

Visual Impact Assessment

Western Sydney University Parramatta Campus Indigenous Centre of Excellence

Victoria Road, Parramatta

Submitted to NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
on behalf of Western Sydney University



'Gura Bulga'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. 'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing New South Wales.



'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.



'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

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

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

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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Appendices

Appendix	Author
A. Visual impact evidence	Virtual Ideas and CMS Surveyors

Executive Summary

Western Sydney University (WSU) (the applicant) has submitted a State significant development application (SSDA) (SSD-64916225) seeking development consent from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to construct a new Indigenous Centre of Excellence (ICoE) (the proposal) on part of their Parramatta South campus located 171 Victoria Road, Parramatta (the site).

To support the proposal, Ethos Urban in collaboration with Virtual Ideas and CMS Surveyors were engaged to prepare a visual impact assessment (VIA) to identify and determine the acceptability of the proposal's likely visual impact by addressing the secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARS) issued by DPHI for the proposal.

Determination of acceptability is based on assessment of the level of significance of likely visual impact and the consistency of this impact against relevant parts of the planning framework. Where consistency with the planning framework does not occur, alternative strategic argument may be appropriate. The level of significance is based on the factors of sensitivity of the visual catchment to the nature of change being proposed and the magnitude of the nature of change being proposed.

That part of the visual catchment where the proposal is likely to be most visible is bound by:

- **north:** Victoria Road
- **east:** Parramatta Light Rail Line, and the Victoria Road overpass of the line
- **south:** Sixth Avenue
- **west:** western end of the campus oval.

The sensitivity of the visual catchment to the nature of change proposed is low – moderate. The magnitude of the nature of change proposed ranges from negligible to moderate. Informed by photomontages, the VIA determined the following significance of visual impact:

- **Victoria Road east:** moderate
- **Victoria Road west:** moderate
- **Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station:** low
- **Eliazbeth Farmhouse:** negligible
- **Sixth Street:** negligible
- **The WSU campus oval:** low.

A finding of a significant visual impact is not determinative of the acceptability of a proposal. Rather, this depends on the consistency of the proposal with relevant parts of the planning framework. With reference to the planning framework, the proposal will:

- have a low significance of visual impact on the Parramatta Light Rail as represented by Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station
- not have a significant impact on State heritage listed buildings. In particular, it will not be visible behind the Verdon Building
- not be visible from historic view corridors identified in the PDGP 2013, in particular those from Elizabeth Farmhouse
- have a low significance of visual impact on the WSU campus oval.

While not fully consistent with the existing largely open space character of this part of Victoria Road and the intended 30m landscaped setback for new buildings, it is argued that the proposal is compatible with and strengthens the role of Victoria Road as a key route into the Parramatta CBD and represents a new high quality landmark at a key gateway into the broader CBD.

As such and subject to the recommended mitigation measures, it is the conclusion of this VIA that the proposal can be supported on visual impact grounds.

Glossary

Abbreviations

Table 1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
Applicant	Western Sydney University
Campus	Western Sydney University (University) South Parramatta Campus
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
FSR	Floor space ratio
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition)
ICoE	Indigenous Centre of Excellence
LEC	Land and Environment Court of New South Wales
LGA	Local government area
Proposal	Western Sydney University Indigenous Centre of Excellence
Rose Bay	Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor [2013] NSWLEC 1046
Site	171 Victoria Road, Parramatta
SSDA	State significant development application
Tenacity	Tenacity Consulting v Waringah [2004] NSWLEC 140
University	Western Sydney University
VIA	Visual impact assessment
WSU	Western Sydney University

Key Terms

Table 2 Key terms

Term	Meaning	Source
Amenity	The pleasantness, attractiveness, desirability or utility of a place, facility, building or feature	DPE, 2023
Character	What makes one neighbourhood distinctive from another. It is the way a place ‘looks and feels’. It is created by the way built and natural elements in both the public realm and private domain interrelate with one another, including the	DPE, 2021

Term	Meaning	Source
	interplay between buildings, architectural style, subdivision patterns, activity, topography and vegetation	
Characteristics	Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a contribution to distinctive landscape character	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Elements	Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Feature	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Key characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Landscape character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Magnitude	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of	Landscape Institute and the Institute of

Term	Meaning	Source
	change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor	Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Significance	A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Visual impact	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013
Visual receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal	Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013

1.0 Introduction

Western Sydney University (WSU) (the applicant) has submitted a State significant development application (SSDA) (SSD-64916225) seeking development consent from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to construct a new Indigenous Centre of Excellence (ICoE) (the proposal) on part of their Parramatta South campus located 171 Victoria Road, Parramatta (the site).

1.1 Purpose of this visual impact assessment

The purpose of this visual impact assessment (VIA) is to support this SSDA by identifying and determining the acceptability of the proposal's likely visual impact by addressing the secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARS) issued by DPHI for the proposal as shown in the below table.

Table 3 Secretary's environmental assessment requirements

Issue	Assessment Requirements	Documentation
6: Visual Impact	- Provide a visual analysis of the development from key viewpoints, including photomontages or perspectives showing the proposed and likely future development - Where the visual analysis has identified potential for significant visual impact, provide a visual impact assessment that addresses the impacts of the development on the existing catchment	- Visual Analysis - Visual Impact Assessment

1.2 Structure of this visual impact assessment

This VIA has the following structure:

- Part 1 – Introduction:** identifies the purpose and structure of this VIA
- Part 2 – The site and its context:** identifies and describes the site and its context
- Part 3 – The proposal:** outlines the proposal
- Part 4 – Panning framework:** identifies relevant parts of the planning framework to VIA
- Part 5 – Key issues:** identifies the key issues to be considered by this VIA
- Part 6 – Methodology:** outlines the methodology used in the VIA
- Part 7 – Visual analysis:** identifies and describes the visual catchment, including its visual characteristics and the pattern of viewing
- Part 8 – Visual impact assessment:** identifies and assesses the proposal's potential visual impact
- Part 9 – Assessment against the planning framework:** assesses visual and view impact against relevant parts of the planning framework
- Part 10 – Discussion of key issues:** discusses key issues
- Part 11 – Mitigation measures:** recommends mitigations measures
- Part 12 – Conclusion:** identifies whether the proposal can be supported on visual impact grounds
- Appendices:** provides a copy of the visual impact evidence upon which this VIA relies.

This VIA forms part of a larger suite of documents prepared to support the proposal. It does not repeat matters that are more appropriately covered in these documents. As such, it should be read together with these other documents, in particular planning and urban design documentation.

2.0 The site and its context

The Western Sydney University South Parramatta Campus is located within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA).

The site comprises one (1) singular allotment, which is legally described as Lot 100 in DP 816829. The project site is known as the P1 Car Park in the northern portion of the wider site campus. The project site is approximately 12,150sqm in size and is broadly rectangular in shape. It currently comprises a hardstand area that accommodates approximately 284 car parking spaces. The existing single storey central energy plant to the west of the development area which serves the wider campus is outside of the scope of this SSDA.

The site is strategically positioned to the northern boundary of the Western Sydney University (University) South Parramatta Campus (the campus), fronting Victoria Road (the A40). The wider campus comprises a significant landholding size of approximately 20ha containing a series of buildings of differing heights and massing forms which are used for educational purposes. The buildings contained within the wider campus site are dissected by a series of open, at grade car parks, internal roads, pathways, and landscaped areas. The campus sits to the north of the Parramatta River.

The site is located approximately 3km east of the Parramatta CBD, which is an area undergoing a process of significant transformation. It is also located approximately 500m to the Parramatta Light Rail Corridor, with the construction of new Yallamundi Light Rail now completed and awaiting operation by TfNSW.

The site location is identified in the below figure.



Figure 1 Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus location context

Source: Nearmap and Ethos Urban



Figure 2 The site

Source: Ethos Urban

3.0 The proposal

The applicant seeks development consent for the construction of a new state-of-the-art ICoE as a new tertiary education facility on campus. The ICoE project is funded by the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program in association with Western Sydney University. The new ICoE will be an important asset for both the University and local community alike, providing a space for the commitment to advancing Indigenous education, leadership, and reconciliation. The ICoE will stand as a symbol of recognition of Indigenous land and the University's relationship with Indigenous communities. The ICoE will represent a celebration of tens of thousands of years of Indigenous knowledges and histories, a legacy that the University is honoured to nurture and promote through further education opportunities for students and communities.

Through the ICoE, the University will aim to drive positive change, increase Indigenous participation in higher education, and contribute to the preservation and sharing of Indigenous cultures.

This SSDA specifically seeks detailed approval for the following works:

- Site preparation including demolition of the existing car park, tree removal and installation of inground utility infrastructure services
- Construction of a four-storey ICoE encompassing:
 - Ground level facilities, including but not limited to

- a dedicated arrival area, outdoor amphitheatre, cinema and lecture theatre, performance space, artist studios and exhibition space
- associated workspaces, meeting areas, lounge areas and other amenities are to be provided throughout the ground floor
- First floor level upwards comprising dedicated educational facilities including library facilities, learning areas and teaching spaces
- Second floor level comprising staff / student foyer, offices, meeting rooms and collaboration spaces
- Third level comprising a multi-functional recreational sports court, with associated ancillary amenities, alongside an astronomy garden and BBQ area
- Roof level plant and services
- Construction of internal driveway with hardstand area to provide 13 car parking spaces
- Landscaping works to provide outdoor educational and recreational spaces.



Figure 3 Artist impression of the proposal seen from above
Source: JCD



Figure 4 Artist impression of the proposal seen from the Victoria Road and Railway Street intersection
Source: JCD

4.0 Planning framework

The planning framework comprises a series of acts, planning instruments and other NSW government planning documents that together help determine the acceptability of a proposal.

Not all parts of the planning framework are relevant to visual impact assessment. The most relevant parts are:

- Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP 2023)
- Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023 (PDCP 2023).

While under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) development control plans do not apply to SSDA, it is best practice to consider their provisions.

4.1.1 Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023

Under the PLEP 2023 that part of the site upon which the proposal will be located is included in Zone SP2 – Infrastructure (Educational Establishment). The objectives for this zone do not address VIA matters.

While the site is not subject to height of building or floor space ratio controls, the objectives for these matters are relevant.

As the site contains a heritage item of State significance, being the WSU Parramatta Campus (former Rydalmere Hospital & Female Orphan School), section 5.10 Heritage conservation is of relevance.

While the site is either wholly (eg, acid sulfate soils) or partly (eg, biodiversity) affected by a number of additional local provisions, they do not address VIA matters.

Other parts of the PLEP 2024, including the aims, do not directly address VIA matters.

The follow table shows the most relevant parts of the PLEP 2023 to VIA matters.

Table 4 Provisions of the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 relevant to VIA

Part	Objectives	Controls
Principal development standards		
4.3 Height of buildings	• (e) To minimise visual impact, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access to existing development • (f) To preserve historic views	• No maximum height is specified
Miscellaneous provisions		
5.10 Heritage conservation	• (b) To conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views	• N/a

4.1.2 Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023

The PDCP 2023 has a layered structure that comprises provisions for all forms of development (eg, Part 2: Design in Context), certain types of development (eg, Part 3: Residential Development), certain aspects of development (eg, Part 5: Environmental Management) and certain locations (eg, Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites).

The following parts of the PDCP 2023 are relevant to VIA:

- Part 2: Design in Context, section 2.8 Views and vistas
- Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area.

In general, where there is a conflict between more local area specific provisions and more general provisions, the more local area provisions will take precedence to the extent of the inconsistency. In this regard, the provisions of part 8 will take precedence over part 2.

Section 2.8 Views and vistas

All of section 2.8 Views and vistas is relevant to VIA.

The preamble to this section is as follows:

- 'The topographical setting of the City of Parramatta (the City), located in a river basin and bounded by hills to the north and west, means that there are significant views and vistas which contribute to the sense of place for the City. Preservation and, where possible, enhancement of public views to landmark and landscape features allows people to interpret and appreciate the special character of the City. In sensitive areas or as part of larger development proposals, Council may request three dimensional models or photo montages from selected locations be submitted to demonstrate how the proposal affects the setting and views and vistas'.

Its objectives and controls are provided in the following table.

Table 5 Provisions of Section 2.8 Views and vistas of the PDCP 2023

Part	Provision
Preamble	
Preamble	The topographical setting of the City of Parramatta (the City), located in a river basin and bounded by hills to the north and west, means that there are significant views and vistas which contribute to the sense of place for the City. Preservation and, where possible, enhancement of public views to landmark and landscape features allows people to interpret and appreciate the

Part	Provision
	special character of the City. In sensitive areas or as part of larger development proposals, Council may request three dimensional models or photo montages from selected locations be submitted to demonstrate how the proposal affects the setting and views and vistas
Objectives	
O.01	Protect public views and vistas from streets and public places
O.02	Preserve and enhance district and local views to improve legibility and wayfinding
O.03	Encourage view sharing through complementary siting of buildings, responsive design, and well-positioned landscaping
O.04	Ensure highly visible sites are designed in scale with the surrounding setting and encourage visual connectivity between places of significance
Controls	
C.01	Development is to preserve views of significant topographical features such as ridges and natural corridors, the urban skyline, heritage and civic buildings, sites of historical significance, and areas of high visibility, particularly those identified in Appendix 1 – Views and Vistas. Refer to Part 8 – Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas and Specific Sites and Part 9 – Parramatta City Centre for other identified view corridors
C.02	Building alignment, street interface, design detail, and massing is to reinforce existing and new view corridors. In some locations, this may be achieved through uniform heights, horizontal plinths, and street walls
C.03	Separation distances between buildings are to enable views to the Parramatta River, riparian zones, parks, and natural features from the public domain
C.04	Street and public domain planting is to reinforce existing view corridors and create new view corridors where appropriate
C.05	Buildings are to be designed so that significant and district views from the public domain are retained
C.06	Building design, location and landscaping is to enable view sharing between properties. This may be achieved by appropriately: • a) siting the building • b) designing the building • c) planting open foliage and well positioned landscaping

Appendix 1 – Views and Vistas includes a number of historic view corridors. While their focus is on visual connection between the Elizabeth Farmhouse and former Female Orphan Factory, views 6, 10 and 13 affect the site more broadly. These views are shown in the following figure, and their description and significance is shown in the following table.

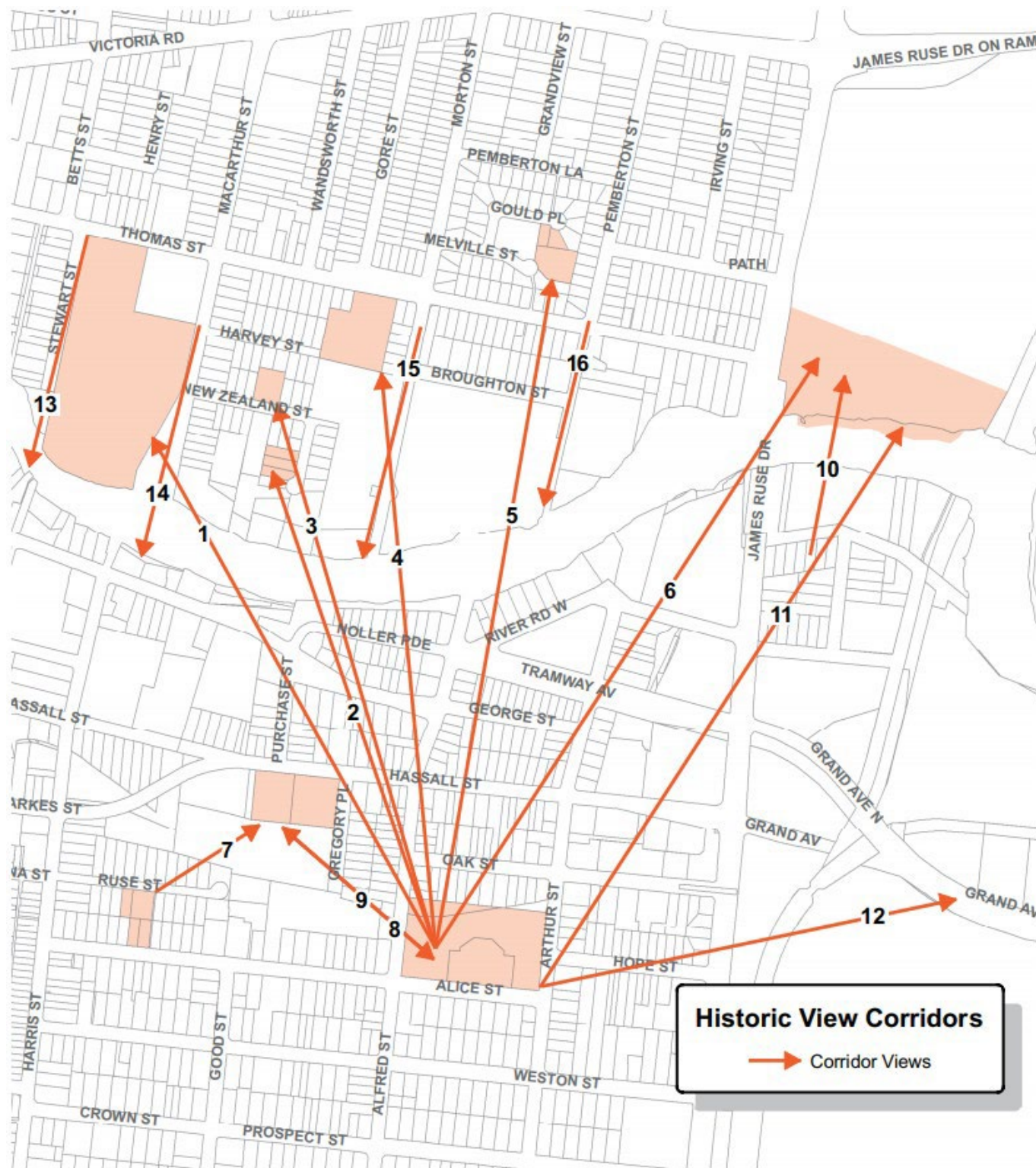


Figure 5 Location of historic view corridors under Appendix 1 – Views and Vistas of the PDCP 2023

Source: Parramatta City Council

Table 6 Description and significance of historic view corridors under Appendix 1 – Views and Vistas the PDCP 2023

View number	Description	Significance
View 11	Views from Elizabeth Farm and Harris Park colonial precinct north to the ridgeline of hills, river basin (area bounded by Victoria Road, James Ruse Drive, Prospect and Harris	Broadest panorama views in Parramatta, of hills to the north allowing appreciation, river valley landscape setting, the siting and interrelationships between key colonial farms

View number	Description	Significance
	Streets) to trees along river, former Newlands, trees of former Rangihou, Wavertree, Macarthur Girls High School, marked by tall tree plantings, including bunya and hoop pines, visible above surrounding suburban development	and remnant early houses (marked by historic tall tree plantings of Elizabeth Farm, Newlands, Wavertree, Macarthur House, Rangihou). Also modern views of key historic farm plantings from major roads.
Views 6 and 10	Views of the former Female Orphan School/ UWS Rydalmere from southwest, from James Ruse Drive, Elizabeth Farm and Experiment Farm	Views to a key heritage item, the former Female Orphan School, retention of historical visual connections to Elizabeth Farm and Experiment Farm.

Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area

The following table identifies the provisions of the Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA.

Table 7 Provisions of the Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA

Part	Provision
Part 8 General Objectives	
O.07	Development is to conserve and enhance identified views, heritage items and the natural environment
8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere	
O.08	Conserve and enhance identified views and encourage the conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage items within the Camellia and Rydalmere Precincts and wider community use and access of these assets.
8.2.4.2 Height of buildings	
Objectives	
O.05	Conserve heritage sites, their settings, identified views and their visual interconnections
Controls	
C.01	Development must not have an adverse impact on significant or historic views from or of heritage sites along the Parramatta River when seen from river and nearby historic sites.
C.02	Any development within the Rydalmere Precinct and on land shown on the Camellia Design Control Map as “Area of Height Sensitivity” must demonstrate through survey and photo montages, that the height of the proposed development does not have a significant adverse impact on identified views to the Female Orphan School (University of Western Sydney Rydalmere Campus) and its emergent trees, the Parramatta River Corridor and Pennant Hills open space ridge line. The relevant identified views for the Camellia and Rydalmere precincts are provided in Appendix 1
8.2.4.5 Building Design	
Objectives	

Part	Provision
O.03	Development that respects, conserves and responds to identified views and the existing heritage character of the precinct
Controls	
C.04	Building setbacks, design, materials, glazing and colours are to minimise the visual impact of the development, particularly if the development is visible from roads and the Parramatta River
8.2.4.7.3 The University Special Area	
Controls	
C.02	Development must respect, conserve and respond to key views identified in that Plan (ie, the Conservation Management Plan for the area)
C.05	The scale and character of the development must recognise and complement the unique visual qualities of the site

5.0 Key issues

Baaed on review of the site and its context, the proposal and the planning framework, in addition to the procedural matters identified in the SEARS the following are the key merit issues that need to be considered by the VIA:

1. impact on the character of Victoria Road as a recognised major gateway into the Parramatta CBD
2. impact on the character of other key transport routes in the form of the Parramatta Light Rail
3. visual relationship between State heritage listed buildings and the proposal
4. impact on historic view corridors
5. impact on key recreation facilities.

6.0 Method

As has already been noted, the purpose of VIA is to identify and determine the acceptability of a proposal's likely visual view impact by addressing the SEARS.

VIA is a highly complex area that involves qualitative and professional value judgements. While there is a wealth of guidance documents, there is currently no universally agreed, national level guideline for VIA in Australia (AILA, 2019). As noted by the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales in *Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor* [2013] NSWLEC 1046 (Rose Bay), the key to addressing this challenge is to adopt a rigorous methodology.

With reference to its purpose, the method used by this VIA has the following key steps:

Identifying the proposal's likely visual and view impacts

- **Visual analysis:** undertaking visual analysis
- **Survey aligned photomontages:** preparing an evidence base of survey aligned photomontages
- **Significance of visual impact:** assessing the significance of the proposal's likely visual impact

Determining the acceptability of the proposal's likely visual and view impacts

- **Consistency with the planning framework:** assessing the consistency of the proposal's likely visual and view impact against relevant parts of the planning framework

6.1.1 Visual analysis

This stage involves the following key steps:

- understand the visual character of the proposal, the Precinct and the visual catchment, which is the area in which the proposal may ordinarily be seen in totality or part
- identify the people within the visual catchment who will ordinarily be exposed to views of the proposal
- identify the pattern of viewing
- identify viewpoints that are representative of the pattern of viewing and through the preparation of an evidence base of survey aligned photomontages may be used to inform identification of likely visual impact.

The methodological basis underpinning this stage is derived from the international standard ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – third edition’ (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013). The GLVIA3 is widely referenced in VIA in Australia (AILA, 2019) including in Secretary’s environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) for state significant development (SSD). It is more versatile for a range of contexts in particular those of an urban nature compared to other commonly referenced but more highly specialised guidance such as that prepared by the US Forestry Service. Where appropriate, the VIA also has regard to other VIA guidance including the planning principle established by the NSW Land and Environment Court in *Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor* [2013] NSWLEC 1046 (Rose Bay), ‘Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity’ (the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2014) and the ‘Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment’ (TfNSW, 2023).

6.1.2 Survey aligned photomontages

To inform the qualitative and professional value judgements made in this VIA, an evidence base of survey aligned photomontages for 6 viewpoints representative of the Precinct and the visual catchment was prepared in accordance with the NSW Land and Environment Court ‘Photomontage Policy’. This represents the highest possible standard of accuracy for visual representation, and is based on on-site survey and photographic and specialist software work. **Appendix A** provides further detail on the methodology used. Where appropriate, reference has also been made to 3D simulated views and other photography taken by others are readily available in the public domain.

6.1.3 Significance of visual impact

As with visual analysis, the methodological basis for this stage is derived from the GLVIA3. This is focussed on the significance of visual impact based on the factors of sensitivity of the Precinct and visual catchment to the nature of change proposed and the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

To assist in providing a level of consistency to the assessment of sensitivity, magnitude and significance, the VIA uses a series of matrix tables. The following table identifies the considerations that inform the factors of sensitivity magnitude.

Table 8 Factors of sensitivity and magnitude

Sensitivity	Magnitude
• Cultural and social value of the view • The prevailing type of people ordinarily exposed to the view • The prevailing number of people ordinarily exposed to the view	• Scale of change (eg, compatibility with existing visual character) • Geographical extent of the area influenced • Duration and / or reversibility of the change

No pre-determined weighting is given to each factor. Rather, where one factor strongly influences the assessment, weighting is be discussed in the context of a particular view.

Significance is expressed in terms of how the proposal may ordinarily be perceived by people on a five-point qualitative scale:

- negligible significance of impact
- low significance of impact
- moderate significance of impact
- high significance of impact
- major significance of impact.

There is no pre-determined definition of what the difference between each of these findings. Rather, as has been noted, it is inherently subjective and varied according to the nature of each view. In this regard the GLVIA3 makes the following observation:

- 'There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal. In making a judgement about the significance of visual effects the following points should be noted:
 - Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant
 - Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant
 - Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view'.

6.1.4 Consistency with the planning framework

Determination of significance does not automatically equate to unacceptability. Rather, acceptability is determined by consistency with relevant parts of the applicable planning framework.

The planning framework is the appropriate reference for this judgement as it represents the policy position of the NSW Government, and in the case of local planning instruments that of Parramatta City Council, on relevant matters.

6.1.5 Assumptions, limitations and exclusions

In addition to any others expressed in the relevant part of this VIA, the following key assumptions, limitations and exclusions apply to this VIA:

- it is assumed that all inputs from other parties, including the urban design team, are accurate
- as the proposal is not for strata titled residential uses or involve extensive alteration of natural landform or removal of native bushland, for the purposes of magnitude assessment the proposal is considered to be ongoing but capable of being reversed (ie, demolished and the land remediated to its current or near its current state)
- to enable a focus on assessment of scale and form, architectural and landscaping detail has not been included in the photomontages
- as with all VIA, there is considerable interplay between planning, design and visual impact matters. As such, while the VIA touches on matters such as character, size and scale, due regard should be given to other relevant documents for full address of these matters
- while photomontages provide an indication of likely future visual environment, they can only provide an approximation of the rich visual experience enabled by the human eye. As they are based on photographs, the same limitations that apply to photography, including optical distortion, apply (refer to **Attachment A** for further detail)
- the photomontages show built form that may be built in accordance with the indicative masterplan. The indicative masterplan represents one way in which the Precinct may be developed in the future in accordance with the proposal. As such, it is important to note that different siting and scale of built form may be allowed within the limits set by the amended planning framework, in particular land use zoning, height and GFA
- detailed consideration of heritage, including impact on values and significance, is excluded

- consideration of impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage values associations is excluded. This is only appropriately undertaken by a member or member or qualified representative of the Aboriginal community
- consideration of night-time impact, including lighting, is excluded.

7.0 Visual analysis

7.1 The site

The visual character of sites are shaped by the interplay of the following attributes:

- natural environment
- built environment.

7.1.1 Natural environment

Topography

The site is generally level.

Vegetation

As it is primarily a carpark, most of the site does not contain vegetation. However, it is surrounded on all sides by planted street trees that have not yet reached maturation .

7.1.2 Built environment

Public domain

The site is bordered on all sides by publicly accessible roads, being:

- North: Victoria Road (refer below figure)
- East: Railway Street (refer below figure)
- South: Fifth Street
- West: Bridge Street.

While private owned, the carpark is accessible by vehicle from Fifth Street.

Victoria Road is the most relevant for VIA. Victoria Road is a key route of access to and from the Parramatta CBD, and in this location comprises three travel lanes in each direction (6 lanes in total) separated by a low, narrow concrete median strip. At its signalised intersection with Railway Street stopped vehicles will be exposed to view of the site and proposal.

Bridge Street is elevated in bridge form over Victoria Road.



Figure 6 Intersection of Victoria Road and Railway Street adjoining the site to the north

Source: Ethos Urban



Figure 7 Railway Street to the east of the site

Source: Ethos Urban

Land use and built form

The site is not occupied by any buildings or structures.

7.2 The visual catchment

7.2.1 Extent

The visual catchment is that part of the public domain from which the proposal may ordinarily be visible by people, either in totality or in part, and as such has a visual connection with the site.

The extent of the visual catchment is influenced by an interplay of a number of factors including topography, buildings and structures and vegetation.

That part of the visual catchment where the proposal is likely to be most visible is bound by:

- **north:** Victoria Road
- **east:** Parramatta Light Rail Line, and the Victoria Road overpass of the line
- **south:** Sixth Avenue
- **west:** western end of the campus oval.

7.2.2 Character

As with sites, the visual character of the visual catchment is also shaped by the interplay of the natural environment and built environment.

Natural environment

Topography

The immediately surrounding part of the visual catchment is largely level. The most notable local topographic element is the elevation of Victoria Road over James Ruse Drive to the west of the site and the Parramatta Light Rail Line to the east of the site. To the south the site slopes gently down to the Parramatta River corridor, before gently rising in the vicinity of Oak Street approximately 700m away from the northern edge of the river.

Vegetation

Most vegetation in the visual catchment comprises street tree plantings and plantings within private property. There are areas of more densely planted trees adjoining the northern side of Victoria Road and along parts of the Avenue. Patches of linear, dense bushland exists along Vineyard Creek to the east.

Built environment

Public domain

The remainder of the WSU campus comprises a series of smaller access roads. Major roads in the visual catchment comprise Victoria Road and James Ruse Drive to the west of the site. Other roads are smaller local access roads in a generally modified grid pattern. Stations on the Parramatta Light Rail line are part of the public domain, with Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station being the most proximate to the site (refer below figure).



Figure 8 Yallamundi / Rydalmere Light Rail Station

Source: JCD

Land to the south and west that forms part of WSU comprises large areas of grassed open space, including the WSU campus oval to the west of the site (refer below figure).



Figure 9 WSU campus oval

Source: Ethos Urban

Land use and built form

Land to the south within the WSU campus comprises a mix of larger and smaller but generally low-rise older buildings associated with the site's former use for 'government institutional care for children and the mentally ill'(WSU, 2024) and larger, multi storey more contemporary buildings purpose built for the site's current tertiary education use. Of particular note is the large, low rise older ED 'Verdon Building' to the south of the site. Adjoining the ED Verdon Building is the more contemporary Eha building, and further to the south-west are the side by side EA and EB buildings (refer below figure).



Figure 10 Older buildings within the site

Source: WSU



Figure 11 Eha building

Source: WSU



Figure 12 EA and EB buildings

Source: WSU

Surrounding land use and built form is mixed. Predominant land uses are as follows:

- **North-west:** similar buildings to WSU as part of its Parramatta North campus
- **North:** a mix of mainly residential buildings as part of 'Metro West Residences'
- **North-west and west:** low density residential uses
- **East:** light industrial uses
- **South:** WSU.

7.3 Sensitivity of the visual catchment to the nature of change proposed

The sensitivity of the visual catchment to the nature of change proposed combines four factors categorised according to whether they are primarily place or people related:

Place factors

- **Cultural and social value:** the value of the visual catchment recognised in planning instruments, including significant landscapes, significant views, heritage items or heritage conservation areas, and through the presence of other indicators such as representation in art and literature, or provision of facilities intended to enable appreciation of views
- **Visual characteristics:** the way in which components (ie, elements and features) come together in composition

People factors

- **Type of people:** the type of people ordinarily exposed to views of the visual catchment, including residents, workers, travellers and visitors
- **Number of people:** the number of people ordinarily exposed to views of the visual catchment.

Cultural and social value

The WSU site has value as a State heritage listed item. The visual catchment will be valued in general terms, in particular by local residents as the context for their homes.

Visual characteristics

While variable based on viewpoints, in general visual characteristics are consistent with that outlined earlier in this VIA.

Type of people

There are a number of different types of people exposed to views:

- residents at home
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area
- people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public footpaths, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views
- travellers on road, rail or other transport routes
- travellers on road, rail or other transport routes where travel involves recognised scenic routes
- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience
- visitors to facilities or services (eg, shops, offices, cafes) that meet their day to day needs
- people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape
- people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

While ultimately a personal matter and as such variable, for the purposes of visual analysis each type of person can be considered to have a different level of overall sensitivity to change in their visual environment on a spectrum ranging from higher to lower as shown in the below table.

Table 9 Visual receptor sensitivity

Level of likely sensitivity to change	Type of visual receptor
Higher	• Residents at home • People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public footpaths, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views • Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes where travel involves recognised scenic routes • Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience • Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area
Lower	• Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes • Visitors to facilities or services (eg, shops, offices, cafes) that meet their day to day needs • People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape

Level of likely sensitivity to change	Type of visual receptor
	People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life

The below table identifies the prevailing type of person in the visual catchment and their sensitivity to the nature of change proposed.

Table 10 Prevailing type of person in the visual catchment and their sensitivity to the nature of change proposed

Direction	Prevailing type of person	Sensitivity to the nature of change proposed
North	Travellers on Victoria Road	Low
South	Visitors to WSU	Medium
West	Visitors to WSU	Medium
East	Visitors to WSU and travellers on the Parramatta Light Rail	Low – medium

Number of people

The below table identifies the prevailing number of people in the visual catchment.

Table 11 Prevailing number of people in the visual catchment

Direction	Prevailing type of person	Prevailing number
North	Travellers on Victoria Road	High
South	Visitors to WSU	Moderate
West	Visitors to WSU	Moderate
East	Visitors to WSU and travellers on the Parramatta Light Rail	Moderate – high

7.4 Pattern of viewing

The way in which visual receptors typically experience the visual catchment is called the ‘pattern of viewing’.

Views can typically be seen at closer or longer range. There are not universal standards as to what constitutes the numerical boundaries between these ranges. Rather, they are relative to each other.

It is considered that the pattern of viewing for the proposal is generally as follows:

- in the closer range to the north by travellers on Victoria Road
- in the closer to medium range to the south, east and west by visitors to WSU
- in the medium range by travellers on the Parramatta Light Rail.

7.5 Significance of visual impact

The SEARS require that the visual analysis:

- identify whether the proposal has potential for significant visual impact
- where this occurs, provide a visual impact assessment that addresses the impacts of the development on the visual catchment.

Under the GLVIA3 significance is defined as:

- a measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic.

The significance criteria adopted are sensitivity and magnitude, including their component factors.

The proposal is considered to have the potential for significant visual impact when considered against these criteria and factors as follows:

7.5.1 Sensitivity

- **Number of people:** although their level of interest or attention in views and visual amenity is likely to be low, the proposal will nonetheless ordinarily be seen by a large number of people travelling on Victoria Street and to a lesser extent the Parramatta Light Rail

7.5.2 Magnitude

- **Size and scale:** while comparable to other nearby buildings in WSU, the proposal nonetheless inherently has considerable height and bulk.

As such, based on the SEARS, a VIA is justified.

It is noted that significance:

- is not absolute but rather relative on a qualitative spectrum corresponding to perception in the view and ranging from negligible to dominant
- does not automatically equate to an adverse impact, with higher significance impacts having the potential to be positive
- does not automatically equate to unacceptability of impact, as this is determined through assessment against relevant parts of the planning framework.

7.6 Key viewpoints

The nature and extent of visual impact changes with a person's location in the landscape (viewpoint) based on factors such as direction, distance and angle of viewpoint and duration of visibility (eg, static or moving). As there is a near infinite number of viewpoints, a selection of viewpoints to form the basis of the VIA is required. In this regard, the GLVIA3 provides the following guidance:

- 'The viewpoints used need to cover as wide a range of situations as is possible, reasonable and necessary to cover the likely significant effects. It is not possible to give specific guidance on the appropriate number of viewpoints since this depends on the context, the nature of the proposal and the range and location of visual receptors. The emphasis must always be on proportionality in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and its likely significant effects'.

As can be seen, the focus is on achieving a balance between adequacy of coverage and reasonableness.

Informed by this the following table identifies the viewpoints that have been selected for assessment as part of this VIA, including the reason for this selection.

Table 12 Key viewpoints

Ref	Location	Target	Reason
1.	Victoria Road east	The proposal	Assess impact on the character of Victoria Road as a recognised major gateway into the Parramatta CBD
2.	Victoria Road west	The proposal	Assess impact on the character of Victoria Road as a recognised major gateway into the Parramatta CBD
3.	Rydalmere Station	The proposal	Assess impact on the character of other key transport routes in the form of the Parramatta Light Rail
4.	Eliazbeth Farmhouse	The proposal	Assess impact on historic view corridors
5.	Sixth Street	The proposal	Assess visual relationship between State heritage listed buildings and the proposal
6.	The WSU campus oval	The proposal	Assess impact on key recreation facilities

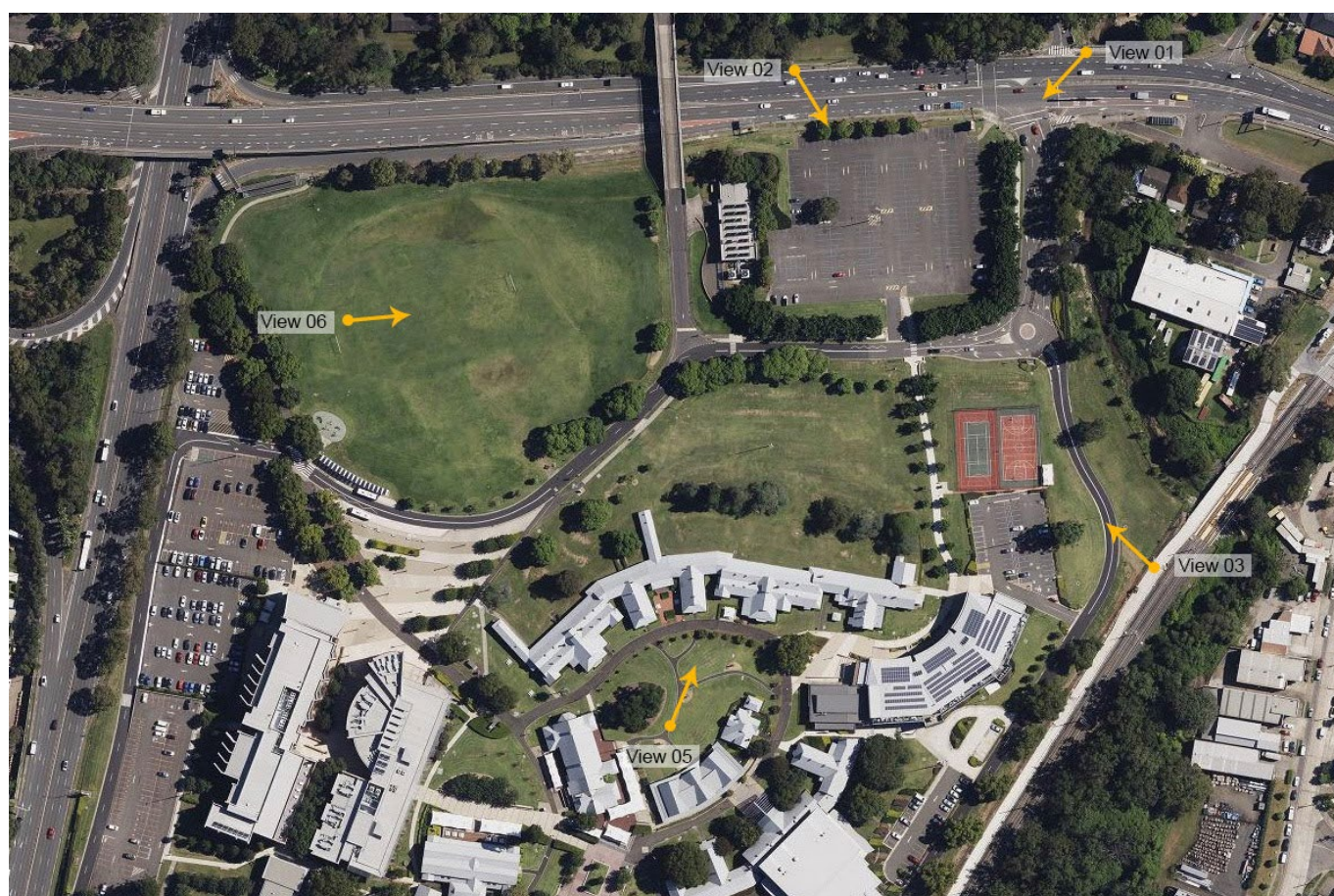


Figure 13 Key viewpoints – closer range

Source: Virtual Ideas



Figure 14 Key viewpoints – longer range

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.0 Visual impact assessment

8.1 Viewpoint 1 – Victoria Road east

8.1.1 Existing view



Figure 15 Viewpoint 1 – Victoria Road east: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.1.2 Likely future view



Figure 16 Viewpoint 1 – Victoria Road east: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: to enable a focus on scale and form, this view does not show architectural or landscape detail

8.1.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 13 Viewpoint 1 – Victoria Road east: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

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

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

8.1.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

Table 14 Viewpoint 1 – Victoria Road east: significance of visual impact

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

8.2 Viewpoint 2 – Victoria Road west

8.2.1 Existing view



Figure 17 Viewpoint 2 – Victoria Road west: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.2.2 Likely future view



Figure 18 Viewpoint 2 – Victoria Road west: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: to enable a focus on scale and form, this view does not show architectural or landscape detail

8.2.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 15 Viewpoint 2 – Victoria Road west: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

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

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

8.2.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

Table 16 Viewpoint 2 – Victoria Road west: significance of visual impact

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

8.3 Viewpoint 3 – Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station

8.3.1 Existing view



Figure 19 Viewpoint 3 – Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.3.2 Likely future view



Figure 20 Viewpoint 3 – Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: to enable a focus on scale and form, this view does not show architectural or landscape detail

8.3.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 17 Viewpoint 3 – Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
Size and scale of change	Major change over wide area	Dominant	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable
	Major change over restricted area, or Moderate change over wide area	Considerable	Considerable	Noticeable	Noticeable

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

8.3.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

Table 18 Viewpoint 3 – Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station: significance of visual impact

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

8.4 Viewpoint 4 – Eliazbeth Farmhouse

8.4.1 Existing view



Figure 21 Viewpoint 4 – Eliazbeth Farmhouse: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.4.2 Likely future view



Figure 22 Viewpoint 4 – Eliazbeth Farmhouse: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: to enable a focus on scale and form, this view does not show architectural or landscape detail

8.4.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 19 Viewpoint 4 – Eliazbeth Farmhouse: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

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

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

8.4.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

Table 20 Viewpoint 4 – Eliazbeth Farmhouse: significance of visual impact

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

8.5 Viewpoint 5 – Sixth Street

8.5.1 Existing view



Figure 23 Viewpoint 5 – Sixth Street: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.5.2 Likely future view



Figure 24 Viewpoint 5 – Sixth Street: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: as the proposal is not visible from this location, it is represented in yellow outline

8.5.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 21 Viewpoint 5 – Sixth Street: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

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

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

8.5.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

Table 22 Viewpoint 5 – Sixth Street: significance of visual impact

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

8.6 Viewpoint 6 – WSU Campus Oval

8.6.1 Existing view



Figure 25 Viewpoint 6 – WSU Campus Oval: existing view

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.6.2 Likely future view



Figure 26 Viewpoint 6 – WSU Campus Oval: likely future view

Source: Virtual Ideas

Note: to enable a focus on scale and form, this view does not show architectural or landscape detail

8.6.3 Magnitude of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the magnitude of the nature of change proposed.

Table 23 Viewpoint 6 – WSU Campus Oval: magnitude of the nature of change proposed

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

		Duration and reversibility			
		Ongoing and irreversible	Ongoing capable of being reversed	Limited life (5 – 10 years)	Limited life (< 5 years)
	Minor change over a restricted area; or Insignificant change	Perceptible	Perceptible	Perceptible	Imperceptible
	Imperceptible change	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

8.6.4 Significance of the nature of change proposed

The following table assesses the significance of the nature of change proposed.

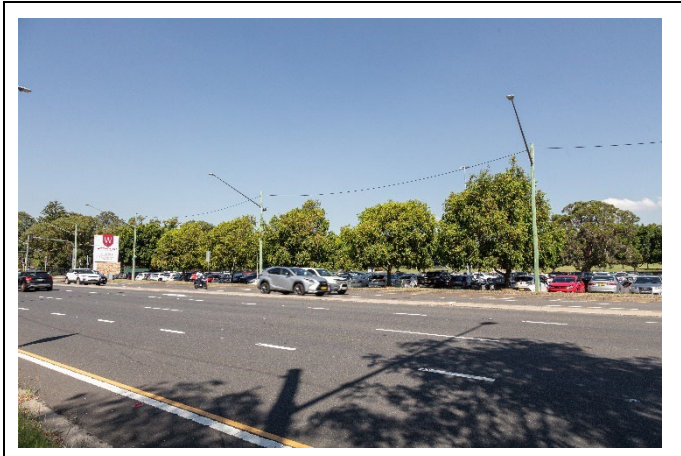
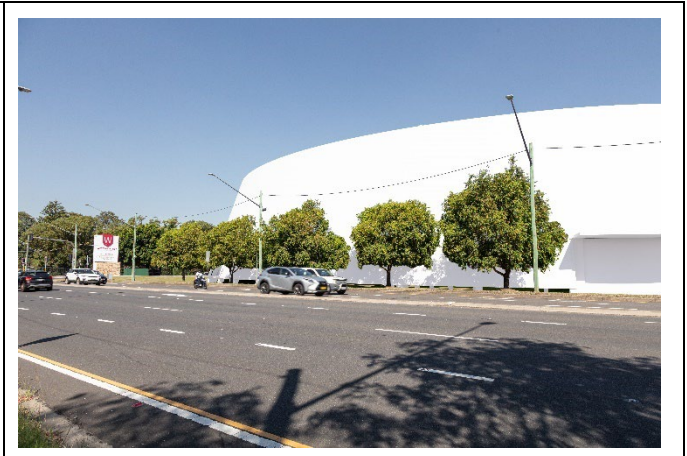
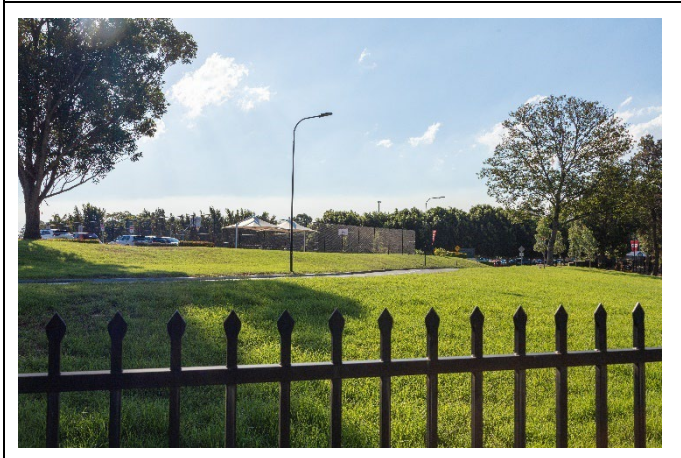
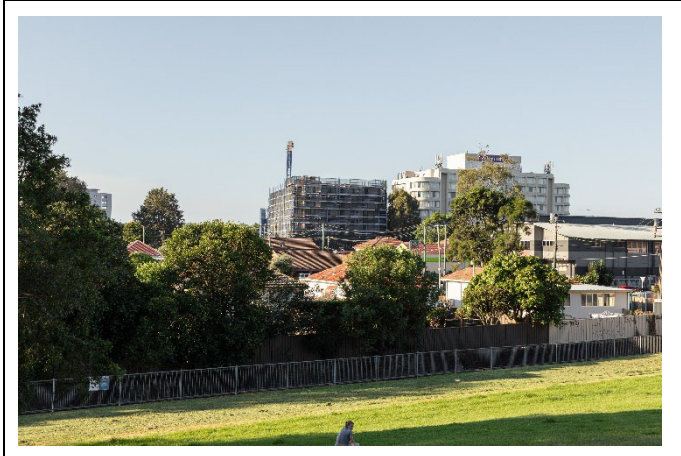
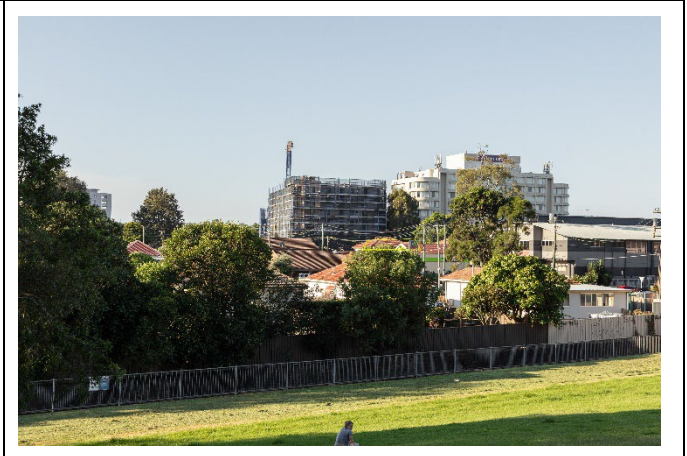
Table 24 Viewpoint 6 – WSU Campus Oval: significance of visual impact

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

8.7 Consolidated photographs and photomontages

For ease of reference, the following table consolidates the photos and photomontages for each of the viewpoints.

Victoria Road east	
	
Existing view	Likely future view
Victoria Road west	

	
Existing view	Likely future view
Rydalmere Station	
	
Existing view	Likely future view
Eliazbeth Farmhouse	
	
Existing view	Likely future view
Sixth Street	

	
Existing view	Likely future view
WSU campus oval	
	
Existing view	Likely future view

Figure 27 Consolidated photographs and photomontages

Source: Virtual Ideas

8.8 Consolidated assessment of sensitivity, magnitude and significance of this visual impact

For ease of reference, the following table consolidates assessment of sensitivity, magnitude and significance of visual impact.

Table 25 Findings of sensitivity, magnitude and significance of visual impact

Viewpoint no.	Viewpoint name	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
1.	Victoria Road east	Medium	Considerable	Moderate
2.	Victoria Road west	Medium	Considerable	Moderate
3.	Rydalmere Station	Low	Noticeable	Low
4.	Eliazbeth Farmhouse	High	Imperceptible	Negligible
5.	Sixth Street	High	Imperceptible	Negligible
6.	The WSU campus oval	Medium	Noticeable	Low

8.9 Key visual impact

The key visual impact of the proposal will be to change the character of Victoria Road. While open space will still be visually prevalent, the proposal will become the visually dominant feature along this part of the Victoria Road streetscape. By doing so, it will also reduce visibility into WSU compared to what presently exists. The similar impact of existing trees along the sites northern boundary with Victoria Road is noted.

9.0 Assessment against the planning framework

The following section assesses the proposal against the PLEP 2023 and PDCP 2023.

Where a control is demonstrated to have been met, further assessment against the relevant objectives is not provided.

9.1 Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023

The following table provides an assessment against the relevant VIA provisions of the PLEP 2023.

Table 26 Assessment against relevant VIA provisions of the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023

Part	Objective	Assessment	Consistency
Principal development standards			
4.3 Height of buildings	(e) To minimise visual impact, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access to existing development (f) To preserve historic views	The proposal represents a new landmark for this part of Victoria Road. It incorporates a range of measures such as curved form, tapered massing, architectural detail and landscaping to minimise its visual impact relevant to its landmark status. The proposal does not disrupt significant views identified in planning instruments The proposal does not impact historic views identified in planning instruments, in particular those identified in the PDCP 2023 from Elizabeth Farmhouse.	Yes
Miscellaneous provisions			
5.10 Heritage conservation	(b) To conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views	The proposal does not impact historic views identified in planning instruments, in particular those identified in the PDCP 2023 from Elizabeth Farmhouse. Note: detailed consideration of heritage is outside the scope of this VIA, and reference should be given to the separate, supporting heritage documentation in this regard.	Yes

9.2 Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023

The following table provides an assessment against the controls of Section 2.8 Views and vistas of the PDCP 2023.

Table 27 Assessment against the controls of Section 2.8 Views and vistas of the PDCP 2023

Part	Control	Assessment	Compliance
C.01	Development is to preserve views of significant topographical features such as ridges and natural corridors, the urban skyline, heritage and civic buildings, sites of historical significance, and areas of high visibility, particularly those identified in Appendix 1 – Views and Vistas. Refer to Part 8 – Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas and Specific Sites and Part 9 – Parramatta City Centre for other identified view corridors	The proposal does not impact these views. In particular, it does not impact views identified in planning instruments, in particular heritage views those identified in the PDCP 2023 from Elizabeth Farmhouse.	Yes
C.02	Building alignment, street interface, design detail, and massing is to reinforce existing and new view corridors. In some locations, this may be achieved through uniform heights, horizontal plinths, and street walls	This part of Victoria Road does not demonstrate the attributes of a view corridor.	N/a
C.04	Street and public domain planting is to reinforce existing view corridors and create new view corridors where appropriate	This part of Victoria Road does not demonstrate the attributes of a view corridor.	N/a
C.05	Buildings are to be designed so that significant and district views from the public domain are retained	The proposal does not impact significant and district views from the public domain.	Yes
C.06	Building design, location and landscaping is to enable view sharing between properties. This may be achieved by appropriately: a) siting the building b) designing the building c) planting open foliage and well positioned landscaping	The proposal does not impact view sharing, in particular due to its physical distance from residential uses.	Yes

The following table provides an assessment against the controls of Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA.

Table 28 Assessment against the controls of Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA

Part	Control	Assessment	Compliance
8.2.4.2 Height of buildings			
C.01	Development must not have an adverse impact on significant or historic views from or of heritage sites along the Parramatta River	The height of the proposal does not impact historic views identified in planning instruments, in particular	Yes

Part	Control	Assessment	Compliance
	when seen from river and nearby historic sites.	those identified in the PDCP 2023 from Elizabeth Farmhouse.	
C.02	Any development within the Rydalmere Precinct and on land shown on the Camellia Design Control Map as “Area of Height Sensitivity” must demonstrate through survey and photo montages, that the height of the proposed development does not have a significant adverse impact on identified views to the Female Orphan School (University of Western Sydney Rydalmere Campus) and its emergent trees, the Parramatta River Corridor and Pennant Hills open space ridge line. The relevant identified views for the Camellia and Rydalmere precincts are provided in Appendix 1	The site is note located within this “Area of Height Sensitivity”. Nonetheless, in the interests of comprehensiveness, photomontages addressing this matter and prepared in accordance with the Court’s Photomontage Policy have been prepared and provided as part of this VIA.	Yes
8.2.4.3 Landscaping			
C.07	The landscape setbacks along major streets and riparian vegetation along the rivers and creeks are to be in accordance with the Camellia and Rydalmere Precinct Design Control Map, with the exception of any riparian vegetation area along the Parramatta River for the University of Western Sydney site, which may be varied provided there is a Conservation Management Plan for the site and the redevelopment achieves all the outcomes specified for the University Special Area	The proposal does not comply with the 30m landscaped setback to Victoria Road for new buildings	No. Refer to merit based assessment against the objectives for landscaping below and discussion in section 10.1 of this VIA
8.2.4.5 Building Design			
C.04	Building setbacks, design, materials, glazing and colours are to minimise the visual impact of the development, particularly if the development is visible from roads and the Parramatta River	The proposal’s setback from Victoria Road does not minimise its visual impact. It does however incorporate a range of measures such as curved form, tapered massing, architectural detail and landscaping to minimise visual impact. Materiality and how is proposed to come together along with landscaping is shown in the below figures.	No. Refer to merit based assessment against the objectives for landscaping below and discussion in section 10.1 of this VIA
8.2.4.7.3 The University Special Area			
C.02	Development must respect, conserve and respond to key views identified in that Plan (ie, the Conservation Management Plan for the area)	Detailed consideration of heritage is outside the scope of this VIA, and reference should be given to the separate, supporting heritage documentation in this regard.	Refer to separate, supporting heritage documentation
C.05	The scale and character of the development must recognise and complement the unique visual qualities of the site	The predominant visual character of the WSU site is that of an institutional campus, comprising a mix of larger buildings in a landscaped open space setting. The individual components of	Yes

Part	Control	Assessment	Compliance
		landscape character are identified and described in this VIA. The proposal recognises and complements this visual character by: • having a scale that is comparable or lesser than recent other buildings developed on the site • being well separated from other buildings, and maintains a strong visual presence of open space along the sites Victoria Road frontage.	

External



Clay Shingles

- Locally sourced
- Light tan, natural clay finish



Day Brackets

- Variation of Clay Shingles
- Various sizes according to shading requirements



Roofing / Cross - laminated Timber

- Primary column and beam structure
- Walls to selected areas



Low carbon Concrete

- Theatre shell (paved)
- Ground Slab (polished with exposed aggregate derived from Country)



Brushed Aluminium

- Window and door frames



High performance glazing

- Fixed glazing
- Operable louvers



Stainless steel tensile mesh

- Sports court and rooftop terraces

Landscape

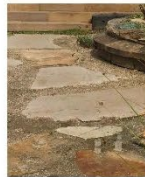
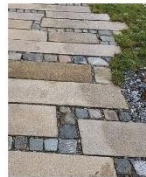


Figure 28 Proposed materiality

Source: JCD

Internal



Native hardwood ply lining

- Internal wall lining
- Perforated where acoustically required



Cement Render

- Interior wall treatment
- Warm tones of Malleous new growth bark



Acoustic / Blackout window

- Theatre and Gallery spaces



Timber internal frames and furniture elements

Images of Country as material and colour palette



Figure 29 How materiality and landscaping are proposed to come together

Source: JCD

The following table provides an assessment against the objectives of Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA.

Table 29 Assessment against the objectives of Part 8: Centres, Precincts, Special Character Areas, and Specific Sites, sections 8.2 – Local Centres, 8.2.4 Camellia and Rydalmere and the University Special Area and the Victoria Road Corridor Special Area of the PDCP 2023 relevant to VIA

Part	Provision	Assessment	Consistency
8.2.4.3 Landscaping			
O.01	Enhance the appearance of these precincts and the setting of heritage items or areas, particularly from the waterway, major thoroughfares, and any other public places.	The proposal does not impact the setting of heritage items. Compared to the existing large, surface grade carpark, the proposal is considered to represent an enhancement to the appearance of the precinct. As a stand-alone building well separated from other major buildings and bordered to the east by extensive areas of open space readily visible from Victoria Road, the proposal maintains the overall campus visual character of the site and its surrounds.	Yes
8.2.4.5 Building Design			

Part	Provision	Assessment	Consistency
O.02	Improve architectural interest by minimising the bulk of buildings and to encourage articulation and modulation of development.	The proposal incorporates a range of measures such as curved form, tapered massing and architectural detail that minimises visual bulk.	Yes
O.03	Development that respects, conserves and responds to identified views and the existing heritage character of the precinct.	The proposal does not impact historic views identified in planning instruments, in particular those identified in the PDCP 2023 from Elizabeth Farmhouse. Note: detailed consideration of heritage is outside the scope of this VIA, and reference should be given to the separate, supporting heritage documentation in this regard.	Yes

10.0 Discussion of key issues

10.1 Impact on the character of Victoria Road as a recognised major gateway into the Parramatta CBD

This part of Victoria Road does not contain any protected views under planning instruments.

Under the PDCP 2024, the desired future character of Rydalmere is:

- ‘Defined by its wide range of complementary uses and functions that support the Parramatta central business district. Rydalmere is particularly notable because of the steadily expanding university campus (University of Western Sydney) and the adjoining light industrial uses. Future development opportunities that mutually support the employment, industrial, educational and research functions of this precinct will be encouraged’.

Supporting this, a key general objective (O.02) is to ‘create a vibrant, attractive and mutually supportive industrial, educational and research precinct’.

In overall terms, the proposal is consistent with this desired future character and objective.

However, given the current largely open space character of this part of Victoria Road and the intent of the PDCP 2024 to retain this character through a 30m landscaped setback for new buildings, the proposal is not fully consistent with this aspect of existing or desired future character.

While the VIA has argued for consistency with the relevant objectives, it is also considered the merits of this setback more broadly.

In this regard, the strategic rationale of retaining the current largely open space character of this part of Victoria Road is questioned given:

- the use of this part of the site for a large, surface grade carpark
- the capability of the WSU Parramatta South campus to evolve further as a major centre of learning, and in particular the Victoria Road frontage of the site that is generally less impacted by heritage items than many other parts of the site
- the diverse and varied overall character of Victoria Road with most of it traversing heavily built up urban areas
- the potential for the Metro West Residences on the northern side of Victoria Road to be comprehensively renewed for more intensive urban development

- the rapidly and extensively evolving nature of Greater Parramatta as the metropolitan centre for the Central River City.

Furthermore, Victoria Road is a key route of entry to and from the Parramatta CBD, and it can be argued that its intersection with James Ruse Drive marks a key gateway into the broader CBD. This is particularly the case as extensive views open up to the taller buildings within the core of CBD from this elevated location. Consistent with this role and the noting the evolving nature of Greater Parramatta as a world class centre, it is argued that a distinct, landmark building is appropriate in this location. This is perhaps made even more suitable due to its purpose of celebrating and promoting indigenous excellence, and its high quality urban, architectural and landscape design. Due to its location surrounded by open space, while notable from Victoria Road, it will not have a significant impact on sensitive uses such as residential uses or sensitive locations such as heritage buildings.

In terms of compatibility, the Land and Environment Court of NSW established a planning principle to guide consideration of this matter in *Project Venture Developments v Pittwater Council* [2005] NSWLEC 191 (Project Venture). While planning principles are technically only relevant to court cases, a number have been adopted more broadly by consent authorities as part of their assessment processes, and they provide a helpful frame of reference for considering important planning matters. Of particular relevance to this matter is the following:

- '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'.

In any event, as is shown in the separate, supporting landscape documentation, the ground plane layout of that part of the proposal is capable of accommodating vegetation to both screen aspects of built form and enhance its integration into the landscape, thereby reducing its visual impact.

10.2 Impact on the character of other key transport routes in the form of the Parramatta Light Rail

While visible, the proposal will have a low significance of visual impact on the Parramatta Light Rail as represented by Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station.

10.3 Visual relationship between State heritage listed buildings and the proposal

The proposal will not have a significant impact on State heritage listed buildings. In particular, it will not be visible behind the Verdon Building.

10.4 Impact on historic view corridors

The proposal will not be visible from historic view corridors identified in the PDCP 2013, in particular those from Elizabeth Farmhouse.

10.5 Impact on key recreation facilities

While visible, the proposal will have a low significance of visual impact on the WSU campus oval.

11.0 Mitigation measures

There are three broad types of mitigation measures:

1. avoid
2. minimise
3. offset.

This is generally consistent with the principles for the management of environmental impacts in the GLVIA3 (part 3.37).

Under the GLVIA3 (part 4.21), there are a number of stages in the development process when mitigation measures should be considered. Of relevance to this proposal are the following:

- **primary measures:** considered as part of design development
- **secondary measures:** considered as part of conditioning a development consent.

As has been outlined in the Planning Report, the proposal has been the subject to a design process that has included consideration of visual impact. This has resulted in the incorporation of a number of primary measures that seek to avoid and minimise any potential significant adverse visual impacts.

As has been determined by this VIA, the incorporation of these mitigation measures have been critical to the determination of acceptable visual impact. On this basis, it is not considered necessary to make further fundamental or otherwise large-scale amendments to the proposal in its current form to satisfactorily manage visual impact.

12.0 Conclusion

Subject to the recommended mitigation measures the proposal has acceptable visual and view loss impact for the following key reasons:

- while not fully consistent with the existing largely open space character of this part of Victoria Road and the intended 30m landscaped setback for new buildings, it is argued that the proposal is compatible with and strengthens the role of Victoria Road as a key route into the Parramatta CBD and represents a new high quality landmark at a key gateway into the broader CBD
- while visible, the proposal will have a low significance of visual impact on the Parramatta Light Rail as represented by Yallamundi / Rydalmere Station.
- the proposal will not have a significant impact on State heritage listed buildings. In particular, it will not be visible behind the Verdon Building.
- the proposal will not be visible from historic view corridors identified in the PDCP 2013, in particular those from Elizabeth Farmhouse.
- while visible, the proposal will have a low significance of visual impact on the WSU campus oval.

As such, it is the conclusion of this VIA that the proposal can be supported on visual and view impact grounds.

Appendix 1: Visual impact evidence

Virtual Ideas and CMS Surveyors

