

BRADDON LOWANNA APARTMENTS

Snapshot

Year built: 2014

How built (private, government): Private

Zone: RZ4

Block area: 2118

Density (number of dwelling units per sqm): 1 dwelling/88m²

Building design (diversity, scale, height, materials, accessibility, entry) Massing and scale carefully integrated into existing streetscape and punctuated by open stairways

Site planning: (people access, cars, open space, setbacks, landscaping): Communal landscaped space provided for residents
Social impact (engagement, neighbours): Common entry and shared outdoor space creates a communal feel in the development

Ecological impact (energy, water): North-facing cross-ventilated apartments with clever and compact floor plans

Affordability (demographic): Fills the gap in the market for singles and couples who wish to live in well-designed, compact apartments close to the city centre

Approval issues (rules): Minimum car space requirements of 1.5 spaces per dwelling were strictly enforced, despite the proximity of the development to transport and the city centre. This almost made the project unviable.

Features

Lowanna is an architect-led development that introduces much-needed density and diversity into an established inner-city suburb. The building, which maintains the proportions and character of the surrounding streetscape, occupies a site made up of three consolidated blocks. Despite its humble appearance, the development comprises a collection of 24 one and two bedroom apartments with terraces facing a common garden. According to the architect, who initiated the development with three friends, "The project has provided a good commercial outcome that has allowed appropriate budget for material selection and careful detailing. This will benefit the neighbourhood for years to come."

The benefits of a carefully considered apartment complex are felt by the residents as well. The common entry through the car park, open stairs connecting the apartments and the extensive shared gardens all contribute to a sense of community in the complex. Private outdoor spaces are all oriented north, avoiding problems of overlooking. Inside the compact apartments, clever configuration of rooms and joinery means no space is wasted.

Lowanna is a solution for a demographic seeking an alternative to detached houses on large blocks and low quality apartments. Located near shops and transport, and with an emphasis on clever site planning and high quality construction, this model of development is inherently economical and sustainable. Around half the units are owner-occupied, and all the residents enjoy low running costs and the convenience of reduced car dependency.

However, the developers ran into frustrations with the planning requirement to provide more than one car space per dwelling and visitors' parking. Six additional spaces were required despite the development's proximity to the city and the fact that the units were all one or two bedrooms. It transpired that none of the residents were willing to buy more than one car space, which were built underground at considerable expense.

Developments like this are a great contribution to the diversity of housing choice in Canberra. Inflexible planning regulations like the one mentioned above can make such innovative housing models unviable. Forward-thinking planning regulations can encourage even more innovation.



Australian
Institute of
Architects



Sustainability

Lowanna demonstrates passive environmental design. Apartments have northern orientation with appropriate overhangs to control solar access. Fences and battened privacy screens are designed to allow solar penetration to outdoor areas whilst maintaining an appropriate degree of privacy.

All apartments allow natural through ventilation. Each apartment has a minimum of three external walls.

Windows are generally floor-to-ceiling (2700 high) to maximise natural daylighting. Northern facades are extensively glazed, while southern and east/west facades include minimal openings.

The internal building structure and all common walls are solid concrete. This thermal mass allows storage of winter daytime heat. The structure is heavily insulated to the outside.

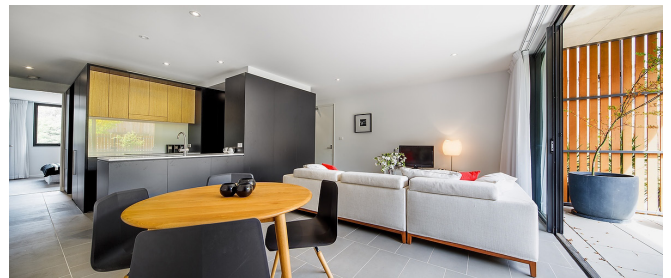
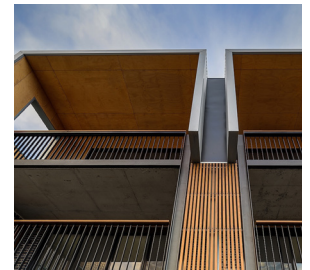
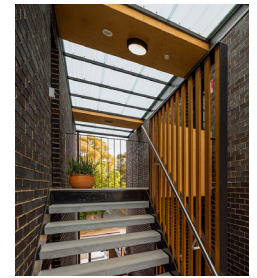
Lowanna demonstrates social sustainability. The building includes extensive communal outdoor spaces including a clothes drying area. The central garden stair provides bright and safe access to the carpark and ensures that every resident has opportunity to meet and interact with their neighbours.

The development provides address and surveillance to a previously fenced and unsafe laneway, which has been landscaped to integrate with the development.

Lowanna demonstrates economic sustainability by providing an efficient medium density residential development in a location that will allow utilisation of existing services and infrastructure.

The design of Lowanna ensures minimal operational and ongoing costs for residents. A palette of robust materials such as brick, concrete and steel cladding form the building fabric and require little ongoing maintenance. The costs of a lift are avoided. A provisional lift pit and space is provided for future lift installation if required.

Lowanna demonstrates sustainability that promotes social wellbeing, minimises ongoing operational and building costs to residents and minimises impact to the environment.



“

The vision was to create a high quality residential development in central Canberra, which demonstrates sustainable design through appropriate urban density and sensible site planning and architectural design.

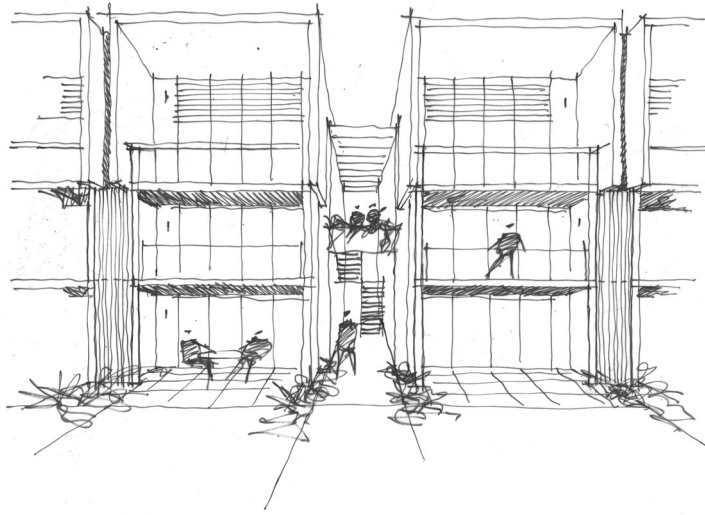
Aerial View



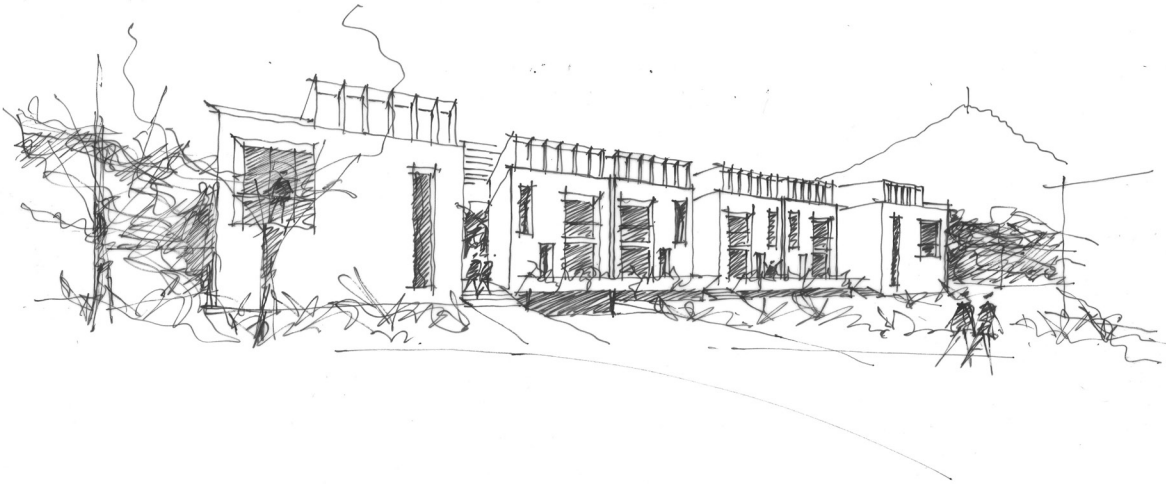
Sample Site Plan



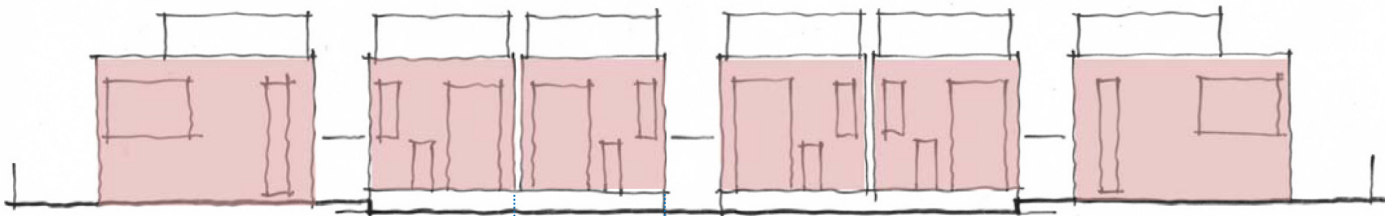
Concept North Sketch



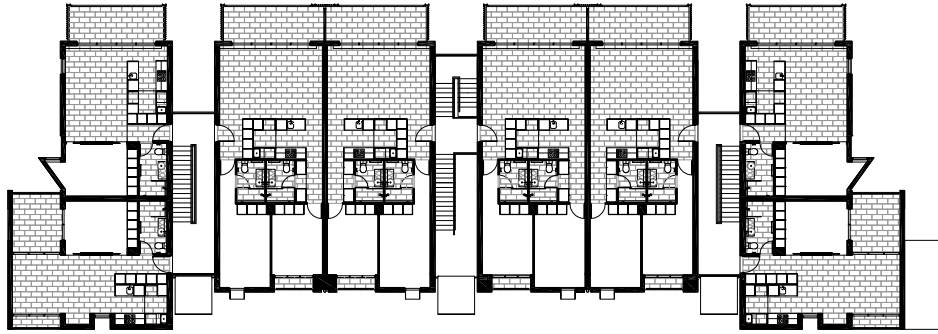
Concept Street Sketch



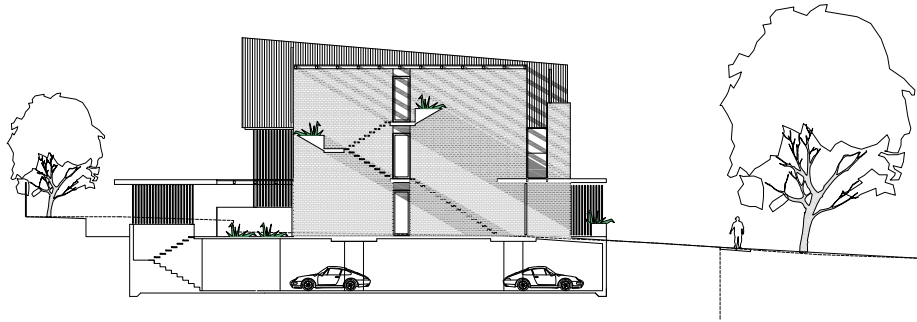
Elevation Concept



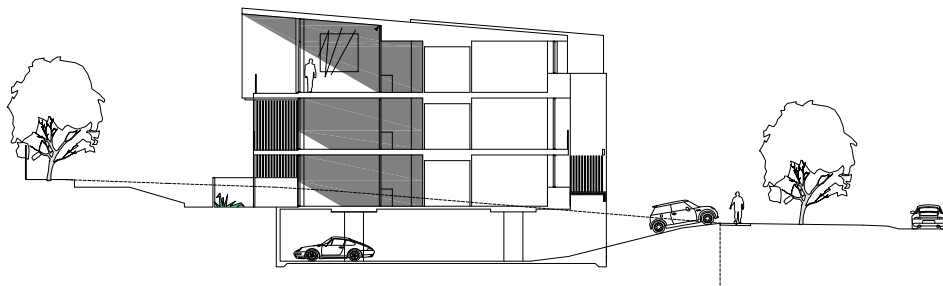
Level 1 Plan



Sections



SECTION - WALKWAY



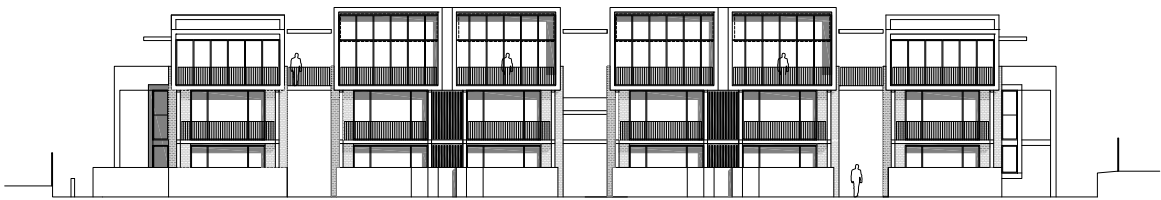
SECTION - APARTMENT



Elevations North and South



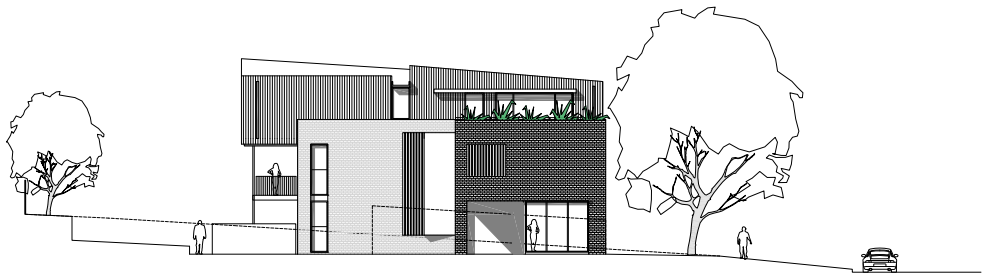
SOUTH ELEVATION
TO LOWANNA STREET



NORTH ELEVATION



Elevations - East and West



WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

