

Proposed Mixed-Use Development
Goulburn

Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared for
Woodlands Ridge
Poultry Pty Ltd

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Mara Consulting Pty Ltd

ACN: 168 093 918

ABN: 13 168 093 918



Level 1, 161 King Street
Newcastle NSW 2300



mara@maraconsulting.com.au



maraconsulting.com.au



02 4965 4317

C O N T E N T S

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Background	4
1.2. The site and context	4
2. Methodology	6
2.1. Background	6
2.2. Existing visual environment	6
2.3. Assessment criteria	7
2.4. Viewing zones	9
3. Proposal	12
3.1. Proposed Development	12
4. Visual impact assessment	14
4.1. Viewpoint Analysis	14
4.2. Visual impact assessment summary	25
5. Visual impact mitigation measures	26
5.1. Recommendations	26

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

This report accompanies the environmental impact statement (EIS) and associated State Significant Development Application for a proposed mixed-use development. The development consists of a cold storage and distribution centre, poultry processing plant, childcare facility and other associated infrastructure at 52 Sinclair St, Goulburn NSW 2580 (the Site).

The visual impact assessment has been prepared to assess the visual impacts on the landscape and to recommend measures to minimise the visual impact of planned development.

The report describes the existing visual environment and provides a methodology to assess the visual sensitivity of the site and to assess the visual impact of the planned development. Viewing zones and significant viewing locations within each zone are identified and assessed.

1.2. The site and context

The site is located on the eastern edge of Goulburn city, within Goulburn Mulwaree Local Government Area. The site lies approximately 280m south of Sydney Road, along Common Street.

The local area south of the site consists of predominantly open paddocks with occasional single, detached residential dwellings along the valley. To the west is an operating quarry (Rocky Hill Sand and Soil) and to the east is a resource recovery centre and the Goulburn Mulwaree Council Tip. North of the site contains residential structures and the commercial enterprises along Sydney Road.

There are scattered tree plantings along the roads with few trees located within the paddocks. A stand of trees exists along the hill in the western portion of the site. Across the valley from the site, the upper slopes of the hills are well forested.

The site has a total plan area of about 8.3ha. It is located within an area of moderately undulating topography, It lies on a western slope of a shallow valley that opens toward the south (see Figure 1).

Ground levels at the site generally range from about RL 651m (AHD) near the south-western corner, up to about to RL 684m (AHD) at the north western corner at the top of a hill. Along Common Street there a slight rise from 659.5m at the south to 667.5m at the north eastern corner.

The site is vegetated in most areas by pasture grasses, with groups of trees along the western boundary (refer to Figures 2.1 & 2.2).



Figure 1.1. Site location

The site is located in Goulburn, on the southern side of the Sydney Road. Site is shown in red.

2. Methodology

2.1. Background

This section provides a methodology for the visual impact assessment. The methodology used in this assessment has been adapted from the Roads and Maritime Services *Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Note (2013): Guidelines for landscape character and visual impact assessment*. This methodology has been used as a guide to align with the features and requirements of this Proposal.

The methodology for assessing the visual impact includes the following key processes:

- Section 2.2 identifies the existing visual environment, the significant landscape features of the site and the visibility of the site from the significant vantage points
- Section 2.3 provides an assessment criteria that describes site visibility and visual absorption capacity
- Section 2.4 identifies viewing zones from which the site could be visible from various distances within the immediate vicinity, local area and regional context
- Section 3 provides an overview of the proposed development
- Section 4 assesses the potential visual impact from a variety of viewing locations
- Section 5 recommended mitigation measures.

2.2. Existing visual environment

This section describes the character and visibility of the site from the surrounding area.

Landscape character

The site and surrounding area is characterised by grassy paddocks with occasional single dwelling buildings.

Areas of natural landscape with retained vegetation exist on a hilltop at the north western corner of the site. Other natural vegetated areas are located east of the site along the upper slopes and ridges.

Site visibility

The procedure for assessing site visibility involved:

- Determination of various viewing zones (regional, local and immediate vicinity)
- Detailed field investigations to plot those portions of the site that are visible from the various viewing zones.



Figure 2.1. Aerial view of landscape south of site.

2.3. Assessment criteria

The potential visual impact of planned development would result from the combination of two factors:

- Visibility of development
- Visual absorption capacity of the landscape in which the development occurs.

The visibility and the visual absorption capacity of the site for each representative view location have been assessed to determine the overall visual impact. Visibility and visual absorption capacity are defined below.



Figure 2.2. Aerial view of landscape north of site.

2.3.1. Visibility

“Visibility” is a measure of the extent to which particular activities/ components of a proposal may be visible from surrounding areas, the relative number of viewers, the period of view, viewing distance and context of view. The rationale for the assessment is that if a proposal is not visible the impact is nil and if the number of people who would potentially see the proposal is low, then the visual impact would be lower than if a potential large number of people had the same view.

For the purpose of this study, the general categories of visibility have been defined broadly as:

- High (H) – where a large number of people would see new development at short distance over a short, moderate or long period of time
- Moderate (M) – where a small number of people would see new development at a short or medium distance over a moderate or long period of time, or a moderate number of people would see the new development at a medium distance over a short, moderate or long period of time, or a large number of people would see it at a medium or long distance over a short period of time
- Low (L) – where a small number of people would see new development at long distance over a short (< 1 minute), moderate (< 1-10 minutes) or long (> 10 minutes) period of time.

The procedure for assessing site visibility involved:

- Determination of viewing locations from which parts of the planned development could potentially be visible (eg. by a motorist, visitor, resident)
- A field inspection to determine the extent of site visibility from the various viewing locations.

2.3.2. Visual absorption criteria

“Visual Absorption Capacity” is an estimation of the capacity of the landscape to absorb development without creating significant visual change. The capacity to absorb development is primarily dependent on land form, vegetation cover and the presence of other development.

The extent to which portions of the site can potentially absorb development without reducing the scenic quality of the area has been assessed under this criteria. Given the visual landscape character of the site this capacity is primarily dependent on repetition of built form and vegetation cover. The surrounding building and tree canopies provide capacity to visually absorb development without significantly changing its scenic quality provided vegetation is retained in public and private land.

The potential for development to significantly change the visual character or to reduce the scenic quality of the area will result from removal of portions of the tree cover and creation of visual contrast between development (buildings, roads and new landscape) and the existing landscape of surrounding areas.

The level of contrast is also strongly influenced by the nature of the backdrop against which development is viewed. In particular, structures that are viewed above the skyline will potentially create a higher degree of contrast than the same elements viewed against a backdrop of similar structures or a landscape of similar colour/textures as the building or structure.

The degree of contrast between proposed development and the existing landscape (buildings and vegetation) can be reduced by careful attention to the colour, scale, texture, and reflectivity of building materials and by avoiding development that breaks the height of the existing tree canopy. Where possible these considerations are to be incorporated into the design and siting of buildings, roads and other structures.

Table 3.1: Visual absorption criteria.

Criteria	Definition
High	Existing landscape and built environment able to absorb development. Low degree of visual contrast
Moderate	Existing landscape able to absorb some development. Some visual contrast will result.
Low	Existing landscape unable to absorb development (unless the denser future character of an area is to deliberately make a development prominent such as a public building or special focus). High degree of visual contrast will result.

2.3.3. Visual Impact Rating

Table 3.2 provides a matrix that compares the visibility rating with the visual absorption capacity rating to determine the visual impact rating.

Table 3.2: Visual impact rating matrix

		Visibility		
		Low	Moderate	High
Visual Absorption Capacity	High	Low	Low	Moderate
	Medium	Low	Moderate	High
	Low	Moderate	High	High

2.4. Viewing zones

Viewing zones are areas outside the site that have potential views to the site from various distances within the immediate vicinity, local area and regional context.

The site is located on the south-facing slope of a small valley. The valley runs southward away from the site. As it progresses southward, the sides of the valley become more densely forested. The views to the site end where a ridge cuts off the views. This means there is a relatively small viewing angle from the elevated slopes facing the site.

Additionally, the roadways surrounding the site have stands of trees and low vegetation along them. Thus, the views toward the site are screened and obscured from publicly accessible locations.

Due to the topography and existing bushland areas, the site is not plainly visible from outside the immediate vicinity. There are few regional views as they are cut off by ridges and existing vegetation.

In order to assess the potential visual impacts of planned development, viewing zones based on the distance from the proposed development were defined as follows:

- Immediate vicinity (< 1.5km)
- Local area (1.5km – 3km)
- Regional area (3km – 6km).

Representative view locations were selected from each zone and the visual impact of the planned development has been assessed from each location.

Immediate vicinity (< 1.5km)

- View 1: Corner of Sydney Road and Common Street
- View 2: Corner of Sydney Road and Long Street
- View 3: 48 Common Street
- View 4: 107 Long Street
- View 5: Corner of Common Street and Chiswick Street
- View 6: Rocky Hill War Memorial and Museum
- View 7: 2 Hetherington Street

Local area (1.5km – 3km)

- View 8: 30 Gorman Road
- View 9: Hudson Park, Reign Street.

Regional area (3km – 6km)

- View 10: 26 Wollondilly Avenue

Each view is addressed separately in Section 4 of this report.

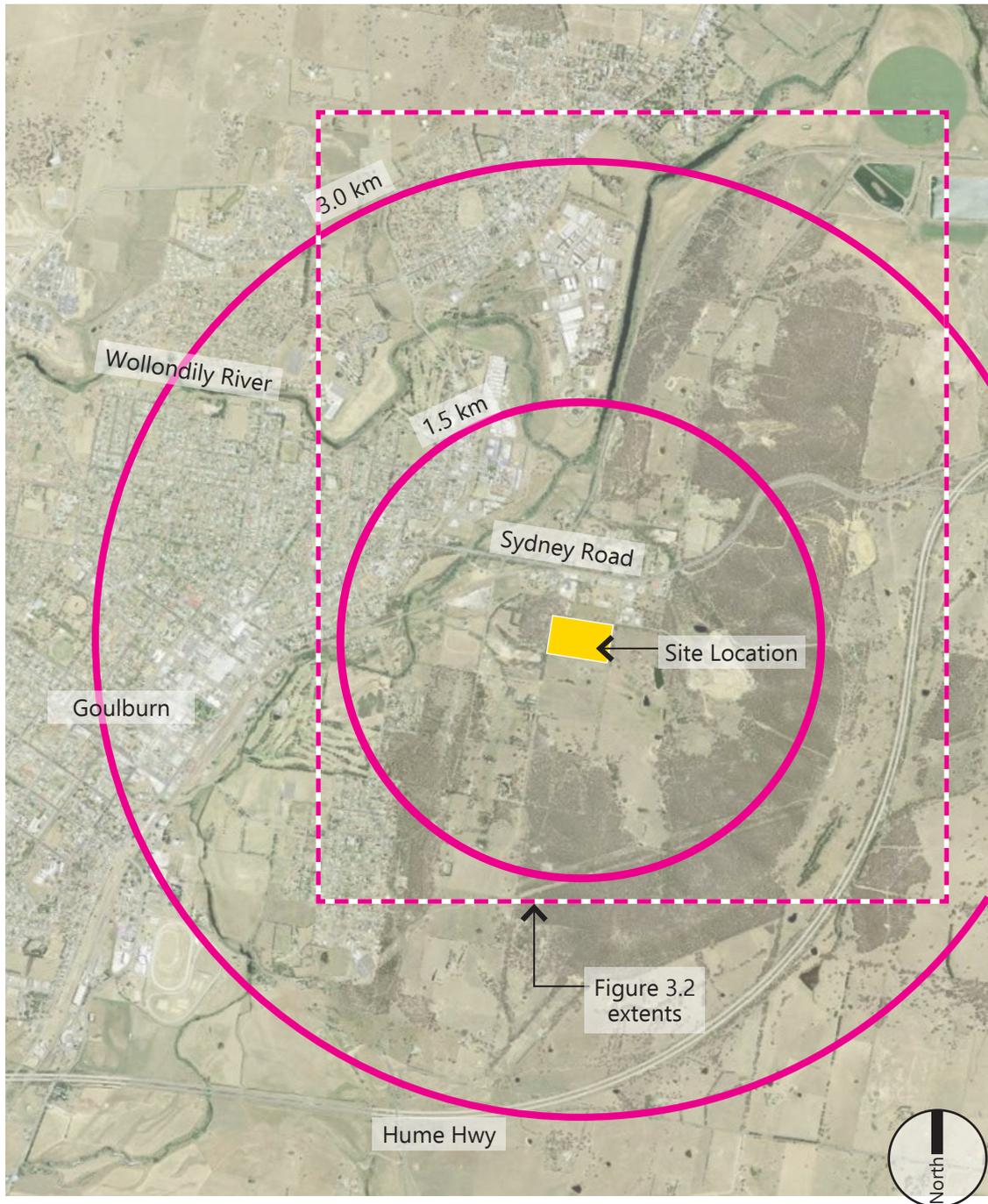


Figure 3.3: Viewing Zones

The viewing zones indicated as distance from the subject site. Figure 3.2 shows specific locations of each viewpoint that will be discussed in Section 4.



Figure 3.4: Viewing Locations

The view locations are shown with arrows. The number on the arrows are associated with the visual assessment in Section 4 of this report

3. Proposal

3.1. Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the construction of 6 buildings with parking across the site as indicated in the plan below (Figure 3.1). The north west corner of the site contains existing vegetation, most of which will be preserved.

The Proposal consists of a:

- Cold storage and distribution centre
- Poultry processing plant
- Child care facility
- Associated infrastructure.

The Proposal will be constructed and operated in stages. Stage 1 involves construction and operation of the cold storage and distribution centre. Stage 2 involves construction and operation of the poultry processing plant. The childcare facility will be constructed and operated concurrently with stage 1 and 2 to meet the demands of local workers and the broader community.

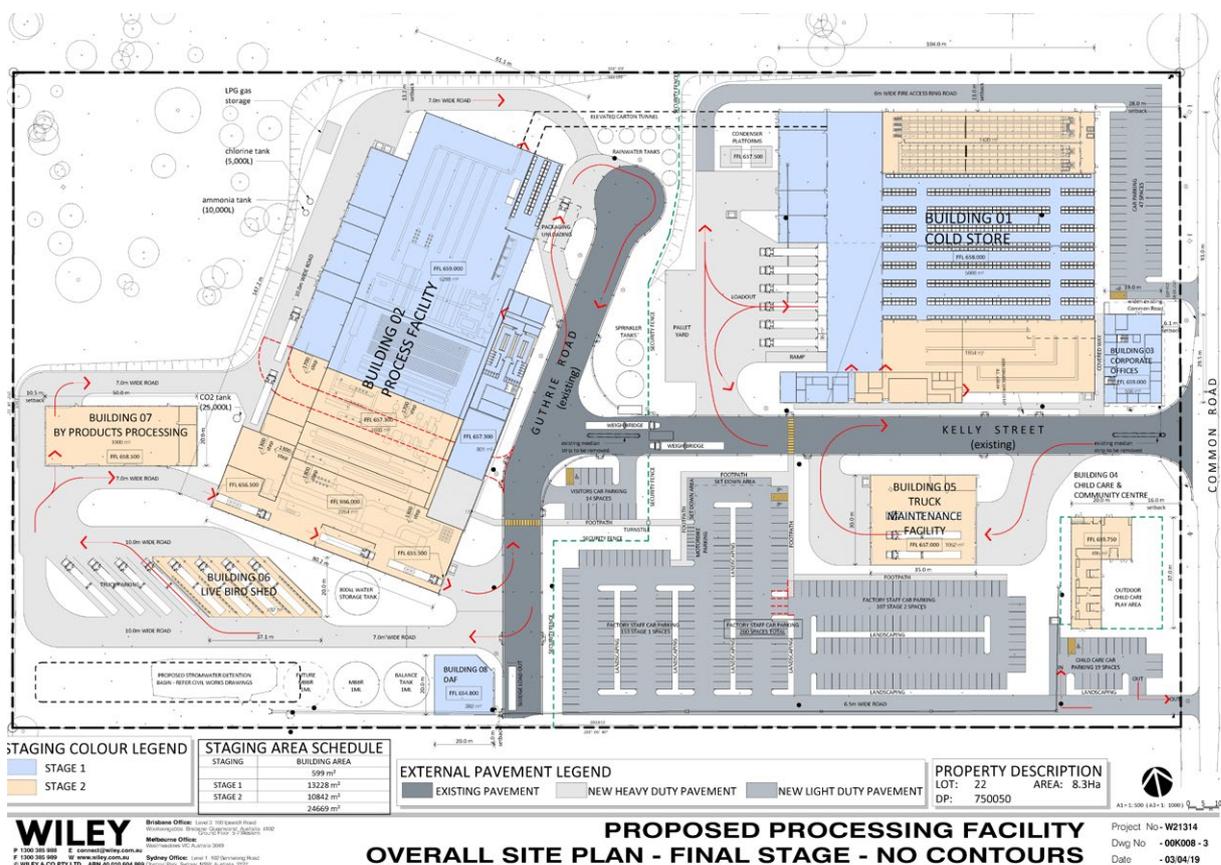


Figure 4.1: Proposed development with building footprints shown

The illustrations shown in Figure 3.2 indicate the scale of the architectural structures with the proposed landscape treatment along the boundaries of the development.

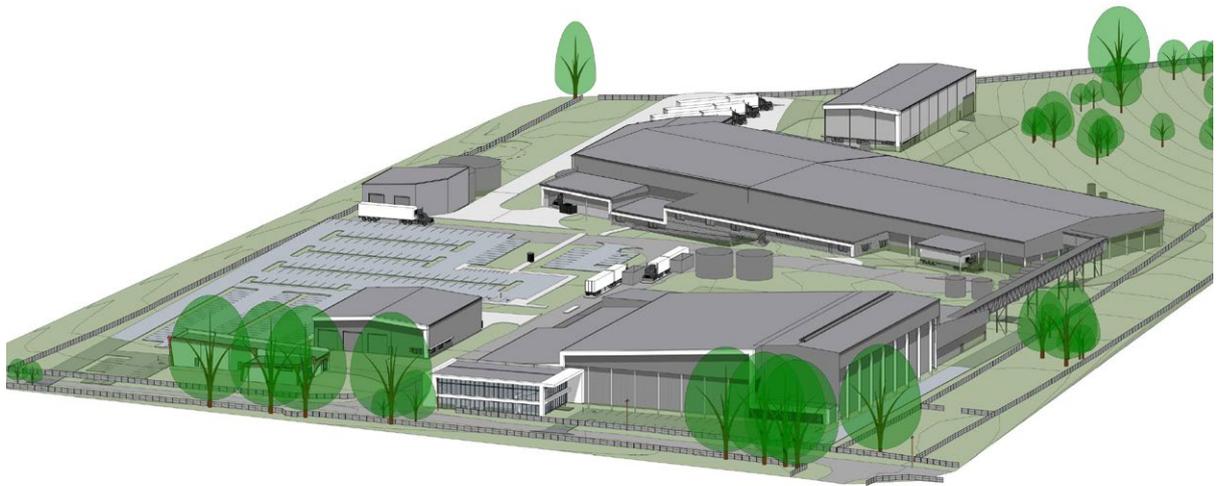


Figure 4.2: Aerial view of artist's impression of proposed development from the north east.



Figure 4.3: Aerial view of artist's impression of proposed development from the east

4. Visual impact assessment

4.1. Viewpoint Analysis

This section of the visual assessment considers the likely impact that the proposed development may have on the views toward the site. This is done by identifying and selecting particular sites, referred to as viewpoints, conducting inspections and determining what part of the development will be visible from those viewpoints and the visual impact of that development proposal.

The viewpoints, as shown on Figure 3.4, were selected on the basis of where the development would appear to be most prominent either based on degree of exposure or the number of people likely to be affected. Sites were further selected on the basis of significant features, significant viewpoints and significant ridge lines as nominated in the scenic quality guidelines.

The following viewpoint worksheets provide photographs and analysis data from each of the viewpoints. The images were taken using a digital camera with a focal length equal to a standard 50mm for a conventional 35mm camera.

The outlines of the proposed buildings in the development have been superimposed over the photographs to illustrate the extents and massing of the buildings.

Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 1	
Viewing situation	Sydney Road, looking up toward the site
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Main road into Goulburn
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	280m
Likely period of view	Low
Visibility	Moderate
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visual impact rating	Low

Description:

View from the intersection of Sydney Road and Common Street looking upward to the site, which is situated over a slight ridge. Commercial and retail establishments line the road and dominate views.

Comments:

The views from this location and along Sydney Road are dominated by the commercial and retail structures along the road. Glimpses of the proposed development are available between the existing structures and over the ridge. Only the upper walls are visible over the hill.

Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 2

Viewing situation	Long Street looking up to the ridge that lies in front of the site.
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Local residents and their visitors
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	325m
Likely period of view	Low
Visibility	Low
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visual impact rating	Low

Description:

View from Long Street (at Sydney Road). Viewer is below the site looking up at the existing commercial buildings along Sydney Road and the hillside beyond.

Comments:

At this location, the ridge between the site and Sydney Road blocks views of the site entirely.

Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 3	
Viewing situation	On Common Street looking into site from the south
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Local residents and their visitors
Relative number of viewers	Moderate
Distance of view	300m
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Moderate
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visual impact rating	High

Description:

View from Common Street (at 48 Common Street). The viewer is at the same level as the development with open paddocks between the viewer and the site. There are very few residences from this vantage point with most viewers seeing the site from moving vehicles. The traffic speed at adjacent to the site is 50kph and offers very little time to view the site.

Comments:

The views from this location are of open paddocks with tree lined hills surrounding. There are residential structures along the valley floor with clumps of trees. Views to the development are open with some screening provided by existing trees.

Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 4	
Viewing situation	Long Street looking north toward the site
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Local residents and their visitors
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	340m
Likely period of view	Long (from residences)
Visibility	Moderate
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visual impact rating	High

Description:

View from Long Street. Viewer is above the site looking down between the existing residences into the site. The viewer is at the same level as the development with open paddocks between the viewer and the site. There are residences from this vantage point but most have hedges and shrubs along their boundaries. The road is not a through street at this location, so viewers are limited to only residences.

Comments:

The views from this location are open to most of the proposed development. Due to the proximity to the development, this is one of few places with open views. Note that the Rocky Hill Sand and Soil workings are also visible from this location.

Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 5	
Viewing situation	Intersection of Chiswick St and Common St looking down across the valley to site.
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Local residents and their visitors
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	660m
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Moderate
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visual impact rating	High

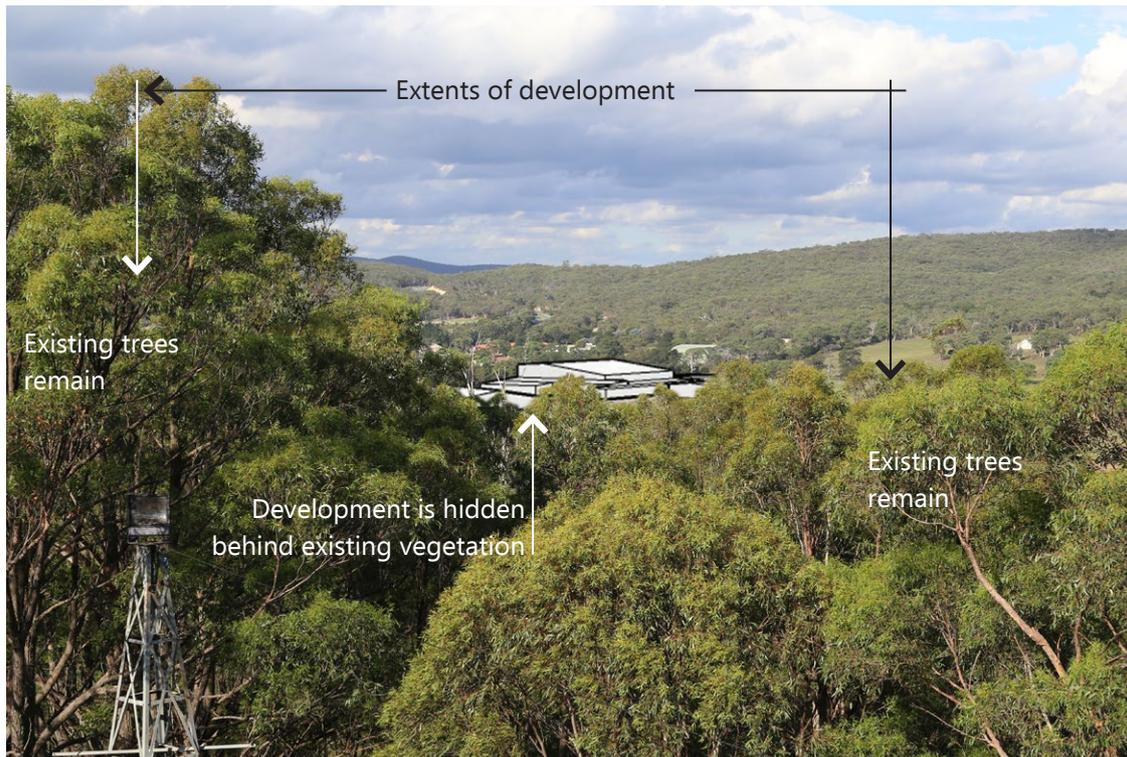
Description:

View from the intersection of Common Street and Chiswick Street. The viewer is higher than the development with open paddocks between the viewer and the site. Clumps of tree plantings obscure the development at this distance. The traffic speed at adjacent to the site is 50kph and offers very little time to view the site.

Comments:

The views from this location are of open paddocks with tree lined hills surrounding. There are residential structures along the valley floor with clumps of trees. Views of the development are scattered and obstructed from the roadways. There are very few residences from this vantage point with most viewers seeing the site from moving vehicles.

Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 6	
Viewing situation	Rocky Hill War Memorial and Museum, atop a hill looking down into the valley
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Visitors to the memorial and museum
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	800m
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Moderate
Visual absorption capacity	Medium
Visual impact rating	Moderate

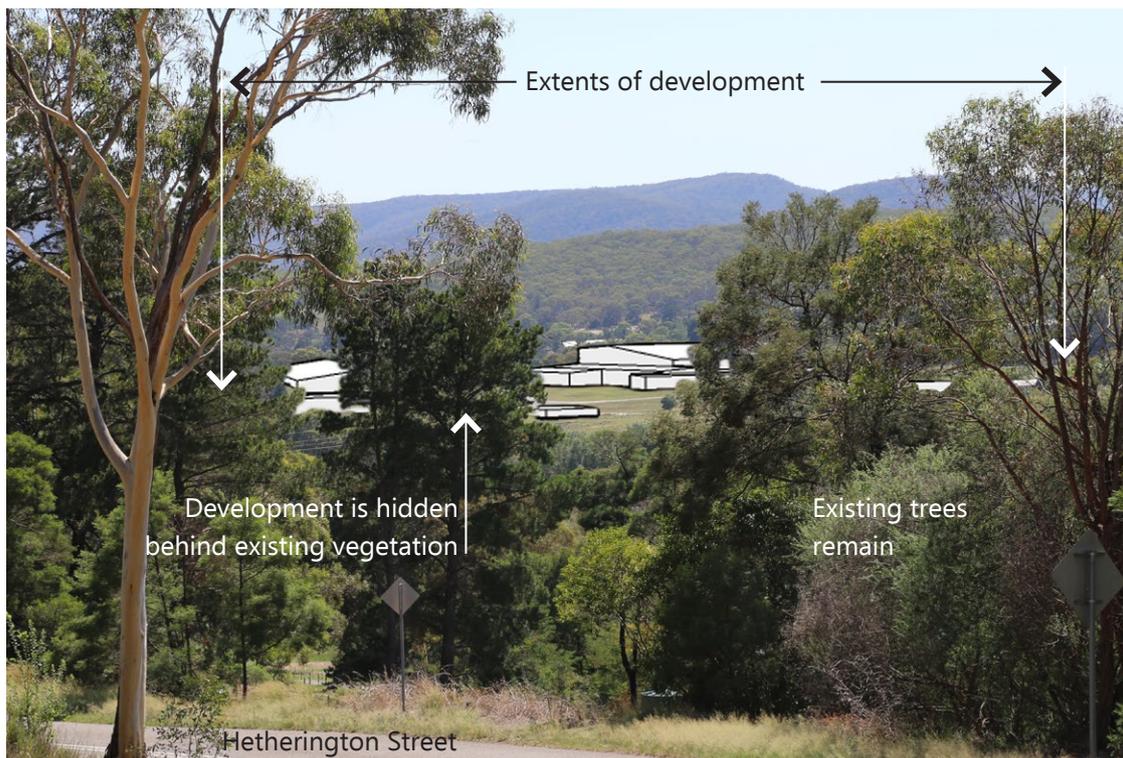
Description:

View from ground level at the War Memorial and Museum looking down at the site.

Comments:

This is an isolated view due to the bushland planting surrounding the memorial, which limit views out of this location.

Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 7	
Viewing situation	Hetherington Street looking down and across the valley
Category of view	Immediate vicinity
Context of view	Local residents and motorist along Hetherington Street
Relative number of viewers	Moderate
Distance of view	1.3km
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Low
Visual absorption capacity	Medium
Visual impact rating	Low

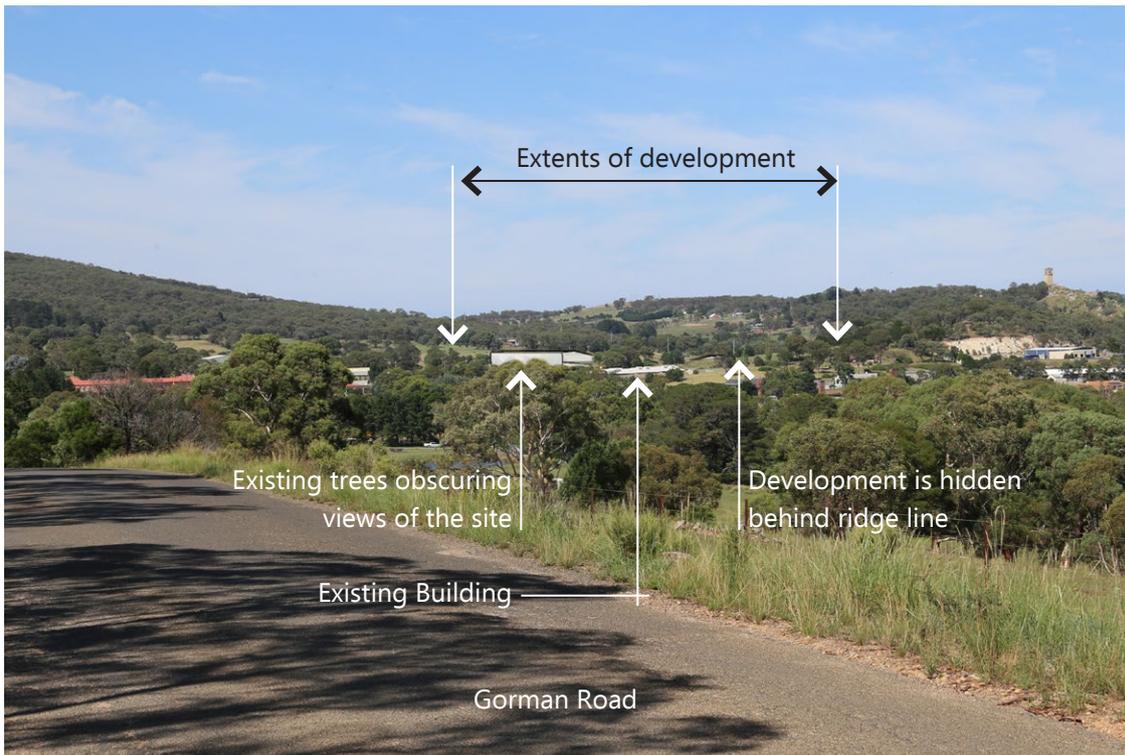
Description:

View from Hetherington Street looking down across the valley toward the proposed development.

Comments:

This vantage point is the only place from which the development will be visible along Hetherington Street without substantial screening from trees. The view is only available for approximately 30m when travelling northward along the road.

Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 8	
Viewing situation	Gorman Road looking across Sydney Road to the site
Category of view	Local Area
Context of view	Local residents and their visitors
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	1.5km
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Low
Visual absorption capacity	Medium
Visual impact rating	Low

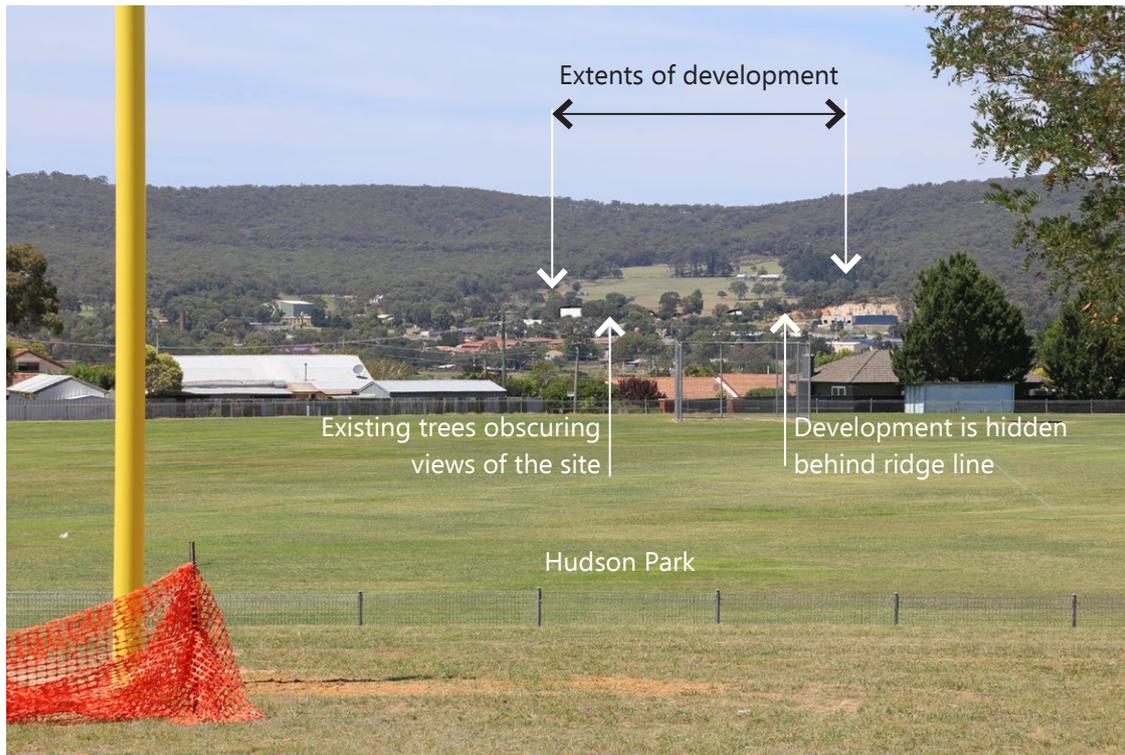
Description:

View from Gorman Road looking across the valley toward the proposed development. Only partial views will be available from this vantage point.

Comments:

This view represents the furthest point from which the site can be seen along this valley. It is located on a rise with the valley falling away behind it. A substantial amount of screening from trees and buildings obscures the site.

Viewpoint 9



Viewpoint 9	
Viewing situation	Hudson Park looking across the valley
Category of view	Local Area
Context of view	Local residents and motorist along nearby roads
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	2.7km
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Low
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visual impact rating	Low

Description:

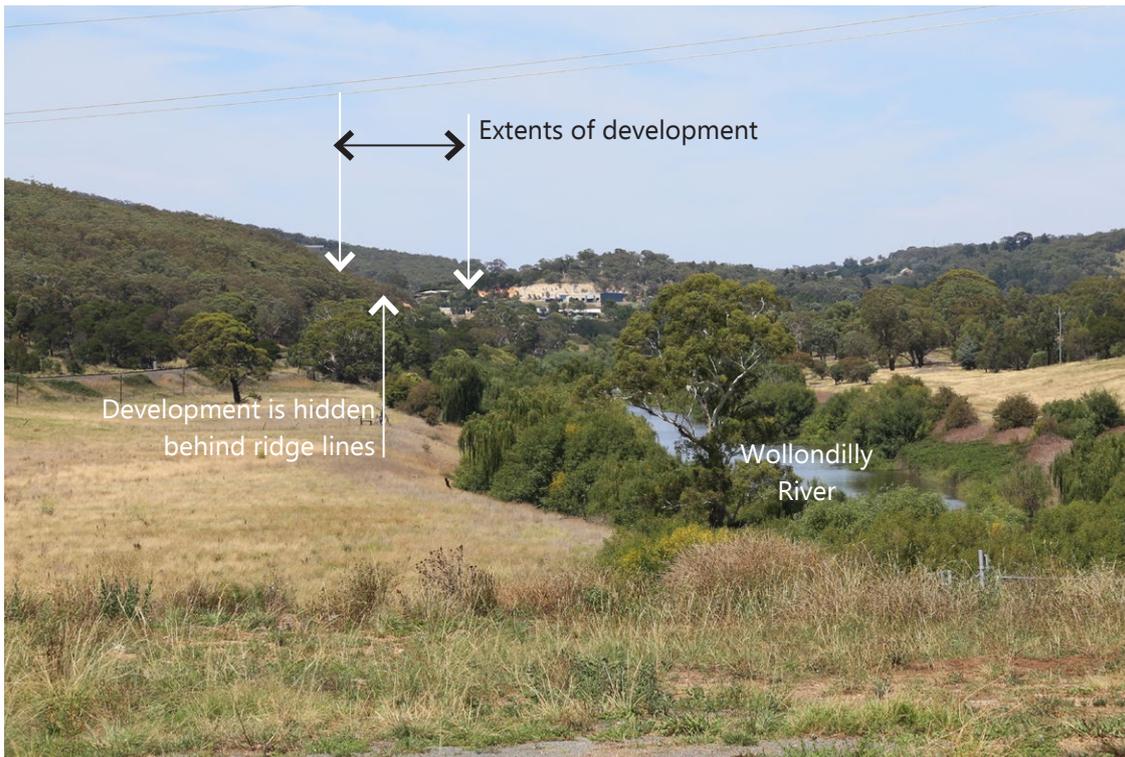
View from Hudson Park near Reign Street. Viewer is looking across the valley toward the proposed development.

Comments:

A large number of buildings exist between the viewer and the site. A substantial number of trees also exist to screen the view.

This vantage point represents one of the furthest places from which the development can be discernible in the distance.

Viewpoint 10



Viewpoint 10	
Viewing situation	Wollondilly Avenue looking across the valley toward site
Category of view	Regional
Context of view	Local residents and motorist along nearby roads
Relative number of viewers	Moderate
Distance of view	3.1km
Likely period of view	Short
Visibility	Low
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visual impact rating	Low

Description:

View from Wollondilly Avenue looking toward the proposed development. Only partial views will be available from this vantage point.

Comments:

This view represents one of the furthest point from which the site is visible. A substantial amount of screening from the landform, trees and buildings obscures the site. At this distance the development will blend in with the surrounding buildings. This is especially true as the proposed trees mature and provide canopy cover.

4.2. Visual impact assessment summary

This section of the report summarises the findings of the visual impact assessment of views in the immediate vicinity, local views and regional views of the site.

Views from the immediate vicinity (< 1.5km)

The proposed development is likely to have a high visual impact from the adjacent streets. This is especially true of Common Street, Chiswick Street and Long Street as these are the only publicly accessible places with full views of the development. This impact is primarily due to the addition of structures and roof lines where open grassy paddocks existed prior to development.

Beyond the streets surrounding the development, views of the site reduce significantly. Where views exist, they are limited to small portions of the development and individual buildings.

The visual impact can be mitigated by introducing new trees for canopy cover within the site and screen planting along boundaries.

Local views (1.5 – 3km)

There are few locations where the site is visible from this distance. The only publicly accessible locations are located north of the site. As illustrated in the photographs, any viewpoint north of the site is screened by a ridge and trees. Thus only two roof lines are visible from these locations when not screened by trees.

Any views from the south at this distance are located on private property. As noted above, these views can be mitigated significantly by the use of trees and boundary screening.

Regional views (3 – 6km)

The only regional views occur north of the site. As with the local views, only roof lines may be visible from this distance. However the proposed structures blend into the existing commercial buildings along Sydney Road.

Using roof colours that are non-reflective will help reduce the visibility of the buildings.

5. Visual impact mitigation measures

5.1. Recommendations

The following recommended mitigation measures are to be implemented in order to mitigate potential visual impacts of development of the site.

The visual impact assessment in Section 4 of this report assigns either a high, medium or low visual impact rating when viewed from the immediate vicinity, local views and regional views. The following mitigation measures are to be considered in the design and assessment of the project.

Visual character

- The site and immediate surrounds contains a number of mature trees that provide visual screening. Most of the trees that screen the site are on private lots adjacent to the subject site and therefore will remain in place. The proposed development will necessarily remove some trees from the site These trees should be replaced with trees that will offer some canopy cover to continue the visual character across the site
- Trees planted within the site (parking areas and open space) and along the boundaries should be selected for their canopy size and ability to blend into the existing trees.

Built form, materials and colours

- Building height should not overwhelm the tree sizes so that the tree canopy cover remains visible to allow the canopy to soften the appearance of development
- Building height should be limited to ensure the roof lines do not rise above the adjacent ridge line to dominate the skyline
- Materials, textures and colour selection are to relate to the natural palette of the surrounding environmental in areas of high visibility and potential for visual impact
- Bright and contrasting colours should be no more than 10% of the facade of a building
- Rooftops should utilise non-reflective colours and materials
- Lighting
 - Lighting treatments are to be sensibly designed to minimise light spill in areas such as street lighting and floodlighting outdoor spaces
 - Lighting to be directed toward the ground to limit visibility
 - Adopt a “dark sky” approach to private garden lighting by directing the lighting in parking areas and streets toward the ground and limiting light spill.

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