

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT

Opal, St Clair

The new residential aged care facility for Opal at St Clair incorporates some key themes identified in the client's brief. These include:

- Resident independence and choices
- Resident privacy and dignity
- Resident access to indoor and outdoor spaces
- Encouraging emotional regeneration
- Creating a homely non-institutional building
- Creating visual and physical connections to nature and between residents
- Interaction between residents, families and the surrounding community
- Creating energy efficient buildings

Something here about the Character analysis process undertaken and the numerous options considered regarding the built form – driven mainly by the privacy and setbacks to the neighbours

Courtyard planning and building orientation

Several courtyards are provided around the facility, each with its own unique offering to the residents. The star shaped building form provides courtyards around the building rather than a typical arrangement being front and back. The northern courtyard provides residents with great outdoor space with deep soil landscaping, various activities, a separate memory neighbourhood area and aspect to the leafy areas to the rear of the site. Three of the courtyards are private for the residents and their guests. To the front of the site there is a public courtyard directly off the café, wellness and training areas. This courtyard provides seating and play areas within a lush landscape area. The Opal team are provided their own personal outdoor area to the western side. Refer to the landscape design for further detail on each of these outdoor spaces.

Each of the wings capture natural light from the east, west and west. Only a few rooms in the middle wings are orientated south. The skewed orientation of the front a rear wing enables the rooms to receive solar access. Each of the wings have been orientated towards each other where the resident's privacy is at risk, vertical blades have been incorporated where necessary along the eastern boundary to decrease visibility onto the neighbours.



The front courtyard and arrival have been designed to increase the landscape area. The U-shaped entry landscaped area retains most of the existing trees along the boundary with new trees and planting proposed. The arrival area is subtle in design, the canopy light, and the architecture unimposing.

The landscape design promotes healthy living encouraging connections to nature. The *Main Courtyard* provides extensive outdoor recreation space for all other residents whilst also ensuring high levels of daylighting, controlled solar access and natural ventilation to resident's rooms. The landscape has been designed to seamlessly integrate with the existing terrain and foliage at the rear. Overland flows have been carefully considered and designed to marry with the landscape solution.

The facility is planned as five resident neighborhoods or building "wings" each with between 16 and 31 bedrooms. This provides the optimum living model for residents and operational model for staffing. A centrally located main area houses the common spaces such as the living and dining rooms and food serveries. This area serves as the "main house" being the major destination for residents on a daily basis. Back of house facilities include a loading area, stores, kitchen and laundry each accessed from the west of the property with an on grade carpark accessible to cars, vans and trucks.

Living in a Landscape

The landscape design provides a variety of landscape experiences for residents, staff and visitors with individual themes for each courtyard and street landscape. These designs are interpretive of the original native flora and ecology of the surrounding region. Passive and active outdoor recreation spaces encourage residents to interact with nature and with other residents to promote healthy living and emotional regeneration.

Resident Amenity

The facility is designed to ensure the highest level of resident, staff and visitor experience. This is consistent with current national trends for resort living and hotel style services in the aged care sector. A porte cochere provides an undercover drop off for residents, staff and visitors leading to the Town Square which includes a reception space and café with an outlook to the landscaped courtyard. This provides a high-quality arrival and everyday experience for residents and visitors and an opportunity for Opal to promote their values of compassion, transparency and excellence. The Town Square also allows residents and visitors to meet outside of the resident neighbourhoods and to connect with the greater community. An adjacent Allied Health facility provides residents and the surrounding community with a variety of medical consulting and physical rehabilitation services.

Kitchen, laundry and ancillary services are planned as "Back of house" facilities, separated from the resident and public areas of the facility. Food is served directly to dining rooms by means of private corridors, double sided lifts and food serveries. This avoids the need to cart food through corridors, improving efficiency and



food freshness whilst improving the resident's experience. Buffet style eating is also provided to dining rooms.

Elevation design and façade materials

A number of architectural strategies have been applied to achieve a variety of built form and to maximise the articulation of the elevations as seen from the surrounding streets and neighbouring properties:

- The overall building is organised as a series of resident neighbourhoods or building wings. This promotes the de-institutionalisation of the complex with each building being identifiable as a separate "house" due to the unusual planning of the building.
- A masonry base of face brickwork is provided to the ground level of all buildings. This provides further modulation to the façade and reduces the apparent height of the buildings. The brickwork base also responds to the anticipated character of the surrounding residential and educational buildings which will incorporate significant areas of face brickwork. A lightweight cladding with expressed joints is applied above the brickwork to lighten the appearance of the facade at the upper level.
- Sun shading and privacy screens are provided to windows and doors to control solar access and glare, define and shade outdoor spaces for residents and to articulate the façade with patterns of shade and sunlight.
- A small unobtrusive porte cochere provides a legible street address with clearly identified entrances to the residential aged care facility and the Allied Health wing. This also promotes different building characters to the major south facing street elevation.
- External and enclosed stairs provide further modulation to the facades by introducing vertical elements into the long horizontal elevations. These are located at the building ends highlighting these as key elements in the building design. Stairs are clad with aluminium battens.
- A variety of roof forms are clad in corrugated Colourbond roofing, each articulating the different resident wings and forming a "village" of residential style buildings organised around the central spine. These are formed by hip roofs all culminating and ending at the central spine at the centre of the building.

Conclusion

The architectural and landscape design provides a very high standard of amenity for residents and staff and a well considered built form when viewed from the surrounding streets and neighbouring properties. The use of courtyards, carefully positioned glazing, shaded landscape spaces and sensitive site planning promote Opal's design vision for strong connections between residents and a day to day focus on nature.