MARSDEN PARK HIGH SCHOOL & MELONBA PRIMARY SCHOOL - VISUAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Marsden Park High School & Melonba (New Primary School)

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report considers the visual impact of the proposed development of two New Schools in the New suburb of Melonba NSW.

Marsden Park High School (MPHS) will accommodate 2,000 students (Stream 12) in the 4-hectare portion of the site. Melonba (New Primary School) (MNPS) will accommodate 1000 students (Core 35) in the 2-hectare portion of the site.

The key drivers for the new schools are:

- High residential growth and population demand, and
- Spatial misalignment between demand and capacity across the SCG

The site is a green field site with Elara Boulevard to the north, Kaluta Avenue to the east, Galah Street to the west and Swallowtail Street to the south. The site enjoys the benefits of street frontage to all boundaries with Kaluta Avenue being the main road running through the precinct.

The site is located in an R2 zone. It is surrounded by low density housing with medium density closer to Richmond Road. The surrounding building typology is two storey detached houses that have been built in the last year or are still under construction. All houses have elements of dark brick and render. There is a portion of the surrounding context zoned as SP2 Infrastructure. There are a number of recreational sport fields and local parks also within an approachable distance from the site.

This report provides photo montages to illustrate pre & post development impact to the precinct. At completion, The New High School and Primary School, will provide a shared community space for recreation and play, with a large soccer field and basketball courts.

The conceptual design of the school intends to recognise and acknowledge its locality. For a constructive and sensitive addition to the urban fabric.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is submitted to the Department of Planning, pursuant to Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) in support of an application for a State Significant Development Application (SSDA). The proposed development of Marsden Park High School and Melonba (New Primary School is identified as a State Significant Development (SSD).

The report illustrates the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding built environment and landscape. At completion, Marsden Park High School and Melonba (New Primary School), will contribute to the formation of the civic hub within the community

2.1 PROJECT BRIEFING NOTE

The following project briefing note provides an overview of the project.

Project Briefing Note –Marsden Park High School and Melonba(new primary school)	
Aspect	**Detail**
Project title	Marsden Park New High School and Melonba New Primary School (SSD-41372302)
School references when referred to in text	• new high school in Marsden Park new primary school in Melonba
Project citation(As per DPE Website)	New primary school and new high school to cater for 3,000 students and 219 staff
Project description	Construction of two new schools, Marsden Park New High School and Melonba New Primary School, located at Lot 30 DP1237735, Elara Boulevard, Melonba. Marsden Park New High School is a secondary school comprising: - 97general learning spaces (GLS) and specialist teaching spaces; - Three supported education learning unit (SELU) rooms; - School hall, and lecture and movement studio; - Administration spaces; - Staff and student facilities; - Library; - Canteen; - Sports courts; - Playing field; - Landscaping and outdoor learning areas; - Covered outdoor learning area (COLA); and - Car parking (shared with Melonba (new primary school). Melonba New Primary School will comprise: - 44 GLS; - Three SELU rooms; - Administration and staff facilities; - Canteen; - Multi-purpose hall; - Library; - Out of School Hours Care (OSHC); - COLA; - Outdoor play areas including sports courts; and - Landscaped outdoor learning areas.
Site address	Lot 30 DP 1237735, Elara Boulevard, Melonba NSW 2765

Allotments	Lot 30 DP 1237735
Site area	6.00hectares: - Marsden Park New High School = 4 hectares - Melonba New Primary School = 2 hectares
Site description	The site is located at Elara Boulevard, Melonba, which is within the Central River City Precinct and Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA). The site is irregular in shape and is sited between two tributaries of Little Creek. The site is generally level but has a gentle fall from the south-eastern corner (RL23) to the north-western corner (RL19.5). The site contains no vegetation other than grass and is currently fenced to prevent unauthorised access.
Surrounding development	To the north, east and south of the site is emerging and recently completed low density residential development comprising one and two storey dwellings. To the west of the site is an open space area (which serves a drainage function) and beyond this is Little Creek, a tributary to South Creek that flows north to the Hawkesbury River. Further to the south is an area zoned as B2 Local Centre, which has not yet been developed. The next phase of residential development in the area is located on the western side of Little Creek and is currently in the bulk earthworks phase to create the street network.
Local government area	Blacktown City Council
Aboriginal country	Darug Nation
Road frontages	Elara Boulevard (northern boundary) Kaluta Avenue–Collector Road (eastern boundary) Swallowtail Street (southern boundary) Galah Street (western boundary)
School capacity	3,000 students: - Marsden Park New High School = 2,000 students - Melonba New Primary School = 1,000 students
Staff capacity	219 full time equivalent (FTE) staff: - Marsden Park New High School: 127.9 teaching staff + 22.8 administration and support staff= 150.7staff - Melonba New Primary School) = 58.5 teaching staff+ 9.4 administration and support staff= 67.9 staff
School access	- Marsden Park New High School primary pedestrian access will be from Kaluta Avenue. - Melonba New Primary School primary pedestrian access will be from Swallowtail Street - Car parking for both schools will be accessed via Galah Street. - Kiss and drip facility located on Kaluta Avenue. - Bus laydown located on Kaluta Avenue
Parking provision	On site parking spaces: - Total =142 (including 2adaptable spaces)–staff parking only - Marsden Park High School students = 0 - Visitor spaces= 0 - Marsden Park High School bike spaces = 84 - Melonba New Primary School bike spaces = 60
Floor area	Gross Floor Area: - Total = 26,745m2 - Marsden Park New High School = 19,230m2 - Melonba New Primary School = 7,515m2 Outdoor Play space:

	- Total = 30,000m2 - Marsden Park New High School = 20,000m2 - Melonba New Primary School = 10,000m2 Play space per student: - Total = 10m2per student - Marsden Park High School = 10m2 per student - Melonba New Primary School = 10m2 per student
Client and application	School Infrastructure NSW
Early works (Not included in this SSDA)	Installation of an electricity substation on Kaluta Avenue

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The Methodology used for this VIA has been based on desktop and field analysis and involves the following main steps:

1. Local character: identify local character
2. Visual catchment: identify the visual catchment 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
5. Acceptability of visual impact: consideration of the visual impact against applicable and relevant planning instruments to determine acceptability.
6. Recommendation: prepare a recommendation based on the findings of the method.

Central to the assessment of visual impact are the below criteria:

1. Sensitivity
   Sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors. It is often important to identify not only what are the conditions at the viewpoint but also what is being seen. Common influences of sensitivity include:
   - 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);
   - elements in the view (value and dominance); and
   - view composition type (obstructed, general, focal or panoramic).

The viewpoints will be assessed against the below matrix:

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

2. Magnitude
Considerations for magnitude include:
    - 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, a context that is dominated by horizontal elements may limit the ability of the view to accommodate change. Conversely, vegetation may significantly increase the ability of the view to accommodate change.

The viewpoints will be assessed against the below matrix:

Rating	Common Influences
High	Large amount of fabric added or lost, high change to view composition in particular regarding 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

3. 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 through the mitigation measures.
For example, the introduction of an element that has high magnitude of visual impact may be positive where it better aligns with the desired future character.

4. Visual Impact Matrix
While acknowledging that context specific, qualitative assessment is key, the visual impact matrix below has been used to guide a more objective VIA.

	Magnitude				
Sensitivity		High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	High	High	High – Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
	Moderate	High – Moderate	Moderate	Moderate – Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate – Low	Low	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Lot 30 DP1237735 is zoned as R2 Low Density Residential Zone and has been earmarked for an educational facility by Blacktown Council. The site has been completely cleared. There is no bushfire, contamination, indigenous artefacts, biodiversity or even a tree on the site.

There is a slight fall to the SP2 Local drainage zoned land for stormwater treatment which is proposed by Blacktown Council to be developed into a future recreation green area and park. Although the site is still mapped as flood affected it has since been filled to ensure this condition is no longer relevant. Refer to Civil report by TTW.

The site enjoys the benefits of street frontage to all boundaries with Elara Boulevard being the main road running through the precinct.

The site is approximately 6 hectares in size and is suitable to accommodate an educational campus of this size with adequate play space for all students from primary to secondary.

Aerial view from SE - Kaluta Avenue and Swallowtail

Aerial view from NE - Kaluta Avenue and Elara Boulevard

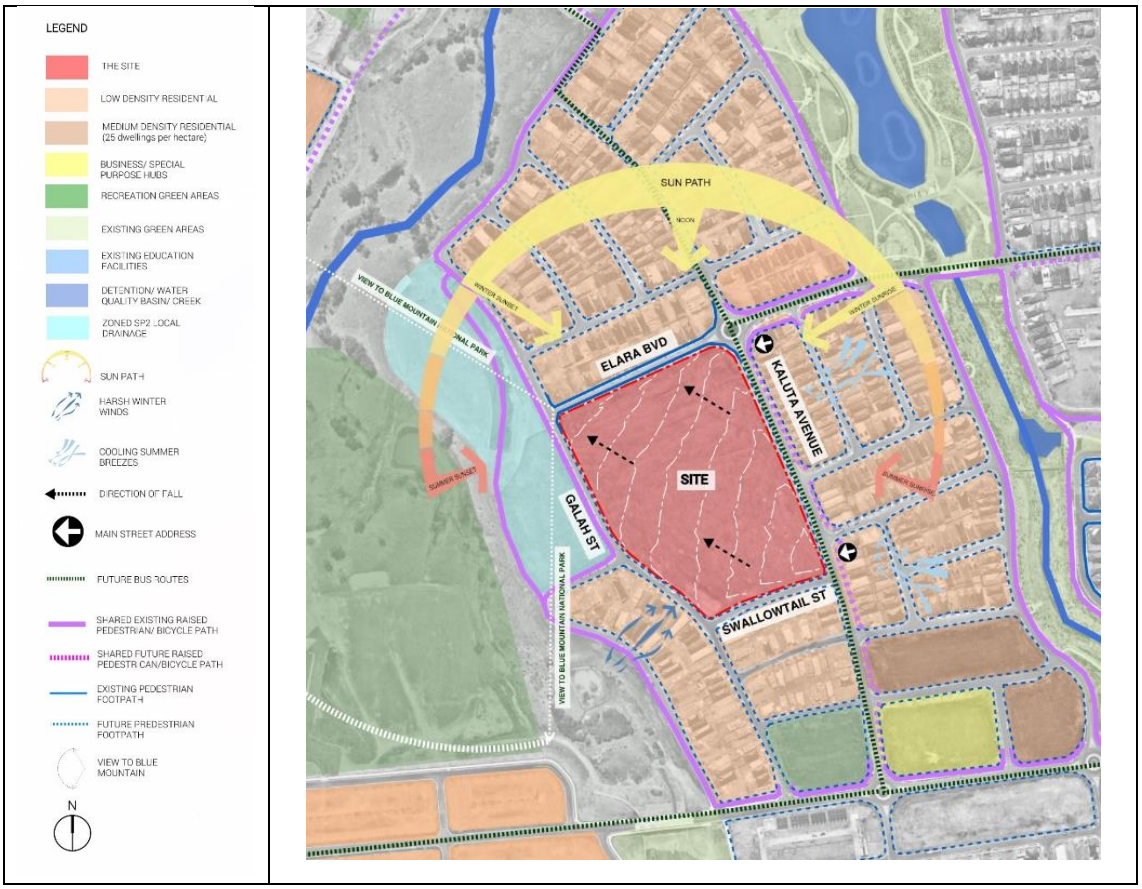
Street View 1 - Kaluta Avenue

Street View 2 – Swallowtail Street

Street View 3 – Swallowtail Street

Street View 4 - Kaluta Avenue

The site is a green field site with Elara Boulevard to the north, Kaluta Avenue to the east, Galah Street to the west and Swallowtail Street to the south. The site enjoys the benefits of street frontage to all boundaries with Kaluta Avenue being the main road running through the precinct.



4.0 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

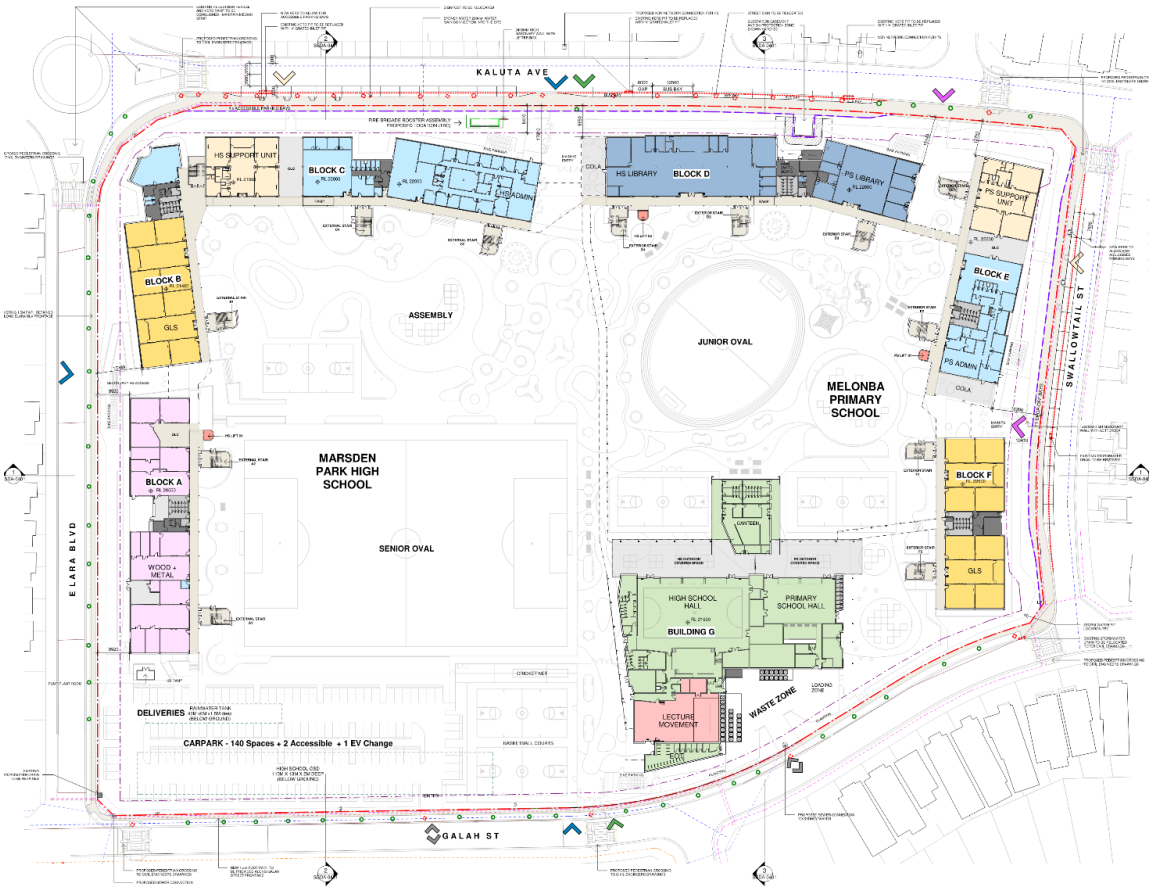
The site is a green field site with Elara Boulevard to the north, Kaluta Avenue to the east, Galah Street to the west and Swallowtail Street to the south. The site enjoys the benefits of street frontage to all boundaries with Kaluta Avenue being the main road running through the precinct.

The site layout for the new schools will see the buildings arranged along the four roads surrounding the school site. The play area & assembly will occupy the middle of the site, and the staff carpark positioned along the North-West corner of the site.

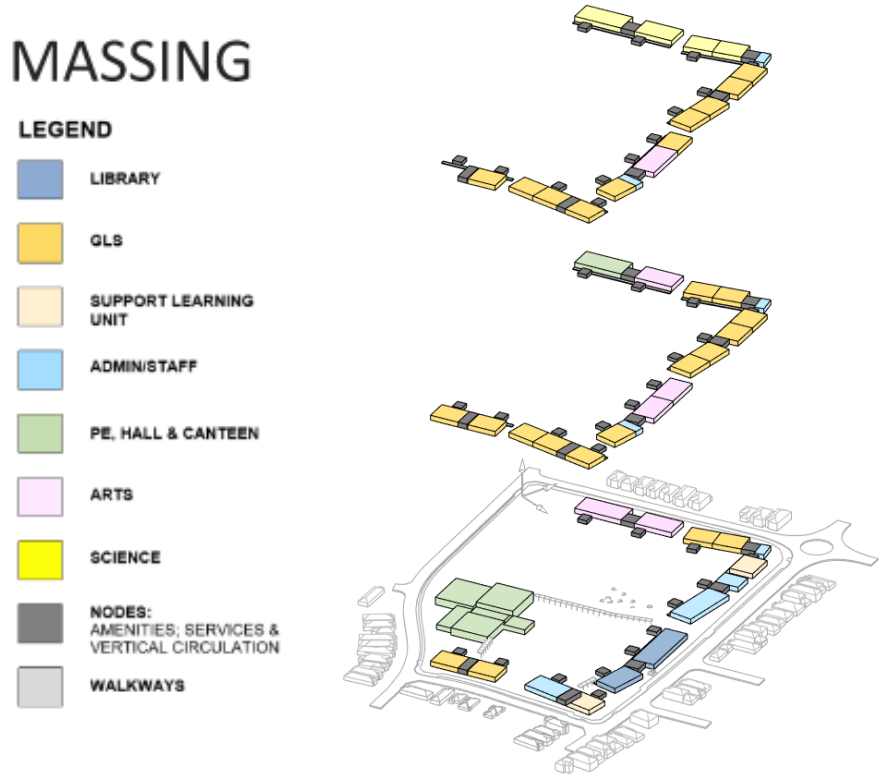
The building volumes are articulated and separated to relate to the suburban setting, also providing a good opportunity for good natural daylight and natural ventilation.

The design of the master plan comprises of:

- High School buildings located on the Northern 2/3 of the site and the Primary School is on the southern 1/3 portion of the site.
- The High School addresses Elara Blvd & Kaluta Ave, the Primary School addresses Swallowtail St. Buildings are arranged along these streets with varying setbacks.
- The High School buildings are arranged along Kaluta Ave, West of the site and Elara Blvd, North of the site.
- The Primary School buildings are arranged along Swallowtail Rd, South of the site. However, the Primary School's Library occupies the ground floor of the south block of the HS buildings facing Kaluta Ave.
- There are multiple entrances to each Primary & High Schools to disperse arrival points during school peak hours to prevent congestion when departing. Entrances are highly visible from the open play area to optimise visibility from the school ground.
- Both libraries are co-located on the ground floor to provide a sense of a centralise school hub with opportunities for community use during school hours.
- The Primary & High School Halls are collocated and provide a built form presence along Galah St. with good community access connection to Council's future recreation area.
- School buildings are mostly 3 storey construction with the exception of the single storey school halls.
- The staff carpark is located at the Northwest corner of the site.
- All the above built forms and parking area forms a hard edge of the school site to leave the central open space for landscaping and play spaces.
- The school building forms have been segmented and rotated to provide varying building setbacks and built form articulation.
- The buildings are interconnecting on the upper levels via linked bridges.
- The pickup and drop-off zones have been distributed along Elara Blvd, Kaluta Ave and Swallowtail St. with no vehicle entry points along these streets.
- On the other hand, Galah St has been designed with a vehicle entry to the staff carpark and a services vehicle entry point to access the waste collection point behind the Halls
- Outdoor play area is in the centre of the site and allows acoustic protection for surrounding land uses and privacy for students
- The school wide planning includes a prominent East-West Axis and North-South Axis. These axes are 'book-ended' by Entry Plazas, the main pedestrian entry points. The school has a minimum 6.5m setback from the site boundaries to provide wide space between the surrounding houses and the school buildings.



SITE PLAN (NTS)



MASTERPLAN (NTS)

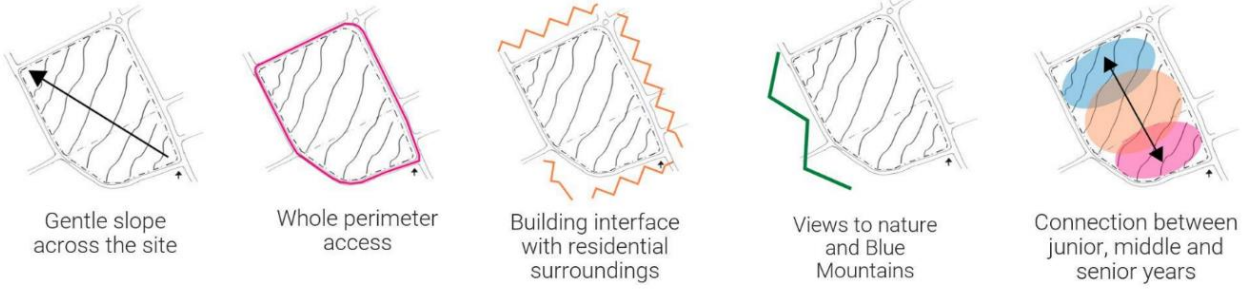
The project design team has identified the following site constraints & opportunities during the early stages of the design.

Constraints:

- The site is located in a new suburban subdivision with underdeveloped public transportation system and civic infrastructure.
- The existing juvenile trees at the periphery of the site provide minimal shade in the near future.
- The site is rectangular in shape and elongated in north-south orientation. Some buildings will have East-West orientation
- Blacktown Council's height limit on R2 zone is 9m
- Limited on-street parking nearby
- No footpaths on neighbouring streets

Opportunities:

- The site is surrounded by roads on all sides to enable adequate distribution of pedestrian footpaths and vehicle access to the site with minimal conflicts where possible.
- The surrounding roads are suburban roads with no major arterial road immediate to the site. The anticipated traffic noise is expected to be manageable.
- The site is relatively flat with a 3-4 m cross fall towards the northwest corner over a distance of 360 meters.
- The site is not subject to flooding and does not have contamination or biodiversity constraints.
- There are distant views towards the Blue Mountains to the west
- Adjacent to open space drainage land, that is planned to be a future recreation green space.
- A cleared green field site with no visible existing natural habitats of flora and fauna presents the opportunity to reinstate native habitats within the landscape design.
- School will provide an opportunity for shared facilities with the community, such as Multipurpose Hall and sports courts
- Future Neighbouring council recreational green space provides an opportunity for shared use
- The potential to optimize the cycleways and pathways planned for this precinct.



5.0 VIEWPOINTS

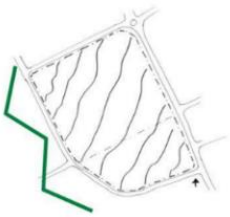
The following series of perspectives have been produced to understand the impact of the proposed schools on the surrounding streetscape and their visual impact to the surrounding neighbourhood. The analysis aims to understand the built form, building height, setback, bulk and scale.

Surrounding the site along Elara Boulevard, Kaluta Avenue and Swallowtail Street are single and two storey residential dwellings. Most of the Galah Street frontage is open to a nature reserve & future parkland to the west.

The school buildings are predominantly 3 storey construction arranged along the 3 abutting streets, Elara Boulevard., Kaluta Avenue and Swallowtail Street. The single storey sports and performance building is located on Galah Street. The remaining site area has been planned to accommodate 30,000m2 play space for 3000 students, soft landscaping, and a staff carpark.

The design team considers the following architectural & landscape design initiatives in the master planning of the schools:

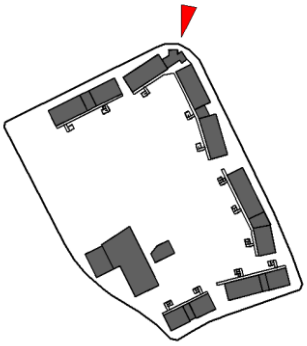
- Discontinue built form to break up the built form mass.
- Provide wider footpath and building set back to reduce the impact of built form presence along the footpath.
- Rotate built forms to create further building setback and identifiable entry points to the campus. This results in providing wide landscape buffer between the school buildings to the street.
- School site security fences & gate are setback from the boundary to create a soft edge along the perimeter of the site.
- The school walkways are open and predominantly face to the west to capture views onto the blue mountains.



Views to nature and Blue Mountains

5.1 VIEW 1 – ELARA BVD / KALUTA AVE LOOKING SOUTH

Current



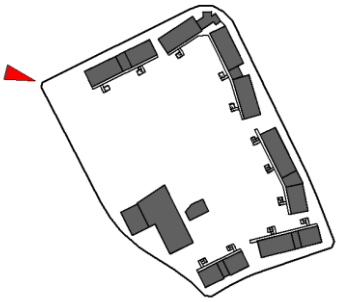
Post High School Development

View 1	Characteristic	Comment
Characteristic	Distance from site	38 m from the closest site boundary
	Relative viewing level	Street Level
	Use at the viewpoint	Street roundabout, Primary development frontage
	Purpose of being at viewpoint	Commonly used street amenity and public access route. Used by both pedestrians and vehicles.
	Dominant elements	Frontage of the prosed development – Highschool Building height, bulk, and scale.
Magnitude	Amount of fabric change	High The proposed High School and Primary School will considerably alter the urban fabric, allowing a significant education development to occupy a vast vacant site.
	View composition change	High Fabric composition from the view point includes: - A prominence corner at the intersection of Kaluta Ave and Elara Blv will be completed with an activated building façade - Building fabric includes coloured through CFC and aluminium framed windows
	Prominence	High

		The new school development will positively alter the appearance of a vacant unattended site into an active educational facility. The proposed school buildings have a minimum 6.5m setback with inclusion of a widen footpath along Kaluta Avenue & street facing landscaping.
	Overall Rating	High The design considers addressing the corner of Elara Blv & Kaluta Ave with a built form that marries the north & east facing façade of the high school buildings. At full maturity, the landscape will complement the architecture in providing a pleasant view at the road junction.

5.2 VIEW 2 – ELARA BVD / GALAH STREET LOOKING EAST

Existing



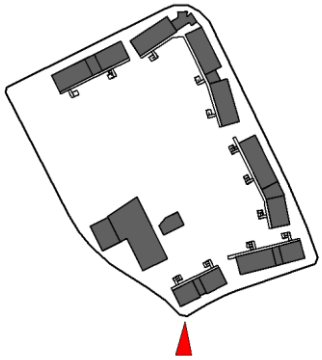
Post High School Development

VIEW 2	Characteristic	Comment
Characteristic	Distance from site	15m from the closest site boundary
	Relative viewing level	Street Level
	Use at the viewpoint	Local Street intersection, School car park, Secondary frontage.
	Purpose of being at viewpoint	Pedestrian, driving pass .
	Dominant elements	Block A of the Highschool on the northern perimeter of the site & the staff carpark.
Magnitude	Amount of fabric change	Medium The main change at the intersection of Galah St and Elara Blv includes high school's buildings facing Elara Blv and a staff carpark at the north west corner of the site.
	View composition change	Medium The view composition from the viewing point includes: - A school staff carpark & carpark landscaping to soften the appearance of the carpark . - The building in the background is one of the high school buildings which will be constructed a combination of brickwork, coloured façade cladding, sunshades and glazing.

		- This view point provide some level of visibility into the school ground through the carpark.
	Prominence	Medium The new school development will positively alter the appearance of at the intersection of Galah St and Elara Blv by the introduction of a built form and vegetated carpark.
	Overall Rating	Medium The view at the corner of Galah St & Elara Blv will be improved with the presence of mature trees as a buffer to the proposed carpark.

5.3 VIEW 3 – GALAH STREET LOOKING NORTH

Existing



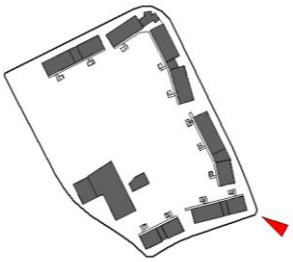
Post Primary School Development

VIEW 3	Characteristic	Comment
Characteristic	Distance from site	30m from the closest site boundary
	Relative viewing level	Street Level
	Use at the viewpoint	Vehicle Access
	Purpose of being at viewpoint	Walking to school, driving.
	Dominant elements	Primary School building height, bulk, and scale.
Magnitude	Amount of fabric change	High A major development on a vacant land in a new subdivision will expectedly change the built fabric and the environment.
	View composition change	High The proposed view composition includes: - Two storey construction at the corner of Swallowtail St & Galah St adjacent to a 3 storey primary school building facing Swallowtail St. - Addressing Galah St, a single storey with two storey volume building, the School Hall Building. - Also visible from this perspective, the designated primary school pickup & drop off zone along Swallowtail St
	Prominence	High

		The prominent features at this intersection and along Swallowtail St include: - a minimum 6.5m setback from the boundary, - a widen footpath and landscaping The combination of the above civic & landscape design initiatives provides generous space between the school buildings and the residential properties opposite.
	Overall Rating	High The built form and landscaping at the corner of Galah St & Swallowtail St will provide a sense of arrival to the precinct when travelling up Galah St.

5.4 VIEW 4 – KALUTA AVE LOOKING NORTH WEST

EXISTING



PROPOSED

Post Primary School Development

View 4	Characteristic	Comment
Characteristic	Distance from site	32m from the closest site boundary
	Relative viewing level	Street Level
	Use at the viewpoint	Primary School Educational facilities.
	Purpose of being at viewpoint	Primary pedestrian access routes.
	Dominant elements	Primary School building height, bulk and scale
Magnitude	Amount of fabric change	High There is a significant addition to the urban fabric from this intersection. The three storey Primary School & High school buildings are visible at the intersection of Kaluta Ave & Swallowtail St.
	View composition change	High The view composition from the viewpoint includes: - 3 Storey built form addressing the corner of the streets - High School Pickup & drop-off zone along Kaluta Ave in the distance. - Bus bays along Kaluta Ave.

		- A wide footpath to facilitate rush hours pick up & drop off.
	Prominence	High The school buildings at the corner of Kaluta Ave and Swallowtail St are one of the most significant features of the design. The buildings provide the sense of arrival to the school and the greater precinct.
	Overall Rating	High The buildings are well setback from the adjacent streets and the propose landscaping will soften the appearance of the school development at this junction.

5.5 VIEW 4 – OVERALL PS PERSPECTIVE – VIEW OF BLUE MOUNTAINS

The school frontage along Galah Street has been left open to take advantage of the stunning views to the Blue Mountains to the west. Both the main Primary School and Highschool will have direct visibility to the mountains, as well as the internal corridors, learning spaces and activity areas. Creating a direct visual connection to the inspiring landscape.

6.0 CONCLUSION

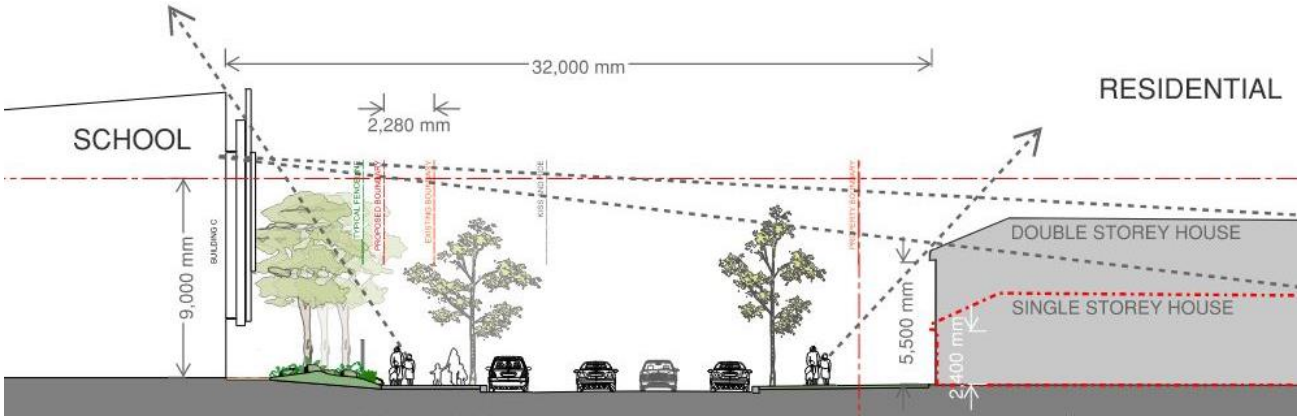
The below table summarises the proposal against the relevant criteria

View	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Visual Impact	Consistent with Planning Instruments
1	View 1 – Elara Blv / Kaluta Ave looking south	High	High	High	✔
2	View 2 – Elara Blv / Galah St Looking east	Medium	Medium	Medium	✔
3	View 3 – Galah Street looking north	High	High	High	✔
4	View 4 – Kaluta Ave looking northwest	High	High	High	✔

An assessment of the proposal as represented in photomontages 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 Visual Impact Assessment concludes that the proposed Marsden Park High School and Melonba (New Primary School) have been design to be sensible to the surrounding neighbourhood. The impact of this major school development on a vacant site in a new subdivision is expectedly high. The school project offers significant activation and can contribute to creating a vibrant environment within the precinct.

At the pedestrian level, the perceived height of the proposed 3 storey school will be comparable to the perceived height of two-storey houses due to the generous set-backs of the built form to the site boundary



In a suburban housing development, two storey houses will likely be subjected to strict privacy requirements to prevent overlooking into their neighbours' property from the first floor of their dwelling. This will also prevent the school from overlooking into the rear level 1 rooms of the houses facing away from the school. Therefore the proposed 3 storey school located 32 to 70m from the immediate houses presents no negative impact to the privacy of its neighbour.