ETHOS URBAN

Visual Impact Assessment

Refurbishment of Stadium Australia

Submitted to Department of Planning
Infrastructure and Environment
On behalf of Infrastructure NSW

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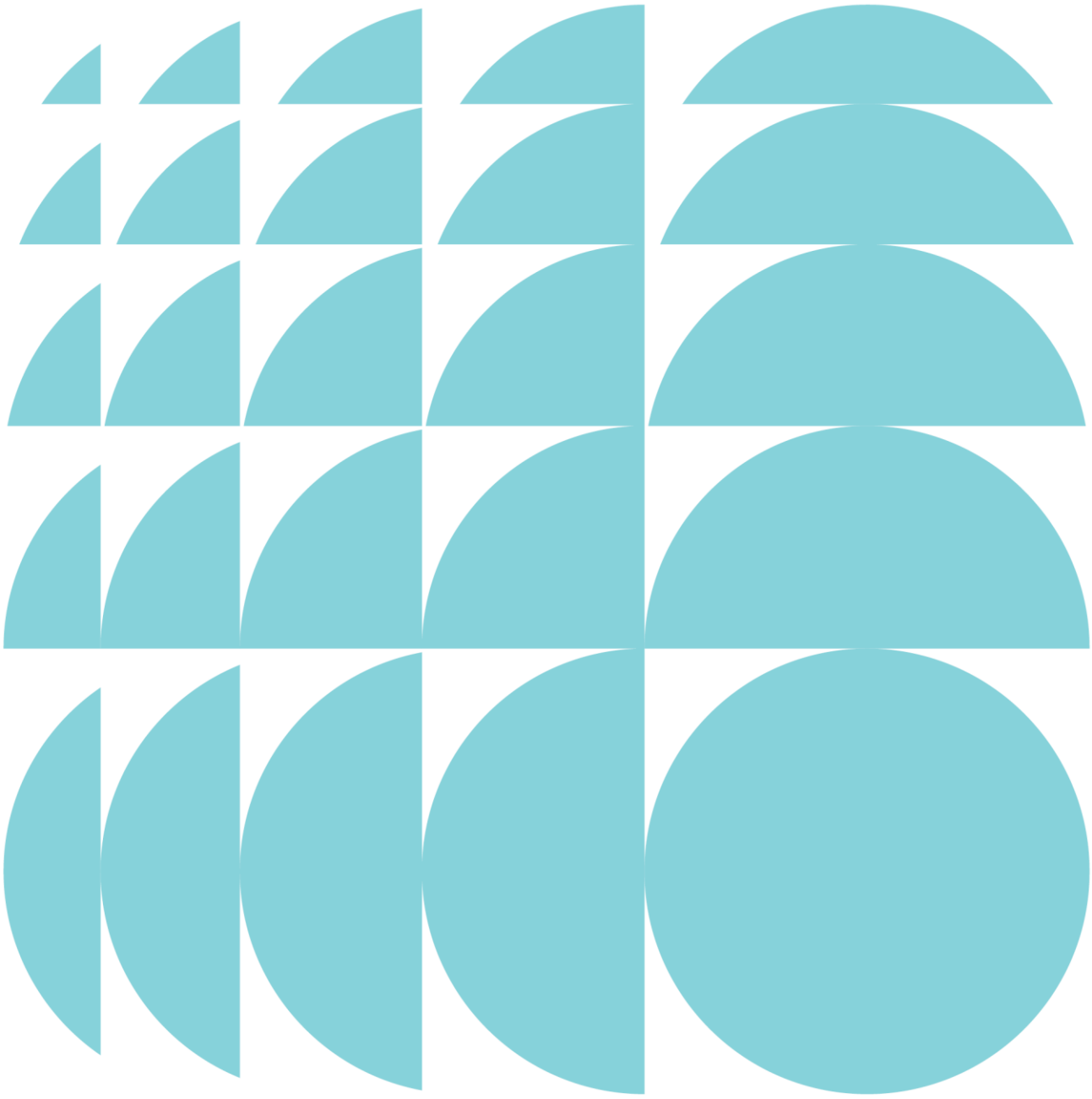

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Terminology

Terminology used in this report is shown in **Table 1**. Terminology is adapted from a number of NSW and national sources, including:

- Local Character and Place Guideline (NSW Government, 2019)
- Understanding Neighbourhood Character (Victorian Government, 2018)
- Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-N04 (NSW Roads and Maritime Services, 2018).

Table 1: Terminology

Term	Meaning
Character	Character is a specific term that is defined the relationship of the physical elements of a place. This includes the public domain informed by matters such as streets and open space, the private domain informed by matters such as scale and architectural style and matters that cross both the public and private domains such as landform and vegetation. Important features have a particular influence on character
DA	Development application
Desired future character	The preferred future outcome for an area as identified by an applicable planning instrument
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
L&E Court	Land and Environment Court
Magnitude	Refers to the physical scale of the project, how distant it is from a viewpoint and the contrast it presents to the existing condition
Master Plan	Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2018 Review)
Place	Place is a broad term that is defined by the relationship between people and social, environmental and economic elements. These elements include land, built form, public domain, history, culture and tradition. Places are multi-layered and diverse environments within the broader context of society. Individual places can be described or understood by people in different ways and at different scales. It includes the sense of belonging a person feels to that place, the way people respond to the atmosphere, how it impacts their mood, their emotional response to that place and the stories that come out of peoples' relationship with that place.
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements, which provides the terms of reference for this VIA
Sensitivity	Refers to how sensitive the existing character of the setting is to the proposed nature of change'
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SSP SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005
SSD	State Significant Development
Visual impact	The nature of change created by the proposal as determined by considering the factors of sensitivity and magnitude. Visual impact can be positive, negative or neutral
VIA	Visual impact assessment

Executive Summary

This report considers the visual impact of the proposed refurbishment of Stadium Australia at Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush.

To determine the visual impact, assessment was undertaken of a number of matters, including:

- the existing place character of Sydney Olympic Park and the primary visual catchment to establish a baseline
- identification of key viewpoints
- assessment of visual impact based on the sensitivity of these viewpoints and the magnitude of change resulting proposal's insertion into the view
- assessment of this visual impact against relevant parts of applicable planning instruments to determine appropriateness
- consideration of mitigation strategies and measures
- residual impact once mitigation strategies and measures have been incorporated.

The stadium is a large, imposing and functional piece of metropolitan serving sporting and entertainment infrastructure. Despite having a 'bowl' form, it has no physical characteristics that when assessed against typical criteria can be regarded as high value. Rather, its value is derived from its non-physical elements – people's associations with experiences had at the venue.

The place character of Sydney Olympic Park and the primary visual catchment is in many ways distinct in Sydney. Sydney is widely recognised and valued for its complex visual composition of natural and built elements. Important features include undulating topography, water and mature vegetation. However, largely due to its origins as land comprehensively cleared and then designed as the centrepiece of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Sydney Olympic Park and in particular the primary visual catchment presents visually as a collection of large, imposing and functional buildings set within a highly organised and functional public domain. Important features in the primary visual catchment include a flat topography, monumental architecture, straight and wide roads, a dominance of hard paved surfaces and limited vegetation. This combines to shape a place character that has an open, almost harsh feel. When considered against conventional measures of scenic amenity, this place character ranks low. It is acknowledged that this character is not uniform throughout Sydney Olympic Park. Areas further to the east closer to the Bicentennial Parklands having a softer character, and relevant parts of applicable planning instruments seeks to encourage further change of this nature. Nonetheless, open, almost harsh feel remains a defining visual character.

Based on consideration of the Master Plan and a site inspection, nine (9) viewpoints in the primary visual catchment were selected upon which to base the visual impact assessment. Photography, surveying and photomontages prepared in accordance with Land and Environment Court Policy was undertaken for each viewpoint. This provided two images – an existing baseline and an indication of the likely proposed future outcome.

Based on consideration of factors such as distance of the proposal from the viewpoint, the composition and dominant features in the view and the purpose of people being at the viewpoint, the sensitivity of all viewpoints were rated as low. Based on consideration of factors such as amount and type of new fabric visible and its relationship to the existing view, the magnitude of change at all viewpoints was also rated as low. It is noted that the photomontages showed that the proposal was likely not to be visible from a number of viewpoints. On this basis, further assessment was not necessary and the visual impact was automatically ascribed to be negligible.

The greatest visual impact is likely to occur at Viewpoint 2: Qudos Forecourt, Viewpoint 6: Dawn Fraser Avenue and Viewpoint 7: Edwin Flack Avenue. The nature of change is derived from introduction of a new roof form to cover the southern and northern stands. As is noted, the visual impact of this is low. While the amount of new fabric visible is considerable, it is consistent with the place character at the viewpoints and does not fundamentally alter the visible nature or the use or meaning of the stadium.

On this basis and considering the criteria established by the SEARs, it is concluded in its current proposed form that while the nature of visual change is substantial from a small number of viewpoints, the impact of this change is low and appropriate having regard to the provisions of relevant parts of applicable planning instruments. In particular, it will not obstruct or fundamentally alter the nature of views obtained from key vantage points as identified in the Master Plan, and will not result in view loss from locations in the public domain.

On this basis it is not considered necessary to implement mitigation strategies and measures to reduce visual impact.

The conclusion of this VIA is that in its current form, the proposal has an acceptable visual impact.

1.0 Introduction

This report supports a State Significant Development (SSD) Development Application (DA) for the refurbishment of Stadium Australia, which is submitted to the Minister for Planning pursuant to Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). Infrastructure NSW is the proponent of the SSD DA.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the SSD DA (the proposal) has an acceptable visual impact, considering all relevant factors.

1.2 Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- **Part 1: Introduction** – covers the purpose, scope and method of the visual impact assessment;
- **Part 2: Background** – provides background information relevant to the site and visual impact assessment
- **Part 3: Site description** – outlines the site;
- **Part 4: Overview of proposed development** – outlines the proposal;
- **Part 5: Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements** – identifies the matters that the visual impact assessment must consider
- **Part 6: Place character** – identifies the place character of Sydney Olympic Park the primary visual catchment to establish a baseline;
- **Part 7: Viewpoints** – identifies relevant viewpoints, shows current and an indication of the likely future outcome with the proposal, and undertakes an assessment of sensitivity and magnitude factors
- **Part 8: Assessment against applicable planning instruments** – assesses the proposal against relevant parts of applicable planning instruments;
- **Part 9: Summary assessment** – provides an overall summary of the proposal's performance against the assessment criteria;
- **Part 10: Mitigation strategies and measures** – discusses mitigation strategies and measures to reduce visual impact;
- **Part 11: Residual impact** – identifies the residual visual impact after application of mitigation strategies and measures
- **Part 12: Conclusion** – provides a conclusion on the appropriateness of the proposal's visual impact.

1.3 Scope

The NSW planning system does not have an accepted standard visual impact assessment method or policy. Given this, in undertaking this visual impact assessment consideration has been given to a number of recognised national and international guidance documents. These include:

- Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact assessment (the RMS Guide) (RMS, 2018);
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013);
- Local Character and Place Guideline (DPIE, 2019); and
- European Landscape Convention.

Consideration has been given to the Land and Environment Court (L&E Court) planning principle for public domain views established by Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor [[2013] NSWLEC 1046.

Consideration has also been given to the following L&E court planning principles as relevant to the proposal:
Veloshin v Randwick Council [2007] NSWLEC 428 for height, bulk and scale, and in particular with regard to reasonable expectations, predominant existing character and 'fit' or 'look'
Project Venture Developments Pty Ltd v Pittwater Council [2005] NSWLEC 191 for compatibility of proposal with surrounding development, and in particular how compatibility does not automatically equate to sameness.

Of broader note for visual impact assessment, the judgement handed down in Project Venture Developments Pty Ltd v Pittwater Council [2005] NSWLEC 191 notes that:

- '22 There are many dictionary definitions of compatible. The most apposite meaning in an urban design context is capable of existing together in harmony. Compatibility is thus different from sameness. It is generally accepted that buildings can exist together in harmony without having the same density, scale or appearance, though as the difference in these attributes increases, harmony is harder to achieve
- 23 It should be noted that compatibility between proposed and existing is not always desirable. There are situations where extreme differences in scale and appearance produce great urban design involving landmark buildings. There are situations where the planning controls envisage a change of character, in which case compatibility with the future character is more appropriate than with the existing. Finally, there are urban environments that are so unattractive that it is best not to reproduce them'.

Consideration has not been given to the following matters:

- case law;
- cultural heritage matters related to the existing stadium's use as part of the Sydney 2000 Olympics; or
- private views.

Stadiums and other large, metropolitan region serving infrastructure as often designed on purpose to be highly visible not just for functional reasons such as accommodating a large capacity, but also as a physical expression of a city's aspirations. This intent should be kept in mind when considering the appropriateness of the visual impact of such items.

Photomontages have been prepared in accordance with L&E Court policy.

1.4 Methodology

Review has been based on desktop and field analysis and have followed the following method:

1. local character: identify local character, including its sensitivity to change and ability to absorb change;
2. visual catchment: identify the visual catchment (a subset of local character) based on consideration of matters such as landform, built form and vegetation;
3. viewpoints: identify key viewpoints from where the proposal may be visible;
4. visual impact: assessment against sensitivity and magnitude criteria (see **Table 1**);
5. acceptability of visual impact: consideration of the visual impact against applicable and relevant planning instruments to determine acceptability. assessment of the visual impact against the planning framework;
6. mitigation: what measures are needed to ensure acceptability of impact; and
7. recommendation: prepare a recommendation based on the findings of the method.

Central to the assessment of visual impact are three (3) main criteria:

1. sensitivity;
2. magnitude; and
3. consistency with applicable and relevant planning instruments.

This report adopts the meaning and method of sensitivity and change from the RMS Guide. In this regard:

- 'sensitivity: refers to how sensitive the existing character of the setting is to the proposed nature of change'
- 'magnitude: refers to the physical scale of the project, how distant it is and the contrast it presents to the existing condition'.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors. It is often important to identify not only what is happening at the viewpoint (e.g. use) but also what is being seen. Common influences of sensitivity include (refer to **Table 2**):

- distance from viewpoint (close, medium or long range);
- relative viewing level (level, below or above);
- number of viewers (few, moderate or many);
- use at the viewpoint (residential, business, recreation, industry, special use);
- purpose of being at the viewpoint (passing through such as a commuter or dwelling such as resident or a tourist);
- viewing period (short or long);
- dominant elements in the view (value and dominance of the valued feature); and
- view composition type (obstructed, general, focal or panoramic).

In particular, we give particular consideration to the value of the features in the view or the overall setting or context

In the case of Sydney, highly valued views are those of iconic landmarks that are representative of Sydney, including Harbour and other major natural waterbodies, the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Based on the findings of scenic amenity studies, other values features include water, parks, other natural features and visually interesting skylines such as that of the Sydney CBD, Parramatta or Chatswood. We also give consideration to dominance of the feature the view.

Overall settings that are often considered more sensitive in Sydney are heritage conservation areas or other mainly residential areas that have a cohesive, attractive character.

Table 2: Sensitivity

Rating	Common influences
High	Close range, below, many viewers, residential or recreation, dwelling, long period, highly valued and dominant, focal or panoramic
Moderate	Medium range, level, moderate viewers, business or special use, passing through, short period, highly valued and not dominant, valued, general, focal or panoramic
Low	Long range, above, few viewers, industry, passing through, short period, valued and not dominant, not-valued, obstructed or general
Negligible	The proposal cannot be seen

Magnitude

Considerations for magnitude include (refer to **Table 3**):

- the amount of new fabric visible compared to the existing situation, which may include a loss or addition;
- changes to the composition of the view;

- the prominence of the new fabric, or the extent to which its type, role, size, colour, materials and other elements are compatible with the existing view; and
- the ability of the view to absorb the change. For example, introduction of a new vertical element such as a tower into a context that is dominated by horizontal elements may limit the ability of the view to accommodate change. Conversely, background vegetation may significantly increase the ability of the view to accommodate change.

Table 3: Magnitude

Rating	Common influences
High	Large amount of fabric added or lost, high change to view composition in particular with regard to focus of view, highly prominent in the field of view
Moderate	Moderate amount of fabric added or lost, moderate change to view composition, visible in the field of view but not prominent
Low	Limited amount of fabric added or lost, low change to view composition, visible in the field of view but not noticeable to the casual observer
Negligible	The proposal cannot be seen

Visual impact assessment is highly subjective. The rating tools in this report only suggest a value. It is important to note that each assessment requires a balanced consideration of each factor and their interrelationship with each other.

Consistency with applicable and relevant planning instruments

Even if the visual impact of a proposal is considered to be high when considered against sensitivity and magnitude, it may be acceptable based on applicable and relevant planning instruments, or can be made acceptable through the mitigation measures (either include in the proposal that forms the development application or through the consent authority applicant of or conditions of development approval).

Visual impact matrix

Consistent with the judgement handed down Tenacity Consulting v Warringah [2004] NSWLEC 140, the judgement handed down in Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor [2013] NSWLEC 1046 notes the importance of context specific, qualitative assessment:

- ‘First, we observe that the analytic stage we propose does not mandate derivation of any formal assessment matrix. Consistency of evaluation of the acceptability of impacts on a public domain view is not a process of mathematical precision requiring an inevitable conclusion based on some fit in a matrix. However, some may find their preparation of a graduated matrix of assistance to them in undertaking an impact analysis’.

However, while acknowledging that context specific, qualitative assessment is key, the visual impact matrix shown in **Table 4** has been used to guide a more objective assessment and finding for this VIA.

Table 4: Visual impact matrix

		Magnitude			
		High	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Negligible**
Sensitivity	**High**	High	High – Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
	Moderate	High – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate - Low	Low	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

2.0 Background

Stadium Australia opened in 1999 for the 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games and, at the time, was the largest Olympic Stadium ever built and the second largest stadium in Australia. In March 2018, the NSW Premier announced plans to refurbish Stadium Australia to address deficiencies with the existing infrastructure and ensure that the stadium retains its status as a premier venue within a network of stadia and events infrastructure in NSW.

The NSW Stadia Strategy 2012 provides a vision for the future of stadia within NSW, prioritising investment to achieve the optimal mix of venues to meet community needs and to ensure a vibrant sports and event environment in NSW. A key action of the strategy includes developing Tier 1 stadia and their precincts covering transport, integrated ticketing, spectator experience, facilities for players, media, corporate and restaurant and entertainment provision. Stadium Australis is one of three Tier 1 stadia within NSW, the others being Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground.

In order to qualify for Tier 1 status, a stadium is required to include:

- seating capacity greater than 40,000;
- regularly host international sporting events;
- offer extensive corporate facilities, including suites, open-air corporate boxes and other function/dining facilities; and
- be the home ground for sporting teams playing in national competitions.

The refurbishment of Stadium Australia will address deficiencies in the existing infrastructure and improve facilities to be in line with contemporary Australian venue standards. The works ensure the stadium remains a modern, globally competitive venue that achieves the requirements for a Tier 1 stadium. The refurbishment of Stadium Australia addresses the following project objectives:

- transform the stadium into a ‘fan favourite’ destination for experiencing and enjoying sports and entertainment events;
- maximise the direct and indirect economic, social and cultural benefits to NSW from the project, including securing major, economically beneficial events within NSW to ensure the economic sustainability of the stadium into the future;
- deliver a multi-use contemporary rectangular venue that meets the needs of patrons, hirers and other users for rugby, football, concerts and other new forms of entertainment, and reaffirms the status of the stadium as Australia’s largest purpose-built rectangular venue in Australia;
- improve the facility’s sensitivity to the environmental conditions of the site by providing a roof which provides cover to 100% of seats (to the drip line);
- provide new and refurbished corporate areas, members areas and general admission areas to enhance the patron experience;
- promote universal accessibility, safety and security such that the stadium is welcoming, inclusive and safe for all stadium users, including persons requiring universal access;
- promote environmental sustainability and embrace a whole of life approach to operations and maintenance; and
- achieve a high standard of design and reinforce the Stadium’s status and identity within the NSW stadia network, and more broadly, nationally and internationally.

3.0 Site description

The site is located at 15 Edwin Flack Avenue within the Sydney Olympic Park. It is bound by Edwin Flack Avenue to the west, Dawn Fraser Avenue to the south, Olympic Boulevard to the east and Qudos Bank Arena to the north. The site is located within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area.

The site is legally described as Lot 4000 in DP 1004512 and part of Lot 4001 in DP 1004512. In 2017, the Minister for Sport assigned Venues NSW as the trustee of Stadium Australia under the Sporting Venues Authorities Act 2008.

In a broader context, the site forms part of Sydney Olympic Park which is a sporting and economic centre in metropolitan Sydney that covers 680 hectares. Sydney Olympic Park comprises a range of sports and entertainment venues, parklands, and commercial, retail and residential developments. It benefits from convenient access to Homebush Bay Drive, Parramatta Road and the M4 Western Motorway, as well as Olympic Park railway station. The Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 and Sydney Metro West will also significantly increase accessibility.

The locational context of the Site is shown in **Figure 1** whilst the site boundaries and existing site features are shown in **Figure 2**.

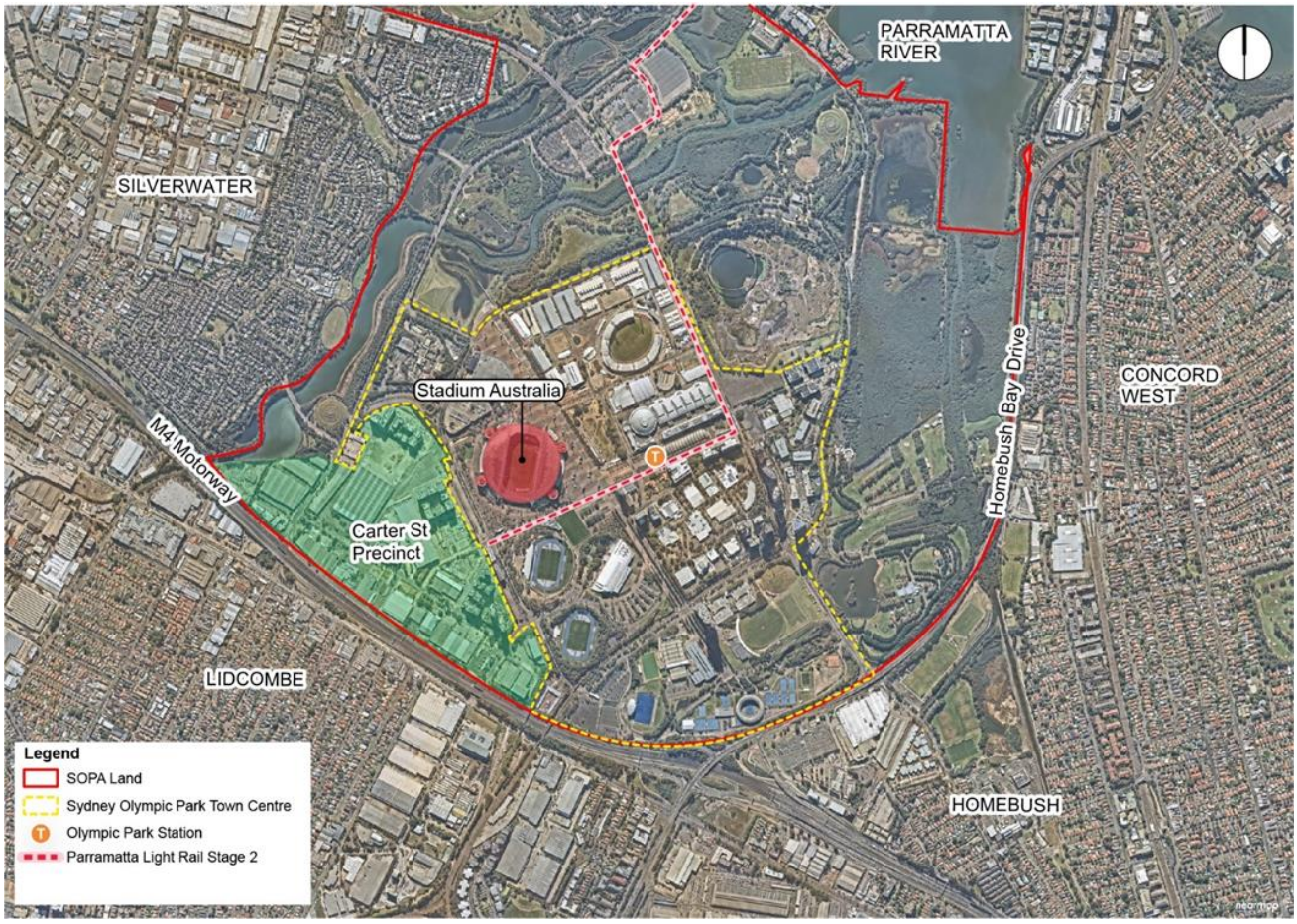

Figure 1: Locational context of the Site

Figure 2: Site boundaries and existing site features

4.0 Overview of proposed development

In March 2018 the NSW Government announced its commitment to refurbish the existing Stadium Australia and retain its status as a premier venue within a network of stadia and events infrastructure in NSW (refer **Figure 3**). This comprises the following:

- reconfiguring the field of play to a permanent rectangular configuration;
- Redeveloping the lower and middle seating bowl to locate seating closer to the field and increase the pitch (steepness) of the seating bowl, which has the effect of reducing the capacity to approximately 70,000 seats (plus up to an additional 20,000 persons on the field during concerts);
- providing 100% drip-line roof coverage to all permanent seats by replacing the northern and southern sections of the roof and extending the existing eastern and western sections of the roof;
- providing a new northern and southern public stadium entrance, including a new stadium facade and double-height concourse;
- renewing the food and beverage concessions, bathrooms, team facilities including new gender neutral changerooms, members and corporate facilities, press and broadcast facilities, and back of house areas;
- providing new signage, high-definition video replay screens, LED lighting, and other functional improvements; and
- Retaining the public domain areas surrounding the stadium that deliver a range of publicly accessible, event and operational areas, with minor works for tree removal.

Part of the existing stadium forecourt will be used as a construction compound during the construction phase and reinstated following the completion of works and prior to commencement of stadium operations.

Figure 3: Indicative photomontage of proposed stadium

5.0 Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has issued Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to the applicant for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed development. This report has been prepared having regard to the relevant SEARs as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5: SEARS

SEAR category	SEAR requirement
Visual and View Impacts	The EIS shall: • include a visual impact assessment to identify the visual changes and impacts on the site and its surrounds when viewed from key vantage points (see plans and documents section).
Environmental Amenity	The EIS shall: • detail the impacts of the development on view loss, wind impacts and reflectivity

6.0 Place character

Local character is a fundamental element of place. Based on the assumption of the importance of place to communities, the NSW planning system seeks to ensure that development considers local character. Identification of local character is therefore an important step in determining the appropriateness of the proposal.

In accordance with the Department's Local Character and Place Guideline (2019) (the Guideline), local character comprises a broad range of elements, including the environmental, social and economic aspects of a place. However, for the purposes of guide development it is best considered as a combination of the important physical aspects of a place. These physical aspects can be organised under three main themes:

1. public domain
2. private domain
3. cross domain.

The RMS Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2018) provides guidance on what matters to consider in identifying local character. While used interstate, the Victorian Government's Understanding Neighbourhood Character Planning Practice Note (2018) also provide guidance on local character.

Importantly, the Guideline acknowledges that it is not always appropriate to keep a places existing local character. It identifies that planning instruments can seek to change, enhance or maintain existing local character.

Under public domain, the following matters often represent important physical aspects of a place:

- movement
- open space.

Under private domain, the following matters often represent important physical aspects of a place:

- land use
- built form, including siting, bulk and scale and detailed design.

Under cross domain, the following matters often represent important physical aspects of a place:

- landform
- street, block and lot patterns
- trees and other vegetation in the public and private domains.

6.1 Sydney Olympic Park

The Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan clearly articulates what is considered to be the important elements of place for the site and surrounds (refer **Figure 4**). This is primarily focussed around preserving the physical heritage of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This setting was structured around three key principles:

- the Olympic Plaza and the Boulevard, as the main organising element of the urban core
- the landscape, including the tree lined streets, parks and green fingers (streets and linear parks running east to west that link the town with the parklands), and the Olympic Markers
- the water features.

The Master Plan states that important physical elements will be preserved and enhanced by:

- 'retaining Olympic Boulevard as the grand ceremonial and event axis
- maintaining the iconic sports venues, public spaces, light towers and artworks built for the Games
- retaining the iconic structures in the Sydney Showground
- designing Dawn Fraser Avenue and Murray Rose Avenue to form the primary east-west connection between the parklands and surrounding suburbs
- strengthening the green finger connections between the urban core and surrounding parklands with enhanced planting

- conserving heritage items, the State Abattoirs heritage conservation area, Showground Road, the Olympic Cauldron at Sydney Olympic Park and significant trees
- building height and envelope controls that complement these elements'.

Figure 4: Important elements of place character

6.2 Primary visual catchment

Due to its size, the theoretical visual catchment of the proposal is large.

Despite this, site inspection has determined that the primary visual catchment for the site is much smaller, and is focussed around areas adjoining the present stadium.

The character of this visual catchment is generally in accordance with the description of place and character.

While parts of it are intended to evolve to a more active, mixed use precinct, the primary catchment presents visually as a regimental arrangement of large, imposing and functional buildings set within a highly organised and functional public domain. In particular, the stadium reads as monumental urban feature, the adjoining

roads are straight, wide and blend with the expansive, hard paved curtilage of the stadium designed to efficiently and safely move a larger number of pedestrians visiting for sporting events. Trees and other vegetation are minimal, and where occurring largely has not reached maturity. The topography is also largely flat. This combination gives the place an open, almost harsh feel, with the sky a dominant visual feature.

The primary visual catchment is highly functional, with people likely to be overwhelmingly transiting as opposed to dwelling.

6.3 The stadium

The construction of Stadium Australia was completed in March 1999 for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Due to this association and its continued role as the city's largest (by capacity) sporting and entertainment venue, it has significant cultural value. The stadium has undergone substantial change since its original opening.

The original design was more in keeping with the proposal, with substantially larger and by association more visually dominant northern and southern wings (refer **Figure 5**).

In 2003 reconfiguration work was undertaken to:

- substantially shorten the north and south stands
- provide new roofs over these shortened stands.

Together with other changes, this reduced the capacity by over 25,000 spectators.

The stadium today is clearly identifiable as a large, statement item of infrastructure. Key features include:

- a contemporary, largely un-decorative design
- a notable difference between the main part of the stadium and the roof
- a curving roof form, rising at the longer eastern and western ends and dipping in height at the shorter northern and southern ends. From certain locations, this creates a visual composition which can in some respects be compared to a 'bowl', or 'saucer'
- prominent, circular extensions that provide for substantial pedestrian movements, and allow for universal access
- exposed steel roofing truss
- main stadium largely reading as a solid form clad in what appears to be a metallic or similar material, articulated to some degree by windows, ventilation outlets and vertical slats on some parts of the
- lightweight elements such as awnings and other element in the surrounding public domain that mainly provide for lighting, however also perform a wayfinding and shelter function.

The stadium has a particular relationship with the Qudos Bank Arena with which it occupies the same street block and is linked by a coherent expanse of paving. While performing a similar role, the smaller arena has a large expanse of transparent glass on part of its façade which serves to reduce its apparent bulk and scale.

While providing some level of distinction, these features and the overall form of the stadium are not considered to be of such high value to suggest major limitation on the acceptability of change. In particular, it is considered that the monumental scale of the stadium provides significant potential to accommodate and visually absorb changes that maintain its role as a sporting and entertainment venue of metropolitan importance.

Figure 5: Stadium Australia in 2000

7.0 Viewpoints

Viewpoints were selected based on the Master Plan identification of important views supplemented by site inspection. It is considered that these viewpoints are representative of the current experience of the primary visual catchment, capturing:

- public domain, in particular those that are highly visited
- all distances – close, medium and long range
- all directions.

It is not considered that the primary visual catchment contains any special viewpoints that warrant special consideration.

Table 6 identifies the viewpoints representative of the visual character of the primary visual catchment that were selected for further analysis. **Figure 6** identifies the location of these viewpoints.

Specific physical elements such as telegraph poles, signs, canopy's and lighting structures have been surveyed and recorded by CMS Surveyors on 22/08/19. COX has then used this underlying data to align and produce the photomontages in accordance with L&E Court policy as shown in **Figure 7-24.**

Table 6: Viewpoints

View	Location	Field of View*	Ground Level RL at camera location	RL of Camera above ground*	Easting	Northing
1.	Station	24mm	16.15	18.1	321240.292	6253112.976
2.	Qudos Forecourt	24mm	11.24	12.84	320836.895	6253414.890
3.	Brickpit	35mm	3.37	4.97	321581.996	6253925.405
4.	Pullman	35mm	19.68	21.28	321206.416	6252942.917
5.	Newington	35mm	3.68	5.28	320375.799	6254105.998
6.	Dawn Fraser Avenue	24mm	16.25	17.85	320815.055	6252847.686
7.	Edwin Flack Avenue	35mm	8.08	9.68	320719.181	6253674.291
8.	Australia Avenue	35mm	6.11	7.71	322041.205	6252483.655
9.	Bicentennial Park	35mm	10.01	11.61	322216.140	6252768.756

**35mm considered to capture perspective similar to human eye. 24mm has been used when shorter viewing distance warrants a wider field of view*
**The height of camera is 1.6m above ground level*

Figure 6: Location of viewpoints and direction

7.1 Viewpoint 1: Station

Figure 7: Viewpoint 1: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Figure 8: Viewpoint 1: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

7.2 Viewpoint 2: Qudos Forecourt

Figure 9: Viewpoint 2: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Figure 10: Viewpoint 2: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Sensitivity

Characteristic	Comment
Distance from site	Close range (approximately 100m)
Relative viewing level	Level with the site
Number of viewers	Many during event times, few ordinarily
Use at the viewpoint	Special use – major sporting and entertainment events
Purpose of being at viewpoint	Transiting to access an entrance, waiting or engaging in activities not allowed within a venue (eg cigarette smoking)
Viewing period	Short
Dominant elements	The view is highly urban and austere, being heavily dominated by built elements and in particular hardstand the foreground and middle ground. The stadium appears as dominant built infrastructure in the background. Lightweight lighting structures and the sky are also notable features. Trees a minimal and do not have a combined canopy
View composition type	Focal, with the stadium occupying a larger part of central frame of view. The lighting structures serve to direct the eye to the stadium
Overall rating	Low

Magnitude

Characteristic	Comment
Amount of fabric change	Moderate
View composition change	Moderate. The view will change the perception of the curving, sweeping nature of the roof form that crates a form resembling a 'bowl'
Prominence	The new fabric is readily noticeable compared to the existing fabric
Overall rating	Moderate

Discussion

The magnitude of the proposed change is moderate compared to the existing situation. This is largely due to the alteration of the form of the stadium created by the addition of the higher northern roof element. However, this magnitude is substantially offset by the low sensitivity of the viewpoint. This sensitivity is in particular shaped by the dominance of hardstand in the foreground and middle ground, with an absence of substantive natural elements (apart from the sky). Therefore, the visual impact at this viewpoint is low – moderate

7.3 Viewpoint 3: Brickpit

Figure 11: Viewpoint 3: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 12: Viewpoint 3: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

7.4 Viewpoint 4: Pullman

Figure 13: Viewpoint 4: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 14: Viewpoint 4: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

7.5 Viewpoint 5: Newington

Figure 15: Viewpoint 5: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 16: Viewpoint 5: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

7.6 Viewpoint 6: Dawn Fraser Avenue

Figure 17: Viewpoint 6: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Figure 18: Viewpoint 6: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 24mm Lens

Sensitivity

Characteristic	Comment
Distance from site	Close range (approximately 80m)
Relative viewing level	Level with the site
Number of viewers	Many during event times, few ordinarily
Use at the viewpoint	Special use – major sporting and entertainment events
Purpose of being at viewpoint	Transiting to access an entrance or parking a vehicle
Viewing period	Short
Dominant elements	Dominant elements in the view are landscaping, hard paved surfaces and built form. Grass and a raised planter bed with sparse shrubs and juvenile trees appear in the foreground. A bitumen verge area in the foreground combines with the road in the middle-ground and stadium curtilage in the background. The stadium is visible in the background, however the variety of other elements, including structures such a light poles and signs and in particular trees reduce its visibility and soften its appearance
View composition type	Focal, with the stadium occupying a larger part of central frame of view, albeit partially obscured. The intersection of the line created by the boundary between grass and the bitumen verge and the line formed by the raised planter bed is an interesting compositional element

Magnitude

Characteristic	Comment
Amount of fabric change	Moderate
View composition change	Moderate
Prominence	The new fabric is noticeable compared to the existing fabric
Overall rating	Low – moderate

Discussion

The magnitude of the proposed change is moderate compared to the existing situation. However, the visibility and perception of change and dominance of the new built form is heavily mitigated by intervening trees and the variety of other elements in the foreground and middle ground. This magnitude is further offset by the low sensitivity of the viewpoint. Therefore, the visual impact at this viewpoint is low.

7.7 Viewpoint 7: Edwin Flack Avenue

Figure 19: Viewpoint 7: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 20: Viewpoint 7: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

Characteristic	Comment
Distance from site	Medium range (approximately 390m)
Relative viewing level	Level with the site
Number of viewers	Many during event times, few ordinarily
Use at the viewpoint	Special use – major sporting and entertainment events
Purpose of being at viewpoint	Transiting, including to venues or the parklands to the east such as the Brickpit accessed by Edwin Flack Avenue
Viewing period	Short
Dominant elements	Hardstand comprising ochre coloured paving contrasting with recently laid bitumen in the foreground and middle ground. Qudos Bank Arena is the dominant built element in the centre right of the middle-ground. The stadium is visible as a small element in the centre background Trees in the left middle-ground edge break up the dominance of hard stand and built form in the view.
View composition type	Restricted
Overall	Low

Magnitude

Characteristic	Comment
Amount of fabric change	Low
View composition change	Low
Prominence	Low
Overall	Low

Discussion

Due to its distance from the viewpoint and the dominance and obstructive nature of Qudos Bank arena, visual impact at this viewpoint is low.

7.8 Viewpoint 8: Australia Avenue

Figure 21: Viewpoint 8: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 22: Viewpoint 8: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

7.9 Viewpoint 9: Bicentennial Park

Figure 23: Viewpoint 9: existing, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Figure 24: Viewpoint 9: proposed, Canon 5D Mark IV – 35mm Lens

Sensitivity

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Magnitude

The proposal is not visible from this viewpoint.

Discussion

As the proposal is not visible from this viewpoint, it has a negligible visual impact.

8.0 Assessment against applicable planning instruments

The main planning instruments relevant to the assessment of the proposal are:

1. State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005 (the SSP SEPP).
2. Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2018 review) (the Master Plan).

8.1 The SSP SEPP

Schedule 3, clause 4of the SSP SEPP states that:

- The only environmental planning instruments that apply, according to their terms, to land within the Sydney Olympic Park site are this Policy and all other State environmental planning policies, except State Environmental Planning Policy No 1—Development Standards.

The SEPP identifies the stadium as a major event venue. This means it is a facility or public space designed to be used for, or to support, a major event.

The SSP SEPP does not have overall aims for the Precinct. Rather, the precinct is divided into a number of zones subject to objectives. The stadium is included in the B4 Mixed Use zone.

The objectives of Zone B4 Mixed Use are as follows:

- to protect and promote the major events capability of the Sydney Olympic Park site and to ensure that it becomes a premium destination for major events
- to integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling
- to ensure that the Sydney Olympic Park site becomes an active and vibrant town centre within metropolitan Sydney
- to provide for a mixture of compatible land uses
- to encourage diverse employment opportunities
- to promote ecologically sustainable development and minimise any adverse effect of land uses on the environment
- to encourage the provision and maintenance of affordable housing.

The corresponding land use table identifies that all uses are either permitted with or without consent. The only prohibited uses are:

- bulky goods premises; caravan parks; industries; moveable dwellings; resource recovery facilities; restricted premises; rural industries; sex services premises; truck depots; warehouse or distribution centres.

Table 7 below identifies the main development controls applying to the site.

Table 7: Main SSP SEPP development controls

Element	Relevant	Provision
Land Zoning	Yes	B4 Mixed Use
Maximum Building Height	No	N/a
Reduced Level Map	Yes	Specifies a maximum height for the Stadium's surrounding ground plane curtilage
Environmental Conservation Areas	No	N/a
Heritage	No	N/a
Acid Sulfate Soils	Yes	Disturbed terrain
Intensive Urban Development	Yes	Silent

Discussion

It is clear from a combined reading of the zone objectives, land use table and main development controls that the site is located in a part of Olympic Park intended for substantial growth, and that there is no strong guidance on visual considerations.

8.2 The Master Plan

Applicability

Schedule 3, clause 26(1) of the SSP SEPP states that:

- Development consent must not be granted for development on land within the Sydney Olympic Park site to which a master plan applies unless the consent authority has considered that master plan, except as provided by subclauses (2) and (3).

Purpose

The purpose of the Master Plan is to:

- provide a comprehensive approach to the development of Sydney Olympic Park
- ensure Sydney Olympic Park becomes an active and vibrant Town Centre within Metropolitan Sydney
- protect the role of Sydney Olympic Park as the premier destination for cultural, entertainment, recreation and sporting events
- protect and enhance the public domain
- protect and enhance the Sydney Olympic Park parklands
- provide detailed planning and design principles and controls to encourage development that responds to its context and contributes to the quality of the built environment and the future character and cultural significance of the site.

Stadia Precinct

The site is included in the Stadia Precinct. The Master Plan states:

- 'the large buildings with their sculptural roofs and the iconic light towers present an enduring image of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games and will be retained to preserve the legacy and event function of the precinct'
- 'a roof over ANZ Stadium is a planned future improvement to the precinct'.

Murray Rose Avenue is noted as a 20m wide view corridor, and a vista is noted from Yulang Square.

Planning Principles

Section 3.2.2: Existing Views of the Master Plan provides the most relevant considerations for visual impact. The Master Plan states that important views will be preserved and enhanced by retaining:

- Fig Grove to mark the high point of the urban core and of Olympic Boulevard
- the vista to the Northern Water Feature and Newington Village along Olympic Boulevard
- the vista to the Tennis Centre along Olympic Boulevard
- views to the surrounding parklands
- eastern views to Sydney CBD and Chatswood
- local views to the former Olympic stadium (currently The Stadium) across the Yulang Square from the station and down Murray Rose Avenue.
- sun access and visual connection will be secured for Central Park and new buildings by creating a vista across Central Park to the Abattoir Gardens. Buildings fronting Central Park will have a view towards the station and Showground buildings.

These important views are shown in **Figure 25**.

They have been the main informants of selecting the viewpoints for assessment this VIA.

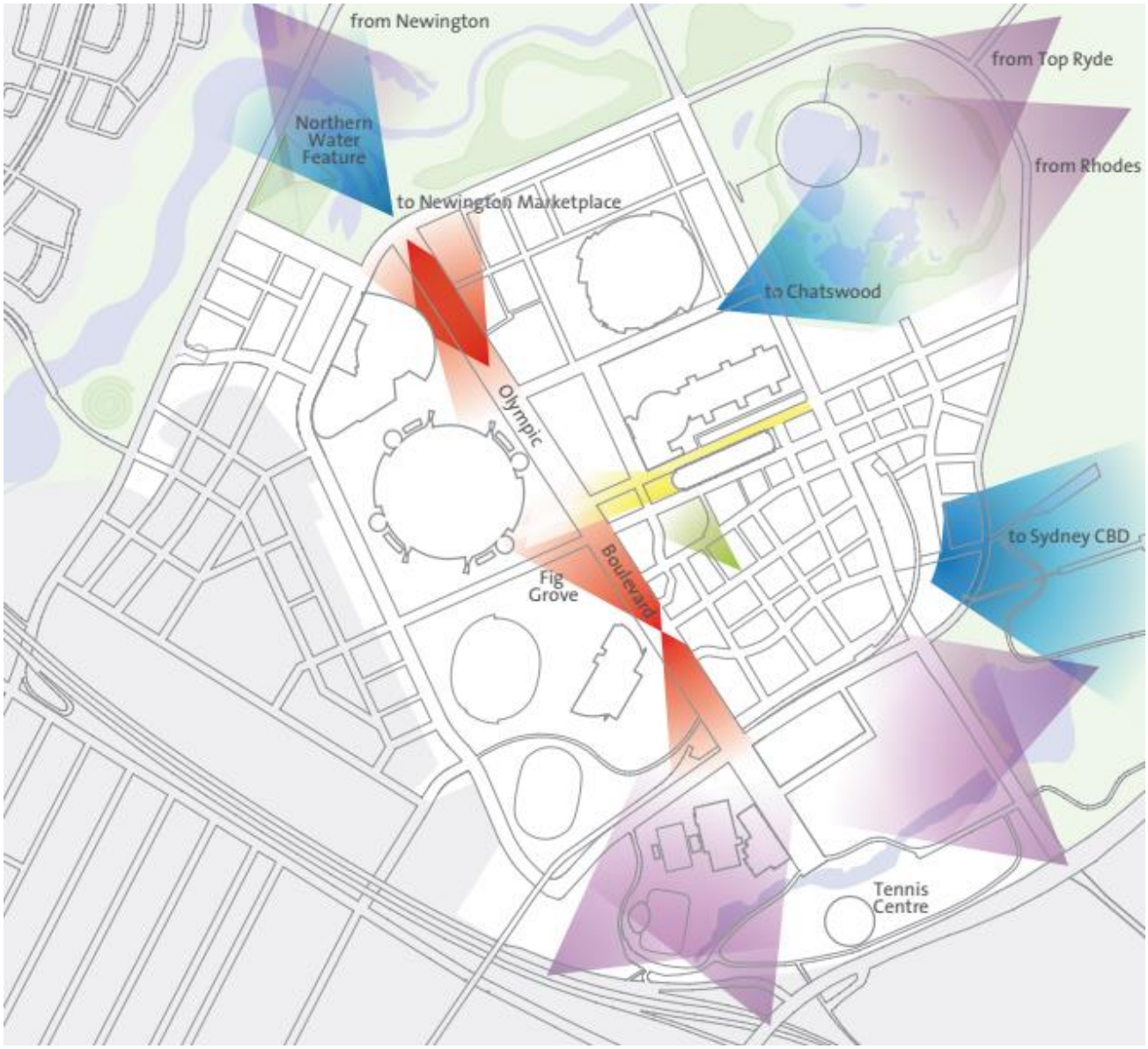

Figure 25: Important views under the Master Plan

Discussion

The Master Plan seeks to protect Sydney Olympic Park as a premier destination for cultural, entertainment, recreation and sporting events. It also seeks to retain the foundational physical elements of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Refurbishment of the stadium will promote the continued role of Sydney Olympic Park and the stadium in particular as Sydney's pre-eminent sporting and entertainment place while respecting the Olympic legacy and enabling the evolution of Olympic Park overall to a more mixed-use precinct. In particular, it will not obstruct or fundamentally alter the nature of views obtained from key vantage points as identified in the Master Plan, and will not result in view loss from locations in the public domain.

8.3 Strategic Plans

Applicability

While Strategic Plans do not hold the same weight in development assessment as the SSP SEPP and the Master Plan, it is best practice to consider their content. The site is subject to the following Strategic Plans:

- the Sydney Region Plan
- the Central District Plan
- a number of documents addressing the Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula Economic Corridor.

While included in the Parramatta LGA, the draft Parramatta Local Strategic Planning Statement has not yet been exhibited. On this basis it is not a relevant consideration.

Discussion

All of these plans acknowledge the importance of Sydney Olympic Park as one of Sydney's premier sporting, recreation and entertainment places, and seek to continue to guide the evolution of the precinct for a greater range and intensity of uses. While the District and Region Plan seeks to protect scenic and cultural landscapes, these landscapes are largely framed as more natural places, and neither Sydney Olympic Park in general nor the stadium specifically are referenced.

9.0 Summary assessment

Table 8 provides a summary assessment of the proposal considering relevant criteria.

Based on consideration of factors such as distance of the proposal from the viewpoint, the composition and dominant features in the view and the purpose of people being at the viewpoint, the sensitivity of all viewpoints were rated as low. Based on consideration of factors such as amount and type of new fabric visible and its relationship to the existing view, the magnitude of change at all viewpoints were also rated as low. It is noted that the photomontages showed that the proposal was likely not to be visible form a number of viewpoints. On this basis, further assessment was not necessary and the visual impact was automatically ascribed to be negligible.

The greatest visual impact is likely to occur at Viewpoint 2: Qudos Forecourt, Viewpoint 6: Dawn Fraser Avenue and Viewpoint 7: Edwin Flack Avenue. The nature of change is derived from introduction of a new roof form to cover the southern and northern stands. As is noted, the visual impact of this is low. While the amount of new fabric visible is considerable, it is consistent with the place character at the viewpoints and visible from the viewpoints and does not fundamentally alter the visible nature or the use or meaning of the stadium.

On this basis and considering the SEARs, it is concluded in its current proposed form that the while the nature of visual change is substantial from a small number of viewpoints, the impact of this change is low is appropriate having regard to the provisions of relevant parts of applicable planning instruments. In particular, it will not obstruct or fundamentally alter the nature of views obtained from key vantage points as identified in the Master Plan, and will not result in view loss from locations in the public domain.

Table 8: Summary assessment

View	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Visual impact	Planning
1.	Station	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a
2.	Qudos Forecourt	Low	Moderate	Moderate – Low	Consistent
3.	Brickpit	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a
4.	Pullman	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a
5.	Newington	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a
6.	Dawn Fraser Avenue	Low	Low-moderate	Low	Consistent
7.	Edwin Flack Avenue	Low	Low	Low	Consistent
8.	Australia Avenue	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a
9.	Bicentennial Park	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	N/a

10.0 Mitigation strategies and measures

Based on the summary assessment, it is not considered necessary to implement mitigation strategies and measures to reduce visual impact.

11.0 Residual impact

As no mitigation strategies and measures are necessary, the residual impact of the proposal is the same as that identified in the summary assessment.

12.0 Conclusion

Assessment of the proposal as represented in photomontages prepared in accordance with L&E Court policy has been made against relevant factors such as existing place character of the primary visual catchment, sensitivity, magnitude, applicable planning instruments, the need for mitigation strategies and measures and consideration of residual impact.

On this basis, this VIA concludes that considering all relevant factors, in its current form the proposal has an acceptable visual impact.