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Samford Parklands

“Rarely does an opportunity arise for a community to have access to a unique parcel of land where recreation, cultural and environmental education can be creatively housed together.”



1.1 History and background

The 700 acre former CSIRO Tropical Pasture Research Station was a contributor to Samford's social, economic and landscape values for at least 40 years until the Federal Government directed it to be sold around the year 2000. Its existence over that time was accepted by the local community and governing councils as an unchanging anchor in the landscape. The character of the property has had a profound influence on the nature of Samford village by assisting to keep it compact and distinct. It has also provided the pleasant northern entry to the Village that brings the historical rural nature of the Valley right to the doorstep of the village.

Several historical structures occur on the site, including the remains of the rail bridge across the South Pine River, and two hilltop sites along the eastern border were identified as being culturally significant to the Undambi and Gubbi Gubbi people.

Once the CSIRO was directed to offer the property for sale, a lengthy process of consultation began between Pine Rivers Shire Council and the Samford Community. A Statement of Planning Policy (PE SP 201/8/2001; <http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/>) was prepared, which stated the Council's position in relation to the redevelopment of the land and ultimately led to the signing of an Infrastructure Agreement between the Council and CSIRO. In essence, the agreement guaranteed that upon sale of the land 50% of the property would be retained for public ownership. (NB: Within this area, the existing buildings are on a separate title deed: the Special Purposes Precinct.)

With the expertise of a multitude of like-minded environmentally aware people throughout Samford and the shire, we could see this rare parcel of land attract and inspire future generations.



The CSIRO Tropical Pasture Research Station provided a pleasant northern entry to Samford village

1.2 The former Pine Rivers Shire Council Master Plan 2004

In 2004, in collaboration with the Samford community, Council produced a document, 'Samford Valley CSIRO Parklands Master Plan Study', incorporating a variety of uses. It can be found at:

<http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/projects.aspx>

These comprised:

- an environmental reserve (primarily along the waterways of the Samford Creek and the South pine River)
- intensive recreation precinct (multi-use sports zones)
- a special purposes precinct (buildings for potential commercial and tourism uses, such as cafes, arts and craft markets, etc.)
- a passive recreational precinct (for informal sports, walking cycling, picnics and barbeques)

- a roadside buffer (open space alongside Mount Samson Road to preserve the rural landscape aspect)
- the Gibbons Road precinct (part of the environmental reserve with recreational trail access and a possible campground)

Since 2007, the public component of the site has been known as Samford Parklands.

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1.3 Existing uses of Samford Parklands

1.3.1 Intensive recreation precinct

According to the 2004 Master Plan, around 13% of the total area was allocated as an intensive recreation precinct. In response to community requests to provide much-needed sporting facilities, the Council proceeded to develop this multi-use sports zone as a priority. Expenditure to date has been \$11.5 million. The current list of clubs using Samford Parklands include:

- Samford Tennis Club
- Samford Netball Club
- Samford Bowls Club
- Samford Rangers Football Club
- Samford Valley Archery Club.

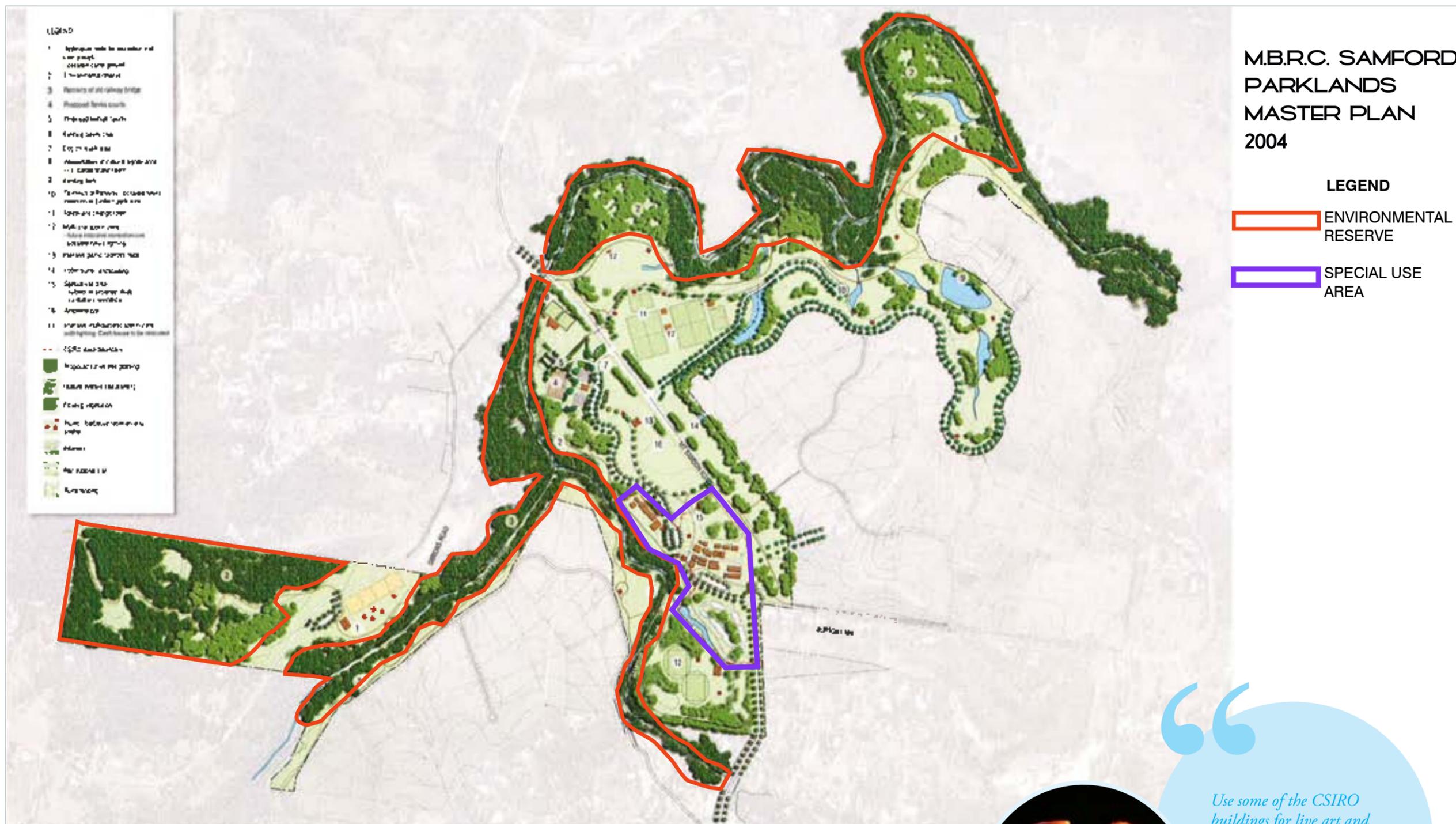
1.3.2 Special purposes precinct

The buildings in the precinct, which was formerly used for pasture research, include various timber structures, greenhouses, two large glasshouses and a large covered machinery shed. State Government departments, the Moreton Bay Regional Council, community groups and individuals are currently using the facilities for a variety of purposes. Despite being in need of maintenance, the buildings are essentially functional and form an attractive precinct along the entry from Mount Samson Road. General services, such as water and sewerage, would need upgrading for any future development.

1.3.3 Other current uses

The passive recreation precinct is largely undeveloped, but is currently used for:

- private cattle/horse agistment
- walking
- public recreational use
- the land to the east of Mount Samson Road is being developed as the RSL Avenue of Honour (to be completed by 2015).



Former Pine Rivers Shire Council Parklands Master Plan 2004



“Use some of the CSIRO buildings for live art and performance studios and small business incubators in cottage industries.”

1.4 Community aspirations

1.4.1 The vision

The community's vision is to use this public space to create a sustainable parkland area that will inspire future generations and further develop the concept of Samford as the 'green lung' of the greater Brisbane region. Based on the suggested uses in the 2004 Master Plan and from the ViVa 2011 Community Survey, the community has suggested that the Samford Parklands become a destination focusing on community recreation, sustainability and cultural activity. Following the initial phase of development on the site, which comprised largely sporting facilities and road development, it seems appropriate to replicate this investment in the areas of culture, sustainability, the arts and education.

The community proposes the establishment of The Samford Commons (a sustainability and arts resource centre), based on principles of appropriate land use and design, consideration of historical precedent and social principals of community participation. For further detail of the proposal, see Section 1.5.

The community's vision is to use this public space to create a sustainable parkland area that will inspire future generations.

1.4.2 Rehabilitate the creeks, gullies and river

In the 2004 Master Plan, the environmental reserve precinct extends 50 metres from the top of the river bank and comprises 50 per cent of the total area. To reduce erosion, improve amenity and provide valuable corridors for native wildlife, the

banks of the creeks, gullies and river should be extensively rehabilitated and revegetated. Clearing of weeds and revegetation is required in some adjacent sections and this would involve planting indigenous native species (of local provenance, where possible). A new bushcare group would be set up to remove weeds and to maintain the native vegetation. As noted in page 5 of the 2004 Master Plan, to avoid the spread of weeds, horse trails should not pass through this area.

Furthermore, the Plan suggested using boardwalks close to the water in the wetlands surrounding the South Pine River behind the Samford Rangers football fields.

1.4.3 Revegetation of the parklands

To improve the overall amenity, and for educational purposes, parts of the parklands could be revegetated with plants indigenous to the wider Samford District. This revegetation could be incorporated into the passive recreation precinct (in the 2004 Master Plan, this comprises 30 per cent of the total area), as well as the environmental reserve. As well as planting along pathways and placing shade trees and windbreaks next to picnic sites (see Section 1.4.8) – several themed plantings could be included, based on habitat types, for example:

- native grasslands in the open areas (which would remove the need for mowing)
- dry eucalypt woodland on some of the exposed slopes
- wet eucalypt forest in some of the moister areas
- heathlands and wetlands.

Along with the environmental reserve, these staged plantings would have an educational function to show the large diversity of local indigenous plants that can be used into cultivation in the Samford district. Suitable species include the iconic Macadamia, which was first discovered by Leichhardt alongside the South Pine River near Samford (and Walter Hill later took seed for the Brisbane Botanic Gardens).

Other ideas for themes to educate and inspire people to use native plants include:

- bush tucker plants
- medicinal plants used by Indigenous people
- butterfly host plants
- koala trees (koalas prefer particular eucalypt species)
- native bee attracting plants
- natives suitable for hedges or windbreaks
- fire-retardant species
- timber trees (perhaps a Mitchell Farm Forestry demonstration plot using local species)

Detailed signage would provide valuable educational information for locals, students and visitors. Once the revegetation is established, the parklands would provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, frogs and other local fauna. In decades to come, the resource would evolve to become part of the regional botanical garden network that has been so successful throughout Queensland.

To fund the plantings and ongoing maintenance, a combination of corporate and other sponsorship, government grants and even carbon credits could be used to keep the ratepayer contribution to a minimum.

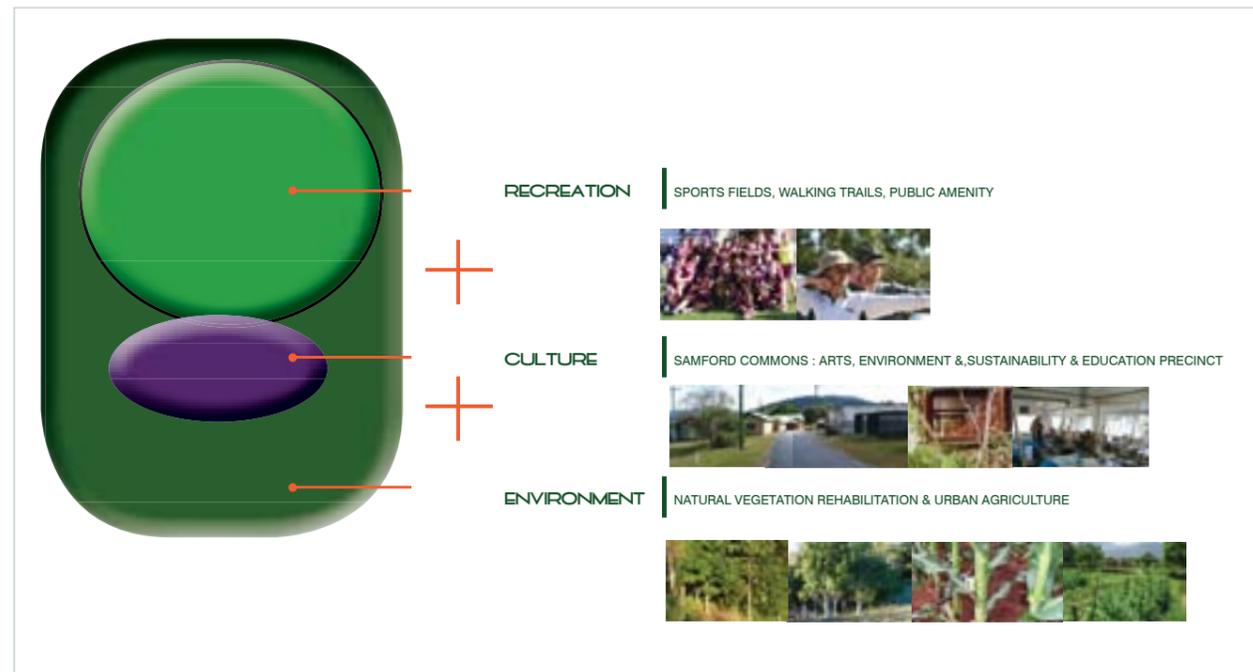
The first stage of the revegetation is already under way. In December 2012, the Samford Valley Progress and Protection Association, the MBRC and other partners were successful in being awarded a grant as part of the Queensland State Government's 'Everyone's Environment' initiative. This will enable a 5000 m² section of the Parklands behind the Bowls Club to be revegetated using local rainforest species indigenous to the nearby Ward's Scrub.

1.4.4 Establish an Urban Farming Centre

To demonstrate sustainable usage of land, an area of the parkland of around 10–15 acres could be set aside for an Urban Farming Centre and an organic food growing demonstration project. For further details see Section 5.5.

1.4.5 Establish a camping site at Gibbons Road

To benefit local tourism, a campground could be established in the Gibbons Road Precinct as a venue for overnight and 'short stay' visitors to Samford Valley. This campground could be council run or a privately leased site. The area would provide cleared campsites with basic facilities (shower and toilet facilities and a basic structure for camp cooking and picnicking would be provided). Over time, the area could be developed to include camp huts and/or small basic dormitories for school groups.



Samford Parklands – integrating recreation, culture and environment

This facility would provide a much needed camping area for:

- bike riders who will be using the new bike path that will be joining Samford to Ferny Grove and beyond.
- school groups and others that wish to take part in tree-planting, organic gardening, craft or other activities that will be offered at the re-developed parklands.
- ‘grey nomads’ who wish to camp or caravan close to Brisbane city but who also wish to enjoy and partake in the many activities (markets, workshops, etc.) offered at the Samford Commons site.
- families who live in the city but want to give their children a ‘country’ experience.

The area proposed as The Campground is on Gibbons road (see Master Plan map) and is easily accessible from the Village and the Parklands by existing pathways.

1.4.6 Establish walking and cycling trails

To ensure good access to the site and movement around it, a network of trails suitable for walking and cycling (and some designated for horse riding) should be created throughout the Parklands. These would link to the existing trails around the Valley (see Chapter 4), to the RSL Avenue of Honour and to Samford Village. Some of these trails would feature educational boards about the history of the site (Indigenous uses, agricultural uses) and the (re)vegetation. This network of interconnected pathways would encourage the public to access areas within the Parklands site and allow them to explore and enjoy the rehabilitated area filled with restored creek and river banks (Section 1.4.2), public artwork (1.4.7) and the Urban Farming Centre (5.5). The trails should have particularly strong connections to Samford Village and the proposed Samford Commons (see map and Section 1.5).

1.4.7 Parklands as a venue for public art

To improve the visual appeal and to stir the imagination of visitors, the parklands should include art installations by local artists at strategic locations throughout the site. For further details see Section 3.4.6.



The approximate location of the proposed campground on Gibbons Road

1.4.8 Added amenities

- Picnic facilities: To improve the amenity of the passive recreation precinct, public picnic sites with shade structures (and/or shade trees) and barbeques should be constructed in all suitable areas and should be linked by the trail network (see 2004 Master Plan pp. 22, 26 and 27 for details).
- Exercise trail: To improve the health and wellbeing of Samford residents and visitors, an exercise trail with distance markers should be constructed in either the passive recreation precinct or the intensive recreation precinct. This would be linked to the wider trail network.
- Internal roads and car parking: as per the 2004 Master Plan, the road network should be integrated into the design to limit the impact on the natural values of the site and car parks should be set back well into the park. Car parks should be dispersed, not concentrated.
- Children’s playground: To encourage families to use the parklands, a children’s playground should be constructed in the passive recreation precinct. This would be linked to the trail network.
- Skate park: To encourage younger people to use the parklands, a skate park should be constructed in the intensive recreation precinct, probably close to the Tennis Club. This would be linked to the trail network.
- Off-leash dog area: to encourage pet owners to use the parklands, an off-leash dog area should be constructed in the passive recreation precinct, probably close to the car parks. This would be linked to the trail network.
 - Signage: directional signage and interpretive signage should be installed throughout the Parklands, with the style embodying the rural character.

To stir the imagination of visitors, the parklands should include art installations by local artists at strategic locations.



Major planting and planned parkland with walking paths and bike paths at the old CSIRO site, between the tennis courts and the old CSIRO buildings.

1.5 The Samford Commons proposal

1.5.1 Existing buildings

The existing buildings in the special purposes precinct lie either side of a central street, giving the precinct the character of a small community campus. The alignment of the street gives the majority of the buildings a favourable northerly aspect. The buildings are clustered together with small spaces in between. These spaces currently offer neither amenity nor spatial quality, but have the potential to become meaningful outdoor spaces. They can provide interconnections that allow building spaces to open onto public space.

The precinct currently lacks landscaping, coherent public spaces and foot-paths, and the external building fabric is unappealing. Although the buildings are physically close to each other, they are not interlinked and the entrances are small and facing different directions.

1.5.2 Overall vision

The community's vision is to create a sustainability and arts resource centre, known as the Samford Commons, based on the existing precinct. The two main activities would involve the arts and sustainability, with a strong focus on community education. Related activities and compatible uses would be co-located in their own sub-precincts, so generating synergies. Different activities may be undertaken in separate buildings or, where the opportunity arises, in shared facilities. The key is to generate a campus-like environment with a buzz of activity and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

The arts sub-precinct

The sub-precinct focusing on the arts would comprise:

- arts studios and teaching spaces
- an exhibition and large studio space (see Chapter 3 for further details).

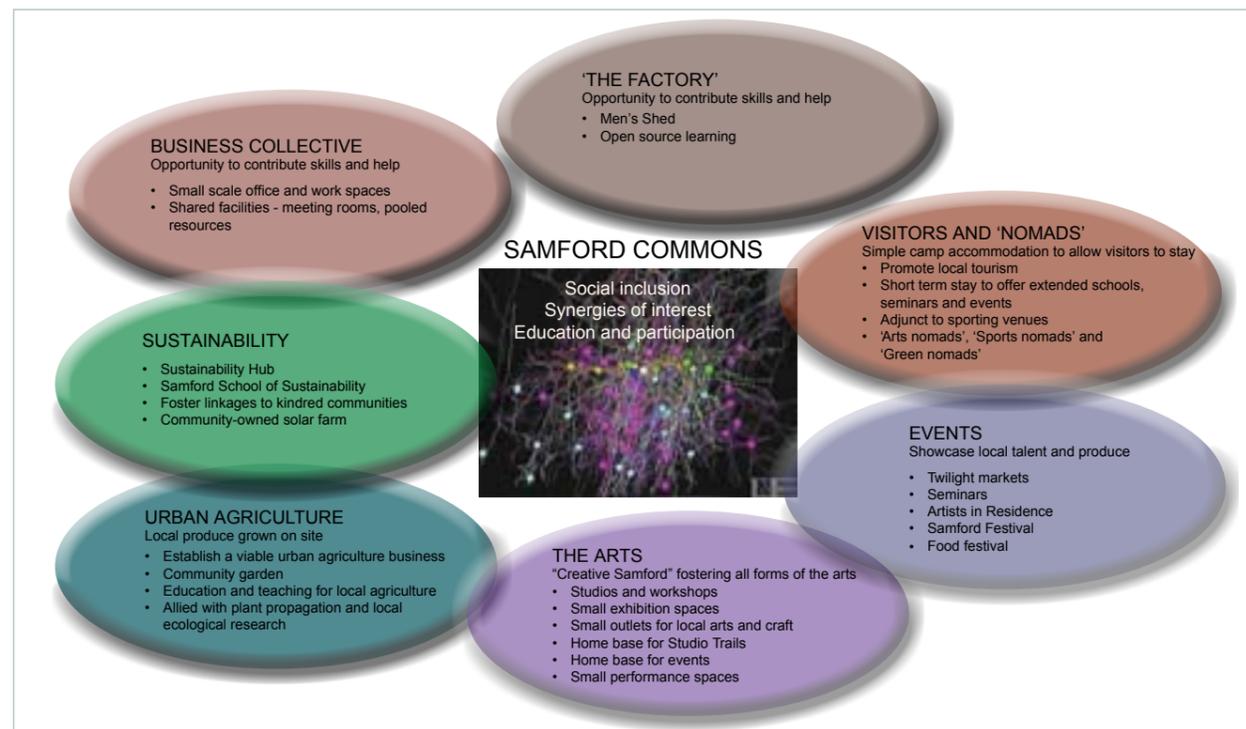
The sustainability sub-precinct

The sub-precinct focusing on sustainability would comprise (see Chapter 8 for further details):

- incubator pods for businesses involved with sustainability
- an environmental sustainability resource centre
- plant research and propagation
- buildings used as part of the Urban Farming Centre (see Chapter 5 for further details).



CSIRO existing buildings – A small-scale campus

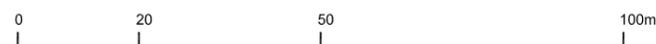


Create a sustainability and arts resource centre, known as the Samford Commons, based on the existing precinct.

Samford Commons – principal uses



COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN



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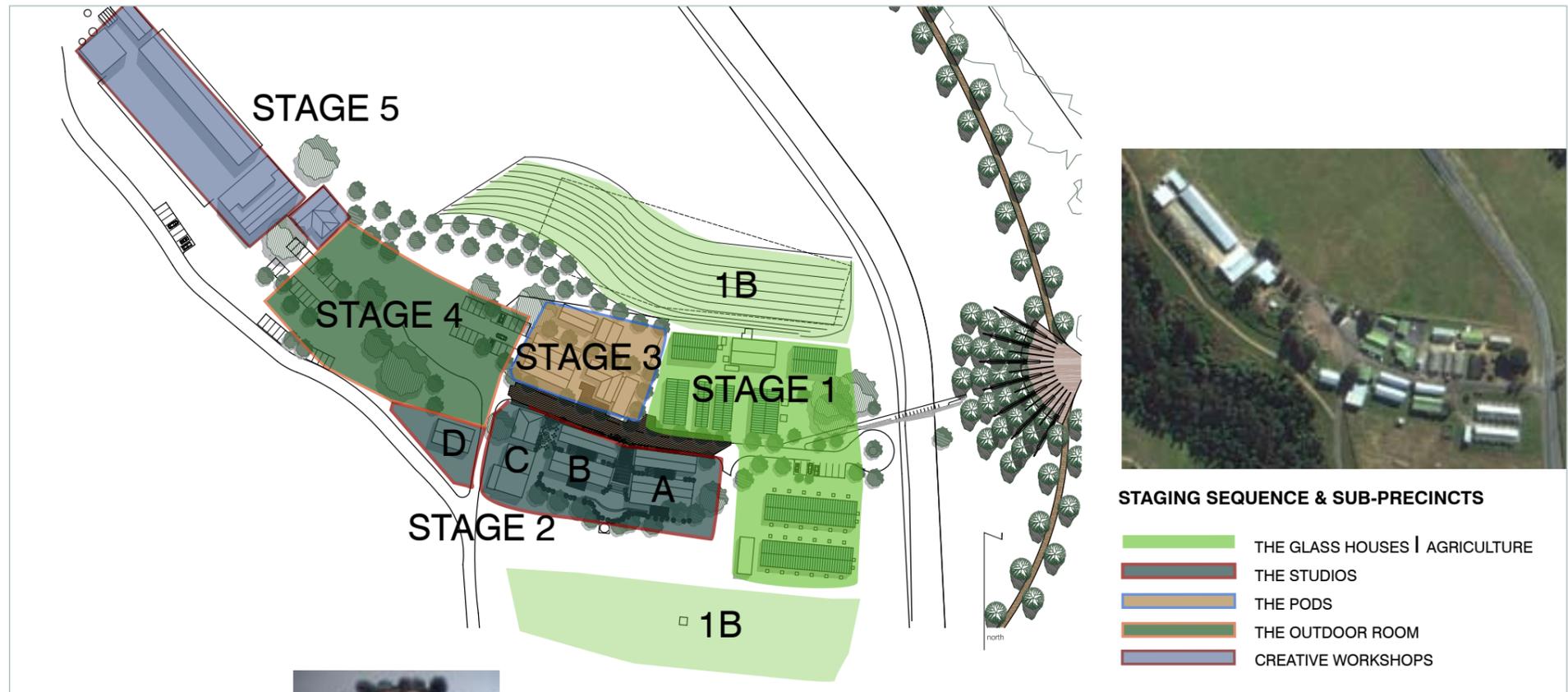
Samford Commons – Community Master Plan

1.5.3 Staged development of the precinct

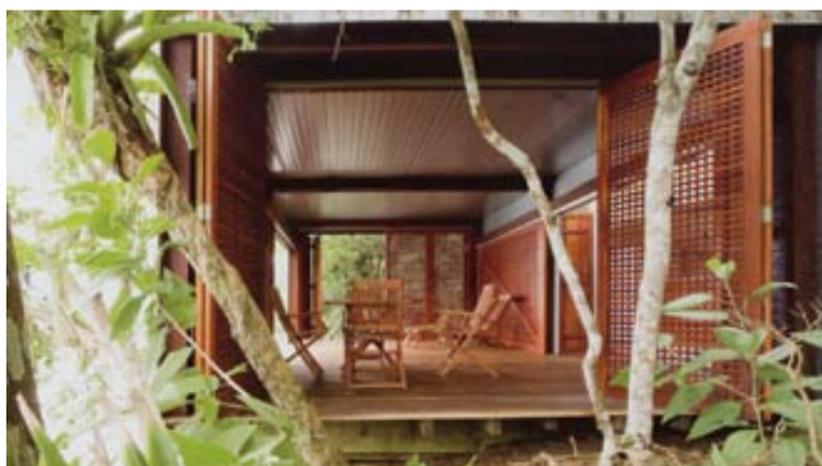
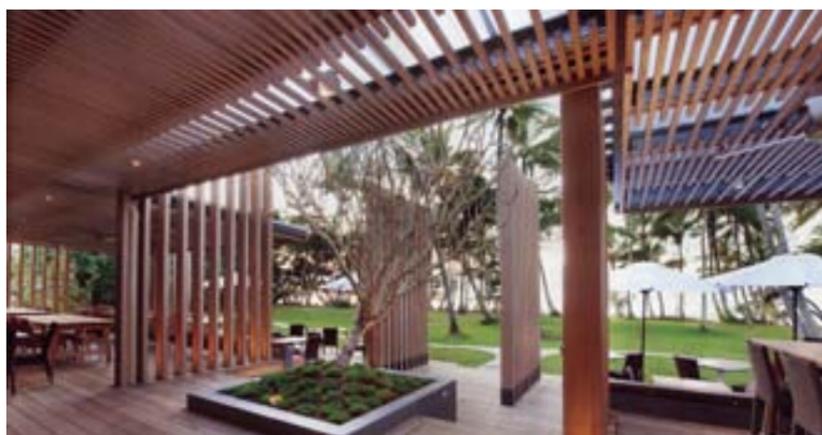
Establishing the Samford Commons precinct by refurbishment of the buildings could progress in stages as shown in the following table and illustration.

Stage 1: The Glasshouses and Agriculture	Buildings 1–4, 17,18, 22, 52, 53 and 54	Use: Plant propagation and research	Outlets for urban agriculture produce
Stage 2: The studios	Buildings 11–14	Use: Arts building , studio space	These buildings each have a footprint of approximately 160 m ² , therefore linking them with connecting spaces gives a 350–400 m ² unit.
Stage 3: The Pods	Buildings 6–8, 16 and 21	Use: Environment and business incubator pods	Small offices, business incubator pods
Stage 4: The Outdoor Room	Infill space	Use: large-scale outdoor flexible venue and gathering space and public amenities	
Stage 5: The Creative Workshops	Buildings (open shed)	Use: large-scale workshop spaces, open exhibition /craft market space	

“Construct a council/community library in an ultra modern way, utilising reading spaces, refreshment facilities, modern meeting facilities, art gallery style display spaces, small space performance facilities etc.”



Samford Commons staging sequence and sub-precincts



The precinct 'heart'

1.5.4 Precinct design principles

The following principles should underlie the establishment of a vibrant sustainability and arts precinct:

- A campus with a unique identity should be created, which becomes a creative space for the transmission of ideas.
- Public spaces should be linked to form an intimate street with a distinct identity.
- Meaningful spaces to congregate and spend time on quality social interaction should be created.
- Pedestrian should be given priority –traffic calming devices should be employed in shared spaces.
- Buildings and spaces should be linked and open to one another, creating a network of spaces with open boundaries.
- Many small spaces should be created to provide intricacy and a sense of intriguing discoveries.
- Outdoor rooms should be used to bridge the gaps between buildings.
- Views should be captured, both between buildings and along the street axes.
- Green walls, trellis and arbours should be incorporated to moderate the environment and provide shade and quality to the public realm.

- Public art should be integrated into the public realm.
- Extensive public seating should be provided.
- Extensive public realm tree planting (endemic species – shade trees, vines creepers for arbor spaces).
- Edible landscapes should be integrated into urban fabric (as examples of urban agriculture).
- There should be strong links from the precinct to the Urban Farming Centre, walking trails and revegetation sites.

The following principles should underlie the refurbishment of the buildings:

- There should be an emphasis on sustainability, such as using recycled materials for refurbishment, embedding passive heating and cooling in the design, and using solar panels, captured roof water, recycled grey water and composting toilets.
- Linkages should be established to group buildings together – buildings that do not front the street should open through the ones that do.
- Outdoor spaces should be integrated with indoor spaces and the outdoor/indoor boundary dissolved by using sliding walls and doors
- Entrances should be clear and inviting.

Our vision for action

- Continue the implementation of the 2004 Parklands Master Plan, especially those aspects relating to revegetation of the environmental precinct (by expanding the 'Everyone's Environment' program to align with the 2004 former Pine Rivers Shire Council Master Plan's proposed revegetation of the environmental reserve) and development of the passive recreation precinct (trails, picnic areas, exercise trail and barbeques).
- Establish the Samford Commons in accordance with the community proposal. This would involve preparing a business plan for the Arts Precinct, Urban Farming Centre, School of Sustainability, business collective, events and tourism.
- Develop a campground at Gibbons Road.
- Reduce the speed limit on Mt Samson Road to 60 or 70 kph (as per the 2004 Master Plan) to allow for safer crossing.



Everyone's future

Want to get involved or find out more? Visit the website for further resources, links and updated info.

www.samfordfutures.org

