

URAMBI VILLAGE

Snapshot

Block 1 Section 149 Kambah
Site Area: 4.4 hectares (44,000m²)
No. of units: 72
Date of Construction: 1976

Features

- Private space is partly foregone in exchange for extensive communal landscaped grounds and facilities in a natural bush setting
- An excellent example of Sydney School architecture combining classic tri-level and courtyard house plans
- Vehicles limited to the site periphery

Urambi Village was designed by Michael Dysart in 1974 as an innovative co-operative housing model that departed from conventional planning policies and involved prospective residents in the design and development process as a co-operative and communal venture. The development consists of 29 single level courtyard houses and 43 tri-level houses set in a natural bush setting on the western edge of Kambah overlooking the Murrumbidgee Country Club. The development attracted residents who were interested in the concept of a new choice of housing that gave up some measure of private space in exchange for generous communal landscapes and facilities.

A unique feature of Urambi is that vehicles are restricted to the site periphery. There are five driveway entries off Crozier Circuit that lead to groupings of garages, carports and open car spaces, together with garbage and mail facilities. Pathways connect these service areas to the central spine and then to the various house groups. This results in an expansive vehicle free landscape of mostly native plantings and promotes casual meetings between residents in the shared space. The houses and landscaping are seamlessly integrated.

Within a total site area of 4.4 hectares (44,000m²), individual titles range from c. 135m² to 385m² depending on house size. This includes the house footprint, a small entry court and a larger semi-private rear courtyard. There are varying degrees of fencing of these spaces but the overall effect is relatively open. Individual land titles total only 30% of the overall site area. The majority of the remainder is communal landscaped area plus a smaller area occupied by parking, community centre, pool and ball court.

The site slopes gently down from Crozier Circuit towards the northwest. The houses are arranged in attached groups of four to six on either side of a central landscaped pedestrian spine. The tri-level houses are arranged on the inner side of the spine and respond to the ground slope. The courtyard houses are located on the golf course side on flatter ground. The majority of the tri-level houses have their living rooms on the upper level with views through the tree canopy over the roofs of the courtyard houses and out to the open woodland. Gaps between the groups maintain view corridors from the rear houses and spine path to the golf course beyond.

Considerable variety of house size and planning is achieved within a simple, consistent architectural language and within the two house types. The houses vary from two to five bedrooms, by virtue of width in the tri-levels and by the length of the north-south leg in the courtyard houses.

Urambi is an excellent example of the Sydney School of Architecture prevalent in the 1970s and particularly popular for its affinity with bushland settings. The house forms incorporate asymmetrical pitched roofs with bold trapezoidal dividing walls which in many cases extend to the ground in a staggered formation providing a considerable degree of privacy without extensive fencing. Materials include brown Swiss pattern roof tiles, earthy toned face brickwork and timber framed window walls.



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Floor Plan

