Site Investigation

AOD - Cook Section 13 Block 12

ACT Health Directorate

28 November 2025

→ **The Power of Commitment**



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Executive summary

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) has initiated a site investigation to identify a suitable location for relocating the Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) Program currently operating from Arcadia House within the Northside Hospital campus, supporting the program's continued delivery in a dedicated and appropriate setting.

Risk summary

GHD have undertaken high-level reviews of the available information and a site inspection to determine the major risks associated with development at the site. A 'rating' is provided for the key risks to inform ACTHD of risks which are either unmitigable and require additional detailed assessments/ further modelling (or design). The rating system and overall risks are outlined below.

Risk assessment ratings

Risk rating	Description
High	Critical issue that may be a significant safety risk or be a considerable time and cost constraint to future planning for the site which may mean the project is unfeasible. Further assessment of potential impacts to validate the rating.
Medium	Issue that will need consideration during further stages of planning a development of the site in relation safety, design and operation. Issue likely to be able to be managed or engineered to reduce or minimise potential impact. Further assessment of potential impacts to validate the rating.
Low	No major issues, or factors that are unlikely to impact safety, design, or operation on site. Risk can be easily managed with standard controls.

Table 1 Project risk summary

Risk rating	Item	Description
High	Town planning	**The site requires a Major Plan Amendment to rezone the block**. To allow for successful zoning of the site an additional subdivision Development Application (DA) is recommended (and likely required). Even if the project does get a successful Territory Priority Project (TPP) declaration to avoid third party appeals post DA acceptance, the Major Plan Amendment portion of this process is not exempt for public representation and intervention throughout the MPA process. **This MPA process is indicatively between 12 and 18 months.**
Medium	Community Opposition	Given the site's proximity to residential areas and community facilities (including childcare centre, playgrounds, and a disability respite centre), there is a risk of community opposition to the proposed development which may contribute to delays in planning approval and project delivery. A considered community engagement plan is recommend to be developed by ACTHD to manage this risk.
Medium	Electrical Supply	Information from the utilities provider is pending. These are required to enable the maximum demand to be calculated for additional load on the existing substation. Once the power supply to the site is confirmed, advice can be provided in terms of the adequacy of the existing supply and weather upgrades are required to support the new facility, however as noted in the power section of this report, cable upgrades to the site may be disruptive to local residents and traffic flows if required.
Low	Regulated Trees	The presence of suspected regulated trees along the site's border poses a risk of project delays or increased costs due to the need for formal approval from TCCS for any removal, which may involve compliance with conditions such as replanting or financial contributions.
Low	Water mains	Water mains run north through the eastern portion of the site, which is also surrounded by trees. It is anticipated that the proposed building will avoid this area to prevent impacts on the infrastructure and protected vegetation avoiding the risk to damage to these utilities.

Risk rating	Item	Description
Low	Soil bearing capacity and grade	The site's moderate to low soil bearing capacity, as indicated in ACTmapi, along with its graded terrain, presents a risk of structural instability and increased foundation costs. These factors may impact construction feasibility and budget.
Low	Graded site	Depending on the exact building location, the site's slope (4m across the site) may result in higher foundation costs due to additional earthworks or structural requirements
Low	Fire protection	Storage tanks and pumps are not expected to be required for the proposed facility, given the favourable pressure and flow data received from the authority. However detailed engineering calculations will be required for pipe reticulation and expected losses to confirm available pressure at the most disadvantaged sprinkler head, during the detailed design stages.

Key findings and recommendations

The planning pathway poses a significant risk for the project due to extended timeframes, and may render the site unfeasible if these timeframes are unacceptable for ACTHD. In the event the extended timeframe is acceptable, the location is considered a viable site for further detailed site analysis and test-fit planning. There are no site constraints, built form interaction concerns or technical specification issues which would impact a proposal of reasonable scale and yield for the site.

The following outlines key aspects of the site's suitability for development:

- **Planning Considerations**: The Urban Open Space (PRZ1) zoning does not align with the intended project functions and should be rezoned Community Facilities Zone. The site requires a Major Plan Amendment (MPA) to rezone the block. Based on recent MPA's to rezone existing areas, there are likely delays of 12 to 18 months to gain zoning approval. To allow for as successful zoning of the site an additional subdivision DA is recommended and likely required. Even if the project does get a successful TPP declaration to avoid third party appeals post DA acceptance, the Major Plan Amendment portion of this process is not exempt for public representation and intervention throughout the MPA process.
- **Capacity and Suitability**: The site is appropriately sized and features suitable terrain and zoning. Frontage vehicular access to the preferred area can be provided via Ellis Street through existing gaps in the regulated trees, or alternatively through the oval carpark. The central portion of the site, currently free of trees and clear of water mains, is the preferred location for development.
- **Site Servicing**: The site is serviced with power, water, sewer, stormwater and communications as confirmed from BYDA asset information. From pressure and flow data obtained for the site, it is not expected that any sprinkler pumps or storage tanks are required, given the favourable figures received.

  The biggest risk from a site services perspective is the existing power supply to the site and this is pending confirmation from Evo Energy. There are no substations in close proximity to the block, and existing power appears to be reticulated underground, from a tee-off from overhead power lines servicing residential blocks. Should power supply upgrades be required, we envisage significant time and cost implications for getting the required power provisions to the site.
- **Current Use and Relocation Potential**: The block currently is close to a residential area, neighbourhood oval and associated carpark but buffered in most parts by trees. Given its proximity to a neighbourhood oval and associated carpark, it maybe feasible to provide dedicated parking accessed along Ellis Street.
- **Community Engagement**: The site borders residential area and the neighbourhood oval and is in walking distance of the Community Hub facility, childcare centre, respite facility and a Presbyterian Church, and local shops close. Due to the sensitive nature of the proposed facility, it is recommended a considered community engagement plan is recommend to be developed by ACTHD.
- **Development Feasibility**: There are no identified physical constraints, design conflicts, or technical issues that would hinder a reasonably scaled development on the site. The site's slope in comparison to the other sites may lead to increased foundation costs, depending on the precise building location.

The following recommendations for next steps;

- To facilitate the proposed AOD facility, the site must be rezoned to a suitable land use. This can be achieved through a Major Plan Amendment (MPA) under the Planning Act 2023, initiated via the Territory Planning Authority. The MPA process includes several key stages shown below with further details, including indicative timelines and the development application (DA) process, can be found on the Attachment 1 .
    1. Initiation: An amendment proposal is prepared, including supporting reports that justify the change.
    2. Public Consultation: The draft amendment is released for public comment, usually for a period of 30 working days, allowing stakeholders to provide feedback.
    3. Review and Revision: Submissions are reviewed, and the draft may be revised accordingly.
    4. Ministerial Approval: The final draft is submitted to the Minister for Planning for consideration.
    5. Legislative Assembly Oversight: If approved, the amendment is presented to the Legislative Assembly.
- It is recommended to prepare a robust engagement strategy to manage potential community feedback and ensure transparency throughout the MPA process. Early consultation and clear communication will be key to navigating this stage effectively. This engagement plan should consider consultation with the Cook Community Council, local businesses, and community services including adjacent Koala Playschool, Emma Ruby House, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Cook Community Hub.
- The Assembly has the authority to accept, reject, or request further modifications. In the event this site is selected, the design team will need to determine which location(s) within the block will be pursued for test-fit analysis.
- Following receipt of the necessary data from the utilities provider, maximum demand calculations should be undertaken early in the design phase to assess the adequacy of the existing substation and determine whether upgrades are required to support the proposed facility.
- A site survey is advised at the early stage to support master planning of the site.
- A geotechnical investigation should be undertaken during concept design or design development stage to confirm soil suitability for building foundations.
- A tree assessment by a qualified arborist should be undertaken during the concept design or design development stage to determine tree type, size, condition, and whether they are regulated or suitable for removal.
- Sustainability targets, as outlined in Section 5, to be reviewed by ACTHD to confirm any design inclusions.

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Attachments

Attachment 1 Town Planning Advice

Attachment 2 Test fit – Preferred Option

1. Introduction

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) with an understanding of the opportunities, constraints, and risks associated with the proposed site for the new Alcohol & Other Drug Facility.

This investigation involves a broad assessment of the site and its context, identifying physical conditions, constraints, services, zoning, and development regulations. It also evaluates existing infrastructure, utility capacity, and opportunities for sustainable and accessible upgrades

Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for ACT Health Directorate and may only be used and relied on by ACT Health Directorate for the purpose agreed between GHD and ACT Health Directorate as set out above.

GHD otherwise disclaims responsibility to any person other than ACT Health Directorate arising in connection with this report. GHD also excludes implied warranties and conditions, to the extent legally permissible.

The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report. GHD has no responsibility or obligation to update this report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the report was prepared.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on assumptions made by GHD described in this report. GHD disclaims liability arising from any of the assumptions being incorrect.

Assumptions & limitations:

– The updated Functional Design Brief provided by GHD in the initial Feasibility Study is a suitable basis to develop the design options and is relatively accurate in capturing ACTHD and Directions requirements.
– Further desktop assessments and detailed site investigations are necessary to comprehensively evaluate the risks, constraints, and opportunities associated with the site, ensuring alignment with the proposed building's functional requirements. The current assessment provides a high-level overview and should be considered preliminary pending more in-depth analysis.

Project Team

The GHD team, comprising architects and engineers, is leading the project and has engaged Spacelab to provide specialist Town Planning advice for inclusion in the report.

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2. Project Overview

Section 13, Block 12, Cook is a greenfield site in Belconnen which ACTHD are investigating it's potential to accommodate Direction's Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) program currently located in Arcadia House. ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is currently exploring the feasibility of relocating Directions' Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) program from Arcadia House, situated within the grounds of North Canberra Hospital in Bruce, ACT.

The Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) program is a 12-bed residential treatment unit that provides withdrawal, residential and day treatments for adults with severe alcohol and other drugs challenges.

The ACT Government has committed to the delivery of a new hospital on the northside of Canberra to replace the ageing facilities currently located on the Bruce site and better serve the needs of north Canberra's growing population. As part of the new hospital, Arcadia House will be demolished, requiring a new site for the AOD program.

3. Existing site conditions

3.1 Site location

The site is situated at the corner of Ellis and Biffin Streets in Cook, a centrally positioned suburb in Canberra's Belconnen district. Easily accessible via major parkways and arterial roads, it offers close proximity to key amenities including Jamison Plaza and the Belconnen shopping and commercial area. The site is under 10 minutes from Northside hospital, and in a low-density suburb with good access to recreational spaces and natural surroundings.

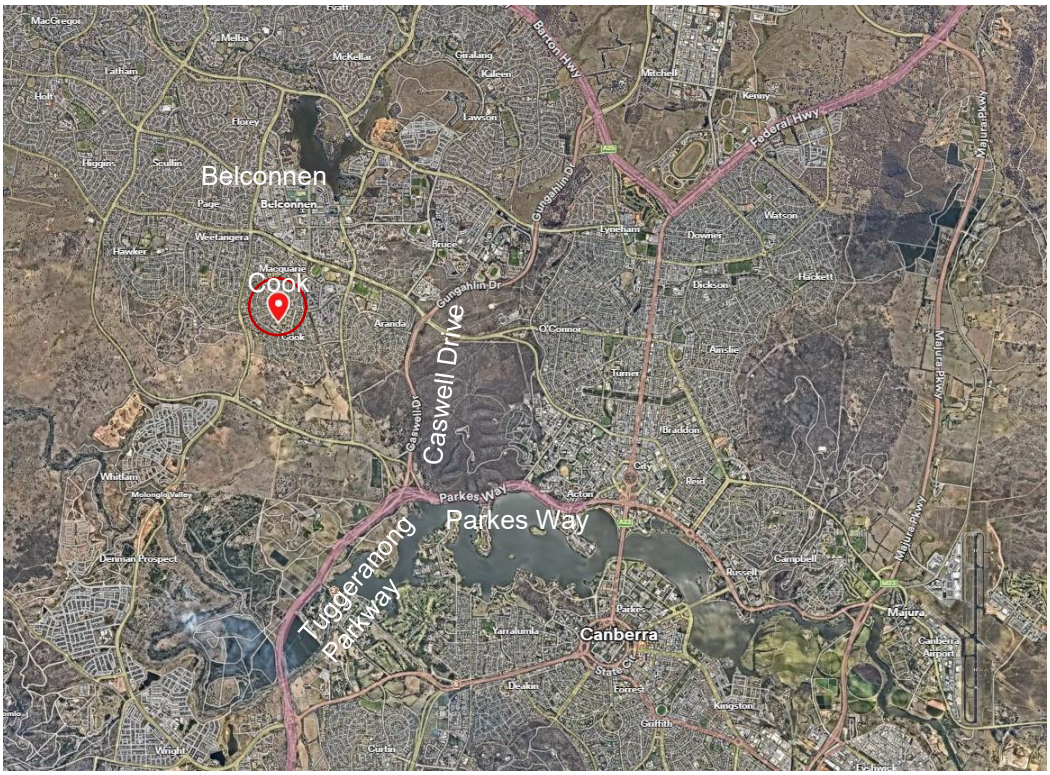


Figure 1 The site location (shown in red) has good transport links.

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3.2 Site Access & Mobility

Located near Bindubi Street—a main arterial road serving the Belconnen area—the site is also in close proximity to local shops and public transport is within walking distance - bus stops along Templeton Street.

The site currently provides vehicular access from Biffin Street to an existing carpark located in front of the neighbourhood oval. To minimise impact on the existing carpark during times of surge – sporting events and for the discrete use of participants - the preferred driveway access to the site would be along Ellis street. Access from Biffin street to the centre of the site would have significant grades and less opportunities through the possible regulated trees.



Figure 2 Site Image: View looking South: Vehicular access to site via Community Oval Carpark.

While current traffic volumes appear minimal for the site, a Transport Effects Form will be required to verify this and support the Development Application.

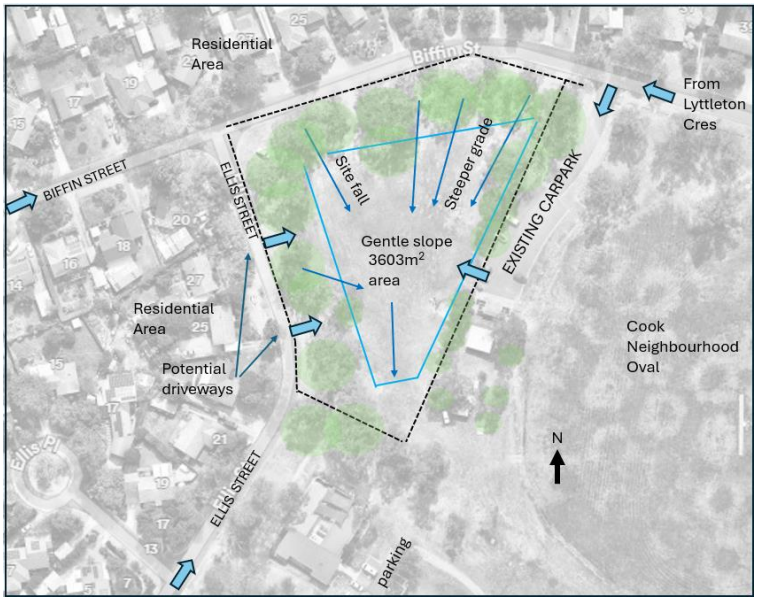


Figure 3 Vehicular, pedestrian and public transport site access. Indicative direction of ground levels.

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The terrain slopes northwest to southeast shown in Figure 6 where accessible movement through the central area is possible if across the slope rather than uphill. Steeper areas may present challenges for accessibility, necessitating additional infrastructure like ramps or graded pathways.

3.3 Site Parking

An existing parking opportunity is available near the neighbourhood oval, potentially offering direct frontage. However, due to possible usage conflicts during peak times, such as sporting events, the parking demand from the proposed development may warrant additional on-site parking. The site's size can accommodate an approximately 500m² building, with parking potentially integrated in the preferred area shown in Figure 4. Site access could be via the existing carpark or a new driveway from Ellis street, depending on the need for discreet parking for program participants and staff.

While the existing parking appears sufficient for the proposed development, a detailed parking assessment will be required, aligned with the ACT Government's Parking and Vehicular Access General Code, and informed by consultations with EPSDD, TCCS, and relevant stakeholders to confirm appropriate parking provisions.



Figure 4 Location of parking areas around the site and possible vehicular site access

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3.4 Neighbouring buildings & facilities

The site is surrounded by a mix of residential and community-oriented facilities, including educational and support services nearby. This proximity provides strong amenity to the proposed facility, but does pose risks regarding potential community engagement. A summary of the surrounding areas is provided below:

Immediate Surroundings

- Residential areas along Ellis and Biffin Streets
- Neighbourhood oval with sporting amenities and storage
- Emma Ruby House: short-stay respite for young people with disabilities

Within Walking Distance

- Koala Playschool (early learning for 3–4-year-olds)
- Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Cook Community Hub (hall, offices, arts spaces)
- Cook Shops (grocery, café, hairdresser)
- Playground and public gym equipment

Key Considerations

- Proximity to vulnerable children at Emma Ruby House; and,
- Cook Grocer (with alcohol outlet), which may impact AOD participants and should be reviewed by ACTHD and their stakeholders. .

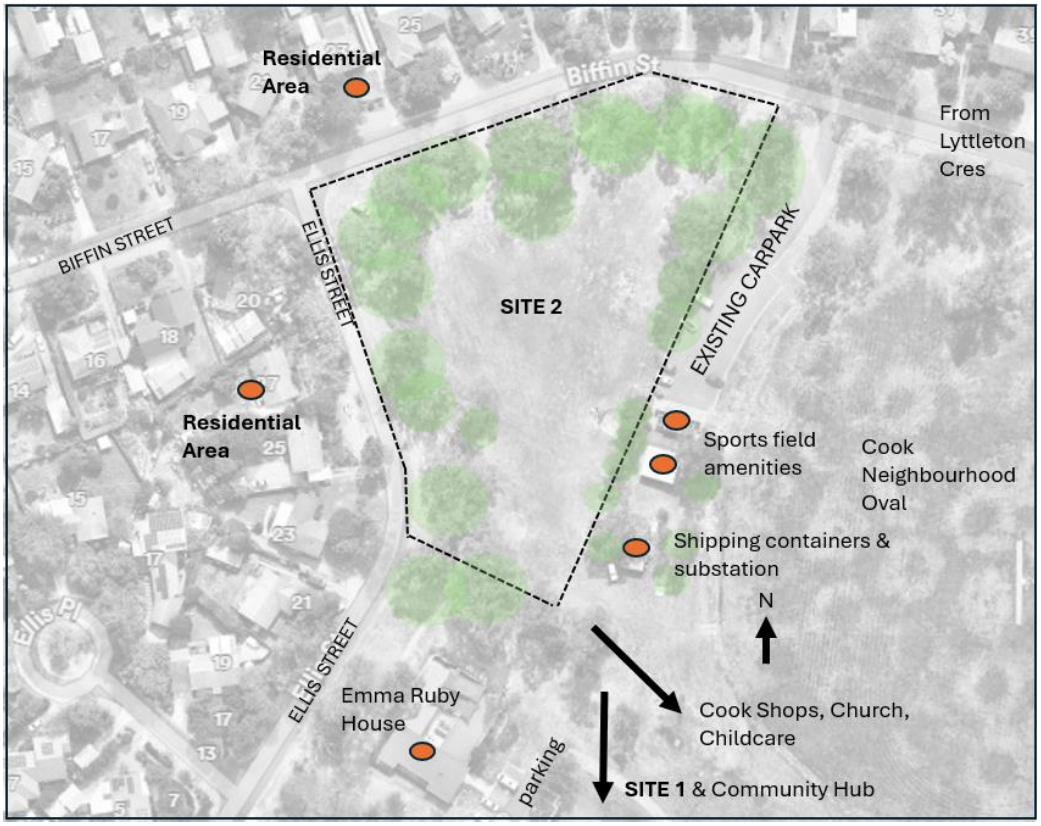


Figure 5 Site Characteristics: Neighbouring buildings and community facilities

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3.5 Site characteristics

Topography

The slope is just under 4m from the corner of Biffin and Ellis Streets to the carpark for the oval as shown in Figure 6. The site features a steep slope descending from the northwest corners toward a gentler central area. This shift in gradient occurs near the carpark and oval amenities, making that portion of the site more suitable for development particularly as it's void of trees - refer to Figure 4 for a visual reference.



Figure 6 *ACTmapi Survey: 2m contours – Approx. 2m across the ideal development area.*

Benefits

– The steep slope supports efficient natural drainage, reducing the risk of water accumulation in elevated areas.
– The elevation of the site offers scenic views, including sightlines to Black Mountain Tower.
– The natural leveling near the existing amenities building helps delineate functional zones within the site, aiding in spatial planning.

Risks

– Building on sloped terrain is generally more complex and costly, with potential additional expenses for foundations, earthworks, and retaining structures depending on the building's location.
– Steeper sections may pose accessibility challenges, requiring infrastructure such as ramps or graded pathways. Note Figure 4 highlights the preferred building location, where the slope is more moderate and better suited for development.
– Without adequate drainage management, water runoff could affect the central and lower areas, particularly near the carpark and existing amenities building.

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Figure 7 *Site Photo – View to east towards the oval – The site slopes more steeply from the north (left of image) toward the central area, then transitions to a gentler gradient toward the south (right of image).*



Figure 8 *View towards the north-east corner*

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Ground Conditions

A review of hydrogeological data on ACTmapi indicates that the site's land and soil capacity ranges from moderate to low – Figure 9. A detailed geotechnical analysis is essential to determine the subsurface conditions and ensure that the soil can adequately support structural loads and long-term foundation performance.



Figure 9 ACTmapi - Hydrogeological landscape – Moderate-low

Vegetation and Fauna

Native mature trees encircle the site to north, east and partly to the east, bordering the streets. The central portion is generally clear of trees apart from boundary plantings, making it more suitable for construction.

Regulated trees if they meet specific size criteria (height, canopy spread, trunk circumference) or are registered as significant are protected under the Urban Forest Act 2023. If approval is granted, conditions may be imposed, such as planting replacement trees or making a financial contribution. Building around regulated trees are also regulated by the tree protection zone.

ACTmapi data indicates that there are no rare or protected plant species within the site area. However, the fauna habitat review highlights the presence of the spotted-tailed quoll and superb parrot in the surrounding region. Preserving existing trees within the area is recommended to support habitat continuity and enhance ecological conditions for these species.

ACTmapi data indicates the site area is not part of the urban ecological network.

Heritage

ACTmapi heritage data indicates the site area is not designated as being an aboriginal place, containing aboriginal objects or having developments nominated on the heritage register.

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Orientation & Aspect

To mitigate the impacts of climate change, the design must incorporate climate-resilient strategies, including enhancements to the building fabric, roof and gutter systems, civil infrastructure for flood and erosion control, and passive design measures to address extreme heat.

The site's orientation presents strong potential for optimal solar exposure, particularly if the building is positioned centrally and away from the northern tree line, which could obstruct daylight access, especially during winter months. Locating the building in this area allows natural light to penetrate interior spaces throughout the day, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and enhancing occupant comfort.

Trees to the west offer valuable afternoon shading, contributing to thermal comfort and reducing cooling loads. The site also lends itself to passive solar design strategies, including the use of strategically placed windows, thermal mass, and shading devices. These elements can help regulate indoor temperatures effectively, minimising energy demands for heating and cooling while supporting a climate-resilient design approach.



Figure 10 Site Photo – View north towards Biffin Street

Wind Protection

The site benefits from a buffer of existing trees and buildings along its northern, eastern, and western boundaries, which serve as passive windbreaks against prevailing winds to the northeast.

Overshadowing

The site spans a relatively large area, with ample separation between existing buildings, reducing the likelihood of overshadowing adjacent structures.

Sightlines

Tall trees surrounding the site provide a strong vertical buffer, while opportunities exist to enhance lower-level screening through additional planting to further improve privacy to residential areas. Sightlines across the site are primarily directed toward the oval, offering unobstructed views of Black Mountain Tower. This visual axis contributes to the site's appeal, while the existing vegetation helps maintain a sense of enclosure and separation from adjacent areas.

Flooding

ACTmapi Flood Map data indicates the site area is not within a flood prone area.

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Site Characteristics

A visual summary of the site's characteristics is provided below in Figure 11.

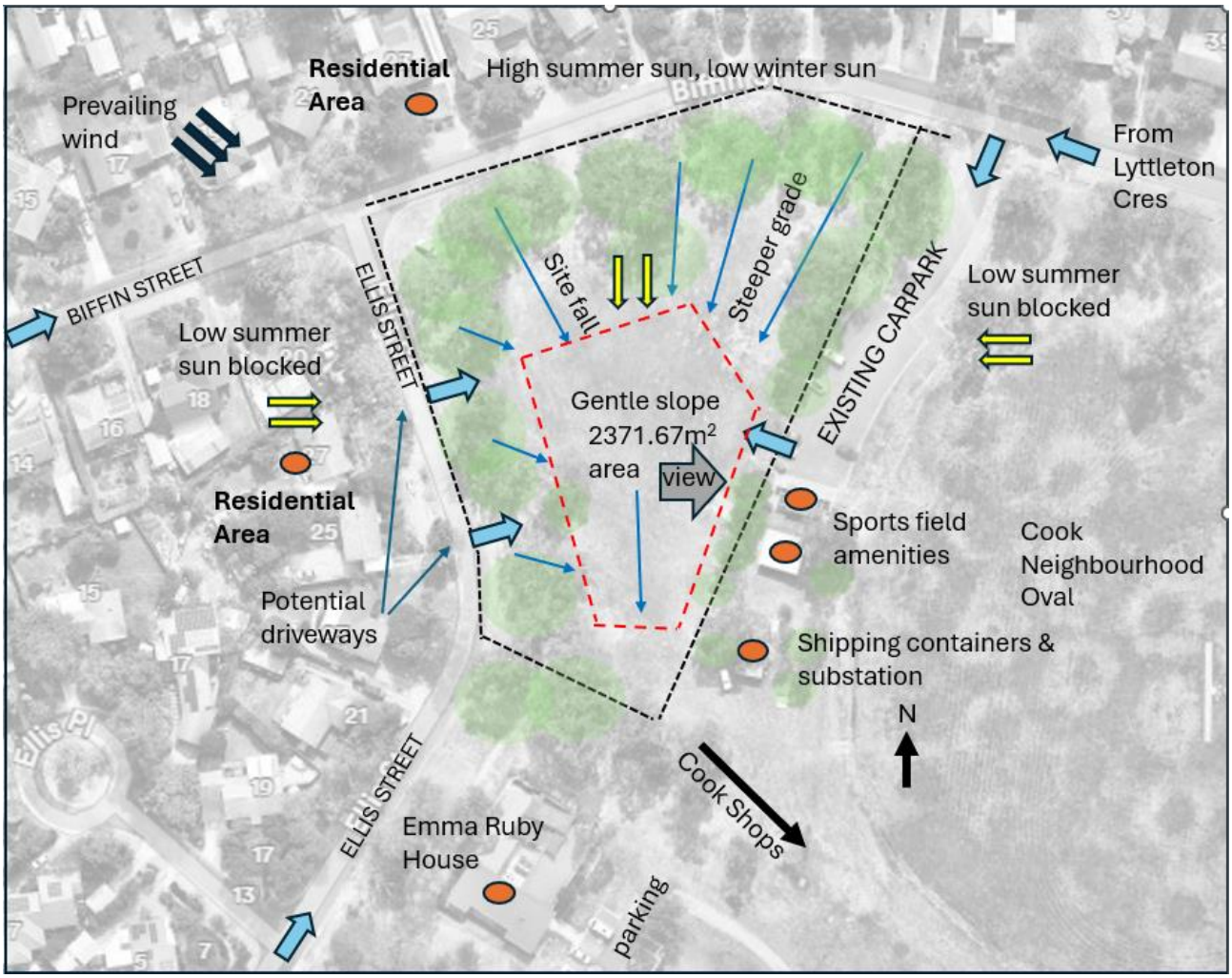


Figure 11 *Site Characteristics – solar, wind, access, outlook, vegetation and neighbouring buildings.*

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3.6 Bushfire Risk

The Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) map identifies regions within the ACT that pose a heightened risk to life and property from bushfire events. The subject site is located outside the designated high-risk zone indicated in red and therefore is not required to implement bushfire mitigation strategies under current mapping and planning guidelines.

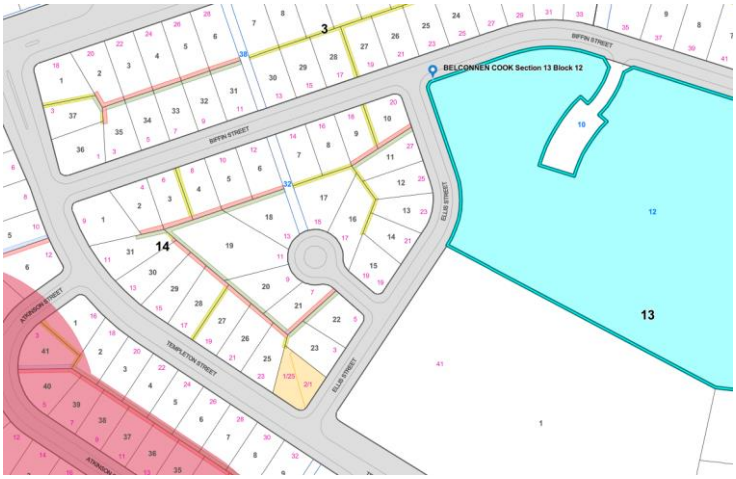


Figure 12 ACTmapi: Bushfire Map - BPA in red and site in blue.

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3.7 Site servicing

3.7.1 Overview

The existing site is currently serviced to accommodate the requirements of the facility (subject to power supply confirmation from the utilities providers). Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) indicates the availability of power, water, stormwater, sewer, and communications provisions to the block. The locations of these aforementioned services and proposed entry points to the new facility are described in section 3.7.2 – Utilities, of this report.

Investigations of the block to date indicate that it has already a high level of development, with little available area remaining for further significant development, further reducing the risk of upgrades to surrounding infrastructure. This is typically confirmed in the next stage, once a final load demand and discussions with utilities can be undertaken.

3.7.2 Utilities

Electrical – Power, Street Lighting, Communications

Evoenergy (Power), TCCS (Street Lighting), Telstra / NBN (Communications)

Street Lighting

Street lighting services are currently provided on the western and northern aspects of the block, running along the entire length of Ellis and Biffin Streets, as indicated by the services asset image in figure 12 below.

Power for the street lighting services is reticulated underground, with services provisions provided by pits located within the green verge on the block's boundary.

There is an in-ground cable which tees off from the main Biffin Street cabling route, which may be utilised to add street lighting provisions to the rear of the block, should any future development require this.



Figure 13 ***ACT TCCS streetlighting infrastructure – Yellow lines denote in-ground cabling assets and yellow circles denote streetlights.***

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POWER

From BYDA asset information, there does not appear to be any substations in close proximity to the block. There is an underground LV supply which traverses Biffin Street, and which appears to be supplied via overhead LV power lines, which also provide power to the residential houses alone Biffin and Redfern streets. The electricity easement is illustrated in Figure 14 and demonstrates the assumed power supply to the existing amenities at Cook Oval.

As previously noted in GHD's report for Site Option 1, there is a Kiosk substation (asset ref. S1173) located along Templeton Street, which may also be considered for power, however the location of this substation would require extensive works to extend a power provision to the proposed facility. Given the current provisions for power to the site, this may be considered high risk, as any upgrades to the existing provisions would require considerable and disruptive works to the adjacent residents and traffic flows.

GHD has requested information pertaining to the power supply provisions to the block from Evoenergy, however this has not been formally received (August 2025) and shall be confirmed under a revision of this report once data is forthcoming.

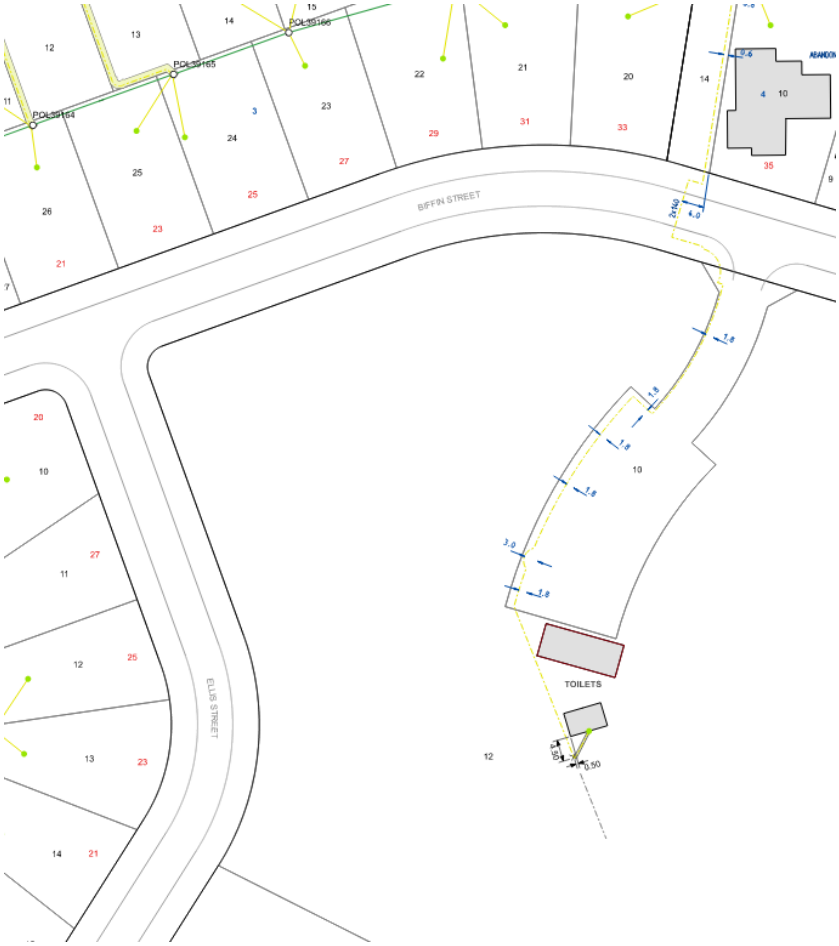


Figure 14 Evoenergy Electricity – Yellow dashed line denotes <50mm underground service line.

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Figure 15 *Evoenergy Electricity – Solid yellow line denotes electricity easement with overhead power lines. The dashed yellow line is an inground service, assumed to be supplied from the overhead poles and requires further verification.*

NBN

There is an existing in-ground cable located within the green verge at the northern boundary of the block (along Biffin Street) for communications services reticulation. There is also an existing NBN services pit located adjacent to the corner of Biffin and Ellis Streets, which is approx. 30m from the proposed facility and looks to be the most favourable candidate for communications services for any future development. The pit and existing communications cable in relation to the block are illustrated in figure 15 below:



Figure 16 *NBN Network – Green lines denote direct buried cables reticulating from service pits denoted by black circles*

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Telstra

The DBYD asset information from Telstra is similar to the NBN information, with direct buried cables indicated along the green verge at the blocks northern boundary. Telstra asset information notes the in-ground cables as ‘other carriers’, however the provision of a communications service pit is evident at the northern corner of the bock, which is approx. 30m from the proposed facility site.



Figure 17 Telstra Mains Cable Plan – Black lines denote direct buried cable

Hydraulics – Hydrant (fire), Sewer, Water, Natural Gas

Icon Water (sewer, water), Evoenergy (gas)

Hydrants

Existing spring hydrants are provided at distinct locations along the north and west boundary of the block, which are located in the green verges along Biffin and Ellis Streets. Biffin Street hydrants are fed from a 225mm concrete lined water main and the Ellis Street hydrants are supplied from a 150mm concrete lined water main.

For the proposed facility, an extension off the 225mm water main on Biffin Street, reticulating in ground, would appear to be the most suitable route for a new hydrant supply line, given the favourable pressure and flow data received in the vicinity of the proposed development, which was received from Icon water (25/07/25) and is reproduced in figure 18 below. From the test figures provided below, it is not expected that storage tanks or booster pumps will be required for the proposed facility.

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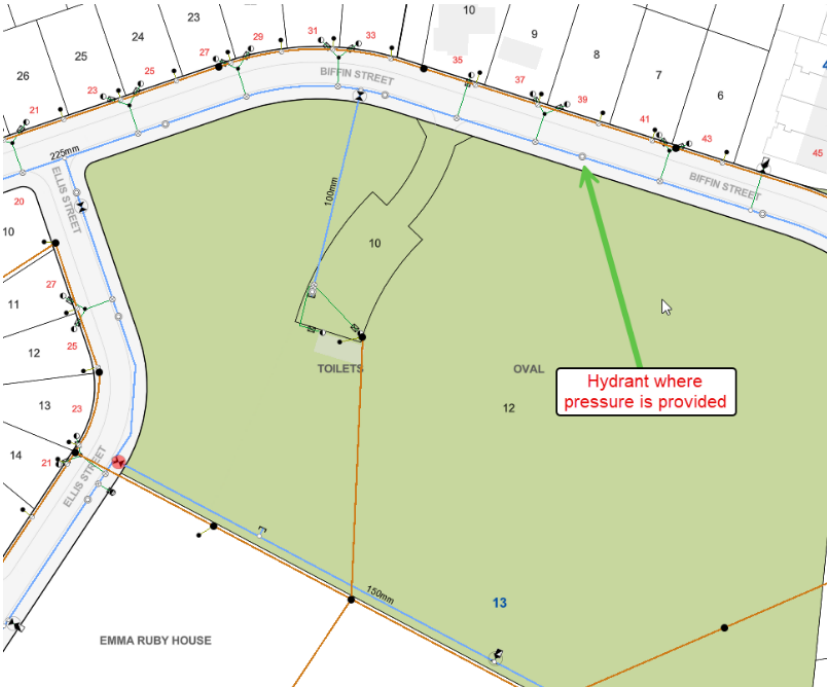


Figure 18 In-ground services asset reticulation from Icon Water. Hydrant lines denoted in blue line type.

Pipe Diameter and Location	DN225 along Biffin Street
Approximate RL (m)	619
Maximum Static Pressure at the Hydrant (m) :	56
Flow Rate (L/s)	**Residual Pressure (m)**
0	47
10	47
20	47
30	47
40	46
50	46
60	45
70	45

Figure 19 Residual pressure vs. flow results from Icon Water

Sewer

There is a 150mm reinforced concrete gravity main line indicated on the BYDA asset network plans from Icon Water, which reticulates along the western boundary of the proposed facility along Ellis Street. Connection into this existing asset would be disruptive, as a new line would need to be installed to cross Ellis Street, pending confirmation of invert levels to ensure there is adequate fall for any new effluent streams.

The most favourable connection point appears to be an existing 150mm reinforced concrete gravity main which services the existing amenities building for the Cook neighbourhood oval. Again, subject to invert level checks, this existing asset appears to allow straightforward trenching to the new facility, in addition to having a location that would not disrupt local traffic movements for any augmentations to the existing sewer services.

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Water

There is a 225mm, concrete lined water main reticulating along the northern boundary of the block along Biffen Street, with a valved 100mm tee-off services line which appears to route along the Cook Oval Carpark to service the oval amenities facility.

Another 150mm concrete lined water main reticulates along Ellis Street, along the grass verge on the western aspect of the block.

The closest water main to the proposed facility would be the 150mm main along Ellis Street, which should be able to support the additional domestic water requirements for the proposed facility. It is proposed to tie-in a new water service connection from this main, to service domestic and wet fire water supply to the new facility.

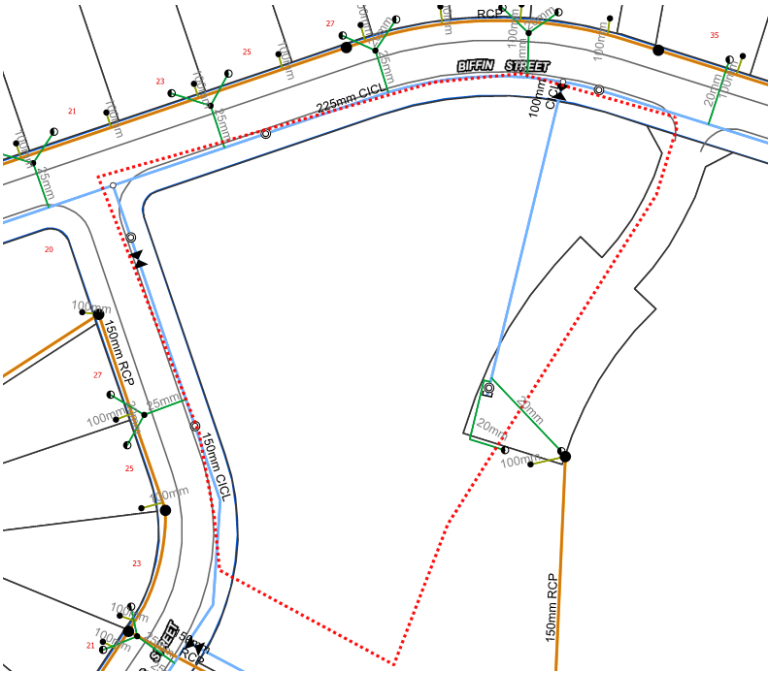


Figure 20 ***Icon Water: Sewer gravity main denoted by orange line type, critical water mains in blue line type, domestic water services tie-ins denoted in green line type***

Natural Gas

Asset information from Evoenergy indicates a 32mm Nylon, 210kPa medium pressure gas main reticulating in-ground along the residential side of Biffin Street. Additionally, a separate 32mm Nylon, 210kPa medium pressure gas line reticulates along the western of the block along Ellis Street. There does not appear to be any local inground gas services provisions which can be tied in, without significant disruptions to local traffic flow to facilitate new gas pipework crossing either Biffin or Ellis Streets to supply the block. The reticulation of in-ground gas services is illustrated in figure 20 below.

Given the above, it is not expected that the proposed facility shall require any natural gas services, given the ACT Governments intention to phase-out this type of energy source due to the emissions from combustion and the source of supply not being renewable. Any domestic heating, hot water supply and cooking are expected to be provided from electric heat pumps and electric resistance appliances. It is for this reason that the existing provisions for connection of new gas services is considered as low risk.

Should any future gas provisions actually be required for the proposed facility, disruptive pipework augmentations from the authority valved provision would be required to extend to the new facility boundary, coupled with a new gas meter and gas pressure regulator.

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Figure 21 Evoenergy BYDA - Medium pressure gas assets indicated in blue line type

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Civil – Stormwater

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS)

The site does not contain any stormwater infrastructure within its immediate boundaries. However, stormwater lines are present nearby on the same block and may be capable of servicing the site.

Notably, ACTmapi indicates a 300mm diameter reinforced concrete stormwater pipe running south to north, and south on the block, as well as an additional pipe along Biffin Street, both of which could potentially support stormwater management for the site.

A Stormwater Capacity Assessment should be undertaken to confirm whether the existing infrastructure, presumed to service the oval catchment, can accommodate runoff from the proposed 500 m² building. While the location appears convenient, and capacity seems adequate, further analysis is required to verify system adequacy.

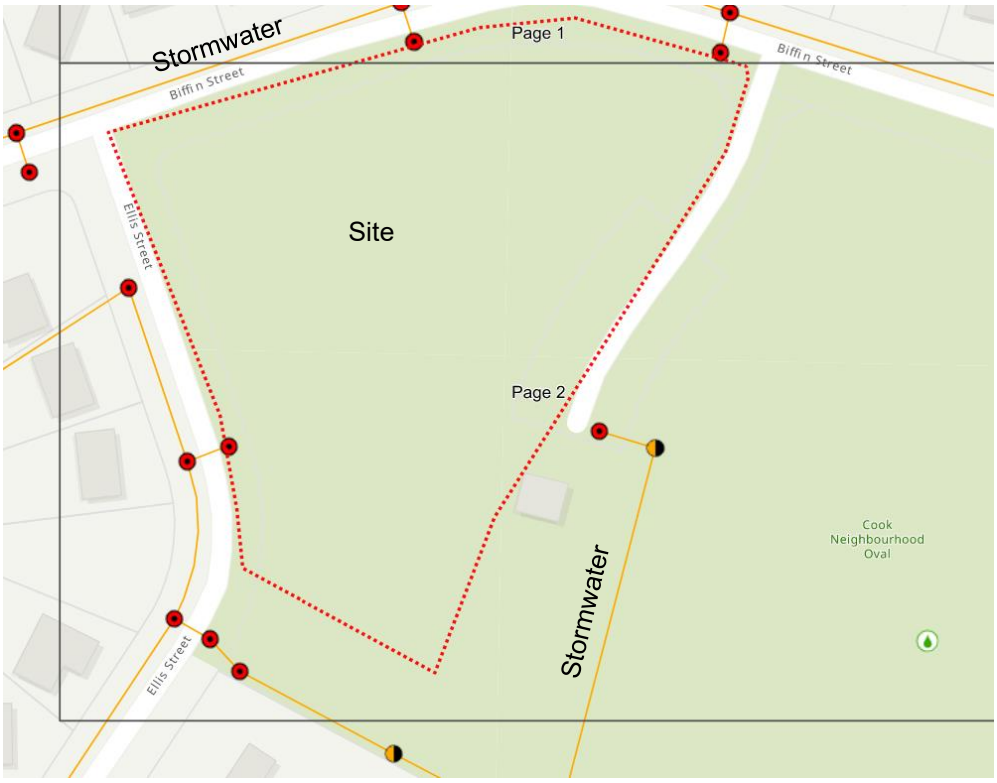


Figure 22 TCCS - Stormwater pipes (orange line), sumps (red dot), manhole (orange/black dot) and site (red dotted line)

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4. Statutory requirements

4.1 NCC considerations

The proposed single storey building is anticipated to be classified under the *National Construction Code (NCC) 2022 – Volume 1* as the following:

- Part Class 9c aged care;
- Part Class 5 office; and
- Type 'C' Construction.

This classification has implications for fire safety, accessibility, and architectural design.

Summary of considerations (including but not limited to):

- **E1D10 - Fire Services – Fire Sprinklers -** Automatic fire sprinklers are mandatory for Class 9c buildings to ensure compliance with NCC fire safety provisions.
- **Accessible Path of Travel –** An accessible path of travel must be provided from the building entry to all areas unless specific rooms are designated for accessibility exemptions.
- **Compliance of fire rating** - Consideration should be given to compliance of smoke and fire compartments to comply with C3D6(3) including.
    - Division of **500 m²** areas by smoke-proof walls.
    - Ancillary use areas containing equipment or materials that are a high potential fire hazard, must be separated from the sole-occupancy units by smoke-proof walls including;
        - Kitchens over **30 m²**;
        - Laundries; and
        - Storage rooms over **10 m²** used prominently for administration records.

Applicable legislation:

- National Construction Code Volume One Building Code of Australia Class 2 to 9 Buildings 2022, Australian Building Codes Board (NCC)
- Building Act 2004
- Building (General) Regulation 2008
- Planning Act 2023
- Planning (General) Regulation 2023

No conflicts between the NCC and the proposed site have been identified as a major risk.

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4.2 Town planning

4.2.1 General

SpaceLab have provided Town Planning advice and recommendation in Attachment 1 that are summarised below:

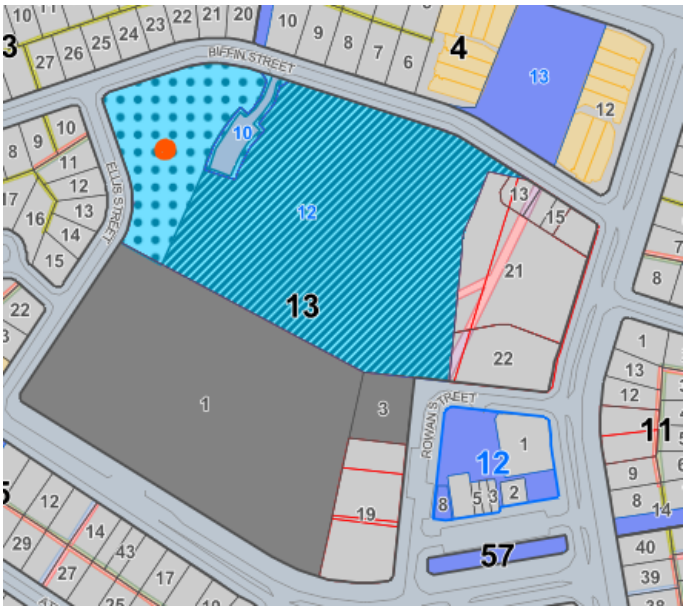
- **The site is subject to the Territory Plan and is zoned Urban Open Space, and does not align with the project goals and should be rezoned Community Facilities Zone. The type of works proposed for the site, including the use and scale, is likely to align with the Territory Plan under Community Facilities but does not align with the current Urban Open Space zoning.**
- **The proposed works will require a Major Plan Amendment and Development Application. This is likely to have extensive programme delays to accommodate the MPA.** Indicative estimates place this timeframe between 12 and 18 months.
- The proposed use fits within the definitions of Residential Care Accommodation and Health Facility.
- The site is on unleased land under TCCS custodianship.
- There are no site constraints, built form interaction concerns or technical specification issues which would impact a proposal of reasonable scale and yield for the site and likely align with the Territory Plan.
- Given the adjoining neighbourhood oval and the layout of the community hub, it is likely all the sites current uses can be relocated within the block or in close proximity of the block.
- A TPP declaration is recommended to avoid third party appeals post DA acceptance. This TPP declaration may not be required if the new TPP Bill is passed post Standing Committee inquiry. This will not prevent public representation through the DA process, so an information session with the local childcare providers and shop owners is encouraged to clear up concerns on the sites use. The timelines of both options are very similar. Noting the new Territory Priority Project Bill may negate the need to apply for a TPP.
- Additional parking requirements will need to be considered.
- 

Figure 23 Actmapi – Indicative Lands is designated as 'TCCS – Other'

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4.2.2 Development Application

The works proposed to the site will be subject to a Development Application.

Noting that there may be some community interest relating to the proposal and the DA, it is prudent to approach key community groups as part of the pre-DA application activities. Key groups to consider approaching prior to lodgement include;

– Local businesses possibly including Koala Playschool, Emma Ruby House, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Cook Community Hub;
– Near neighbours; and,
– Cook Community Council.

The Development Application is third party appealable under the Planning Act 2023. There is a reasonable prospect members of the public will trigger a third party ACAT review of the Decision post DA assessment. This could seriously impact timing for the proposal post decision, expanding project timeframes.

5. Sustainability considerations

The ACT Government is committed to consolidating Canberra's position as a world-leading sustainable city. The ACT's emissions reduction targets intend to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. The ACT Government have committed to a stepped approach to reducing emissions and shifting to a net zero emissions economy.

To assist the ACT Government in this regard, sustainability opportunities have been investigated as part of the project. Using GHD's Sustain tool, the following opportunities can be addressed within the design;

– On-site renewables and electrical assets. Include photovoltaic panels within the design.
– 25% car spaces have infrastructure for Electric Vehicles
– 10% of occupants have End of Trip facilities (bikes, lockers, showers etc)
– HVAC heat loads will be based on RCP 8.5 2050 horizon,
– Building fabric (glazing, insulation) to minimise heating and cooling costs.
– Improved downpipes and gutters to cater for larger rainfall events.
– Shade for outdoor areas (eg bbq area).
– FOGO stream within the kitchen waste.

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6. Indicative project programme

A high-level programme has been developed to assist ACTHD understand key project milestones.

There are opportunities to expedite this programme, which include;

– Fast tracking ACTHD review timeframes and decisions;
– Fast tracking the design programme;
– Minimising the construction tendering period; and,
– Minimising the proposed construction period.

These opportunities will need to be considered against the risk of inadequate internal consultation and governance/ review processes, increased design costs, and low tenderer engagement. ACTHD are also able to engage a construction planner to assist in validating the proposed construction timeframes, and to determine the viability of expediting the construction stage.

Table 2 Indicative project programme

Milestone	Indicative date
Pre-tender design completion	May 2025
Major Project Amendments	Estimated December 2027
Contractor engagement	December 2027
Construction completion	May 2029
AOD programme operational	June, 2029

There are several risks associated with the project which can be reviewed with ACTHD. They include;

– **External approvals -** The Development Approval process (primarily an ACAT referral) may be considerably expanded due to community interest in the project. Any utility infrastructure upgrades required for the project will be subject to utility authorities and are outside of the project's control beyond early engagement. Due to the proposed construction procurement methodology (design & construct), there is a risk the final design submission to utility authorities is not finalised until the Contractor's design is complete, likely delaying the project several weeks.
– **Design changes -** Any design changes during the design or construction process can extend the programme, either through increased scope of works or redesign works.
– **User fit-out** - Once the project is handed over to Directions, their internal move-in process is outside of the direct control of the project.

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7. Test Fit

Based on the Schedule of Accommodation and the briefing information provided, a comprehensive Test Fit exercise was undertaken for each proposed site. The planning process was guided by the relevant AusHFG Health Planning Unit, specifically '0136 – Non-Acute Inpatient Mental Health Unit'. Using this framework, the standard Functional Relationship Diagram (**Error! Reference source not found.**), was translated into three distinct Spatial Planning Models (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Each model was then rigorously tested against the constraints and opportunities of the proposed sites to assess suitability and alignment with the project requirements.

Key elements of the Functional Relationship diagram include:

- **Entry and reception**: Provide direct, discreet access for visitors and consumers, minimising movement through clinical or residential areas, noting this is to be a voluntary service.
- **Day use areas**: Collocated clinical support areas for consumers such as lounges, dining areas, gyms and outdoor spaces, which promote social interaction and therapeutic engagement while maintaining a domestic scale.
- **Staff Zone**: Positioned separately from consumer areas to ensure privacy, operational efficiency, and a calm workspace for staff, while maintaining easy access and visual oversight of consumer areas where appropriate.
- **Accommodation Pods**: Inpatient areas to be divided into Pods, typically allocated as Male and Female. Each pod is linked to day-use areas, and consumer rooms are not typically accessible during the day.

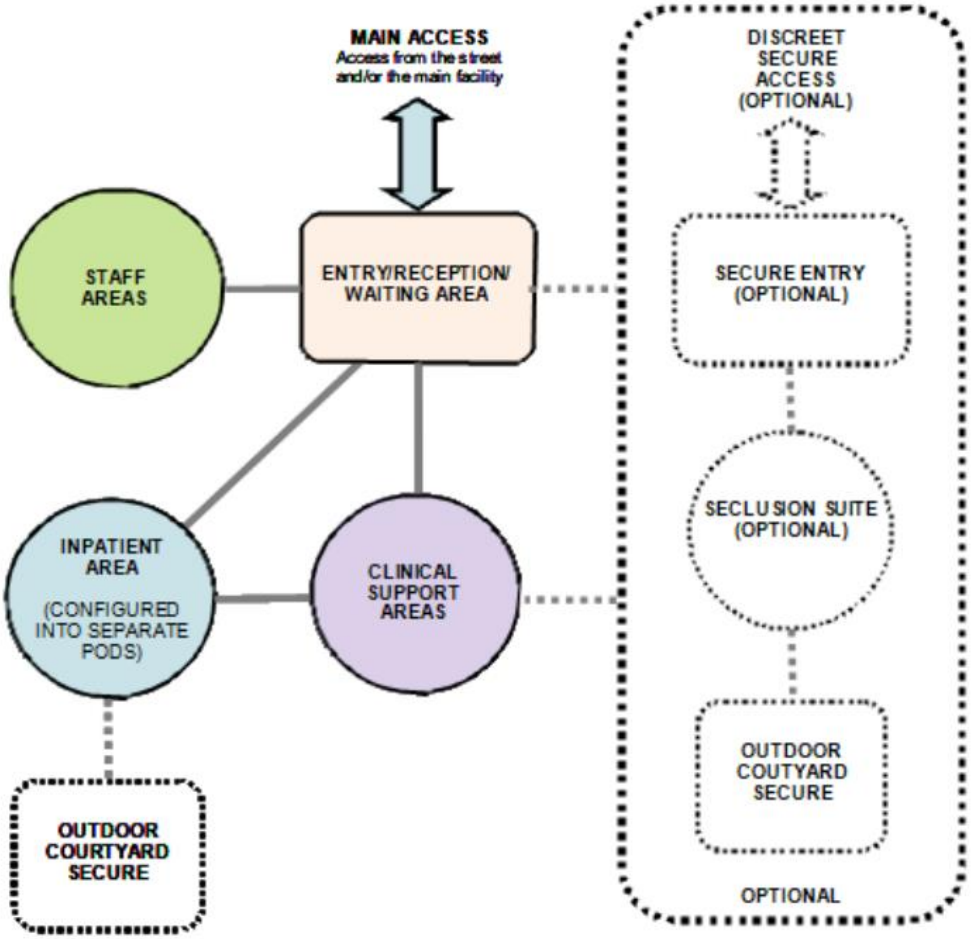


Figure 24 Functional relationships between zones in a non-acute mental health inpatient unit – AusHFG

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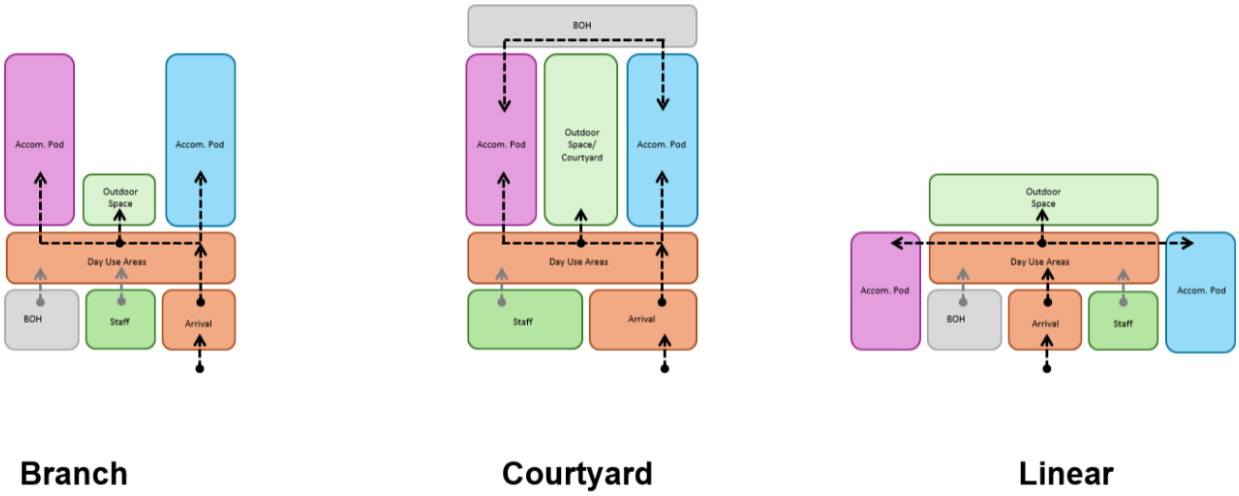


Figure 25 Spatial Planning Models – GHDD

Spatial Planning Models:

- **Branch Model**: Central spine with accommodation pods branching off like arms.
- **Courtyard Model**: Pods and day-use areas arranged around a central enclosed courtyard. Inward facing.
- **Linear Model**: Day-use areas aligned along a single corridor with Accommodation pods at either end.

Beyond spatial planning considerations, siting the building is also a critical factor. For each spatial arrangement, alternative positions on the site were explored to assess orientation, access, and integration with the surrounding context, as outlined below.

Preliminary Options (preferred option outlined in red):



Figure 26 Templeton Street - Preliminary Test Fit Options

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7.1 Preferred option

Following the initial test fits, the preferred option was further developed to validate the approach and integrate feedback received from stakeholders.

For this site, the preferred option is a branching building positioned to take advantage of views to the east (including Black Mountain Tower), the oval, as well as the adjacent trees and vegetation (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Advantages of this option include:

– The site planning allows the new facility to be nestled behind the existing tree line, providing physical and visual separation to neighbouring homes.
– The building would be easy to find as it does not share this part of the site with any other facilities. A new address would need to be established as part of the urban planning process.
– The facility would benefit from strong solar access to the northern outdoor area and an excellent outlook to the east over the oval.

Disadvantages include:

– Some existing trees would likely be impacted to connect the proposed carpark with the existing. This would need to be validated once a detailed site survey is completed.
– Relocation of some existing oval amenities is likely required, including the shotput/discus throwing area.
– The proximity to the oval and visibility across the field may still cause community concerns from community members.
– This site has a greater slope than others explored. Site levels, extent of fill, tree protection, and access will need to be carefully considered.



Figure 27 Biffin Street – Preferred option – Site test fit.

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Figure 28 *Biffin Street – Preferred Option – Test fit plan*

Features of the Test fit plan include:

– The suggested form is highly responsive to the site and would provide an opportunity to design a building that is sensitive to the surroundings as well as visually interesting.
– A central arrival point into the day-use spaces (orange).
– Accommodation pods (in blue and purple) are separate to the day-use and staff areas, supporting various lines of security, zoning and privacy.
– The consumer clinical spaces, such as the lounge, dining area and covered outdoor spaces, have direct views across the oval to the east, and would benefit from winter sun exposure to the north.
– Staff areas have visibility across the carpark to monitor arrival/departures.

Refer to Attachment 2 for scaled drawings.

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Attachments

Attachment 1

Town Planning Advice

Preliminary Planning Advice

Alcohol and Drug Facility, Cook Site 2

at

Block 12 Section 13, Cook

(Corner of Biffin Street and Ellis Street, Cook ACT 2614)

August 2025

Rev. A

SPACELAB
urban planning and design

Disclaimer

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SPACELAB declares that it does not have, nor expect to have, a beneficial interest in the subject project.

SPACELAB Studio Pty Ltd holds Quality Management System AS/NZS ISO 9001:2015 certification. This report has been prepared and reviewed in accordance with that system. If the report is not approved for issue, it is a Preliminary only.

J24-01175 | Preliminary Planning Advice | Alcohol and Drug Facility, Cook Site 2

Revision	Date	Author	Approved
A	2025.08.15	JT	RN

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Planning Report

Brief

SPACELAB has been engaged to prepare preliminary planning advice on behalf of ACT Health with relation to the new Alcohol and Other Drug Facility (AOD). This report provides planning analysis for Block 12 Section 13 Cook.

This planning report provides advice on relevant Statutory and Design considerations for the subject site. The intention is to inform the scope of applications, project work and to identify key elements as they relate to planning and delivery of an AOD facility on an alternative site in Cook.

The information provided in this report is based on the understanding that the AOD Facility would be designed to work within the constraints of the site and the site is available for redevelopment by ACT Health. This response provided without SPACELAB having visited the site.

Key Review Points

We have reviewed the advice provided to date against the following key planning documents which apply to the site:

- Planning Act 2023.
- Territory Plan 2023.

Key site constraints

Following SPACELAB's desktop review, the following potential constraints has been identified:

- Possible built form on the site.
- Interaction with neighbouring Cook local oval and Community Hub.
- Site access locations and building entry.
- "Upgrade works" to the internal roads and carparking on the block.

Site Description



Block, Section, Suburb

Block 12, Section 13, Cook

Land Tenure

The site is currently an open park area at the corner of Biffin Street and Ellis Street, on the same block as the local oval and to the north of the Cook Community Hub. The area of the site is under TCCS ('Other') custodianship, with the local oval and a majority of the block under TCCS Sport and Recreation Facilities custodianship.

Site Topography

The high point of the site is on the western corner of the block, with a slope of just less than 4m from the corner to the carpark for the local oval. This grade is not a development constraint for the site.

Location

The site is situated next to the Cook local oval within the district of Belconnen. To the south of the site is the Cook Community Centre and to the southeast is the Cook Shops, Cook Community Park Playground, Cook Pre-School and Westminster Presbyterian Church Belconnen.

Access, Driveways and Parking

The site is on the corner of Biffin Street and Ellis Street and has no current connection to the street. There are mature street trees on both street frontages and the traffic impacts of a new verge crossing for the site would need to be investigated.

There is the possibility for access to the site through the existing local oval carpark. This would require an upgrade to the carpark and existing access to the block from Biffin Street, this may minimise traffic impacts to Biffin Street.

A traffic engineer should be engaged for any further assessment of the access and parking.

Zone (including overlays)

The site is Zoned Urban Open Space (PRZ1).

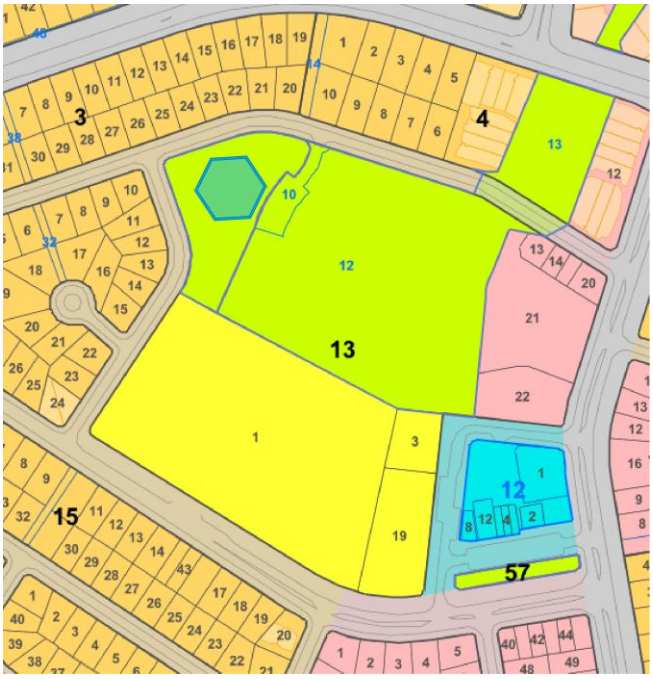
There are no identified additional overlays.

The PRZ1 Zoning for the site does **NOT** permit the following uses:

- Business Agency.
- Educational Establishment.
- Health Facility.
- Hospital.
- Residential Care Accommodation.
- Social Enterprise.
- Supportive Housing.

It does permit the following uses:

- Ancillary Use.
- Community Activity Centre.
- Complementary Use.



Current Use and Lease Purpose Clause

The site is currently undeveloped land.

The site is under TCCS – Other custodianship and is unleased government land.

Surrounding Land Uses and Development

The site is surrounded by a mixture of zonings.

RZ1: Suburban – Adjacent to the north across Biffin Street and west across Ellis Street.

RZ2: Suburban Core – Adjoining the block but not the site to the east.

CFZ: Community Facilities – Adjoining the block to the south.

PRZ1: Urban Open Space – Adjoining the site to the east Cook Neighbourhood Oval and carpark.

CZ4: Local Centre – Adjoining the block but not the site to the southeast is the Cook Shops, a commercial zoned local centre.

Surrounding Section 13 is a mix of RZ1 and RZ2 blocks.

Unleased Land

There is no Crown Lease available as the block is unleased land with a government custodian for the site.

There is no information which suggests the site being unleased land will be a major constraint for the sites future development as a community facility.

Territory Plan 2023

The new planning legislation was initially implemented in November 2023. This plan is considerate of the growing needs and density of the Canberra urban landscape, changing many zones capabilities and the yield of areas surrounding Town Centres.

Within the Territory Plan the following Policies will have relevance to Blocks 12, Section 13 Cook:

- Belconnen District Policy.
- Parks and Recreation Zones Policy
- Community Facilities Zones Policy.
- Subdivision Policy

These policies would be the focus of any future applications.

Belconnen District Policy

The site is subject to the ***Belconnen District Policy***.

No additional use overlays apply to the site, and no additional prohibited developments apply to Block 12, Section 13 Cook.

The following Policy Outcomes of the District Policy are relevant to the site:

- *7. Consider the role and function of existing group and local centres, including in north and west Belconnen, with a focus on local business and community life. Depending on the results of this consideration and whether further action is required, investigate planning and non-planning initiatives to support centres' viability and role as a meeting place.*

There are no specific assessable outcomes or requirements which apply to Cook as part of the District Policy.

Parks and Recreation Zones

The following land uses are permissible for Parks and Recreation Zones:

Land Use / Development Type

Ancillary use
Aquatic recreation facility
Communications facility
Community activity centre
Community garden
Complementary Use
Consolidation
Demolition
Distribution reservoir
Major electricity storage facility
Major electricity sub-station
Major gross pollutant trap
Major pump station
Major road
Major service conduits
Minor road
Minor use
Municipal depot
Outdoor recreation facility
Parkland
Playing field
Power generation station
Sign
Subdivision
Temporary use
Treatment plant
Urban lake, pond and/or retardation basin
Utility hydrogen production facility
Varying a lease where not prohibited
Water storage dam

These land uses are not complementary to the proposed Drug and Alcohol Facility, and a Major Plan Amendment (MPA) would be required to change the zoning of the site to an appropriate zone. This is recommended as Community Facility Zone (CFZ).

For the following sections of the report, it is assumed that the site has been rezoned to Community Facility Zoning.

Community Facility Zoning

The following land uses are permissible for Community Facilities Zones:

Land Use / Development Type

Ancillary use
Business agency
Community activity centre
Community housing
Community theatre
Complementary use
Consolidation
Cultural facility
Demolition
Early childhood education and care
Educational establishment
Emergency services facility
Health facility
Hospital
Indoor recreation facility
Minor road
Minor use
Office
Outdoor recreation facility
Parkland
Place of worship
Public agency
Religious associated use
Residential care accommodation
Retirement village
Sign
Social enterprise
Subdivision
Supportive housing
Temporary use
Varying a lease
Veterinary clinic

In terms of the above definitions, the proposed alcohol and drugs rehabilitation facility could be defined as one or more of the following:

- *Health Facility*
  Health facility means the use of land for providing health care services (including diagnosis, preventative care, or counselling) or medical or surgical treatment to out-patients only.
  - *Examples include consulting room, health centre.*
- *Hospital*
  Means the use of land for the medical care (including diagnosis, preventative care, and counselling) of in-patients, whether or not outpatients are also provided with care or treatment and may include associated residential accommodation.
- *Residential Care Accommodation*
  Means the use of land by an agency or organisation that exists for the purposes of providing accommodation and services such as the provision of meals, domestic services and personal care for persons requiring support. Although services must be delivered on site, management and preparation may be carried out on site or elsewhere.
  - *Examples include; rehabilitation facility.*

Given the nature of the facility will provide residential care to clients, as well as provision of counselling services as part of the day program, the use can be defined as health facility limited to health care services and residential care accommodation limited to rehabilitation facility.

At the time of writing, it is unclear what level of care is provided which may or may not discount hospital as a possible use.

Relevant Community Zone Policies

The following Community Facility Zone policy outcomes are relevant to the site:

1. Facilitate social sustainability and inclusion through providing accessible sites for key government and nongovernment facilities and services for individuals, families and communities.

3. Protect social and community uses from competition from other uses.

4. Enable the efficient use of land through facilitating the co-location and multi-use of community facilities, generally near public transport routes and convenience services appropriate to the use.

6. Safeguard the amenity of surrounding residential areas against unacceptable adverse impacts including from traffic, parking, noise or loss of privacy.

7. Promote active living and active travel.

8. Provide safe pedestrian and cycling access to community facilities to promote active living

The above policy outcomes will be considered as any part of future DAs and will need to form a component of the design narrative for the proposed use.

Relevant Community Zone Assessment Outcomes

The following is a summary of the relevant assessment outcomes. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, rather it is a summary of key elements to consider as part of the feasibility design:

Site and Land Use

4. The functionality and usability of the development is appropriate for its intended purpose/use.

5. The proposed use and scale of development are appropriate to the site and zone.

6. Adverse impacts of development on surrounding uses (both within a site and on adjoining sites) is minimised and residential amenity protected.

Access and Movement

7. The functionality and layout of the development is accessible and adaptable, while achieving good connections with the surrounding area. This includes consideration of traffic flow, passive surveillance and active travel.

8. Access to, from and within the site permits safe and legible movement while catering for all users (including pedestrians). This includes consideration of vehicle manoeuvrability and access routes.

Parking, Services and Utilities

22. The development provides electric vehicle parking and access to charging locations.

23. The development provides appropriate end-of-trip facilities.

24. Vehicle and bicycle parking sufficiently caters for the development while minimising visual impacts from the street or public space. This includes consideration of parking location, dimensions and number of spaces provided.

25. The site is appropriately serviced in terms of infrastructure and utility services and any associated amenity impacts are minimised.

Relevant Community Zone Assessment Requirements

Assessment requirements set the mandatory rules for development within the respective zones and for specific development types.

No specific requirements apply to the site, or the type of development proposed.

Subdivision Policy

In order to complete a clean and effective change of zones through an MPA, it is seen as a complimentary process to subdivide the site from the local oval block. This is not a complicated process but is significant development under the *Planning Act 2023* and does come with an extended timeframe for a normal Development Application. This timeframe is still short than a plan amendment so not seen as an impediment to the project.

Relevant Subdivision Policies

There is only one relevant policy applicable to the block and this is not seen as an impediment to the subdivision of the block.

Subdivision – All zones except Residential Zones

2. Subdivision is only permitted where it is demonstrated that any residual block can accommodate another assessable development designed in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Policy and any district or zone policy.

Planning Act 2023

The *Planning Act 2023* includes the *Territory Plan 2023*. However, when responding to applications it holds less importance. The Technical Specifications are guides on how to meet the Territory Plans Policy outcomes and requirements.

Within the Territory Plan the following Policies will have relevance to Blocks 1, Section 13 Cook:

- Planning (Belconnen District) Technical Specifications 2024 (No 2).
- Planning (Parks and Recreation Zones) Technical Specifications 2024
- Planning (Community Facilities Zones) Technical Specifications 2024 (No 2).

Any application to amend the Crown Lease may be requested to include:

- Planning (Lease Variation Charges) Determination 2024.
- Any Design Guides seen as relevant to the change.

If the authority believes any of the above legislation needs a response, they will request the applicant addresses these appropriately for a lease variation.

Technical Specifications and Design Guides

DA assessment is also subject to consideration of the Technical Specifications relevant to the type of proposal. DA's are also subject to mandatory consideration of Urban Design Guides. As this proposal is largely an adaptive re-use with very limited additional built form, the Urban Design Guide component is likely to be minimal.

Technical Specifications

As the current Parks and Recreation Zoning of the block is not seen appropriate for the land uses within the proposed project, it has been assumed Community Facilities Zone Technical Specifications will be able to be addressed successfully for the project on block 12 section 13 Cook.

The parking specifications provided are from the Community Facilities Zone Technical Specification, which recommend the following parking provision.

Parking spaces for residential care accommodation is recommended to be 0.25 spaces per bed or accommodation unit plus 1 space per staff member.

With estimates of 6 employees and 12 beds, the following parking requirements are recommended by the Technical Specifications:

- *6 employee car spaces*
- *3 for accommodation*
- *Total of 9 spaces recommended by the Technical Specifications*

It is important to note that this is a recommendation only. We do note that there are currently no marked spaces on site but also note that there is capacity to upgrade the parking areas near the site.

Major Plan Amendment

To rezone the site to a use which will support the proposed AOD facility, an MPA under the *Planning Act 2023* is required to be undertaken through the Territory Planning Authority. The amendment process involves several key stages.

1. Initiation: An amendment proposal is prepared, including supporting reports that justify the change.
2. Public Consultation: The draft amendment is released for public comment, usually for a period of 30 working days, allowing stakeholders to provide feedback.
3. Review and Revision: Submissions are reviewed, and the draft may be revised accordingly.
4. Ministerial Approval: The final draft is submitted to the Minister for Planning for consideration.
5. Legislative Assembly Oversight: If approved, the amendment is presented to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly has the authority to accept, reject, or request further modifications.

Once endorsed, the amendment becomes part of the Territory Plan, meaning that Development Applications can be lodged under the new Community Facility Zoning for the site. The process is stepped out below.

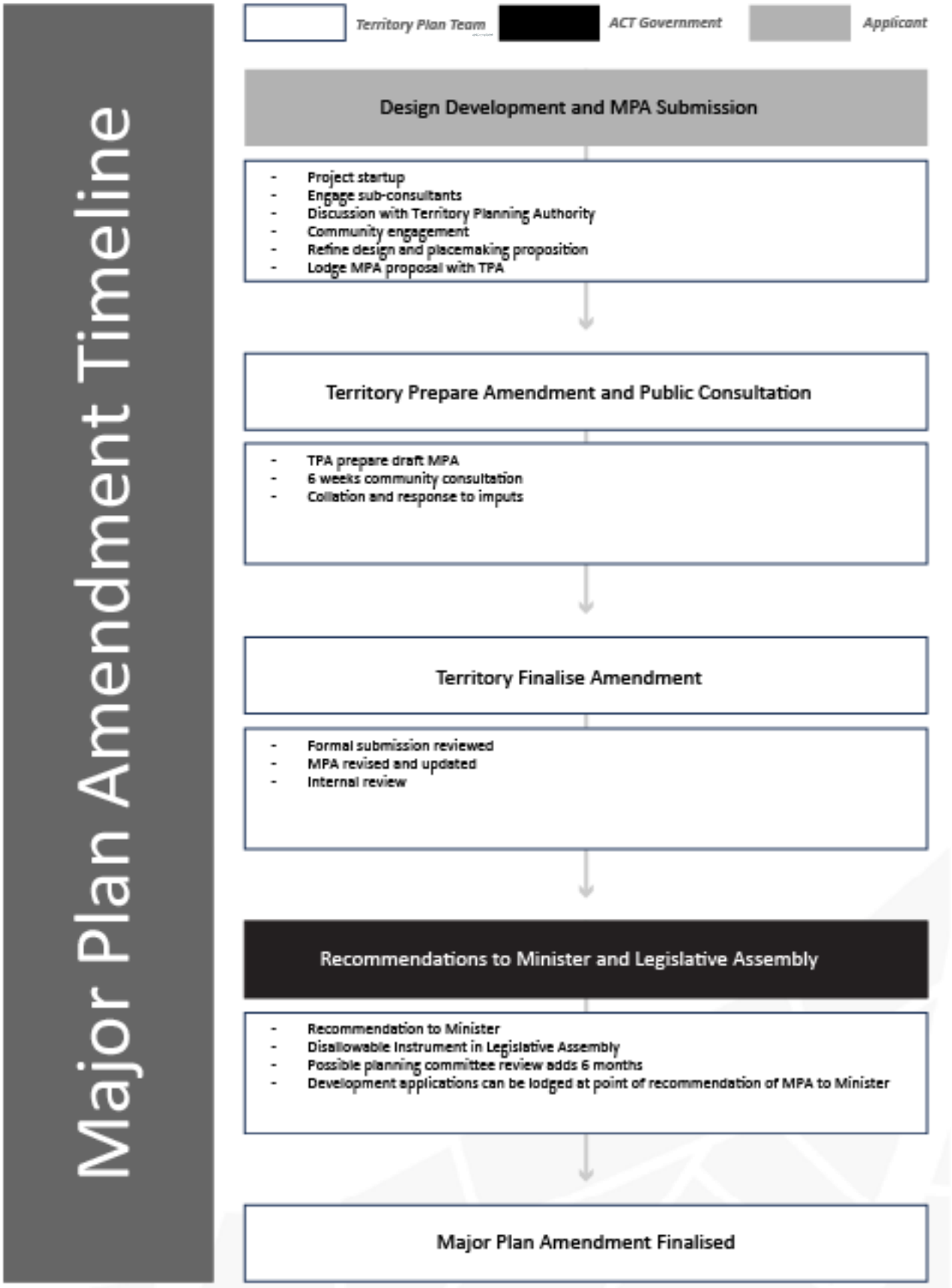
There is no standard documentation checklist for a Major Plan Amendment. The supporting report submitted to the Territory Plan Team should be written in a way that is presentable to the public, providing sufficient detail to justify the proposed change to the Territory Plan.

In our experience, preparation of a 'Project Proposition' for the site would be of benefit to the MPA and detailed design phase for the facility. A Project Proposition is a strategic statement that articulates the desired identity, character, and role of a project. It sets out the unique qualities, experiences, and functions that the place aims to offer, guiding design decisions, statutory processes and development outcomes.

Preparation of MPA documentation is expected to take 2 months to complete. The Subdivision DA could be developed concurrently with the MPA process. The MPA process is expected to take between 12 and 24 months to complete.

The MPA process is not seen as a significant impediment to the proposal beyond the time to undertake and complete.

Major Territory Plan Amendment Process



SOURCE: SPACELAB (2025)

Development Application Process

A Development Application (DA) will be required for most of the works proposed on site. The preparation of documentation and public notification are key elements of the DA process.

Noting that there may be some community interest relating to the proposal and the DA, we consider it prudent to approach key community groups as part of pre-DA application activities. Key groups to consider approaching prior to lodgement include:

- Local businesses including adjacent childcare, church and Community Centre.
- Adjacent neighbours.
- Cook Community Council.

The Development Application is third party appealable under the Planning Act 2023.

Territory Priority Project

Under the Planning Act 2023, an application can be made to declare a project a Territory Priority Project (TPP). The Chief Minister and Minister can jointly declare a TTP if they are satisfied that the proposal:

a) would achieve a major government policy outcome that is of significant benefit to the people of the ACT; and

b) would substantially facilitate the achievement of the desired future planning outcomes set out in the planning strategy, a relevant district strategy, the territory plan or any relevant zone; and

c) is for significant infrastructure, or significant facilities, that are of significant benefit to the people of the ACT; and

Note Significant infrastructure or facilities includes community, social and public housing projects of any scale.

d) has been the subject of sufficient consultation under subsection (3)

The benefit of having a project declared a TPP is the decision to approve is prioritised after the process to have the project declared. Furthermore, the proposal is exempt from third party appeal. In the case of community facilities such as the one proposed, this can be of benefit to limit the risk of ACAT review delaying the proposal.

In the case of an MPA for a TPP, should the MPA be supported by the Minister and the Standing committee opt to undertake an enquiry, the period for enquiry for a TPP is shortened from 6 months to 3.

Timeline

There are no set timelines for the TPP nomination process. The process follows the below steps:

Step 1 – Proponent submits TPP declaration request.

↓

Step 2 – Assessment of proposal against criteria.

↓

Step 3 – Authority advises Planning Minister about TPP declaration request.

↓

Step 4 – Public consultation.

↓

Step 5 – Consultation closes.

↓

Step 6 – Authority advises Chief Minister and Minister with consultation report.

↓

Step 7 – Presentation to the Legislative Assembly.

↓

Step 8 – TPP declaration notified and commenced.

DA Decision

There is no fast track for a decision under a TPP. The DA will follow the normal process:

Completeness check – 5-10 working days.

Public notification – 15 working days.

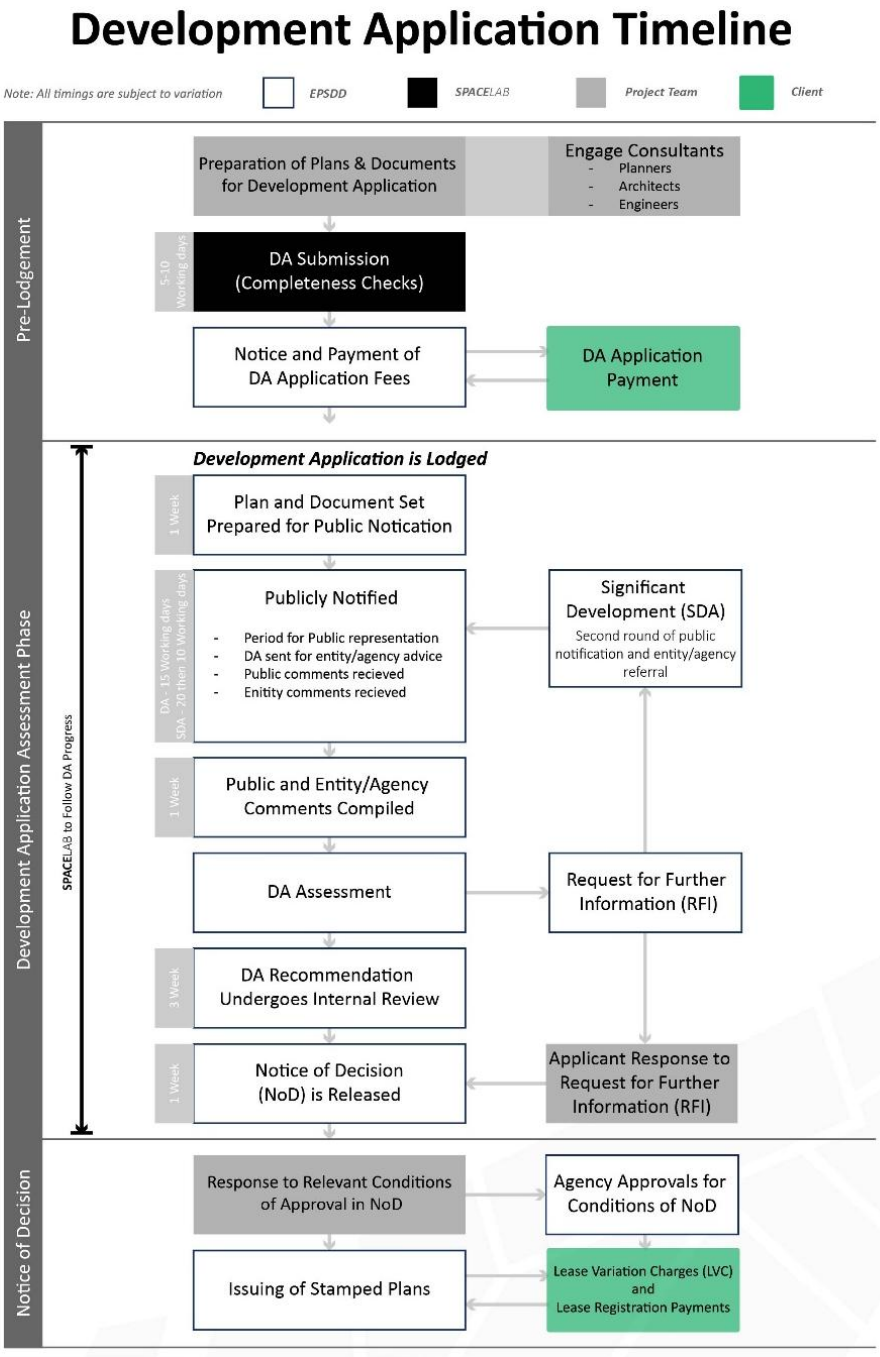
Entity referrals – 15 working days.

Assessment process – 45 working days as representations are expected to be received.

Further information requests – No timeframe.

Notice of Decision – There is no consistent timeframe as this is dependent on internal processes.

These are all indicative timeframes based on government documentation and previous works



Appeal Rights

The DA decision for a TPP is exempt from third party appeal (such as the community or representors) from making applications for ACAT review. However, a TPP can be taken to the ACT Supreme Court.

Planning (Territory Priority Project) Amendment Bill 2025

An amendment to the Planning Act 2023 was presented to the Assembly on 5 February 2025. The Standing Committee then decide to undertake an inquiry on 19 February 2025, with a final decision date of 5 May 2025. After the inquiry is completed, the Standing Committee and Planning Minister may decide to implement this amendment to the Planning Act 2023. This would mean the timeframe shown above is skipped and the site received automatic declaration as a TPP site. The following changes would then be applicable to the Alcohol and Drug Facility in Cook.

Under the amended Section 216 of the amended Planning Act 2023 the facility would be made a TPP under the new insert '*(c) a development proposal related to a public health facility; or'*. For the facility to be considered a TPP under Section 216, the following Section 217A is applicable.

217A Meaning of related to a public health facility

(1) For this Act, a development proposal is related to a public health facility if the development to which the proposal relates

a) *Is proposed to be undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Territory or a territory entity; and*
b) *May facilitate the construction, ongoing operation and maintenance, repairs, refurbishment, relocation or replacement of any of the following that are, or are intended to be, owned or operated by the Territory or a territory entity:*
    - *(i) a health facility;*
    - *(ii) a hospital;*
    - *(iii) a mental health facility;*
    - *(iv) residential care accommodation that provides accommodation for a facility mentioned in subparagraphs (i) to (iii);*
    - *(v) supportive housing that provides accommodation for a facility mentioned in subparagraphs (i) to (iii);*
    - *(vi) infrastructure required for the effective use or operation of a facility mentioned in subparagraphs (i) to (v).*

Definition

***Health facility** means a facility for providing health care services (including diagnosis, preventative care or counselling) or medical or surgical treatment to out-patients only.*

Planning Advice

Summary

The following summary is provided as part of this initial advice, noting no concept plans or potential yield information has been available for assessment as of July 2025

- The site is subject to the Territory Plan and is zoned Urban Open Space.
- This zoning does not align with the project goals and should be rezoned Community Facilities Zone.
- The proposed use fits within the definitions of Residential Care Accommodation and Health Facility.
- Hospital use is also a possible use depending on the level of health care provided.
- The site is on unleased land under TCCS custodianship.
- The type of works proposed for the site, including the use and scale, is likely to align with the Territory Plan under Community Facilities but does not align with the current Urban Open Space zoning.
- The proposed works will require a Major Plan Amendment and Development Application.
- Parking requirements will need to be considered.
- Consideration should be given to engaging with neighbours and other stakeholders as part of DA preparations.
- A Territory Priority Project declaration is a possible pathway to reduce risk of delays to the proposal through third party appeal.
- The new Territory Priority Project Bill may negate the need to apply for a TPP.

Recommendation

As this is a high level planning review of the sites suitability, there are no recommendations in relation to potential built form or design at this stage. However, using the previous site at Rivett as a benchmark for the size and yield of a future Alcohol and Drug Facility, the following recommendations have been made.

The site has suitable size, topography and access to accommodate an Alcohol and Drug Facility of similar yield to the previous Rivett site. The block does not have a zoning that permits the uses required for an Alcohol and Drugs Facility. The site is currently undeveloped urban open spaces with a gradual gradient and mature trees surrounding the build envelope. Given the adjoining neighbourhood oval and the community hub to the south, it is likely the proposed uses would suit the site if rezoned to Community Facilities Zoning.

The site is not feasible without a Major Plan Amendment to rezone the block. To allow for as successful zoning of the site an additional subdivision DA is recommended and likely required. Even if the project does get a successful TPP declaration to avoid third party appeals post DA acceptance, the Major Plan Amendment portion of this process is not exempt for public representation and intervention throughout the MPA process.

Given all the information provided within this report, it is our opinion that Block 12, Section 13 Cook is a viable site, however, will take more time to reach an approval due to the requirement for an MPA when compared to Block 1 Section 13 Cook or Block 4 Section 32 Spence.



Jamie Taylor
Urban Planner



Richard Nash
Principle Planner

Attachment 2

Test fit – Preferred Option



SITE 2 - OPTION 1.1 PREFERRED

SCALE 1 : 500

Rev	Description	Checked	Approved	Date
P02	PRELIMINARY			23.10.25
P01	PRELIMINARY			15.10.25

Drafting Check EW | Reg Architect EW

Design Check NI | State and Reg No.

N

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SCALE 1:500 AT ORIGINAL SIZE

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Project No. 12659038

Client ACT GOVERNMENT

Project ALCOHOL AND DRUG FACILITY

Status PRELIMINARY

Drawing Title SITE 2 - SITE PLAN

Drawing No. 12659038-GHD-00-00-DRG-AR-00120

Size A1

Rev P02

Plot Date: 23/10/2025 4:25:56 PM

File Name: Autodesk Docs://12659038-ACT Government - Alcohol and Drug Facility/12659038-GHD-00-00-MDL-ARC-00001.rvt



SITE 2 - OPTION 1.1 BLOCKING

SCALE 1 : 200

AREA LEGEND

- STAFF AREAS
- CONSUMER AREAS - SHARED
- CONSUMER AREA - MALE
- CONSUMER AREA - FEMALE
- DAY USE AREAS
- CIRCULATION

Rev	Description	Checked	Approved	Date
P02	PRELIMINARY			23.10.25
P01	PRELIMINARY			15.10.25

Drafting Check EW
Design Check NI
Reg Architect EW
State and Reg No.

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SCALE 1:200 AT ORIGINAL SIZE

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Project No. 12659038

Client ACT GOVERNMENT
Project ALCOHOL AND DRUG FACILITY
Status PRELIMINARY

Drawing Title SITE 2 - PREFERRED OPTION
Drawing No. 12659038-GHD-00-00-DRG-AR-00121
Size A1
Rev P02

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