

Bunnings Warehouse
Lot 3, Bringelly Road Business Hub, Leppington

State Significant Development Application SSD-10366

Visual Impact Assessment



October 2019



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Document control

Issue	Date	Details	Author	Approved
01	23/10/2019	Client Review	AC	AC
01	25/10/2019	For SSD Application	AC	AC
File Location: Macintosh HD:Users:alan:Documents:Urbanac:Clients:Bunnings:Leppington Bringelly Rd Visual Impact Assessment:Bunnings Leppington Visual Impact Assessment Final.docx				

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Abbreviations

Business Hub	Bringelly Road Business Hub
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SSD	State Significant Development
RMS Guidelines	<i>Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-N04 (version 2.1), published by Roads and Maritime Services, December 2018.</i>

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1 Overview

1.1 Background

Urbanac was engaged by Bunnings Group Limited to undertake a visual impact assessment in relation to a State Significant Development Application SSD-10366 for a new Bunnings Warehouse on land within the Bringelly Road Business Hub.

Approval for a State Significant Concept Development SSD-6342 was granted on 13/01/2016 (which has been modified three times, Mod 3 approved 22/03/2019, Mod 4 lodged but not yet determined) for a business park comprising 'large format retail premises', 'light industry', 'service station', 'take away food and drink premises', and 'restaurant or café' and a development structure including: - land uses; - site layout; - building envelopes; - design parameters; and – landscaping, subject to conditions which include the following:

PART B CONDITIONS TO BE MET IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS...

Visual Impact 86. Future development applications shall be accompanied by a detailed visual impact assessment, which includes photomontages that identify the potential impacts of the development from nearby residential receivers and significant vantage points in the public domain and outlines proposed mitigation measures to reduce potential visual impact.

This report provides a visual impact assessment required in future development applications in accordance with that condition.

1.2 Methodology

The report assesses the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding significant vantage points and nearby residential receivers. Locations elsewhere within the Business Hub itself are not included for assessment.

The visual impact assessment methodology generally follows that set out in *Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-N04 (version 2.1)*, published by Roads and Maritime Services, December 2018.

In essence this methodology involves the following steps:

- Identify the extent of visibility of the proposal
- Identify existing viewpoints and their sensitivity to change
- Determine the magnitude of change for each viewpoint
- Assess visual impact

The report has also had regard to the remainder of the approved Bringelly Road Business Hub site layout and building envelopes, the Site Design Guidelines prepared by JBA for Western Sydney Parklands dated June 2015.

2 The Site

The site is part of the Bringelly Road Business Hub (the Business Hub) which is a joint venture between Charter Hall and CI Property who hold a ground lease from the Western Sydney Parklands Trust (WSPT). Currently an undeveloped greenfield site which has previously been used as grazing pasture land, the approved stage 1 works to establish the Business Hub will result in the clearing of 1.87 hectares of nine small patches of Cumberland Plain Woodland across the site, including disturbed woodland, scattered paddock trees and native shrubs to create the allotments approved within the subdivision plan.

The approved (as yet unregistered) plan of subdivision creates 'Lot 3' which is a 4,0968 hectare site at the western end of the Business Hub adjacent to Stuart Road. The Bunnings Warehouse proposal is to be contained within a reconfigured Lot 3, which is to be established via a concurrent amendment to SSD 6324 (Mod 4) as shown in Figure 1.

2.1 Site Context

The immediate context of the Bunnings Warehouse site includes:

- To the west across Stuart Road, existing low density residential uses;
- To the north across Stuart Road, undeveloped greenfield site used as used as grazing pasture land;
- To the east the remainder of the Business Hub, which will ultimately contain similarly scaled large format retail premises and light industry built form with low-scale residential uses further east and generally beyond the visual catchment of the site;
- To the south, Skyline Crescent, which forms the connector road for the Business Hub, and further south Bringelly Road, separated by a generous landscaped buffer.



Figure 1 Bringelly Road Business Hub and subject site

Source: Google and Sutherland and Associates Planning

3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises:

- Construction of a commercial building to be used for hardware and building supplies and garden centre (Bunnings Warehouse) encompassing a warehouse, covered outdoor nursery, bagged goods store, timber trade sales area, café, office, amenities, service road/ramps and loading areas;
- An at-grade and below ground car park located to the west of the warehouse;
- Bunning's wall business identification signs;
- Landscaping and public domain works.

The warehouse is aligned to the eastern boundary of the site, with a minimum 15 metre setback from Stuart Road (including a 9 metre landscaped strip) which runs along the north and east of the site, and greater than 10 metre setback from Skyline Crescent, the new road to the south of the site. Loading facilities are located at the north-eastern corner of the site. The eastern boundary is shared with the next lot of the Business Hub, and is likely to be developed with a similar scale of built form.



Figure 2 Proposed Landscape Plan showing landscape buffers and carpark planting

Source: Bunnings Group Limited and John Lock & Associates Landscape Architecture

4 Visual Impact Assessment

4.1 Extent of Visibility

Figure 3 shows the approximate extent of visibility measured at the ground plane.

No significant view corridors (such as a towards a coastline or other major land/water interface, mountains, forests or iconic built environment features) have been identified within the extent of visibility, which is considered to contain a range of generally pleasant but unremarkable semi-rural views (including of paddocks, woodland, and gentle hills), as well views of rural-residential dwellings and associated buildings and large scale road infrastructure but is not considered to contain significant landscape features.

For the purposes of this visual impact assessment sites within the Business Hub to the east of the site were not included on the basis that the building will be largely obscured by buildings on adjacent lots within the short term.

4.2 Existing Viewpoints

Within the extent of visibility, five viewpoints outside were selected as representative of the surrounding environment taking into account the topography, public approaches to the site and the location of sensitive receivers. These are marked A through E on Figure 3. Each location includes a photograph showing the existing view towards the site, and in the tables a description of the effect of the proposal. This is consistent with the RMS guidelines which note "a description of the effect of the proposal may be sufficient to explain the level of magnitude determined... ..whilst photomontages may be necessary to give surety in a particularly sensitive location".



Figure 3 Extent of Visibility Diagram

Source: Base map Michael Carr Architect

Out of these five locations, two were selected for the creation of full photomontages. (These are marked A and B on Figure 3).

These locations were selected for several reasons including:

- These were considered the most prominent public locations at which the proposed development is first apparent in approaches to the site along Bringelly Road;
- The views show different aspects of the building;
- The views are representative and allow for similar views to be extrapolated from other points along Bringelly Road.

Refer to Figures 4 and 5 for viewpoint A, and Figures 6 and 7 for viewpoint B.

Viewpoints from residential receivers (marked C on Figure 3 as a representative location), or from other locations along Stuart Road (marked D on Figure 3 as a representative location) were not developed into photomontages on the basis that, given the nine metre wide, multilayered landscaped buffer along Stuart Street, little if any of the building would be readily apparent. In the case of the nearby residential receivers, even if the building were able to be glimpsed between trees this would be only as a somewhat distant backdrop given the setback of the building by approximately 60-90m from Stuart Street.

Refer to Figure 8, 9 and 10 for viewpoint C, and Figure 11 for viewpoint D.

The final viewpoint selected is from the top of the connector road between Bringelly Road and Skyline Street, being a location at which many users of the Business Hub will view the site as they enter the hub. Due to the general similarity to viewpoints A and B it was considered not necessary to produce a photomontage from this location (marked E on Figure 3 as a representative location) due to its similarity to the rendered architectural south elevation (see Figures 12 and 13).

No viewpoints were selected east of the site, as this aspect of the building is likely to be significantly obscured in views beyond the

Business Hub site by the built form on the adjacent lot to the east, as well as by Stuart Road landscape buffer noted above.

4.3 Sensitivity

Table 1 provides a description of the selected viewpoints and their sensitivity. In accordance with the RMS guidelines, sensitivity of a view is defined as an assessment of its capacity to absorb the change arising from the proposal, as well as the type of viewer and number of views.

4.4 Magnitude of Change

Magnitude refers to the form – scale, size, character – of the project and its proximity to the viewer. The RMS Guidelines define *magnitude* as “the measurement of the scale, form and character of a development proposal when compared to the existing condition. In the case of visual assessment this also relates to how far the proposal is from the viewer”.

Magnitude of change has been assessed for each location and reported in Table 3.

Table 1. Viewpoints and their Sensitivity to Change

Location	Description	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity Rating
A	Looking generally east towards the site from Bringelly Road, eastbound.	<p>This view is a broad landscape view from a local high point encompassing the distant horizon with the subject site set below the horizon line. The subject building colour at predominantly dark green tends to blend with the adjacent stands of landscaping along Stuart Road. Because the view is so broad, and the site and proposal set well below the horizon, sensitivity is considered to be very low.</p> <p>Type of Viewer: This viewpoint is public.</p> <p>Number of Views: High, typically seen from this viewpoint from a moving vehicle.</p>	4
B	Looking generally north of west towards the site from Bringelly Road, westbound	<p>This view is a broad landscape view from a local low point in which the subject site and proposed building as a result of their scale and colour take on the a landscape like aspect, complementing adjacent stands of trees along the horizon. Despite the broadness of the view and wide scale the proposal is above the horizon, leading to a sensitivity rated as low rather than very low.</p> <p>Type of Viewer: This viewpoint is public.</p> <p>Number of Views: High, typically seen from this viewpoint from a moving vehicle.</p>	4
C	Representative views of the site looking generally east from nearby residential uses (sensitive receivers) along Stuart Road	<p>This is a near view to landscaping across Stuart Road with open paddock space behind. The sensitivity is rated as very medium-high, with the potential for significant change depending on the nature of the development on the subject site.</p> <p>Type of Viewer: This viewpoint is public (street) and private (dwellings and private open space).</p> <p>Number of Views: Low, and generally stationary.</p>	2
D	Looking towards the site westbound on Stuart Road	<p>This view is an oblique view of the site along Stuart Road, which already includes medium-high landscaping on the edge of the road reservation. Because the site is already well screened by vegetation visual sensitivity is considered to be very low.</p> <p>Type of Viewer: This viewpoint is public.</p> <p>Number of Views: Medium, typically seen from this viewpoint from a moving vehicle.</p>	4
E	Looking due north towards the site along the new access road between Bringelly Road and Skyline Crescent	<p>This view is a direct view of the site along its main access road. Despite this, the fall of the land results in the site and any built form on the site is lower in the view reducing visual sensitivity to medium-low.</p> <p>Type of Viewer: This viewpoint is public.</p> <p>Number of Views: High, typically seen by all users of the Business Hub.</p>	3



Figure 4 Viewpoint A – Existing



Figure 5 Viewpoint A – Photomontage

Source: Art Solutions Architectural 3D Rendering



Figure 6 Viewpoint B – Existing



Figure 7 Viewpoint B – Photomontage

Source: Art Solutions Architectural 3D Rendering



Figure 8 Viewpoint C – Existing range of views from the Stuart Road residential sensitive receivers



Figure 9 Viewpoint C – West elevation approximating view from this viewpoint through Stuart Road landscape zone and carpark

Source: Michael Carr Architect



Figure 10 Viewpoint C – West end of the south elevation showing the landscape screening depth and setbacks along Stuart Road

Source: Michael Carr Architect. Notes: A=Nearest Residential (Sensitive Receivers); S---S= 9m Stuart Road Landscape Zone; C---C= Car Park; B=Nearest line of building to Residential (60-100+m).



Major visual changes comprise increased screening from Stuart Street 9m landscaped setback zone

Figure 11 Viewpoint D – Existing views and likely changes



Figure 12 Viewpoint E – Existing views



Figure 13 Viewpoint E – South elevation approximating views from this vantage

Source: Michael Carr Architect.

4.5 Assessing Visual Impact

The combination of sensitivity with magnitude provides a measure of visual impact. The assessment of visual impact uses the values described below in table 3 and the resulting visual impact rating derived from the matrix below and in accordance with the RMS Guidelines.

Table 2. Visual Impact Descriptors and Matrix Diagram

Sensitivity:	Magnitude of Change:
1 High	A Extensive change to the nature of the view
2 Medium	B Moderate change to the nature of the view
3 Low	C Minor impact or nature or view only partly affected
4 Very Low	D Insignificant or minimal

		Magnitude			
		A	B	C	D
Sensitivity	1	High	High Medium	Medium	Negligible
	2	High- Medium	Medium	Medium-Low	Negligible
	3	Medium	Medium-Low	Low	Negligible
	4	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

4.5.1 Mitigating Features of the Existing Design

The proposal already contains a number of design features that mitigate against potential adverse visual impacts. These include:

- Minimum 15m setback along Stuart Road including 9m landscaped area providing for multilayered visual screening;
- Multilayering of planting, and in particular low-medium height shrubs at the carpark aisle ends and to the Stuart Street batter, which will provide effective visual screening between the carpark

and the residential uses on Stuart Road, including the screening of headlights of cars in the carpark at night;

- Locating the built form (and in particular the loading areas and back of house) at the eastern edge of the site, farthest from the nearest residential uses and allowing the carpark to provide an effective buffer and transition space between the larger scale warehouse buildings and smaller rural-residential uses opposite;
- A simple building form which is uncluttered and sits comfortably in the broader landscape at a scale in keeping with adjacent road infrastructure;
- Uncluttered signage and super-graphics with the familiar logo and the hammer graphic appearing only once per elevation (the depiction of the hammer, a familiar human-scaled object, is also considered, serendipitously, to assist in reducing the overall scale of the building).

Acting together these design features of the building provide a substantial and significant mitigation of visual impacts compared to alternative potential designs with reduced landscape buffer zones; smaller setbacks; which located the built form less sympathetically on the site; had unnecessarily complicated architecture; or excessive graphics leading to visual clutter.

4.5.2 Additional Mitigation Recommendations

In light of the mitigating features already inherent in the design, and in lack of significant adverse visual impact identified, no additional mitigation measures have been identified or are recommended.

Table 3. Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint	Sensitivity Rating	Element of Project Visible	Magnitude Rating	Consideration	Visual Impact Rating
A	4	The carpark, and elevations of the building are present in the view, set below the horizon, and occupying the mid ground, considered to be a medium magnitude.	C	The extensive use of landscape screening, the positioning of the building at the most remote corner of the site from this viewpoint, and the dark green, relatively subdued colour of the building, and its general lack of visual clutter all act to further mitigate any potential visual impacts. It is further noted that the development of Lot 1 (in the foreground of this view) will tend to cause the proposed development to visually recede.	Negligible
B	4	Despite its scale, the building presents in this view as a long, low thin landscape element at the general line of the horizon, considered to represent a medium magnitude.	C	The use of landscape screening, the dark green, relatively subdued colour of the building, and its general lack of visual clutter all act to further mitigate any potential visual impacts in this view.	Negligible
C	2	The proposed development will generally be significantly visible in the view but only the 9m wide Stuart Road multilayered landscaped buffer. As this is not generally perceived as development by most people, the magnitude which could be higher is instead rated as negligible.	D	The positioning of the building as far as possible away from the Stuart Road boundary with the setback area kept essentially undeveloped except as car parking ensures that any potential visual impact from this viewpoint is significantly mitigated.	Negligible
D	4	The proposed development is unlikely to be visible in this location behind existing and proposed landscape treatments to Stuart Road, leading to magnitude assessment of negligible.	D	The visual screening provided by the significant 9m wide Stuart Street landscape buffer effectively mitigates completely against any visual impacts.	Negligible
E	3	The carpark, and south elevation of the building are present in the view, set below the horizon, and occupying the mid ground, considered to be a medium magnitude.	C	The Bunnings proposal will be prominent in this view, but understated and generally lacking in visual clutter, considered to be appropriate and representing a good corporate citizen of the Business Hub.	Low

Conclusion

The report assesses the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding significant vantage points and nearby residential receivers generally following the visual impact assessment methodology set out in *Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-N04 (version 2.1)*, published by Roads and Maritime Services, December 2018.

As all impacts were rated at Low or Negligible, and in light of the considerable mitigating features already inherent in the design, no additional mitigation measures have been identified or are recommended.

The proposal is recommended to the Department for approval.

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