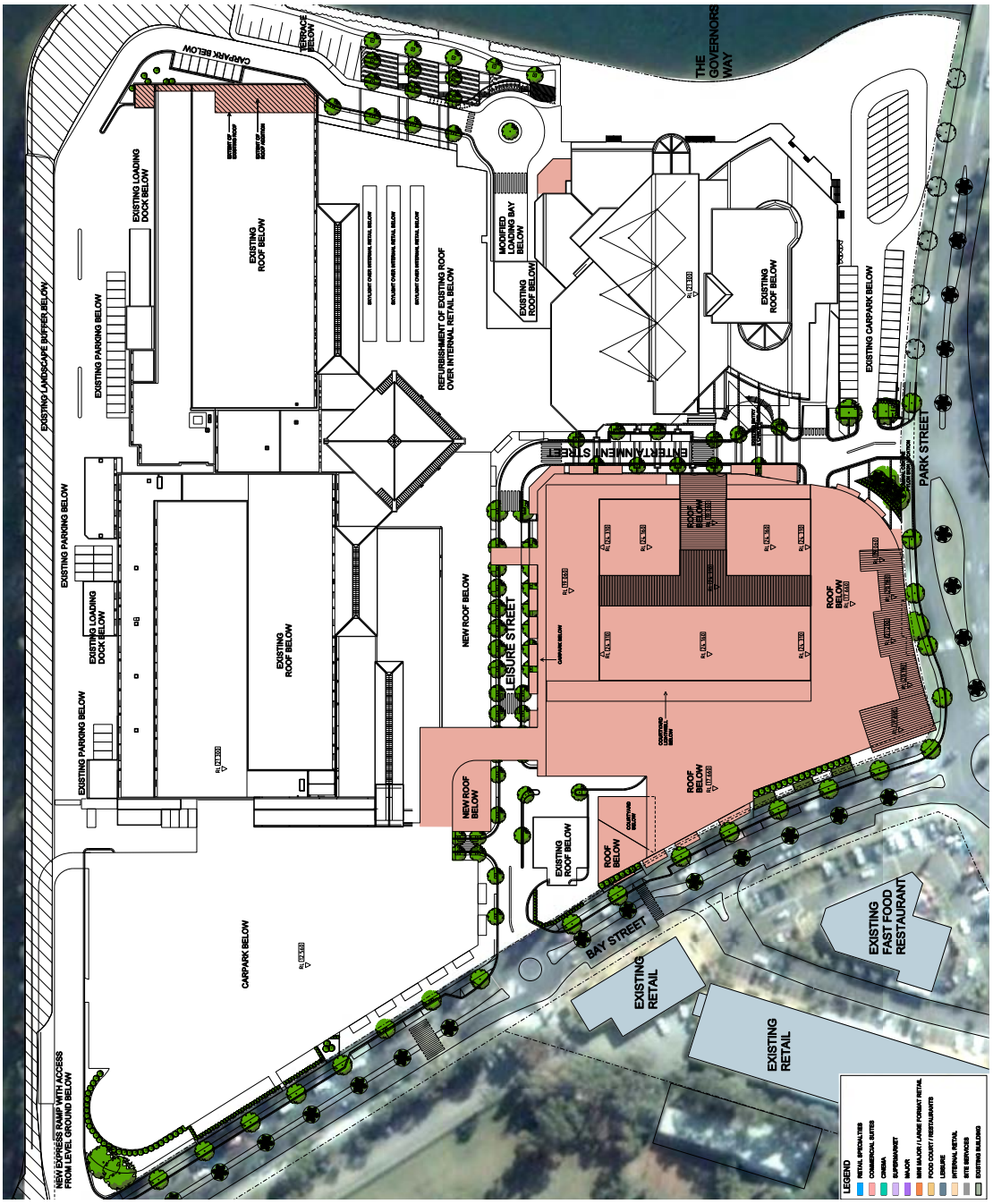
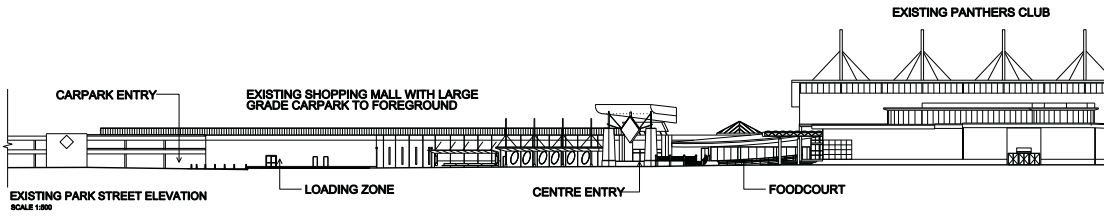


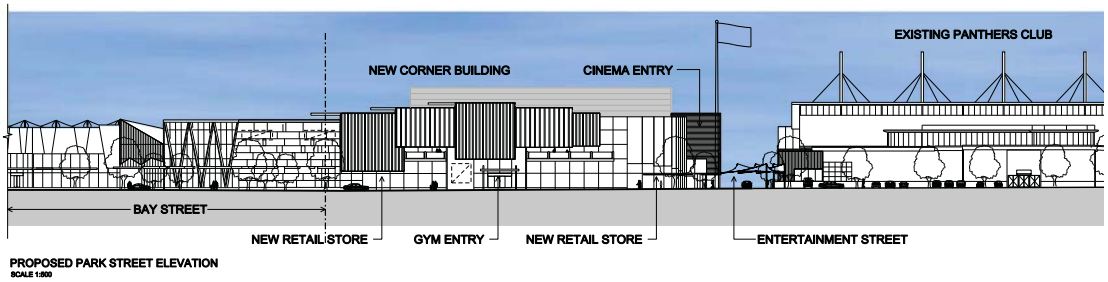
CLOUSTON associates	*Fig 3.2*	Settlement City, Port Macquarie • Visual Impact Assessment **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: ROOFPLAN**	NS 1063 15.05.09

VIEW TOWARDS EXISTING CARPARK ENTRY

VIEW TOWARDS JUNCTION OF PARK STREET & BAY STREET

VIEW TOWARD PANTHERS CLUB FROM PARK STREET



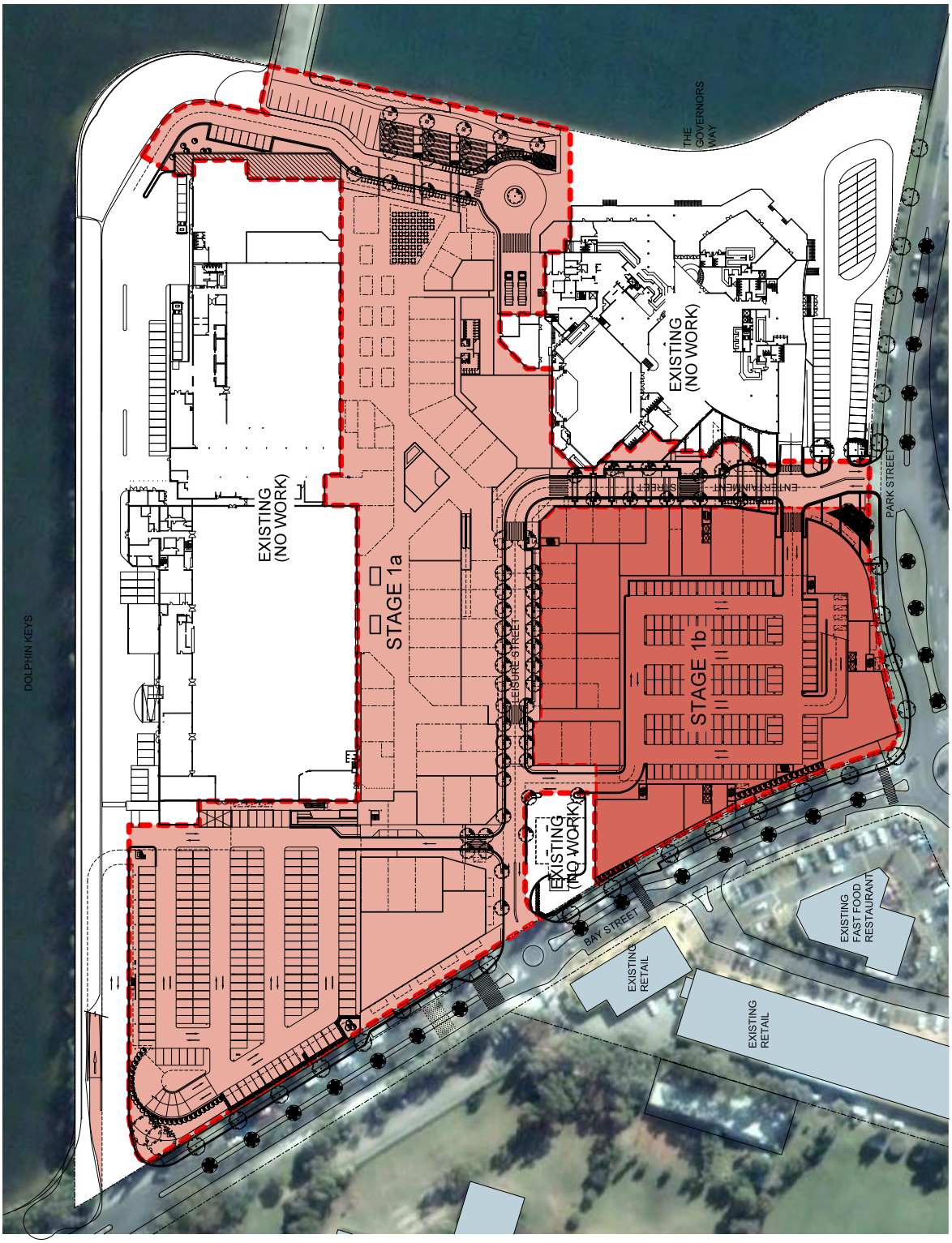


ARTIST PERSPECTIVE SHOWING PROPOSED ELEVATIONAL TREATMENT

VIEW 01

VIEW 02

CLOUSTON associates	Fig 3.3	Settlement City, Port Macquarie • Visual Impact Assessment **PROPOSAL: ELEVATIONS AND IMAGES**	NS 1063 15.05.09



CLOUSTON associates	*Fig 3.4*	Settlement City, Port Macquarie • Visual Impact Assessment **STAGING PLAN**	NS 1063 15.05.09

4. VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In Table 01 the level of visual impact of the various elements of the proposed development on the principal visual receptors is summarised. These assessments are based on a range of evaluation criteria, both quantitative (objective and measurable changes to the view and scene) and qualitative (subjective perceptions of the positive or adverse impacts of those changes based on the anticipated perceptions and experience of the different viewers / receptors).

4.1 QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The quantitative evaluation criteria for each visual receptor include:

- Receptor Sensitivity ie is the receptor viewing the development as part of their domestic or working life or is the view periodic or occasional eg from a road while passing the site?
- Distance of viewer from the heart of the site or proposal.
- Quantum of view occupied by the development or proposal.
- Duration of the view, ie from a fixed position or while passing.
- Magnitude of change, ie how significantly different the proposal will be from the nature and form of the existing landscape.

These evaluation criteria are separately assessed on a five point scale of High, High/Medium, Medium, Medium/Low and Low. The rationale for these individual scores is provided in the key to the table (see Table 02).

From the aggregated scoring of each of the above criterion a total assessment of quantitative visual impacts is determined under the heading 'Visual Significance' and scored on the same basis.

4.2 QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

In the absence of a consultation with all of the existing and future visual receptors, an assessment of the perceptual visual impacts is based on a professional evaluation of the combination of Scenic Sensitivity of the site and anticipated receptor perceptions of visual impacts based on previous project experience of consultation with receptors of a similar nature. It should be stressed that this assessment is solely a professional one and given the personal nature of each viewers experience, is provided for guidance only in this assessment.

4.3 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

In Section 5.0 a summary of the net visual impacts based on both quantitative and qualitative scores is detailed. This summary then informs the proposed mitigation measures and recommendations in Sections 6.0 and 7.0.

Set out on the following pages are four key views referenced in the SCPSP and in section 2 of this VIA and in which a block model of the development has been inserted to illustrate the impacts.

Fig 4.1a- Receptor CH2 existing (View A in SCPSP) from St Agnes Church Forecourt. Note Panthers RSL roofline, white building in mid distance right.

Fig 4.1b- Receptor CH2 proposed (View A in SCPSP) from St Agnes Church Forecourt. Note roofline of cinema immediately below and to right of flagpole, approximatley 3 metres above RSL roofline; there is no appreciable loss of view to mountain backdrop from this location and the pine trees in the midground are likely to obscure much of the proposed building when they mature.

Fig 4.2a- Receptor P3 existing (View B in SCPSP) from CBD foreshore walk. Note existing Panthers RSL roofline, white building in mid distance

Fig 4.2b- Receptor P3 proposed (View B in SCPSP) from CBD foreshore walk. Note roofline of cinema immediately to right of flagpole and left of RSL.

Fig 4.3a- Receptor RE1 existing (View D in SCPSP) from Hastings Avenue. Note existing Panthers RSL roofline, white inclined roof in mid distance, centre left.

Fig 4.3b- Receptor RE1 proposed (View D in SCPSP) from Hastings Avenue. Note Panthers RSL roofline obscured by new development cinema roofline. Cinema roofline does not breach horizon from this location but would do so marginally from midslope in the street.

Fig 4.4a- Receptor P1 existing (not shown in SCPSP) from Seawall Wakway. Note existing RSL roofline in distance, centre right. Vegetation in front of RSL is mostly mid ground on Pelican Island.

Fig 4.4b- Receptor P1 proposed (not shown in SCPSP) from Seawall Wakway. Note new development roofline to left of RSL with cinema roofline above height of RSL and mountain horizon in background mostly obscured in this part of view.

Fig 4.5a- View from Governor's Way, north side of bridge, existing. This is a key view noted in the SCPSP.

Fig 4.5b- View from Governor's Way, north side of bridge, proposed.

TABLE 01 : VISUAL RECEPTOR IMPACT ANALYSIS

RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION			*QUANTITIVE RATING*					*QUALITATIVE RATING*	*SUMMARY*	
RECEPTOR NO	*RECEPTOR DESCRIPTION*	*PHOTO NO*	*DISTANCE*	*VIEW QUANTUM*	*DURATION*	*MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE*	*SUMMARY RATING QUANTITATIVE*	*RECEPTOR SENSTIVITY*	*TOTAL RATING*	*COMMENTS*
SE1	*School*		*H*	*M-L*	*H*	*L*	*M*	*M-H*	M	*Minor glimpsed views*
CE1	*Stores*	*15*	*H*	*M-H*	*H*	*M-H*	*M-H*	*M-L*	M	*Direct view across Bay St*
CE2a	*Marina*		*H*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Trees obscure views*
CE3b	*Resort*		*H*	*L*	*M*	*L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Trees obscure views*
CH1	*St. Thomas Church*		*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*M-H*	M-L	*Many rooftops in view total change is limited*
CH2	*St. Agnes Church*	*1*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*M-H*	M-L	*Many rooftops in view total change is limited*
HE1	*Apartments*	*19,4*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*H*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Mid distance views across rooftop*
HE2a,b,c	*Houses*		*M-H*	*L*	*H*	*L*	*L*	*H*	L	*Views obscured by dense vegetation on opposite shore*
HE3	*Houses*	*6*	*M-H*	*M-L*	*H*	*M*	*M*	*H*	M	*Direct or oblique view across canal*
WE1	*Bay*		*M*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*M*	L	*Foreshore vegetation and roadside bridge obscure views*
RE1	*Hastings Av*	*4*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M*	*M-H*	*M*	*M-H*	M-H	*Mid distant elevated view over rooftops. Cinema rooftops quite evident and dominant in mid ground*
RE2	*Park St*	*8*	*H*	*M-L*	*L*	*M*	*M*	*M-L*	M-L	*Panthers building obscures most view of new development*
RE3	*Park St*	*5*	*M-H*	*M-L*	*L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Views partly obscured by existing roadside trees*
RE4	*Park St*	*7*	*H*	*M-H*	*L*	*H*	*M-H*	*M-L*	M	*Close up view at Park Street and Bay Street junctions*

KEY

For rationale in establsihing rating for each criteria see Tabe 02

SE - SCHOOL EXISTING - View from existing school
CE - COMMERCIAL EXISTING - View from existing commercial or retail premises
CH - CHURCH EXISTING - View from existing church
HE - HOUSE EXISTING - View from window, door, verandah of house or apartment
WE - WATER EXISTING - View from navigable or non-navigable water body
RE - ROAD EXISTING - View from road
PE - PUBLIC WALKWAY or open space

TABLE 01 (CONT'D) : VISUAL RECEPTOR IMPACT ANALYSIS (CONTINUED)

RECEPTOR IDENTIFCATION			*QUANTITIVE RATING*					*QUALITATIVE RATING*	*SUMMARY*	
RECEPTOR NO	*RECEPTOR DESCRIPTION*	*PHOTO NO*	*DISTANCE*	*VIEW QUANTUM*	*DURATION*	*MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE*	*SUMMARY RATING QUANTITATIVE*	*RECEPTOR SENSTIVITY*	*TOTAL RATING*	*COMMENTS*
RE5	*Park St*	*9*	*H*	*H*	*L*	*M-H*	*M-H*	*M-L*	M	*Direct view into entry major new built form on streetfront*
RE6	*Park St*		*H*	*M*	*L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Panthers building obscures most view of new development*
RE7	*Bay St*		*H*	*H*	*L*	*H*	*M-H*	*M-L*	M	*Direct view into entry major new built form on streetfront*
RE8	*Bay St*		*H*	*M-H*	*L*	*M*	*M*	*M-L*	M-L	*Built form height in close view will change little*
P1	*Walkway*	*22,23*	*L*	*M*	*M-L*	*M*	*L*	*M-H*	M-H	*view to Pelican Island and mountain backdrop. Cinema rooftop higher than RSL*
P2	*Walkway*	*22,23*	*L*	*M*	*M-L*	*M*	*M*	*M-H*	M-H	*Distant view but cinema roof clearly evident above trees*
P3	*Wharf*		*L*	*M*	*M-L*	*M*	*M*	*M-H*	M-H	*As above*
P4	*Walkway*	*3*	*L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-H*	M	*Oblique view foreshore vegetation obscures site but cinema roof evident*
P5	*Park*	*10*	*H*	*M*	*M-L*	*M-H*	*M*	*M-H*	M	*Direct view but park not developed and little used*
P6	*Foreshore*	*8*	*H*	*M-H*	*L*	*M-H*	*M*	*M-H*	M	*Angled view of development*
P7	*Foreshore*	*20*	*H*	*M-H*	*L*	*M-H*	*M-H*	*M*	M	*Close view on foreshore*
P8	*Weir*	*6*	*M-H*	*M-H*	*L*	*M*	*M-L*	*M-L*	M-L	*Direct view from weir crossing*
P9	*Inlet Foreshore*	*16*	*M-H*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*L*	*M*	L	*Dense foreshore trees obscure view to site*
P10	*Foreshore Park*	*11*	*M*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-L*	*M-H*	M	*Top of cinema roofs possibly visible*

KEY

For rationale in establsihing rating for each criteria see Tabe 02

SE - SCHOOL EXISTING - View from existing school
CE - COMMERCIAL EXISTING - View from existing commercial or retail premises
CH - CHURCH EXISTING - View from existing church
HE - HOUSE EXISTING - View from window, door, verandah of house or apartment
WE - WATER EXISTING - View from navigable or non-navigable water body
RE - ROAD EXISTING - View from road
PE - PUBLIC WALKWAY or open space

TABLE 02 - RATIONALE FOR IMPACT RATING IN TABLE 01

RECEPTOR		
Receptor **Identification**		Receptor identification includes: – Receptor Number: A letter prefix that identifies the Receptor Type (on this project the receptor types fall into the categories as summarised in the key to the analysis table) and Receptor Number as identified in the Receptor Identification Map – Receptor Description: a written description of the location (eg street number or principle viewing point) – Photo Location (where applicable): photo location as shown on Photo Location Map
QUANTITATIVE IMPACT RATING		
Distance		The effect the development has on the view is related to the distance between the development and the receptor. The distances are categorised as:
	H	Within 100 metres- high impact
	H/M	100 to 500 metres - high to moderate impact
	M	500 metres to 1000 metres - moderate impact
	M/L	1000 metres to 2000 metres - moderate to low impact
	L	Further than 2000 metres - low impact
Quantum of View		The Quantum of view relates to the openness of the view and the angle of the view to the principal vistas. A development located in the direct line of sight has a higher impact than if it were located obliquely at the edge of the view. Whether the view of the development is filtered by vegetation etc. also affects the impact, as does the nature of the view (panoramic, restricted etc.). A small element within a panoramic view has less impact than the same element within a restricted or narrow view. The effects can be categorised as:
	H	A direct view of the development or its presence in a restricted view where development occupies a large proportion of the view cone
	M/H	A direct view of the development within a panoramic view where development occupies a large proportion of the view cone
	M	A direct view of the development or its presence in a restricted view where development occupies a moderate proportion of the view cone
	M/L	A direct view of the development within a panoramic view where development occupies a moderate proportion of the view cone
	L	An oblique or highly filtered view of the development
Duration		The length of time the viewer is exposed to the view. The duration of view affects the impact of the development on the viewer - the longer the exposure the more detailed the impression of the proposed change in terms of visual impact
	H	Significant part of the day - high impact: usually residential property or workplace
	M/H	5 minutes to several hours - high to moderate impact: usually from a garden or park
	M	10 seconds to 1 minute - moderate impact: usually from a road or walking past
	M/L	5 to 10 seconds - moderate to low impact: usually from a road
	L	1 to 5 seconds - low impact: usually from a road

Magnitude of change		Magnitude of change is a quantitative assessment of the change in nature or character of the view If the development will complement the existing elements within the view- i.e. buildings of a similar scale, location and appearance, the magnitude of change is low. If the development radically changes the nature or composition of the view, i.e. a view of open space is replaced by a view of large buildings, the magnitude of change is high.
	H	The magnitude of change can be categorised as: More than 50 percent of elements of the view (e.g. built form, open space, streetscape) and composition of the view will change
	M/H	Less than 50 percent of the view and composition of the view will change
	M	More than 50 percent of elements of the view are unchanged but composition or arrangement of the view changes
	M/L	Less than 50 percent of elements of the view are unchanged but composition or arrangement of the view changes
	L	Elements and composition of the view remain largely unaltered
Summary Impact Rating		A rating of visual significance based on the overall combination of the preceding factors (Distance, Extent of view, Magnitude of change). The significance is rated high, moderate to high, moderate, moderate to low or low
QUALITATIVE IMPACT RATING		
Receptor Sensitivity		Each receptor type has an inherent sensitivity based on its relative level of presence or interest in the landscape. Rating is from highest to lowest sensitivity
	H	Existing Residential - view from dwelling experienced regularly over long periods of time, residents develop a strong familiarity and association with the view. Viewers may have a personal investment in the property and consequently the view - highest sensitivity
	H	Existing Roads - the view experienced is often temporary, views are sometimes oblique and obstacles such as topography and trees fragment the view thus reducing its impact - moderate sensitivity
Qualitative Impact overall		This is the summary rating of all qualitative impacts
SUMMARY		
Overall Impact Rating		This is a total summary of quantitative and qualitative ratings
Comments		This summarises the nature of the key visual impacts for visual receptors

5. SUMMARY OF VISUAL IMPACTS

From the foregoing assessment of both the qualitative and quantitative visual impacts of the proposal when completed, the summary of overall impacts from most to least potential significance are set out below:

High Impacts
- None.

Moderate to High Impacts
- Key mid distance views including Hastings Avenue (RE1), Seawall walkway (P1), Foreshore walk views west of the CBD (P2 and 3). See Figures 4.1 to 4.4 for existing/proposed development images. (Note P3 not illustrated.)

Moderate Impacts
- Some views along Bay Street from east and west, given the scale of the streetfront building heights against the more intimate scale street scale
- Close views from the school and discount store precinct on Bay Street
- Views from north of Governors Way, driving south on Park Street and oblique views from Westport Park foreshore

Moderate to Low Impacts
- Some closer views to development approaching from south and north along Park Street, views to rooftop from Sails Resort and Marina, view from weir
- Elevated views from St Agnes Church, St Thomas Church and Mort St
- Individual high rise sites within the CBD (not numbered)

Low Impacts
- All other receptors.

Impacts Specific to Construction Period

Several elements may be visible during the construction period that will either be present for a limited period after the construction is complete or completely removed. These include:
- Cranes and other plant used for demolition and reconstruction.
- Construction signage, hoardings and fencing.
- Stockpiling and temporary erosion control measures.
- Major construction vehicles accessing and exiting the sites.
- Disturbance to ground for earthworks.
- Lighting of construction during dark hours and for security.

While some of these elements may cause visual impacts of some significance during the period of construction, being of a temporary nature and largely unavoidable they will however have no enduring impacts beyond the construction completion.

Impacts Specific to Operation and Maintenance

Several elements may be visible the day to day life and maintenance of the proposed development once completed. These include:
- Street lighting
- Security lighting if and where applicable
- Advertising signage

These impacts can mostly be mitigated by design and appropriate location of planting.

6. MITIGATION MEASURES

The most effective mitigation measures for any form of potential visual impact are largely those that entail avoidance of impacts through appropriate site selection or reduction of impacts by site and built form design, rather than through more negative responses to design such as through screening. The principal forms of mitigation typically employed in this respect are set out below and their relevance or otherwise to this site and proposal are addressed.

6.1 AVOIDANCE

Site selection; given that the site is zoned appropriately for development of this nature and that the site is already in permitted use for the proposed commercial purposes, the site selection is appropriate here and therefore does not require any avoidance measures.

6.2 REDUCTION

Reductions in impacts can usually be achieved through siting and layout of built form or new landform. In light of the impacts of the cinema roofline the most substantial mitigation that could be achieved would be through redesign of this element to reduce both height and footprint.

6.3 REMEDIATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Remediation and enhancement relates to detailed design elements within the built form (eg colours, materials, finishes etc) and associated landscape and urban design (eg tree planting).Given the scale and height of the cinema roofline, tree planting is unlikely to achieve any significant mitigation for many years and, like the proposed roofline is likely to partly obscure the mountains to the west when the site is viewed from the east. Any remediation or enhancement will therefore rely on design elements such as colour and finishes, with only limited mitigation achieved.at the key views that have moderate to high impacts.

The most important initial aspect of the immediate landscape and planting in the immediate vicinity of the development will be the retention of key trees that will lend a sense of establishment to the new buildings.

Some of the most important trees in this regard appear to lie outside the proponent's ownership on the streetfronts of Park and Bay Street. Selecting the key trees to retain that contribute most visually to the development and site, the removal of those trees that add little visual value and the supplementing of these trees with new planting may be a recommendation to put to Council to undertake as streetscape improvement.

Generally the tree species proposed on the Landscape Design plans do not exceed the roof height of the proposed buildings. For the most part this is an appropriate response to avoid overshading internal streetscapes. However, there are a number of significant existing trees in the immediate vicinity of the site - in particular large Norfolk Island Pines - and it would therefore seem appropriate to plant a small number of larger trees in the heart of the development site which, when mature, appear above the roofscape and add to the locality's treescape.

6.4 OFF SITE COMPENSATIONS

The nature of the visual impacts as addressed in this assessment would not appear to warrant offsite tree plantings to screen immediate views for any of the visual receptors as these would also be likely to obscure long distance views to the mountains.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Settlement City Precinct Structure Plan 2009 (SCPSP) identifies a number of key requirements for the redevelopment of this site that would mitigate visual impacts. In particular the SCPSP identifies:

- key viewpoints from which the visual impacts of any new development at Settlement City Precinct should be considered
- Building height control RLs, in particular those related to the existing RSL roofline that should not be exceeded by new development
- Recommendations on appropriate design character for future development in the Precinct

This VIA report and its background site evaluation endorses the general nature of these viewpoints and controls but demonstrates that some of the viewpoints in the SCPSP are not relevant to the particular part of the wider precinct that is the subject of this redevelopment proposal.

For the most part the proposals assessed in this VIA appear to meet the objectives and guidelines contained in the SCPSP from a visual impact perpsective. However, the specific aspect of the proposal that generates the most visual impact is the cinema roofline which:

- exceeds the maximum roofline RL control
- exceeds the existing roofline RL of the adjoining Panthers RSL building
- creates a relatively bulky structure on the top of the proposed building complex.

The visual impacts of this element of the building are generally moderate to high (M-H) when viewed at distance from three of the four key views illustrated in this assessment (Figs 4.1-4.4) and as a result this is the principal design element that requires closest attention to mitigation.

When viewed from closer quarters in the adjoining streets, parks and residential properties wher the cimema roofline is hidden by the streetfront facades it can reasonably be argued that the development proposal provides some net benefits to visual quality of the site and locality including:

- A stronger and more legible built form street presence on the junction of Bay and Park Street.
- The containment of large areas of parking presently visible from the Park and Bay Street within the proposed built form.
- A more contemporary architectural style appropriate to the locality and responding to the materials and design guidelines in the Structure Plan.
- A more coherent and structured landscape design for the site and its street frontages, including significant new tree plantings.

Any mitigation measures associated with these views would largely be related to planting and tree retention to optimise a sense of an established landscape in which the new buildings would be set.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the principal visual impacts outlined in this assessment relate mostly to the consequences of the height of the cinema roofline located in the heart of the development, any mitigation measures that will reduce this visual impact appear to fall within two scales:

Major Reduction: this would entail the redesign of the cinemas to achieve a reduced roofline RL commensurate with the maximum control height stated in the Structure Plan. This would result in reducing the visual impact rating from each of the key views from moderate to high (M/H) down to Moderate (M); in essence the impacts would then relate to the general bulk and scale of the entire building development. It is understood that the main EA assessment discusses issues and constraints that have been considered by the project team in relation to the potential for design changes to this element of the building.

Minor Reduction: if the above redesign approach is shown not to be possible for reasons not associated with visual impact assessment, then some minor reductions in visual impact could be achieved by selection of appropriate materials, finishes, architectural detailing and colour selection to reduce refectivity, bulk and scale from the key views nominated. However the extent of reduction through this process would not alter the total impact rating for the three key views addressed with moderate to high impacts.

In light of the above it is recommended that the scale, heights and bulk of the cinema roof design be reviewed to establish whether the proposed reduction above can be achieved. From a visual impact perspective this would be the preferred outcome. However, a balanced view of the merits of the proposed design and the appropriateness of the height requires a parallel asssessment of range of operational and technical issues.Such considerations fall outside the scope of this VIA but have been considered within the main EA document. This VIA should therefore be read in parallel with the main EA.

If the above redesign cannot be achieved for operational and other technical reasons and a planning merit case is made and accepted by approval authorities for retaining the currently proposed heights then the minor reduction measures outlined above should be adopted as a matter of course.

Given that the visual impacts of the proposed Settlement City buildings when viewed at close quarters are generally not of a significant nature, it is recommended that a few minor amendments to the proposed landscape designs would assist the perceived establishment of the new building in the landscape; these recommendations are:

- A review of the existing trees on the Park and Bay Street frontages to determine which might best be kept and which should be removed or replaced. Where these trees lie outside the property line of the development this may be a matter to be recommended to Council to undertake as general streetscape improvement.
- The selection of a larger tree species for the corner of Shopping Street and Entertainment Street that would ultimately grow above the proposed roof heights of the development and therefore break down the mass of the roof when viewed from elevated and distant views.

8. REFERENCES

WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

Macroplan Australia. (2009), *Port Macquarie-Hastings Council: Settlement City Precinct Structure Plan January 2009*. Report prepared for Port Macquarie Hastings Council