BENOWA GARDENS

RFI Response

Site Address: 203 Ashmore Road,
Benowa, QLD 4217

Application No: MCU/2025/79

neylan ARCHITECTURE

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to Council's request for further information regarding development bulk, height, form, and scale. It addresses item (k) of the information request and explains how the revised design responds positively to the local character, urban context, and planning intent of the Neighbourhood Centre zone.

The revised scheme introduces a number of key design amendments to address Council's concerns, including reductions in building height, improved tower separation and articulation, physical breaks through the podium, and stronger connections to the surrounding pedestrian network. Collectively, these refinements ensure the proposal contributes positively to the emerging built form character of the precinct and delivers a high-quality, context-responsive outcome.

2.0 Site Context Analysis

2.1 Location and setting

① BENOWA HIGH SCHOOL

② BENOWA PRIMARY SCHOOL

③ PINDARA PRIVATE HOSPITAL + SUITES

④ GOLD COAST TURF CLUB

⑤ RESIDENTIAL RD2 ZONE HOUSING

⑥ RETAIL PRECINCT

EAST-WEST CONNECTOR (ASHMORE ROAD)

BENOWA ROAD

The site occupies a prominent corner position at the intersection of Ashmore Road and Benowa Road, within the Neighbourhood Centre Zone. It sits adjacent to a mix of uses including the Gold Coast Private Hospital, Benowa Gardens Shopping Centre, local schools, and medium-density residential areas.

The surrounding built form is varied:

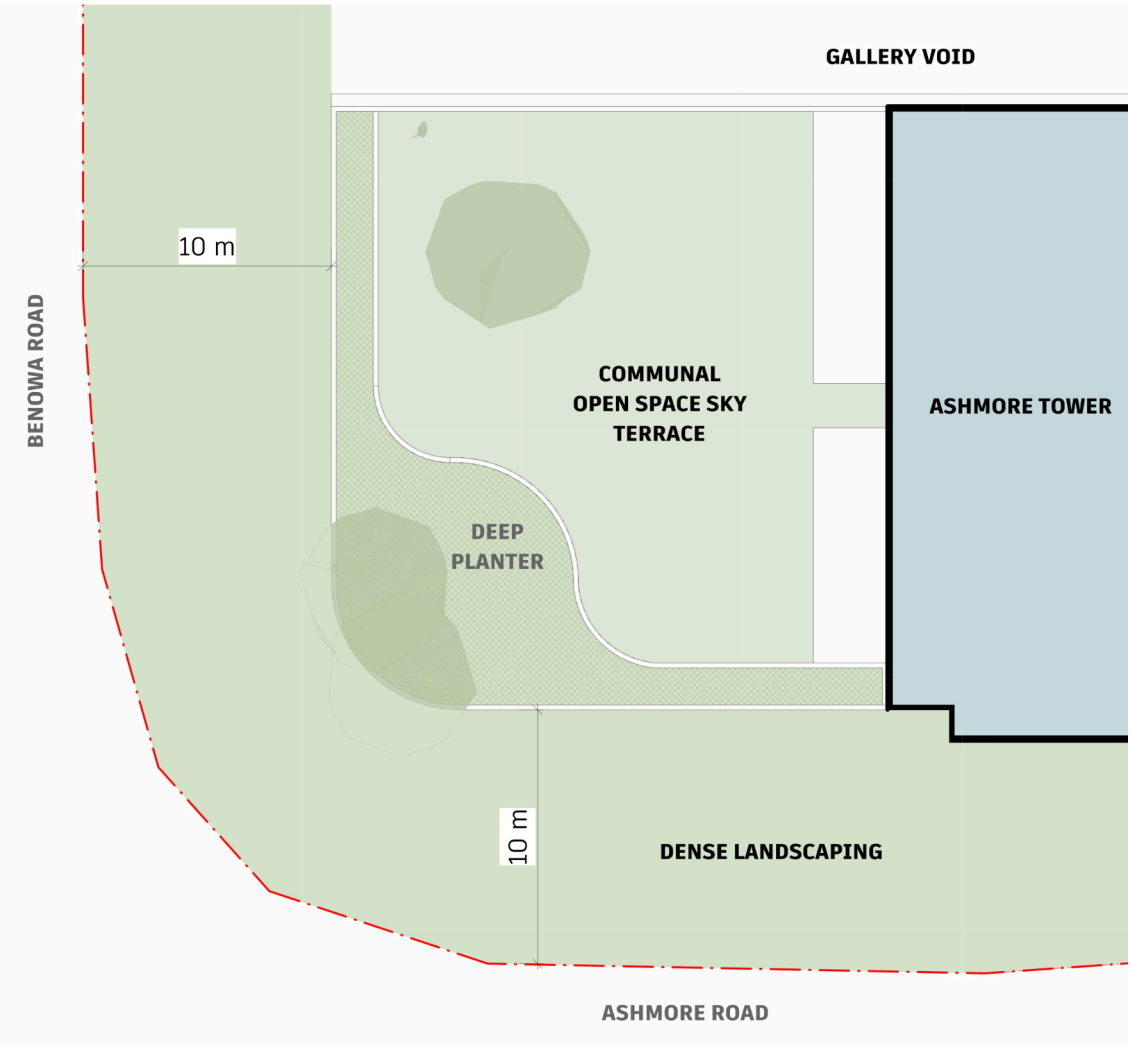
- Predominantly low- to mid-rise commercial and institutional buildings (2–6 storeys);
- Transitioning built form character, with several approvals in the broader area supporting increased height and mixed-use intensity near major intersections;
- Strong landscape setting, with established street trees and landscaping defining the local character;
- Pedestrian activity generated by the nearby hospital, schools, and retail uses, particularly along Carrara Street & Benowa Road.

The site's corner location and proximity to key community destinations present an opportunity for a landmark mixed-use development that strengthens local activity and identity, while maintaining sensitivity to the surrounding suburban scale.

3.0 Response to Local Character and Context

3.1 Podum Response

a) Reduced height at Ashmore Rd / Benowa Rd intersection

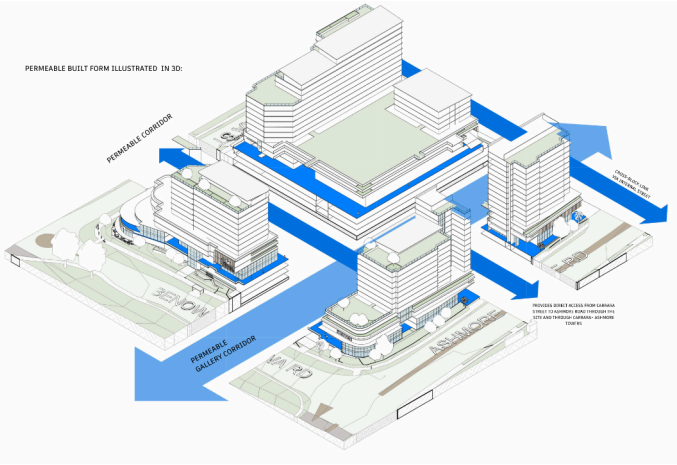


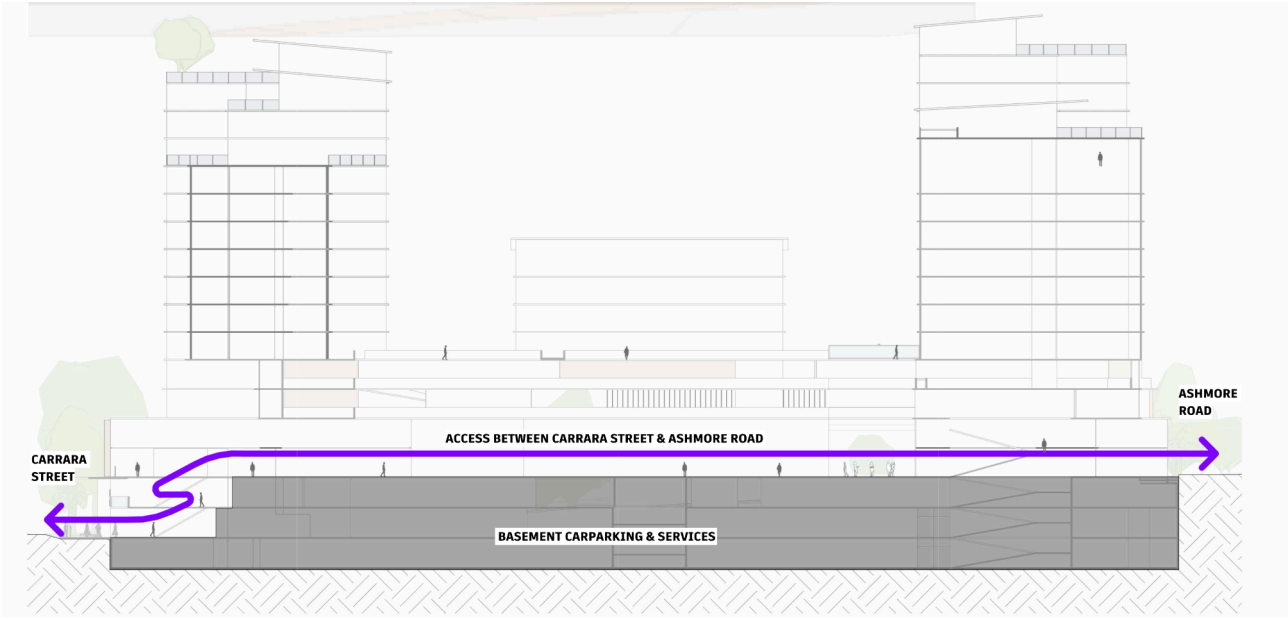
While the podium height has been maintained at four storeys, this is considered appropriate given the site's prominent location on a major arterial intersection and the surrounding urban conditions. Ashmore Road is a wide, four-lane vehicle corridor with substantial traffic volumes and a generally larger built scale, capable of comfortably accommodating a podium of this height. To address Council's concerns regarding visual bulk and dominance, several design measures have been introduced:

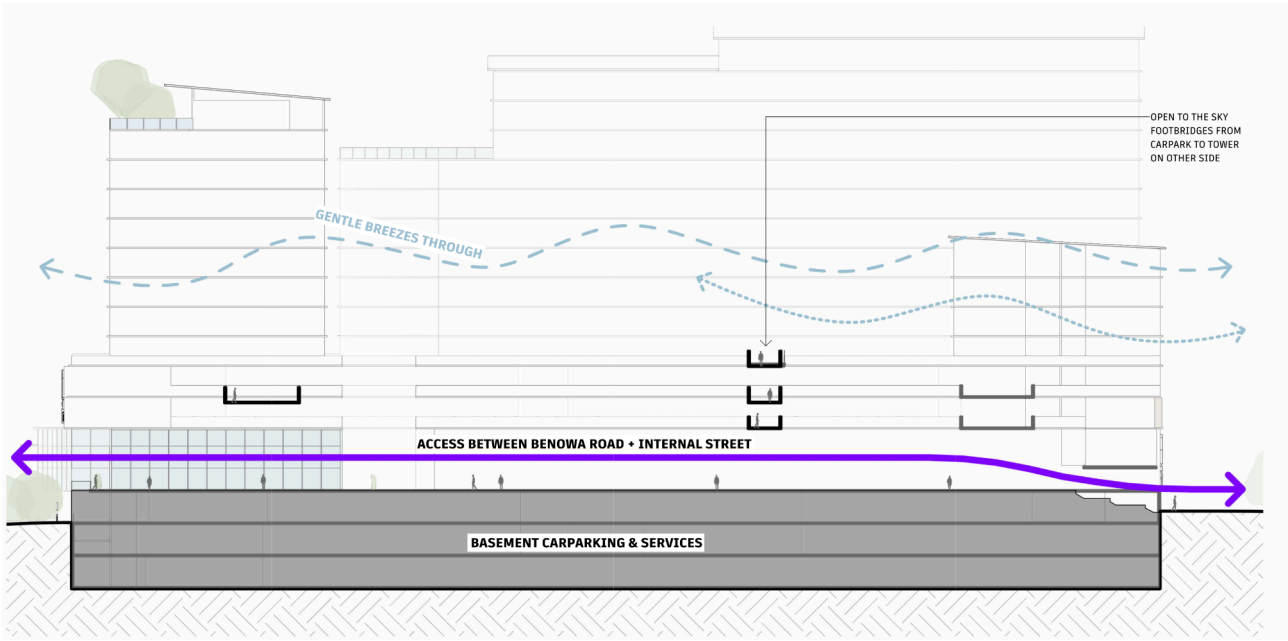
- A sky terrace has been incorporated at the podium corner, providing visual relief and integrating landscaping at the upper level to soften the building's appearance.
- The terrace will include deep planters capable of supporting substantial trees and vegetation, which will help break down the scale and add greenery to the façade.
- The built form is set back from the boundary in this location due to the underlying stormwater easement. This area will be landscaped with dense and substantial planting, further reducing perceived bulk and creating a softer, greener edge to the intersection.

Together, these refinements ensure that the podium maintains a strong urban presence appropriate to its location, while addressing visual impact through landscaping, articulation, and modulation rather than a reduction in height.

b) Physical breaks through the podium to the sky + cross-block links

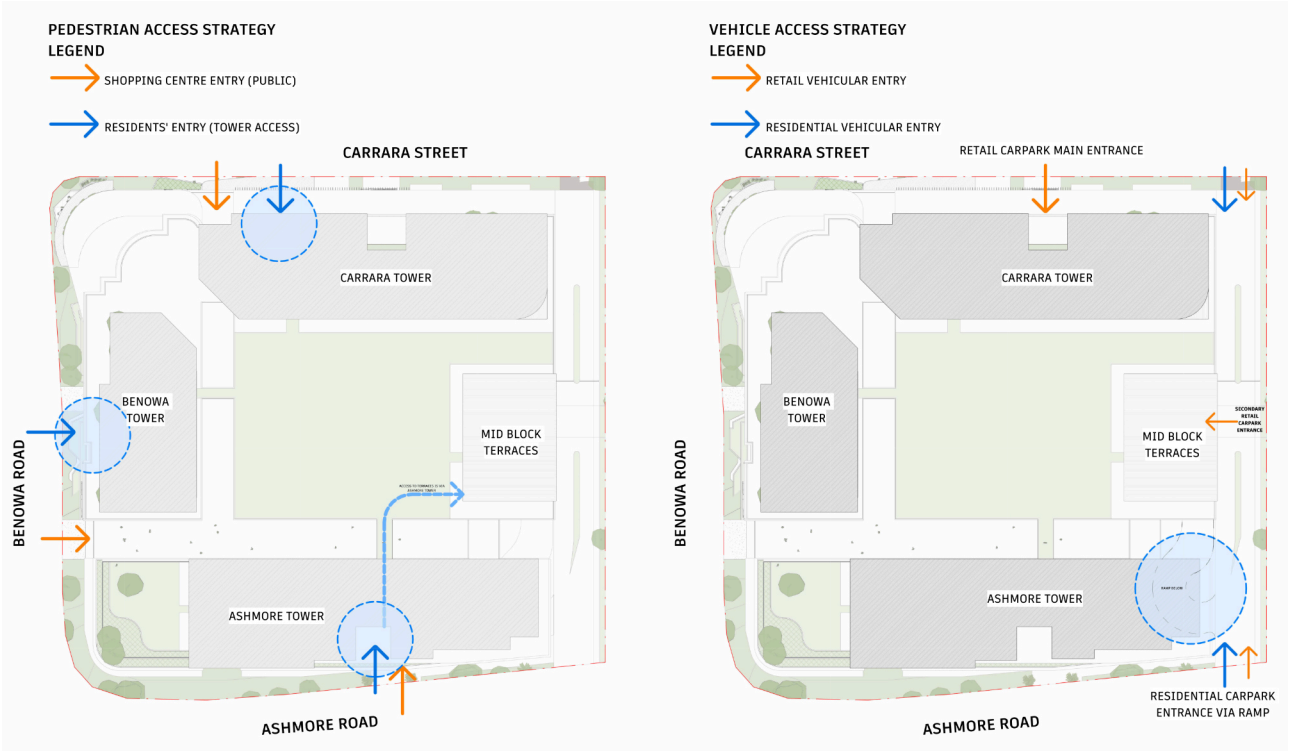






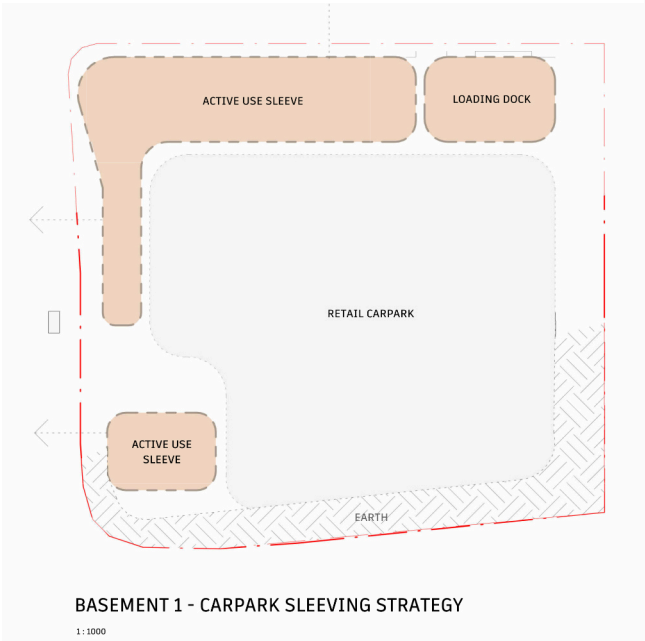
The revised podium incorporates open-to-sky voids, internal pedestrian links, and a through-site connection aligned with key desire lines from the hospital, schools, and bus stops. These interventions break down the podium massing, improve permeability, and reflect the open and landscaped character typical of the surrounding precinct.

c) Entry forecourts, seating and landscaping pockets



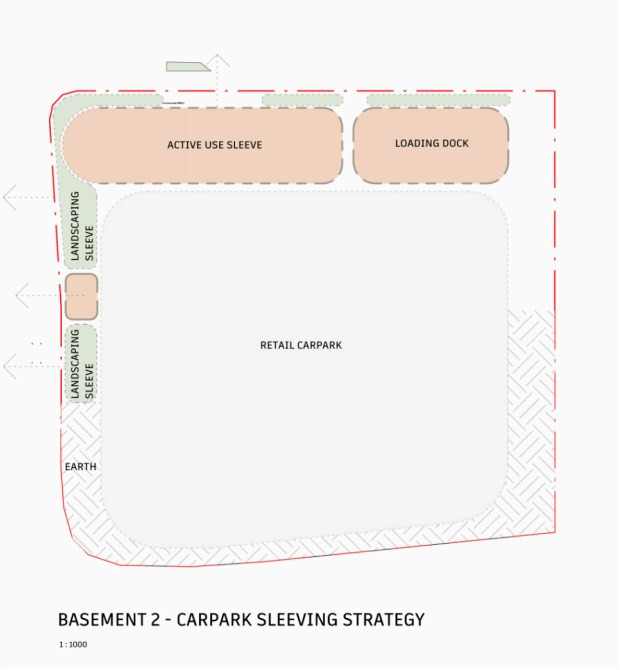
New forecourt areas and landscaped pockets are introduced along street frontages to create a welcoming and legible arrival experience. These elements enhance the pedestrian realm and mirror the existing pattern of landscaped setbacks and civic open spaces in the locality.

d) Sleeving car parking with active uses



BASEMENT 1 - CARPARK SLEEVING STRATEGY

1 : 1000



BASEMENT 2 - CARPARK SLEEVING STRATEGY

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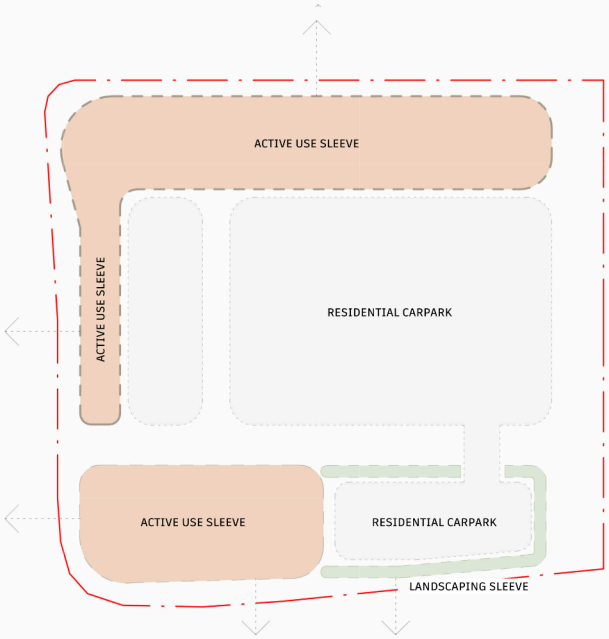

LEVEL 2 - CARPARK SLEEVING STRATEGY

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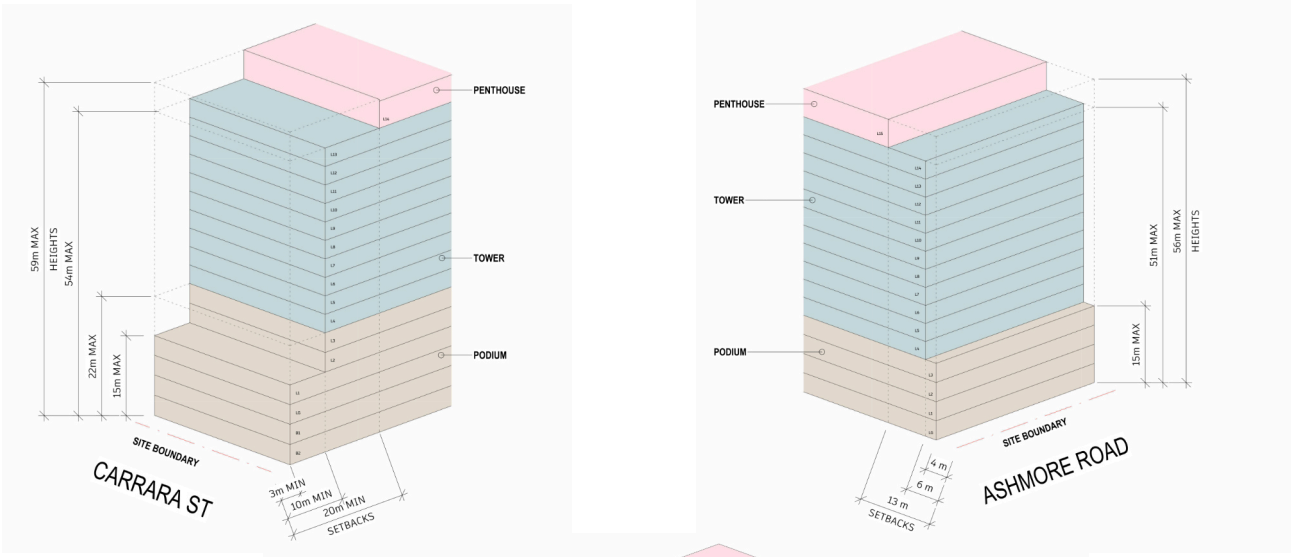
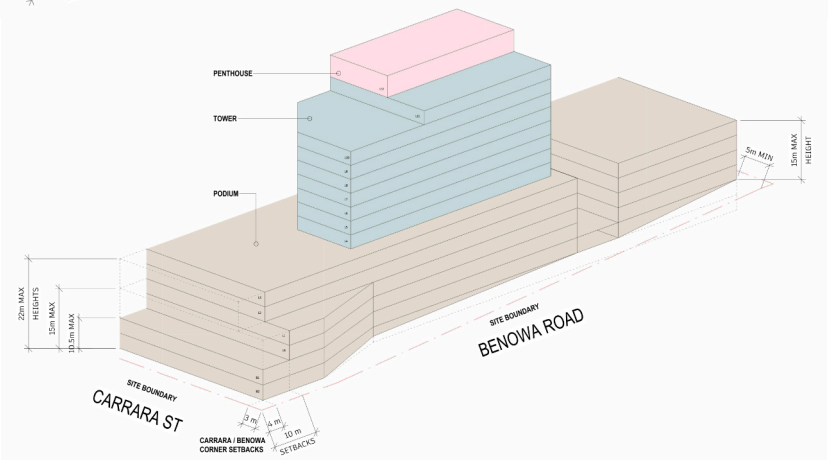
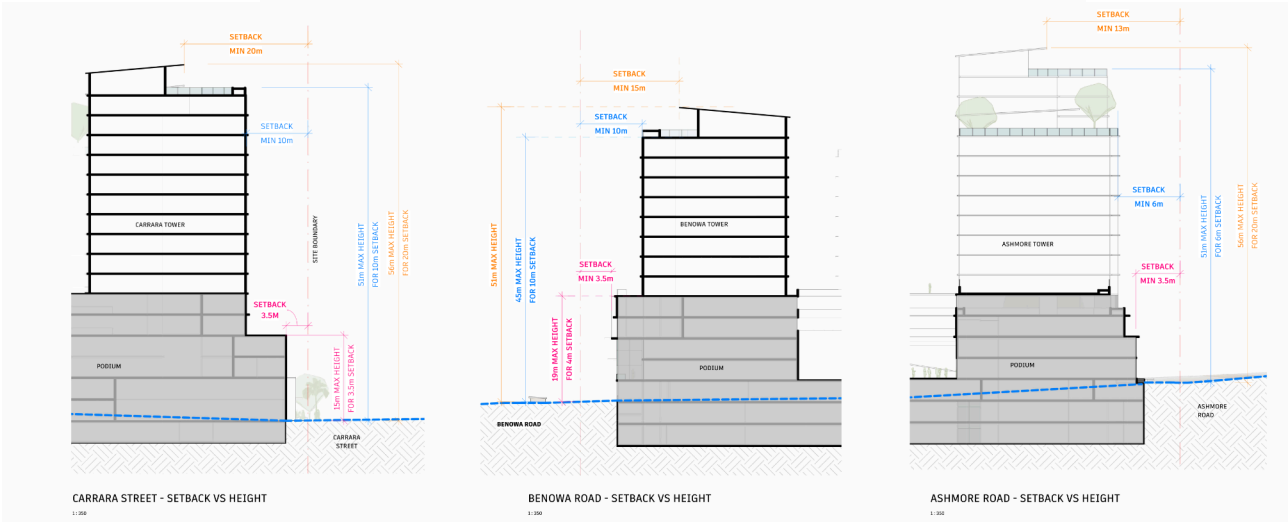
All podium levels visible to the street are now lined with active uses or landscaping, ensuring the building addresses the street with retail and community-oriented frontages. This supports the desired active, fine-grain character of a neighbourhood centre.

e) Reduced tower heights

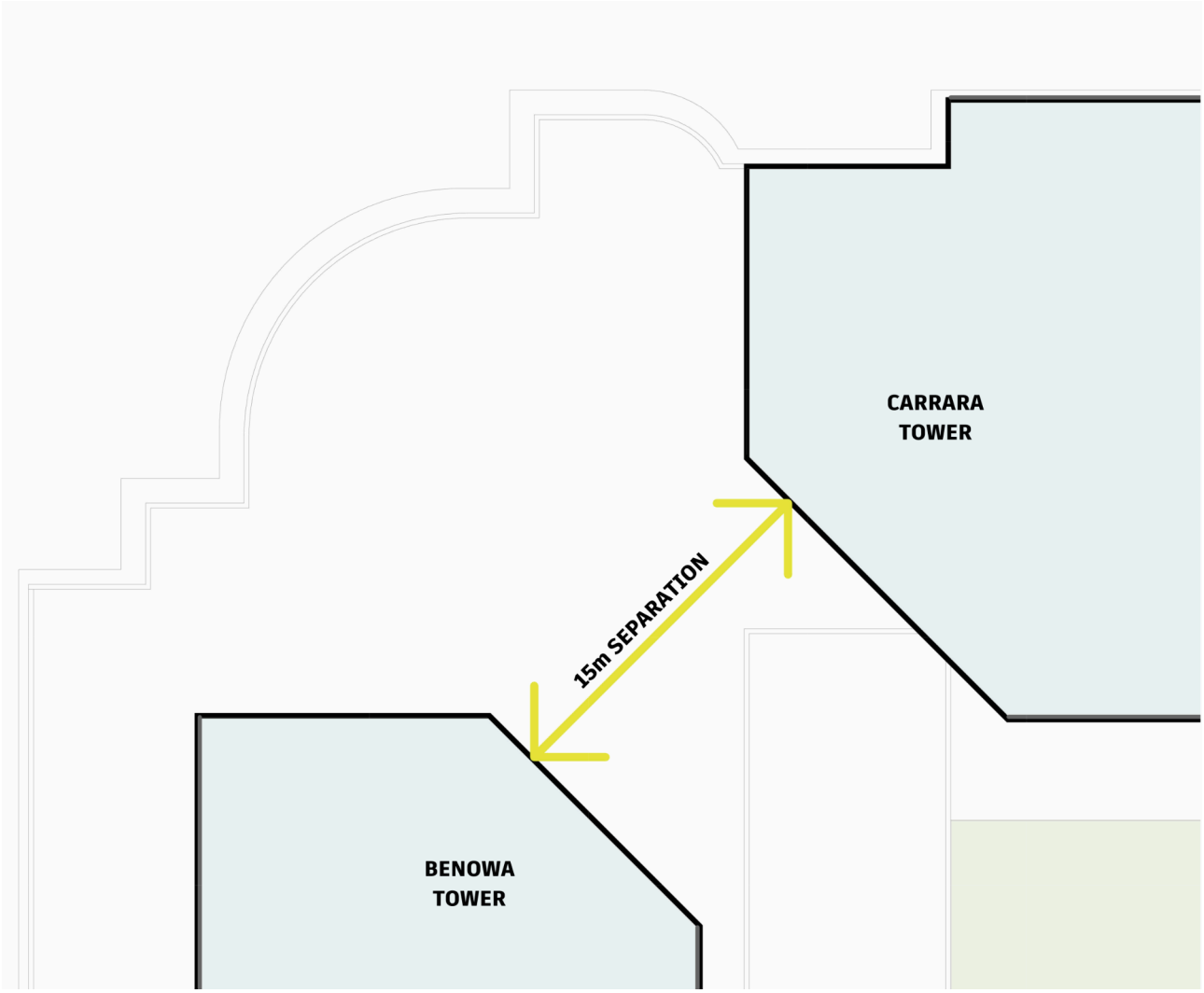






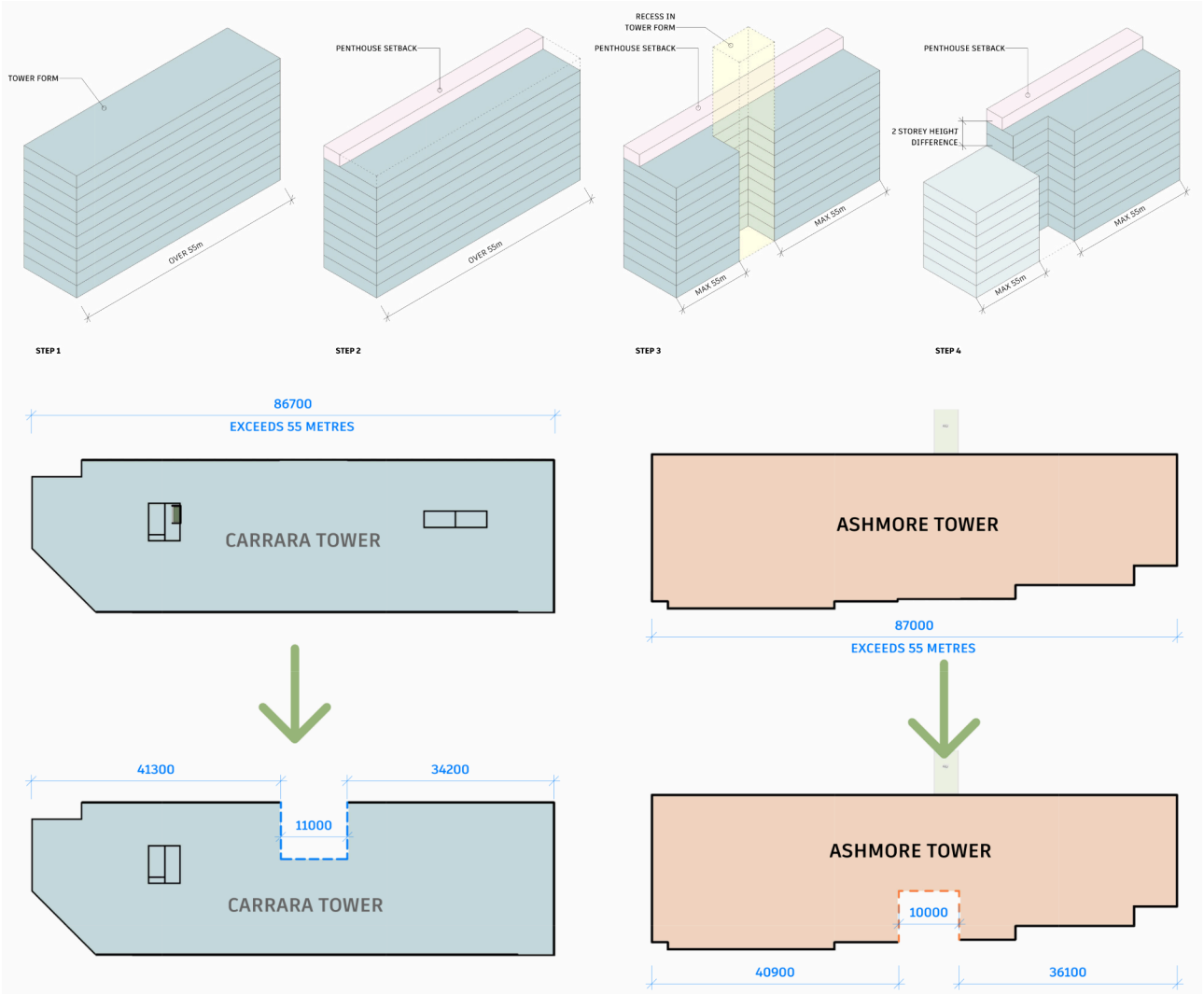
While the overall tower heights have been generally retained, a range of architectural and landscape measures have been introduced to reduce perceived bulk and visual dominance. Each tower now includes multiple sky terraces at varying heights, incorporating greenery and deep planters to soften the upper levels and create a visually lighter skyline. The three towers also feature varied roof heights, ensuring they read as distinct vertical elements rather than a uniform mass. The towers have also been stepped back progressively with height, increasing upper-level setbacks from the podium and street edges. This terraced form reduces visual impact, improves sky exposure, and achieves a more slender appearance when viewed from the surrounding public realm. Together, these refinements maintain the landmark quality of the towers while delivering a more articulated and contextually appropriate built form.

f) Separation bettween Carrara and Benowa towers



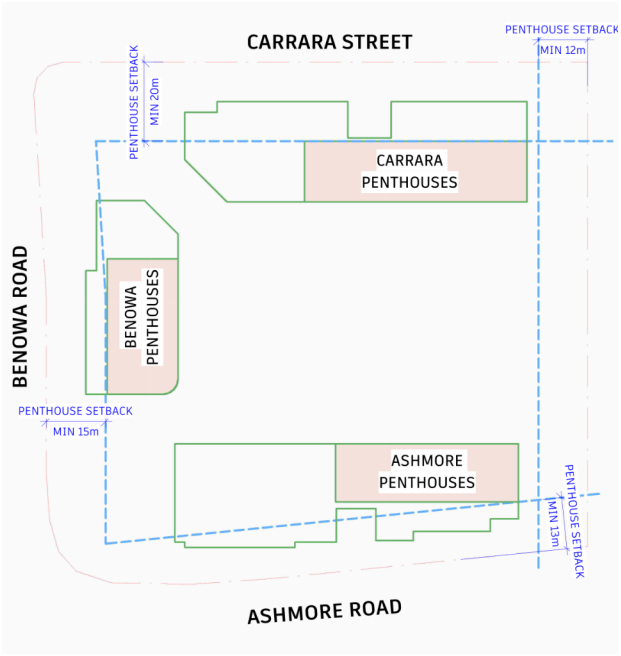
.The introduction of a clear separation zone between towers allows views through the site from Ashmore Road to Benowa Road, significantly reducing the perception of bulk and avoiding a continuous urban wall effect.

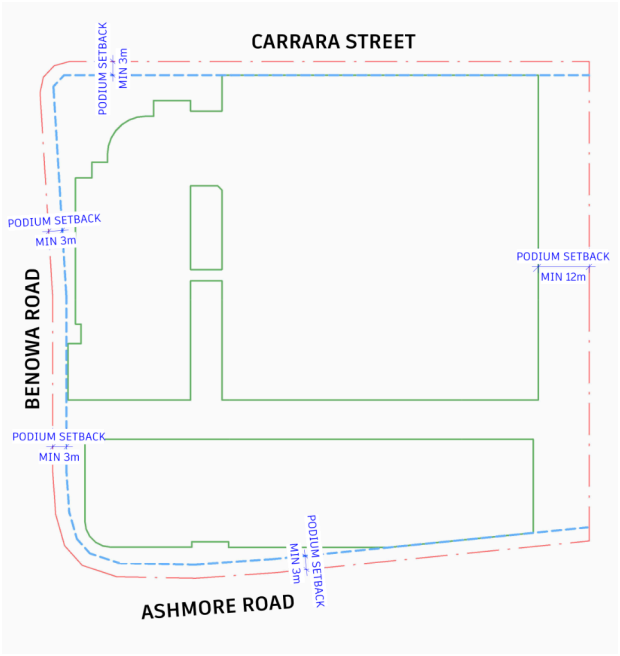
g) Reduced tower lengths

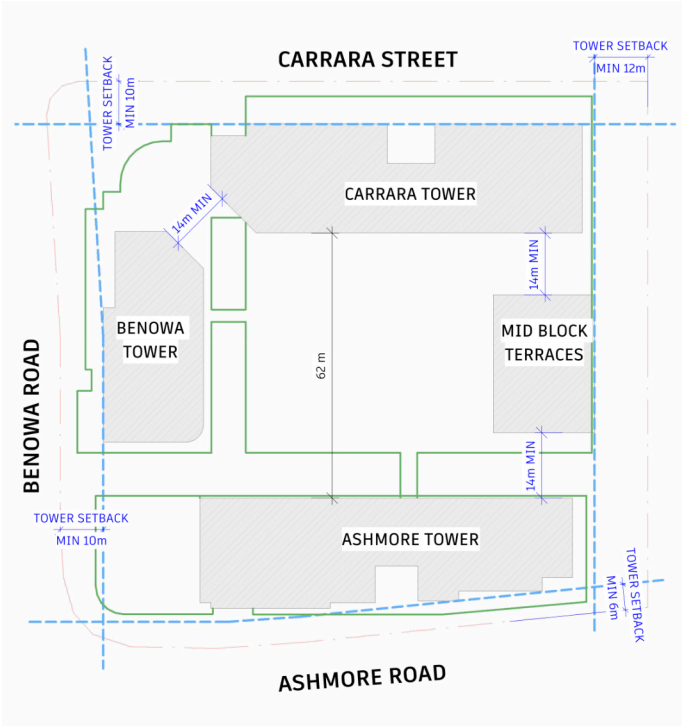


While the overall tower lengths exceed 55 m, the revised design introduces deep recesses and height variation to achieve the visual effect of multiple, smaller tower forms. Each tower now incorporates a minimum 10 m × 8 m recess in the façade, creating a clear visual separation that allows the building to read as two distinct vertical elements rather than a single continuous mass. In addition, height variation of at least two storeys has been integrated within each tower so that no single height section exceeds 55 m. This modification, combined with the recessed elements and level changes, significantly reduces perceived building bulk and introduces a more slender, articulated form when viewed from the street and surrounding public areas. These refinements achieve the intended design outcome of visual breaks and reduced massing without requiring a reduction in the overall tower length.

h) Increased tower street setbacks

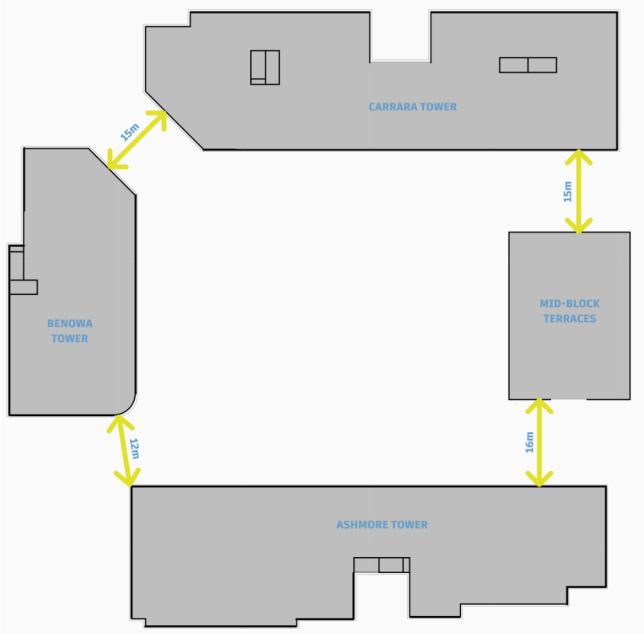






While the tower setbacks are generally below 10 m along most street frontages, the Ashmore Road tower setback is maintained at 6 m to respond to its wide, high-traffic conditions. Ashmore tower incorporates articulations, recesses, and stepped forms, which break the façade up into smaller components with various materiality treatments to prevent the appearance of a continuous wall. This approach reduces perceived bulk, creates visual interest, and ensures that the towers read as a series of individual elements rather than a single mass. Given the local context, including low pedestrian activity along Ashmore Road, the reduced setback is considered appropriate and contextually responsive while maintaining a positive urban design outcome.

i) Increased tower separation



Additional spacing enhances outlook, daylight access, and privacy between residential buildings. It also maintains the sense of openness that characterises the broader Benowa/ Ashmore context.

j) Variation in height, articulation and modulation

The towers have been designed with varied heights, stepped rooflines, sky terraces, and articulated façades. These measures reduce visual bulk, add rhythm to the skyline, and enhance the overall landmark quality of the development while creating a more engaging and dynamic streetscape.

4.0 Overall Urban Design Justification

The revised design results in a built form that:

- Reduces the apparent bulk and height through podium lowering, tower separation, and articulation;
- Improves the pedestrian experience through permeability, active frontages, and landscaped public spaces;
- Enhances visual permeability across the site and reinforces key pedestrian movement patterns;
- Provides a graduated transition of scale that respects the suburban context while supporting the site's strategic role as a mixed-use node;
- Contributes positively to the evolving local character, consistent with the intent of the Neighbourhood Centre zone and the built form criteria of the City Plan.