LIVING LAB NORTHERN RIVERS

BRING IT ON HOME

CONTENTS

BRING IT ON HOME

Explore housing beyond your back fence.

INTRODUCTION	Exhibition introduction	3
	Housing types	7
	Streetscapes	12
	Crunching the data	16
	Housing strategies and reports	19
	Housing crisis	20
INFILL	Infill introduction	22
	Case studies	23
	Speculative designs	51
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	The rumpus room	71
	Reading list	72
	Podcasts	73
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Thanks	74

WHAT DOES HOME MEAN TO YOU?

We've got a housing problem. There aren't enough affordable homes to go around, and much of the housing stock isn't the right type.

How we got here is complex and there's no easy fix. It's time for a renovation.

The floods of 2022 damaged more than our beautiful old homes. For many, it's created an uncertain future for them and their community. Homeowners have struggled to navigate the options around relocating or rebuilding, while renters are under pressure with properties scarce and rents on the rise.

It's hard, but we need to see rebuilding our region as an opportunity to look at new designs, development models, and innovative partnerships to meet the housing needs of our communities.

Everyone thinks about shelter in different ways. Regardless of appearances, these are deeply personal spaces, providing safety and comfort for our families, and somewhere to hang with friends. They're vessels for life.

What does home mean to you? Bring your ideas along, but for this exhibit, think about them on a grand scale.

We need to transform the Northern Rivers for the benefit of everyone, and that starts at home.

It's your place that makes the neighbourhood that makes the village that makes the region. We're all connected, so let's explore the housing system together and contemplate how it'll be transformed.

A BASIC HUMAN NEED, NOT A COMMODITY

Alongside food and clothing, adequate shelter serves a basic human need. Many international organisations and conventions recognise housing as a human right.

Housing is a right, not a commodity.[1]
In the international human rights context, the right to housing is integrally linked to other human rights.[2]

It is recognised in the following treaties:

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Article 25

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services."[3]

1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Article 11(1)

"The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."

While Australia recognises and has obligations to these two treaties, the human right to adequate housing for all is not legislated in Australia.

"How is a nation to fulfil this rather ubiquitous obligation — and in a federal system of shared responsibilities? What does adequacy mean?"
Rosalind Croucher, AHRC

The UN describes the elements of the right to adequate housing as:[1]

Security of tenure
"To be adequately housed means having secure tenure; not having to worry about being evicted, or having your home or lands taken away."

Availability of services
"Safe drinking water, sanitation, energy for cooking, etc."

Affordability
"Housing is not adequate if its costs threaten occupants' enjoyment of other human rights."

Habitability
"Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards."

Accessibility
"Housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged or marginalised groups are not taken into account."

Location
"Housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas."

Cultural adequacy
"Housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity."

Beyond shelter, appropriate and secure housing allows people to form strong connections with their local communities and create a solid work and social life.

[1] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.
[2] Rosalind Croucher AM, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sandy Duncanson Memorial Lecture, October 2022.
[3] https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

WHAT TYPES OF HOUSING EXIST?

The Northern Rivers has always been a place of diversity, except when it comes to housing.

Here's a mix of dwellings, both familiar and rare, that suit different needs.

Our definitions match those used in the NSW State Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

DETACHED DWELLING HOUSES

One dwelling on one lot

SECONDARY DWELLINGS ON EXISTING LOTS

Granny flat
Two dwellings on one lot

Missing middle type

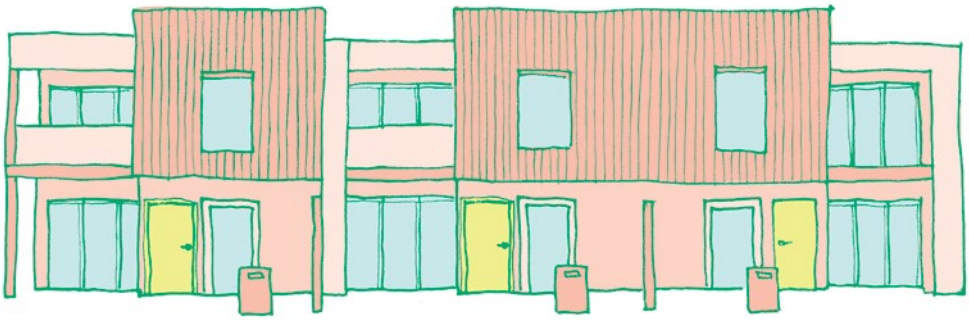
DUAL OCCUPANCIES (ATTACHED AND DETACHED)

Duplex
Two dwellings on one or two lots

Missing middle type

ATTACHED DWELLINGS

Terrace or row housing
Three or more dwellings on separate lots



Missing middle type

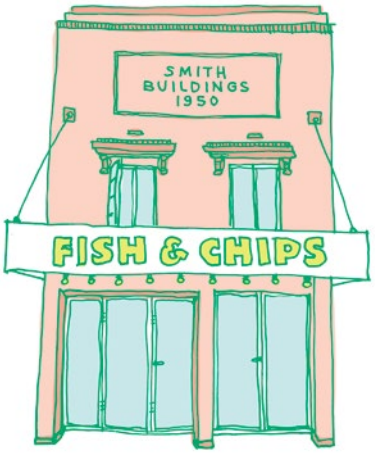
MULTI-DWELLING HOUSING

Townhouses, villas, cluster housing
Three or more dwellings on one lot

Missing middle type

MANOR HOUSES

Three to four dwellings on one lot,
no more than two storeys



Missing middle type

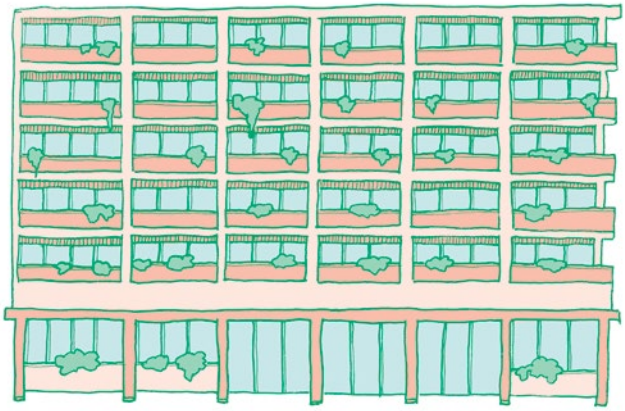
SHOP TOP HOUSING
MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

One or more dwellings above a ground floor shop
or commercial tenancy

Missing middle type

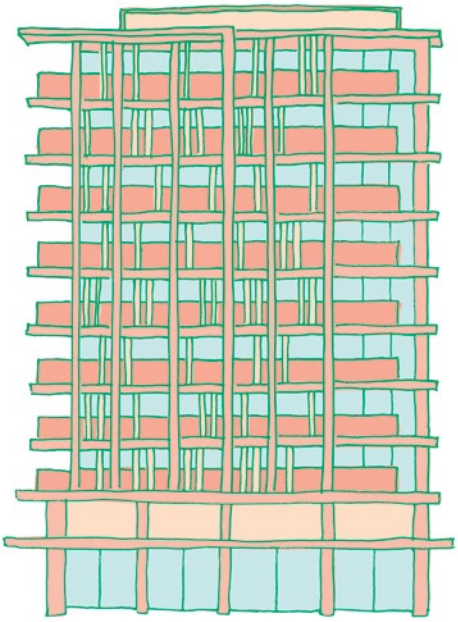
LOW RISE RESIDENTIAL
FLAT BUILDINGS

Six-packs or walk-up flats
Multiple dwellings up to four storeys on one lot



MEDIUM RISE RESIDENTIAL FLAT BUILDINGS

Multiple dwellings between five and seven storeys



HIGH RISE RESIDENTIAL FLAT BUILDINGS

Multiple dwellings above seven storeys

OTHER TYPES

Group homes, seniors housing, co-living, boarding houses Multiple dwellings on one lot with some shared facilities

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

Caravans, tiny houses, prefabricated pods

THE MISSING MIDDLE

The 'missing middle' refers to housing types that contain more than one dwelling on one lot in a variety of forms. Typically, these types have two or more dwellings and are no more than two storeys high. Sometimes the term extends to includes low-rise residential flat buildings of three to four storeys.

"The Missing Middle plays an important role in that new housing types can be inserted into established well serviced neighbourhoods, providing greater diversity in locations well sought after, at a lower price point to other predominantly available housing stock."
Architect Angelo Korsanos

HOUSING TENURE AND DENSITY

Housing tenure refers to the financial arrangement under which a household occupies a dwelling. It can be broadly organised into private market ownership and renting.

PRIVATE MARKET OWNERSHIP

Strata title
Ownership of lots within a building or development.

Company title
Shares in a company, with an allocation of dwellings in a building or development.

Community title
Two or more lots with common areas.

Alternative models for private ownership in Australia:

Community lands trust
Trust owns the land, residents own their house, with pricing capped, which maintains affordability forever. Equity and resale gains go back into the trust to build more affordable housing.

Not-for-profit
Private developments that offer housing at cost, like Nightingale in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney.

Build to rent to own
A stable rental agreement with the option to buy at an agreed sale price.

RENTING

Private market rental
Renting off the owner.

Co-living
Renting a private room with shared amenities. More affordable.

Affordable housing
Rental option for very low to moderate income households. Rent set either as discount on market rate or proportion of household income.

Build to rent
Development created for leasing to long-term renters, not sold.

In-fill affordable housing
At least 20% of developments within walking distance to well-serviced areas, managed by community housing provider.

Boarding house
Affordable rental housing, where residents usually occupy a room with access to shared facilities.

New housing is often discussed in terms of density, referring to how intensively a residential area is developed. Usually, it's measured by the number of dwellings per hectare, in the following ranges:

Low (≤15 dw/ha), Medium (16–60 dw/ha), High (60+ dw/ha)

STREETS OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS

What does local housing look like today?

There's over 300,000 people living in almost 150,000 dwellings in our region. Every home's different, and grouped together in different surroundings, they form unique neighbourhoods, some of which we've captured here.

These aren't actual locations, with every type of home, but they do illustrate many common streets from across our backyard. Which one do you live in?

VILLAGE

Ziggy's now in primary school. He lives with his mums Rach and Nicole.

Sally's a midwife at the local hospital. She lives with her husband and their two boys.

Having lived in the same spot for 37 years, Di and Garry's kids come back to visit now and then.

Small clusters of mostly classic timber cottages, with a general store, plus some other cafes, shops and services, like a petrol station and mechanic, all dotted along the main street.

There's an old church and community hall, small playground and park, but little else, which only adds to the charm.

You may recognise this streetscape in Bonalbo, Burringbar, Clunes, Dunoon, Eltham, Federal, Tyalgum, Uki, Wardell and Woodenbong.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

It's almost killed him, but Nick and Sophie have finally finished renovating the family home, just in time for their second baby.

Molly and Arvin are retired. They're only just able to manage their property without help.

Large parcels of land, hobby farms, and community titles, all sprinkled with a mixture of housing. There are small cottages, relocated Queenslanders, secondary dwellings, agricultural sheds, and an increasing number of brand new (huge) two storey homes. While there are some groupings of dwellings, there's no nearby shops or amenities.

You may recognise this streetscape in Caniaba, Boat Harbour, Tullera, Coorabell, Eureka and McLeans Ridges.

HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Social worker and single mum, Louise and her toddler choose to rent here, because it's close to the office and daycare.

When she's not throwing clay in her backyard studio/granny flat, you'll find Jenny at the cafe, whipping up lattes.

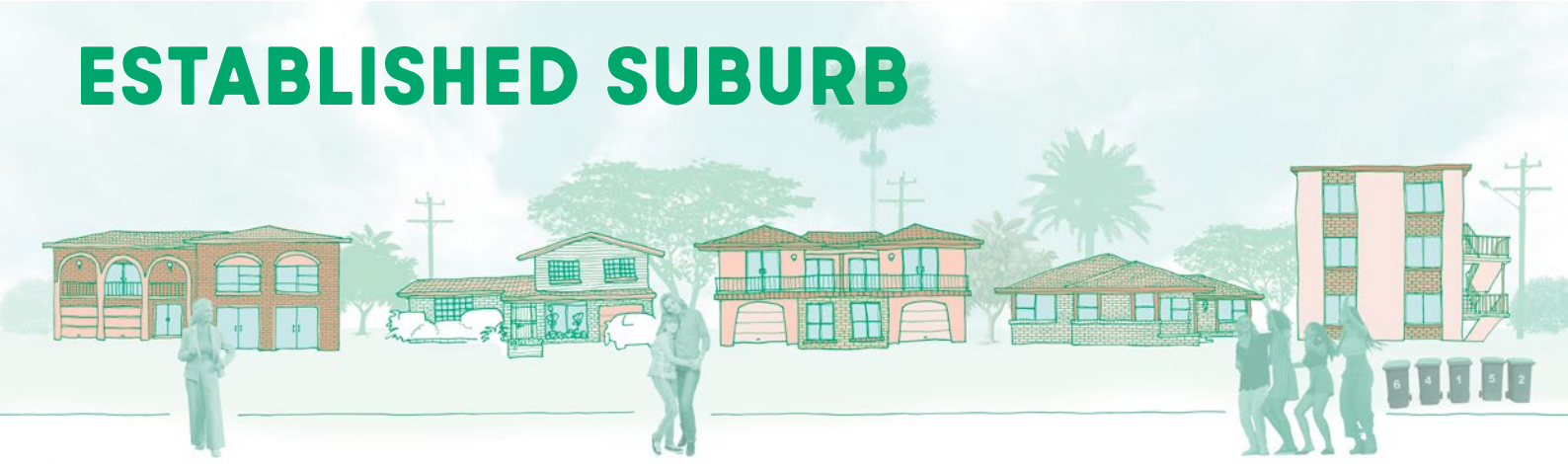
Ron lives alone, like so many seniors, but he's still able to get out and visit the club on his mobility scooter.

Found within the historical footprint of original settlements, these are the small chunks of town with the oldest blocks (often double the size of a modern lot), wider streets, tallest trees, and handsome heritage buildings.

Housing is mostly single storey Queenslander style timber residences, but some have been raised up.

You may recognise this streetscape in the older parts of Casino, Grafton, Kyogle, Lismore, Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah.

ESTABLISHED SUBURB



It's too big for her, but Tiffany is still too busy with her career at the university to think about downsizing.

Cara lives with her teenage daughter, who has autism. They've stayed in the area because the local school is inclusive with good resources.

Party house! Bec and her three mates are rarely home (because they work in hospitality) but when they are, it's good times.

The residential rings that emanate from every town, where most of the population have grown up, or moved into, thanks to a mix of housing types and density.

Here's the blocks of apartments, rows of townhouses, and five-bedroom brick castles. All just outside walking distance to work and the shop.

You may recognise this streetscape in parts of Alstonville, Bilambil, East Ballina, Evans Head, Goonellabah, Ocean Shores, Pottsville, Tweed Heads and Wollongbar.

NEW RELEASE SUBURB

Multigenerational living has its benefits, just ask Luke and Kaylie, who live with their kid and (babysitter) Kaylie's mum.

The Walkers both had two kids from previous marriages, which are now happily blended under one roof.

When Ben had his hip replaced, his brother John moved up to help with his recovery.

New estates, with smaller lots and bigger (mostly two storey) houses, less than two metres apart.
Designs restricted by developer contracts, creating suburbs with similar homes in similar colours. Baby trees, so a little stark.
You may recognise this streetscape in Cumbalum, Casuarina, Cudgen, Goonellabah, Lennox Head and Terranora.

TOWN CENTRE

Having moved to Australia three years ago, for a job in the food industry, Ahmad is happy in his bachelor pad.

Access means everything to Keith and Robert (who's in a wheelchair), so they had to find a first-floor apartment.

Welcome to the love shack. Steph, and her tradie boyfriend, are stoked with their new spot in town.

The central business district, technically a mixed-use area, but predominantly commercial.
Closest to services and transport, they have the most diversity, with some higher density housing, shop top housing, and a few remaining heritage homes.
You may recognise this streetscape in inner parts of Ballina, Byron, Grafton, Lismore and Tweed Heads.

CRUNCHING THE DATA

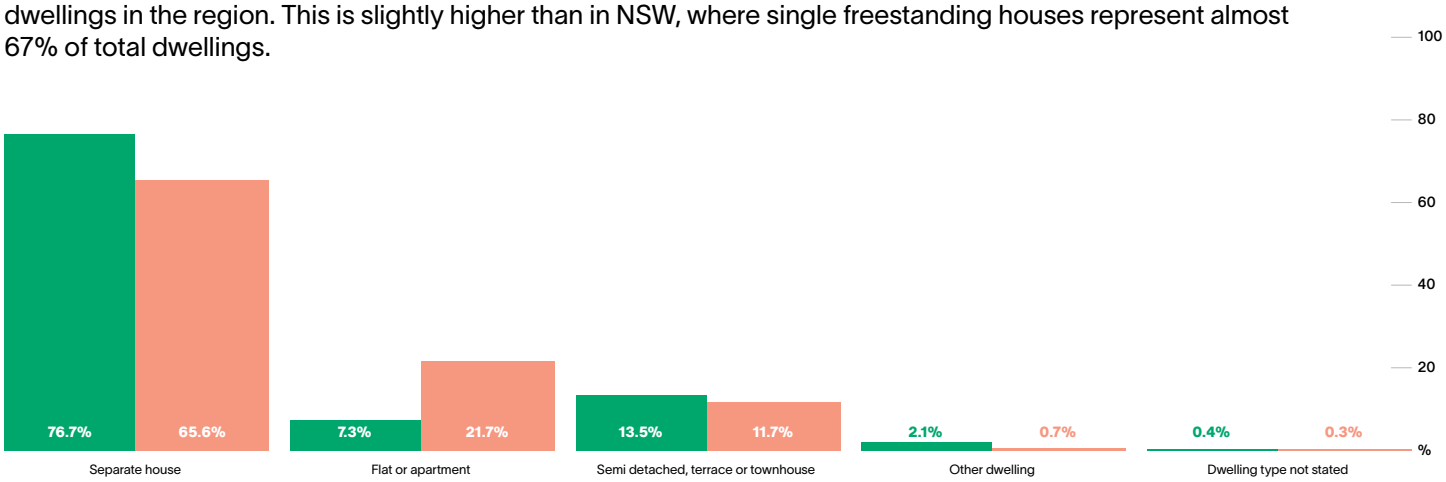
There are 311,175 people living in approximately 83,644 dwellings in the Northern Rivers region.[1]

[1] Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.

Northern Rivers New South Wales

Types of dwellings

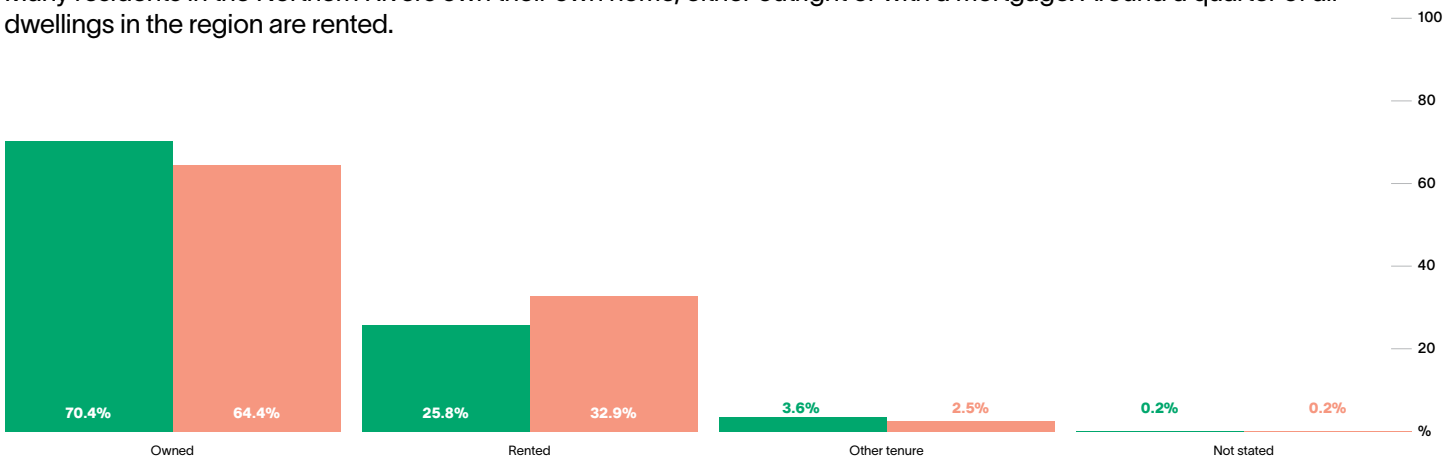
The most common house type in the region is a single freestanding house, representing almost 80% of total dwellings in the region. This is slightly higher than in NSW, where single freestanding houses represent almost 67% of total dwellings.



Source: Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.

Dwelling tenure

Many residents in the Northern Rivers own their own home, either outright or with a mortgage. Around a quarter of all dwellings in the region are rented.

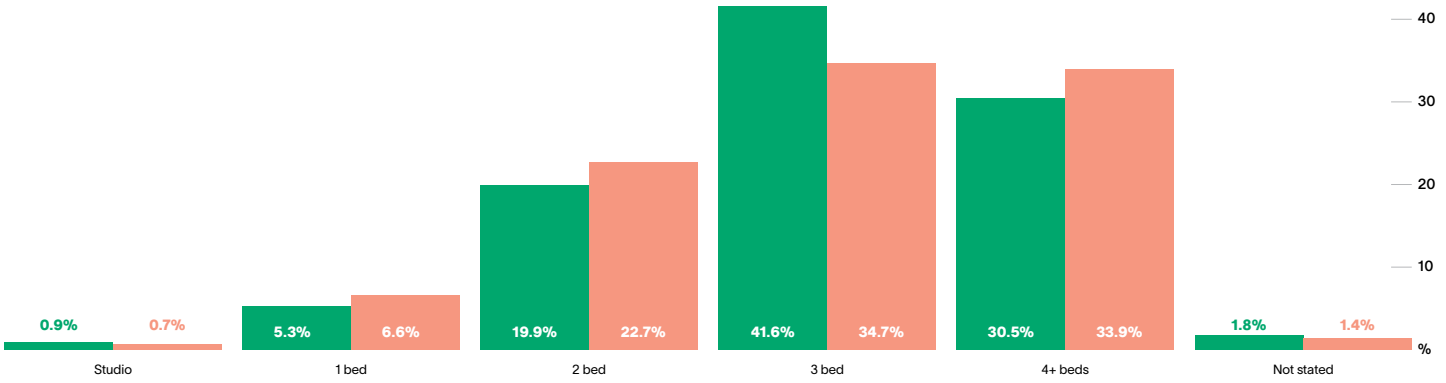


Source: Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.

Northern Rivers New South Wales

Bedrooms per dwelling

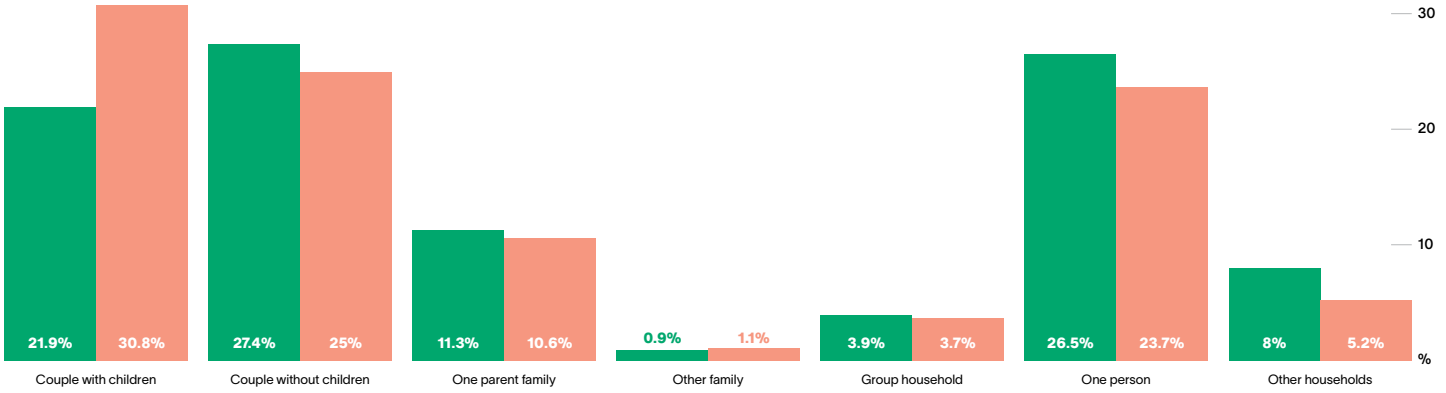
Over 72% of dwellings contain 3 bedrooms or more in the Northern Rivers region. This is slightly higher than the state comparison at 69%.



Source: Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.

Household type and average household size

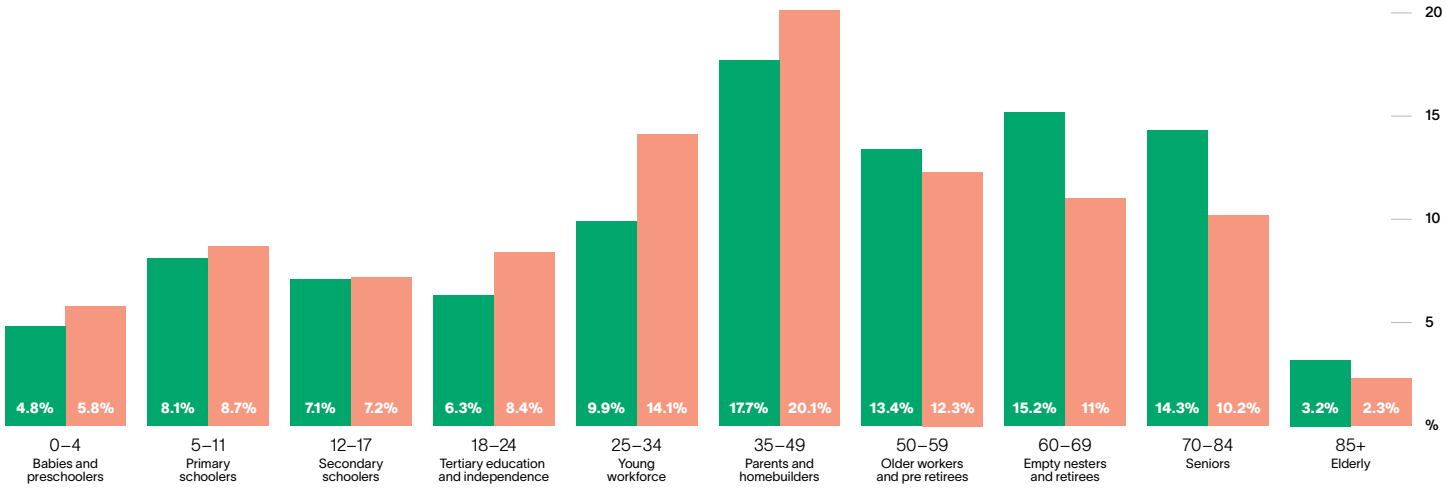
The average household size in the Northern Rivers is 2.4 people. The most prominent household types in the region are couples without children and one person households, representing 27.4% and 26.5% of all households respectively. By comparison, the most prominent households in NSW are couples with children.



Source: Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.

Age structure

Approximately 46% of the population in the Northern Rivers region are aged 50 years or more. The largest age group in the region are aged between 35 and 49, representing almost 18% of the population.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

Private dwelling occupancy rates

Dwelling occupancy rates in the region range between 84.6% in Byron Shire to 92.8% in Ballina and Lismore.[1]

Airbnb listings

There are approximately 6,090 dwellings (entire homes/apartments) listed for short term rental on Airbnb within our region.[2]

Expected waiting times for social housing

The expected waiting time for social housing varies across the region from 2 to 10 or more years. The longest waiting times are experienced in the Tweed Shire, with a 10+ year wait for all dwelling sizes (1 bedroom to 4+ bedroom dwellings).[3]

People experiencing homelessness

There were approximately 1,484 people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers on the date of the 2021 Census. There were also 1,325 people living in marginal housing on this date.

ABS definitions:[4]

Experiencing homelessness include *People living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out, People in supported accommodation for the homeless, People staying temporarily with other households, People living in boarding houses, People in other temporary lodgings, People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.*

Marginal housing include *People living in other crowded dwellings,*
People in other improvised dwellings, People who are marginally housed in caravan parks.

Median weekly rent price

Between 2017 and 2022, median weekly rents increased by 30% or more across Northern Rivers region. Tweed Shire experienced the highest median weekly rent increase at 51.2%, from $430 (Dec 2017 quarter) to $650 (Dec 2022 quarter).[5]

Median house price sales

Between 2017 and 2022, median house sales prices increased by 42.9% or more across the Northern Rivers region. Kyogle experienced the highest median house sales price increase at 81.1%, from $297,000 (Dec 2017 quarter) to $538,000 (Dec 2022). Ballina Shire experienced a 66.2% increase in median house sales price, from $628,000 (Dec 2017 quarter) to $1,044,000 (Dec 2022 quarter).[5]

[1] Local Government Housing Kit — Census 2021, Published Feb 17, 2023, Updated May 5, 2023.
[2] Inside Airbnb, updated on June 18, 2023.
[3] NSW Government, Communities & Justice, Guide to waiting times for social housing at 30 June 2022.
[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Estimating homelessness: Census, 2021.
[5] NSW Government Sales Report, Rent and sales, by DCJ Statistics Published May 25, 2023.

HOUSING STRATEGIES AND REPORTS

Want more detail?

Here's some Local and State Government Housing Strategies and Reports for the Northern Rivers.

Northern Rivers Region

North Coast Regional Plan 2041
Low Rise Housing Diversity Guide

Ballina Shire

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Housing Strategy — Stage One

Byron Shire

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Alternative Housing Models Research
Affordable Housing Initiatives

Clarence Valley

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Affordable Housing Policy
Housing Strategy Underway

Kyogle Shire

Local Strategic Planning Statement

Lismore City

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Affordable and Diverse Housing Strategy
Secondary Dwellings Brochure
Shop Top Housing Brochure

Richmond Valley

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Draft Growth Management Strategy

Tweed Shire

Local Strategic Planning Statement
Major Housing Developments

Additional resources

Landcom Residential Density Guide 2011

ANATOMY OF A HOUSING CRISIS

What's the problem and why now?

"In a nutshell, the housing crisis comprises declining home ownership, growing private rental stress, rising homelessness and shrinking social housing capacity."

Dr Andrew Clarke, UNSW School of Social Science

HOUSING STRESS

Increasingly common across the Northern Rivers, this is when households have to contribute more than 30% of their gross weekly income to service a mortgage or pay rent.

HOUSE PRICES

Between 2017 and 2022, median house sales price growth ranged from 81.1% in the Kyogle Shire, to 42.9% in Richmond Valley. All seven LGAs were higher than the NSW average, which increased by 25.6%.[1]

SOCIAL HOUSING DEMAND

There were 2,150 applicants for social housing in the Northern Rivers, in 2021, representing a massive 4.3% of all NSW social housing applicants. Expected wait times for social housing varies across the region, from 2-5 years for a 3-bedroom house in Clarence Valley to 10+ years for a 3-bedroom house in Tweed or Byron Shire.[2]

RENT INCREASES

Market driven increases in median rent prices across every LGA in the Northern Rivers, from 2017 to 2022, above the NSW average. Tweed Shire experienced the highest median weekly rent increase at 51.2%.[3]

HOMELESSNESS

1,484 people were experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers in 2021. Another 1,325 people were living in compromised conditions, like overcrowded housing or improvised dwellings.[4]

LOCAL MIGRATION

A double whammy of interregional migration in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise in work from home arrangements, alongside within-region migration from the coast to the hinterland.

INFLATION

Cost of living increases and wage stagnation.

HOUSING OPTIONS

Lack of appropriate housing options for smaller and diverse households, intensified by low developer interest and private market investment in alternative housing models.

LOW VACANCY RATES

Caused by a lack of new developments for the rental market.

SHORT STAY ACCOM

Conversion of properties from the long-term rental market into short-stay accommodation.

LAND ZONING

Can't go up, due to height restrictions.
Can't spread out, because there is very little appropriately zoned land.

COUNCILS

Limited capacity of local government to process development approvals.

INDUSTRY SHORTAGES

Supply chain disruptions and labour shortages impacting on building costs.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Recent floods removed around 3,500 dwellings from available housing stock in the region.

"The latest floods have worsened an already strained housing system in the Northern Rivers. In addition to thousands of homes rendered uninhabitable from flooding, the event exposed the high levels of 'housing vulnerability' in the region."

UNSW City Futures

[1&3] NSW Government Sales Report, Rent and sales, by DCJ Statistics Published May 25, 2023.
[2] NSW Government C&J. Expected waiting times for social housing. Family & Community Services. Published 2020. Accessed May 29, 2022.
[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Estimating homelessness: Census, 2021.

INFILL

We need lots of solutions, this is one.

Let us fill you in. Infill housing is when new dwellings are built within an existing town or village, opposed to developing new estates on greenfield sites around the fringe.

Less sprawl and more gentle density, thanks to structures like duplexes, townhouses and low to medium rise apartments.

Infill's good because it's close to services and provides alternative types of housing.

Hurdles include the higher cost of urban land and planning restrictions.

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies explore a range of infill housing types from across Australia, including cohousing, social housing, affordable housing, accessible apartment living, new builds and adaptive reuse of commercial and residential buildings.

As you'll see they vary in density, tenure model and scale.

CASE STUDY 1:

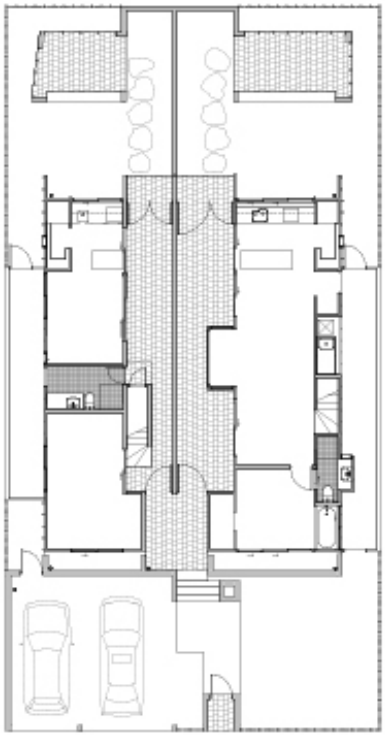
MERMAID MULTIHOUSE

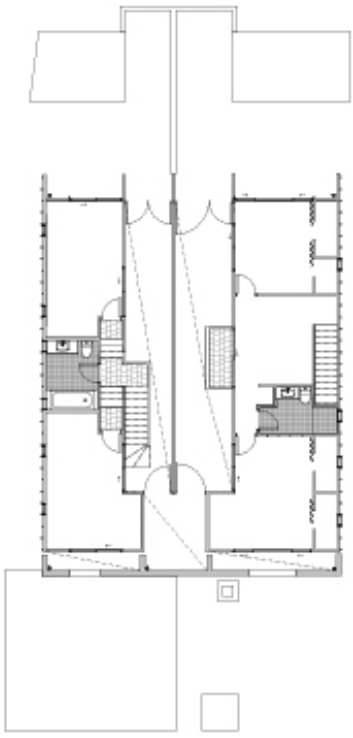
Yugambeh Country / Mermaid Beach, Queensland

Architect & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site area:	Density:
Partners Hill with Hogg and Lamb, 2018	Duplex	Each dwelling privately owned	2 dwellings (3 bedrooms) on 1 lot	3 storeys	Private owner	405m^2	Medium; 49.4 (dw/ha) (dwellings/hectare)

MERMAID MULTIHOUSE

Images: Shantau Starick





MERMAID MULTIHOUSE

Mermaid Multihouse is an experimental duplex designed for an intergenerational household, with changing requirements over time. Pooling their resources, two family members jointly purchased a property within their desired suburb.

Removing the original home and rebuilding on a typical suburban lot, two distinct dwellings increase density yet retain the scale of neighbouring houses.

The building presents a united front to the street, shrouded in a breezeblock screen and shared carport. Behind this, the building splits into two along a central light filled arcade that remains open to the elements.

Each dwelling is slightly different in size and unique in its arrangement of rooms. This offers a flexibility to be occupied by a household or a workplace household mix.

CASE STUDY 2:

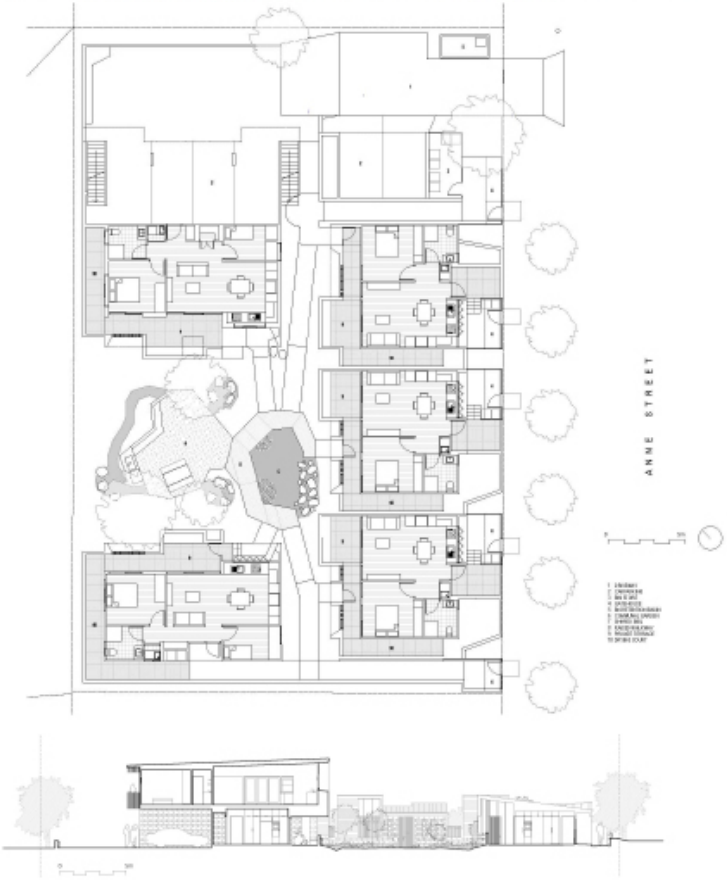
ANNE STREET GARDEN VILLAS

Yugambeh Country / Southport, Gold Coast, Queensland

Architect & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
Anna O'Gorman Architecture, 2021	Villas	Social housing	7 dwellings on 1 lot	1 and 2 storeys	Queensland Government	1,220 m²	Medium; 57.4 dw/ha (dwellings/hectare)

ANNE STREET GARDEN VILLAS

Images: Christopher Fredrick Jones



ANNE STREET GARDEN VILLAS

Anne Street Garden Villas provide a new model for social housing. Developed as a demonstration project, these seven dwellings form a village-like arrangement around a central shared garden, fostering a sense of community amongst residents.

Each dwelling is provided with an address to a public street or an outlook to the shared garden space, giving all residents direct access to public and private spaces. The central garden space is overlooked by all units, providing amenity and passive surveillance.

Each dwelling is compact in scale and constructed of durable materials with playful colours to personalise each residence. Internal spaces within dwellings are designed to allow residents to age in place, with flexible rooms to accommodate changing patterns in living and work arrangements. Greater pedestrian movement around the central garden space is maximised by locating cars on the north-eastern edge of the site.

CASE STUDY 3:

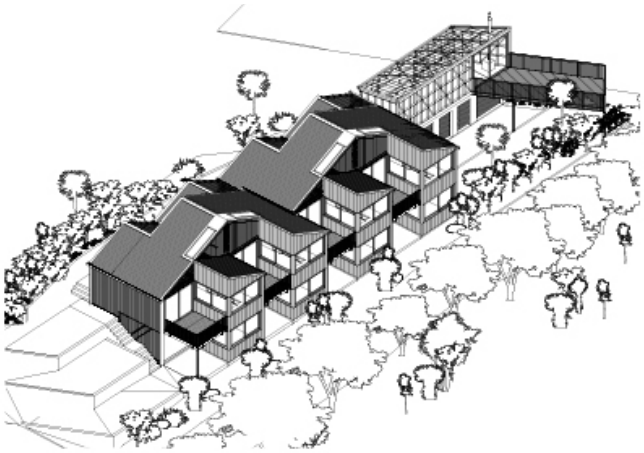
BLOCK PARTY

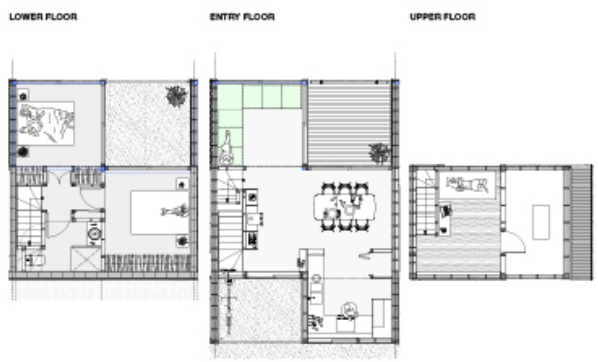
Te Whanganui-a-Tara / South Wellington, New Zealand

Architect & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
Spacecraft Architects, 2022	Townhouses	Privately owned	4 dwellings (3 bedroom) on 1 lot	2 storeys	Private owners (a group of friends)	654 m²	Medium; 61.2 (dw/ha) (dwellings/hectare)

BLOCK PARTY

Images: David Straight





BLOCK PARTY

Block Party is a cohousing model designed for a group of six friends (two couples and two singles) who together purchased a typical suburban lot in Wellington. The site is divided into four three-bedroom townhouses with shared communal facilities at the front and terraced gardens at the back.

Shared and private spaces are carefully balanced in this building to celebrate the benefits of communal living while providing ample spaces for retreat. A common ‘house’ situated at the street edge allows space for socialising, as well as shared utilities such as laundry and storage.

Recessed entry porches and private decks are carefully protected from the wind, maximising opportunities for access to sunlight and views.

CASE STUDY 4:

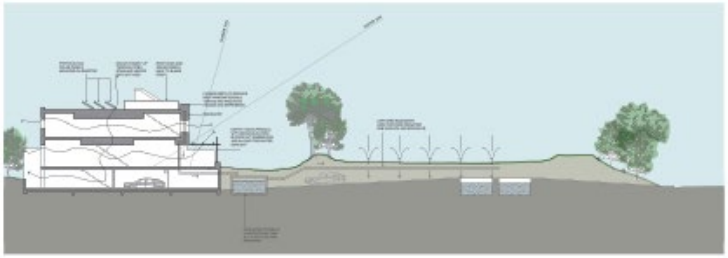
HELLER ST PARK AND RESIDENCES

Wurundjeri Country / Brunswick, Melbourne, Victoria

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
Six Degrees Architects & Simon Taylor Landart, 2022	Terraces	Privately owned	10 dwellings (four bedrooms) on 1 lot	3 storeys	Heller Street Group, Moreland City Council	4,340 m²	Medium; 23 dw/ha (dwellings/hectare)

HELLER ST PARK AND RESIDENCIES

Images: Patrick Rodriguez



HELLER ST PARK AND RESIDENCIES

Heller St explores a new model of medium density housing creating a greater sense of community and a more habitable space for all.

The transformation of a piece of unused council land into a public park and medium density housing specifically designed for families results in a dynamic community asset. The private terraces and pathway at the front of each dwelling are deliberately ambiguous in their public/private nature – paying homage to the way local Greek and Italian migrants inhabit their front porches and interact with the street.

Nearly all units have two or three children who engage with the park on a daily basis. The design of the dwellings is such that they face the park and this public open space becomes an integral part of the life of each family.

CASE STUDY 5:

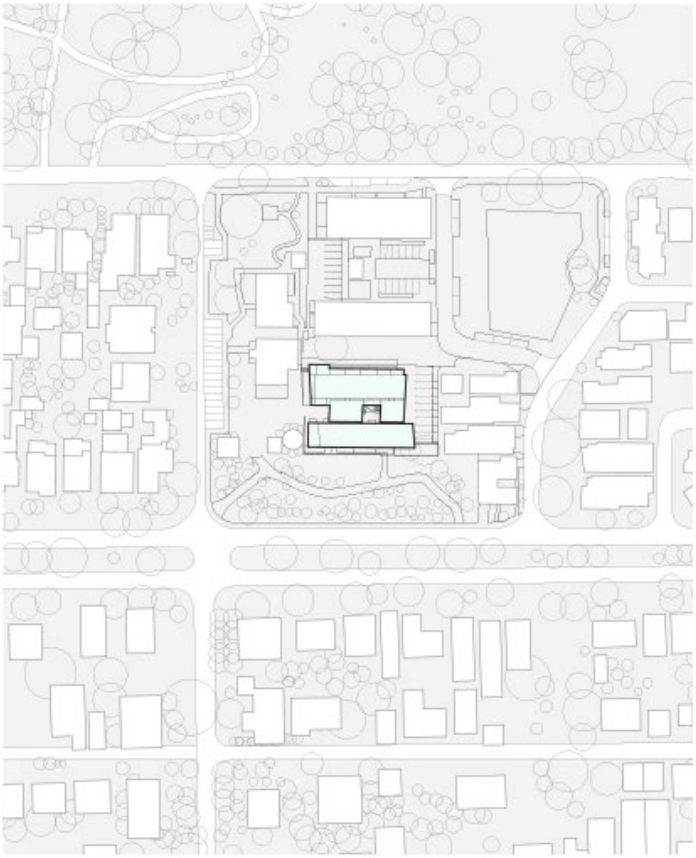
SHAC

Noongar Nation / White Gum Valley, Western Australia

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
With Architecture Studio, 2017	Residential flat building	Affordable rental	12 dwellings on 1 lot	4 storeys	Access Housing & SHAC Cooperative	1,230 m²	High 97.5dw/ha (dwellings/hectare)

SHAC

Images: Development WA and Ed Janes



SHAC

Sustainable Housing for Artists and Creatives (SHAC) is an apartment building designed to provide affordable accommodation for artists and creatives in the Fremantle region. In this development, rent for apartments is calculated as a percentage of an artist-resident's income.

Twelve apartments are arranged in two buildings, with a relatively small footprint, to allow for a generous central courtyard. In these communal spaces, creative projects, planting, and painting merge amongst the architecture. Ground floor studios provide productive workspace and support communal exhibitions and performances. During the design stages, the architects collaborated with the artist's collective to work through the current and future needs of potential residents.

SHAC is situated within the White Gum Valley demonstration precinct, a broader precinct of innovative housing projects led by the WA Government.

CASE STUDY 6:

ST ALBANS HOUSING

Wurundjeri Country / St Albans, Melbourne, Victoria

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
NMBW Architecture Studio + Monash University, 2021	Residential flat building	Affordable rental	7 dwellings on 1 lot	4 storeys	Monash Uni + Urban Lab with Housing Choices Australia	1,033 m²	High; 67.8dw/ha (dwellings/hectare)

ST ALBANS HOUSING

Images: Peter Bennetts

ST ALBANS HOUSING

St Albans Housing creates a new apartment building type on a standard single allotment in a middle-ring suburb of Melbourne. The building offers a replicable and affordable model of accessible apartment living in a suburban area.

The goal was to create a different type of apartment living for those with limited mobility, who spend more time at home, and for whom quality of internal and private external space is arguably more critical. The seven apartments have simple, generous layouts — an outdoor terrace and accessible bathrooms with natural light, ventilation and views – benefiting not only the resident but also the carers who spend long hours in these spaces.

The design is focused on meeting the needs of older people but is not officially 'elderly housing' – its flexible design allows a range of tenants of different ages and abilities to be accommodated in any apartment, aiming for a mixed community.

CASE STUDY 7:

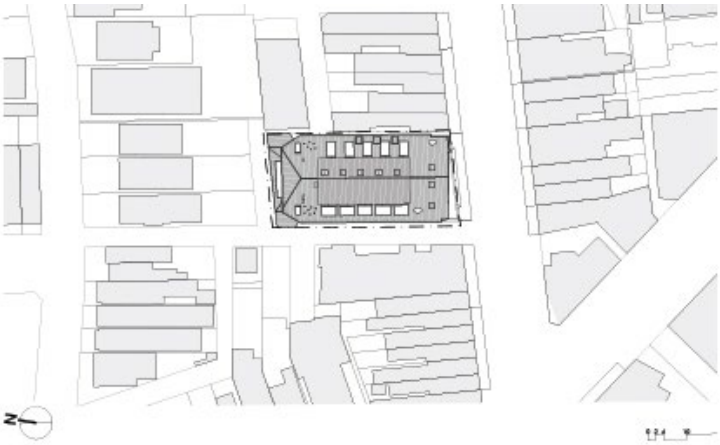
THE MAJESTIC THEATRE APARTMENTS

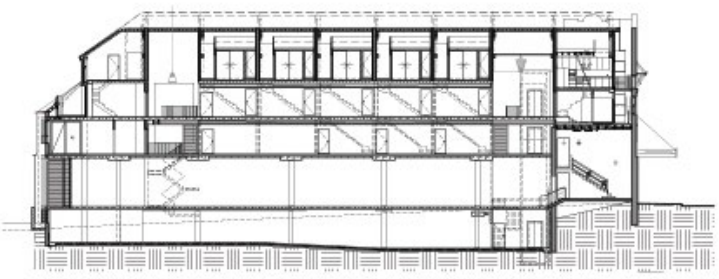
Gadigal Country / Petersham, Sydney, New South Wales

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
Hill Thalis Architecture and Urban Projects, 2013	Shop-top / mixed-use building	Private ownership + rental	27 apartments and 3 shops on 1 lot	4/5 storeys	Private developer	1,225 m²	High; 220 dw/ha (dwellings/hectare)

THE MAJESTIC THEATRE APARTMENTS

Images: Brett Boardman





Long Section

THE MAJESTIC THEATRE APARTMENTS

The Majestic Theatre Apartments is an adaptive infill development, converting a former disused commercial premises into a mix of street front shops and dwellings.

Originally constructed in 1921 as The Majestic Theatre, the building has had many lives — as a cinema, roller-skating rink, and a local club. This development continued the site's tradition of adaptation, achieving viability for dwellings while at the same time conserving the historic building (its volume, roof profile and perimeter walls).

Now it provides 27 residential apartments (a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments) across three levels, as well as ground floor retail sites. The apartments are organised into nine different configurations; a series of single-floor units face the side laneway, while to the side boundary double height apartments have tall atrium spaces that bring light and air. The building's splayed ends are quirkily adapted into highly individualised dwellings occupying the nooks and crannies that were previously projection rooms and back of house.

CASE STUDY 8:

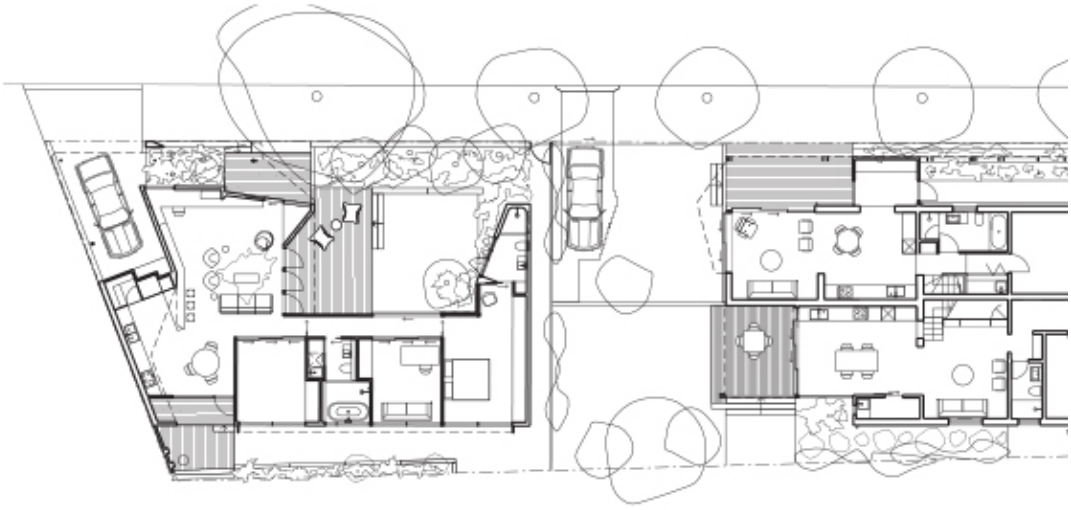
THREE HOUSES MARRICKVILLE

Gadigal Country / Marrickville, Sydney, New South Wales

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
David Boyle Architect, 2015	1 duplex and 1 detached house	Privately owned	3 dwellings, 1 large lot subdivided into 3	2 storeys	Private owner	690 m²	Medium; 43.5 (dw/ha) (dwellings/hectare)

THREE HOUSES MARRICKVILLE

Images: Brett Boardman & Victoria King



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

EAST ELEVATION

Plans not to scale.

THREE HOUSES MARRICKVILLE

Three Houses Marrickville is an example of low-impact urban consolidation. It delivers three private dwellings — a pair of two-storey semis, and one single-storey freestanding house — on a complex urban site, where once a single house stood.

The existing Federation-era house is retained and split down the middle, creating two distinct semi-detached dwellings, helping to minimise material usage and waste, and retain the original character of the building. Each of these dwellings have been carefully re-planned to provide three bedrooms, generous living rooms and flexible workspaces to accommodate a range of household types.

At the rear of the site, a compact, timber clad house is inserted, opening to the street and mimicking the scale of surrounding sheds and carports. Each dwelling has its own private courtyard and ample access to sunlight and views through generous porches and openings.

CASE STUDY 9:

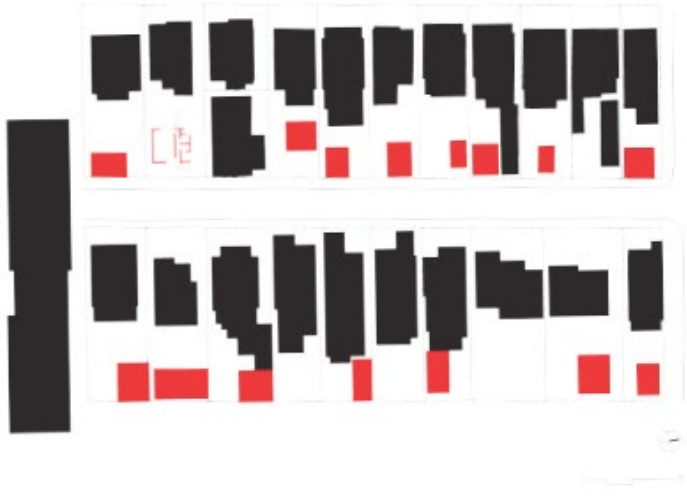
WARATAH SECONDARY HOUSE

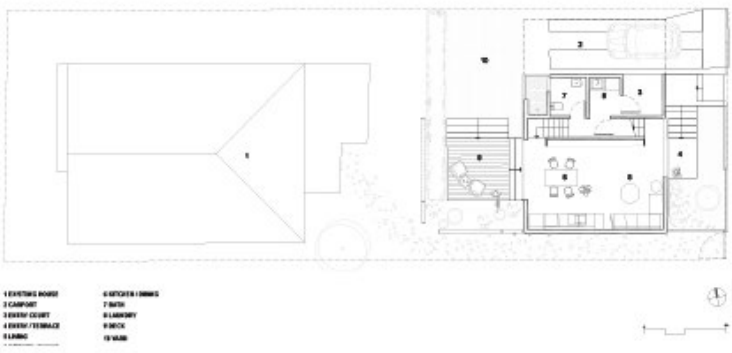
Awabakal Nation / Newcastle, New South Wales

Architects & Year:	Type:	Tenure:	Dwellings & Lot:	Scale:	Client:	Site Area:	Density:
Anthrosite, 2018	Secondary dwelling	Private rental	2 dwellings on 1 lot	1.5 storeys	Private owner	667 m²	Medium; 29.9 (dw/ha) (dwellings/hectare)

WARATAH SECONDARY HOUSE

Images: Christopher Federick Jones





WARATAH SECONDARY HOUSE

Waratah Secondary House is a 60sqm secondary dwelling embracing constraints of budget, floor area and flood controls, sitting comfortably within its urban context. Responding to the neighbourhood context, the house maintains a similar footprint to the numerous backyard sheds along the street.

Due to flood mitigation controls, the primary living level is elevated 1.2m above the natural ground level. Within the main living area, a lofty ceiling creates space for a bedroom mezzanine to be tucked above the ground floor bathroom and laundry.

The building is composed of simple, sturdy materials such as concrete block, timber framing and prefabricated structural insulated panels to enable affordability and quick construction – the building (3 months) and durability against potential flood inundation. Compact and sustainable, this development increases suburban density while offering quality residential living to those renting on smaller budgets.

HYPOTHETIC -ALLY THINKING

We invited four architects to dream up a speculative design to help solve the Northern Rivers' housing problem.

Focused on various density options, and highlighting our current lack of housing diversity, these are just thought starters and not approved projects.

Our only goal is they live rent-free in your mind.

LISMORE MEDIUM DENSITY SITE

DFJ ARCHITECTS & CLAIRE BOOTHBY

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 1: LISMORE MEDIUM DENSITY SITE

SITE PLAN 1:1000

LISMORE
FLOOD RESILIENT HOUSING STUDY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Widjabul Wia-Bal people of Bundjalung Nation, the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which this project is based, and pay our respect to elders past, present and future.

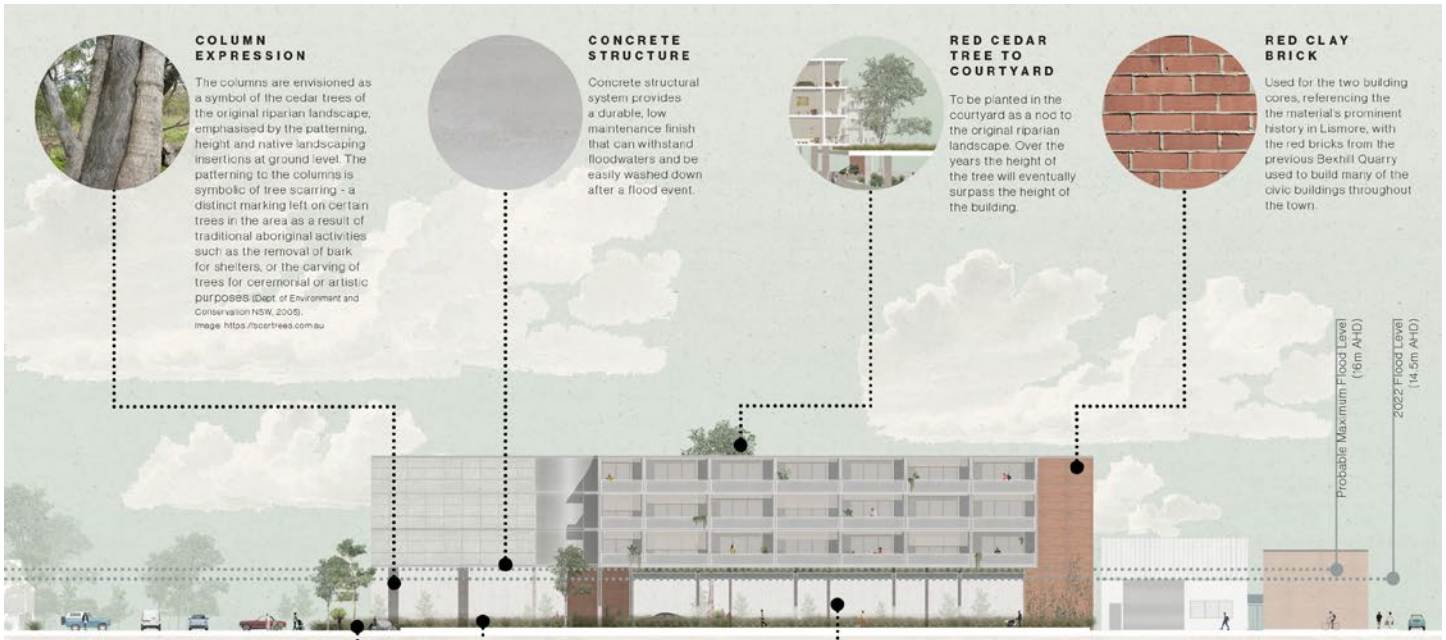
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The purpose of this project is to investigate a resilient medium density infill housing model in Lismore. A site on the corner of Molesworth and Bounty Street in Lismore CBD was chosen for context.

Although the building falls under the category of 'medium density' in typical planning scenarios, it is important to note that in the context of Lismore it can be considered as more of a high density development when compared to the existing housing typologies of the town.

ORIGINAL RIPARIAN CONDITION SECTION 1:100

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 1: LISMORE MEDIUM DENSITY SITE



SOUTH ELEVATION 1:200

0 5 10 20m

SECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE A

KEY PLAN

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 1: LISMORE MEDIUM DENSITY SITE

TYPICAL UNIT PLANS

1 BED APARTMENT 55SQM

2 BED APARTMENT 75SQM

1 BED STUDIO 40SQM

The first floor of residences are located 5.5m above the ground plane to ensure that the lowest habitable floor level sits above the Probable Maximum Flood Level (PMF) of 16m, with two additional floors above. Each floor contains seven 1-bedroom, four 2-bedroom and seven studio apartments, along with five work-from-home offices for residents.

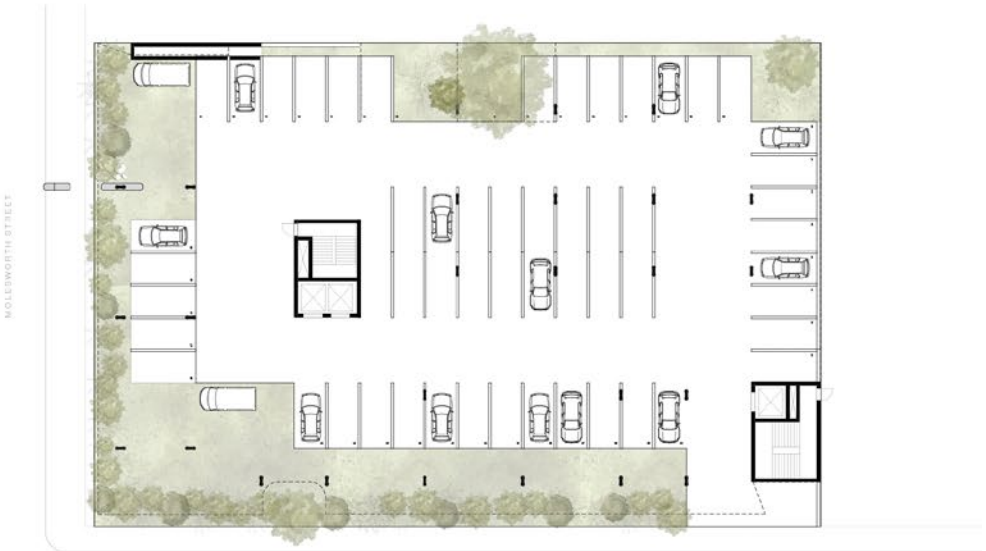
The three levels of apartments wrap around an open courtyard on the north-eastern edge of the site, which allows daylight and natural ventilation to flow into the apartments whilst providing additional greenspace for the residents. Additional voids are then cut into the corridor between the 2-bedroom and studio apartments, allowing for additional daylighting and ventilation to penetrate the interior spaces.

The interiors have been designed to balance durability, liveability and affordability, continuing with the raw stripped back material palette of the architecture with exposed concrete ceilings, exposed services and plywood joinery.

At the ground plane, the double-height volume and surrounding gardens are intended to support flexible uses of the space, with the ability to host small public markets, car boot sales or events, creating a direct streetscape with the streetscape as illustrated to the right.

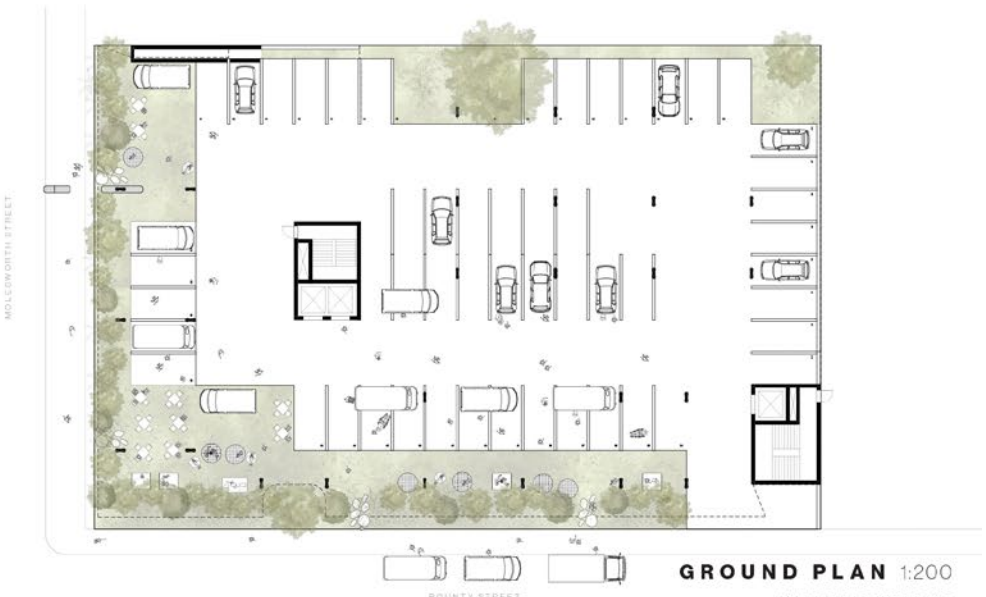
LEVEL 1 PLAN 1:200

0 5 10 20m



GROUND PLAN 1:200

NORMAL CONDITIONS



GROUND PLAN 1:200

MARKET CONDITIONS

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 1: LISMORE MEDIUM DENSITY SITE

PRECEDENT STUDY | 1111 LINCOLN ROAD CARPARK

ARCHITECT: HERZOG & DE MEURON
LOCATION: MIAMI, USA
YEAR: 2010

Image: ©Rasmus Hjortshøj

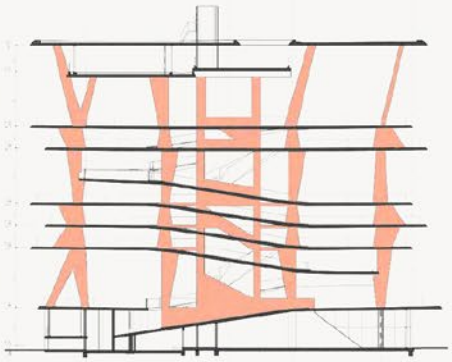


Image: ©Herzog & De Meuron (colour by author)

Structural system forms the core architectural language, made up of an expressive network of concrete slabs, floor plates, columns and ramps.

Varying ceiling heights with high points double and triple the standard height to emphasise the structure and views, and support additional programs for the space such as events, photo shoots or concerts.

PRECEDENT STUDY | INTERNATIONAL HOUSE SYDNEY

ARCHITECT: TZANNES
LOCATION: SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
YEAR: 2017

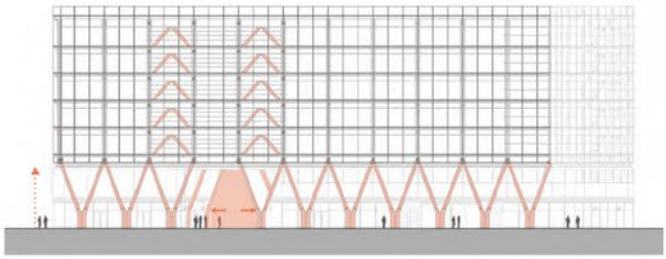


Image: ©TZANNES (colour by author)

Image: ©TZANNES

Expressive timber structure left exposed throughout the building without additional finishing layers.

V-saped timber columns across the ground plane create a floating effect for the building above, creating an expansive open public space beneath.

PRECEDENT STUDY | NIGHTINGALE EVERGREEN

ARCHITECT: CLAIRE COUSINS ARCHITECTS
LOCATION: BRUNSWICK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
YEAR: 2022

Image: Nightingale Evergreen by Claire Cousins Architects (left), & Nightingale Leftfield (right) by Kennedy Nolan. Photo by Tom Ross

Image: Nightingale Evergreen by Claire Cousins Architects. Photo by Tom Ross

Stripped back architecture celebrates the rawness of the material palette, with its exposed concrete structure complemented by an industrial green metal skin and insertions of greenery throughout.

Interiors continue the design language, with raw concrete ceilings, exposed services and a minimal palette emphasising the idea of living sustainably with what is needed, without anything superfluous.

By including only the necessities, funds could instead be allocated to things such as double glazing, high performance insulation and GreenPower to support healthy, comfortable and sustainable living.

LISMORE SHOPTOP HOUSING

VICTORIA KING

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 2: LISMORE SHOPTOP HOUSING

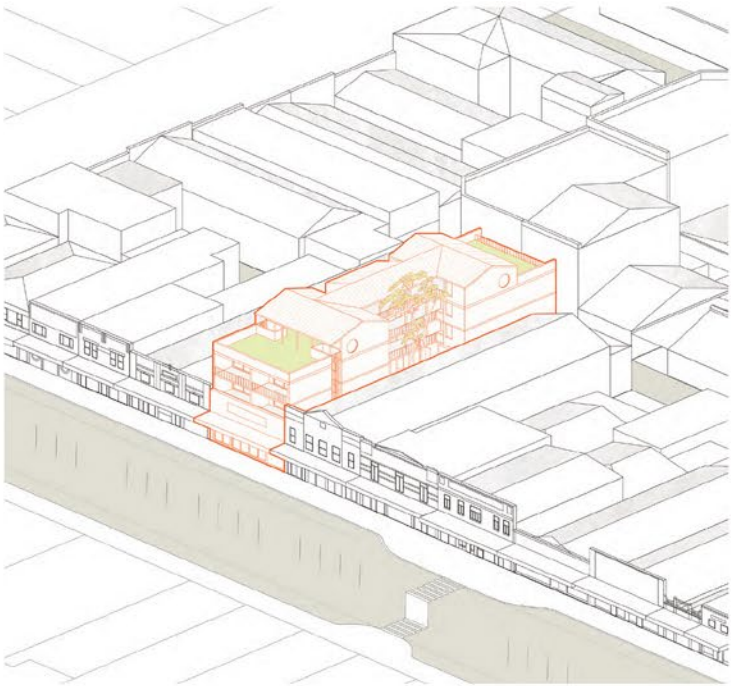
*RL refers to relative height above Australian sea level

Exploring the potential of low-rise, mixed-use buildings in the city centre

This speculative project looks at shop-top housing as a unique building typology that is embedded within the built fabric of Lismore and many other town centres in the Northern Rivers Region. It imagines a future in which buildings in the city centre are responsibly retained and adapted to provide greater flood resilience for shop owners and new housing options for residents.

Each concept design tests the elevation of dwellings and living spaces to above the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) level.

SHOP-HOUSE EVOLUTION



BIRDS EYE VIEW OF POTENTIAL SHOP-HOUSE 2.0

SITE PLAN - KEEN STREET, LISMORE CITY CENTRE 1:1000

0 10 20 50m

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 2: LISMORE SHOPTOP HOUSING

Shop-House 2.0 = Communal living above the main street

This concept re-imagines the traditional shop-house on a typical lot in Lismore's city centre. It provides eight new dwellings suitable for smaller households. Strategies for flood resilience have been integrated into the design at each level.

1. **Ground floor commercial or community space** Design ground floor spaces to have as little obstruction as possible. Internal mezzanines may be incorporated. Ensure wet-proofing of surfaces and easily dismantled fitouts.
2. **Private Residential Entry** Ramps elevate the ground floor by 1m to help minimise risk of flash flooding and protect elevator
3. **Cental Courtyard Garden** Improve porosity of the urban ground plane by storing water in the earth.
4. **Community Kitchen** Flexible zone for use by residents or community, accessible from the lane. Ensure joinery is easily dismantled.
5. **Elevated Dwellings** All dwellings have been raised to the Probable Maximum Flood Level, in Lismore city centre this level is 16m (see section below).
6. **Emergency Storage** Integrated storage rooms for ground floor retailers. Minimum dimensions of 4x4m. Allow wide doors and openings for easy manoeuvring of objects.
7. **Vertical Connecting Voids** For movement of goods to upper levels and to bring light and ventilation into the building core.
8. **Hoist Mechanisms** Install beside voids for easy movement of goods to upper levels.
9. **Rooftop Terrace Refuge** Sheltered rooftop space for residents to gather during a flood event. Install warning systems and services in this space.
10. **Rooftop Garden** For use by residents or community.

0 2 4 10m

STREET SECTION 1:200

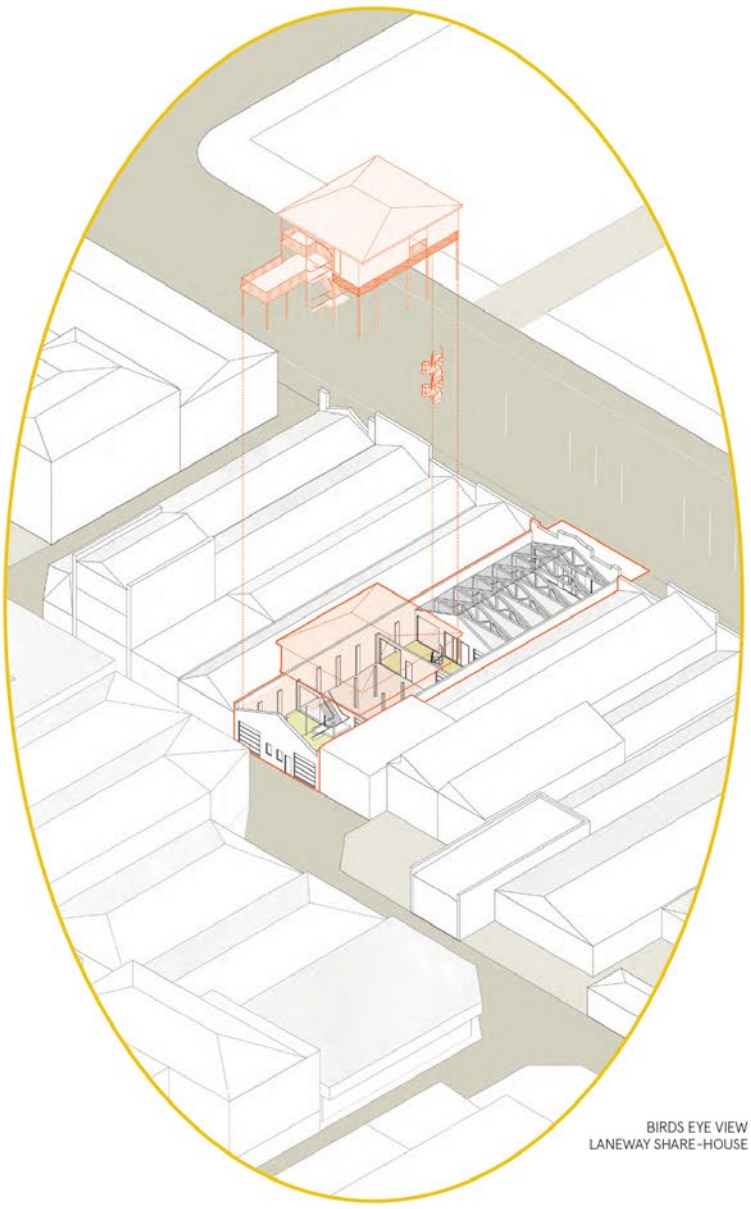
*RL refers to relative height above Australian sea level

0 2 4 10m

laneway living?

Exploring the adaptive re-use of existing warehouse buildings

This concept takes its cues from the characterful warehouses that frame the laneways of Lismore's city centre. An existing warehouse structure is retained on the ground floor, and a new, elevated dwelling is inserted at the rear of the lot. Each structure addresses a different street frontage, allowing for the two uses of shop and house to co-exist independently or together if required.



BIRDS EYE VIEW
LANEWAY SHARE-HOUSE

1. **Ground Floor Retail Space**
The original shop-front space is retained along the main street. This retail space is reduced in length, with private and semi-private workspaces inserted to the rear.
2. **Shared Courtyard Gardens**
The original roof structure is peeled back in parts to bring light and air into the ground floor shop/warehouse.
3. **Flexible Warehouse Workspace**
Semi-private zone beneath the new dwelling house, could be used by the retail tenant or rented separately.
4. **Loading Zone**
Lane access and parking for ground floor shop, and workspaces.
5. **Private Dwelling Entrance**
Ground floor carpark and private courtyard entry for dwelling.
6. **Communal Terrace**
Outdoor elevated mezzanine for use by residents, accessed by central stair.
7. **Elevated Dwelling**
Laneway house is elevated to 6m above the ground floor. The dwelling is imagined as a share-house for collective living, with three private bedrooms, two bathrooms and communal living areas.
8. **Rooftop Storage Zone**
Rooftop platform for emergency storage. Accessible by central courtyard stair and flyover bridge.

CASE STUDY:
NIGHTINGALE BALLARAT

Breathe Architects, 2022
Nightingale Ballarat is a medium density infill development located on a former warehouse site in Ballarat's city centre. The building integrates into the surrounding context through the use of locally sourced, recycled bricks. Central courtyards and rooftop terraces bring greenery, light and fresh air into the building.

Photography by Derek Swalwell

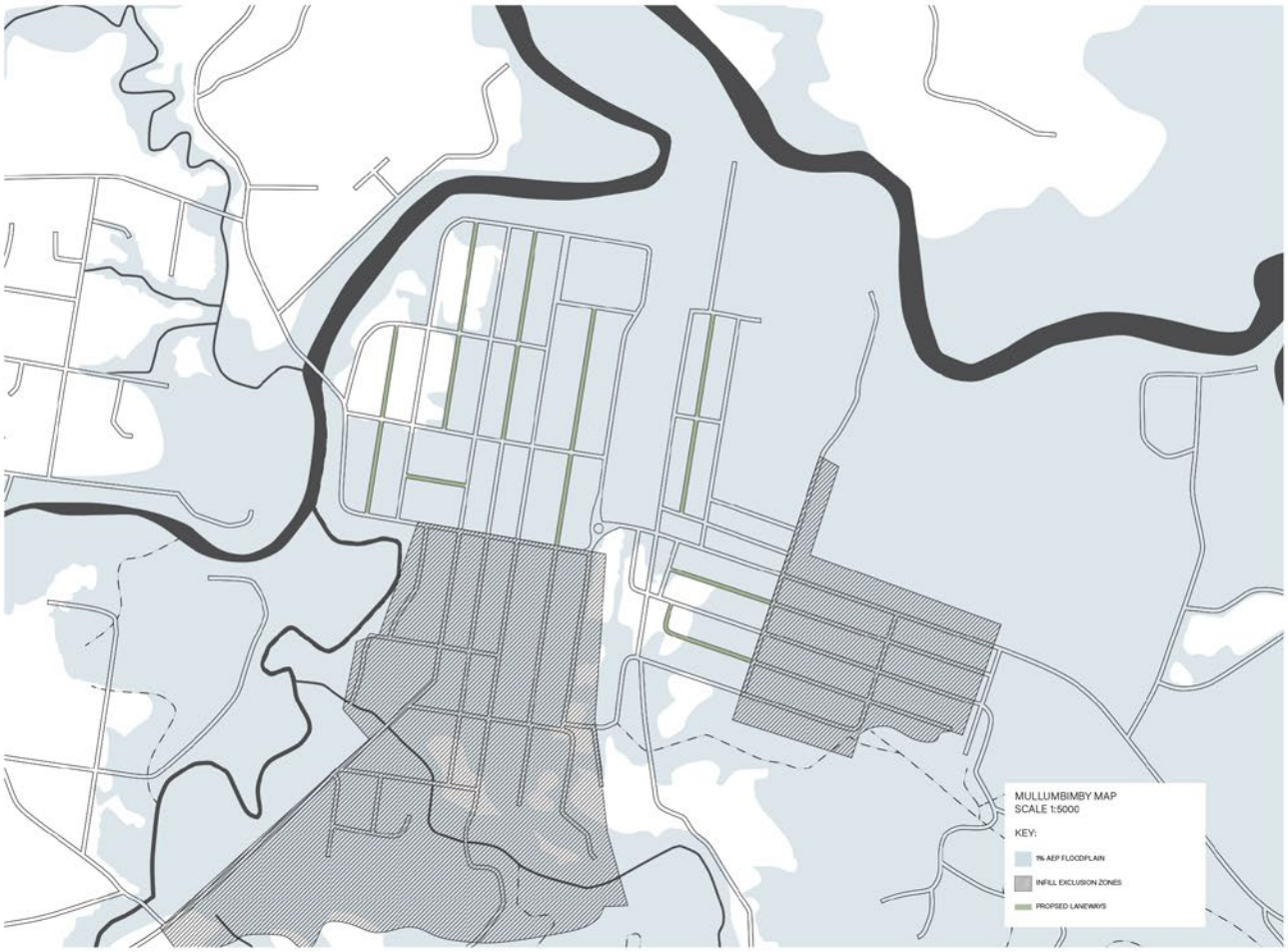
STREET ELEVATION - LANEWAY SHARE HOUSE 1:100

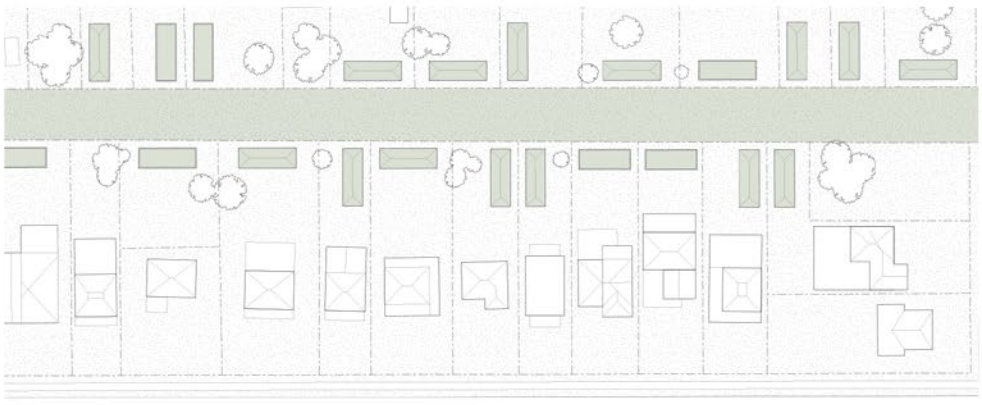
*RL refers to relative height above Australian sea level

MULLUMBIMBY GRANNY FLATS

INFORMAL ARCHITECTS & GEORGIA LLOYD

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 3: MULLUMBIMBY GRANNY FLATS





The granny flat development proposes a low-density housing strategy for Mullumbimby on existing lots, utilising the laneway precincts around the Town's Centre. This development harnesses opportunity to transform these laneways into pedestrian thoroughfare and cycleways, as well as a regenerative corridors for bio-diversity.

The granny flats sit along the rear boundary of existing housing lots and can be used as an extension of the house, a guest house, a rentable investment for homeowners to both tenants and storefronts/studios, or an additional studio and one bedroom option to provide affordable housing to the region. These developments are orientated towards the laneway, maintaining privacy for the existing house, whilst devices like window seats and servery windows activate the lane, encouraging community interaction and allowing the neighbourhood to thrive.

Entry into the centrally-accessed granny flats is at the centre of the building mass through a covered walkway. This allows the building to be divided to be used as a guest house and a entertaining space/studio or one consolidated home for a family. The side entry granny-flat utilises the extra space of the walkway to provide a larger connected open space to the development but remains as one 'building.' In this instance the bedroom can be closed off and living and bathroom spaces can operate as a studio/storefront during the day and as a home outside of operating hours.

It is intended that the visual character of each of these developments is personalised to the houses already existing on the site, to keep within the existing character of the homes within the Township of Mullumbimby.

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

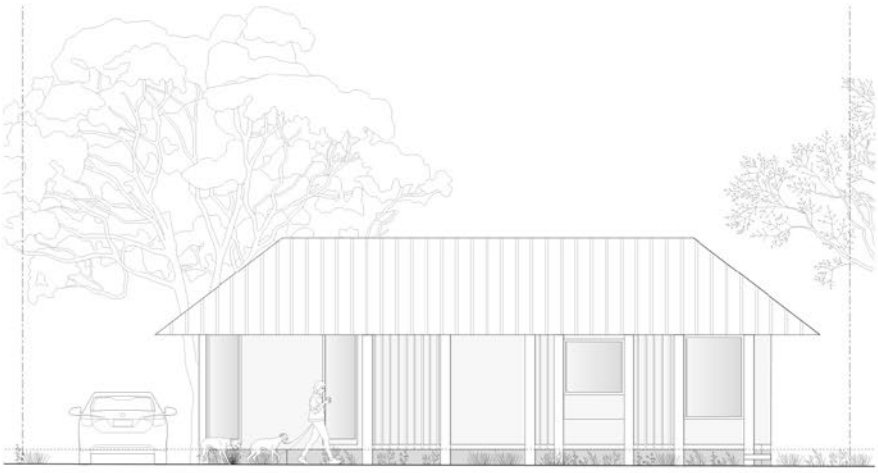
IN —

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 3: MULLUMBIMBY GRANNY FLATS

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)
renders Benji Brennan

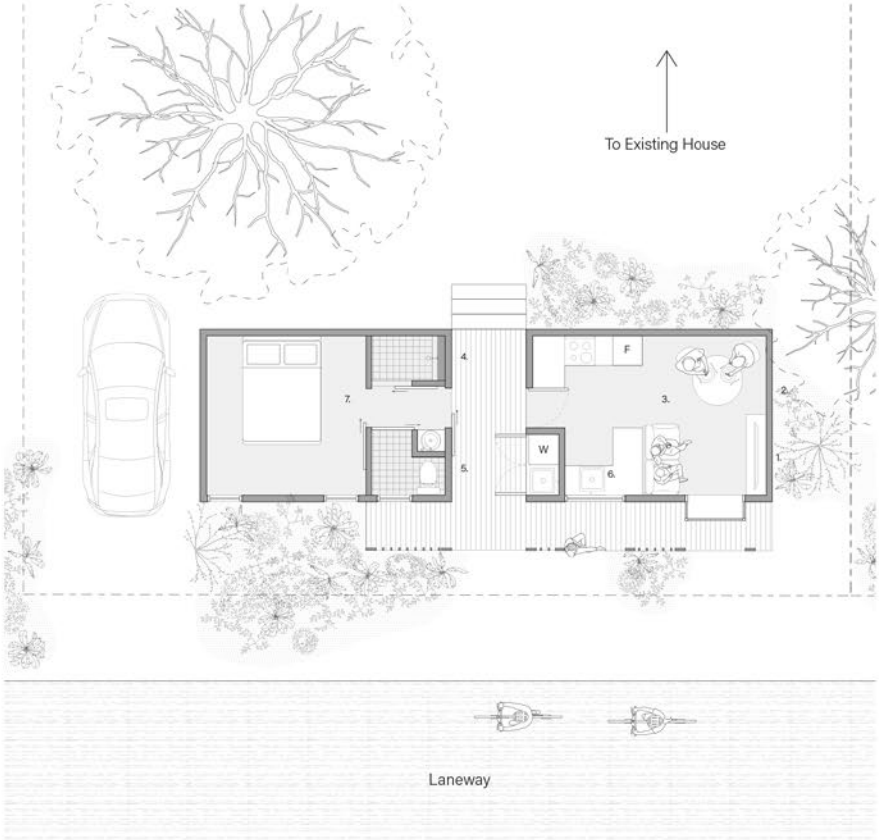
IN —

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 3: MULLUMBIMBY GRANNY FLATS



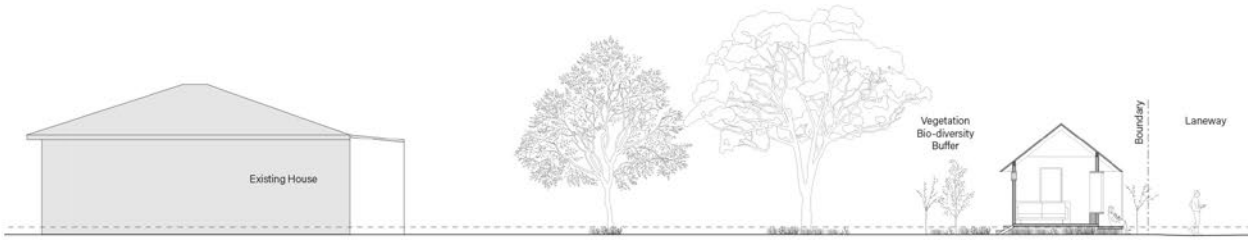
Key:
Boundary Lines
1% AEP Level

CENTRALLY-ACCESSED GRANNY FLAT ELEVATIONS
SCALE 1:50



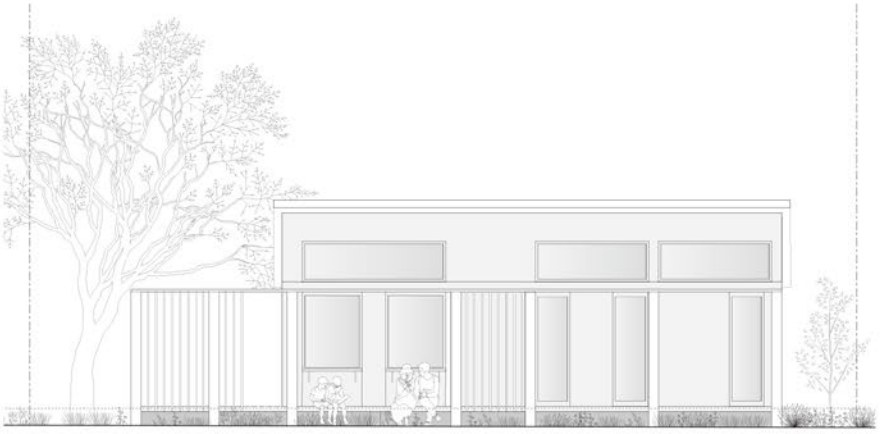
Key:
1. Living Room
2. Dining
3. Kitchen
4. Shower
5. WC
6. Laundry Cupboard
7. Bedroom
8. Storage

CENTRALLY-ACCESSED GRANNY FLAT PLANS
SCALE 1:50



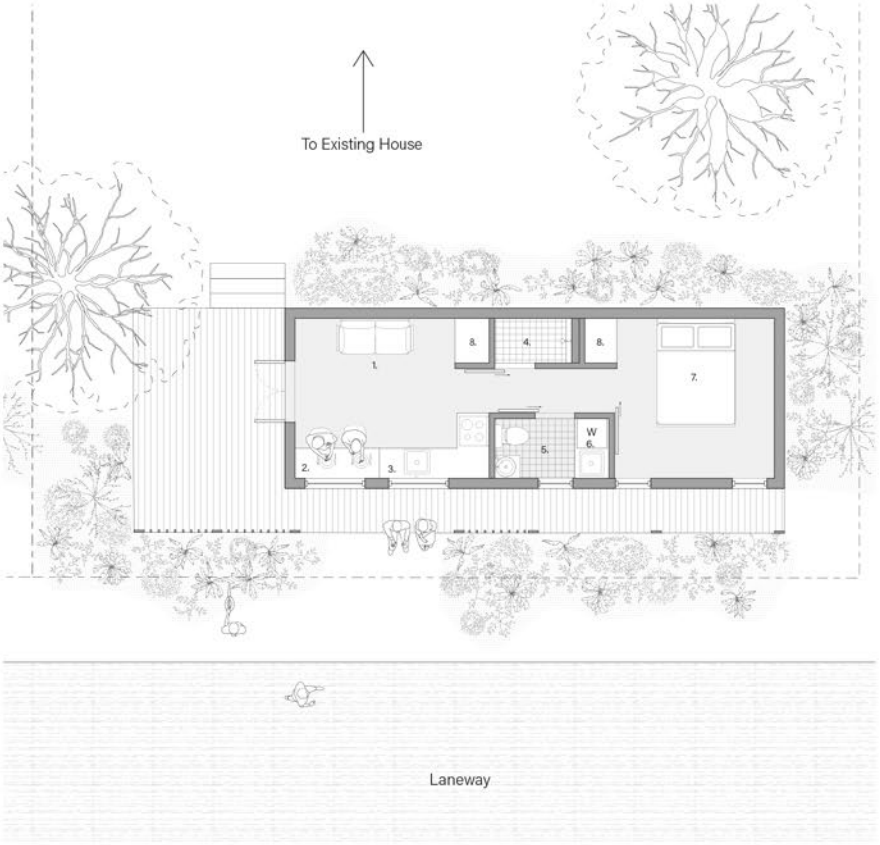
INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 3: MULLUMBIMBY GRANNY FLATS



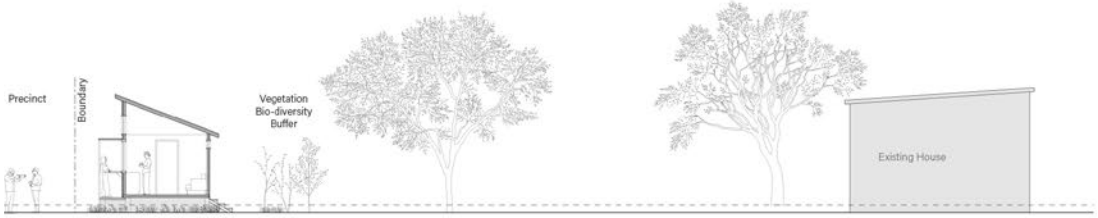
Key:
- Boundary Lines
- 1% AEP Level

SIDE ENTRY GRANNY FLAT ELEVATIONS
SCALE 1:50



Key:
1. Living Room
2. Dining
3. Kitchen
4. Shower
5. WC
6. Laundry Cupboard
7. Bedroom
8. Storage

SIDE ENTRY GRANNY FLAT PLANS
SCALE 1:50



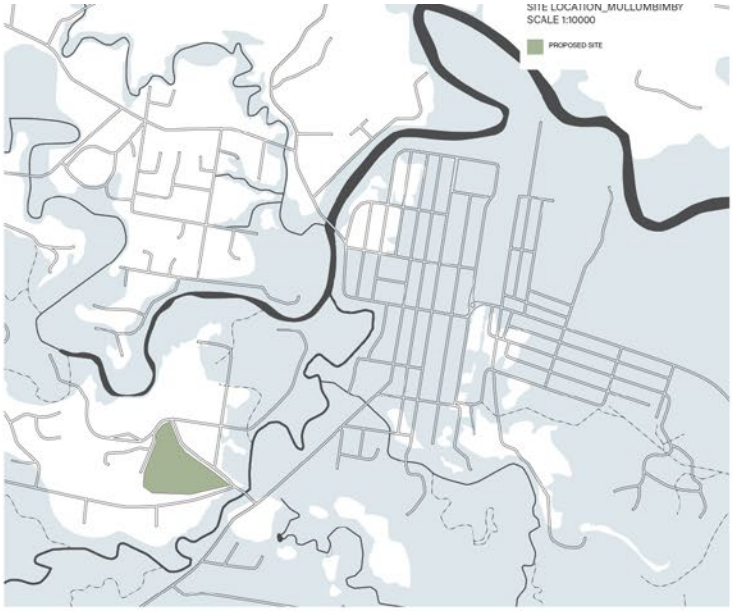
GRANNY FLAT LANEWAY SECTION
SCALE 1:50

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

FORMER MULLUMBIMBY HOSPITAL SITE

INFORMAL ARCHITECTS & GEORGIA LLOYD

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 4: FORMER MULLUMBIMBY HOSPITAL SITE



This low-rise, mid-density infill housing speculation proposes the development of 2 storey, mixed apartment type dwellings on the old Mullumbimby hospital site. This location maintains proximity to the Town Centre, elevated out of flood water zone. The scale and form of the development is sensitive to the surrounding neighbourhood, whilst allowing for densification for increased, diverse housing supply for the area. The dwellings are a mix of studio, 1bed, 2bed and 3bed configurations which are flexible in type to allow for larger dwellings for larger or multi-generational families, that can be configured to meet the needs of the dwellers over a life time.

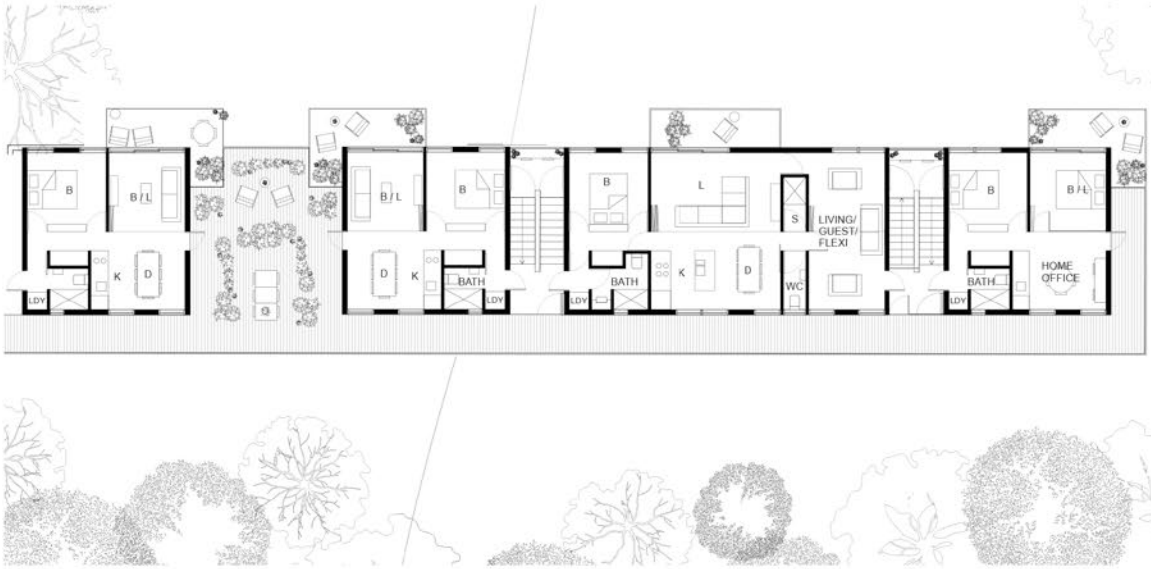
The buildings are located towards the eastern corner of the site where the topography is flatter, disturbance to existing vegetation is minimised with all existing trees maintained and highlighted contaminated land is avoided. It is proposed that a regeneration planting of native species will help support bio-diverse ecologies to thrive. The buildings are orientated to the North and the East of the site to maximise daylight into the dwellings.

The buildings are connected by a network of open-air verandahs which all link back to on-site car spaces. Making use of the topography allows for on-grade accessible access to all apartments in the precinct, to both the ground floor and the first floor, without the need for elevators. The two-storeys are also further connected using covered, open-air stair voids which use windows to funnel daylight into common spaces and create breaks in the building bulk mass. It is intended that the circulation and verandahs become communal space which the residents can use for garden planters, spaces to sit and have a cup of tea or read a book, and meeting places to foster the development of community within the precinct.

SITE PLAN
SCALE 1:200

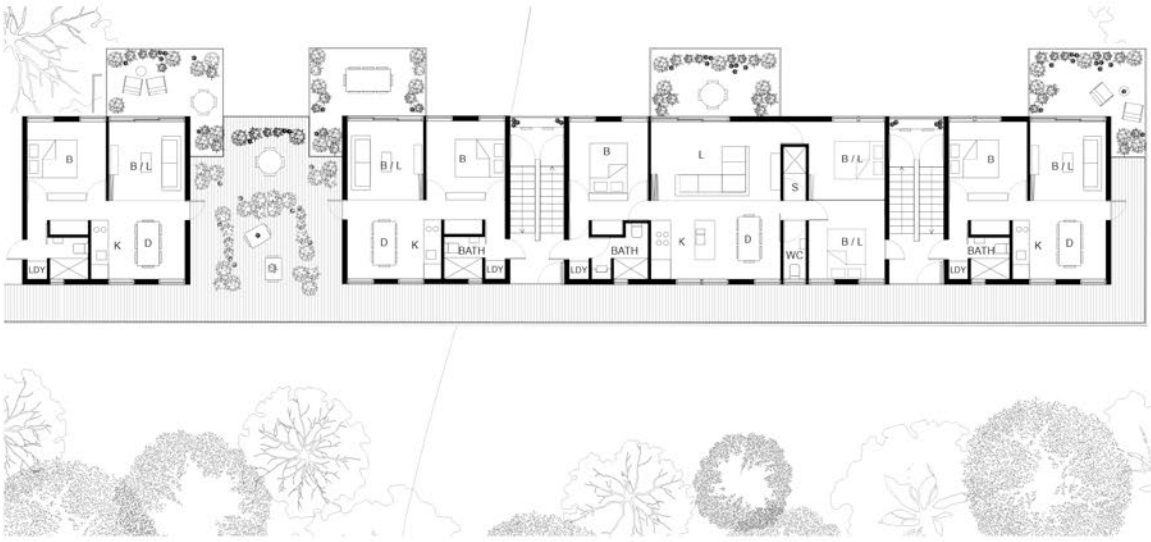
INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 4: FORMER MULLUMBIMBY HOSPITAL SITE



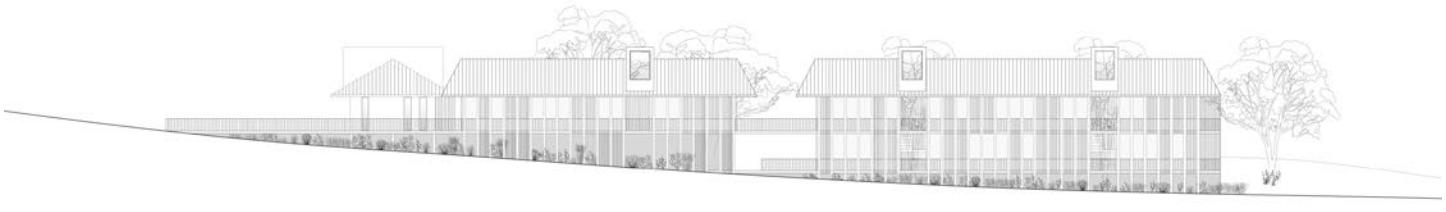
KEY
B - BEDROOM
B / L - FLEXIBLE BEDROOM OR LIVING
D - DINING
K - KITCHEN
L - LIVING
LDY - LAUNDRY
S - SHOWER
WC - WATER CLOSET

FIRST FLOOR PLAN SAMPLE
SCALE 1:100



KEY
B - BEDROOM
B / L - FLEXIBLE BEDROOM OR LIVING
D - DINING
K - KITCHEN
L - LIVING
LDY - LAUNDRY
S - SHOWER
WC - WATER CLOSET

GROUND FLOOR PLAN SAMPLE
SCALE 1:100



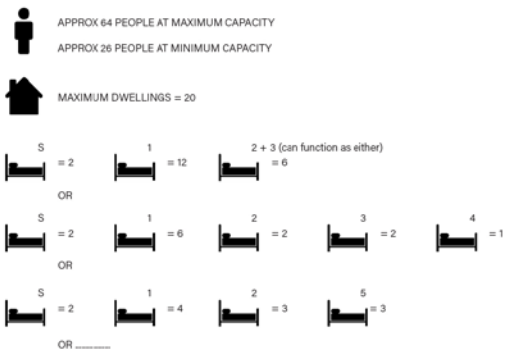
ELEVATIONS
SCALE 1:200

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 4: FORMER MULLUMBIMBY HOSPITAL SITE

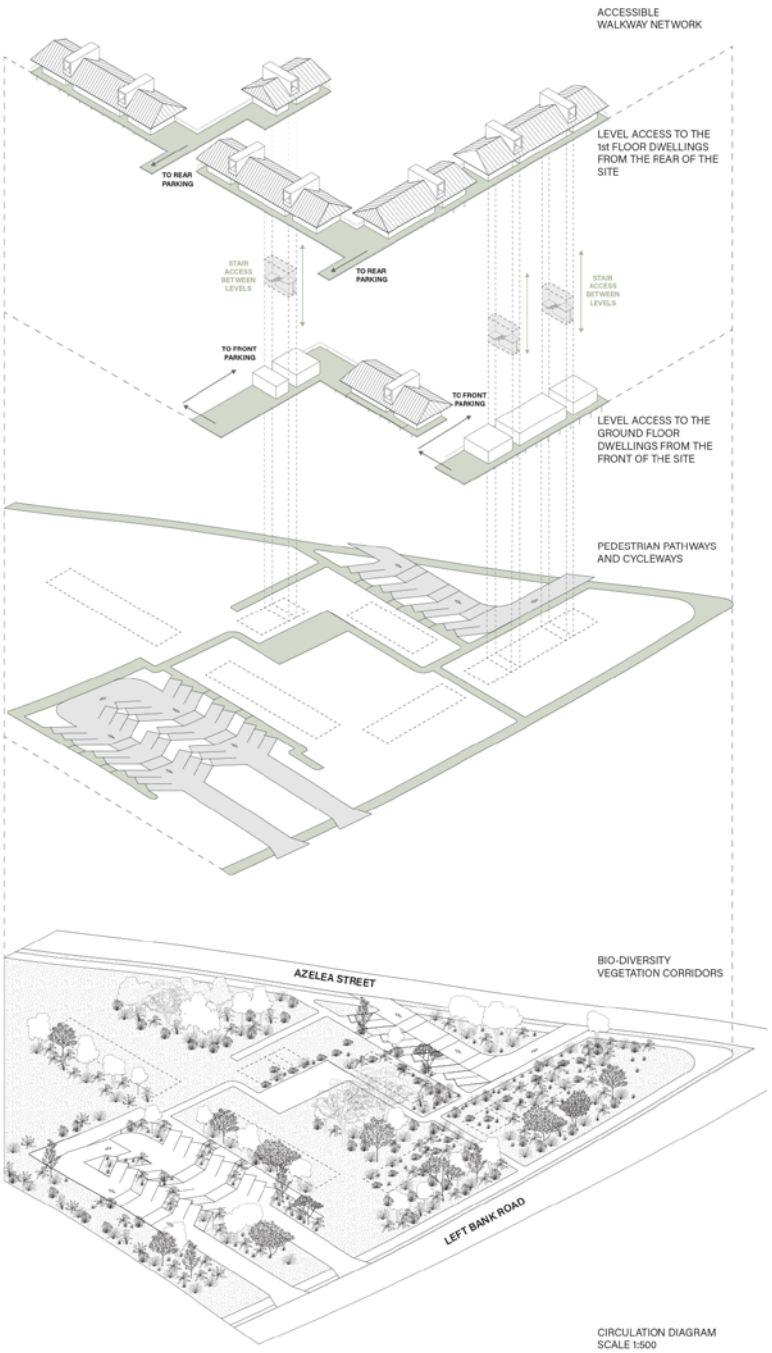
FLEXIBLE APARTMENT MIX

DENSITY

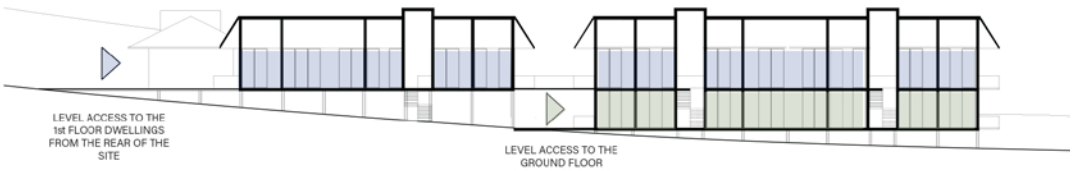


Apartments are configured so they can conjoin across circulation, which can be closed off to be made private, enabling larger apartments to form for 4 and even 5 bedroom, if and when required and likewise can retract in size, to avoid under-occupancy of the individual dwelling and across the development as a whole.

Flexible apartments allow a household to remain in place across a life cycle - homes can grow when households grow, make use of office space for live/work, allow for renting capacity if times get tight, allow grown children to remain at home but with autonomy, allow for multi-generational living, allow for shared houses, assisted living, and accessible dwelling for all.



CIRCULATION DIAGRAM
SCALE 1:500



SECTION DIAGRAM
SCALE 1:200

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)

SPECULATIVE DESIGN 4: FORMER MULLUMBIMBY HOSPITAL SITE

INformal Architects
Brooke Jackson (UTS)
+ Georgia Lloyd (UTS)
Renders by Benji Brennan

IN —

THE RUMPUS ROOM

The one space designated to having fun, ours is packed to the rafters with music, books, films, TV, and podcasts we've enjoyed.

READING LIST

Home, housing and shelter — dive into some of these stories suggested by booksellers in our region.

Homeland Elegies
Ayad Akhtar

Cannery Row
John Steinbeck

Ceremony
Leslie Marmon Silko

The Tree of Man
Patrick White

The Plains
Gerald Murname

12 Edmonstone Street
David Malouf

Carpentaria
Alexis White

White Teeth
Zadie Smith

The Spare Room
Helen Garner

The Labyrinth
Amanda Lohrey

Tirra Lirra by the River
Jessica Anderson

Mullumbimby
Melissa Lucashenko

Lola in the Mirror
Trent Dalton

The House of Sorrowing Stars
Beth Cartwright

The House in the Cerulean Sea
TJ Klune

Keeper of Lost Things
Ruth Hogan

YA FICTION

A Glasshouse of Stars
Shirley Marr

CHILDRENS BOOKS

The Shelter
Celine Claire & Qin Leng

Dorothy
Jordan Collins & Myo Yim

Wonder Earth
Zanni Louise

Belonging
Jeannie Baker

PODCASTS

Hidden Cities
with Miriam McGarry

Listen here.

Hidden Cities is a podcast about the invisible infrastructure that shapes our urban spaces and experiences. Series One focuses on housing affordability. In each episode, an expert explains how a policy or economic approach impacts housing affordability, to make these often complex policies understandable.

Housing Choice
with Kate Raynor and Fiona Andrews

Listen here.

The 'Australian dream' is owning a house in the suburbs, but as cities grow and densify, apartment building has boomed. Simultaneously, we're experiencing a lack of housing and lack of affordable housing. How do our housing choices impact us at an individual, local and national scale? What does research tell us about the attributes of 'good housing'? How can architects and urban planners actively work with key stakeholders to deliver dwellings and precincts to enhance social outcomes and wellbeing?

Place Agency
with Angelique Edmonds

Listen here.

Place Agency presents a series of conversations with 6 prominent Architectural practitioners and academics in Australia and the UK, considering the intersection between design, social value and the power of social connection. Each episode presents a pair of conversation partners examining design's capacity to elevate one of three themes; Social, Trust and Diversity.

It has long been understood that the way we design and organise our living environments can help or hinder social connection. We know that at worst failed approaches can build in isolation- with long term damage to quality of life including physical and mental health outcomes. How we build refers not only to the built structure as an outcome, but also the process through which we arrive at that structure. The series highlights the importance of our agency in this through design's capacity to be both a noun (an outcome) and a verb (a process).

Hearing Architecture
The Australian Institute of Architects

Listen here.

Hearing Architecture is a podcast featuring professionals from within the built environment, sharing what they do, and why it's important. In this podcast, we'll be interviewing architects, builders, and designers from around Australia who will tell us about the work they are doing to improve our cities and neighbourhoods.

WATCH

Home, housing and shelter — here are a few films recommended by local film makers.

The Castle
A comedy about a working-class Australian family that fights to keep their home when faced with an imminent government takeover.

The Pursuit of Happyness
A heartwarming film tells the true story of a struggling single father and his son's journey to find stable housing while pursuing a career.

Parasite
A South Korean dark comedy-thriller that explores social class divisions through the lens of two families from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Nomadland
A poignant film directed by Chloé Zhao, portraying a modern-day nomad, brilliantly played by Frances McDormand, as she navigates the American West, exploring themes of resilience, solitude, and community.

Beasts of the Southern Wild
A poetic and visually stunning film directed by Benh Zeitlin. It follows a resilient young girl, Hushpuppy, as she faces natural disasters and discovers her place in a magical, endangered community known as "the Bathtub."

The Florida Project
This drama follows the lives of a group of children living in a budget motel near Disney World, highlighting the struggles of low-income housing.

Room
Adapted from the novel, this film portrays a mother and her son who are held captive in a small room for years and their adjustment to the outside world.

Rabbit Proof Fence
A powerful Australian film directed by Phillip Noyce. Based on a true story, it follows three Indigenous girls who escape a government-run settlement to journey home, defying cultural oppression and discrimination.

Minari
A heartwarming film directed by Lee Isaac Chung, depicting a Korean-American family's pursuit of the American Dream in rural Arkansas. It explores themes of family, identity, and resilience.

THANKS

THANKS

Our collaborators and supporters aren't just another brick in the wall. We couldn't have made this exhibition without them.

Rick Bannister
Claire Boothby
Benjamin Brennan
Dan Etheridge
Suzie Fawcett
Dominic Finlay-Jones
Nicole Gurran
Brooke Jackson
Ed Horne
Victoria King
Georgia Lloyd
Megan Louis
Elizabeth Mossop
Zerina Millard
Rick Shearman

ARCHITECTS

Anna O'Gorman Architecture
Anthrosite Architects
David Boyle Architect
DFJ Architects
Hill Thalis Architecture and Urban Projects
Hogg and Lamb
INformal Architects
NMBW Architecture Studio
Partners Hill
Six Degrees Architects
Spacecraft Architects
With Architecture Studio

Founding Partners

NSW GOVERNMENT

Southern Cross University

UTS

Living Lab Northern Rivers acknowledges the Ngandowal, Minyungbal, Arakwal, Minjungbal, Nyangbul, Widjabul Wia-bal and Githabul people of the Bundjalung Nation, as the traditional owners of the land within our boundaries, and recognises their continuous connection to culture, community and Country.

LIVING
LAB
NORTHERN
RIVERS