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**VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION  
16-20 OLD CASTLE HILL ROAD, CASTLE HILL NSW 2154**

DECEMBER 17 2025

Project Type: Development Application

Lot: 10/-/DP881332, 11/-/DP881332, 1/-/DP204335, 20/-/DP222257

Address: 16-20 Old Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill NSW 2154

## CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. Scope and Purpose of Report	3
1.2. The Proposed Development	3
1.2.1. The Site and existing property	3
1.3. Proposed Land Use and Built Form	4
1.4. Methodology of Assessment	5
1.4.1. Process	6
1.4.2. Assessment Methodology	6
1.4.3. Site Inspections	7
1.4.4. Contextual Analysis:	7
1.4.5. Visual Impact Analysis:	7
1.4.6. Statutory Planning Assessment:	7
1.5. References	7
<b>2. THE SITE AND THE VISUAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. The Visual Context	9
2.2. Visual Features and Local Landmarks	9
2.3. Streetscapes	10
2.4. The selected view locations for the local view analysis	10
2.5. Context of View	10
2.6. Extent of View	10
<b>3. VISUAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. Visual Impact Assessments viewpoint locations	11
3.1.1. Method of Assessment	11
3.1.2. Assessment at selected viewpoints	12
<b>4. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. APPENDICES</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1. APPENDIX B: Methodology, CV and LEC Guidelines	19
5.2. APPENDIX C: Survey	31
5.3. APPENDIX D: Wireframe images	33

### APPENDIX A: Assessment Images - panoramic (additional PDF)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Scope and Purpose of Report

This Visual Impact Assessment report supports a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) being lodged with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for site establishment works facilitating a residential development including affordable housing at 16-20 Old Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill (the site). The proponent for the SSDA is UPG Castle Corner Pty Ltd (UPG).

State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2022 (Planning Systems SEPP) identifies development which is declared to be State Significant. The site was declared SSD pursuant to State Significant Declaration Order 2025 (No 7) (the Order) issued on 13 May 2025.

A separate 'Early Works' SSDA seeks approval for site establishment, tree removal, bulk excavation, infrastructure services augmentation and ancillary site works. This 'Main Works' SSDA and Concurrent Rezoning seeks approval for the built form aspects of the residential flat building.

The proposal aims to:

- Facilitate transport-oriented development within an area of high amenity, promoting increases to both market and affordable housing supply proximate to public transport, open space, and employment.
- Respond to the housing challenges facing NSW through boosting the delivery of housing in an area of growth.
- Align with the NSW Government's strategic ambitions to deliver 23,300 homes in The Hills by 2029.
- Deliver affordable housing in accordance with the in-fill affordable housing provisions of State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021.
- Deliver a built form that relates to the surrounding context and respects the character of its environs.

As per the SEARS Assessment Requirement No.8: Visual Impact

- Provide a visual analysis of the development from key viewpoints, including photomontages or perspectives showing the proposed and likely future development.
- If the proposal would result in significant visual impact not anticipated by the planning controls, provide a visual impact assessment that addresses the visual impacts of the development on the existing catchment.



Figure 1 – Site location shown in yellow overlay.

## 1.2. The Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the site preparation and construction of a 40 storey residential flat building.

### 1.2.1. The Site and existing property

The subject site is situated at 16-20 Old Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill, within The Hills Local Government Area (LGA). It is well located, being approximately 250m from Castle Hill Metro Station which provides services to Rouse Hill, Macquarie Park, Chatswood and the Sydney CBD. It is equally proximate to Castle Towers shopping centre, a major regional retail hub. The site has ready access to public open space being less than 100m from Arthur Whitling Park and Eric Fenton Reserve.

The site is located at the corner of Old Castle Hill Road and McMullen Avenue comprising an area of 3,180.4m<sup>2</sup>. It comprises 4 lots in an irregular configuration, legally described as: Lot 10 in DP 881332 / Lot 11 in DP 881332 / Lot 20 in DP 222257 / Lot 1 in DP 204335

The site currently contains development comprising two detached residential dwellings located on 18 and 20 Castle Hill Road. There is currently no development on 16 Castle Hill Road. The site as a whole is covered in dense vegetation and has a steep slope upwards from the north-west to the south-east.

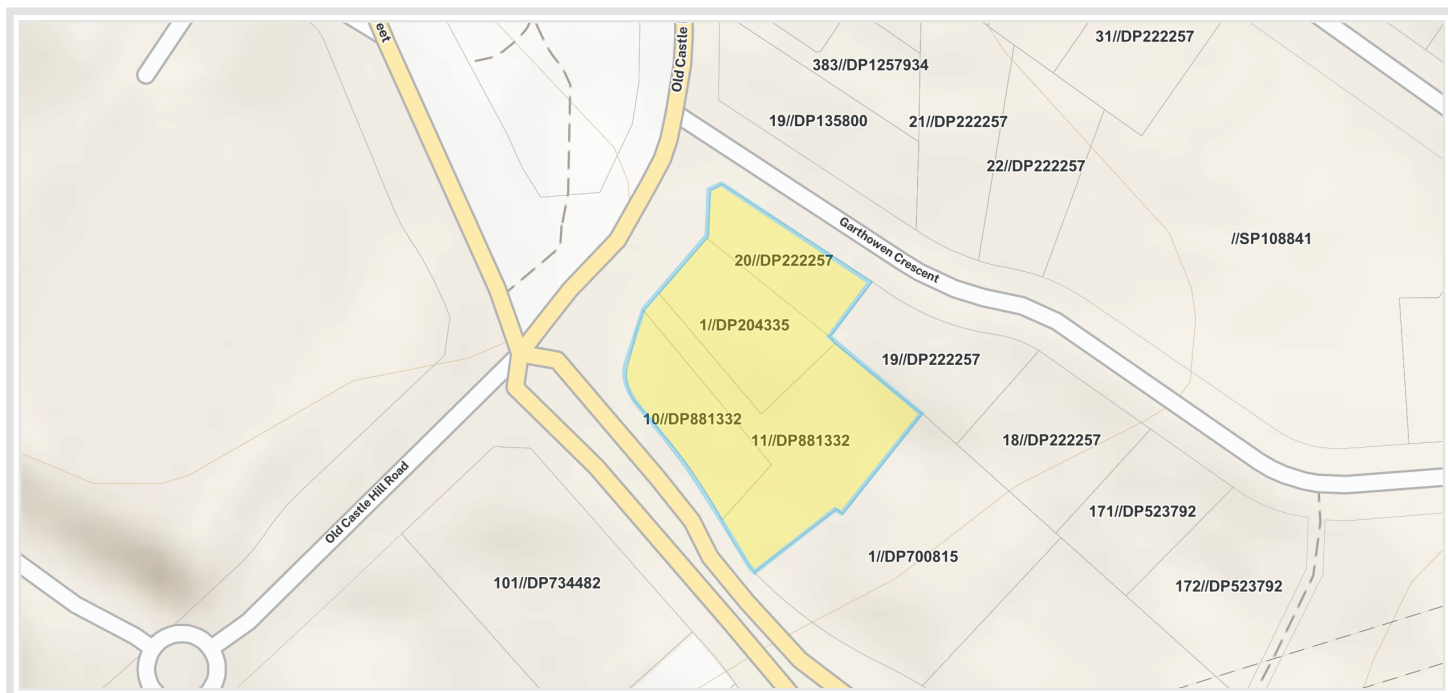


Figure 2 – Subject site shown in yellow overlay.

### 1.3. Proposed Land Use and Built Form

The Early Works SSSA seeks approval for:

- *Early works including:*
- *Demolition and bulk excavation and activities;*
- *Infrastructure services coordination and deviation;*
- *Erosion and sediment control; and*
- *Removal of trees.*

The Main Works SSSA seeks approval for:

- *The construction and operation of an 40-storey residential flat building, comprising the following:*
- *Market and affordable housing units;*
- *Basement parking; and*
- *Communal open space;*
- *Associated landscaping and public domain works.*

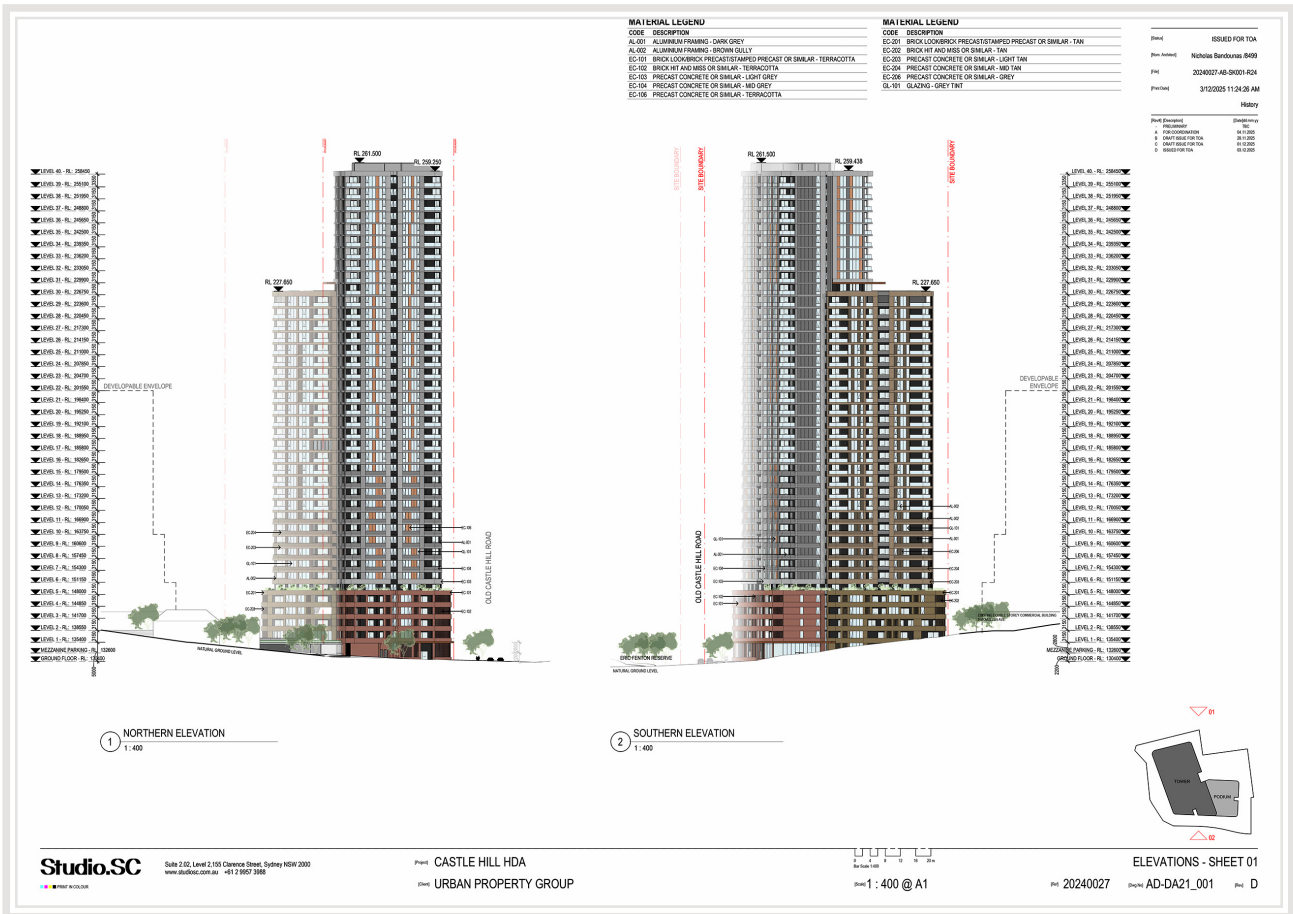


Figure 3 – Elevations of the proposed design by Studio SC Architects.



Figure 4 – Typical floor plan of the proposed design by Studio SC Architects.

## 1.4. Methodology of Assessment

The methods used by Urbaine, for the generation of photomontaged images, showing the proposed development in photomontaged context are summarised in an article prepared for New Planner magazine in December 2018 and contained in Appendix A. A combination of the methods described were utilised in the preparation of the photomontaged views used in this visual impact assessment report.

### 1.4.1. Process

Survey, plans, elevations and model of the proposal were sourced from the architect, Studio.SC Architects and aligned to the scene using the survey information which accompanies the DA submission.

A drone assessment was undertaken and triangulated into a 3D point cloud which was aligned to ground control points using a RTK GNSS rover with NTRIP corrections. This was placed into the scene and further verified against the survey DWG.

Virtual cameras were placed into the 3D model to match various selected viewpoints, in both height and position. These locations were measured on-site using a survey provided. From these cameras, rendered views have been generated and photomontaged into the existing photos, using the ground plane for alignment at standing height 1600mm.

The final selection of images shows these stages, including the block montage of the original development application and concluding with an outline, indicating the potential visual impact and view loss. For the purposes of statutory requirements, the images within the report are of a standard lens format.

### 1.4.2. Assessment Methodology

There are no set guidelines within Australia regarding the actual methodology for visual impact assessment, although there are a number of requirements defined by the Land and Environment Court (LEC) relating to the preparation of photomontages upon which an assessment can be based.

Where a proposal is likely to adversely affect views from either private or public land, Council will give consideration to the Land and Environment Court's Planning Principles. For view sharing from private locations *Tenacity Consulting v Warringah Council* [2004] NSWLEC 140 'planning principle' can be used or *Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council & Anr* [2013] NSWLEC 1046 'planning principle' for public domain views.

The Tenacity Planning Principle establishes a four-step assessment to assist in deciding whether or not view sharing is reasonable:

- *Step 1: assessment of views to be affected.*
- *Step 2: consider from what part of the property the views are obtained.*
- *Step 3: assess the extent of the impact.*
- *Step 4: assess the reasonableness of the proposal that is causing the impact*

The planning principle for public domain views adopted in *Rose Bay Marina* involves a two stage inquiry: the first factual, followed by a second, analytical requiring both quantitative as well as qualitative assessment.

However, there is no peer review system for determining the accuracy of the base material used for visual impact assessments. As a result, Urbaine Design Group provides a detailed description of its methodologies and the resultant accuracy verifiability – this is contained within Appendix A.

The methodology applied to the visual assessment of the current design proposal has been developed from consideration of the following key documents:

- *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Note, Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (EIA-N04) NSW RMS (2013);*
- *Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia, A Manual for Evaluation, Assessment, Siting and Design, Western Australia Planning Commission (2007);*
- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (Wilson, 2002);*

In order to assess the visual impact of the Design Proposal, it is necessary to identify a suitable scope of publicly accessible locations that may be impacted by it, evaluate the visual sensitivity of the Design Proposal to each location and determine the overall visual impact of the Design Proposal.

Accessible locations that feature a prominent, direct and mostly unobstructed line of sight to the Project are used to assess the visual impact of the Design Proposal. The impact to each location is then assessed by overlaying an accurate visualisation of the new design onto the base photography and interpreting the amount of view loss

in each situation, together with potential opportunities for mitigation.

Views of high visual quality are those featuring a variety of natural environments/ landmark features, long range, distant views and with no, or minimal, disturbance as a result of human development or activity. Views of low visual quality are those featuring highly developed environments and short range, close distance views, with little or no natural features.

Visual sensitivity is evaluated through consideration of distance of the view location to the site boundary and also to proposed buildings on the site within the Design Proposal. Then, as an assessment of how the Design Proposal will impact on the particular viewpoint. Visual sensitivity provides the reference point to the potential visual impact of the Design Proposal to both the public and residents, located within, and near to the viewpoint locations.



Figure 5: Area investigated during the photographic site visit.

### 1.4.3. Site Inspections

A site inspection was undertaken to photograph the site and surrounding area to investigate:

- *The topography and existing urban structure of the local area*
- *The streetscapes and houses most likely to be affected by the Proposal*
- *Important vistas and viewsheds*
- *Other major influences on local character and amenity*



Figure 6: Selected private viewpoint locations for visual impact assessments with site outlined in purple.

Where photography was not possible or impracticable in regards to time, resources and likely hood of high value view loss, drone images were taken from the boundary or virtual views were used. The map, see figure 6, indicates chosen locations for site photography.

Virtual analysis was also undertaken to asses the potential for high value view loss base on relative height of the proposal and current site, see figure 7.

#### 1.4.4. Contextual Analysis:

An analysis was undertaken of the visual and statutory planning contexts relevant to the assessment of visual impacts in a Development Application.

#### 1.4.5. Visual Impact Analysis:

The visual impacts of the proposed development were analysed in relation to the visual context and assessed for their likely impact upon the local area and upon specific residential properties.

#### 1.4.6. Statutory Planning Assessment:

The results of the local view impact assessment are included in Section 3 of this report.

### 1.5. References

The following documentation and references informed the preparation of this report:

- *Design Documentation*
- *The design drawings and information relied upon for the preparations of this report were prepared by Studio.SC Architects*
- *The Hills Shire Council LEP and DCP*
- *Photography by Urbaine Design Group*
- *Photomontages and 3D by Urbaine Design Group*

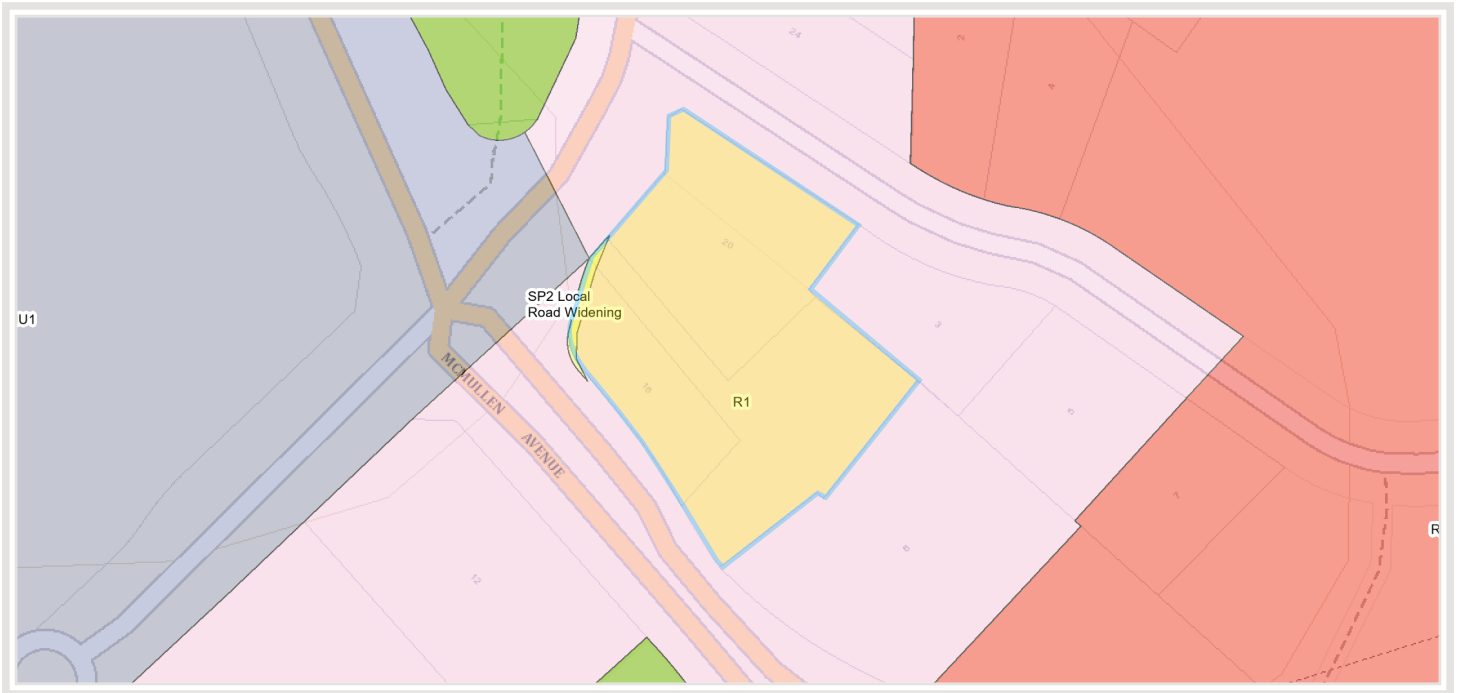


Figure 7: Land zoning map, indicating site with yellow outline.

## 2. THE SITE AND THE VISUAL CONTEXT

Visual impacts occur within an existing visual context where they can affect its character and amenity. This section of the report describes the existing visual context and identifies its defining visual characteristics.

Defining the local area relevant to the visual assessment of a proposed development is subject to possible cognitive mapping considerations and statutory planning requirements. Notwithstanding these issues, the surrounding local area that may be affected by the visual impact of the proposed development is considered to be the area identified on in the topographical area map, Figure 9.

Although some individuals may experience the visual context from private properties with associated views, the general public primarily experiences the visual context from within the public realm where they form impressions in relation to its character and amenity. The public realm is generally considered to include the public roads, reserves, open spaces and public buildings.

The visual context is subject to “frames of reference” that structure the cognitive association of visual elements. The “local area” (as discussed above) provides one such frame of reference. Other “frames of reference” include the different contextual scales at which visual associations are established and influence the legibility, character and amenity of the urban environment. Within the scope of this report three contextual scales are considered relevant to the analysis of the visual context and the visual impact of the proposed development.

The ‘Street Context’ provides a frame of reference for reviewing the visual relationship of the new development (and in particular its facades) in relation to the adjoining pedestrian spaces and roads. Elements of the development within this frame of reference are experienced in relatively close proximity where, if compatible with the human scale they are more likely to facilitate positive visual engagement and contribute to the “activation” of adjoining pedestrian spaces.

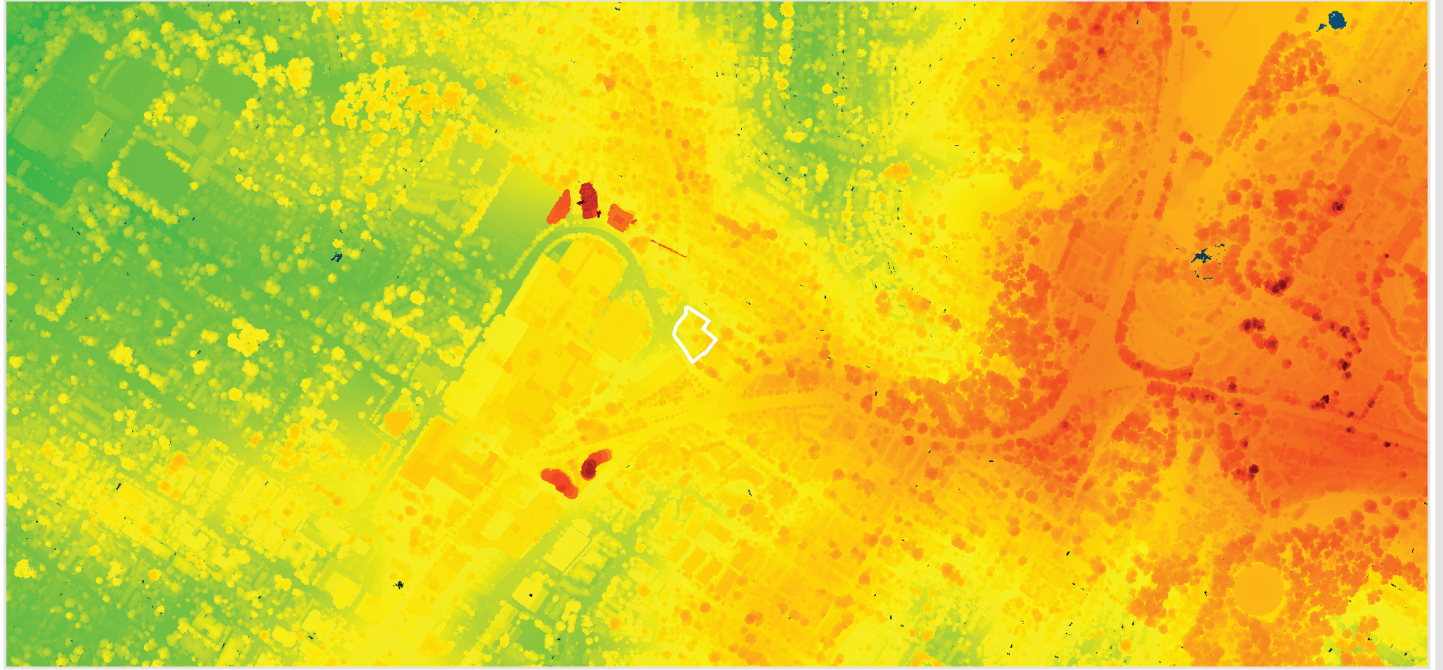


Figure 8: Lidar Point cloud including trees and buildings with gradient ramp to show topography, proposed site in white outline.

The 'Neighbourhood Context' provides a broader frame of reference that relates the appearance of the development as a whole to the appearance of other developments within the local area. As a frame of reference, it evolves from the understanding gained after experiencing the site context and the low density of development. Within this context the relative appearance, size and scale of different buildings are compared for their visual compatibility and contribution to a shared character from which a unique "sense of place" may emerge. This frame of reference involves the consideration of developments not necessarily available to view at the same time. It therefore has greater recourse to memory and the need to consider developments separated in time and space. The neighbourhood context is relevant to the visual 'legibility' of a development and its relationship to other developments, which informs the cognitive mapping of the local area to provide an understanding of its arrangement and functionality.

The 'Town / City Context' provides a frame of reference that relates the significance of key developments or neighbourhoods to the town as a whole. The contribution that distinctive neighbourhoods make (or may potentially make) to the image of the city can be affected by the visual impact of an individual development through its influence on the neighbourhood's character and legibility. Within this context, it is also important to be aware of other proposed developments in the area.

## 2.1. The Visual Context

The immediate surroundings of the site feature a diverse range of residential options, including terrace houses, apartments within residential complexes, and standalone dwellings. These buildings showcase a blend of architectural styles, encompassing both traditional and contemporary designs. The area's development history spans different eras, leading to a mixture of construction materials and finishes. As a result, the buildings exhibit varying setbacks from the public domain, contributing to the overall eclectic character of the neighbourhood.

The locality has a residential, leafy character characterised by a streetscape quality of side setbacks and predominant landscape. The building heights reinforce the existing cityscape in response to the undulating character of the area.

## 2.2. Visual Features and Local Landmarks

Particular elements in the urban pattern, through either location and/or built form provide visual nodes and landmarks that assist in differentiating locations within the broader visual context. The following visual nodes are considered to be of the greatest significance in terms of their contribution to the character and legibility of the local and surrounding area:

The focus of all the properties is to the local district views, available across the undulating topography.

## 2.3. Streetscapes

Within the immediate and surrounding areas of the subject site is a number of large residential towers, surrounded by wide, public landscaped areas and low- density residential plots.

## 2.4. The selected view locations for the local view analysis

As a result of the site's topography, the visual impact is primarily relevant to the residential properties to the south and east of the subject site. A large number of site photos were taken and a smaller number of specific views selected from these, relevant for private viewing locations, as described above. The selected photos are intended to allow consideration of the visual and urban impact of the new development at a local level and, specifically, from the neighbouring properties and public viewing locations.

## 2.5. Context of View

The context of the view relates to where the proposed development is being viewed from. The context is different if viewed from a neighbouring building, or garden, as is the case here, where views can be considered for an extended period of time, as opposed to a glimpse obtained from a moving vehicle.

## 2.6. Extent of View

The extent to which various components of a development would be visible is critical. For example, if the visibility assessment is of a multi-storey development proposal in a low-density context of 2 to 3 storey buildings, it would be considered to have a significant local scale visual impact, whereas if a development proposal is located in an area of a CBD containing buildings of a similar scale and height, it may be considered to have a lower scale visual impact.

The capacity of the landscape to absorb the development is to be ranked as high, medium or low, with a low ranking representing the highest visual impact upon the scenic environmental quality of the specific locality, since there is little capacity to absorb the visual impact within the landscape.

# 3. VISUAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

## 3.1. Visual Impact Assessments viewpoint locations

Visual Impact Assessments from 16 viewpoint locations – from public places.

### 3.1.1. Method of Assessment

In order to allow a quantitative assessment of the visual impact locations where view impact and view loss, a Canon EOS Full Frame Digital Camera with fixed focal length 24mm lens was used to take all viewpoint photos, at an eye level of 1600mm.

The photos include location descriptions, to be read in conjunction with the site map, contained in Appendix A. Additionally, information is supplied as to the distance from the site boundary for each location and the distance to the closest built form is provided in Section 3.1.2 below.

To assess the visual impact, there are 2 relevant aspects - view loss of actual substance (landscape, middle and distance view elements etc.) and also direct sky view loss. To a large extent, the value associated with a view is subjective, although a range of relative values can be assigned to assist with comparing views. Figure 9 is a scale of values from 0 to 15, used to allow a numeric value to be given to a particular view, for the purposes of comparison.

On the same table are a series of values, from zero to 15, that reflect the amount of visual impact.

The second means of assessment relates to assigning a qualitative value to the existing view, based on criteria of visual quality defined in the table – see figure 9.

The % visual content is then assessed, together with a visual assessment of the new development's ability to blend into the existing surroundings.

TENACITY / SCALE / VALUE		VISUAL IMPACT		VISUAL QUALITY	
NIL	0	NEGLIGIBLE	No negative impact on the pre-existing visual quality of the view	N/A	
	1		LOW	A minor negative impact on the pre-existing visual quality of the view  Examples: minor impact on natural landscapes no impact on iconic views impact on small number of receivers significant distance between the development and receiver	Predominant presence of low quality man made features
2	Minimal views of natural formations (e.g. cliffs, mountains, coastlines, waterways, ridges etc.)				
3	Uniformity of land forms				
4					
5					
MINOR	6	MEDIUM	A medium negative impact on the pre-existing visual quality of the view  Examples: moderate impact on iconic views or natural landscapes impact on moderate number of receivers located nearby the receiver	Presence of some natural features mixed with manmade features	
	7			Some views of distinct natural formations (e.g. cliffs, mountains, coastlines, waterways, ridges etc.)	
	8				
MODERATE	9	HIGH	A high negative impact on the pre-existing visual quality of a view  Examples: loss of iconic view impact on significant number of receivers overshadowing effect directly adjacent the receiver	Predominantly natural features	
	10			Minimal manmade features, however if present of a high architectural standard	
	11			Significant views of distinct natural formations (e.g. cliffs, mountains, coastlines, waterways, ridges etc.)	
SEVERE	12	HIGH	A high negative impact on the pre-existing visual quality of a view  Examples: loss of iconic view impact on significant number of receivers overshadowing effect directly adjacent the receiver	Presence of iconic regional views of landmark features	
	13				
	14				
DEVASTATING	15				

Figure 9: Urbaine Group Assessment Table

### 3.1.2. Assessment at selected viewpoints

14 viewpoints have been assessed.

## VIEWPOINT 01



Existing site photo - Castle Hill Showground

From standing position on grassed area within Castle Hill Showground  
RL + 96.38m - Distance to boundary 2243.54m - Bearing direction 104.21 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 47%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 3% : 97%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 9 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 2 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from within the Castle Hill Showground facing east. In the immediate foreground, the open showground arena is characterised by the central grassed area, around which is a mix of flat lawns, internal fencing and sections of a sealed, circular access track. Moving beyond the central arena, the midground is adorned with clusters of mature trees and landscape that line the internal boundary of the showground. These natural elements provide partial visual concealment of adjacent facilities, including stables, storage sheds, and supplementary event structures. To the east, the view gradually shifts towards the residential zones adjacent to Showground Road and surrounding local thoroughfares. To the southeast a tall residential tower is visible, though the area is softened, at lower levels, by the presence of tree canopies. In the background, a continuous line of treetops and the rooftops of residences is visible.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible. The lower portion of the building will be screened by the distant tree line, while only the upper section will have a limited effect on the view of the sky. The new proposal will not detract from the surrounding character and integrates well into its current and future setting.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - park.*
- *Extent of impact: Negligible.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact.

VIEWPOINT 02



Existing site photo - Showground Road

From standing position on siewalk along Showground Road  
RL + 125.58m - Distance to boundary 840.77m - Bearing direction 62.38 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 46%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 0% : 100%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 6 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 5 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Showground Road, facing northeast. The foreground features the expansive roadway of Showground Road, which ascends, gradually, towards the northeast. The asphalt road, lane markings, and median divisions delineate the immediate approach, whereas the landscaped verge on the opposing side of the road, offers a seamless transition to the adjoining built environment. Prominently situated in the midground, to the northeast, is the Wesley Castle Hill Uniting Church. This structure is framed by well-maintained garden beds that enhance its visual appeal. To the east-northeast, there is a single-storey building, featuring a wide verandah and a pitched roof, in a slightly elevated position above the road alignment. This building accommodates the Northwest Chess Academy. In the background, beyond the church and adjacent structures, mature trees and distant high-rise residential towers can be observed further to the northeast. These taller rise above the treeline, but maintain a visually subordinate presence within the broad, open skyline.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible-to-Minor. The new proposal will affect a limited area of the sky view above the site. The lower levels will be screened by the existing foreground buildings, while the upper levels will remain visible and will influence the skyline of this area, as more, similarly-sized towers are approved.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Low-to-Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Negligible-to-Minor.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact.

**VIEWPOINT 03**



Existing site photo - Old Northern Road

From standing position at pedestrian crossing on Old Northern Road  
RL + 135.80m - Distance to boundary 762.11m - Bearing direction 46.79 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

**Visual Impact Assessment:**

- Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 39%
- Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 0% : 100%
- Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 3 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 4 /15

This is a static, public viewpoint from Old Northern Road, facing northeast. The foreground is characterised by a controlled traffic intersection at the junction of Old Northern Road and Cecil Avenue, to the north. The roadway features pedestrian crossing markings, kerb ramps, traffic signal poles, and directional signage. The northwest corner is marked by a commercial frontage that extends forward, while the northeast corner displays signage branding pertaining to the petrol station and convenience store. Continuing northeast along Old Northern Road, a line of low-rise and retail commercial structures lines the streetscape, consisting of service providers, and small business enterprises. To the northwest, the sizable commercial building enhances the visual character of the intersection. In the background, the skyline is dominated by mid- to high-rise residential towers situated further northeast, beyond the commercial precinct. These taller buildings rise above the lower urban landscape, creating a layered backdrop against the open sky and defining the denser urbane fabric of this area.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible. The new proposal will blend with the surrounding built environment, being only marginally taller than the towers to the south of the subject site. Although there will be some impact upon the sky view, it does not disrupt the overall character of the area.

**Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:**

- Value of view: Low.
- View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.
- Extent of impact: Negligible.

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The building design already integrates into the existing skyline from this viewpoint.

**VIEWPOINT 04**



Existing site photo - Castle Street

From standing position on pedestrian footpath at Castle Street  
RL + 125.76m - Distance to boundary 466.19m - Bearing direction 71.31 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 2%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 0% : 100%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 4 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 1 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Castle Street, facing east. The immediate foreground features a traffic-controlled intersection, where Castle Street intersects with Pennant Street, positioned to the north-northeast. This intersection is characterised by pedestrian crossing markings, kerb ramps, traffic signal posts, and relevant street signage. Along this pedestrian footpath, on the north-northeastern side, the signage indicates the location of the Castle Hill Police Station. The edge of the footpath along Castle Street is visible to the east, seamlessly connecting to landscaped verges. In the midground, prominently situated on the east corner, is the expansive external facade of the Castle Towers Shopping Mall, distinguished by its broad, walls and limited window openings. Mature eucalyptus trees and carefully placed shrubs encircle the building, offering a vegetative buffer that separates the structure from pedestrian footpaths. Additionally, signal infrastructure and directional signage delineate the approach to the mall as well as the adjacent street network. Continuing to the east-northeast, the footpath extends past landscaped garden beds and established trees. In the background, towards the north and northeast, the urban skyline reveals glimpses of the mid and high-rise commercial and residential towers, which are partially obscured by mature trees at their lower levels.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible. The new proposal is almost entirely concealed by the Castle Towers Shopping Mall, with only a very small portion of the new proposal's roofline perceptible through the tree foliage along Castle Street.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Low.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Negligible.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is almost entirely screened by existing landscape when viewed from this location.

**VIEWPOINT 05**



Existing site photo - Castle Street

From standing position on pedestrian crossing at Castle Street  
RL + 141.25m - Distance to boundary 372.63m - Bearing direction 55.60 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 78%
- Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 19% : 81%
- Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 4 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no:6 /15

This is a static, public viewpoint from Castle Street, directly adjacent to the controlled traffic intersection, with Old Castle Hill Road and Crane Road, within the overall town centre of Castle Hill. This perspective is oriented to the northeast. In the foreground, the surface of Crane Road transitions into the expansive intersection, where it converges with Old Castle Hill Road to the north-northeast, Old Northern Road to the northeast and Crane Road to the east. To the northwest of the scene, low-rise commercial buildings define the corner. The presence of street furniture, traffic lights, and pedestrian crossing infrastructure prominently characterises the urban landscape along the kerbside. A tall streetlight, situated centrally, enhances the vertical aspect of the intersection. When viewing towards the northeast, the midground is marked by an extensive urban corridor that gently descends along Crane Road and Old Castle Hill Road. Established rows of street trees line both sides, creating a partly vegetated vista. To the east-northeast, a rounded high-rise residential tower at no.299 Old Northern Road is observed. In the background, the skyline features multiple modern residential towers, identifiable as part of the Castle Hill high-density precinct. These structures extend above the treeline, comprised of mid-rise and high-rise buildings interspersed with mature vegetation.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Minor-to-Moderate. The new proposal will have some impact on the background and sky view above the site. However, the surrounding trees will soften its appearance, and the development will ultimately complement and complete the character of the area as future developments, of similar heights, are approved.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- Value of view: Low.
- View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.
- Extent of impact: Minor-to-Moderate.

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

## VIEWPOINT 06



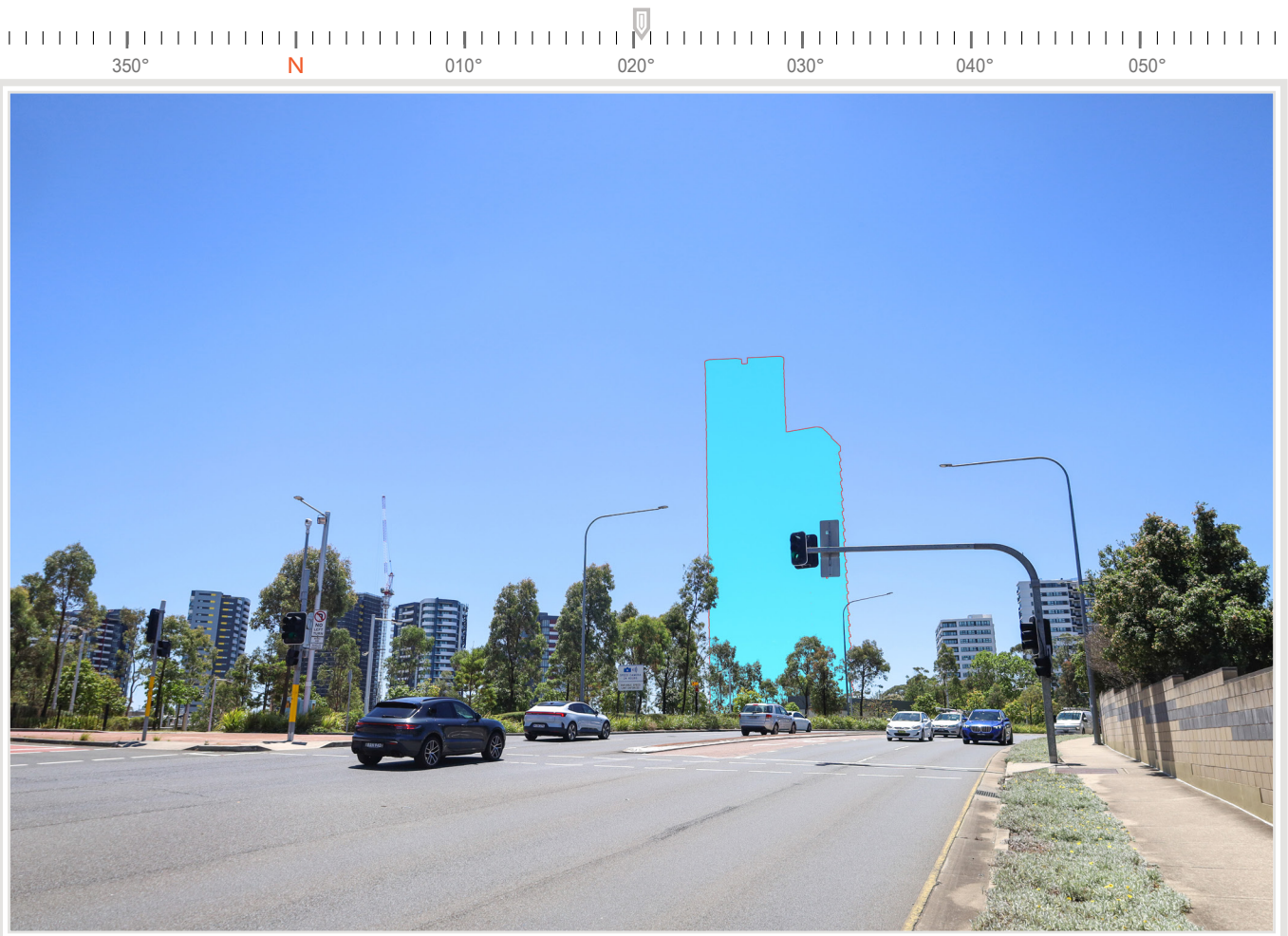
Existing site photo - Old Northern Road

From standing position on grass verge along Old Northern Road  
RL + 141.92m - Distance to boundary 222.31m - Bearing direction 20.41 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 93%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 6% : 94%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 6 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 9 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint, looking along Old Northern Road, oriented towards the north and the subject site. The expansive, multi-lane thoroughfare of Old Northern Road extends directly northward, characterised by traffic-controlled intersections, clearly marked road lanes, and pavements. On the northwestern side, the intersection area is flanked by landscaped verges and evenly spaced, mature street trees, which form a landscaped barrier between the roadway and the surrounding land. Beyond this tree line, a series of prominent high-rise residential towers can be observed, standing out noticeably against the skyline, whilst generally sitting at a height lower than the tree canopies in front. On the eastern side, a continuous masonry boundary wall borders the footpath, complemented by low planting and mature trees that delineate the edge of the roadway. Additional multi-storey residential structures can be seen further north, partially obstructed by vegetation. In the midground, the vegetation within the median and along the roadside verges provides a green framework, through which the high-rise buildings become progressively more visible.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Moderate. The proposed structure would incorporate a significant vertical backdrop, distinctly rising above the existing trees and the heights of the distant towers to the north. The visual impact of the lower levels will be softened by the landscape, while the upper section would contribute to a moderate impact upon the sky view. Despite its height, the new proposal would sit within an already urbanised setting and align with the surrounding area and its future development.

### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Low-to-Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

VIEWPOINT 07



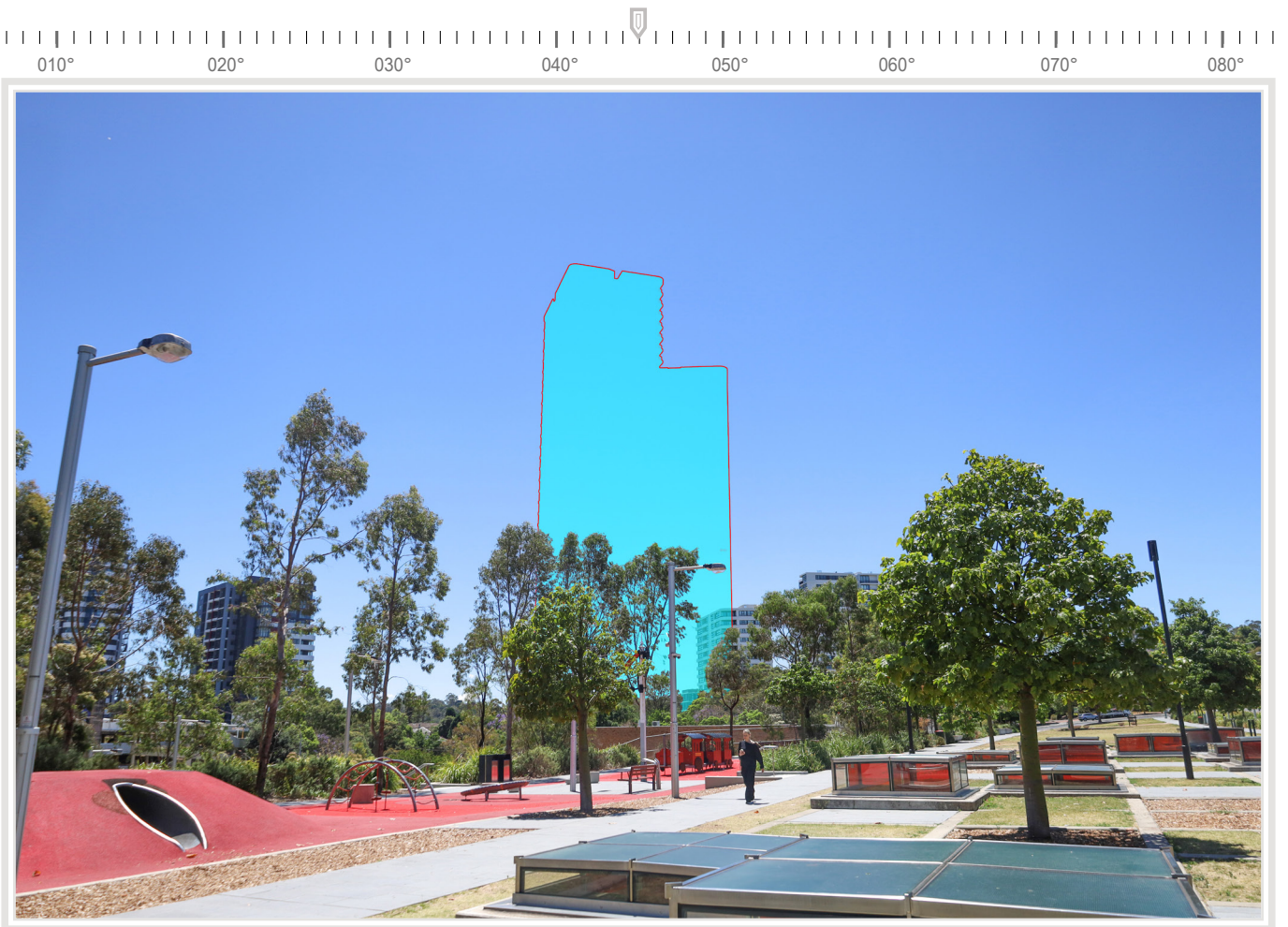
Existing site photo - Arthur Whitting Park

From standing position at the pedestrian path to the east of the children's playground  
RL + 142.94m - Distance to boundary 192.71m - Bearing direction 45.01 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 89%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 9% : 91%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 10 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 10 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from the pedestrian path to the east of the children's playground within Arthur Whitting Park, directly to the north of Castle Hill Metro Station, facing northeast. In the immediate foreground, is a landscaped pedestrian area featuring paved footpaths, low grassy patches, and several square skylight structures framed by red panels. A young deciduous tree is situated on the eastern side, offering partial canopy shade coverage. To the southwest, a portion of the park's modern playground mound, which is finished with red safety surfacing, is visible. The midground is characterised by the open, recreational spaces of Arthur Whitting Park, which include walking footpaths, seating arrangements, and appropriately spaced tree plantings, primarily comprising medium-height eucalyptus and ornamental trees. This vegetation serves to provide a green framing for the view, while also partially obstructing the built environment beyond, located on Garthowen Crescent and Excelsior Avenue. In the background, beyond the tree line, a number of mid-rise and high-rise residential towers along Garthowen Crescent and within the broader Castle Hill town centre precinct are distinctly observed. These structures rise above the canopy and define the northeastern skyline.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Moderate-to-Severe, as the new proposal will predominantly affect the sky view only. The lower portion will be softened by the existing trees, while the upper levels will have a visible impact on the sky. However, the building's form and integrity will blend well with its surroundings and contribute to a more urbanized character of the area.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium-to-High.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - park.*
- *Extent of impact: Moderate-to-Severe.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

## VIEWPOINT 08



Existing site photo - Old Northern Road

From standing position along Old Northern Road  
RL + 147.44m - Distance to boundary 122.05m - Bearing direction 337.19 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

**Visual Impact Assessment:**

- Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 79%
- Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 11% : 89%
- Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 7 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 10 /15

This is a static, public viewpoint from Old Northern Road facing northward. In the forefront of the view, Old Northern Rd occupies the lower segment of the view, extending directly northwards. The junction with Mullen Avenue is distinctly recognisable by the delineated road markings, traffic signal installations, and kerb returns on both the northeastern and northwestern sides. The midground is characterised by a densely populated band of mature trees, located immediately beyond the intersection to the north. These trees partially obscure the built environment that lies behind them. A low-rise brick residence is situated at the northeastern corner, which accommodates the Castle Hill Senior Citizens Club, contributing to the established residential context along this segment of the roadway. In the background, a cluster of prominent, high-rise residential buildings is positioned further north-northwest. These structures extend above the treeline, emerging as the predominant vertical features within the distant skyline.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Moderate-to-Severe. The new proposal would introduce a prominently more significant, vertical element into the view, extending significantly above the current treeline and buildings. While the base would be largely obscured by vegetation, the upper sections would be distinctly visible, resulting in a moderate impact upon sky view. However, given its height, the structure would fit within the urban context and aligns with surrounding high-rises. Over time, more taller towers will be approved and the context will increase in scale, diminishing this proposal's overall impact

**Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:**

- Value of view: Medium.
- View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.
- Extent of impact: Moderate-to-Severe.

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

**VIEWPOINT 09**



Existing site photo - Brisbane Road

From standing position on the pedestrian footpath along Brisbane Road  
RL + 148.43m - Distance to boundary 388.71m - Bearing direction 316.39 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

**Visual Impact Assessment:**

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 61%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 6% : 94%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 9 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 6 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from the western pavement, along Brisbane Road, facing northwest. In the immediate foreground on the southeast side, the footpath runs parallel to Brisbane Road, flanked by well-kept lawns and low garden beds. The entrance to the Christelle apartment complex at No.26 Brisbane Road is seen. A timber utility pole is located centrally, along the kerb line, supporting various overhead cables that extend diagonally across the view. Continuing further, Brisbane Road gently ascends toward the northwest, bordered by dense residential landscape and mature trees on both sides. Predominantly single-storey properties, with landscaped front gardens line both sides of the street. Mature trees, including conifers and deciduous varieties, form a dense canopy above these that characterise the midground streetscape. In the distance, to the northwest, larger buildings emerge above the tree canopies, signalling the boundary from low-rise residential areas to higher-density developments further along the viewing corridor. These distant structures are partially obscured by mature vegetation, with the skyline predominantly featuring greenery.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Minor-to-Moderate. The lower levels will be screened by the existing mature vegetation, while the upper section will affect the sky view only, to the north of the subject site. Further, the new proposal would integrate in its surroundings and contribute to an increasingly urbanised character, which will continue to increase in density over time.

**Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:**

- *Value of view: Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Minor-to-Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

## VIEWPOINT 10



Existing site photo - Old Northern Road

From standing position on the footpath along Old Northern Road  
RL + 166.19m - Distance to boundary 408.11m - Bearing direction 299.68 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 72%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 7% : 93%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 8 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 8 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Old Northern Road, facing northwest. The foreground features a concrete pavement along the west side, adjacent to Old Northern Road, bordered by well-maintained hedges and low vegetation. A prominent eucalyptus tree stands near the path, while the road stretches northwest, with overhead power lines and timber utility poles along its southern edge. Mature trees line the northern side of the road, while the roof of the property at No.314 Old Northern Rd is visible below the road level. In the midground, the west-facing carriageway of Old Northern Road is flanked by dense, mature trees on both sides. A pedestrian warning sign indicates a nearby school zone. The streetscape is well-enclosed by vegetation, with expansive tree canopies providing shade. In the background, The road descends, revealing a cluster of mid-rise buildings, framed by trees. These structures are the main visual focus in the central area of the background, while the overall skyline is predominantly green.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed Moderate. The new proposal would present as a taller, central background element above the tree canopies, with its lower sections filtered or partially screened by dense vegetation, while the upper levels would add a vertical aspect to the skyline and impact upon sky view. Nevertheless, given its location within an urbanised corridor, the overall visual impact remains moderate and aligns with the surrounding, and future-intended built environment.

### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

## VIEWPOINT 11



Existing site photo - Garthowen Cres

From standing position along Garthowen Cres  
RL + 147.69m - Distance to boundary 167.12m - Bearing direction 238.13 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

**Visual Impact Assessment:**

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 21%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 4% : 96%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 8 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 6 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Garthowen Crescent, looking in a west-southwesterly direction. In the foreground, the view is defined by the grass verge, pavement and the white picket fence enclosing no.14 Garthowen Crescent, the Dashing Ducks Child Care, Castle Hill. Dense hedging, shrubs, and low planting reinforce a green, enclosed street frontage. In the midground, a prominent residential tower with curved balconies rises above the treeline, serving as the primary vertical landmark within the view. Additional mid-rise structures can be observed partially visible through the canopy of jacaranda trees at the sides of the view.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Minor-to-Moderate. The new proposal would be largely screened and only partially visible through the tree canopy, with only a small portion affecting the sky view, when observed behind the existing buildings in the foreground Overall, it integrates well within the surrounding environment.

**Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:**

- *Value of view: Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Minor-to-Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is significantly concealed behind a combination of existing buildings and landscape.

**VIEWPOINT 12**



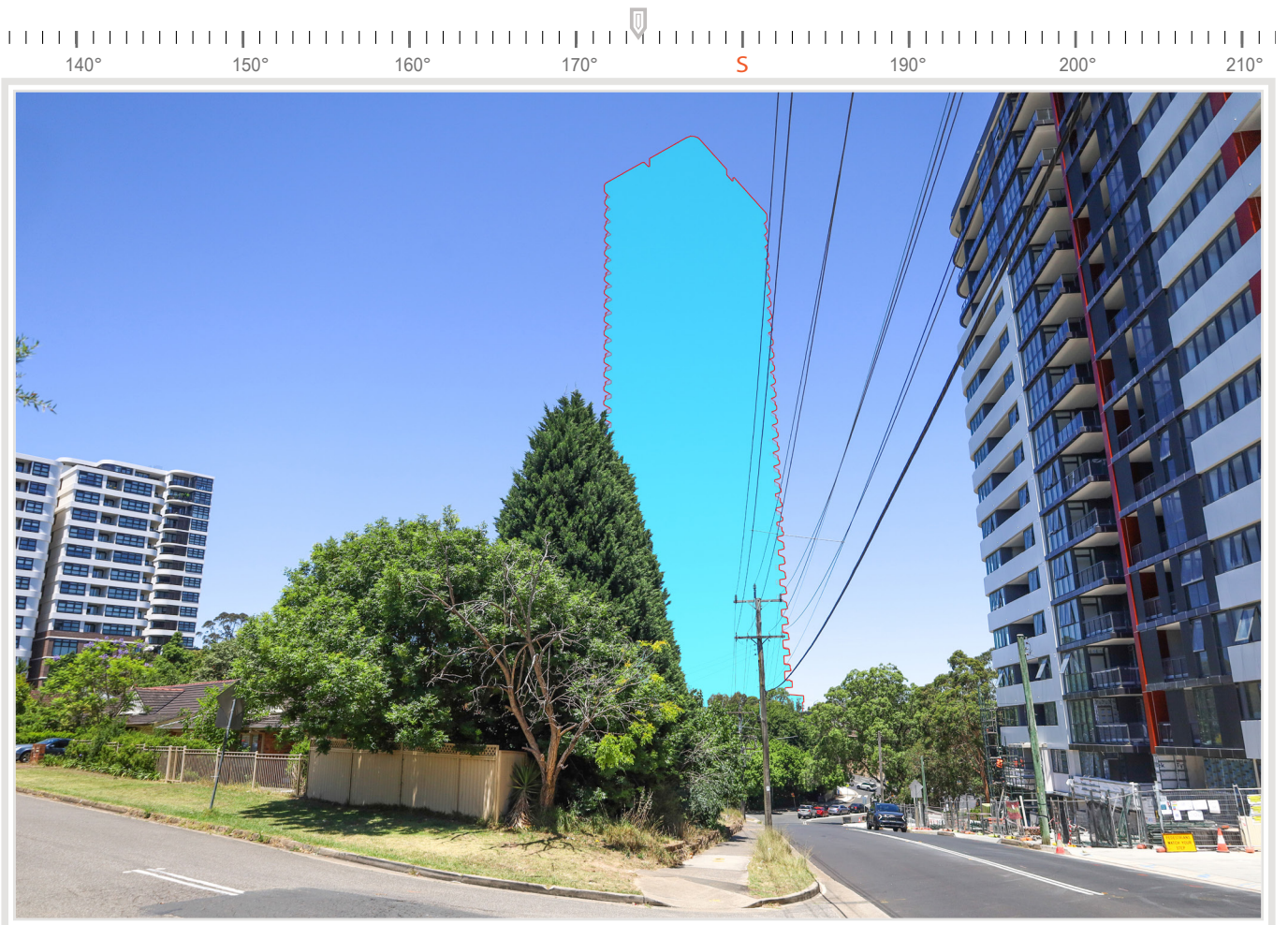
Existing site photo - Garthowen Cres

From standing position at pedestrian crossing at Garthowen Cres  
RL + 141.94m - Distance to boundary 134.02 m - Bearing direction 173.85 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 87%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 3% : 97%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 6 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 9 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from the pedestrian crossing at Garthowen Crescent, oriented towards the southwest. To the west, a single storey residential property is set back from the street, featuring front gardens and mature vegetation at No.28 Gathowen Crescent. A large conifer and several broad-canopied trees create a dense green barrier to views beyond the garden. Further along to the west, a multi-storey residential structure rises above the tree line, partially visible in the background. On the eastern side, a newly constructed high-rise residential building stands prominently along the street's edge. Public utilities, including overhead power lines and timber utility pole, run parallel to the roadway. The road intersection ahead is with Old Castle Hill Road, which slopes downward and is partially flanked by vegetation and adjacent structures. The descending curve of Old Castle Hill Road guides the view downhill. Pavements on both sides delineate the street, while in the midground, the roadway continues southwest towards a densely vegetated area where trees border the view corridor. In the background, additional multi-storey residential buildings are visible beyond the tree line.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Moderate. The new proposal will stand out significantly above the treeline, adding a strong, vertical element to the background. Its lower levels will be obscured by dense vegetation, while the upper floors will be visible against the sky. Although the height differentiation is significant, future developments of this scale will continue to be approved and the impact will progressively diminish. Currently, the proposal fits within an established high-rise setting.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Low-to-Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

**VIEWPOINT 13**



Existing site photo - Pioneer Park

From standing position on footpath within Pioneer Park  
RL + 143.37m - Distance to boundary 519.71m - Bearing direction 250.77 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 47%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 2% : 98%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 9 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 6 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Pioneer Park, facing west towards the subject site. The immediate foreground features gently inclined, open grassy areas within Pioneer Park, bisected by a paved footpath that curves towards the west. Subtle elements of park infrastructure, such as small bollards and occasional benches, are positioned inconspicuously within the expansive lawns. This region maintains an uninterrupted, open recreational ambience. In the midground, to the west, a substantial band of mature vegetation, comprising tall eucalyptus trees and dense canopy reflects the continuity of the typical suburban landscape. These trees serve as a natural visual barrier between the parkland and the neighbouring residential areas, softening the transition and partially obscuring the built environment located beyond. In the distance, to the west, a grouping of high-rise residential towers constitutes the predominant built feature, visible along the skyline. Although partially concealed by the intervening trees, the upper levels of these structures remain distinctly visible above the canopy, introducing a notable vertical element to an otherwise low-rise horizon. A construction crane is also visible, signifying ongoing developmental activity in the area.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Minor-to-Moderate. Only the upper levels of the new proposal will affect the sky view beyond the subject site, to the west. The lower sections will be screened by the dense, existing landscape, while, given its location within an urbanised corridor, the overall visual impact remains acceptable and will align with the surrounding, and future-intended built environment.

### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - park.*
- *Extent of impact: Minor-to-Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

## VIEWPOINT 14



Existing site photo - Old Castle Hill Road

From standing position on the median along Old Castle Hill Road  
RL + 138.70m - Distance to boundary 494.65m - Bearing direction 173.26 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 82%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 4% : 96%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 10 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 6 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Old Castle Hill Road facing southwest, towards the subject site. The immediate foreground features the curved roadway of Old Castle Hill Rd, which leads into a landscaped roundabout. The paved median and the inner strip are flanked by low-lying vegetation and seasonal leaf litter. Traffic signs are strategically positioned at the entry points of the roundabout, while to the west lies the intersection with Tuckwell Road, which diverges from the roundabout. The midground is distinctly characterised by dense landscaping, flanking both sides of the roundabout, including mature jacaranda trees, intermingled with mixed foliage. This vegetation creates a consistent canopy over the western and southern peripheries of the intersection. The landscaped central island features shrubs and low-growing flowering plants, while residential fencing and low-rise structures are partially obscured by the tree canopies. Beyond the treeline, to the southwest, the skyline is adorned with taller vegetation and distant mid-rise developments, which are partially discernible through openings in the treeline. Additionally, a construction crane is visible in the far background to the south, signifying ongoing development within the wider Castle Hill area.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Minor-to-Moderate. The new proposal introduces a distant vertical feature, partially obscured by mature vegetation, whilst altering the skyline backdrop. The robust presence of mature trees effectively mitigates visual intrusion, allowing the new proposal to align with the surrounding urban environment.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium-to-High.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - traffic island.*
- *Extent of impact: Minor-to-Moderate.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

**VIEWPOINT 15**



Existing site photo - Old Castle Hill Road

From standing position on sidewalk along Old Castle Hill Road  
RL + 130.88m - Distance to boundary 887.04m - Bearing direction 213.02 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 41%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 6% : 94%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 5 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 4 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from the eastern pavement of Old Castle Hill Road, facing west, towards the subject site. The immediate foreground is characterised by the expanse of roadway of Old Castle Hill Road, which encompasses the kerb lines, verge landscaping and the edge of a brick-paved roundabout at the intersection with Heritage Park Drive. The pavements on either side are flanked by well-kept grass verges and mature street trees that delineate the road corridor. The midground features a medium-density residential environment, with single and double-storey homes set back from the street behind established gardens and hedges, specifically at Nos.128 and 126 Old Castle Hill Drive. Deciduous and evergreen trees line both sides of the house plots and enhance the green, enclosed character of the streetscape in this area. The roadway curves to the west, while in the distance, the view is traversed by a dense aggregation of tall eucalyptus and mature vegetation. The tree line serves as a continuous natural backdrop, revealing only limited glimpses of rooftops through the dense foliage. Beyond this, a number of large residential towers can be observed, above the canopies.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible. The lower levels will be significantly obscured by the existing buildings along Old Castle Hill Road, while the upper levels will impact upon sky view only. The proposal will integrate into the existing high-rise environment and it will serve to redefine the skyline with its increased height.

### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Low-to-Medium.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - pavement.*
- *Extent of impact: Negligible.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. At this distance, the tower is of a larger bulk and scale when compared to the existing residential flat buildings, although future approvals will be in line with the Council's intention for higher density urbanisation.

**VIEWPOINT 16**



Existing site photo - Castle Hill Heritage Park

From standing position from footpath within Castle Hill Heritage Park  
RL + 130.90m - Distance to boundary 1234.63m - Bearing direction 200.47 °

Camera - Canon RP  
Lens - 24mm



Photomontage of Proposal



Visual impact in cyan with red outline, view gain in yellow

#### Visual Impact Assessment:

- *Visual impact – Amount of new development visible in view - 2%*
- *Visual impact ratio - view loss (including buildings) : sky view loss: 0% : 100%*
- *Existing Visual Assessment Scale no: 10 /15 & Visual Impact Assessment Scale no: 1 /15*

This is a static, public viewpoint from Castle Hill Heritage Park. The foreground features gently sloping grass areas, with newly planted trees and a pedestrian footpath leading to the park's centre, with a sign highlighting the site's heritage significance. A linear arrangement of heritage and informational markers can be seen progressing into the distance. Adjacent to a landscaped garden bed is a modest timber-clad park building, while mature conifers and eucalyptus enhance the park's natural character. The backdrop consists of a dense stand of tall eucalyptus trees, creating a continuous green canopy that encapsulates the area and reinforces the bushland setting. Through the vegetation, partially visible rooftops and parked vehicles can be seen within the nearby car park and residential zones.

The visual impact of the new proposal, from this location, is assessed as Negligible. The new proposal will be almost entirely obscured from view by the dense foliage in the foreground of the view. Only small glimpses will be discernible through the thick tree canopies.

#### Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council Assessment Summary:

- *Value of view: Medium-to-High.*
- *View location: Public viewpoint - park.*
- *Extent of impact: Negligible.*

Reasonableness of proposal: Within the context of the existing skyline and the future planning objectives for Castle Hill, this proposal can be deemed acceptable, when reviewed in relation to view loss and visual impact. The tower is almost entirely screened by existing landscape when viewed from this location.

## 4. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

This Visual Impact Assessment from Urbaine Design Group seeks to provide an objective approach to the likely visual impact on the surrounding areas from the development proposal at Nos.16-20, Old Castle Hill Road

This Visual Impact Assessment has undertaken a review of the proposal, within its future setting and concludes that, although there are locations within the neighbouring properties that are impacted by the new development, the relevant views, as selected within the report, are all observed from public viewing locations.

The assessment of visual impact has been undertaken in relation to the current proposal and also, the future context of Castle Hill, which will evolve, in accordance with Planning Controls that encourage higher density urbanisation.

Since the proposal is largely compliant, it satisfies the Council's guidelines for view sharing between neighbouring properties. In relation to its visual impact, the lower levels of the development are significantly screened by existing and proposed landscape from many of the viewpoints investigated. The higher levels of the towers are also filtered from view, in several instances, while the overall impact from the upper levels will reduce over time, as other similarly-scaled projects are approved.

Based on our 3D analysis, photography, and site visit it would be my recommendation that the Development Application be approved on the grounds of an acceptable amount of visual impact and view loss, when assessed against the permissible building envelope for the site.



John Aspinall, Director,

**urbaine design group pty ltd**

## 5. APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A:** Assessment Images - panoramic (additional PDF)

**APPENDIX B:** Aspinall CV

- *LEC Guidelines for Photomontages*
- *Visual Impact Assessment Methodology*

**APPENDIX C:** Survey and camera positions

**APPENDIX D:** Wireframe/alignment images

**APPENDIX E:** Site photography

## 5.1. APPENDIX B: Methodology, CV and LEC Guidelines

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## **JOHN ASPINALL. director: urbaine design group**

**UK Qualified Architect RIBA BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) Liverpool University, UK.**

24 years' architectural experience in London and Sydney.

Halpin Stow Partnership, London, SW1

John Andrews International, Sydney

Cox and Partners, Sydney

Seidler and associates

NBRS Architects, Milsons Point

Urbaine Pty Ltd (current)

### **Design Competitions:**

UK 1990 – Final 6. RIBA 'housing in a hostile environment'. Exhibited at the Royal Academy, London

UK Design Council – innovation development scheme finalist – various products, 1990.

Winner: International Design Competition: Sydney Town Hall, 2000

Finalist: Boy Charlton Swimming pool Competition, Sydney, 2001

Finalist: Coney Island Redevelopment Competition, NY 2003

### **Design Tutor: UTS, Sydney, 1997 – 2002**

This role involved tutoring students within years 1 to 3 of the BA Architecture course. Specifically, I developed programs and tasks to break down the conventional problem-solving thinking, instilled through the secondary education system. Weekly briefs would seek to challenge their preconceived ideas and encourage a return to design thinking, based on First Principles.

### **Design Tutor: UNSW, Sydney 2002 – 2005**

This role involved tutoring students within years 4 to 6 of the BArch course. Major design projects would be undertaken during this time, lasting between 6 and 8 weeks. I was focused on encouraging rationality of design decision-making, rather than post-rationalisation, which is an ongoing difficulty in design justification.

### **Current Position: URBAINE GROUP Pty Ltd**

Currently, Principal Architect of Urbaine - architectural design development and visualisation consultancy: 24 staff, with offices in: Sydney, Shanghai, Doha and Sarajevo.

Urbaine specialises in design development via interactive 3d modelling.

Urbaine's scale of work varies from city master planning to furniture and product design, while our client base consists of architects, Government bodies, developers, interior designers, planners, advertising agencies and video producers.

URBAINE encourages all clients to bring the 3D visualisation facility into the design process sufficiently early to allow far more effective design development in a short time frame. This process is utilised extensively by many local and international companies, including Lend Lease, Multiplex, Hassell, PTW, Foster and Partners, City of Sydney, Landcom and several other Governmental bodies. URBAINE involves all members of the design team in assessing the impact of design decisions from the earliest stages of concept design. Because much of URBAINE's work is International, the 3D CAD model projects are rotated between the various offices, effectively allowing a 24hr cycle of operation during the design development process, for clients in any location.

An ever-increasing proportion of URBAINE'S work is related to public consultation visualisations and assessments. As a result, there has also been an increase in the Land And Environment Court representations. Extensive experience in creating and validating photomontaged views of building and environmental proposals. Experience with 3D photomontages began in 1990 and has included work for many of the world's leading architectural practices and legal firms.

**Co-Founder Quicksmart Homes Pty Ltd. , 2007 - 2009**

Responsible for the design and construction of 360 student accommodation building at ANU Canberra, utilising standard shipping containers as the base modules.

**Design Principal and co-owner of Excalibur Modular Systems Pty Ltd: 2009 to present.**

High specification prefabricated building solutions, designed in Sydney and being produced in China.

Excalibur has developed a number of modular designs for instant delivery and deployment around the world. Currently working with the Cameroon Government providing social infrastructure for this rapidly developing country.

The modular accommodation represents a very low carbon footprint solution

**Expert Legal Witness, 2005 to present**

In Australia and the UK, for the Land and Environment Court. Expert witness for visual impact studies of new developments.

Currently consulting with many NSW Councils and large developers and planners, including City of Sydney, Lend Lease, Mirvac, Foster + Partners, Linklaters.

Author of several articles in 'Planning Australia' and 'Architecture Australia' relating to design development and to the assessment of visual impacts, specifically related to the accuracy of photomontaging.

Currently preparing a set of revised recommendations for the Land and Environment Court relating to the preparation and verification of photomontaged views for the purposes of assessing visual impact

**VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: A REALITY CHECK.**  
**BY JOHN ASPINALL.**

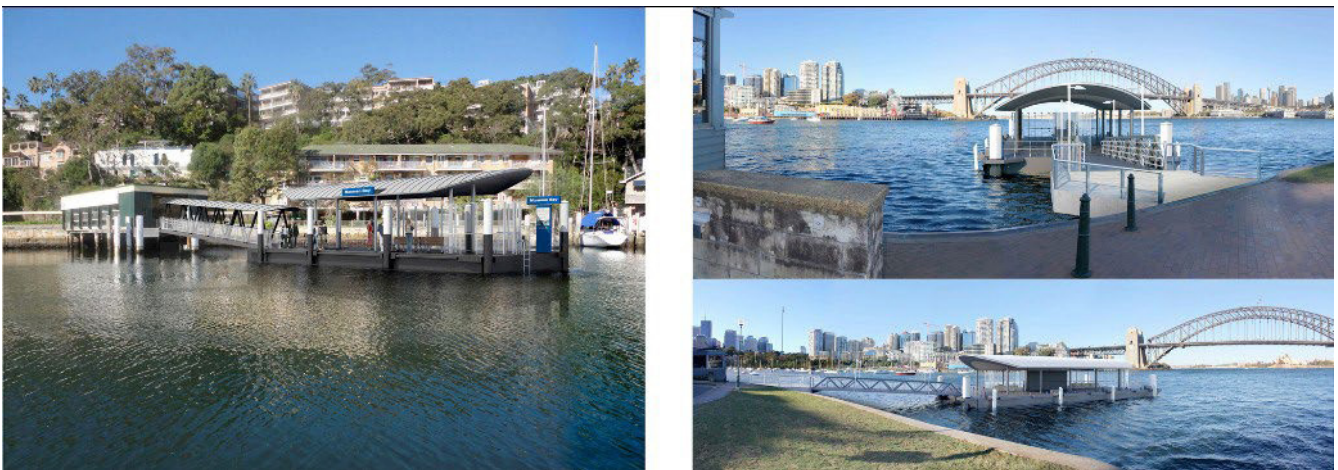


Photomontaged views of new apartment building at Pyrmont: Urbaine

Australia's rapid construction growth over the past 10 years has coincided with significant advances in the technology behind the delivery of built projects. In particular, BIM (Building Information Modelling), Virtual Reality and ever-faster methods of preparing CAD construction documentation.

Alongside these advances, sits a number of potential problems that need to be considered by all of those involved in the process of building procurement. Specifically, the ease with which CAD software creates the appearance of very credible drawn information, often without the thoroughness and deliberation afforded by architects, and others, in years past.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of visual impact assessments, where a very accurate representation of a building project in context is the starting point for discussion on a project's suitability for a site. The consequences of any inaccuracies in this imagery are significant and far-reaching, with little opportunity to redress any errors once a development is approved.



Photomontaged views of new Sydney Harbour wharves: Urbaine

Urbaine Architecture has been involved in the preparation of visual impact studies over a 20 year period, in Australia and Internationally. Urbaine's Director, John Aspinall, has been at the forefront of developing methods of verifying the accuracy of visualisations, particularly in his role as an expert witness in Land and Environment Court cases.

In Urbaine's experience, a significant majority of visualisation material presented to court is inaccurate to the point of being invalid for any legal planning decisions. Equally concerning is the amount of time spent, by other consultants, analysing and responding to this base material, which again can be redundant in light of the frequent inaccuracies. The cost of planning consultant reports and legal advice far exceeds that of generating the imagery around which all the decisions are being made.

Over the last 10 years, advances in 3d modelling and digital photography have allowed many practitioners to claim levels of expertise that are based more on the performance of software than on a rigorous understanding of geometry, architecture and visual perspective. From a traditional architect's training, prior to the introduction of CAD and 3d modelling, a good understanding of the principles of perspective, light, shadow and building articulation, were taught

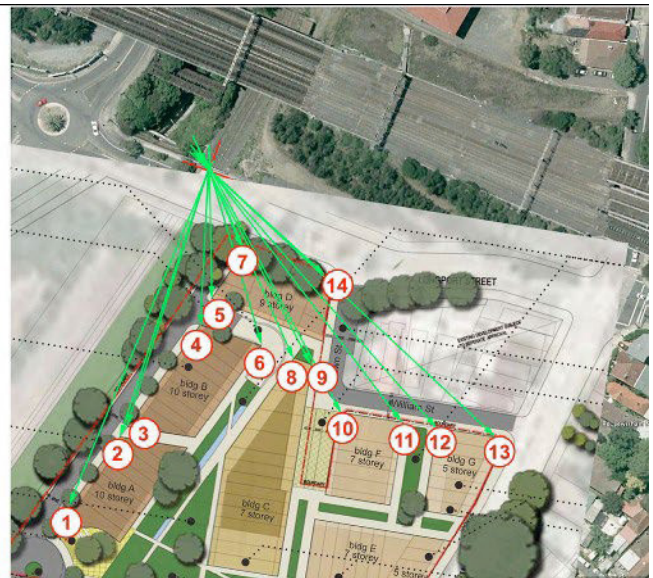
throughout the training of architects.

Statutory Authorities, and in particular the Land and Environment Court, have attempted to introduce a degree of compliance, but, as yet, this is more quantitative, than qualitative and is resulting in an outward appearance of accuracy verification, without any actual explanation being requested behind the creation of the work.

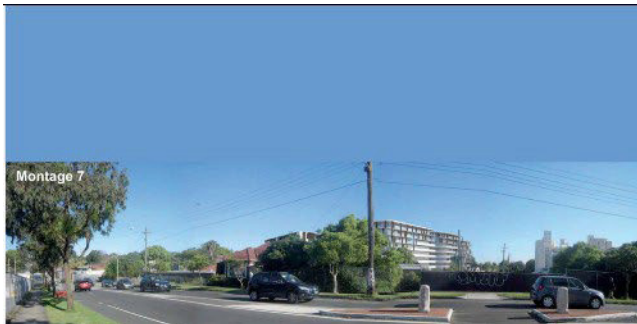
Currently, the Land and Environment Court specifies that any photomontages, relied on as part of expert evidence in Class 1 appeals, must show the existing surveyed elements, corresponding with the same elements in the photograph. Often, any surveyed elements can form such a small portion of a photograph that, even by overlaying the surveyed elements as a 3d model, any degree of accuracy is almost impossible to verify. For sites where there are no existing structures, which is frequent, this presents a far more challenging exercise. Below is one such example, highlighted in the Sydney Morning Herald, as an example of extreme inaccuracy of a visual impact assessment. Urbaine was engaged to assess the degree to which the images were incorrect – determined to be by a factor of almost 75%.



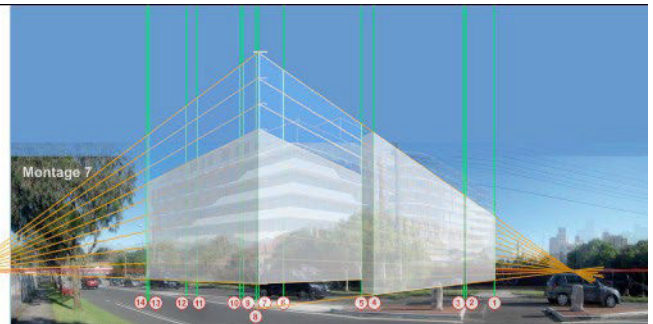
SMH article re inaccurate visualisations



Key visual location points on site: Urbaine



Photomontage submitted by developer



Assessment of inaccuracy by Urbaine

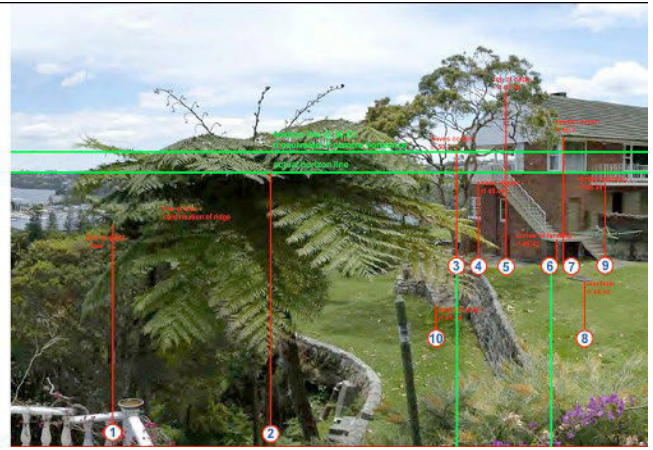
Urbaine has developed a number of methods for adding verification data to the 3d model of proposed buildings and hence to the final photomontages. These include the use of physical site poles, located at known positions and heights around a site, together with drones for accurate height and location verification and the use of landscaped elements within the 3d model to further add known points of references. Elements observed in a photograph can be used to align with the corresponding elements of the new building in plan. If 4 or more known positions can be aligned, as a minimum, there is a good opportunity to create a verifiable alignment.

Every site presents different opportunities for verification and, often, Urbaine is required to assess montages from photographs taken by a third party. In these cases, a combination of assessing aerial photography, alongside a survey will allow reference points to be placed into the relevant 3d model prior to overlaying onto the photos for checking.

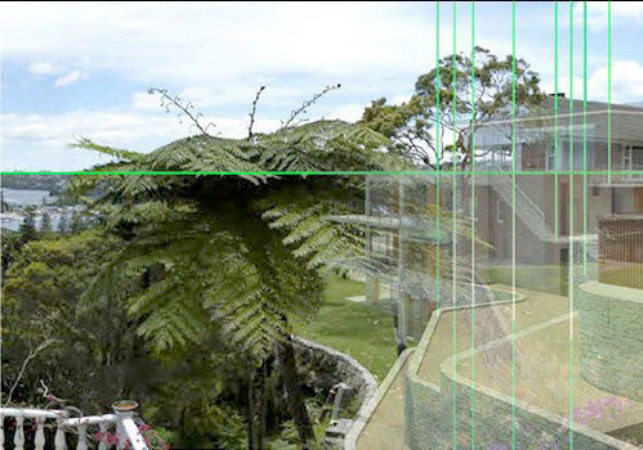
The following example clearly demonstrates this – a house montaged into a view, by others, using very few points of reference for verification. By analysing the existing photo alongside the survey, the existing site was able to be recreated with a series of reference elements built into the model. A fully rendered version of all the elements was then placed over the photo and the final model applied to this. As can be seen, the original montage and the final verified version are dramatically different and, in this case, to the disadvantage of the complainant.



Photomontage submitted by developer



Key visual location points on site: Urbaine



Key points and 3d model overlaid onto existing photo



Final accurate photomontage: Urbaine

Often, Urbaine's work is on very open sites, where contentious proposals for development will be relying on minimising the visual impact through mounding and landscaping. In these cases, accuracy is critical, particularly in relation to the heights above existing ground levels. In the following example, a business park was proposed on very large open site, adjoining several residential properties, with views through to the Blue Mountains, to the West of Sydney. Urbaine spent a day preparing the site, by placing a number of site poles, all of 3m in height. These were located on junctions of the various land lots, as observed in the survey information. These 3d poles were then replicated in the 3d CAD model in the same height and position as on the actual site. This permitted the buildings and the landscaping to be very accurately positioned into the photographs and, subsequently, for accurate sections to be taken through the 3d model to assess the actual percentage view loss of close and distant views.



Physical 3000mm site poles placed at lot corners



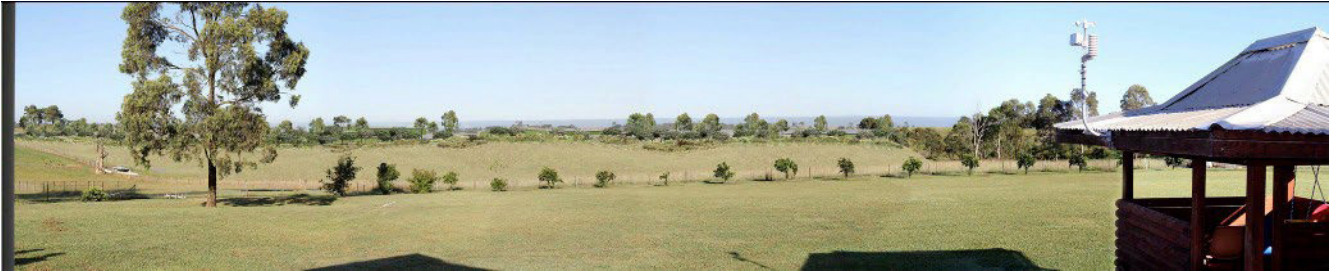
3d poles located in the 3d model and positioned on photo



Proposed buildings and landscape mounding applied

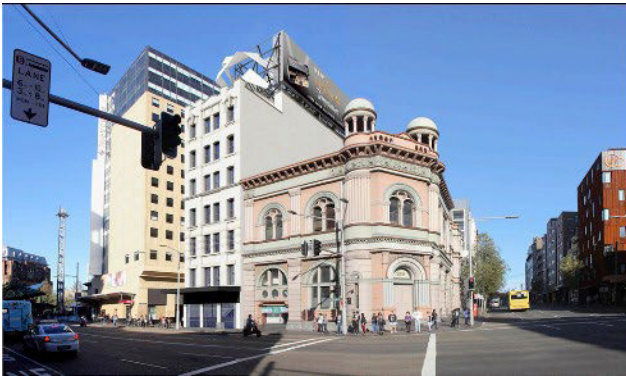


Proposed landscape applied – shown as semi-mature

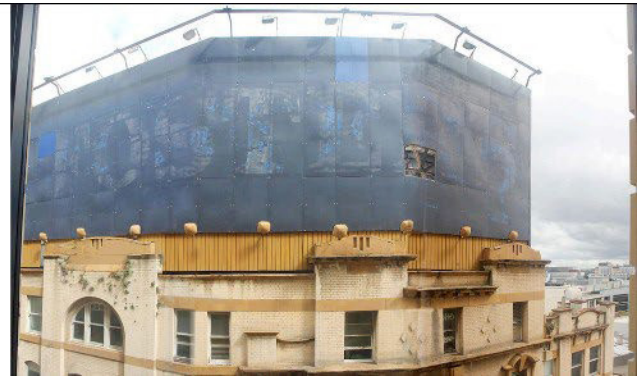


Final verified photomontage by Urbaine

Further examples, below, show similar methods being used to give an actual percentage figure to view loss, shown in red, in these images. This was for a digital advertising hoarding, adjoining a hotel. As can be seen, the view loss is far outweighed by the view gain, in addition to being based around a far more visually engaging sculpture. In terms of being used as a factual tool for legal representation and negotiation, these images are proving to be very useful and are accompanied by a series of diagrams explaining the methodology of their compilation and, hence verifying their accuracy.



Photomontage of proposed building for digital billboard



Existing situation – view from adjoining hotel

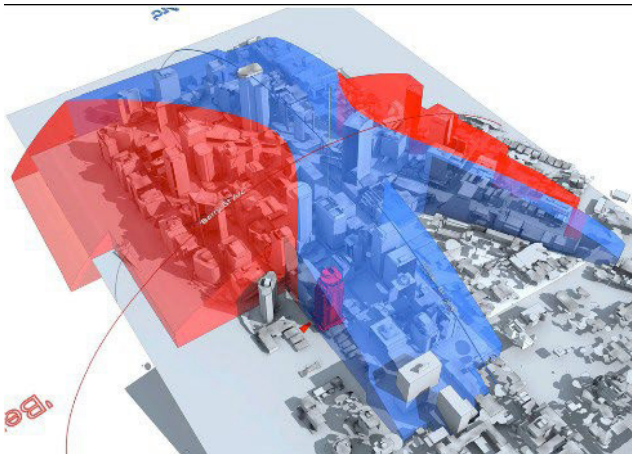


Photomontage of view from hotel

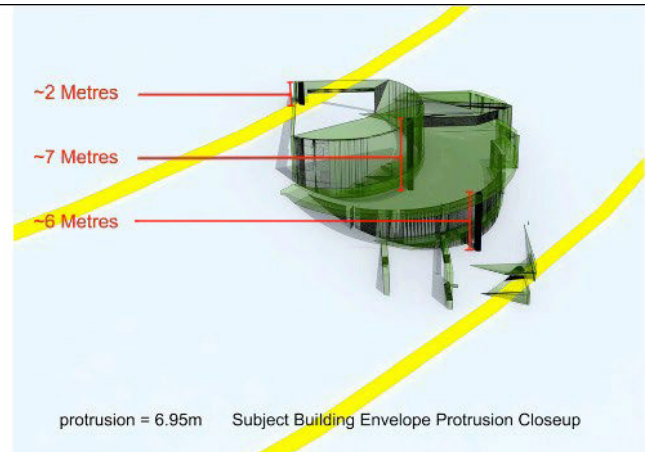


View loss – green = view gain / red = view loss

There are also several areas of assessment that can be used to resolve potential planning approval issues in the early stages of design. In the case below, the permissible building envelope in North Sydney CBD was modelled in 3d to determine if a building proposal would exceed the permitted height limit. Information relating to the amount of encroachment beyond the envelope allowed the architect to re-design the plant room profiles accordingly to avoid any breach.



3d model of planning height zones



Extent of protrusion of proposed design prior to re- design

Urbaine’s experience in this field has place the company in a strong position to advise on the verification of imagery and also to assist in developing more robust methods of analysis of such imagery. As a minimum, Urbaine would suggest that anyone engaging the services of

visualisation companies should request the following information, as a minimum requirement:

1. Height and plan location of camera to be verified and clearly shown on an aerial photo, along with the sun position at time of photography.
2. A minimum of 4 surveyed points identified in plan, at ground level relating to elements on the photograph and hence to the location of the superimposed building.
3. A minimum of 4 surveyed height points to locate the imposed building in the vertical plane.
4. A series of images to be prepared to explain each photomontaged view, in line with the above stages.

This is an absolute minimum from which a client can determine the verifiability of a photomontaged image. From this point the images can be assessed by other consultants and used to prepare a legal case for planning approval.



# Policy: Use of Photomontages and Visualisation Tools

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## Commencement

1. This policy commences on 17 May 2024 and replaces the policy published 21 August 2013.

## Purpose of the policy

2. This policy is to guide the preparation of photomontages, still images, video images, and other visualisation tools to depict the development in an appeal under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, to ensure that the data they present is represented and interpreted accurately, and that their use would assist the Court in determining the appeal.

## Application

3. The policy applies to appeals under the EPA Act, where photomontages or other visual tools are to be submitted as part of expert evidence.

## Definitions

4. In this Policy:

**Appeal** means an appeal to the Court under the EPA Act.

**CGI** means Computer Generated Image.

**Commissioner** means a Commissioner or Acting Commissioner of the Court.

**Court** means the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales.

**Development** means the development for which consent is sought in the development application that is the subject of the appeal.

**EPA Act** means the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.



**Existing Image** means an unchanged or unaltered image of the location, viewing angle and approximate conditions on which the proposed development will be overlaid, to convey the issues in dispute.

**Judge** means a Judge of the Court.

**Photomontages** means, for the purpose of this policy, any visual tool or aid, whether still image, video, computer generated image, two dimensional (2D) or three dimensional (3D) or other visual means to depict development plans.

**Registrar** means a Registrar of the Court.

**RL** Reduced Level or Relative Level as defined in Australian Standard® AS1100 Technical Drawings.

## General principles

5. A photomontage submitted in an appeal should provide to the Judge, Commissioner or Registrar the most accurate visual images of the development in its real-world location, so as to specifically convey the issues in dispute.
6. A photomontage must include:
  - 6.1 the existing image;
  - 6.2 a 2D plan and/or elevation showing the location of the camera, target point/viewing angle, and lighting source that corresponds to the location from where the existing image was taken; and
  - 6.3 the proposed built envelope and key features of the development overlaid on the existing image in the form of a wire frame and/or 'block massing' model to demonstrate the development.
7. Where a photorealistic CGI of the development is used:
  - 7.1 the metadata from the existing image to create an identical 3D computer generated camera should be provided;
  - 7.2 the environmental conditions of the CGI should be set to the same parameters as the existing image;
  - 7.3 colour matching in the CGI is to correspond with the existing image; and



- 7.4 the details of the software used in creating the CGI should be stated as part of the submission of the photomontage.
8. A detailed summary of the methodology used to create the photomontage should be provided, including:
- 8.1 survey data that is used to create the photomontages, including the name and qualifications of the surveyor who prepared the survey information from which the underlying data for the wire frame was obtained;
  - 8.2 site specific topographical data used to create the photomontages, including the source and references utilised for the topographical data (for example paper, or survey inputs from file types such as from 'DWG' or 'DXF');
  - 8.3 the camera type, lens, focal length or field of view, and sensor used for the purpose of the photograph from which the existing image has been derived;
  - 8.4 accurate location, alignment and direction of the camera (whether fixed on tripod or drone) and RL of the camera for the existing image;
  - 8.5 data that was used to prepare the photomontages, such as:
    - 8.5.1 use of relevant plans and data for the depiction of existing buildings or existing elements as shown in the wire frame, block massing model or photorealistic CGI;
    - 8.5.2 the means by which terrain has been generated (such as surveyed spot levels and/or contours or by some form of point cloud, or Ground Control Point survey method);
    - 8.5.3 any variables applied to the images such as, time of day, lighting and weather conditions;
    - 8.5.4 consistency in application of scale and interpretation of the relevant data;
    - 8.5.5 rationale for selecting a particular view, use of camera lens or conditions in creating the image. For example, in circumstances where a development is best depicted with an expanded field of view or panoramic view, the type of panorama head and equipment must be stated, in addition to the data above.



- 8.6 where a photomontage has used more than one baseline image to represent the existing context (that is where multiple images are 'stitched together'), this must be stated, and the requirements above should be adapted to convey the key data required to verify its accuracy; and
- 8.7 whether any editing software or other visual manipulation has been used in the preparation of the final image, for example an adjustment in contrast, saturation, tilt shift or the like.

### Visualisation Tools

9. As technology emerges, the principles outlined above are to be applied. What is important is that the Court has an unaltered and real life baseline, summary of metadata so the veracity of imagery presented can be verified, and application of relevant overlays of the proposed development that assists in the Court's consideration of the real issues in dispute.
10. All effort is to be made and the 'best practices' are to be applied when utilising technology for the purposes of visualisation of the development to ensure accuracy and avoid bias of information interpretation.

### Paperless Hearings

11. Parties should be prepared to display the photomontage electronically if it is to be relied upon, or be the subject of an examination of an expert witness.
12. It will be the responsibility of the party whose expert is being examined, to provide a device compatible with courtroom technology which can display the photomontage electronically. This will allow the presiding officer, the experts, lawyers and all other people to be able to see in real time and on a common image, the subject of the examination.

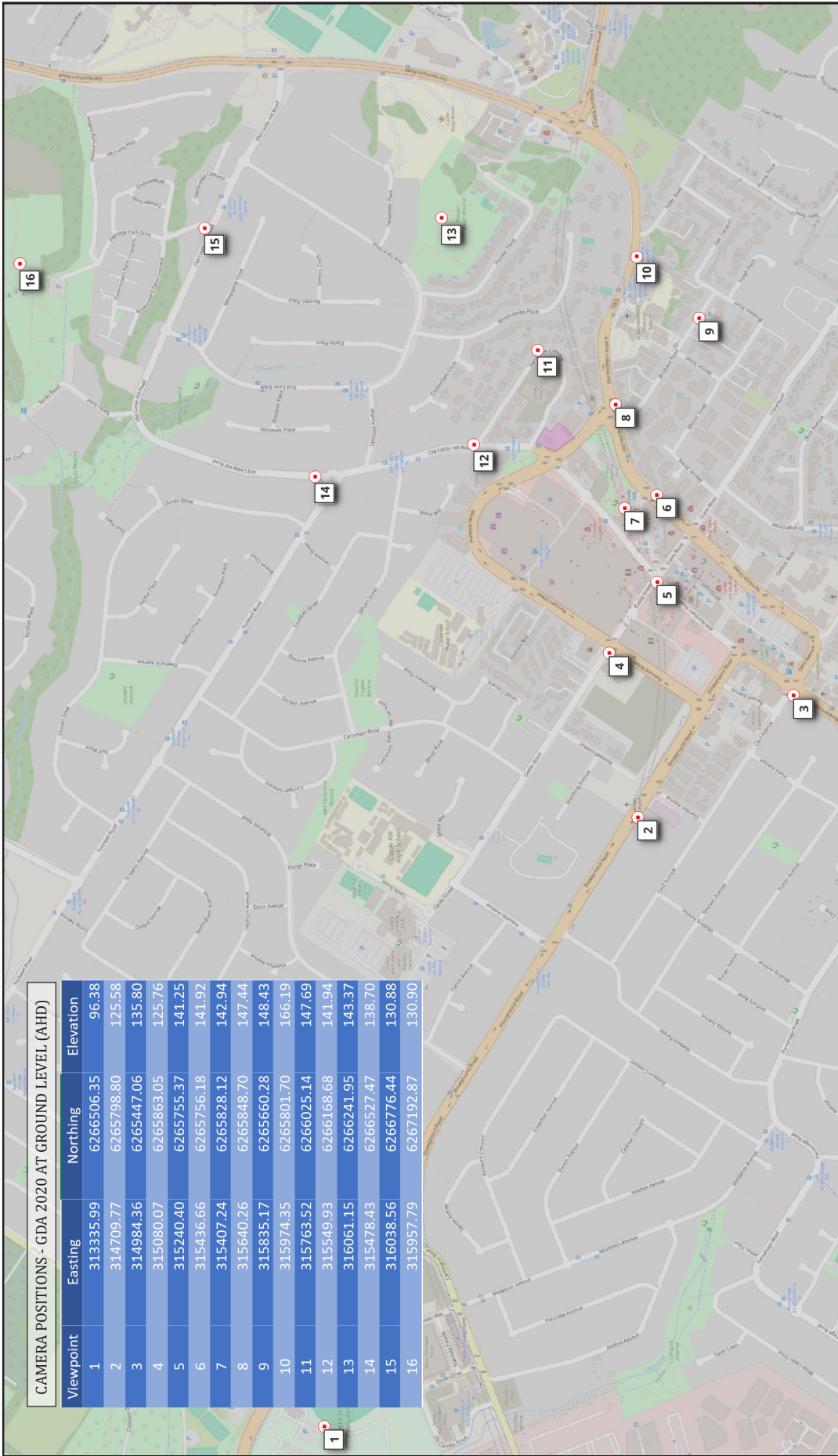
**Issued by:**

***The Honourable Justice Brian J Preston  
Chief Judge – Land and Environment Court of NSW  
Date: 17 May 2024***

## 5.2. APPENDIX C: Survey and camera positions

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**CAMERA POSITIONS - GDA 2020 AT GROUND LEVEL (AHD)**

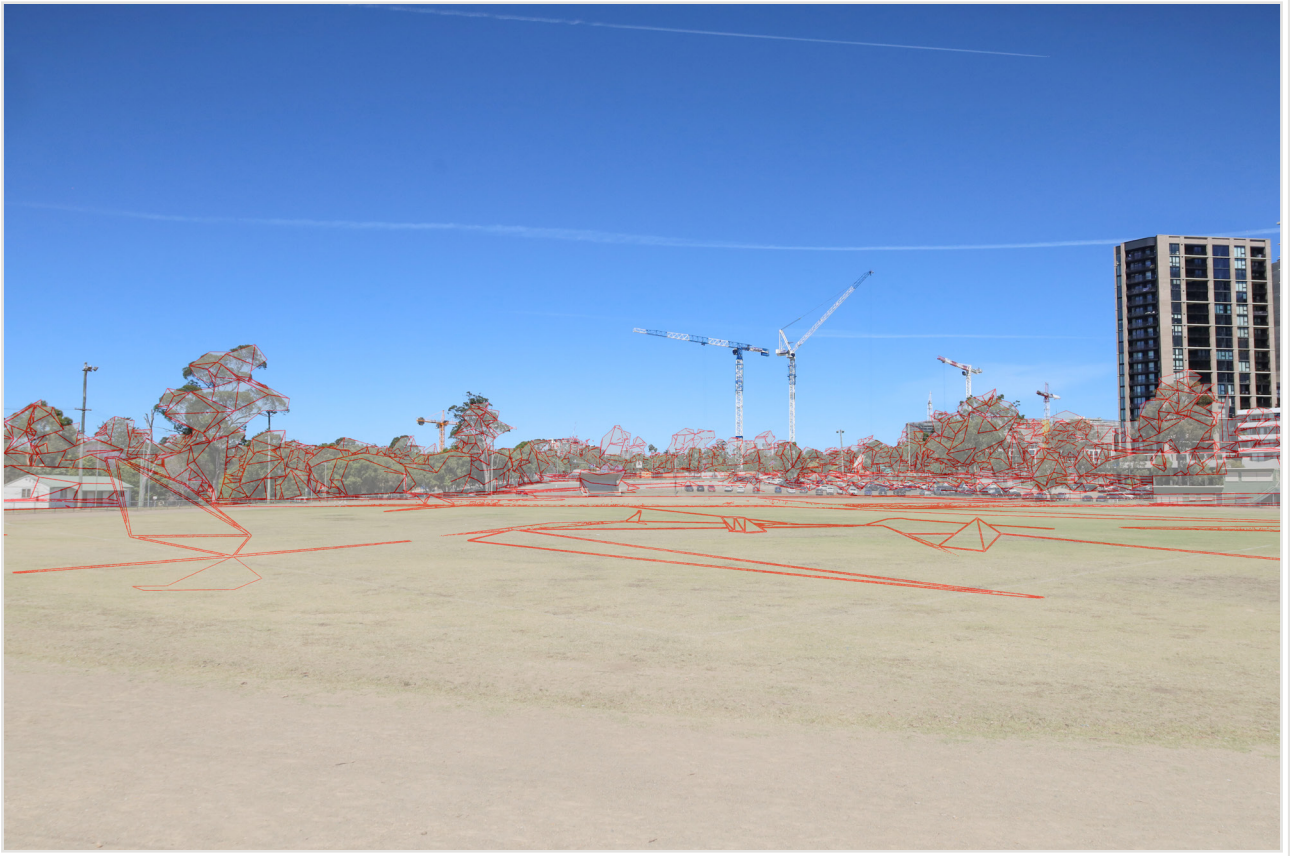
Viewpoint	Easting	Northing	Elevation
1	313335.99	6266506.35	96.38
2	314709.77	6265798.80	125.58
3	314984.36	6265447.06	135.80
4	315080.07	6265863.05	125.76
5	315240.40	6265755.37	141.25
6	315436.66	6265756.18	141.92
7	315407.24	6265828.12	142.94
8	315640.26	6265848.70	147.44
9	315835.17	6265660.28	148.43
10	315974.35	6265801.70	166.19
11	315763.52	6266025.14	147.69
12	315549.93	6266168.68	141.94
13	316061.15	6266241.95	143.37
14	315478.43	6266527.47	138.70
15	316038.56	6266776.44	130.88
16	315957.79	6267192.87	130.90

**NOTE:**  
 BUILDING POSITIONS ARE INDICATIVE FOR PRESENTATION PURPOSES.  
 DATA WAS CAPTURED USING GNSS RTK ROVER  
 CAMERA POSITIONS ARE FROM GNSS WITH NTRIP CORRECTIONS OBSERVATIONS WITHIN +/- 0.01M  
 LEVELS ARE BASED ON AUSTRALIAN HEIGHT DATUM (AHD)

JOB NO: 795 UPG_Castle Hill	IGA: THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL
DATE: 07.10.2025	DATUM: AHD
DRAWN: DK	SCALE: N/A
CHECK: JA	SHEET: 1:1

SKETCH PLAN SHOWING  
 INDICATIVE CAMERA POSITIONS FOR -  
 16 - 20 OLD CASTLE HILL ROAD, CASTLE HILL, 2154

### 5.3. APPENDIX D: Wireframe images



Viewpoint 01



Viewpoint 02



Viewpoint 03



Viewpoint 04



Viewpoint 05



Viewpoint 06



Viewpoint 07



Viewpoint 08



Viewpoint 09



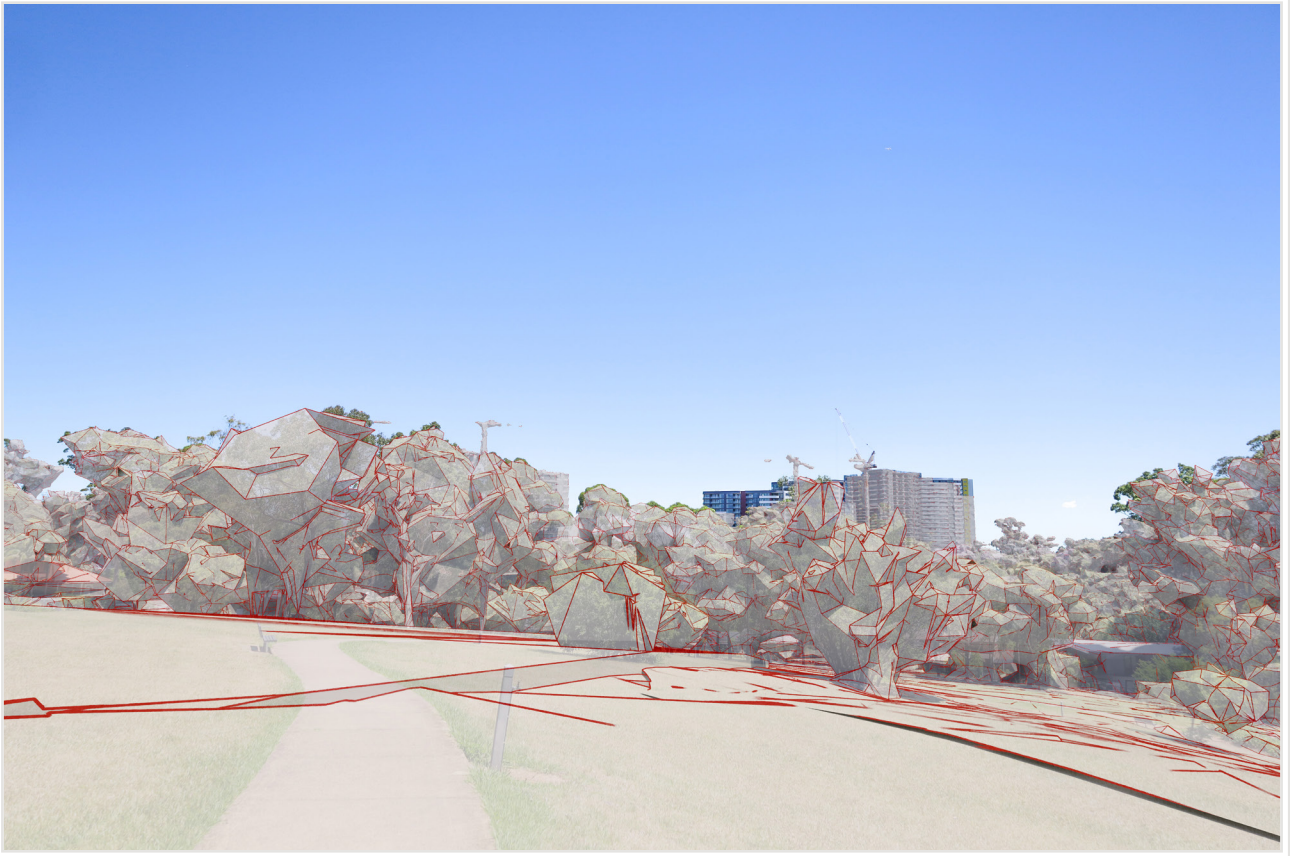
Viewpoint 10



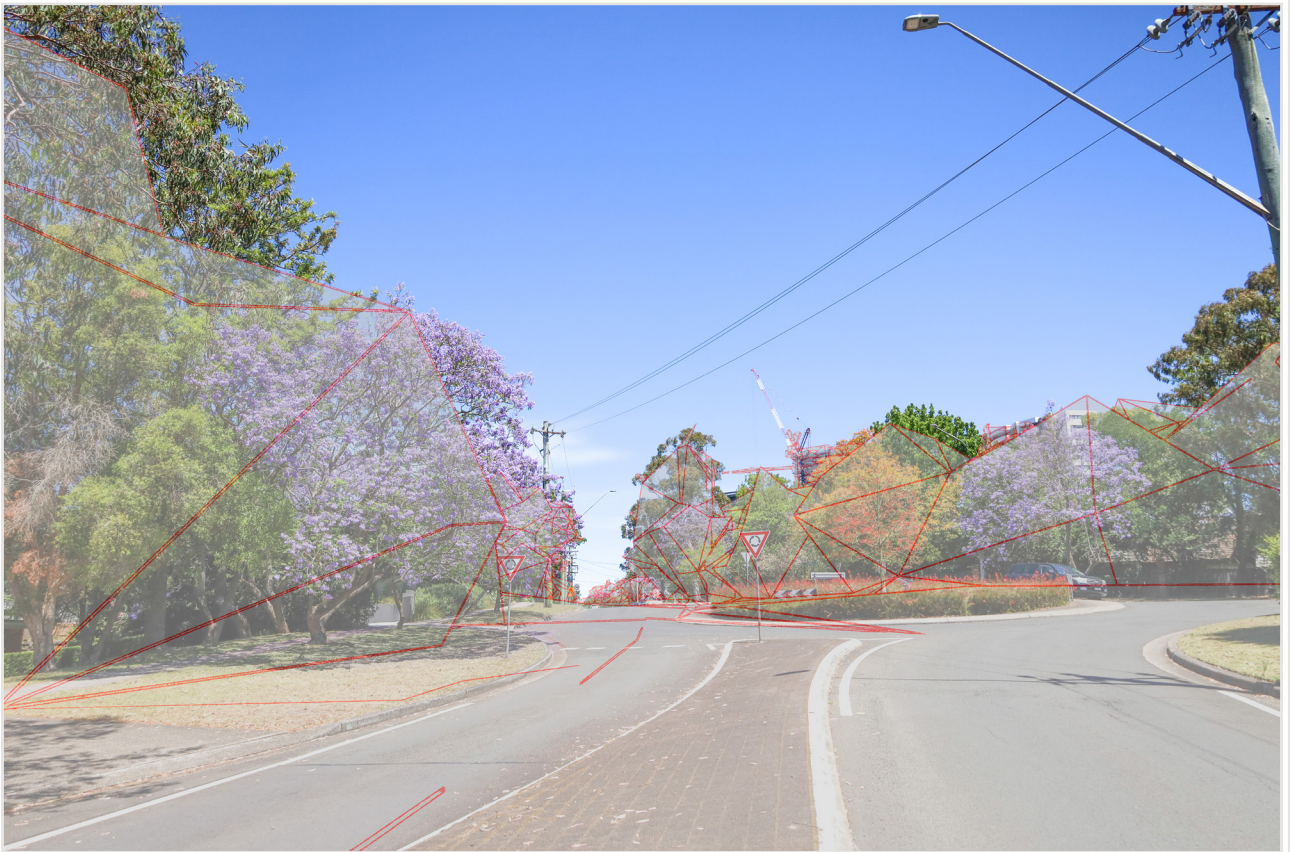
Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 12



Viewpoint 13



Viewpoint 14



Viewpoint 15



Viewpoint 16

**5.4. APPENDIX E:** Site Photography

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Viewpoint 01

Viewpoint 02

Viewpoint 03

Viewpoint 04

Viewpoint 05

Viewpoint 06

Viewpoint 07

Viewpoint 08

Viewpoint 09

Viewpoint 10

Viewpoint 11

Viewpoint 12

Viewpoint 13

Viewpoint 14

Viewpoint 15

Viewpoint 16

Viewpoint 17

Viewpoint 18

Viewpoint 19

Viewpoint 20

Viewpoint 21

Viewpoint 22

Viewpoint 23

Viewpoint 24

Viewpoint 25

Viewpoint 26

Viewpoint 27

Viewpoint 28

Viewpoint 29

Viewpoint 30