VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - UON GOSFORD CAMPUS, 299-305 MANN STREET, GOSFORD

prepared for:

LYONS ARCHITECTURE

terras
landscape architects

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Rev	Description	Initial	Date
A	CLIENT REVIEW	ER	21.11.2022
B	FOR ISSUE	ER	12.12.2022
C	FOR ISSUE	ER	16.12.2022

contents

summary

1. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Terras Landscape Architects has undertaken a visual assessment of the proposed University Of Newcastle Gosford Campus at 299-305 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW, 2250. The assessment has been undertaken to address the project Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) as they relate to visual impact, in particular, 'a visual analysis of the development from key viewpoints.'

The criteria for the visual assessment has been detailed and viewpoint data sheets have been prepared using site photographs to allow the reader to gain a visual appreciation of the views from the identified significant viewing locations.

Additional descriptive text and information has been provided to support this investigation. This summary has been provided as a brief commentary on the findings of the visual assessment.

- The site is located on Darkinjung land. The site is registered as Lots 1/-/DP911163, 1/-/DP911164 and Lots 1-2, 4 and 29-32/1/DP1591 within the Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council and Central Coast Council Local Government Area. The site is zoned B4 - Mixed Use.

- The site is located in the suburb of Gosford, on 299-305 Mann Street. The closest major road corridor is Mann Street, located on the western boundary of site. Access points are from this road corridor, as well as southern boundary, along Beane Street and the eastern boundary, along Hills Street. The site is located within the Gosford City Centre, in the precinct defined as "Gosford City North."

- The local area character units associated within a 1km radius of site include mixed-use, special purpose infrastructure, commercial core, general residential and public recreational zones

- The subject site is located within the Gosford City North precinct, and is identified as a "key site" within Gosford. Characteristics of this site will ensure ridgelines and corridor views to Brisbane Water are maintained through the setback and mixed development guidelines. The site topography falls to the west towards Mann Street

- The proposal involves the removal of a former 'Mitre 10' commercial structure and the construction and operation of a University Of Newcastle (UON) Gosford Campus within an existing mixed-use zoned area. The subject site is surrounded by existing mixed-use development, with a large majority related to the health and commercial sector. To the west, the site adjoins a major road corridor of Gosford, Mann Street, identified as the "city spine" connecting north and south Gosford. The site is located near an existing UON Gosford Campus with the Gosford Hospital to form an extension of the educational precinct.

- The proposed design can be considered an extension of the existing mixed-use precinct and urban district. The proposed works are designed with a consideration of landscaping into the natural slope of site, creating diversity in the streetscape whilst also being consistent with B4 Mixed-Use land zoning requirements. Afforded views are observed in the context of the established mixed-use and special purpose zoned land either side.

- The building envelope is setback from Mann and Beane Streets by six metres to afford outdoor breakout space and reduce the impact to the street frontage. The height has also been reduced from the maximum 60m to approximately 20m. By reducing street frontages and height, the proposed building envelope sensitively reduces the potential impact on views to both Rumbalara and Presidents Hill ridgelines and enhances pedestrian access to open, public space. The dynamic facade allows a broken visual plane from each elevation, avoiding a block presentation of built form to the streetfront

- Viewing locations are restricted to within 250m of the site. Direct views from Mann, Beane and Hills Street are available but are viewed within the urban context and softened by proposed landscaping along streetfront elevations. Fragmented views from the west across the Gosford Rail Corridor are available, however these are only afforded to drivers and pedestrians for limited duration along Showground Road--particularly from the high point at the Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout--and at the top of the stairs within the outdoor public gathering area of Gosford Hospital

- It is acknowledged that the viewing time of pedestrians and general public in the outdoor gathering area of the Gosford Hospital is minimal. The greatest visual access afforded into the site will be to vehicles travelling along Mann, Beane and Hills Street in the immediate vicinity of site. It is noted that these areas are within the mixed-use zone and contain existing/emerging development. Landscaping proposed to the south, east and west elevations of the proposed structure aim to soften views of the built form from all streetfronts and emerge it into the existing urban fabric.

- The visual impact rating has been assessed to be low-moderate. This is a result of views afforded responding to the established character of the area and consistent with the urban, mixed-use context.

In summary, it is considered that the overall visual impact arising from the proposed development is LOW-MODERATE. The incorporation of the public, open space through increased setbacks, is a key design consideration making a positive contribution to the amenity of the site from all elevations. This initiative provides a refreshing facade change amongst the existing built environment streetscape of Mann Street and would assist in achieving the urban revival of the desired, future character of City North as outlined by Gosford City Centre DCP 2018

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of this report are as follows:

- To identify and describe the existing visual/landscape environment and to evaluate its current qualities including an assessment of visual quality.

- To identify viewsheds and to locate and/or identify typical viewpoints from which the impacted areas may be seen.

- To determine what the likely impacts the proposal may cause to the prevailing visual/landscape quality of the area and to make recommendations, where appropriate, to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development if required.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology applied to this study involves systematically evaluating the visual environment pertaining to the site and using value judgements based on community responses to scenery. This identifies aspects that are more objective (such as the physical setting, character and visibility of a proposal), from more subjective aspects, such as the compatibility of the proposal within the setting.

Visual data collection involves systematically evaluating the visual environment from relevant viewpoints through fieldwork to determine the actual potential for views to the site. Once a viewpoint has been identified, data is recorded both photographically and as detailed notes.

The selection of viewpoints has generally been based on locations where potential for views of the proposed development would occur. Viewpoint selection criteria include: consideration of where views can be obtained from publicly frequented locations, such as major traffic corridors; prominent look-outs or locations of high scenic value; or, where members of the local community may be affected.

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance of the requirements of Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (RMS, 2013) and as such, the work has been carried out following the below steps:

- Assess the visibility of the proposal. This includes a review of the existing visual environment/landscape setting of the locality.
- Identify key existing viewpoints and their sensitivity. This requires the preparation of a viewpoint analysis using a representative number of viewpoints located within a reasonable distance of the site located within its visual catchment.
- Assess visual impacts. A brief description of the proposal is included within this section followed by an assessment of the likely impacts based on a composite of the sensitivity of the view and the magnitude of the proposal being a combination of scale, size and character having regard to the proximity of the viewer.

2.3. Terminology

The below meaning for the following terms shall apply to this report:

•The proposal/development site is that activity which has the potential to produce a visual impact either during the works or as a result of it.

•The subject site (referred to also as the site) is defined as the land area directly affected by the proposal within defined boundaries. (re: Lots 1/-/DP911163, 1/-/DP911164 and Lots 1-2, 4 and 29-32/1/DP1591).

•The study area consists of the subject site plus the immediate surrounding land potentially affected by the proposal during its construction and operation phase.

•The study locality is the area of land within the regional visual catchment whereby the proposal can be readily recognised. Generally this is confined to a six-kilometre radius beyond which individual buildings are difficult to discern especially amongst other development where contrasts are low. Further, visual sensitivity generally declines significantly beyond this range due to the broad viewing range that can be had from vantage points. For this study the locality has been limited to the visual catchments that have distances less than one kilometer as views beyond this are restricted.

2.4. Compliance with SEARS

The assessment has been undertaken to address the project SEARs, which require:
'Visual - including an impact assessment at private receptors and public vantage points.'

The table below, along with the contents of this report, outlines the location within this report of where each SEARS issue has been analysed and addressed.

Compliance with SEARS	
REQUIREMENTS	ADDRESSED IN SECTION
Section 5. Environmental Amenity • Assess amenity impacts on the surrounding locality, including lighting impacts, solar access, visual privacy, visual amenity, view loss and view sharing, overshadowing and wind impacts. A high level of environmental amenity for any surrounding residential or other sensitive land uses must be demonstrated	View Analysis undertaken in Sections 3, 4 and 5
Section 6. Visual Impact • Provide a visual analysis of the development from key viewpoints, including photomontages or perspectives showing the proposed and likely future development • Where the visual analysis has identified potential for significant visual impact, provide a visual impact assessment that addresses the impacts of the development on the existing catchment	Visual Analysis undertaken in Section 7 Visual Impact Assessment undertaken in Section 8

3. THE SITE

3.1. Site Context

Gosford is the city and administrative centre of the Central Coast Council Local Government Area, lying approximately 76km north of Sydney and 91km south of Newcastle. The area is largely residential in character, and features a mix of modern, urban development amongst the city centre. It is placed in the centre of the Central Coast region, with large-scale business operations due to its prime accessibility between Sydney and Newcastle. The city centre is situated at the norther extremity of Brisbane Water, an extensive branch of the Hawkesbury River estuary and Broken Bay.

Gosford is the third largest urban area in NSW, and is an important gateway to the Central Coast and is undergoing significant urban change. Gosford has a long civic spine running 1.4km from city south to city north. The intent of the Gosford Urban Design Framework is to create three unique places along this spine, City South, Civic Heart and City North. Rumbalara Reserve featuring bushland adjacent to the heart of Gosford, is a popular recreation attraction with walking trails and lookouts. Views to Brisbane Water and the ridgelines of Rumbalara Reserve and Presidents Hill strongly define key vistas unique to Gosford.

The site address is located on Darkinjung land at 299-305 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW, 2250. It is located north of the central business district, within the Gosford City Centre boundary and an established B4 - Mixed-Use zone on the corner of Mann, Beane and Hills Street. It is formally identified as Lots 1/-/DP911163, 1/-/DP911164 and Lots 1-2, 4 and 29-32/1/DP1591. It is subject to the Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council, Central Coast Council Development Control Plan 2022 and to Central Coast Local Environmental Plan 2022.

The site is located in a minor valley between East and West Gosford, with a steep battering towards the eastern boundary of site. Views from the immediate eastern boundary along Hills Street are superior, and views from the immediate western boundary, along Mann Street, and southern boundary, along Beane Street, are inferior due to the topography of site.

Image 1 The site and immediate surrounds

the site

3.2. Site Description

The site is on a corner lot fronting Mann Street. Access is also available from Beane and Hills Street to the south and east, respectively. The site is adjoined by existing commercial businesses and a residential high rise complex across Beane Street, to the south. The east, west and northern boundaries adjoin existing commercial businesses.

The subject site is currently comprised of a vacant hardware store structure that no longer operates, with scattered, overgrown grassland and former carpark to the rear. The site topography falls to the west towards Mann Street.

The site has an area of approximately 4671.9m^2, and is proposed as a new building to complement the existing University of Newcastle Gosford Campus precinct.

Image 2 Existing neighbouring sites, existing view looking west from Beane Street

Image 3 Site lot boundary

Image 4 Aerial view of the site and access points

4. VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Site Character

Gosford's unique location within a valley, encourages corridor views to Brisbane Water framed by the ridgelines of adjoining Rumbalara Reserve and Presidents Hill. These vistas become key components to characterising Gosford's visual environment.

To all elevations of the site, there is visible freestanding infrastructure associated with the B4 - Mixed Use zone. The land to the south, whilst significantly dominated by residential complexes, are located within the mixed-use zone. The existing buildings are easily recognised, with a strong urban character and unique, surrounding architectural form.

Directly to the west opposite Mann Street, is Gosford Railway Line. Gosford Train Station is located approximately 300m further south.

Mann Street serves as a main linkage corridor between Gosford City North and Gosford City South. This corridor creates direct visual and physical access to Brisbane Water at the south of Mann Street, and ensures views and vistas towards the key area are conserved. Mann Street is identified by its distinctive mixed-use development, diversifying the city from the north to the south, contained by glimpses of the ridgelines of Rumbalara Reserve and Presidents Hill from the east and west, guiding the viewer towards Brisbane Water at the south.

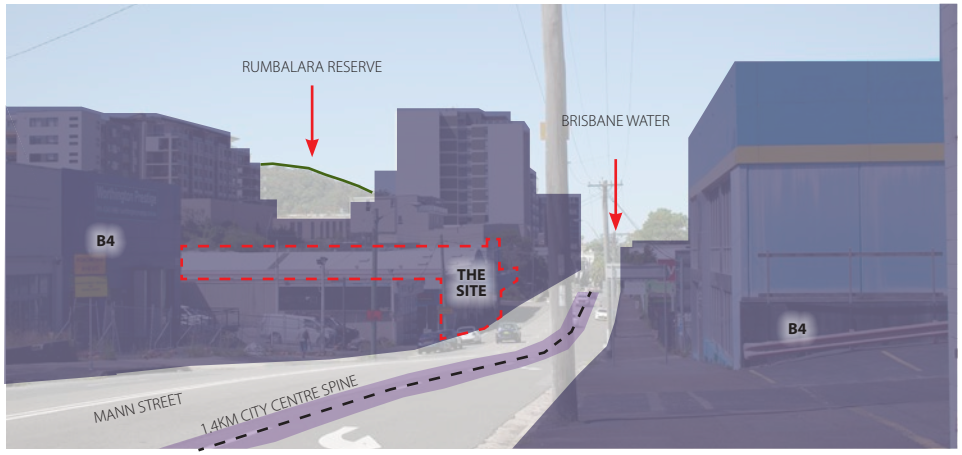

Image 5 Mann Street with existing, mixed-use, urban development and Rumbalara Reserve in the background

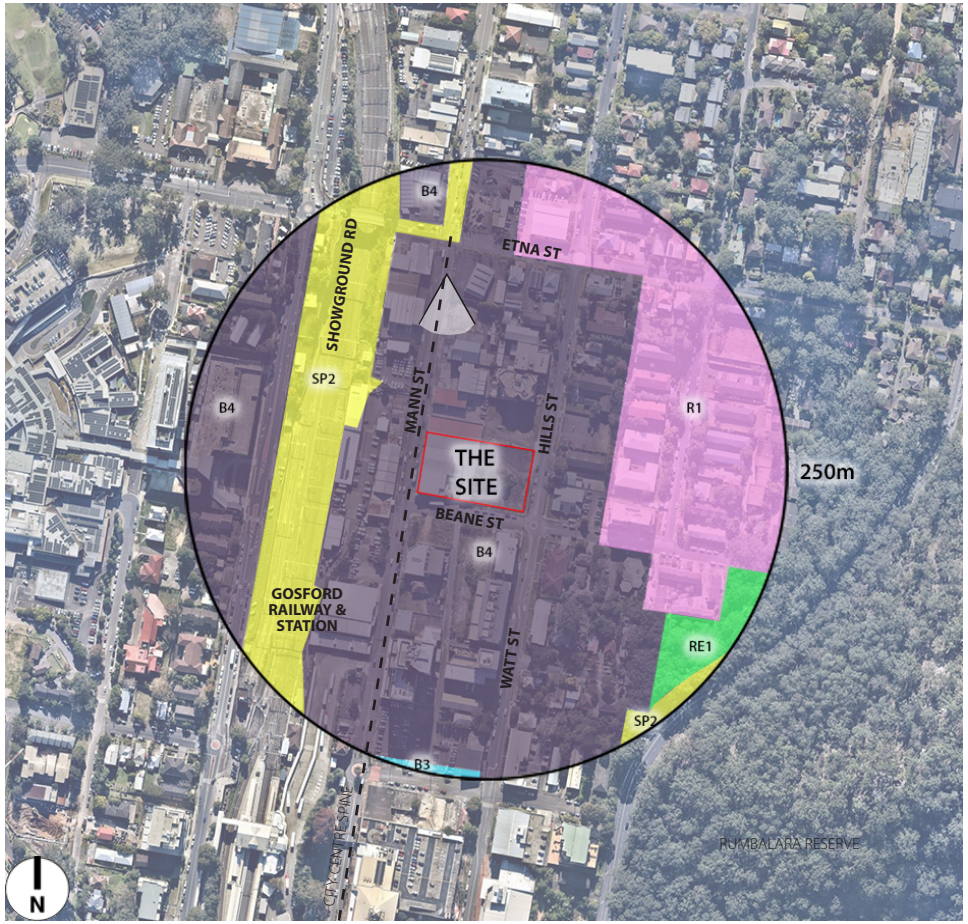

Image 6 Land zoning around site within 250m.

4.2. Landscape Character Units

Gosford DCP 2018 identifies a 1.4km long city spine and has divided this spine into three key areas: City North, Civic Heart and City South. The site lies within City North. The divisions are aimed at creating a sense of connection with the surrounding landscape and existing vegetation and commitment to (not only) the protection and maintenance of these areas, but a celebration of them through corridor views and highlighted ridgelines.

Presidents Hill and Rumbalara Reserve are vital ridgelines defining the Narara Valley. The implementation of "scenic conservation" areas, prevent impacts on the scenic qualities of these escarpment lands. Through the highlighting of these ridgelines, corridor views towards Brisbane Water provide a sense of connection with existing landscape and assist in coordinating development that responds to human scale and celebrates the scale of the surrounding landscape catchment.

The Gosford City North "innovation" precinct aims to connect the north of Gosford with the south through an active and functional city spine, stretching Mann Street. City North sees opportunities for urban renewal and public open spaces that respond to pedestrian links across the rail corridor to meet and enjoy public life. The precinct is characterised by its mixed-use development, combining residential and mixed-use zones to create opportunities for diversity and collaboration within the streetscape.

Five key landscape character units are identifiable within an immediate 250m radius of site. These are:

1. Vegetated hillsides
2. Residential development
3. Central city spine
4. Rail corridor
5. Mixed use and commerical development including land-zoned SP2 - Special purpose associated with the central spine

These are explored in more depth on the next page.

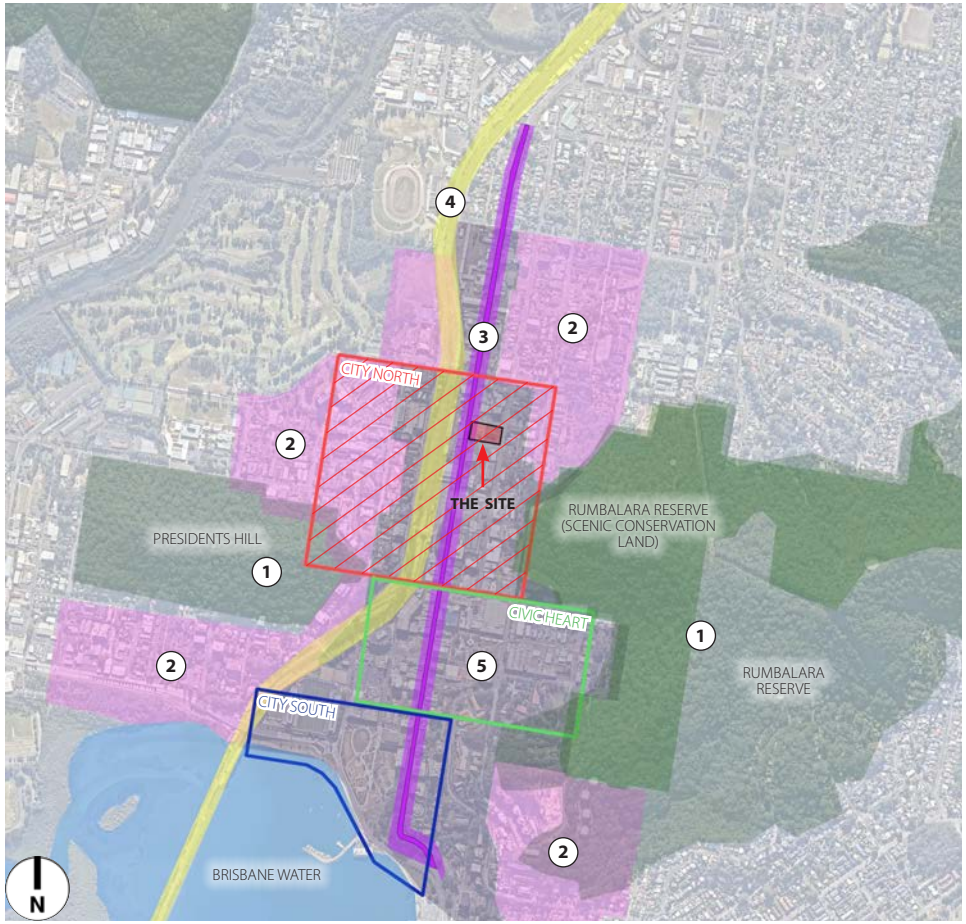

Image 7 5 Key landscape characteristics of Gosford

visual environment

1. VEGETATED HILLSIDES

Image 14 Rumbalara Reserve from Showground Rd, looking east

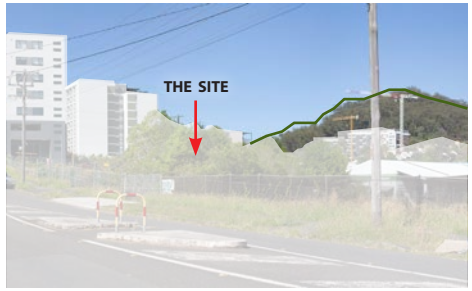

Image 15 Presendents Hill from Hills St, looking south-west

The vegetated hillsides of Rumbalara Reserve and Presidents Hill assist in connecting the City North precinct to the south. Gosford DCP 2018 emphasises the importance of maintaining undeveloped vegetated slopes that connect Gosford to its natural landscape and create a sense of direction and guidance along the city spine of Mann Street towards Brisbane Water at the south. The site's location places it in a key position within the City North, as both ridgelines are visible from east and west elevations guiding viewers towards Brisbane River

2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Image 16 Nearby residential zone - Apartment complex

Image 17 Nearby residential zone - Townhouse complex

A large component of the Gosford DCP 2018 highlights the importance of linking residential and mixed-use development and zoning in order to create a balanced growth amongst the city centre. By interlinking the zones, Gosford city precinct can stabilise access to a variety of essential and optional lifestyle needs, such as food, transport, health facilities and education. The site's location to nearby residential zones and complexes makes it ideal for students, through ease of access to education without significant commute.

3. CENTRAL CITY SPINE

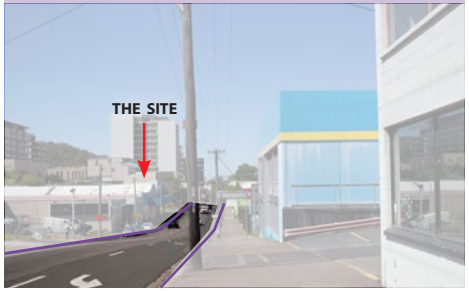

Image 18 Central City Spine, 1.4km along Mann Street, looking south

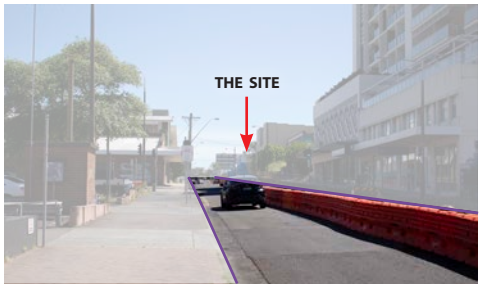

Image 19 Mann Street with mixed use development, looking north

The central civic spine, stretching 1.4km from northern to southern Mann Street, provides Gosford city centre with a diverse array of mixed-use development whilst also increasing access for nearby users to a variety of resources and experiences. The site's location on Mann Street places it at the forefront of civic life within the City North, and connects it with further, mixed-use development along Mann Street.

4. RAIL CORRIDOR

Image 20 Gosford Railway Corridor as key transport area

Image 21 Rail corridor dividing mixed-use space, central to Gosford

Gosford rail corridor runs parallel to Mann Street. The transport line is a central component to easing access to all city precincts and beyond. The corridor divides mixed-use space from Mann Street to Showground Road, and maintains pedestrian linkage between the two. This produces efficient access from mixed-use and special purpose zoning on the west of the rail corridor, to mixed-use and residential premise on the east. The site's location on the east of the rail corridor enhances connection by linking the existing UON Gosford Hospital precinct with the proposed campus.

visual environment

5. MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Image 22 The site from the footpath near Etna/Mann St roundabout

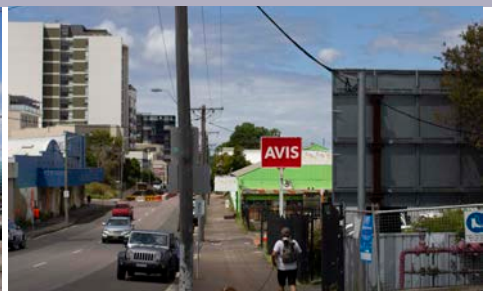

Image 23 Opposite neighbouring site use - Party Shop & Car Rental

Image 24 Nearby neighbouring site use - Car dealership

Image 25 Opposite neighbouring site use - Apartment complex

Image 26 Opposite neighbouring site use - Sports Medicine Centre

Image 27 Nearby neighbouring site use - Apartment complex

Image 28 Neighbouring UON Gosford Campus along Showground Rd

Image 29 Neighbouring Gosford Hosptal parking along Showground Rd

Image 30 Surrounding mixed-use development

Image 31 Surrounding SP2 - Special purpose development

Image 32 Surrounding mixed-use development on Beane St

The surrounding area is characterised by a large array of mixed-use development relating to all facets of daily life. The variety of development, from commercial to residential, health to education, creates a unique sense of urban change amongst City North. The site's incorporation of the public, open space through increased setbacks, provides a refreshing facade change amongst the existing built environment streetscape of Mann Street and surrounding development, whilst also creating a spatial opportunity for diverse public interaction of the various developments.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1. Proposed Project

The University of Newcastle Central Coast Campus is briefed as a 6 Star Green Star, $58 million project comprising a building of approximately 4,500m2 of multi-disciplinary academic and innovation spaces, along with a component of underground parking and significant landscaping of over 2000m2.

The stated aim of The University of Newcastle is to "establish a new health, innovation, and education campus in the heart of Gosford that will activate the Central Coast Education and Employment Precinct and catalyse the ongoing revitalisation of the Gosford CBD." By expanding its presence on the Central Coast, the University will play a pivotal role in transforming Gosford into a thriving university-city at the heart of the region.

The project design is based on principles of inclusion and openness for both University staff and students as well as the local Gosford communities. The design incorporates contemporary teaching and learning spaces, a large community engagement space, an innovation hub, engaging meeting and event spaces and high quality, publicly accessible outdoor space.

There is a strong focus on the activation of the street frontages within the design, providing a welcoming and attractive campus in the context of the planning policy and regional plans. The building envelope is optionally setback from Mann and Beane Streets by six metres to afford outdoor breakout space and reduce street frontage impact. The height has also been optionally reduced from the maximum 60m to include only a ground and three floors. By reducing street frontages and height, the proposed building envelope sensitively reduces the potential impact on views to both Rumbalara and Presidents Hill ridgelines and enhances pedestrian access to open, public space. The dynamic facade allows a broken visual plane from each elevation, avoiding a block presentation of built form to the streetfront.

The building form will complement the future direction of development of the health and education character of the area, by creating an exemplar of design excellence in the 'City North' precinct, through a public facing interface of internal and external spaces - all designed to encourage community use. Through diversity of built form, activity, frontage and entry facade, the proposed mixed-use development will create a unique sense urban renewal, commemorating the heritage significance of the site through an attractive public domain that contributes as a recreational asset to Gosford City North.

The subject site is located in an established mixed-use and special infrastructure zone. The proposal will allow UON to improve public access to education and educational-related spaces and services whilst also providing relief through the incorporation of an extensive public, open space. The subject site is in close proximity to the UON Gosford Hospital Campus and will be ideally located to act as an extension of the existing UON Gosford precinct.

The building will utilise materials which reference Gosford's natural geology and rich industrial history in timber, with warm natural hues alongside richly planted landscape areas creating a welcoming environment aligned with wellness design principles.

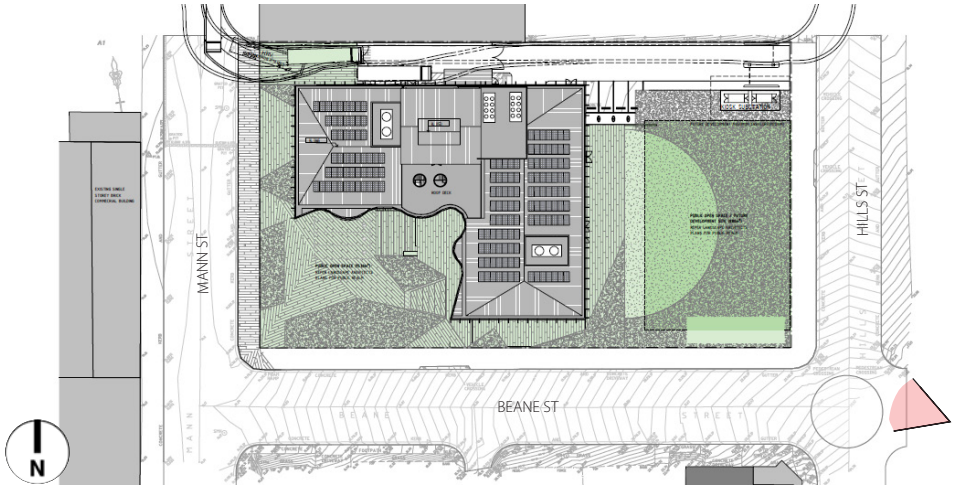

Image 33 Proposed Site Plan

Image 34 Architectural render of proposed works within the existing context.

the proposal

5.2. Proposed Landscaping

The landscaping works include an incorporation of vegetation to soften the built form whilst also matching the existing urban fabric of the immediate surrounds of the site.

The proposed development incorporates various landscaping initiatives allowing for an increase in visual privacy from streetfront elevations through the implementation of a diverse array of species. The planting is expected to provide a positive contribution to the Mann Street streetscape and is commensurate with the scale of the development proposed.

The landscape proposal has divided the site into 6 distinct areas.
- The Community Urban Verandah is a high quality pubic street interface providing increased tree canopy cover and considered edge treatments.
- The Civic Valley Square is the outdoor gathering space, outdoor classroom and flexible space that celebrates the arrival into the site. The space provides a space for activation and events.
- The Escarpment is a variety of gathering spaces at different scales to provide amenity for small group meeting through to an amphitheater for outdoor learning and event gathering.
- The Learning and Innovation Edge provides amenity for outdoor learning immersed within a biodiverse and ecological setting to provide students with a connection to nature
- The Plateau is an open lawn and provides significant flexible space
- The performative roof captures stormwater for reuse and houses PV panels for renewable energy generation.

The material palette will draw upon the sites unique character and context to create a clear identity for the site, with materials such as natural sandstone, engineered stone, exposed aggregate concrete, gravel and timber. The planting palette draws inspiration from local indigenous plant communities to create a sense of place specific to the site. The scheme includes street planting, shade planting, WSUD planting, cultural knowledge planting and ecological grassland planting.

Significant tree planting is proposed to the perimeter of the site which will soften the built facade from views external to the site.

Image 35 Concept Landscape Plan

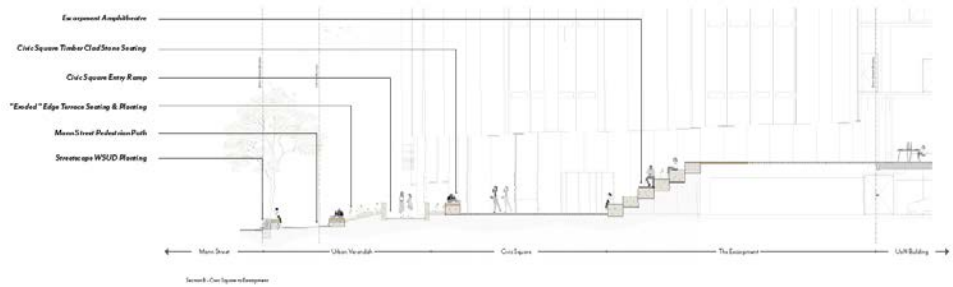

Image 36 Section B - Civic Square to Escarpment; Looking from Beane Street

viewpoint data sheets

6. VIEWPOINT DATA SHEETS

6.1. Viewpoint Analysis

This section of the VIA considers the likely impact that the proposed development may have on the local visual environment. This is achieved by selecting particular sites, referred to as Viewpoints, conducting inspections and determining how the development will appear from these locations.

Where accessible, areas within the study locality were visited to gain an appreciation of views and sight lines back to the subject site. This VIA assesses the existing visual amenity of the site and resultant visual impact of the proposed development.

Landscape assessment is concerned with changes to the physical landscape in terms of features/elements that may give rise to changes in character. Visual appraisal is concerned with the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects on visual amenity. Changes may result in adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive) effects. The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques, uses subjective professional judgement.

Many potential viewpoints were assessed for inclusion in this report. Due to local topography, existing vegetation and development, viewpoints into the site are restricted to motorists and pedestrians travelling within a 250m radius. The greatest visual access afforded into the site will be to vehicles travelling along Mann, Beane and Hills Street in the immediate vicinity of site. Publicly accessible viewing locations are restricted to popular roads, Mann Street and Showground Road, minor roads surrounding the immediate site, and the Gosford Hospital precinct. All other views afforded are fragmented and viewed within the existing SP2 - special purpose and B4 - mixed-use context. Direct views from the Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout and pedestrian pathway and public gathering areas within the Gosford Hospital precinct are available but restricted due to existing built form in the urban context. It is acknowledged that the viewing time of pedestrians and general public in the outdoor gathering area of the Gosford Hospital is minimal due to the exposed nature of the area with minimal shelter and at the top of stairs. Pedestrian and traffic flow in this area was minimal and when observed.

Fragmented views from the western side of the Gosford Railway Line are available, however these are only afforded to drivers and pedestrians on Showground Road.

Photographic images were taken using a digital camera with a focal length approximating a standard 50mm lens for a conventional 35mm camera and equivalent to the human eye, so that all images represent an accurate representation that is neither zoomed in or out. A number of indicative photo panoramas have been included to put views to the site in context with the surrounding area.

Viewer sensitivity and quality is further discussed in the following section.

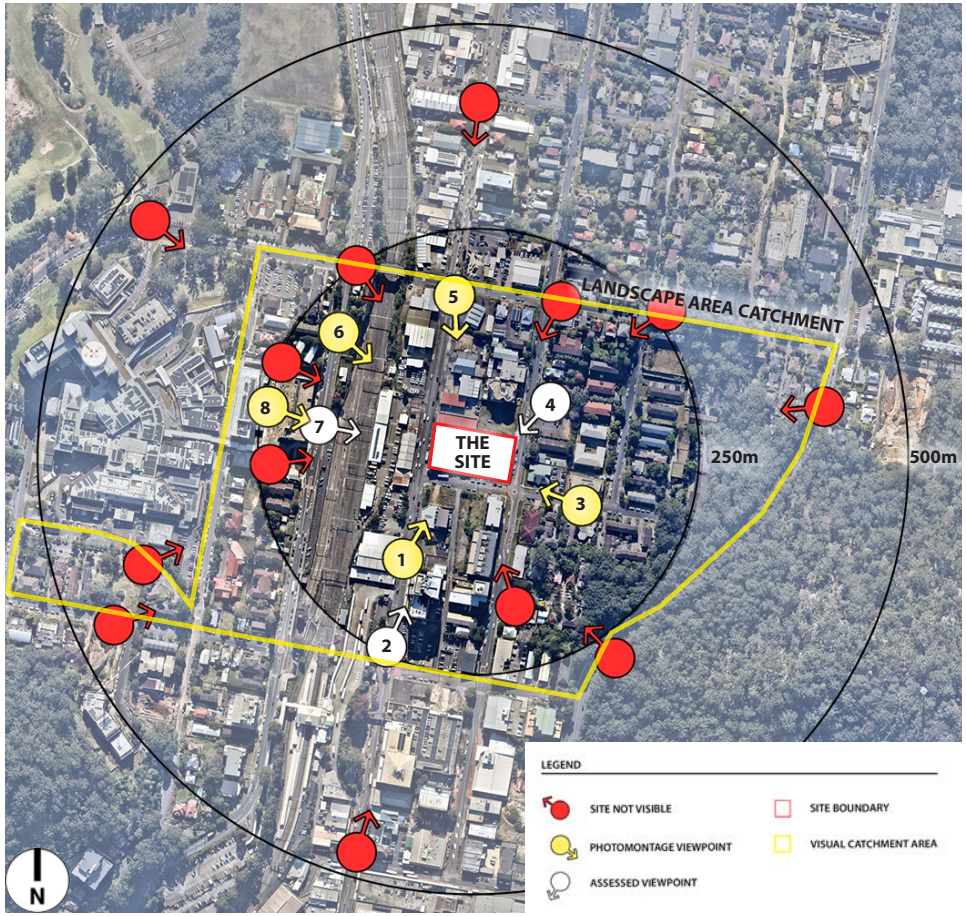

Image 38 Viewpoint locations

viewpoint data sheets

6.2. Viewsheds

The viewshed diagram explores and demonstrates the views into the site. As discussed in the viewpoint analysis, due to local topography, existing vegetation and development, the viewshed area is restricted to within the immediate surrounds, and to a maximum distance of generally 250m.

Vehicles travelling along Showground Road will have a limited and brief view when looking west towards site, due to break in built form, existing vegetation and natural terrain. Viewpoints from Showground Road/Etna Street roundabout and a public, gathering area within the Gosford Hospital precinct are possible due to increased elevation but are fragmented and reduced due to existing built form and existing vegetation. Beyond this, existing views of the site from high points on Henry Parry Drive and Faunce Street West are not possible due to existing vegetation and built form.

View access and effect is further explained in the following section.

Image 39 Viewshed diagram.

7. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

7.1. Visual Quality

The visual quality of an area is essentially an assessment of how viewers may respond to designated scenery. Scenes of high visual quality are those that are valued by a community for the enjoyment and improved amenity that they can create. Conversely, scenes of low visual quality are of little scenic value to the community with a preference that they be changed and improved, often through the introduction of landscape treatments (e.g. screen planting).

As visual quality relates to aesthetics, its assessment tries to anticipate subjective responses. There is evidence to suggest that certain landscapes are continually preferred over others with preferences related to the presence or absence of certain elements.

The rating of visual quality of this study has been based on the following generally accepted conclusions arising from scientific research (DOP, 1988).

- Visual quality increases as relative relief and topographic ruggedness increases.
- Visual quality increases as vegetation pattern variations increase.
- Visual quality increases due to the presence of natural and/or agricultural landscapes.
- Visual quality increases owing to the presence of water forms (without becoming common) and related to water quality and associated activity.
- Visual quality increases with increases in land use compatibility.

VISUAL QUALITY REFERENCE TABLE

ELEMENT		RATING: LOW	RATING: MEDIUM	RATING: HIGH
LANDFORM / RELIEF				
	CONTRAST	FLAT TERRAIN DOMINANT. RIDGELINES NOT OFTEN SEEN.	UNDULATING TERRAIN DOMINANT. LITTLE CONTRAST OR RUGGEDNESS. RIDGELINES PROMINENT IN ONLY HALF OF LESS OF LANDSCAPE UNITS.	HIGH HILLS IN FOREGROUND AND MIDDLE GROUND. PRESENCE OF CLIFFS, ROCKS AND OTHER GEOLOGICAL FEATURES. HIGH RELIEF (E.G. STEEP SLOPES RISING FROM WATER OR PLAIN). RIDGELINES PROMINENT IN MOST OF LANDSCAPE UNIT.
VEGETATION				
	DIVERSITY AND CHANGING PATTERNS	ONE OR TWO VEGETATION TYPES PRESENT IN FOREGROUND. UNIFORMITY ALONG SKYLINE	PATTERNING IN ONLY ONE OR TWO AREAS. 3 OR 4 VEGETATION TYPES IN FOREGROUND FEW EMERGENT OR FEATURE TREES	HIGH DEGREE OF PATTERNING IN VEGETATION. 4 OR MORE DISTINCT VEGETATION TYPES. EMERGENT TREES PROMINENT AND DISTINCTIVE TO REGION.
NATURALNESS				
	CORRECT BALANCE	DOMINANCE OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN MANY PARTS OF A LANDSCAPE	SOME EVIDENCE OF DEVELOPMENT BUT NOT DOMINANT	ABSENCE OF DEVELOPMENT OR MINIMAL DISTURBANCE WITHIN LANDSCAPE UNIT. PRESENCE OF PARKLAND OR OTHER OPEN SPACE INCLUDING BEACH, LAKESIDE, ETC.
WATER				
	PRESENCE, EXTENT AND CHARACTER	LITTLE OR NO VIEW OF WATER. WATER IN THE BACKGROUND WITHOUT PROMINENCE. PRESENCE OF POLLUTED WATER OR STAGNANT WATER.	MODERATE EXTENT OF WATER. PRESENCE OF CALM WATER. NO ISLANDS, CHANNELS, MEANDERING WATER. INTERMITTENT STREAMS, LAKES, RIVERS, ETC.	DOMINANCE OF WATER IN FOREGROUND AND MIDDLE GROUND. PRESENCE OF FLOWING WATER, TURBULENCE AND PERMANENT WATER.
DEVELOPMENT				
	FORM & IDENTITY	PRESENCE OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES. PRESENCE OF LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT (E.G. MINING INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC) RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	PRESENCE OF ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. SMALL SCALE, INDUSTRIAL ETC IN MIDDLEGROUND. PRESENCE OF SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.	PRESENCE OF RURAL STRUCTURES (E.G. FARM BUILDINGS, FENCES ETC.). HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES APPARENT. ISOLATED DOMESTIC SCALE STRUCTURES.

Source: After Clouston & Brouwer, 1995

assessment criteria

7.2. Viewer Access

This considers the relative number and type of viewers, the viewer distance, the viewing duration and view context. The rationale is that if the number of people who would potentially see portions of the proposal is low, then the visual impact would be low, compared to when a large number of people would have the same view.

VIEWER ACCESS MATRIX

		VIEWER DISTANCE											
		VERY SHORT (<1km)			SHORT (1-2km)			MEDIUM (2-3km)			LONG/DISTANT (>3km)		
		VIEWING DURATION											
		>10mins	10-30mins	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins
VIEWER NUMBERS	VERY LOW (>49 PEOPLE PER DAY)	L	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	M/L	L	L	L
	LOW (50-149 PEOPLE PER DAY)	L	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	M	L	L	L
	MODERATE (150-199 PEOPLE PER DAY)	M	H	H	M	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	L
	HIGH (>200 PEOPLE PER DAY)	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	L	L	M

Source: Adapted from

7.3. Visual Effect

Visual effect is the interaction between a proposal and the existing visual environment. It is often expressed as the level of visual contrast of the proposal against its setting or background in which it is viewed.

This is particularly important should any proposed development extend above the skyline unless, once again, there are particular circumstances that may influence viewer perception and/or visual impact.

It should be noted that a high visual effect does not necessarily equate with a reduction in scenic quality. It is the combination of both visual sensitivity and visual effect that results in visual impact.

VISUAL EFFECT TABLE

LEVELS	HIGH	RESULTS WHEN A PROPOSAL PRESENTS ITSELF WITH HIGH VISUAL CONTRAST TO ITS VIEWED LANDSCAPE WITH LITTLE OR NO INTEGRATION AND/OR SCREENING.
	MODERATE	RESULTS WHERE A PROPOSAL NOTICEABLY CONTRASTS WITH ITS VIEWED LANDSCAPE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN SOME DEGREE OF INTEGRATION (E.G. GOOD SITING PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED, RETENTION OF SIGNIFICANT EXISTING VEGETATION, PROVISION OF SCREEN LANDSCAPING, CAREFUL COLOUR SELECTION AND/OR APPROPRIATELY SCALED DEVELOPMENT).
	LOW	OCCURS WHEN A PROPOSAL BLENDS IN WITH ITS EXISTING VIEWED LANDSCAPE DUE TO A HIGH LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF ONE OR SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING: FORM, SHAPE, PATTERN, LINE, TEXTURE OR COLOUR. IT CAN ALSO RESULT FROM THE USE OF EFFECTIVE SCREENING OFTEN USING A COMBINATION OF LANDFORM AND LANDSCAPING.
	NEGLIGIBLE	THERE ARE NO VIEWS OF THE PROPOSAL COMPONENTAS AND AS SUCH THERE IS NOT IMPACT

Source: Adapted from

assessment criteria

7.4. Visual Sensitivity

Another aspect affecting visual assessments is visual sensitivity. This is the estimate of the significance that a change will have on a landscape and to those viewing it. For example, a significant change that is not frequently seen may result in a low visual sensitivity although its impact on a landscape may be high.

The assessment of visual sensitivity is based on a number of variables such as: the number of people affected; viewer location including distance from the source; the surrounding land use and degree of change. Variables may also include viewer position, i.e. inferior, where the viewer's station is below the horizontal axis as characterise by looking up (least preferred), neutral, where the viewer sight line is generally along the horizontal axis, and, superior, where the viewer sight line is above the horizontal axis as characterise by looking down to an object (most preferred).

Generally the following principles apply:

- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewer distance increases. This occurs as changes to the scenic environment must be assessed over a broader viewshed which is comprised of a greater number of competing elements.
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time decreases.
- Visual sensitivity can also be related to viewer activity (e.g. a person viewing an affected site while engaged in recreational activities will be more strongly affected by change than someone passing a scene in a car travelling to a desired destination).
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the number of potential viewers decreases.

Visually sensitive landscapes include:

- Main ridgelines
- Significant natural landscape features such as coastal headlands, prominent hills, lake channel entrances, lake islands and lake promontories
- National Parks, State Recreation Areas and other protected natural conservation areas
- Other areas zoned for natural values (areas zoned e2 - Environmental Conservation)
- WIthin 100m of the lake edge
- Within 300m of the coastal edge
- Heritage conservation areas and precincts

The adjoining table outlines the visual sensitivity based on the above criteria.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY TABLE

		DISTANCE ZONES				
		FOREGROUND 0-0.5km	FOREGROUND 0.5-1km	MIDGROUND 1-1.5km	MIDGROUND 1.5 - 2km	BACKGROUND (>2km)
LAND USE	RESIDENTIAL: RURAL OR URBAN	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	NATURAL AREAS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	TOURIST OR PASSIVE RECREATION	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	MAJOR TRAVEL CORRIDORS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	TOURIST ROADS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	MINOR ROADS	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	AGRICULTURAL AREAS	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	INDUSTRIAL AREAS	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY

Source: Adapted from EDAW, 2000

assessment criteria

7.5. Visual Impact

Visual impact is the assessment of changes in the appearance of the landscape as the result of some intervention typically man-induced, to the visual quality of an area having regard to visual sensitivity and visual effect and the other attributes that these elements embody as discussed above.

Visual impact may be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction). When visual impacts are negative, the loss of visual quality needs to be determined and when they are found to be undesirable or unacceptable, then mitigation measures need to be formulated with the aim of reducing the impact to within, at least acceptable limits.

The adjoining table illustrates how Visual Effect and Visual Sensitivity levels combine to produce varying degrees of Visual Impact. The overall project assessment summary is marked in red and is assessed as LOW/MODERATE**.** Further assessment is provided in the Visual Evaluation for selected viewpoints.

7.6. Visual Absorption

Visual absorption capacity (VAC) is the physical capacity of a landscape to accept human alterations without loss of its inherent visual character or scenic quality.

VISUAL IMPACT TABLE

		VISUAL EFFECTS LEVELS			
		HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
VISUAL SENSITIVITY LEVELS	HIGH	HIGH IMPACT	HIGH IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	MODERATE	HIGH IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	LOW	MODERATE IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT

Source: EDAW, 2000

viewpoint 1

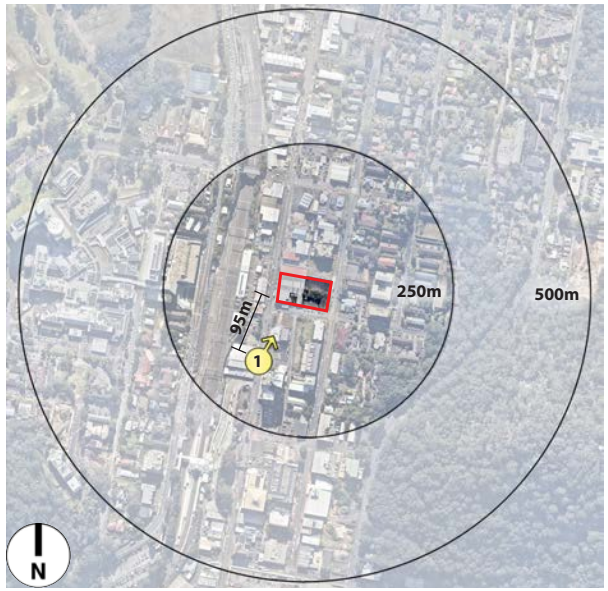

Image 40 Viewpoint 1, existing view. Looking north from Mann Street outside Gosford Community Corrections Office

Viewpoint 1	
Location	Mann Street, looking north. This view is typical of users traveling north along Mann Street. Due to the topography, the viewer position is neutral. The visual sensitivity is considered high as Mann Street experiences high levels of traffic and is located within the established mixed-use development of Gosford City Centre. The proposed works will be located between existing commercial and vacant developments but is setback from the existing streetfront plane, as not to dominate the streetscape and provide space for large trees along Mann Street, thus the visual effect is low. The removal of the degraded, existing, former Mitre 10 building and establishment of the proposed development will be an improvement of the streetscape from these viewpoints. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated moderate.
Distance to the site	95m south of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

photomontage - viewpoint 1

Image 41 Viewpoint 1, existing view. Looking north from Mann Street outside Gosford Community Corrections Office

Image 42 Viewpoint 1, proposed view. Looking north from Mann Street outside Gosford Community Corrections Office. Indicative photomontage from this viewpoint of proposed works.

viewpoint 2

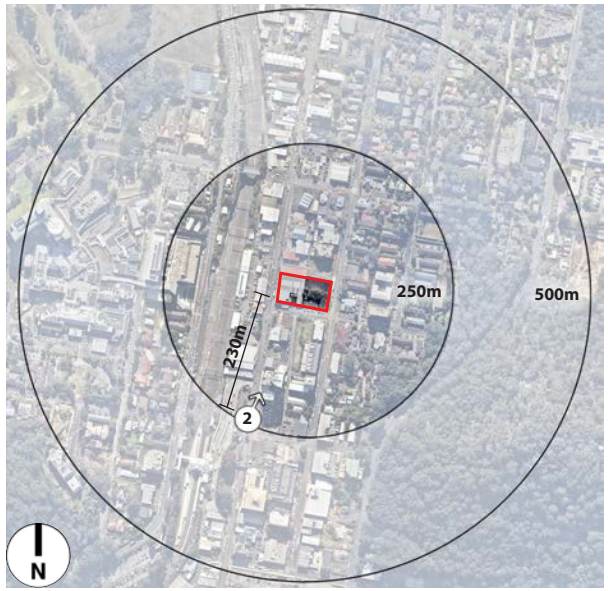

Image 43 Viewpoint 2, existing view. Looking north from Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout

Viewpoint 2	
Location	Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout, looking north. This view is typical of vehicles traveling north along Mann Street at the Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout. Due to the topography, the viewer position is neutral. The visual sensitivity is considered high as Mann Street is a major road with high levels of traffic and is located within an established mixed-use development area. The proposed works will be located between existing commercial and special infrastructure developments, and will be visible from this location, however, very limited as foreground development dominates the view. The proposed works will be located between existing commercial and vacant developments but optionally setback from the existing streetfront plane, as not to dominate the streetscape and provide space for vegetation along Mann Street, thus making the visual effect is low. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated low.
Distance to the site	230m south of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access		■	
Visual Sensitivity			■
Visual Effect	■		
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

indicative location - viewpoint 2

Image 44 Viewpoint 2, existing view. Looking north from Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout

Image 45 Viewpoint 2, proposed view. Looking north from Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout. Indicative form and shape from this viewpoint of proposed works without vegetation.

viewpoint 3

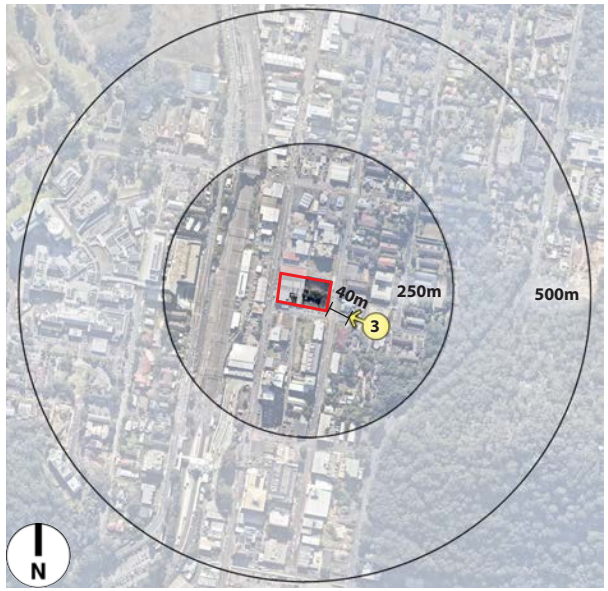

Image 46 Viewpoint 3, existing view. Looking west from Beane Street.

Viewpoint 3

Location	Beane Street, looking west. This view is typical of vehicles travelling west from residential areas through to the mixed-use zone on Beane Street. The viewer position is superior. There is light traffic flow as this portion of Beane Street experiences significantly less traffic and limited audience (largely relevant to the local immediate residential area). Visual sensitivity is high due to proximity and visual access is considered moderate, as current views--whilst afforded to drivers and pedestrians at close range, is available in brief periods. It is expected that views to vegetated ridges may be partially interrupted by the proposed development. The visual effect is moderate, as the proposal noticeably contrasts with its viewed landscape, however, colour selection, facade treatment, screen planting and scale have been used to achieve integration. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact for this viewpoint is rated moderate.
Distance to the site	40m east of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access	■		
Visual Sensitivity		■	
Visual Effect		■	
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

photomontage - viewpoint 3

Image 47 Viewpoint 3, existing view. Looking west from Beane Street.

Image 48 Viewpoint 33, proposed view. Looking west from Beane Street. Indicative form and shape from this viewpoint of proposed works without vegetation.

viewpoint 4

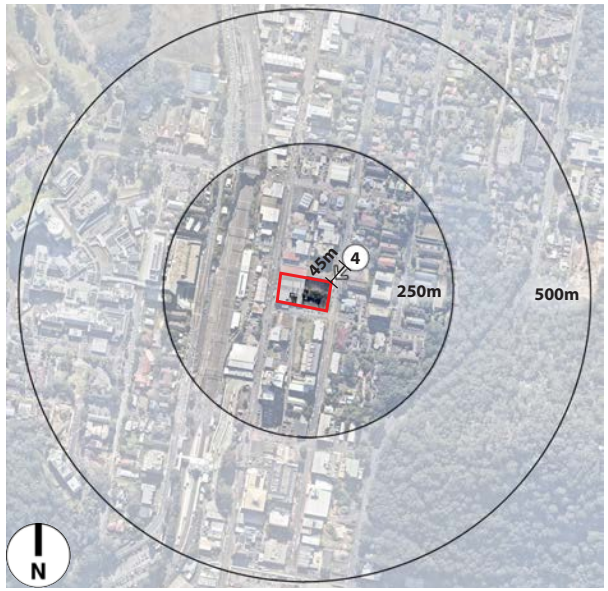

Image 49 Viewpoint 4, existing view. Looking south-west from Hills Street

Viewpoint 4	
Location	Hills Street, looking south-west. This view is typical of vehicles traveling south along Hills Street. The visual sensitivity is considered moderate as Hills Street is a minor road with medium levels of traffic and is located within an established mixed-use development area. The proposed works will be located between existing commercial and residential developments within the mixed-use zone, and will be visible from this location, causing viewer access to be high. Views to vegetated ridges will be interrupted by the proposed development. The visual effect is moderate, as careful colour selection scale and facade treatment will ensure a degree of integration. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated low.
Distance to the site	45m north-east of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

indicative location - viewpoint 4

Image 50 Viewpoint 4, existing view. Looking south-west from Hills Street

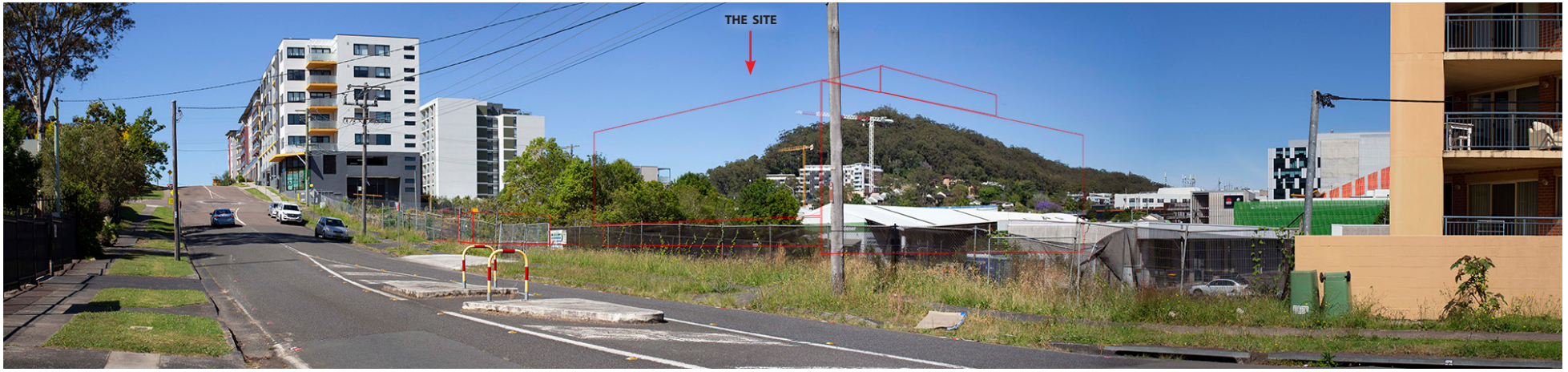

Image 51 Viewpoint 4, proposed view. Looking south-west from Hills Street. Indicative form and shape from this viewpoint of proposed works without vegetation.

viewpoint 5

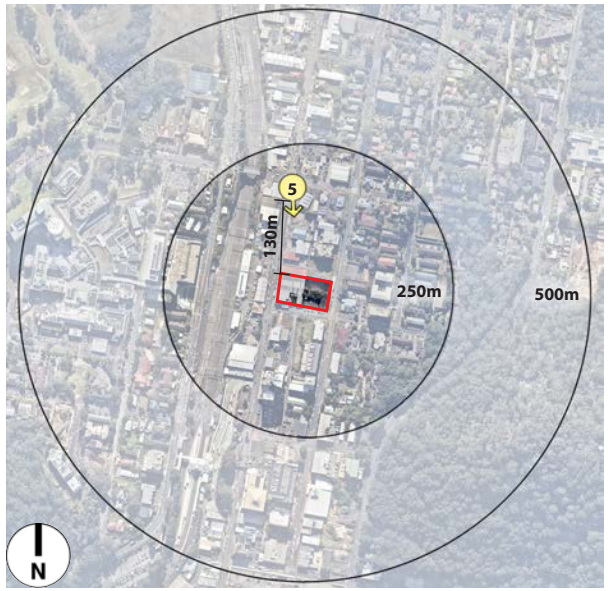

Image 52 Viewpoint 5, existing view. Looking south-east from Etna Street/Mann Street roundabout

Viewpoint 5	
Location	Etna Street/Mann Street roundabout, looking south-east. This view is typical of vehicles traveling south along Mann Street. The viewer position is superior. The visual sensitivity is considered high as Mann Street is a major road with high levels of traffic and is located within an established mixed-use development area. The proposed works will be located between existing commercial and special infrastructure developments, and will be visible from this location. Viewer access is high. The visual effect is low, as scale and facade treatment have been carefully selected. It is considered, that from this viewpoint the proposal will be in keeping with the desired future character of Mann Street. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated moderate.
Distance to the site	130m north-west of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

photomontage - viewpoint 5

Image 53 Viewpoint 5, existing view. Looking south-east from Etna Street/Mann Street roundabout

Image 54 Viewpoint 5, proposed view. Looking south-east from Etna Street/Mann Street roundabout. Photomontage from this viewpoint of proposed works

viewpoint 6

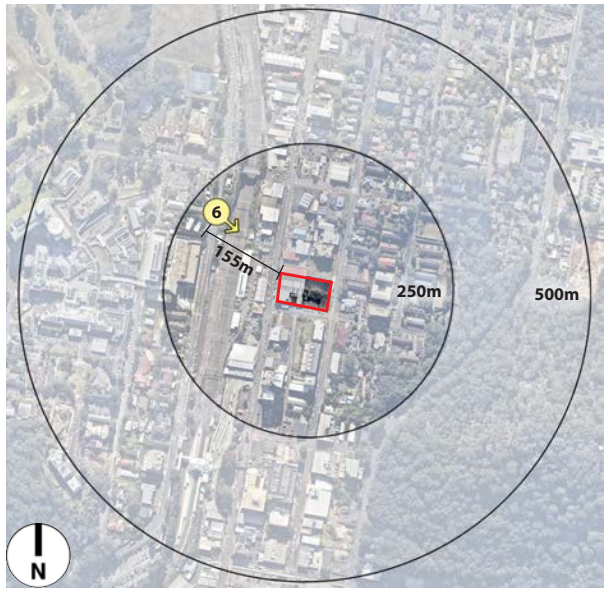

Image 55 Viewpoint 6, existing view. Looking south-east from pedestrian footpath/residential townhouse driveway at Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout

Viewpoint 6	
Location	Faunce Street, looking south-east. This view is typical of pedestrians and vehicles traveling south-east from the Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout. The viewer position is superior. There is high traffic flow as this is a linking street between North Gosford, Gosford City Centre and Gosford Train Station. Visual sensitivity and visual access is considered high due to viewer numbers. The current view is afforded to drivers in brief periods and pedestrians and habitants of the residential townhouses located immediately behind. The proposed site is assumed to largely blend with existing form, thus, not dominant the streetscape from this location. Therefore, the visual effect is low. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact for this viewpoint is rated low.
Distance to the site	155m north-west of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Moderate		

photomontage - viewpoint 6

Image 56 Viewpoint 6, existing view. Looking south-east from pedestrian footpath/residential townhouse driveway at Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout

Image 57 Viewpoint 6, proposed view. Looking south-east from pedestrian footpath/residential townhouse driveway at Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout. Photomontage from this viewpoint of proposed works

viewpoint 7

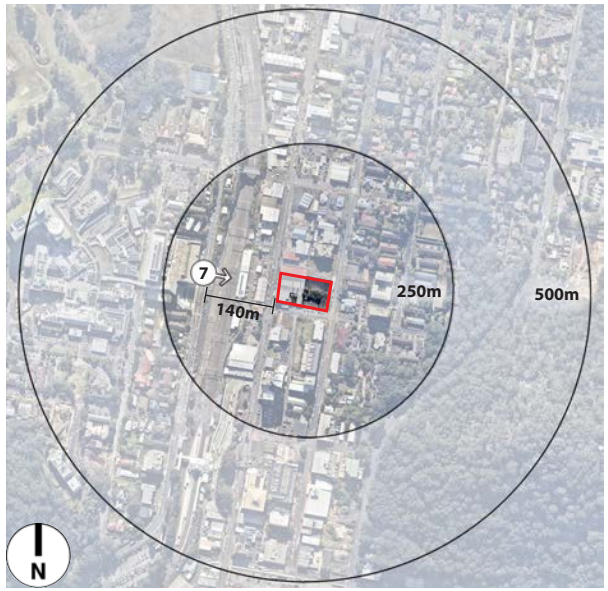

Image 58 Viewpoint 7, existing view. Looking east from Showground Road.

Viewpoint 7	
Location	Showground Road, looking east. This view is typical of pedestrians and vehicles traveling along Showground Road. The viewer position is neutral. There is high traffic flow as this is a linking street between North Gosford, Gosford City Centre and Gosford Train Station. Visual sensitivity is considered moderate due to viewer numbers and predominant, established built form and frequent train interference with views from this viewpoint making views negligible. The current view is afforded to drivers and pedestrians in brief periods. The proposed site is assumed to largely blend with existing form, thus, not dominant the streetscape from this location. Therefore, the visual effect is low. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact for this viewpoint is rated low.
Distance to the site	140m west of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Low		

indicative location - viewpoint 7

Image 59 Viewpoint 7, existing view. Looking east from Showground Road.

Image 60 Viewpoint 7, proposed view. Looking east from Showground Road. Indicative placement and shape from this viewpoint of proposed works without vegetation.

viewpoint 8

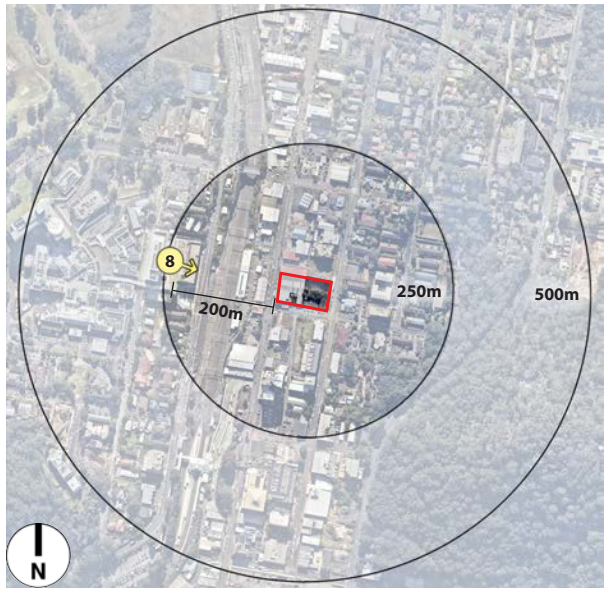

Image 61 Viewpoint 8, existing view. Looking east from public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at top of stairs.

Viewpoint 8	
Location	Public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at top of stairs, looking east. This view is typical of pedestrians standing in the public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at top of stairs, looking east. The viewer position is superior. When observed, user traffic was low in this area and related largely to the health precinct. Visual sensitivity is considered moderate. Viewer access is considered low due to viewer numbers and location of viewpoint at top of stairs reducing chance for extended viewing time unless stationary. The current view is afforded to pedestrians in brief periods from a superior viewpoint, and the proposed site is assumed to largely blend with existing form surrounding site, thus, not dominant the streetscape from this location. Therefore, the visual effect is low. Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact for this viewpoint is rated low.
Distance to the site	200m west of the site
Visual Quality	Low

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Effect			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria is: Low		

photomontage - viewpoint 8

Image 62 Viewpoint 8, existing view. Looking east from public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at top of stairs.

Image 63 Viewpoint 8, proposed view. Looking east from public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at top of stairs. Photomontage from this viewpoint of proposed works.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1. Discussion

This section considers the general impact the proposal may have on the local visual environment and identifies those areas where the visual impact may potentially be the most significant. This was done by undertaking a surrounding site inspection and broadly scoping the study area to identify where the proposed development would likely to be visible and appear to be most prominent. Visual effect may be either based on the degree of exposure or the number of people likely to be affected.

The main views available to drivers and pedestrians are when travelling along Mann Street but are viewed in the existing built, urban context and softened by proposed front, side and rear landscaping. The nearest residential area is located approximately 70m east of the site but views from these areas of site when afforded, are viewed in the context of the established mixed-use and special purpose zoned land. Views from Showground Road and an outdoor, public gathering area located within the Gosford Hospital precinct, whilst fragmented, are superior due to the nature of the site in a minor valley but are reduced due to foreground built structures, existing vegetation, natural terrain and distance. Mann Street and Showground Road experience frequent traffic loads as they operates as traffic connection points between North Gosford and Gosford City Centre. Beane, Watt and Hills Street experience less traffic as they operate as minor roads. Beyond this, existing views of the site from high points on Henry Parry Drive, Etna Street (excluding the Mann Street and Showground road intersections), Faunce Street West and Ward Street are not possible due to existing vegetation and built form.

Viewpoints 1 and 5 are typical of people travelling along Mann Street. The site is immediately visible as it is in the foreground. Whilst neutral in position, and despite partial screening from existing development, viewer access and sensitivity is considered high as the road is a high-traffic location and the site is located on a corner lot. It is to be noted that the proposed works will be located between established, urban development in the mixed-use zone but setback from the existing streetfront plane, as not to dominate the streetscape and provide space for large trees along Mann Street, thus a moderate overall impact from these viewpoints.

Viewpoint 2 is typical of vehicles travelling north along Mann Street after exiting the Faunce Street/Mann Street roundabout. The viewer position is neutral. Despite frequent traffic, viewer access is considered moderate due to visibility of site from this view. Views of the proposed works from this viewpoint, to a large extent, are negligible, due to distance and existing development dominating the foreground from this location, viewer access is considered moderate despite being a high-traffic connection point from North Gosford to Gosford City Centre. The proposal will remain consistent in nature with surrounding mixed-use development, the overall visual impact will be low due to the visual absorption being high and the visual quality being low.

Viewpoint 3 and 6 are typical of vehicles traveling and/or viewing the proposed site from residential areas. The viewer positions are superior. There is light traffic flow along Viewpoint 3 as this portion of Beane Street operates as a minor road, used predominantly by residents, therefore, viewer access is considered low. Visual sensitivity is considered moderate, as current views are only afforded to drivers and residents travelling west along this minor road. Visual effect is considered moderate as the development noticeably contrasts with its vegetated background, but has some degree of integration. Therefore, the overall impact is to be considered moderate.

Viewpoint 6 is considered from the perspective of pedestrians and vehicles looking south-east towards site at the Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout. Visual sensitivity is considered high, as current views are afforded to drivers and residents with prominent natural vegetation in the background. However, as views of site do not exceed or dominate the existing eye line or interfere with the vegetated ridgelines, visual effect is considered low and the overall impact is to be considered low.

Viewpoint 4 is considered from viewers traveling south along Hills Street. The viewer position is neutral. There is medium traffic flow as these operate as linking streets between mixed, commercial and residential use zones. Views to vegetated ridges will be partially interrupted by the proposed development. Visual sensitivity and access is considered moderate due to viewer numbers and predominant, established built form from this viewpoint. Therefore, the overall impact of this viewpoint is to be considered moderate.

Viewpoint 7 is typical of users traveling along Showground Road. There is high traffic flow as this is a linking street between North Gosford, Gosford City Centre and Gosford Train Station. Visual sensitivity is considered moderate as the current view is afforded to drivers and pedestrians in brief periods due to screening from the infrastructure of the Gosford Railway line in the immediate foreground. Therefore, the overall impact of this viewpoint is to also be considered low.

Viewpoint 8 is considered from viewers standing stationary in the public gathering area within Gosford Hospital Precinct at the top of the stairs, looking east. The current view is afforded to pedestrians in brief periods from a superior viewpoint, with user traffic low in this area and largely to the health precinct. The proposed site is assumed to largely blend with existing form surrounding site, thus, not dominant the streetscape from this location, causing the overall impact to be low from this location.

Protected Views

As identified in City of Gosford DCP 4.4 the character of Gosford is strongly defined by significant views. The site is located within the Gosford City North precinct, in a mixed-use zone, along the central city spine. The site is identified as a "key site" within Gosford--a crucial component to the sense of connection and place within the broader community and its relationship to the broader Gosford community. The site does not impede key views as outlined in Figure 4 of City of Gosford DCP 2018.

Ridgelines and corridor views to Brisbane Water are generally maintained (excluding Viewpoints 3 and 4 which operate as minor roads). SEPP 2021 Chapter 5 – Gosford City Centre, clause 5.53 states that the objective of these setbacks is to protect and enhance key vistas and view corridors in Gosford City Centre. The shape of the building

mass and consideration of setbacks and open space ensures the existing vistas along Mann Street are reinforced and respected. Vistas are views along streets that are framed with buildings. The proposed development fronting Mann Street, identified as a commercial spine, will reinforce the vista south to Brisbane Waters. The proposed building has been designed to minimise its impact on these views set back from Mann Street.

The visual absorption capacity of the visual catchment area is high due to the character units identified within the immediate vicinity of the site, being Mann Street as the city spine, and the mixed-use, commercial development associated with it. The proposed development will reinforce the north/south vista while setting a new development standard in keeping with the desired future character of the City North.

Viewpoint Summary

	ACCESS	SENSITIVITY	EFFECT	IMPACT
Viewpoint / Photomontage 1 - Looking north from Mann Street (95m)	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	MODERATE
Viewpoint / Indicative Location 2 - Looking north from Etna/ Mann Street roundabout (230m)	MODERATE	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Viewpoint / Photomontage 3 - Looking west from Beane Street (40m)	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Viewpoint / Indicative Location 4 - Looking south-west from Hills Street (45m)	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Viewpoint / Photomontage 5 - Looking south-east from Etna Street/Mann Street (130m)	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	MODERATE
Viewpoint / Photomontage 6 - Looking south-east from Etna Street/Showground Road roundabout (155m)	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Viewpoint / Indicative Location 7 - Looking east from Showground Road (140m)	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	LOW
Viewpoint / Photomontage 8 - Looking east from Gosford Hospital precinct (200m)	LOW	MODERATE	LOW	LOW

8.2. Conclusion and Recommendations

A review of the visual catchment of the proposed development site showed that views of the site were limited to within 250m of the site due to topography, existing and proposed vegetation and the existing, established built environment associated with Mann Street.

Generally the viewpoints assessed are viewed within the context of the surrounding landscape, and the proposed development will integrate with the existing environment due to its form, and the use of landscaping.

The proposed development will interrupt views to ridgelines from Viewpoints 3 and 4, however, this is to be expected as development occurs in association with Mann Street. It is acknowledged that these viewpoints are from minor roads and the building impact is further reduced as the overall height of the proposed site is significantly less than the maximum allowed, therefore visual access is low. The proposed development has considered façade treatment, scale, and colour in association with tree planting to ensure a degree of integration from these viewpoints.

The proposed development is considered to be consistent with the character of the area. The proposal will have a low accumulative visual impact on the surrounding area, with the exception of immediate proximity views to be moderate, with the proposed works blending with the established mixed-use, urban character of the area while creating a high quality public, open space.

This will result in a LOW-MODERATE visual impact overall.

The following recommendations are provided:
- Implementation of the landscaping plan prepared and submitted with the DA.
- Planting to be undertaken as soon as practicable
- Ensure regular maintenance to landscaped areas

9. REFERENCES

Central Coast Council Development Control Plan 2022 (DCP).

Central Coast Local Environmental Plan 2022 (LEP).

Gosford City Centre Development Control Plan 2018 (DCP).

Gosford City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP).

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Nearmap, 2022

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