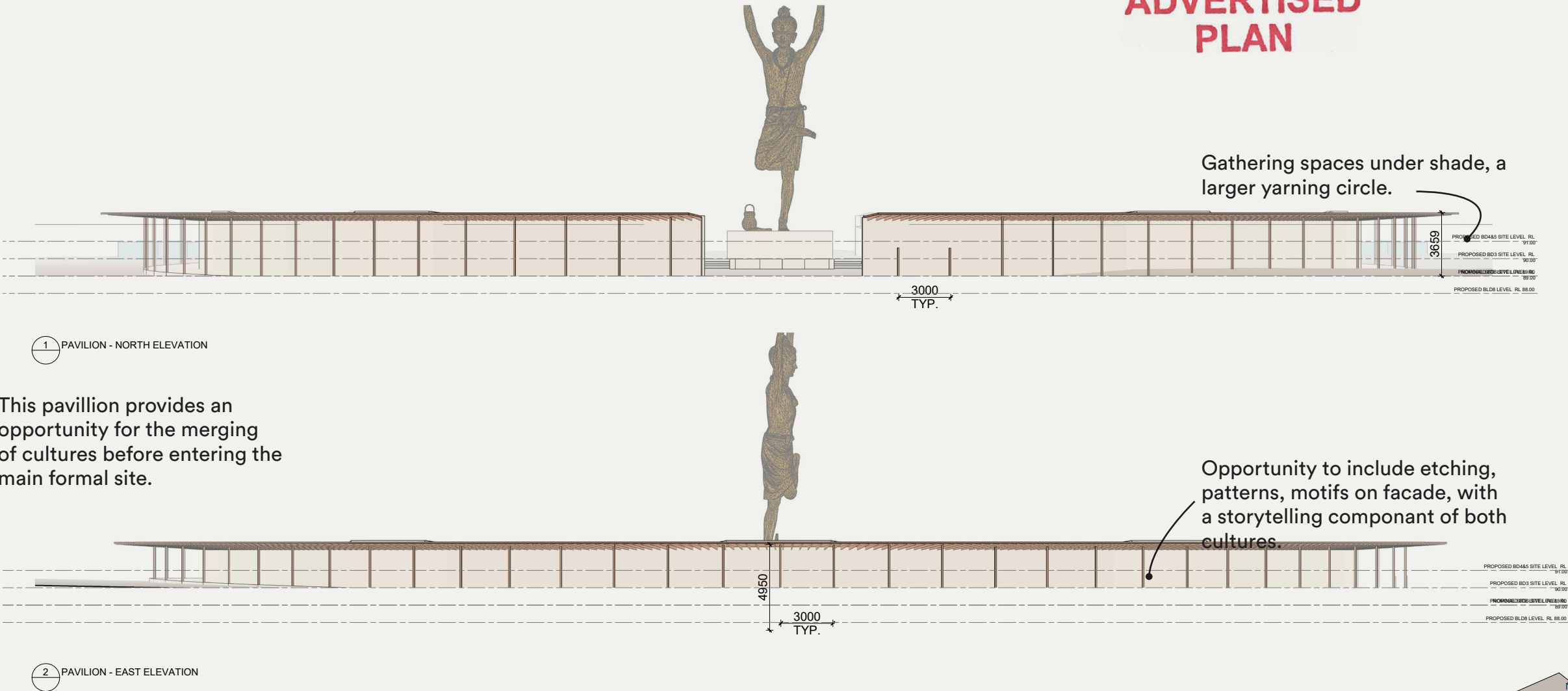


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4.10 Indigenous Inclusion Opportunity

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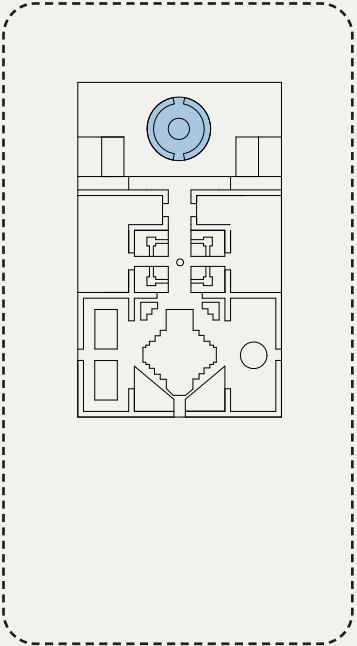


This pavillion provides an opportunity for the merging of cultures before entering the main formal site.

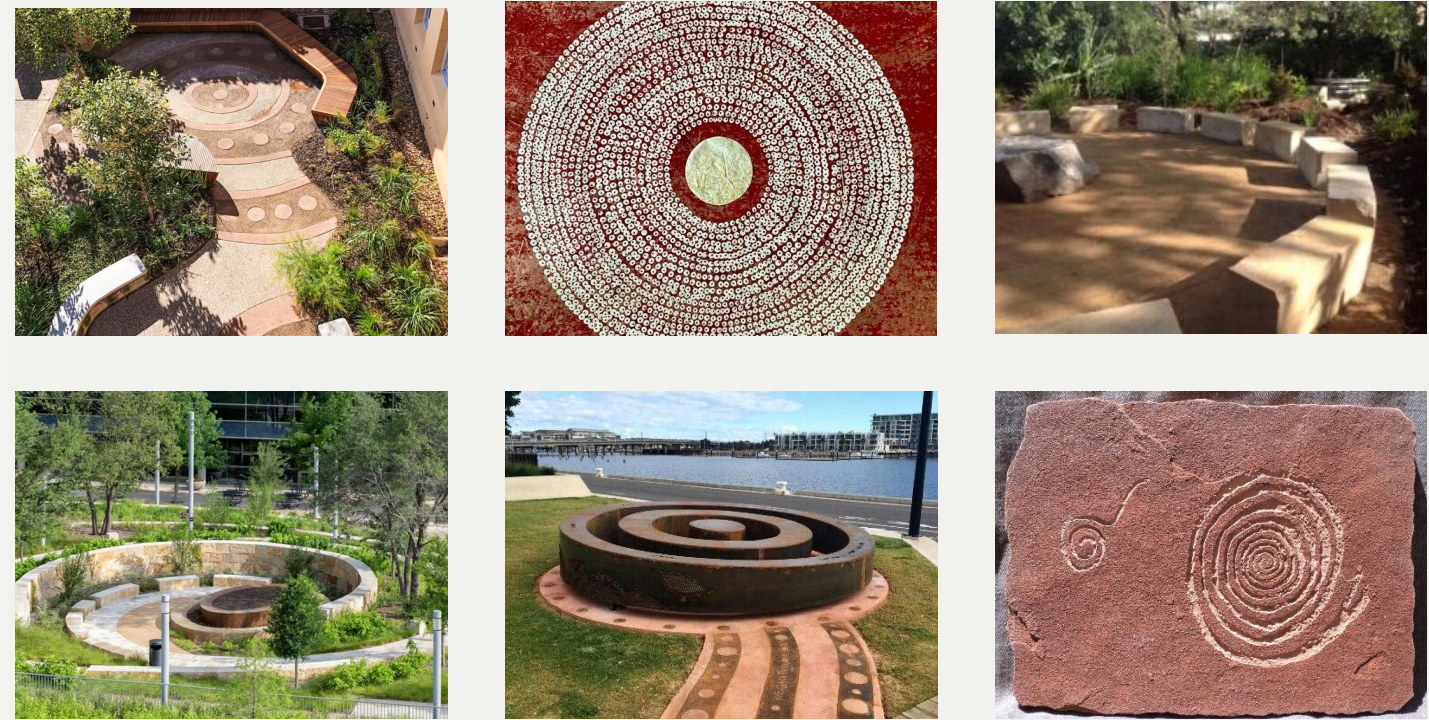
Gathering spaces under shade, a larger yarning circle.

Opportunity to include etching, patterns, motifs on facade, with a storytelling component of both cultures.

Site Plan

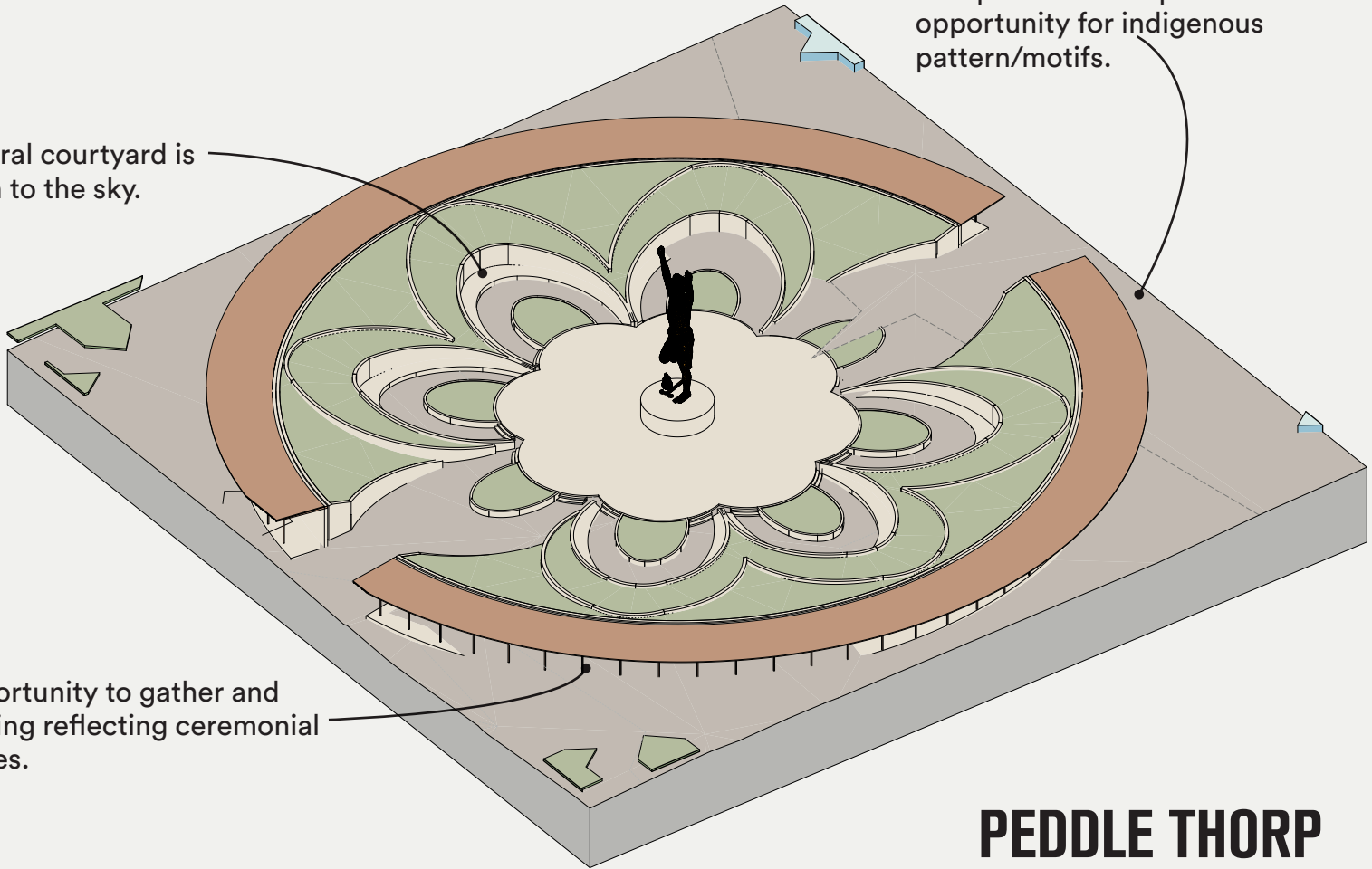


Opportunity to include native planting, floor pattern and roof pattern could provide opportunity for indigenous pattern/motifs.



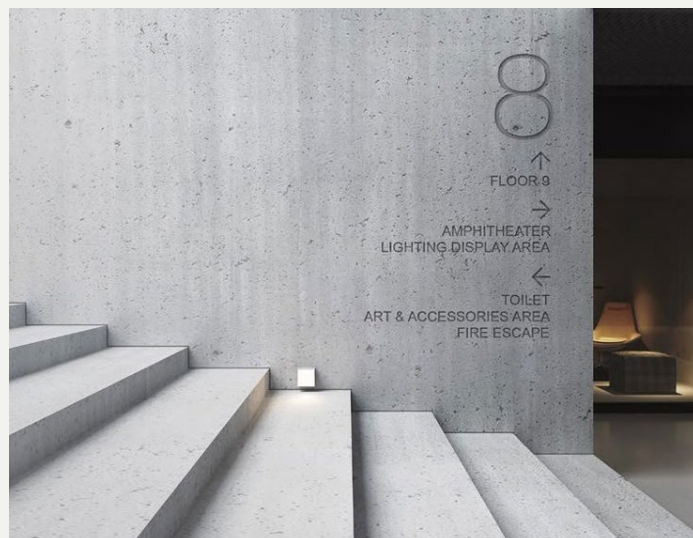
Central courtyard is open to the sky.

Opportunity to gather and proving reflecting ceremonial circles.



4.11 Public Interfaces

BAPS Hindu Mahā-Mandir, Melbourne



Public Interfaces will be defined through carefully detailed decorative stone walls at a low height, integrated signage, and clear way-finding elements. These features will work together to establish welcoming pedestrian arrival points, enhancing orientation, legibility, and the overall experience of arrival.

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4.13 3D Visualisation

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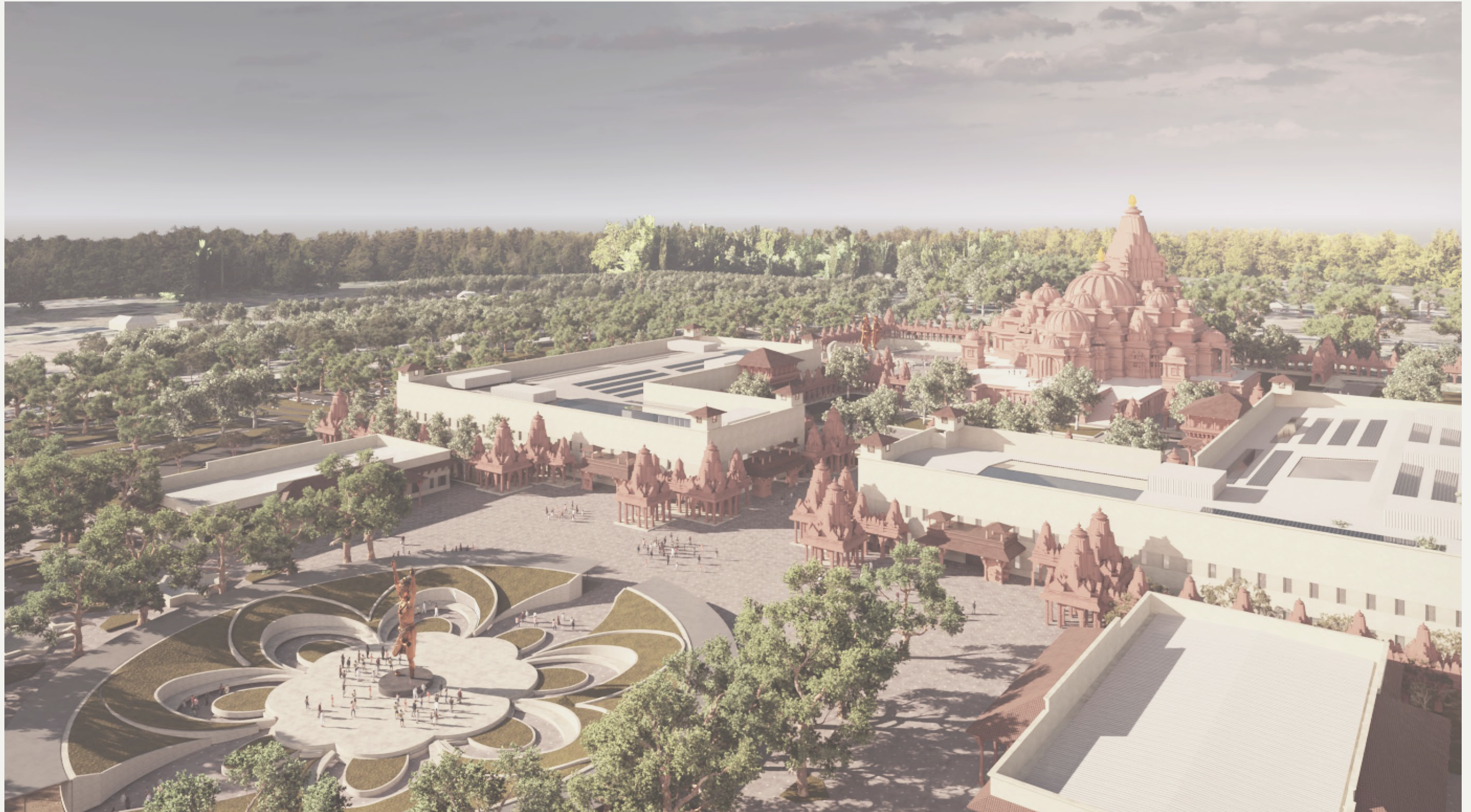
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