

Visual Impact Assessment

Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation: State Significant Development Application

500 Harris Street, Ultimo
Infrastructure NSW



'Gura Bulga'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.

By using the green and blue colours to represent NSW, this painting unites the contrasting landscapes. The use of green symbolises tranquillity and health. The colour cyan, a greenish-blue, sparks feelings of calmness and reminds us of the importance of nature, while various shades of blue hues denote emotions of new beginnings and growth. The use of emerald green in this image speaks of place as a fluid moving topography of rhythmical connection, echoed by densely layered patterning and symbolic shapes which project the hypnotic vibrations of the earth, waterways and skies.

Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We acknowledge the Gadigal people, of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land where this document was prepared, and all peoples and nations from lands affected.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Executive summary

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has required preparation of a visual impact assessment to assist in understanding the likely impact of this proposal on both the public domain and private domain.

To satisfy the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements, Ethos Urban was engaged by Infrastructure NSW to prepare this visual impact assessment. This version of the VIA has been revised to include an indication of proposed building materiality and landscaping.

Sensitivity to the nature of change proposed is as follows:

- High sensitivity: 3 viewpoints
- Medium sensitivity: 3 viewpoints.

The magnitude of the nature of change proposed is as follows:

- Considerable magnitude of change: 2 viewpoints
- Perceptible magnitude of change: 3 viewpoints
- Imperceptible magnitude of change: 1 viewpoint.

As a consequence, the significance of visual impact is as follows:

- Moderate significance of visual impact: 2 viewpoints
- Low significance of visual impact: 3 viewpoints
- Negligible significance of visual impact: 1 viewpoint.

The highest visual impact will be experienced from Harris Street.

When further considering the findings of the assessment of the photomontages, in particular against relevant parts of the statutory planning framework, this visual impact assessment makes the following additional findings:

Heritage

- By not being visible from the Pier Street viewpoint, the proposal retains the visual integrity and dominance of the landmark, State heritage listed Boiler House and Engine Room when seen from this highly trafficked gateway into Ultimo
- By replacing existing buildings and structures in the south-east corner of the site, the proposal substantially increases visibility of the State heritage listed Boiler House, Turbine Hall and Switch House from the public domain, and in particular the Goods Line. This enables greater visual integration with the Goods Line and the adjacent Harwood Building.

Bulk and scale

- The proposal's visual bulk and scale is considered appropriate as it has a floor space ratio considerably less than what is permissible for the site under the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012
- Apparent scale is broken up by measures such as the massing, articulation and use of materials and colours in externally visible elevations.

Significant public views

- The proposal does not block or otherwise impact significant view corridors as identified in the statutory planning framework

Streetscape and townscape

- The proposal incorporates a range of measures that create a streetscape and townscape outcome that is both visually attractive and compatible with current context. These include aligning the new building with Harris Street to reinforce its strong, linear nature, the breaking down of the Harris Street ground plane into smaller components.

View loss

- View loss from nearby residential premises ranges from negligible to minor when assessed against the quantitative Tenacity scale.

Based on these findings and subject to the integrity of the proposal being retained as part of final approvals and construction, no mitigation measures are suggested to mitigate the identified impacts of the proposed works.

Overall, on the balance of relevant visual impact considerations, the proposal has an acceptable visual impact and can be supported on the visual impact grounds.

Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
DA	Development application
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EIS	Environmental impact statement
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 rd Edition
SDCP 2012	Sydney Development Control Plan 2012
SLEP 2012	Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012
SSD	State Significant Development
Tenacity	Tenacity Consulting v Waringah [2004] NSWLEC 140
The City	City of Sydney
VIA	Visual impact assessment

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of Infrastructure NSW to support a State Significant Development (SSD) Development Application (DA) for alterations and additions to Powerhouse Ultimo at 500 Harris Street, Ultimo. This version of the VIA has been revised to include an indication of proposed building materiality and landscaping.

The Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation is a transformative investment by the NSW Government to establish a world-class museum that will significantly contribute to an important and developing part of Sydney. The renewed Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo will deliver a dynamic applied arts and applied science program, presenting exhibitions that showcase the Powerhouse collection, international exclusive exhibitions and programs that support the creative industries.

2.0 Process

The Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation project is for the purposes of an 'information and education facility' with a capital investment value of more than \$30 million, and such is classified as State Significant Development (SSD) pursuant to Section 13(1) of Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021.

3.0 Site description

Powerhouse Ultimo is situated upon the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. It is located within the City of Sydney Local Government Area and its primary address is 500 Harris Street, Ultimo. The site comprises part Lot 1 DP 631345; Lot 3 DP 631345; Lot 1 DP 770031; Lot 1 DP 781732; and Lot 37 DP 822345. Refer to Figure 1 for a view of the site as seen from Harris Street, and Figure 2 for a map of the site.

The site contains two heritage-listed buildings, being the 'Ultimo Power House' (c.1899-1905) and the 'Former Ultimo Post Office including interior' (c.1901), both of which are listed on the State Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1997.

Other buildings within the site include the 1988 museum building fronting Harris Street (Wran Building). A café building has been constructed immediately to the south of the Power House at the northern end of the Ultimo Goods Line. Located at the corner of Harris Street and Macarthur Street is a forecourt that acts as the main public entrance to the site, but provides limited activation and is disconnected from higher-quality urban spaces including the Ultimo Goods Line.

The primary focus of the Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation project is the museum to the north of Macarthur Street and bounded by Harris Street, Pier Street and the light rail corridor.



Figure 1 Powerhouse Ultimo as seen from Harris Street

Source: NSW Government



Figure 2 The site

Source: Ethos Urban and Nearmap

4.0 Overview of proposed development

This DA seeks consent for the design, construction and operation of the proposed Powerhouse Ultimo. Specifically, approval is sought for the following:

- Site preparation works, including site services and infrastructure works, tree removal, earthworks, remediation and the erection of site protection hoardings and fencing.
- Demolition of existing structures on the site, including:
 - Harris Street forecourt
 - Structures in the forecourt entrance at the Goods Line, including the café
 - Internal demolition of non-heritage elements of the Ultimo Power House building.
- Construction and use of a new museum spaces along the Harris Street frontage, including the following uses:
 - Loading dock and other back of house spaces
 - Creative industry studios.
- Conservation and adaptive reuse of the existing Ultimo Power House and Ultimo Post Office heritage items for museum purposes.
- Alterations to the Wran Building spaces to upgrade the auditorium and exhibition spaces.
- Construction of a new public open spaces including:
 - At the south-eastern corner of the site to connect with the Ultimo Goods Line
 - An internal courtyard garden wrapped by the building fronting Harris Street
 - A creative courtyard between the Post Office and Wran Buildings.

Full details of the proposed development are set out in the Architectural Drawings and Landscape and Public Domain Drawings accompanying the SSDA.



Figure 3 The proposal seen from Harris Street

Source: NSW Government

5.0 Assessment requirements

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) has issued Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to the applicant for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed development. This report has been prepared having regard to the SEARs as follows

Table 1: SEARS

Environmental Assessment Requirement	Where addressed in this report
Assess amenity impacts on the surrounding locality, including...visual amenity, view loss and view sharing.... A high level of environmental amenity for any surrounding residential or other sensitive land uses must be demonstrated.	Section 9.0 ‘Visual impact – private views’, section 11.8 ‘Amenity impacts on the surrounding locality’ and section 11.9 ‘View loss and view sharing to surrounding sensitive land uses’
Provide a visual analysis of the development from key viewpoints, including photomontages or perspectives showing the proposed and likely future development.	Section 8.0 ‘Visual impact – public views’, section 9.0, ‘Visual impact – private views’,
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	Section 11 ‘Discussion of key issues’

While the VIA considers views to heritage items, it does not undertake a detailed assessment of impact on heritage fabric, value or significance, and defers to heritage report in this regard.

6.0 The statutory planning framework

The site is subject to the following planning legislation:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Heritage Act 1977.

The following planning instruments are of relevance to VIA:

- Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP2012)
- Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 (SDCP2012).

Relevant provisions to consideration of visual impact are:

SLEP2012

- Section 2.3 ‘Zone objectives and Land Use Table’ (B4 Mixed Use zone)
- Section 4.3: ‘Height of buildings’ (between 6m and 28m max)
- Section 4.4: ‘Floor space ratio’ (4:1 max)
- Section 5.10 ‘Heritage conservation’ (State Heritage Items - Ultimo Power House and Ultimo Post Office; local heritage item: I2031 - Powerhouse Ultimo, and in the vicinity of the Harris St Ultimo Conservation Area)
- Section 6.21D ‘Competitive design process’ (up to 10% additional height permitted where undertaking a competitive design process)

SDCP2012

- Locality and site identification (Ultimo)
- Sydney Airport OLS Height Restriction (Part 156m AHD, part 150 to 156m AHD)
- Building height in storeys (5 storeys)
- Building street frontage height in storeys (6 storeys).

7.0 Visual impact – public views

7.1 Viewpoint 1: Harris Street and William Henry Street



Figure 4: Viewpoint 1: Harris Street and William Henry Street – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 5: Viewpoint 1: Harris Street and William Henry Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact.

Table 2 Viewpoint 1: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible
	Minor change over a restricted area; or	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible

		Duration and / or reversibility			
	Insignificant change				
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 3 Viewpoint 1: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.2 Viewpoint 2: Pier Street



Figure 6: Viewpoint 2: Pier Street – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 7: Viewpoint 2: Pier Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact.

Table 4 View 2: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible
	Minor change over a restricted area; or	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible

		Duration and / or reversibility			
	Insignificant change				
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 5 View 2: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.3 Viewpoint 3: the Goods Line and Macarthur Street



Figure 8: Viewpoint 3: the Goods Line and Macarthur Street – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 9: Viewpoint 3: the Goods Line and Macarthur Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact.

Table 6 Viewpoint 3: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible
	Minor change over a restricted area; or	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible

		Duration and / or reversibility			
	Insignificant change				
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 7 Viewpoint 3: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.4 Viewpoint 3: the Goods Line



Figure 10: Viewpoint 4: the Goods Line – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 11: Viewpoint 4: the Goods Line – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact.

Table 8 Viewpoint 3: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible
	Minor change over a restricted area; or	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible

Duration and / or reversibility					
	Insignificant change				
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 9 Viewpoint 3: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.5 Viewpoint 5: Harris Street and Macarthur Street



Figure 12: Viewpoint 5: Harris Street and Macarthur Street – existing view
Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 13: Viewpoint 5: Harris Street and Macarthur Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact..

Table 10 Viewpoint 5: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible
	Minor change over a restricted area; or	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible

		Duration and / or reversibility			
	Insignificant change				
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 11 Viewpoint 5: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.6 Viewpoint 6: Harris Street



Figure 14: Viewpoint 6: Harris Street – existing view
Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 15: Viewpoint 6: Harris Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

The following tables assess the magnitude and significance of visual impact. Sensitivity of each viewpoint to the nature of change proposed remains the same as the concept stage VIA.

Table 12 Viewpoint 6: magnitude of visual impact

		Duration and / or reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable
	Moderate change over restricted area; or Minor change over a wide area	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable	Perceptible

		Duration and / or reversibility			
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 13 Viewpoint 6: significance of visual impact

		Magnitude				
		Dominant	Considerable	Noticeable	Perceptible	Imperceptible
Sensitivity	High	Major	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	Medium	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

7.7 Summary of visual impact

Sensitivity to the nature of change proposed is as follows:

- High sensitivity: 3 viewpoints
- Medium sensitivity: 3 viewpoints.

The magnitude of the nature of change proposed is as follows:

- Considerable magnitude of change: 2 viewpoints
- Perceptible magnitude of change: 3 viewpoints
- Imperceptible magnitude of change: 1 viewpoint.

As a consequence, the significance of visual impact is as follows:

- Moderate significance of visual impact: 2 viewpoints
- Low significance of visual impact: 3 viewpoints
- Negligible significance of visual impact: 1 viewpoint.

In response to the SEARS, a finding of a moderate significance of visual impact for one of more viewpoints constitutes a finding of significant visual impact for the entire project. A finding of a significant visual impact is not determinative of an unacceptable visual impact. Rather, this is determined based on considered assessment against key issues and the planning framework. This is presented in part 9 and part 10 of this VIA.

8.0 Visual impact – private views

8.1 Viewpoint 7: 537 Harris Street

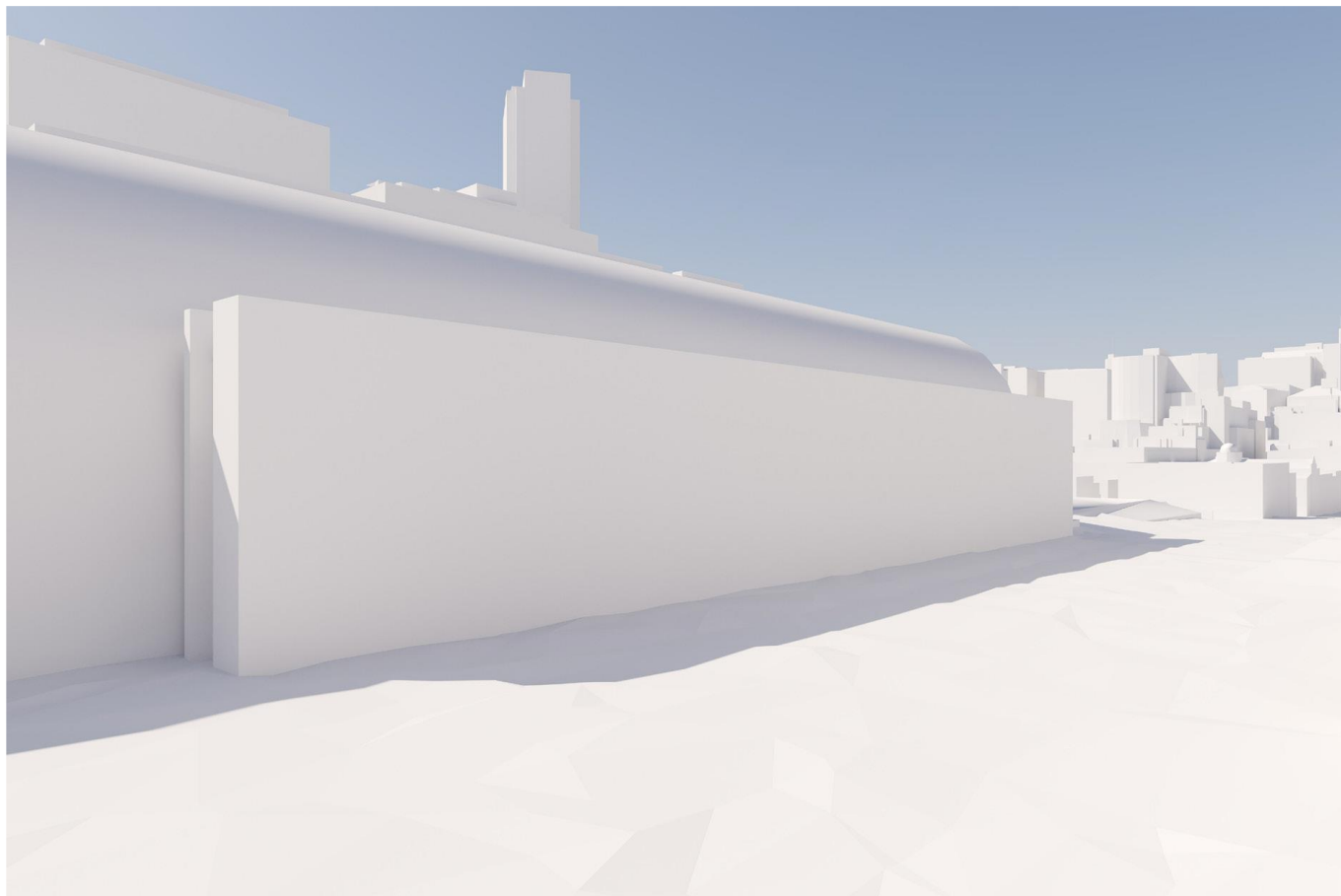


Figure 16: Viewpoint 7: 537 Harris Street – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

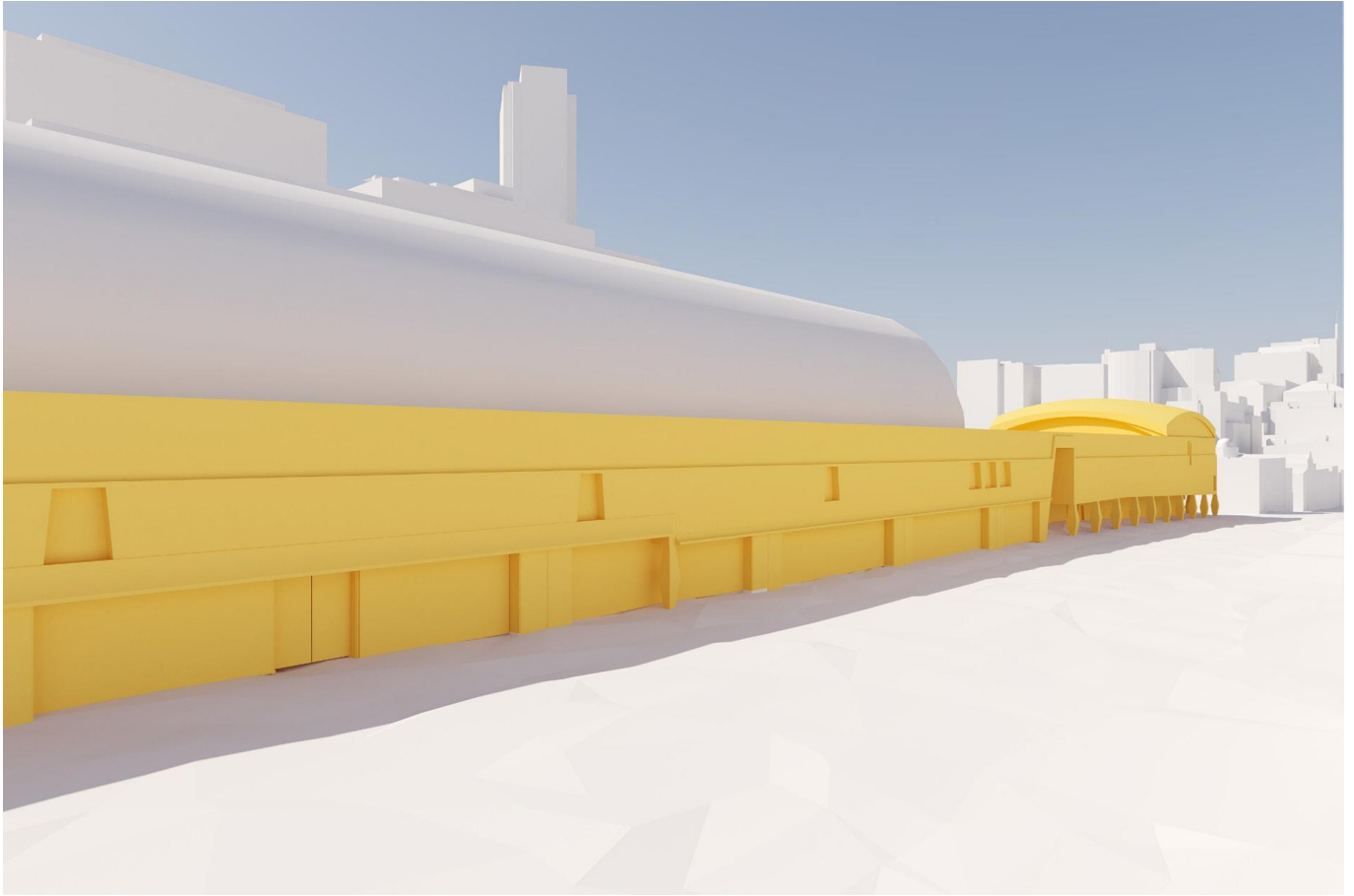


Figure 17: Viewpoint 7: 537 Harris Street – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.2 Viewpoint 8: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 7

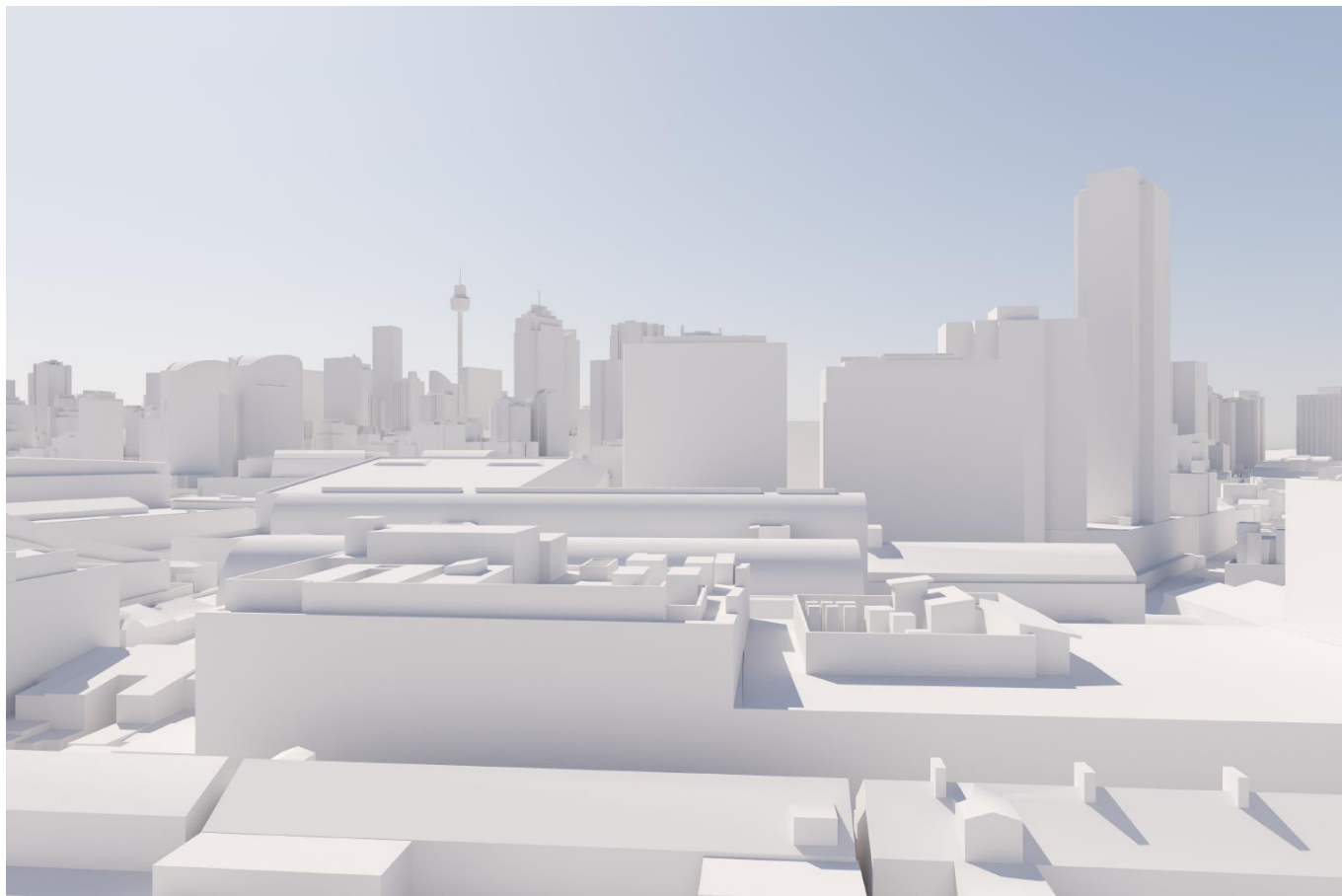


Figure 18: Viewpoint 8: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 7 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

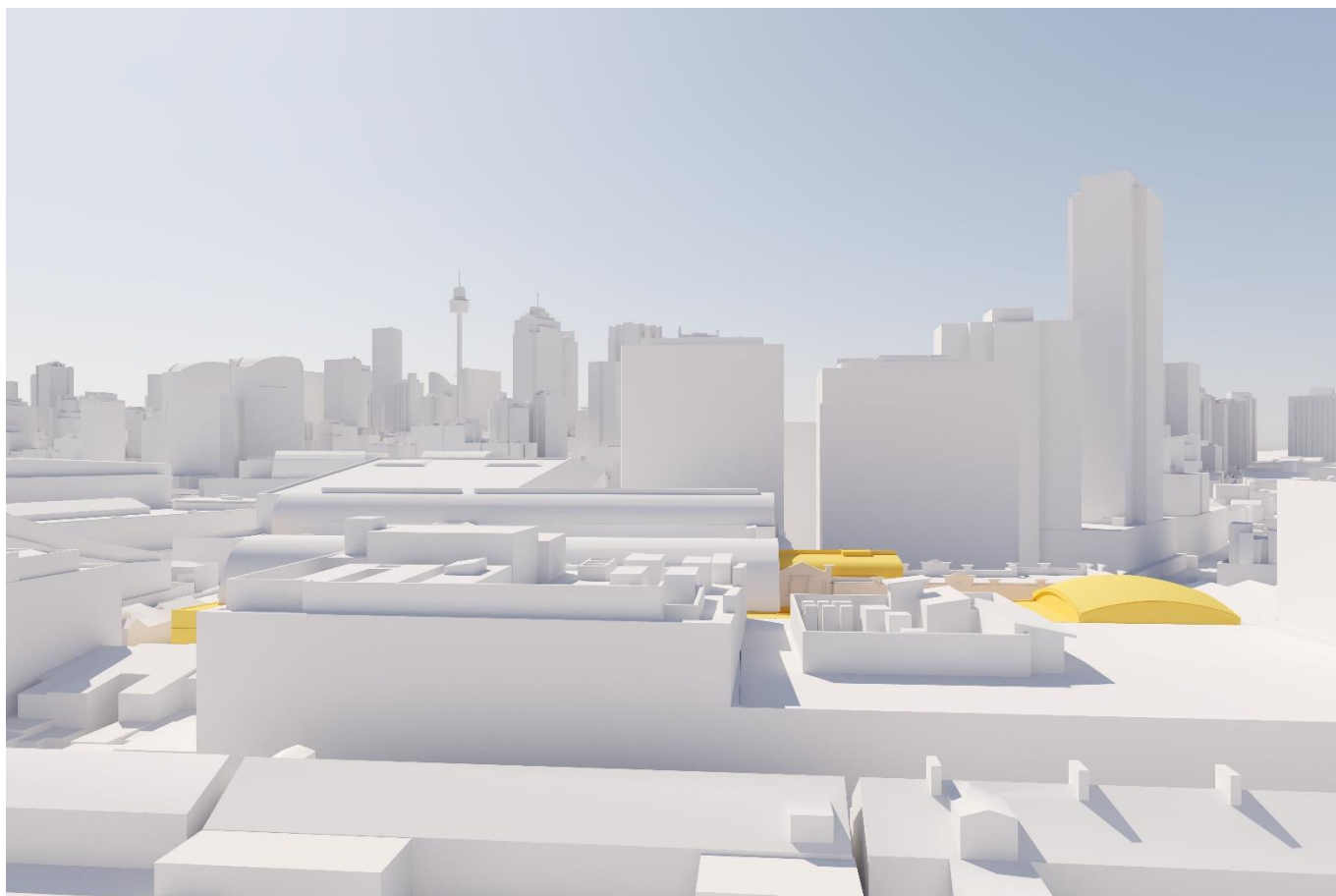


Figure 19: Viewpoint 8: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 7 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.3 Viewpoint 9: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 5

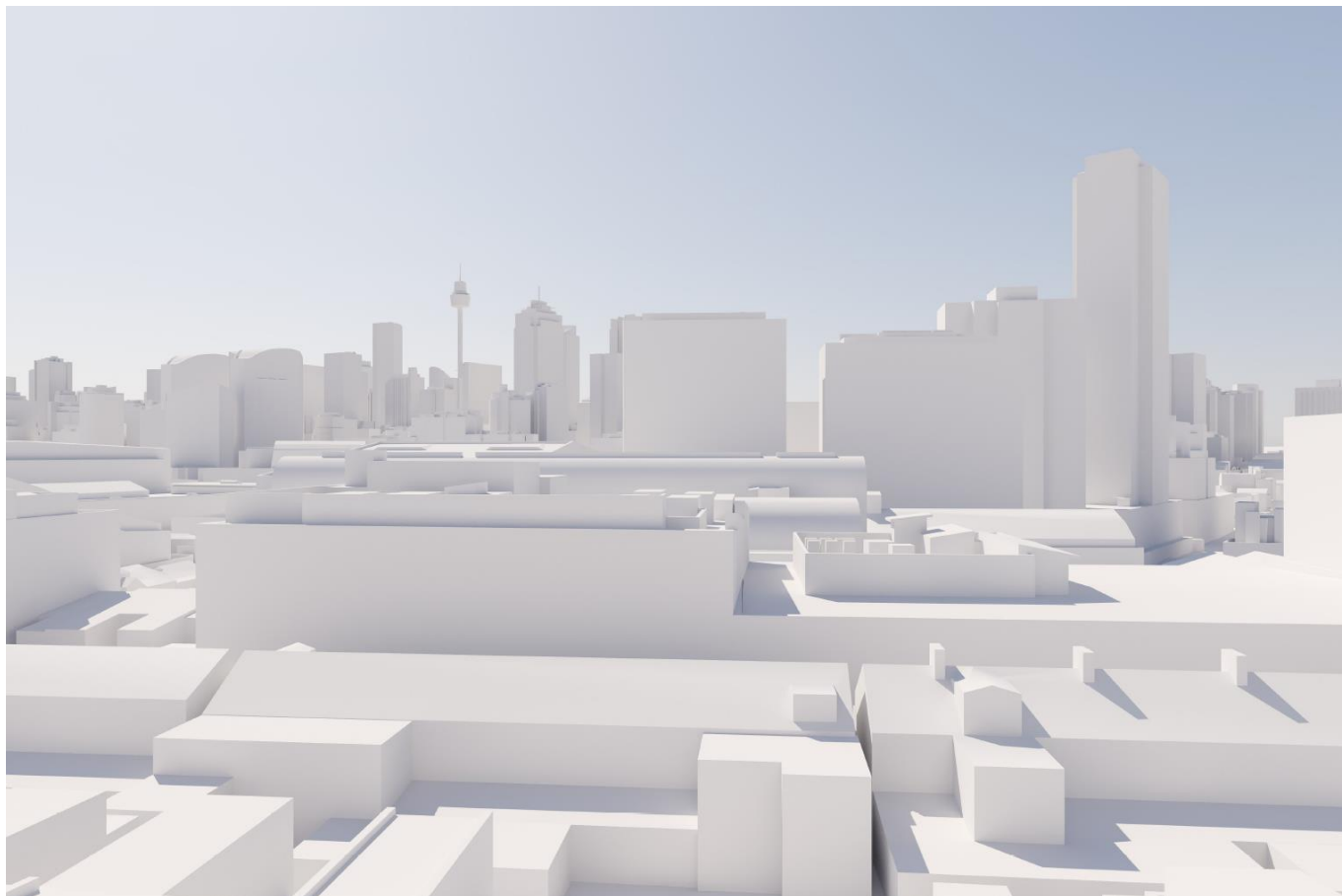


Figure 20: Viewpoint 9: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 5 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

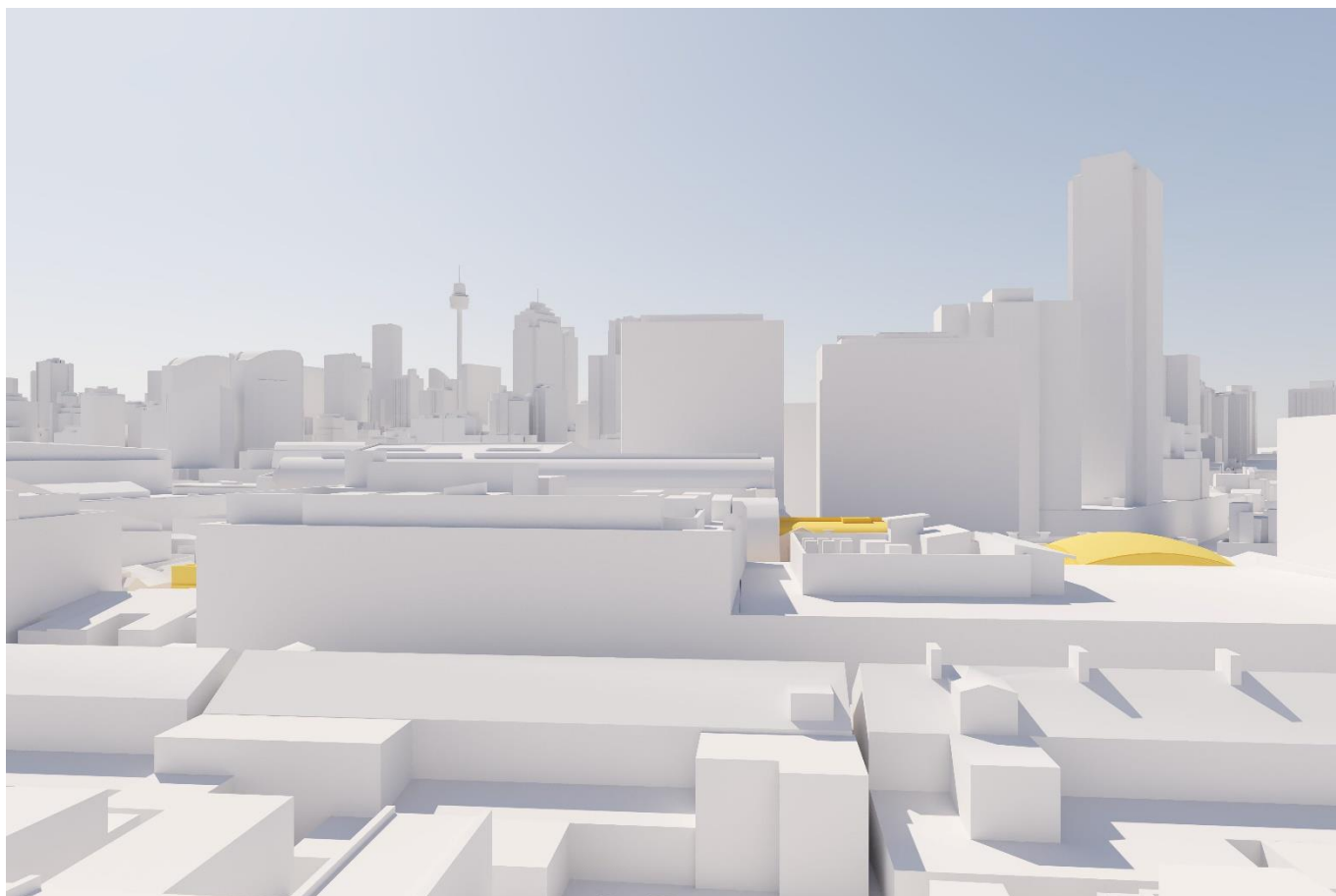


Figure 21: Viewpoint 9: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 5 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.4 Viewpoint 10: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 3

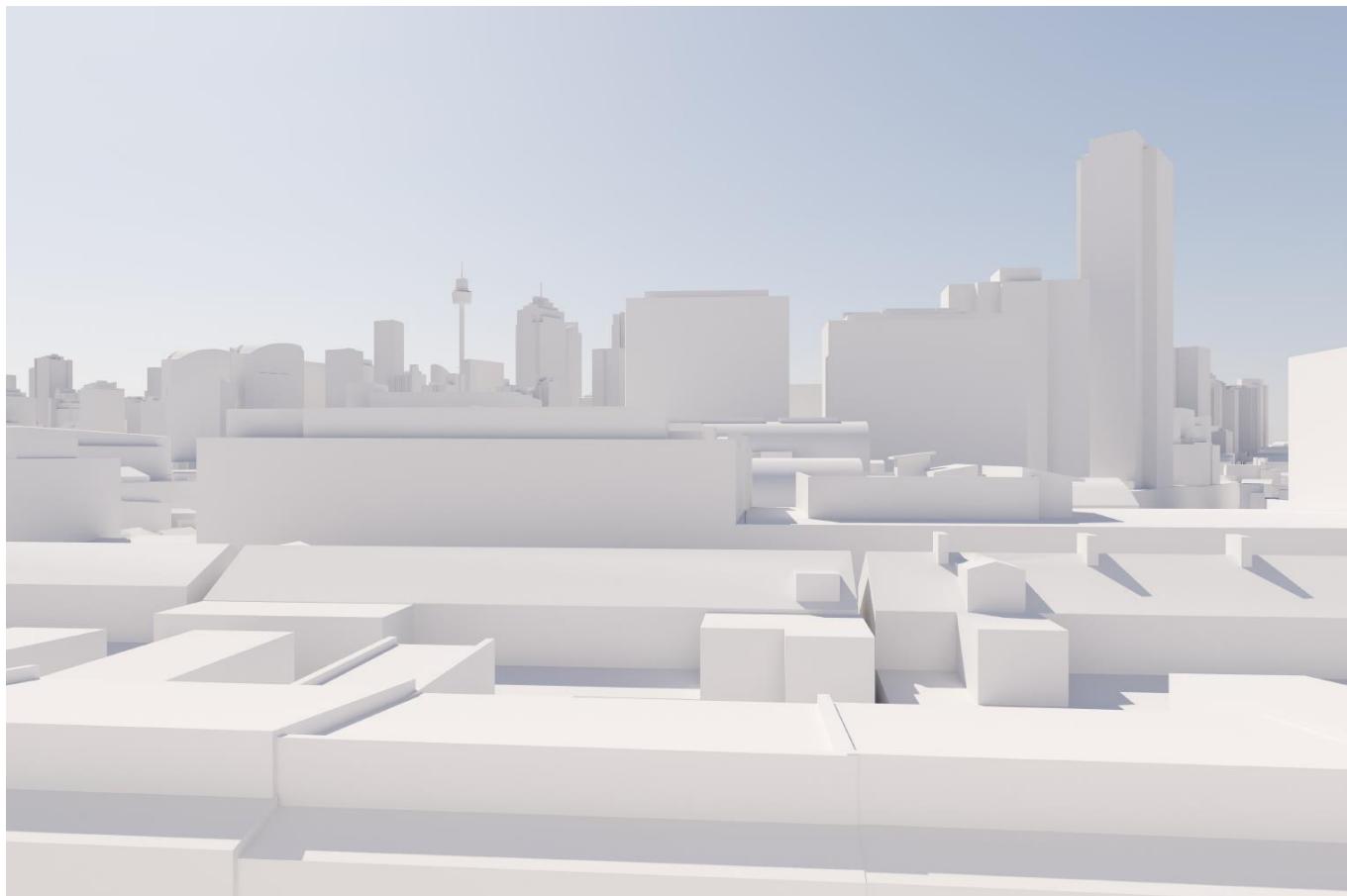


Figure 22: Viewpoint 10: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 3 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

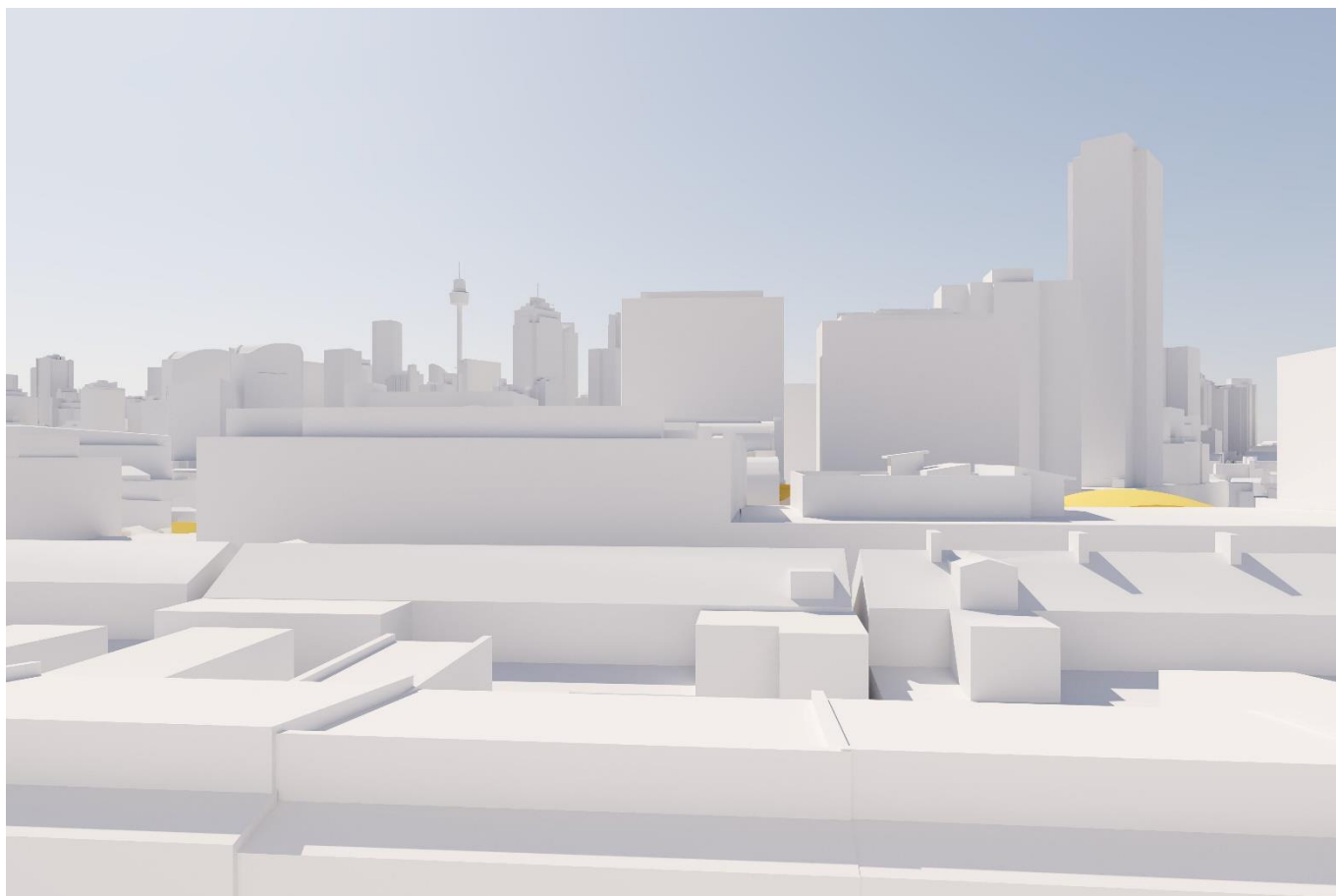


Figure 23: Viewpoint 10: 355 Bulwara Street, Level 3 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.5 Viewpoint 11: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 4

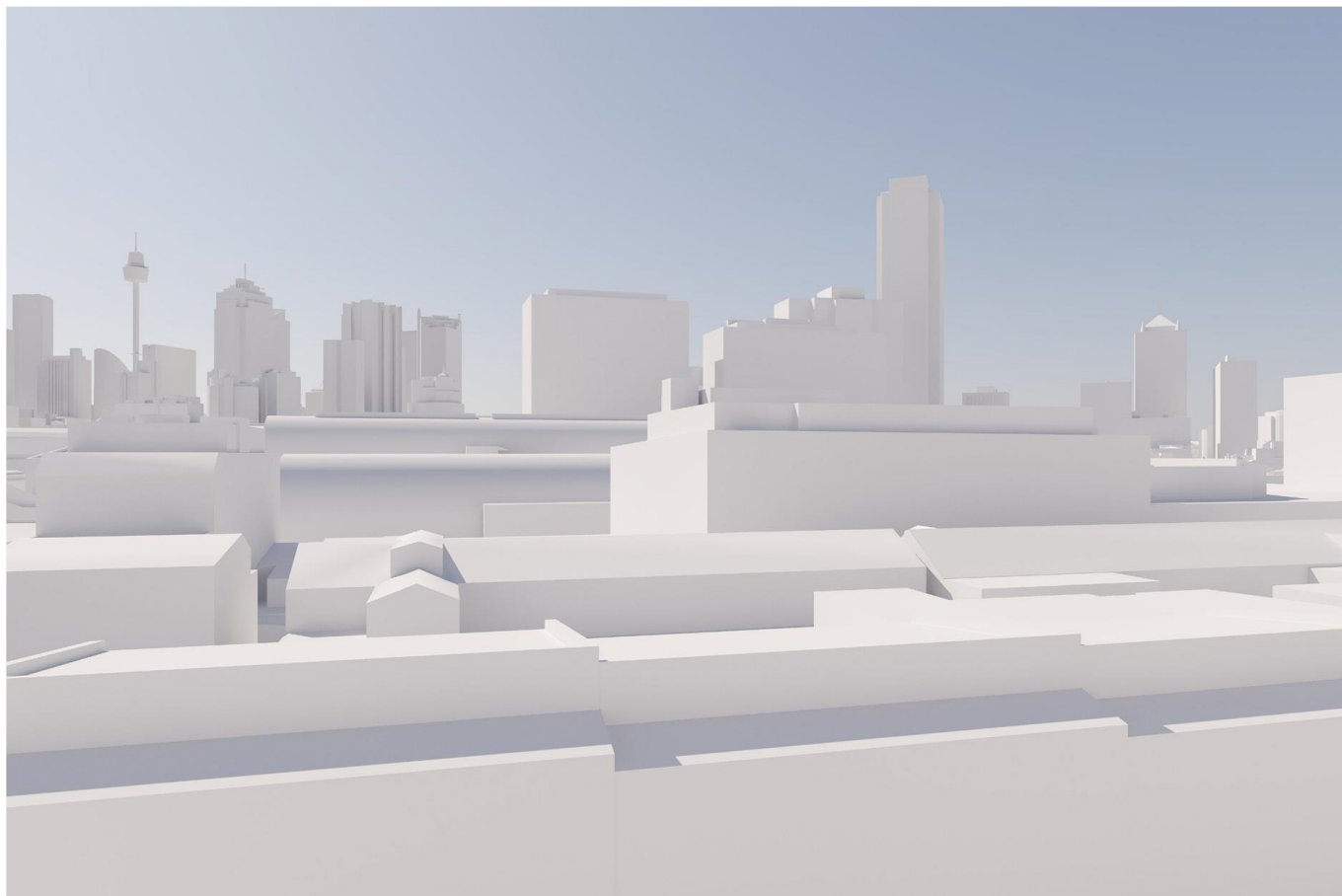


Figure 24: Viewpoint 11: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 4 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

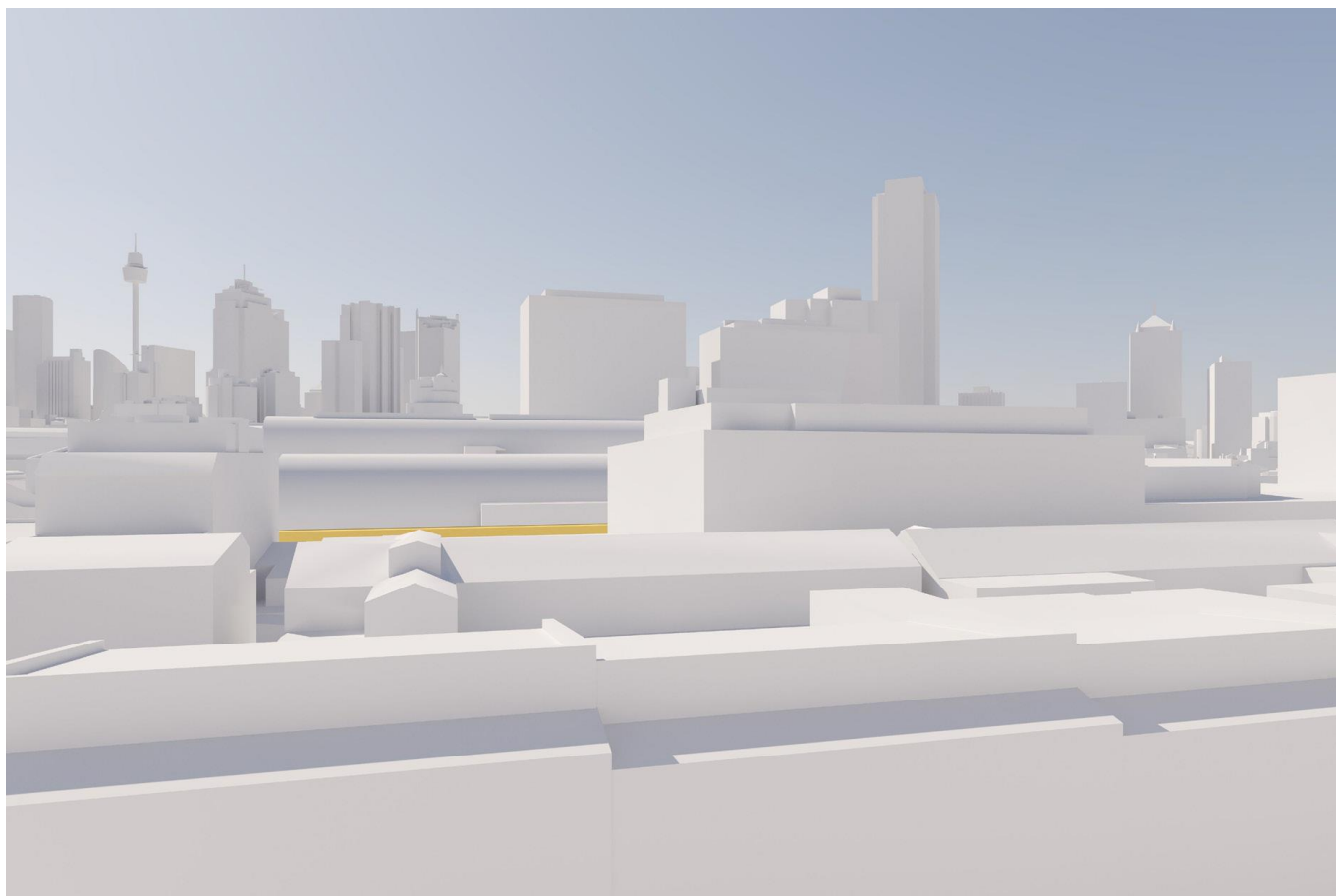


Figure 25: Viewpoint 11: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 4 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.6 Viewpoint 12: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 3

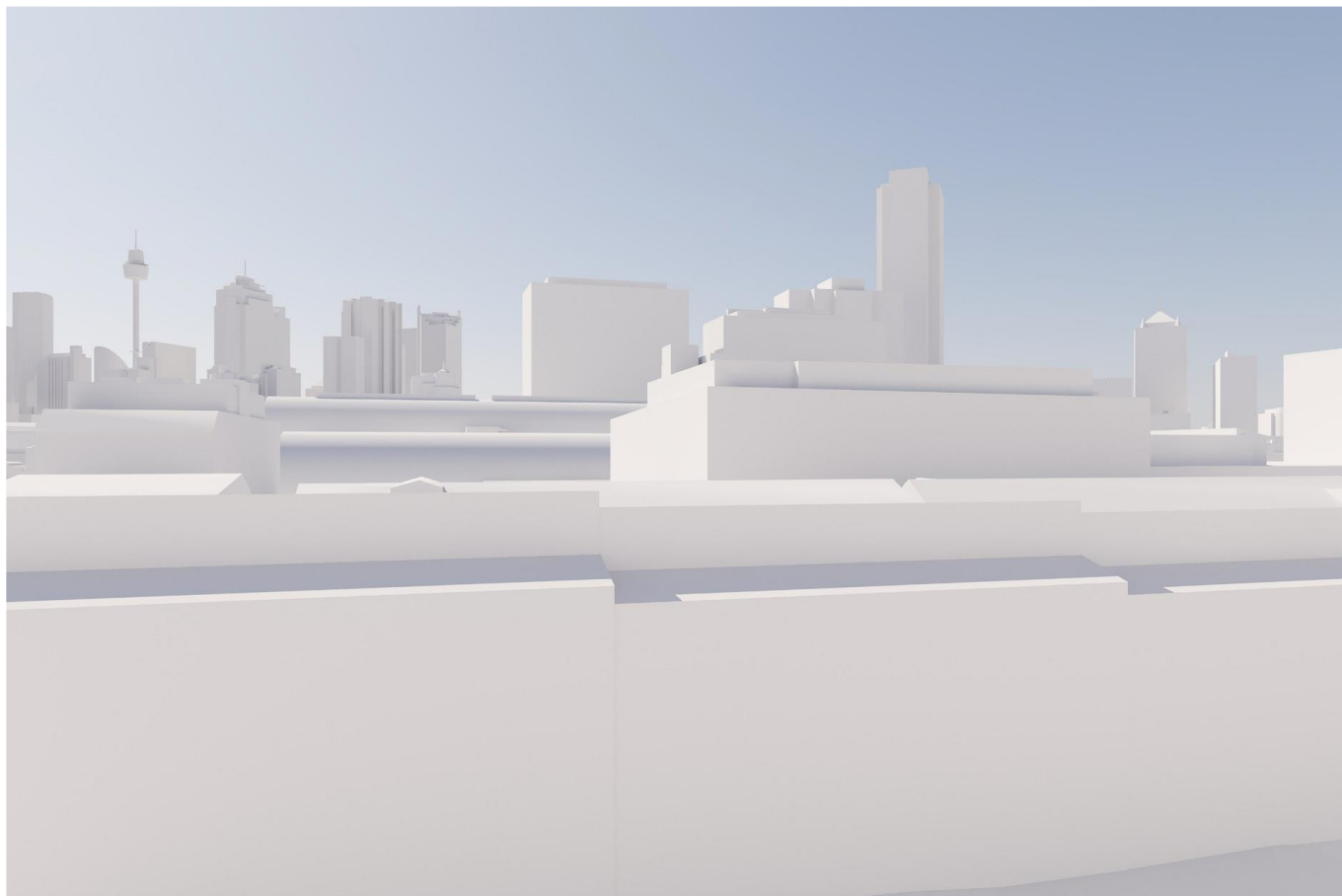


Figure 26: Viewpoint 12: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 3 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

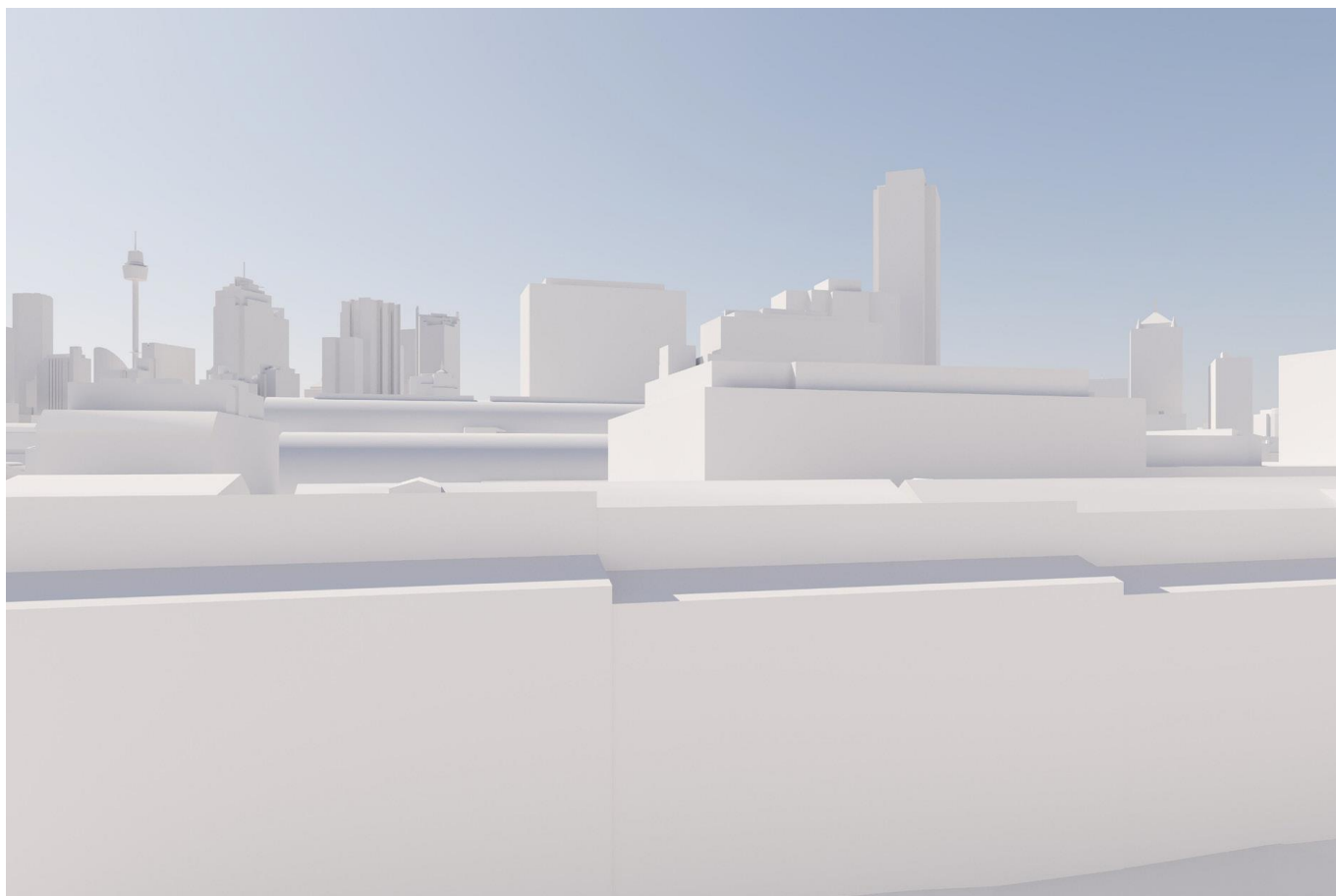


Figure 27: Viewpoint 12: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 3 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.7 Viewpoint 13: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 2

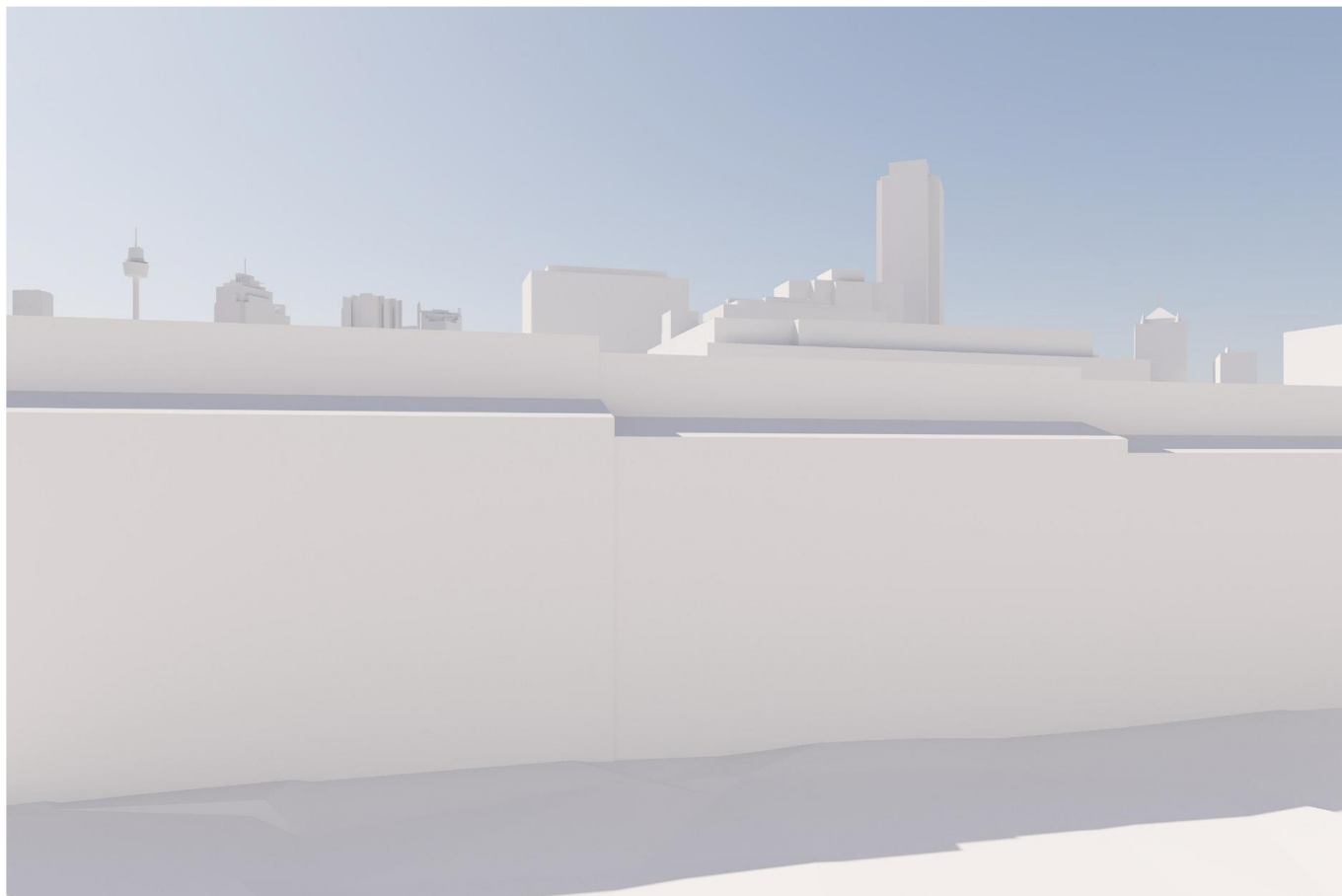


Figure 28: Viewpoint 13: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 2 – existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

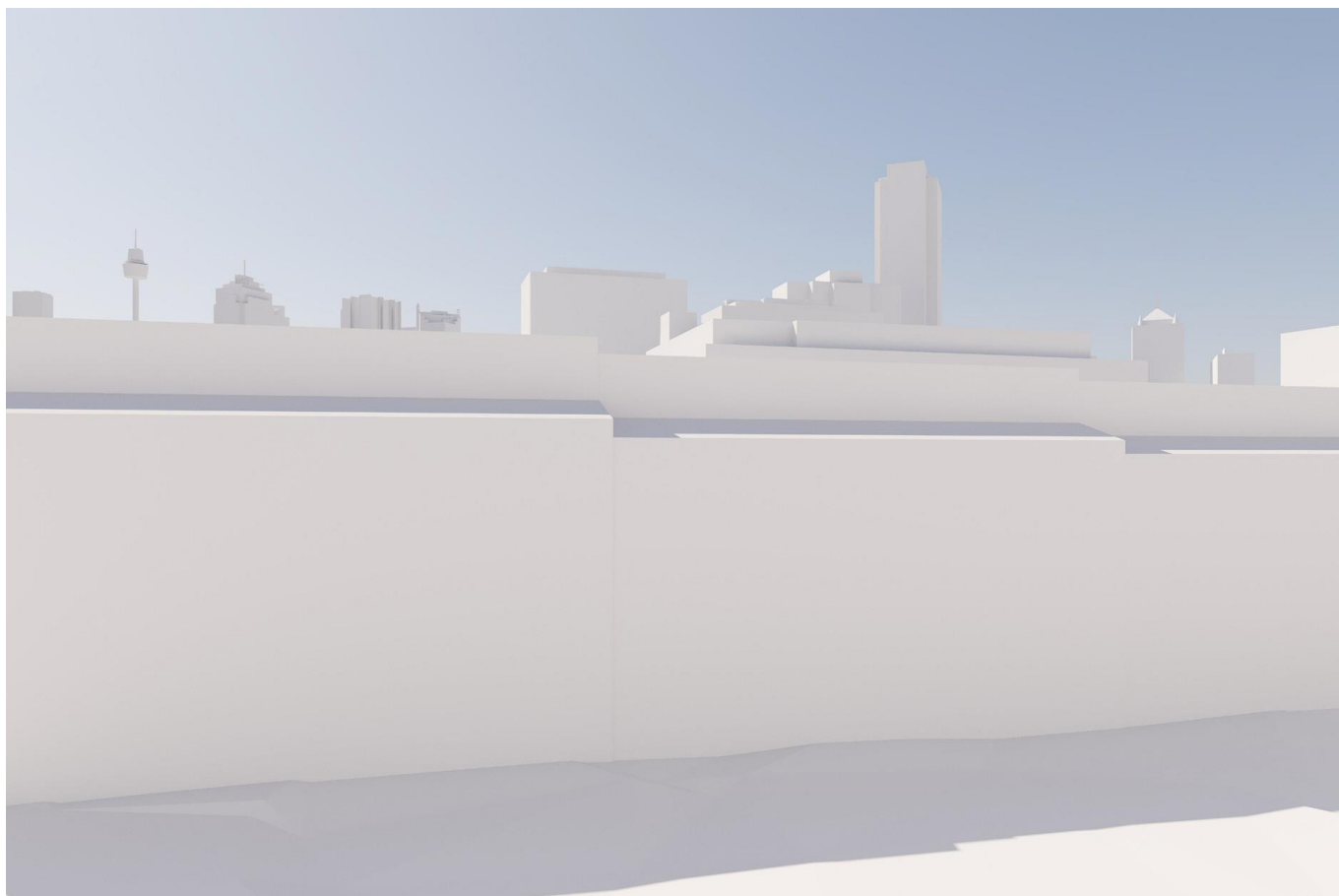


Figure 29: Viewpoint 13: 333 Bulwara Street, Level 2 – proposed view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.8 Tenacity assessment

8.8.1 Step 1: views to be affected

The views are of an urban setting looking over Pyrmont in the foreground and midground to the Sydney CBD skyline in the background. Development of scale is evident, and from upper-levels views of the Powerhouse is noticeable.

Views do not contain water, land and water interface or iconic elements or features.

8.8.2 Tenacity step 2: what part of the property the views are obtained

The views are obtained from a standing position on balconies that look over the front boundary of the dwellings. While floor plans have not been obtained, based on review of information in the public domain, it is understood that most balconies adjoin living rooms.

8.8.3 Tenacity step 3: extent of the impact

In all views, the proposal will be seen as a relatively small scale addition to the roof profile of the Powerhouse.

The greatest extent of impact will occur from the closer and lower level viewpoint at 349 Harris Street (2nd storey). From this viewpoints, the proposal will be seen as a horizontal extension of the existing Harris Street buildings. This extension will partially obscure background views of taller buildings in Haymarket.

The proposal will:

- not result in loss of visibility to highly valuable or iconic features
- does not fundamentally alter the components or composition of views
- does not introduce a new element that is uncharacteristic or discordant in views.

On this basis it is qualitatively assessed as negligible to minor on the Tenacity scale.

Table 14: Tenacity steps 1 - 3

View	What part of the property the views are obtained	Assessment of view to be affected	Extent of the impact
537 Harris Street			
7	537 Harris Street	The objective value of the view is low – moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
355 Bulwara Street			
8	355 Bulwara Street, Level 7	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
9	355 Bulwara Street, Level 5	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
10	355 Bulwara Street, Level 3	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
333 Bulwara Street			
11	333 Bulwara Street, Level 4	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
12	333 Bulwara Street, Level 3	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor
13	333 Bulwara Street, Level 2	The objective value of the view is moderate	View loss is qualitatively assessed as being minor

8.8.4 Tenacity step 4 – reasonableness

The proposal is consistent with the intent, strategies and actions of the Place Strategy to grow Pymont Peninsula as ‘an innovative, creative and cultural precinct’, with particular support for strengthening the role of the Powerhouse.

It complies with the SLEP2012 height and FSR controls, and is considered to result in view loss that is the same or less than that of the approved concept DA.

On this basis, the extent of view loss is considered reasonable.

9.0 Assessment against the statutory planning framework

9.1 Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012

The following table assesses the proposal’s compliance with the SLEP2012.

Table 15: Assessment against the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012

Part	Provision	Assessment	Compliance
4.3 (2) Height of buildings	Maximum building height is 6m-28m +10%	- The proposal has a maximum RL 45.83. - As is outlined in the EIS, this is wholly contained in the approved stage 1 envelope and complies with the maximum height control for the site (28m + 10%).	Yes
4.4 (2) Floor space ratio	Maximum floor space ratio is 4:1	- The proposal has a FSR of 0.91:1. - This is substantially lower than the permissible maximum FSR of 4:1.	Yes

Despite complying with the relevant planning controls for height and FSR, assessment has been made against more detailed corresponding objectives for distribution of height and sharing of views.

Objective 4.3 (b) to ensure appropriate height transitions between new development and heritage items and buildings in heritage conservation areas or special character areas

As can be seen with the existing juxtaposition of the Wran Building with the Powerhouse buildings, the site can successfully accommodate development of considerable scale while maintaining a fundamental compatibility between new development and heritage items.

The new building is setback from the smaller scale, more sensitive former Ultimo Post Office, and is not prominent in views featuring the Harwood Building in the foreground.

The site is not surrounded or visually connected to any other heritage items of particular visual sensitivity.

Objective 4.3 (c) to promote the sharing of views outside Central Sydney

As has been identified in this VIA, the extent of view loss is minor and considered reasonable as it:

- is consistent with the intent, strategies and actions of the Place Strategy to grow Pyrmont Peninsula as 'an innovative, creative and cultural precinct', with particular support for strengthening the role of the Powerhouse
- is for a publicly accessible use that will bring considerable community benefit to the local area, Sydney and NSW more broadly
- complies with the SLEP2012 height and FSR controls
- results in view loss that is the same or less than that of the approved concept DA.

9.2 Sydney Development Control Plan 2012

While as SSD the provisions of DCPs do not apply, the following table assesses the proposal's compliance with the SDCP2012.

Table 16: Assessment against the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012

Part	Provision	Assessment	Compliance
Part 4 of the DCP – development types			
No controls apply to information and education facilities	Building height in storeys is mapped as up to 5 storeys (and 1 storey for the Former Post Office)	The proposal does not present readily discernible storeys to the public domain. As such, the intent of this provision – which is to use storeys as an indicator of compatibility with context – is not considered to be relevant to the proposal	Yes

Part	Provision	Assessment	Compliance
No controls apply to information and education facilities	Building street frontage height is mapped as up to 6 storeys to Pier/Henry Street, Harris Street and Macarthur Street (noting this mapping indicates a discrepancy with the above control)	Refer assessment above	Yes
Character statement and principles			
2.12.3 Ultimo (a)	Development must achieve and satisfy the outcomes expressed in the character statement and supporting principles	Refer below for assessment against the character statement	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (b)	Development is to respond to and complement heritage items and contributory buildings within heritage conservation areas, including streetscapes and lanes	While the separate Heritage Report addresses this in detail, visually the scale and form of the proposal compliments that of the existing site. It will not represent a significant departure from the scale and form of existing development presenting to the Glasgow Arms Hotel or the terraces along Harris Street. Based on the VIA, it can be inferred that it will not be visually dominant from the HCA to the west of the site focussed around Hackett Street	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (c)	Encourage street legibility and orientation by retaining street vistas and district views from the public domain	The proposal with strengthen the Harris Street street wall, extending the strong, linear street wall established by the Wran Building. This will serve to better focus axial views down Harris Street	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (d)	The height of buildings are to respect and complement existing buildings that contribute to the areas character in terms of scale, elevation detail and proportions and materials	As has been noted already in this VIA, the scale and form of the proposal is considered to respect that of the site and its context. The proposal incorporates considerable articulation to externally visible elevations, helping to break up the appearance of scale and add visual interest when seen from the public domain.	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (e)	Development is to address the street and have easily identifiable building entries and create a high-quality public domain including awnings in locations shown on the Active street frontages map	The proposal addresses Harris Street through clearly identifiable entries and the extensive use of transparent glass at the ground level. Through creation of the new forecourt, the proposal substantially improves the site's address to Macarthur Street and the Goods Line. The forecourt also represents high quality, public accessible open space integrated with the Goods Line.	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (f)	Encourage café and restaurants to offer street dining where footpath width permits	The proposal includes the potential for café and restaurant uses at the ground floor where facing the new forecourt.	Yes
2.12.3 Ultimo (g)	Adaptively re-use historical buildings providing a mix of land uses in the distinctive built forms	The proposal will enable renewal of the heritage listed Powerhouse buildings, with the new building representing a distinct, highly innovative built form.	Yes

Part	Provision	Assessment	Compliance
2.12.3 Ultimo (h)	Improve pedestrian and bike connections through sites between Darling Harbour, the proposed extension of the Ultimo Pedestrian Network, Central Sydney, Wentworth Park and Blackwattle Bay	The proposal retains and enhances existing pedestrian and bike connections.	Yes

Assessment against the outcomes expressed in the character statement

The character statement is as follows:

‘This locality is bounded by Mary Ann Street, Harris Street and Ultimo Road to the south, Darling Drive, William Henry Street and Harris Street to the east, Fig Street to the north and Wattle Street to the west.

Ultimo is to continue its existing mixed-use character comprising residential, cultural, retail and commercial uses. The historic low scale housing and large scale historical and industrial buildings are to be protected. Changes to the built form are to respect the scale and character in the vicinity including street scale, proportions and rhythms of existing buildings and materials. Streets and public spaces will feature strong linear edges.

New development is to provide street legibility and improved pedestrian amenity by aligning buildings with the street, entries that address the footway and awnings where required. Ground floor uses that create a lively streetscape and street surveillance are to be provided in locations shown on the Active street frontages map. Sites are to provide improved pedestrian and bike links’.

In response, the proposal involves the following initiatives that impact the visual setting:

- continues and strengthens the existing mixed-use character of the locality
- retains, protects and revitalises the existing large-scale heritage listed Powerhouse buildings
- respects the scale of both the heritage listed Powerhouse buildings and is similar to the existing Wran Building
- provides for a human scale at the ground level along Harris Street, and breaks up the appearance of visual scale and bulk through varied massing and articulation
- aligns with and strengthens the existing strong linear edge of Harris Street, enhancing its legibility and character
- provides for a new forecourt with distinct edges.

These outcomes are considered to result in the proposal aligning with the intent of the character statement as it relates to visual matters.

10.0 Discussion of key matters

10.1 Distribution of built form

As is outlined in the EIS, to achieve the vision for the project new floor space in particular configurations (eg, of sufficient height and dimensions to accommodate large museum pieces) is required within the site.

To minimise impact on the State heritage listed Engine House and Boiler House, most of this floor space has been located to the west of the site adjoining Harris Street.

In addition, the proposal involves relocating the main public entry to the museum from the corner of Harris Street and Macarthur Street to the intersection of the Goods Line and Macarthur Street. Again, while resulting in a greater visual impact to Harris Street, this results in a significant positive visual outcome as discussed in **section 11.3**.

10.2 Size and scale

The scale of the new Powerhouse building is comparable to that of the existing Wran Building.

Importantly, it is wholly contained within the approved stage 1 concept SSDA planning envelope and does not exceed the maximum building height or FSR controls in the SLEP2012.

10.3 Views to heritage items

Through removal of the café building and creation of a forecourt to the main public entry to the museum the proposal reveals the southern elevations of the Engine House and Boiler House and the eastern elevation of the Switch House to people using the Goods Line. This enables a much greater appreciation of the heritage buildings on the site and better visual connectivity to the Harwood Building and the Goods Line itself. This is considered to be a significant positive visual impact.

While the proposal also involves landscaping to the forecourt, trees and other larger elements that that has the potential screen views from the Goods Line are consolidated in the east of the forecourt. Considering the merit of trees within this space, this is considered an accepted visual outcome. In addition, the incorporation of other, lower vegetation such as grasses is consistent with the landscape design of the Goods Line and will soften the visual impact of buildings when seen from the Goods Line.

Through the massing strategy, the proposal reduces visibility of the Switch House from Harris Street. While not noticeable at locations further to the north, this is noticeable from viewpoint 5 and viewpoint 6. To reduce this impact, the proposal is setback from Macarthur Street relative to the Switch House and is angled in a north-east direction to provide for visibility from the Harris Street and Macarthur Street intersection.

10.4 Backdrop to heritage items

The proposal is not visible from viewpoint 2 on Pier Street. This enables the Engine House and Boiler House to visually dominate the view. In particular, the ability to see these buildings silhouetted against the sky is a positive visual outcome.

The proposal does not impact the backdrop to the former Ultimo Post Office building.

The extent of new built form visible behind the Engine House, Boiler House and Switch House when seen from the Goods Line is comparable to what currently exists.

10.5 Detailed design

The design approach is outlined in detail in the design documentation.

From a visual perspective, the elements of line, form, colour, materials and textures are widely recognised as key influences of visual impact.

- **Line and form:** the largely straight and angled lines and rectangular forms used in the main part of the building reflect that of the heritage buildings. The use of different, more curved lines and forms in the upper parts of the building references differences between the lower and upper parts of the heritage building, and helps to break up visual bulk. The use of particular lines and forms that deviate from this overall pattern, such as the diamond shaped pillars to Harris Street provide visual interest and relief
- **Colour:** the use of more 'earthy', natural colours that are typically more visually recessive rather than dominant facilitates the blending in of the proposal with its surrounds including heritage items

- **Materials and texture:** the predominant use of concrete and brick on externally visible elevations is sympathetic to that of the Engine House, Boiler House and Switch House. The use of extensive areas of transparent glass facilitates visual engagement with Harris Street, and breaks up visual bulk.

This approach to these elements assists in integrating the proposal with its surrounds and broader townscape.

10.6 View corridors

Under the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy primary view corridors affecting the site include existing views north and south along Harris Street, along the Goods Line, and south of the site in Mary Ann Street. Objectives around primary views include creating new views and maintaining existing views along streets and between buildings to support legibility and wayfinding, enhance existing character and visually connect people to the natural setting of the Peninsula.

The proposal:

- reflects and strengthens the existing visual definition of Harris Street formed by the Wran Building
- while reducing visibility of the Switch House, retains its visibility from the intersection of Harris Street and Macarthur Street, and opens up visibility in the site from Harris Street through the through-block link and ground floor windows
- retains views to the former Ultimo Post Office
- enhances visibility of the Engine House, Boiler House and Switch House when seen from the Goods Line.

10.7 Amenity impacts on the surrounding locality

DPHI defines amenity as ‘the pleasantness, attractiveness, desirability or utility of a place, facility, building or feature’.

The proposal is the outcome of a competitive design competition that has been judged by an expert panel of designers to have exhibited design excellence. This design excellence is demonstrated throughout the design documentation. As can be seen, overall the proposal represents a high quality, visually appealing insertion into the townscape. It also resolves a number of pre-existing visual amenity deficiencies with the existing development, including the café facing the Goods Line. While there are competing views about the attractiveness of the existing forecourt off Harris Street, the proposal resolves challenges presented by topography by removing the considerable steps up from Harris Street that visually reduce integration of the site with Harris Street and the adjoining high brick wall that visually reduces integration of the site with Macarthur Street.

10.8 View loss and view sharing to surrounding sensitive land uses

As can be seen from the images in **section 9.0** and the related Tenacity assessment, the proposal is considered to have the same or lesser impact on views obtained from nearby residential properties as the approved stage 1 concept SSDA planning envelope (negligible to minor). Key to this is the ability to continue to see and appreciate the Sydney skyline to the north, and the lesser impact than what would otherwise be permissible under the SLEP 2012.

11.0 Mitigation measures

Based on the findings of this report and subject to the integrity of the proposal being retained as part of final approvals and construction, no mitigation measures are suggested to mitigate the identified impacts of the proposed works.

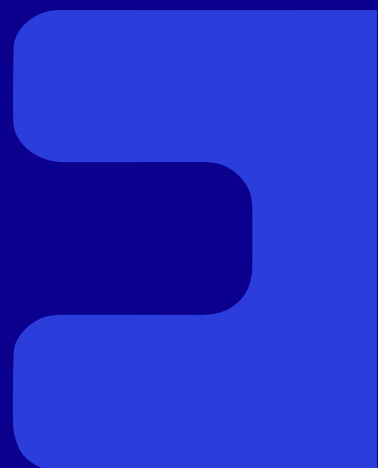
12.0 Conclusion

Overall, on the balance of relevant visual impact considerations, the proposal has an acceptable visual impact and can be supported on the visual impact grounds.

Appendices

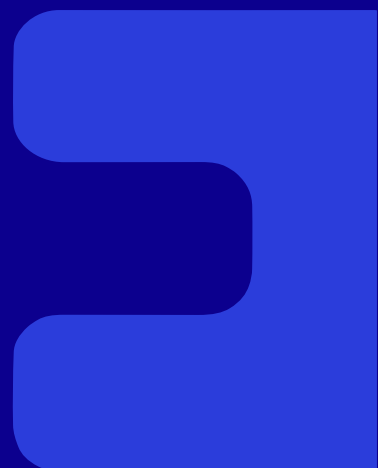
Appendix 1

Visual impact evidence (Public views)



Appendix 2

Visual impact evidence (Private views)



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