

HUNTINGWOOD PROCESSING EXPANSION, 65 HUNTINGWOOD DRIVE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PREPARED FOR

CHARTER HALL HOLDINGS PTY LTD

FOR SUBMISSION JULY 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The potential visual catchment of the subject site was identified using lidar topography mapping and 'ground-truthed' during fieldwork observations and was found to be limited in extent and constrained to immediately surrounding roads, by existing building development and vegetation.

Further, the visibility of the highest RL proposed for the site was tested and identified that the visual catchment would be unlikely to significantly increase due to the minor additional height proposed for example the height of the new silo compared to existing silo.

The immediate visual context is characterised by industrial-scale warehouse buildings of varying height, bulk and scale. Larger scale built forms exist immediately west and north-west of the site. These facilities include buildings which occupy the majority of their sites and include visible areas of hardstanding and limited screen or ameliorative planting.

Four close views were selected for analysis and modelling to show the likely visual effects of the proposed development. The 3D architectural model of the proposed development and indicative planting forms and locations were included in block-model photomontages.

These accurate objective visual aids satisfy the requirements outlined in the Land and Environment Court of NSW practice note for the use of visual aids to be relied on in Court.

The photomontages show that in close views the proposed built form will create significant visual change to the existing composition and character of views largely due to the removal of some vegetation.

Visual effects of the proposal were assessed against our methodology criteria including view place sensitivity, viewer sensitivity, viewing period and scenic quality etc.

A large extent of visual change of high levels of visual effects does not in our opinion, necessarily equate to a high visual impact.

The application of variable impact weighting factors such as compatibility with the existing visual character and scenic quality of immediate visual context, physical absorption capacity(PAC), compatibility with desired future character and compliance with land-use zone objectives; served as 'down-weights' to the level of visual effects.

Proposed visual impact mitigation in the form of tree planting across the site and the inclusion of virtual 'green walls' to the majority of the road frontages will in time further filter views to and reduce the visibility of the proposed development. Mitigation creates a further down-weight to the overall level of visual impacts.

Therefore taking all relevant factors into consideration, the visual impacts of the proposed development on the existing visual context were found to be low and acceptable.

The proposed development can be supported on visual impacts grounds.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) report supports a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) pursuant to Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), for the proposed expansion of the existing food processing operations at 65 Huntingwood Drive, Huntingwood.

This application is SSD by way of Schedule 1 under State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011 on the basis that the development is for the purpose of food and beverage processing (bakery) with a Capital Investment Value of more than \$30 million.

This report has been prepared having regard to the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued for the project by DPIE, ref no SSD-17352813 issued on 12th May 2021.

This VIA includes a certification statement regarding the accuracy of the preparation of photomontages prepared by Urbis.

1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH SEARS

This report has been prepared to address the SEARs dated 12th May 2021 which are relevant to views as outlined in Key Issues section: Urban Design and Visual. These are included below;

A visual impact assessment (including photomontages and perspectives) of the development layout and design (buildings and storage areas), including staging, site coverage, setbacks, open space, landscaping, height, colour, scale, building materials and finishes, façade design, signage and lighting, particularly in terms of potential impacts on:

- *Nearby public and private receivers and*
- *Significant vantage points in the broader public domain*

1.2 THE SITE

The site is currently used by Arnott's Biscuits as a food processing (bakery) facility which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The facility is located at 65 Huntingwood Drive, within the Huntingwood Industrial Estate, 32km west of Sydney CBD and 4km south of Blacktown Centre in the Blacktown City Council LGA.

The subject site occupies the prominent south-east corner of Huntingwood Drive and Brabham Drive and is bordered by the Western Motorway (M4) to the south.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SSDA seeks to expand the facilities of the existing food processing operations at 65 Huntingwood Drive, Huntingwood. The proposal includes the following features that will be visible;

- A new processing facility with a height of 14.6 metres above the loading dock on the north-western corner of the site, replacing the existing oval and carpark.
- A new silo of 29.32 metres alongside the existing silo which sits adjacent to the processing factory on the northern boundary.
- New storage building immediately east of the existing processing building.
- A new smaller processing building and ingredient silo directly south of the main processing building.
- Loading dock above two levels of car parking at the north-west corner of the site accessed from Huntingwood Drive.
- Landscaped setbacks on Huntingwood Drive and Brabham Drive.

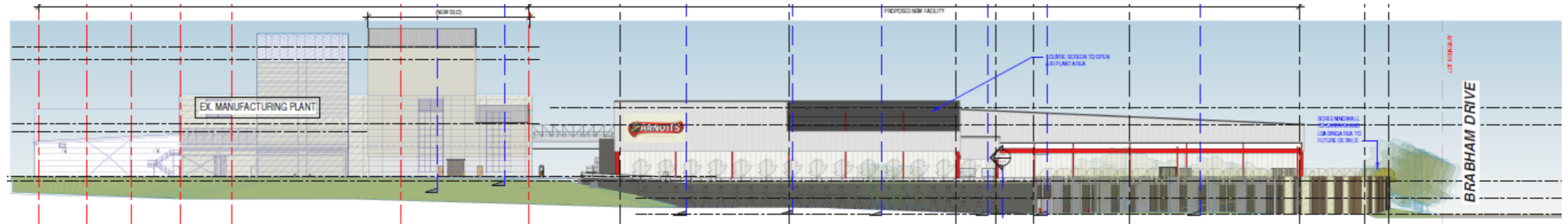


Figure 1 Proposed north elevation (Huntingwood Drive)

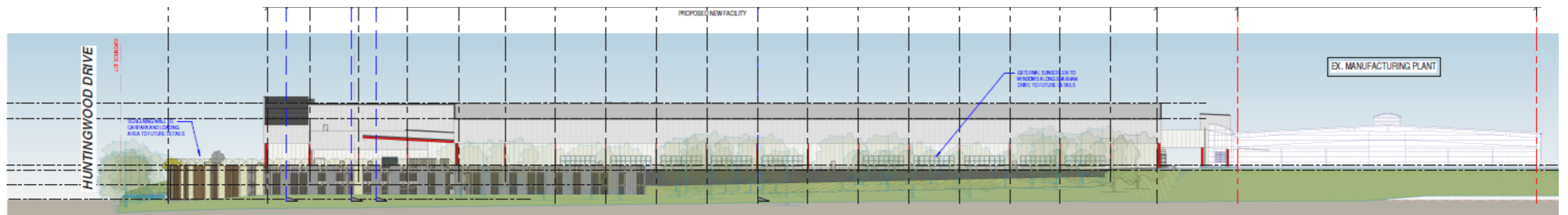


Figure 2 Proposed west elevation (Brabham Drive)

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed for this VIA is based on our analysis of a number of published methods including the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment 3rd edition, published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA) and on extensive experience gained by the author of this report working with Richard Lamb and Associates (RLA).

This report also draws on the method outlined in the Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment practice note EIA -NO4 prepared by the Roads and Maritime Services December 2018 (RMS LCIA).

Although the content and purpose of the RMS LCIA is to assess the impact on the aggregate of an area's built, natural and cultural character or sense of place rather than solely on views, it provides useful guidance as to the logic and process of visual impact assessment (VIA).

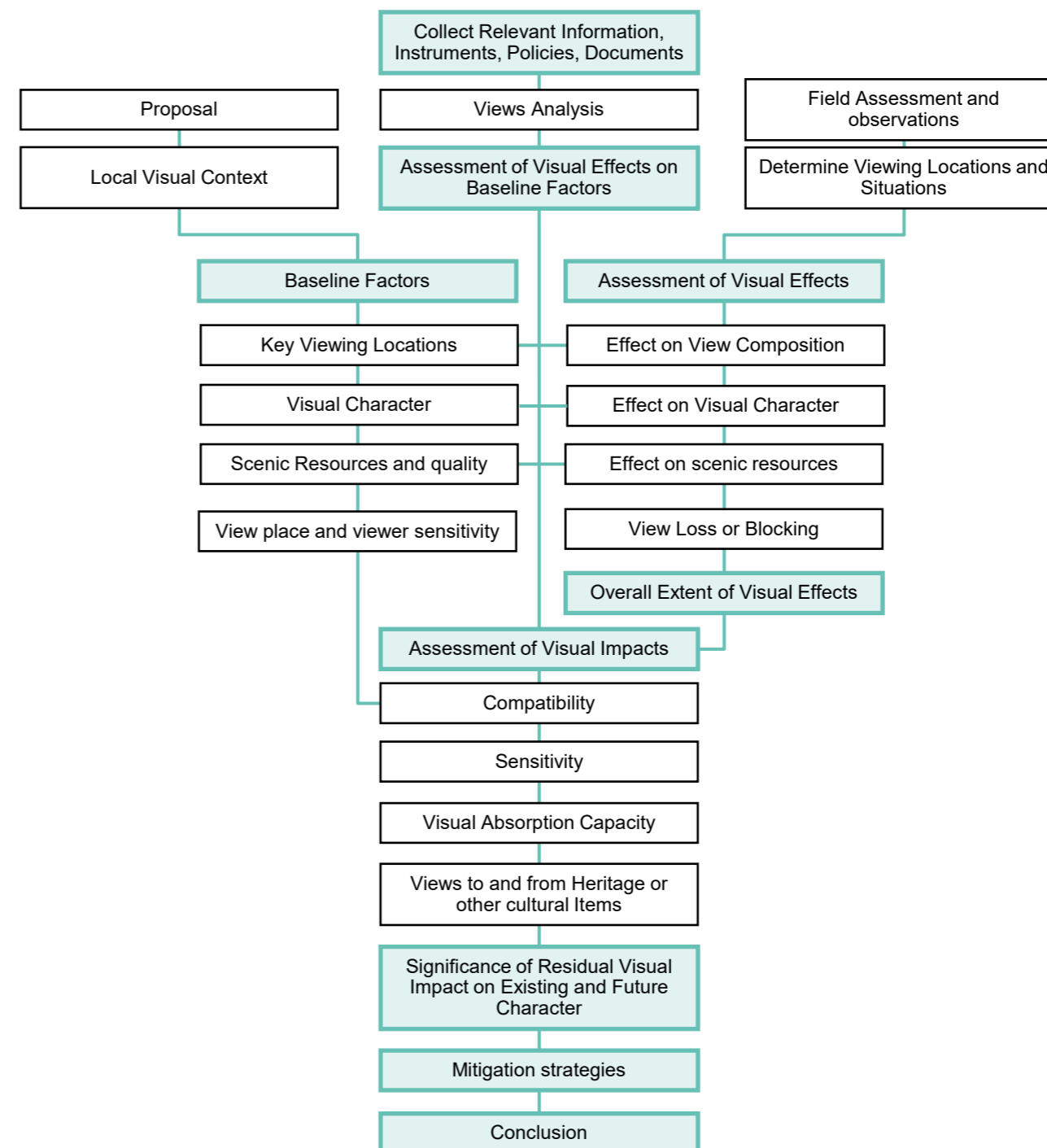
The Urbis methodology identifies objective information about the existing visual environment, quantifies and analyses the extent of visual effects on those baseline characteristics and unlike other methods, considers the importance of additional layers of information such as view place sensitivity or compatibility with visual character.

Separating objective facts from subjective emotional responses establishes a robust and comprehensive matrix for analysis and the final assessment of the level of visual impacts.

Reviewing and combining industry best practice, Urbis continually reviews and develops its VIA methodology so that it is appropriate for application across both rural and urban visual context.

The sequence of steps and flow of logic is shown graphically in the following method flow chart.

2.1 URBIS VIA METHODOLOGY



3.0 BASELINE VISUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 VISUAL CHARACTER

The large site occupies a long broadly rectangular block of land bounded to the north by Huntingwood Drive, west by Brabham Drive and to the south by the M4 Motorway.

The site is approximately 16.4 hectares in area and is characterised by areas of open space, vegetation and long freestanding industrial buildings which are massed in three main locations. The site has an access driveway on the northern boundary, loading areas, small ancillary buildings, car parking and established planting surrounding the three large freestanding industrial buildings, being the processing facility and two warehouses.

The buildings are broadly massed along and parallel to the east edge boundary and forms a reverse 'L' shaped floorplate with the exception of a separate southern building. The buildings vary in height and form but share similar industrial characteristics in terms of their simple massing, cladding materials and some roof forms. The recent 50m tall high-bay warehouse is the building located in the south-west corner, its 'L' shaped floorplate projects to the west towards Brabham Drive and is highly visible from it. It is characterised by steel clad blank walls and a low pitched roof form.

The site is reasonably flat with a gentle east to west crossfall. The north-western edge of the site is elevated 4m above the surrounding road reserves which increases its visibility in close views. This north-west corner currently acts as an on-site detention (OSD) basin. Built form broadly covers the site, with open space on the north-western boundary that presents to the corner of Brabham and Huntingwood Drives.

The north-west corner of the site also includes a cricket oval surrounded by mature vegetation and tennis courts. The tennis courts line the west side of the formal north-south aligned driveway of Huntingwood Drive. East of the main driveway topography is characterised by even sloping batters and manicured lawn areas below a relatively level platform and buildings which form the 'upright' of the 'L' shaped mass on the site.

The road reserves surrounding the north and west site boundaries are characterised by sloping turfed berms and semi-mature native woodland planting. The trees are closely spaced and as a result are relatively 'clear-stemmed' trees, up to approximately 20m in height with narrow canopies which provide filtering effects in relation to external views.

Separate heavy vehicle access to the site is available from Huntingwood Drive adjacent to the eastern boundary. Heavy vehicle access to the high-bay warehouse is also available from Brabham Drive. We observed that the eastern site boundary is elevated in relation to the majority of the site and is characterised by open space and a substantial amount of tree planting. The southern-most building includes a taller pitched roof form at its eastern end and lower curved roof form to the west, which is lower than the recent western built form. A row of semi-mature vegetation lines the southern boundary of the site and is augmented by a semi-continuous band of vegetation located within the M4 motorway road reserve.



Figure 3 Location Map of Documented Views

DOCUMENTED VIEWS FROM THE VISUAL CATCHMENT

3.2 SURROUNDING VISUAL CONTEXT

The site's surrounding visual context is characterised by industrial development and major road corridors. Built forms immediately west of the subject site are of large scale and greater in size relative to the existing and proposed built forms for the site. For example, although partly set below the Brabham Drive road level the Bungarribee Industrial Estate owned by Goodman, includes two buildings, the eastern one of which is a long continuous pitched-roof warehouse form that is simply massed, approximately 400m in length and 200m in width. This building occupies virtually the entire length of the site and includes no architectural relief and is surrounded only by a narrow margin of hardstanding for vehicle access and strip planting along its eastern boundary. The adjoining site west of Bungarribee Industrial Estate, occupied by TOLL, is also characterized by one long continuous built form of approximately 420m in length, which sits in a north-south alignment and is approximately equivalent to 3 to 4 residential storeys in height. We observed that this site is devoid of any visually significant planting or mature trees. The north side of Huntingwood Drive west of Brabham Drive also includes a tall bulky data centre at the north-west corner opposite the subject site. This facility is a rectangular mass clad in contemporary materials which appears to be approximately equivalent to 5 to 6 residential storeys in height. The building is set close to both roads and is surrounded by minimal ornamental planting so that it is highly visible from within the immediate visual catchment.

The visual context north of the site is in generally characterised by smaller lots and as a result by smaller scale buildings, some of which are lower in height compared to the existing silo on the site and in relation to the data centre described above. Development to the north accessed from Liberty Road appears to be constructed circa 1990's and is characterised by open parking areas and commercial office areas attached to larger low storage and distributions facilities for example GMP, Koch and Co and DHL to the north-east.

We observed that both sides of Huntingwood Drive between Brabham Drive and Caley Circuit include groups and rows of mature and semi-mature native trees within privately owned blocks and the road reserve. These contribute positive visual amenity to the streetscape. Of note is the large park-like setting of the Endeavour Energy facility at 51 Huntingwood Drive which adjoins the subject site to the east. This is a sprawling site which includes a single building located at the south end of the site leaving the majority of the northern half largely free of built form and predominantly characterised by a heavily treed landscape.

The site context to the south includes the wide M4 Motorway corridor which sits at a lower elevation relative to development to its north. Brabham Drive falls in elevation to the south to enable it to pass below the motorway corridor. The visual context adjacent south of motorway corridor includes a variety of semi-industrial uses and the Eastern Creek speedway. There are no heritage items present, or sensitive view locations such as public reserves within the immediate visual context to which views are available. The immediate site context does not include areas of places which we consider to be of high scenic quality.

We note that residential development exists to the west in Minchinbury and north-east in Bungarribee and Arundell Park. All areas are located minimum 1.5 kilometres from the subject site.



View 1 View south-west down Huntingwood Drive to Endeavour Energy site



View 2 View west down Huntingwood Drive



View 3 View to north-eastern corner of site from Huntingwood Drive



View 4 View west down Huntingwood Drive towards northern boundary of site



View 5 View south-west from Huntingwood Drive to northern site access point



View 6 View looking south-east from Huntingwood Drive to northern site access point



View 7 Detail view of entrance to subject site



View 8 Axial view south down Liberty Road



View 9 Detail of data centre on north-west corner of Brabham and Huntingwood Drives



View 10 Axial view south down Brabham Drive



View 11 View south from intersection of Brabham Drive and Great Western Highway



View 12 View south from north-western corner of Brabham Drive and Great Western Highway



View 13 View to north-eastern corner of site from intersection of Brabham and Huntingwood Drives



View 14 View east from west end of Huntingwood Drive



View 15 View to north-eastern corner of site from Huntingwood Drive



View 16 Detail north-east corner of site



View 17 View south down Brabham Drive to south-west corner of site



View 18 Detail of DHL warehouse on northern side of Huntingwood Drive

3.3 VISUAL CATCHMENT

Fieldwork observations and Lidar data across the potential visual catchment have been used to determine the extent of external visibility of the existing and proposed built forms proposed on the site, from surrounding development. The existing silo was used as a visual marker during fieldwork and in addition the highest proposed roof form (RL 95.72) was used to guide the use of lidar survey data to further interrogate the potential visual catchment. Visibility is shown in Figure 4. The relatively flat surrounding topography to the north, west and south, and lack of local highpoints further limits potential views towards the site.

Based on fieldwork observations the potential visual catchment of the subject site is limited and constrained to the closest surrounding streets by intervening development and road alignment. Direct views to parts of the site including the existing silo, entrance, hard standing and low warehouse forms are available to the east from Huntingwood Drive approximately to its intersection with Healy Circuit. Views from this vicinity include the street frontage that is characterised by vegetation and semi-mature trees.

Fieldwork observations confirm that the site's visual catchment extends to the west along Huntingwood Drive to a local knoll and high point which approximately aligns with the east leg of Liberty Grove in the vicinity of 52 Huntingwood Drive occupied by a DHL facility. East of this location there is limited oblique visibility towards the subject site due to the filtering effects of intervening vegetation located in the Endeavour Energy at 51 Huntingwood Drive site, at the north end of the subject site's eastern boundary and street trees within the road reserve.

From the west the development site would be visible in close views from a short section of the western extension of Huntingwood Drive close to its roundabout with Brabham Drive. From the north, the north-western most edge of the site is not highly visible from the intersection of Brabham Drive and the Great Western Highway. Views south from moving viewing situations along Brabham Road are constrained to the road corridor by development along the east side of the road. The subject site is visible from the west pedestrian pathway approximately adjacent to the south boundary of 8 Brabham Drive.

There is limited visual permeability into the site from the south and from the closest parts of the M4 given the presence of the existing continuous vegetative screen along the southern site boundary.

3.4 SCENIC QUALITY

Scenic quality relates to the likely expectations of viewers regarding scenic beauty, attractiveness or, preference of the visual setting of the subject site and is a baseline factor against which to measure visual effects. Criteria and ratings for preferences of scenic quality and cultural values of aesthetic landscapes are based on empirical research undertaken in Australia by academics including Terrance Purcell, Richard Lamb, Colleen Morris and Gary Moore.

Therefore, analysis of the existing scenic quality of a site or its immediate visual context are considerations and form part of the understanding of the likely expectations and perception of viewers. The site would be considered in isolation and within its visual setting as having a moderate to high scenic quality given the inclusion the existing undeveloped open spaces on the site and visually significant vegetation which surrounds the cricket oval some of which is visible from Huntingwood and Brabham Drives.

3.3 VIEW PLACE SENSITIVITY

View place sensitivity refers to the importance of a view or view place in the public domain. View place sensitivity means a measure of the public interest in the view. The public interest is considered to be reflected in the relative number of viewers likely to experience the view from a publicly available location. Places from which there would be close or middle distance views available to large numbers of viewers from public places such as roads, or to either large or smaller numbers of viewers over a sustained period of viewing time in places such as reserves, beaches and walking tracks, are considered to be sensitive viewing places. There are no sensitive or important public domain view locations within the immediate visual catchment. Notwithstanding there are highly used roads including the M4 Motorway, Brabham Drive and the Great Western Highway to the north. Huntingwood Road is a secondary two-lane carriageway which appears to carry local logistics traffic. In this regard in our opinion there are no views of high sensitivity which would be exposed to views of the proposed development. In our opinion views from all roads and intersections would be exposed to views of the proposed development for short time periods and from moving view situations.

3.4 VIEWER SENSITIVITY

Viewer sensitivity is a judgement as to the likely level of private interest in the views that include the proposed development and the potential for private domain viewers to perceive the visual effects of the proposal. The spatial relationship (distance), the length of exposure and the viewing place within a dwelling are factors which affect the overall rating of the sensitivity to visual effects. No residential development is located within the immediate visual catchment of the site and we note that the closest residents are located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north-east. Given the spatial separation, curvilinear road arrangement and settlement pattern of this suburb and its limited elevation, in our opinion views access to any part of the site would be limited if available. Further, we do not anticipate that the potential visual catchment of the site will increase significantly given the height of the proposed silo, in this regard no residential development would be significantly affected by the proposed development.

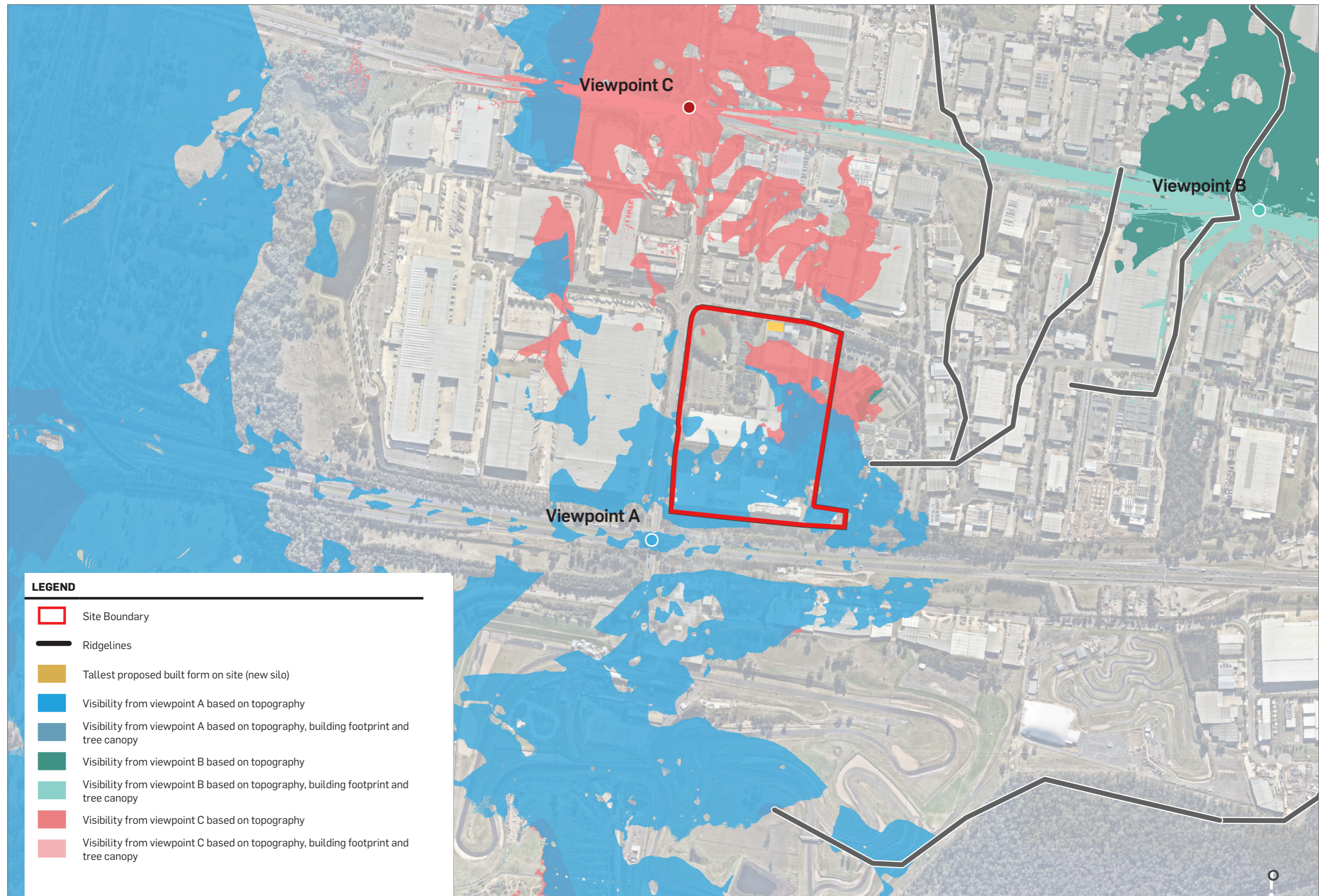


Figure 4 Visual catchment of site based on visibility from indicative local high points

4.0

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

4.3 VIEWING PERIOD

Viewing period in this assessment refers to the influence of time available to a viewer to experience the view to the site and the visual effects of the proposed development. Longer viewing periods, experienced either from fixed or moving viewing places such as dwellings, roads or waterways, provide for greater potential for the viewer to perceive the visual effects. In the majority of views from close locations to the proposed development will be from moving viewing locations.

Repeated viewing period events, for example views experienced from roads as a result of regular travelling, are considered to increase perception of the visual effects of the proposal.

4.4 VIEWING DISTANCE

Viewing distance can influence the perception of the visual effects of the proposal which is caused by the distance between the viewer and the development proposed. It is assumed that the viewing distance is inversely proportional to the perception of visual effects: the greater the potential viewing distance, experienced either from fixed or moving viewing places, the lower the potential for a viewer to perceive and respond to the visual effects of the proposal.

For 65 Huntingwood Drive given the visual catchment is limited due to the bulk and height of neighbouring built forms proposed, and relatively flat surrounding topography of Brabham Drive and Huntingwood Drive that have local crests which block visibility towards the subject site, the majority of the views modelled fall into the close and medium distance ranges. Ranges are as follows; close range (<100m), medium range (100-500m) and distant (>500m).

4.5 VIEW LOSS OR BLOCKING EFFECTS

4.5.1 RELEVANT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The site is under the planning controls of the *Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015* (BLEP 2015) and the *Blacktown Development Control Plan 2015* (BDCP 2015).

The site is zoned IN2 Light Industrial in accordance with the BLEP 2015. The proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the IN2 Light Industrial land-use zone in the BLEP 2015.

A review of provisions for development in industrial areas under the BDCP 2015 found that there are no relevant controls or objectives for views for the subject site.

5.0

PHOTOMONTAGES

The following pages undertake a detailed analysis of 4 views. These 4 modelled views represent a range of view points from which the proposed development may have a visual effect or impact.

Photomontages were prepared for these 4 views by Urbis visualisation specialist (please see Appendix 2) and are analysed against descriptions which have been used to make judgements in relation to the effects and impacts of the proposed development on each of the modelled views. Please refer to Appendix 1 for details on the descriptions and their ratings.

VIEW 01

VIEW SOUTH-WEST FROM HUNTINGWOOD DRIVE TOWARDS EXISTING SITE ENTRY

- Distance class
- Close view
 - <100m

Existing composition of the view

This focal view includes a foreground composition of Huntingwood Road, sloping grass berm and mature individual trees, with a minor amount of infrastructure such as fire hydrant pipework and security fencing. The midground composition is characterised by the oval area and its treed surrounds. There is no access to views above and beyond the site to scenic resources or items. There is filtered access to a distant background composition which includes the Blue Mountains.

Visual effects of the proposed development on the composition as modelled

Proposed development will occupy the majority of the foreground view replacing existing areas of open space. The building is massed in two sections which differ and reduce in height towards the intersection with Brabham Road and in so doing creates sense of space above the lower form. The upper parts of the proposed built form are not dissimilar in height to the existing built forms on the site including the existing silo. The proposed development does not block views to any scenic or important features including to or from heritage items. The visual effects are typical of and not dissimilar in height, scale or character to others which exist in the immediate visual context of the subject site. The extent or magnitude of visual change that would occur reflects permissible uses for the zone and as such the likely level of effects contemplated by zone objectives.

Visual effects of proposed development factors	
Visual Character	high
Scenic Quality of View	low-medium
View Composition	high
Viewing Level	low
Viewing Period	low
Viewing Distance	low
View Loss & View Blocking Effects	low
Rating of visual effects on variable weighting factors	
Public Domain View Place Sensitivity	low
Visual Absorption Capacity	medium
Compatibility with Urban Context and Visual Character	high
Compatibility/compatibility with regulatory framework and DCP objectives	high
Effects of mitigation-planting (considered 5 years post installation)	medium-high
Overall rating of significance of visual impact	LOW



Figure 5 Key Plan of View 1



Figure 6 View 1 - Existing



Figure 7 View 1 - Existing conditions 3D model overlay



Figure 8 View 1 - Proposed

VIEW 02

VIEW SOUTH FROM THE WEST-SOUTH-WEST CORNER AT THE INTERSECTION OF BRABHAM DRIVE AND GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY

- Distance class
- Medium
 - 100-500m

Existing composition of the view

The existing view is representative of the kinds of views that would be available from the vicinity of this intersection. It is characterised by Brabham Drive, a variety of vegetation within the road reserve and by built forms of various scales and uses. The composition does not include access to views above and beyond the site to scenic resources or important items or features.

Visual effects of the proposed development on the composition as modelled

A minor amount of the upper part of the north-west part of the building is visible above intervening and development and will occupy a minor amount of this view. The upper parts of the proposed built form are not dissimilar in height to the existing built forms on the site including the existing silo. The proposed development does not block views to any scenic or important features. The level of visual effects are typical of and not dissimilar in height, scale or character to others which exist in the immediate visual context of the subject site. The extent or magnitude of visual change that would occur reflects permissible uses for the zone and as such the level of visual effects contemplated by zone objectives.

Visual effects of proposed development factors	
Visual Character	low
Scenic Quality of View	low
View Composition	low
Viewing Level	nil
Viewing Period	low
Viewing Distance	low
View Loss & View Blocking Effects	low
Rating of visual effects on variable weighting factors	
Public Domain View Place Sensitivity	medium
Physical Absorption Capacity	high
Compatibility with Urban Context and Visual Character	high
Compatibility/compatibility with regulatory framework and DCP objectives	high
Effects of mitigation-planting (considered 5 years post installation)	high
Overall rating of significance of visual impact	LOW



Figure 9 Key Plan of View 2



Figure 10 View 2 - Existing

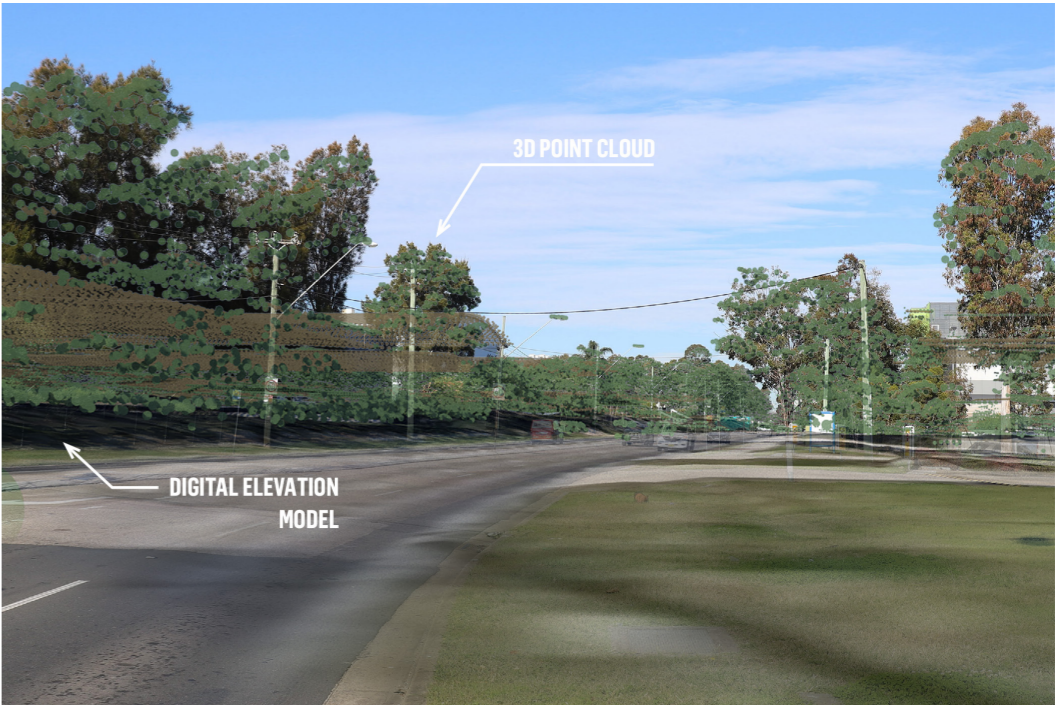


Figure 11 View 2 - Existing conditions 3D model overlay