

## **Royal North Shore Hospital**

Preliminary Environment Assessment







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ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL



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## **1** INTRODUCTION

This assessment has been prepared to identify key potential issues associated with the preparation of a Concept Plan for the redevelopment of the Royal North Shore Hospital site.

In accordance with Part 3A of the EP&A Act and associated guidelines, this preliminary Environmental Assessment has been prepared to provide an overview of the Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards project, to inform consultation with relevant agencies in a Planning Focus Meeting (PFM) (if required).

In summary, the project involves the development of new 'state of the art' hospital facilities. The proposal involves consolidation and refurbishment of some existing buildings to meet changing clinical needs and the development of a new acute hospital building, a new community health precinct and new research and education facilities. The resultant rationalisation of hospital assets will release surplus land, creating opportunities for the commercial development of a range of complementary health activities, and new office, retail and residential development by the private sector to fund procurement of the new health facilities.

## 2 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSAL

The development objectives of the Royal North Shore Hospital Project are to:

- Provide new 'state of the art' hospital facilities with high quality care standards.
- Facilitate the delivery of improved health, education, research and community facilities on site.
- Provide improved access to and between different health and community services on site.
- Provide flexible building design to allow for future modification and expansion to meet anticipated growth in demand for services and changes in clinical practice.
- Encourage supplementary and support private hospital health facilities on lands core to the RNSH public hospital.
- Ensure development provides harmony and balance with the surrounding areas.
- Facilitate the broader redevelopment of St Leonards and surrounding environs.
- Introduce a wide range of uses onto the site consistent with the site's proximity to the St Leonards Station, including commercial, retail and residential uses, whilst maintaining as a dominant feature, the RNS hospital and complementary health activities.
- Provide a high quality urban environment through careful design of buildings and a well designed public domain.
- Improve and enhance the public domain, including a variety of public areas and pedestrian and vehicular connections through the site.
- Retain significant heritage items, within a campus-wide strategy for adaptive reuse.
- Enhance access to public transport, including walking, cycling, rail and bus networks.
- Provide adequate car parking on site.
- Manage traffic though the site so that pedestrians can move freely and safely, and amenity is maintained.
- Encourage public transport use by enhancing convenient access to rail and bus networks.
- Maintain a leafy, green environment.
- Identify opportunities for the private commercial development of surplus lands to fund procurement and to accomodate new health and related facilities.



## **3 PROPONENT AND CONSULTANT TEAM**

This preliminary environmental assessment has been prepared on behalf of NSW Health, the proponent of the project. The consultant team for the project currently includes:

- Burns Bridge Services Pty Ltd (Project Director Procurement)
- Cox Richardson Architects (Urban Planning)
- UrbisJHD (Statutory Planning)
- Hassell/Silver Thomas Hanley Architects (Hospital Planning)
- Bassetts Consulting Engineers (Building Services/ESD Engineers)
- Taylor Thomson Whitting (Structural/Civil Engineers)
- Masson Wilson Twiney (Traffic Engineers)
- Godden Mackay Logan (Heritage)

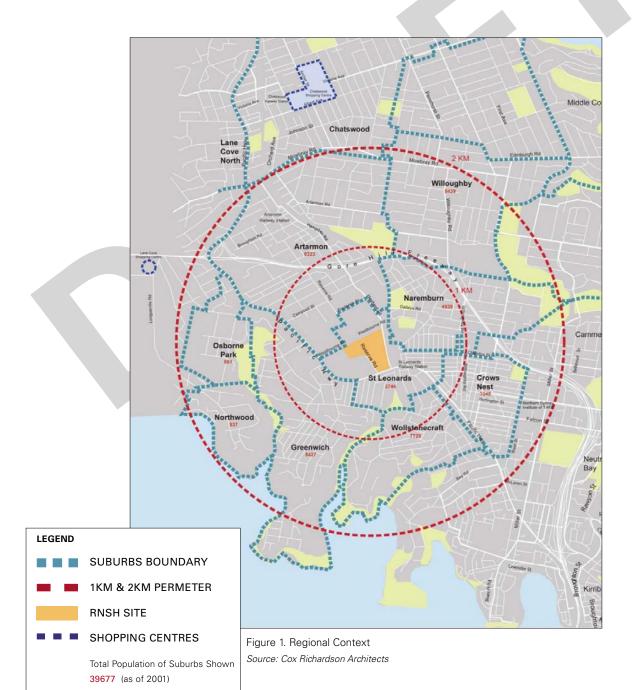
## 4 THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

## 4.1 **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The site is located is St Leonards on the lower north shore within the Willoughby Local Government Area (LGA), approximately 10 minute drive from Sydney CBD.

St Leonards has been identified as a 'Specialised Centre – Employment Precinct' in the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney, primarily due to the presence of the RNS Hospital, as well as the scale of office employment and its strategic location along rail and bus networks. St Leonards provides regionally significant concentrations of employment, health, education and lifestyle related activities at a location well serviced by public transport, as well as supporting areas of higher density residential development.

St Leonards station will soon be accessible to Strathfield station via the equidistant rail routes of either the new Macquarie Line or via the Sydney CBD. On completion of the Land Cove Tunnel the site will also have direct access to the Orbital Motorway. This will make St Leonards highly accessible from locations throughout the Sydney metropolitan area.



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## 4.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

The site has excellent access to the Sydney CBD. It is located within immediate proximity of St Leonards Railway Station, and lies on several major bus routes. It is within easy walking distance of transportation networks, shops, offices, open space and residential properties. It has convenient access to both the Pacific Highway and the Orbital Motorway (including the Gore Hill Freeway).

The high ridge that underlies St Leonards is reflected in built form and the skyline is an interesting and distinctive feature in the broader landscape, with the railway station marked by the highly visible Forum development.

RNS Hospital is surrounded by a wide variety of land uses, including St Leonards CBD and high density housing to the east; residential development to the south and east; special uses (UTS North Sydney TAFE, Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery and former ABC site) to the west; industry and Gore Hill Park to the immediate south west.

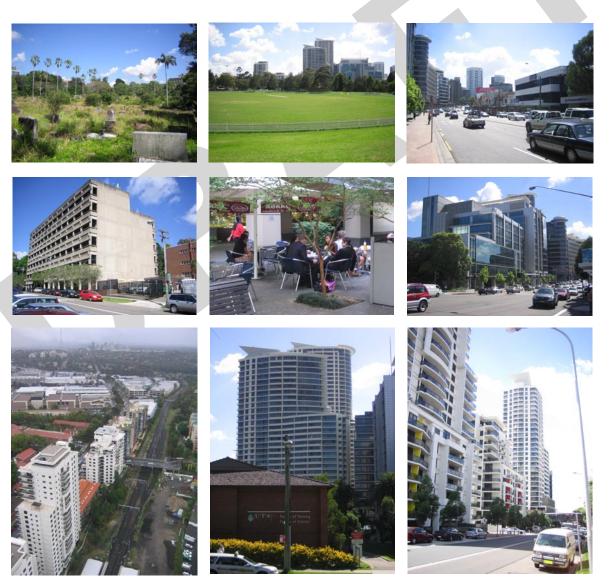


Figure 2. Local Context

## 4.3 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

The site has an area of approximately 11.5 hectares. It is commonly known as the Royal North Hospital Campus. The majority of land which will be subject to the Concept Plan is owned by Northern Sydney Area Health Service and is legally described as Lot 21 in DP 863329. The land surrounding Gore Hill Park that will also be subject to the Concept Plan is Crown Land Reserve and is legally described as Lot 7083 in DP 93642. The crown land is administered by Willoughby Council.

The site occupies a prominent ridge to the north of the Pacific Highway, and the main high rise hospital building is a prominent landmark visible from many vantage points in the North Shore.

The RNS Hospital is a complex site consisting of a wide range of building types, styles and sizes ranging from small Queen Anne buildings to the multi storey Hospital Building 2.

Vehicular access to the site is from the Pacific Highway to the south and the Gore Hill Freeway to the north. Service vehicle access is available from Herbert Street and the western section of Westbourne Street. A complex internal road network provides vehicular access to the different hospital precincts and buildings.

RNS Hospital is a major teaching, research and referral hospital and provides state-wide services for burns and spinal injuries. It also has a major emergency department and plays a significant role in the provision of specialist services for the Sydney metropolitan area, particularly in surgical and medical services, paediatrics, maternity and community services.





Figure 3. Existing Development

## 4.4 EP&A ACT AND RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

## EP& A Act

Part 3A the Act came into force on 1 August 2005. It established new assessment procedures for various forms of 'major development' of state or regional significance. Such significance can be established in a number of ways, including being a form of development listed at Schedules 1 & 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects). Group 7 of Schedule 1 lists Health and Public Service Facilities – Hospitals. This project clearly conforms to the Group 7 class of development.

NSW Health has requested that DOP confirm in writing that the development constitutes a 'major project' for which the Minister for Planning is the Consent Authority, and to which Part 3A of the Act applies.

Essentially, the concept approval process provides for the Minister to undertake a co-ordinated whole of government assessment of the merits of the concept of a project of significance to the state, and to establish procedures for the subsequent approval of detailed aspects of the project.

NSW Health is seeking the Director General Environmental Assessment Requirements for the project. A concept plan will be prepared in accordance with the matters outlined in these requirements.

## **State Environmental Planning Policies**

State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Project) 2005.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Project) 2005 came into affect on 25 May 2005 and was subsequently amended on 31 October 2005. This SEPP defines what development is state significant development and is determined by the Minister of Planning. NSW Health has requested that DOP confirm in writing that the development will be declared as a 'Major Project" pursuant to Clause 6 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects). NSW Health has also requested that the Minister rezone the subject land and have it listed as a 'State Significant Site' pursuant to clause 8 of the SEPP to facilitate the disposal of surplus land for residential, commercial and retail development.

State Environmental Planning Policy 55 – Remediation of Land

SEPP 55 states that land must not be rezoned or developed unless contamination has been considered and, where relevant, land has been appropriately remediated.

State Environmental Planning Policy 11 – Traffic Generating Developments

SEPP 11 aims to ensure that the Roads and Traffic Authority is made aware of and is given an opportunity to make representations in respect of certain types of development referred to in Schedule 1 or 2 of the SEPP.



The following are included in the Schedules to SEPP 11:

Schedule 1: (I) heliports, airports or aerodromes

Schedule 2: (o) the erection of a building for the purposes of a hospital with accommodation for 100 or more beds or the enlargement or extension of a building for the purposes of a hospital where that enlargement or extension provides accommodation for 100 or more beds.

State Environmental Planning Policy 8 – Surplus Public Land

SEPP 8 aims to promote and co-ordinate the orderly and economic use of land in public ownership which is no longer required for the public purpose and is otherwise surplus to public needs.

Draft SEPP 66 – Integration of Land Use and Transport

The Draft SEPPP states that the consent authority must consider whether the future development of the site helps integrate land use and transport, and minimises the need to travel by private car.

## Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 1995 (WLEP 1995)

The site is located within a 5(a) Special Uses Zone under the provisions of the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 1995 (WLEP 1995). This zoning provides for hospital, community and infrastructure type uses only.

Hospitals are permissible with development consent under the current zoning. Residential, commercial and retail development is prohibited within the current zone. Notwithstanding, under SEPP (Major Projects) 2005, provided that the project is not "wholly" prohibited in the current zone, the project can be approved by the Minister.

### Special provisions under WLEP 1995

In addition to the zoning issues WLEP 1995 contains a number of controls that may have implications for a proposed hospital facility and are summarised below:

- Clause 11 Subdivision of land requires development consent.
- Clause 13c The objective of this clause is the preservation and management of trees and bushland vegetation within the City of Willoughby. This clause allows Council to make a tree or bushland preservation order.
- Clause 13D Consideration must be given to whether the proposed development will cause loss of views, loss of privacy or a reduction of sunlight to the living areas or principal open space recreation areas.
- Clauses 56-62 Heritage items and development in the vicinity of heritage items. Consent is required for development on land that is affected by heritage items and consideration must be given to the heritage significance of the item concerned and its setting.

## **Other Relevant Legislation**

NSW Legislation:

- Roads Act 1993 (S. 138) consent to:
  - a. erect a structure or carry out a work in, on or over a public road, or (b) dig up or disturb the surface of a public road, or
  - b. remove or interfere with a structure, work or tree on a public road, or
  - c. pump water into a public road from any land adjoining the road, or
  - d. connect a road (whether public or private) to a classified road).
- Local Government Act 1993 (Section 68 approvals drainage works, carry out work/connect to Council water supply, carry out work/connect to Council's sewer).

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## 5 THE PROJECT

The project will provide new 'state of the art' hospital facilities on the RNS campus to meet changed clinical needs. Surplus land released by the consolidation of health facilities will provide opportunities for the development of complementary health facilities and commercial and residential development by the private sector to support and fund the procurement of the new health facilities. The project will comprise:

## **Hospital Rationalisation**

 Consolidation/refurbishment of some existing buildings to meet changing clinical needs and the development of a new acute hospital building, a new community health precinct and new research and education facilities.

## **New Development of Surplus Land**

- An additional 160,000m<sup>2</sup> of privately developed floor space area (FSA) on the site in a range of new health related, commercial, retail, research, high technology and residential buildings ranging from 5 to 30 storeys.
- Provision of accommodation for nursing and medical officer staff, students and hospital patient relatives.
- Public open space and new pedestrian links.
- New car parking facilities.
- New internal roads.
- Landscaping.

An indicative site planning analysis is included on the following page at Figure 4.

## 5.1 ASPECTS FOR WHICH CONCEPT APPROVAL WILL BE SOUGHT

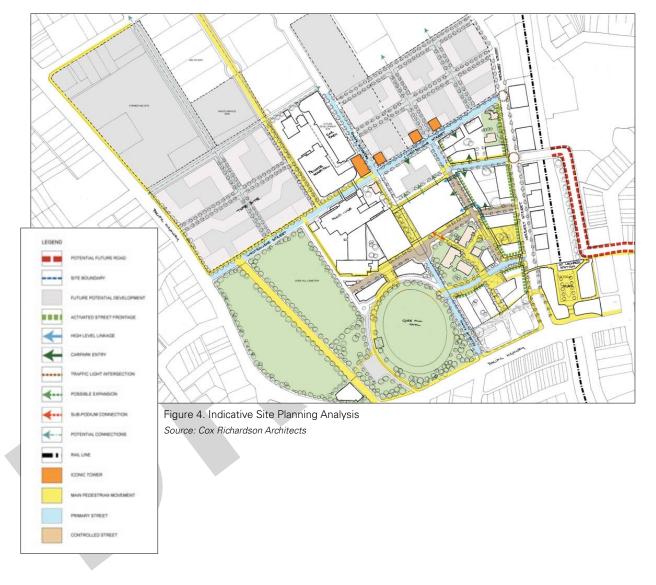
Aspects for which concept approval will be sought includes:

- Land use distribution.
- Heights.
- Floor Space Ratios (FSR).
- Road hierarchy/layout.
- Open space networks.
- Access networks.
- Car parking numbers.
- Landscaped areas (% of site).
- Heritage Re-Use Strategy.
- Construction Staging.

Pursuant to the 'Concept Plan' provisions of Part 3A of the EP&A Act, the detailed design of buildings and works will be separately approved.

## 5.2 ZONING RATIONALE

As the site is currently zoned 5(a) Special Uses "A" under the Willoughby LEP 1995, there is an issue of zoning and permissibility of certain uses. Provided that the project is not "wholly" prohibited within the current zone, the project can be approved. Notwithstanding, whilst the outcomes of the Concept Plan under Part 3A of the EP&A Act will allow residential, commercial and retail development on the site, a rezoning is required to facilitate the disposal of surplus public land.



## 6 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

## 6.1 HOSPITAL OPERATIONS

Contemporary service delivery modes are changing the way in which health services are delivered and arranged, The ageing population will require services that are patient-centres and organised in a way that make services easy to access. Whilst inpatient beds will be an important part of the redeveloped facilities, most people will not receive treatment in a traditional impatient unit, but will be cared for on a day-stay, ambulatory or outreach basis.

The RNS Hospital redevelopment project, provides opportunity to enhance health services on site by:

- Locating acute clinical services in one building, with close links to rehabilitation services to improve accessibility, and enhance continuity between acute and rehabilitation services.
- Improving links between community and other health services on site.
- Providing consolidated research facilities and multidisciplinary educational facilities on site.
- Providing flexible building design to allow for future modification and expansion to meet changes in clinical practice.

## 6.2 METRO STRATEGY

The Metro Strategy was released on 4 December 2005 and represents the State Governments latest strategic policy for the future development of greater metropolitan Sydney. The Metropolitan Strategy map is included on the next page at Figure 5. The Metro Strategy for Sydney has identified St Leonards as a "Specialised Centre for Employment" and has projected employment targets of 33,000 for St Leonards by 2031. This is an increase of 31% on the current working population of 25,156 for St Leonards. St Leonards is also located centrally within the identified "Global Economic Corridor" and the Arc of "Knowledge and High Skilled Industry" from North Ryde to Sydney Airport, adjacent to a major public transport node.

Opportunity exists on the RNS Hospital site to build on the site's strategic health, education and transport assets as a catalyst for employment and residential growth in line with the State Government's strategic plans for St Leonard's. Given the size of the campus, there is opportunity to provide employment for a significant portion of the anticipated 31% employment growth in St Leonards on the site. A large part of this employment potential will be in direct and indirect healthrelated services.

Similarly the site offers very high amenity for residential uses by virtue of proximity to public transport, employment, services, shops, open space and entertainment can help meet demand for hospital-related accommodation demand (such as nurses and medical officer accommodation).

## 6.3 STATE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The RNS Hospital redevelopment can deliver valuable social and economic outcomes for the Region. The site will help achieve state and regional planning objectives, importantly the recently released Sydney Metropolitan Strategy. As stated at Section 6.2 significant opportunity exists on the site to provide employment and residential growth in line with State Governments plans for St Leonards as a 'Specialised Centre for Employment' within the Global Economic Corridor.





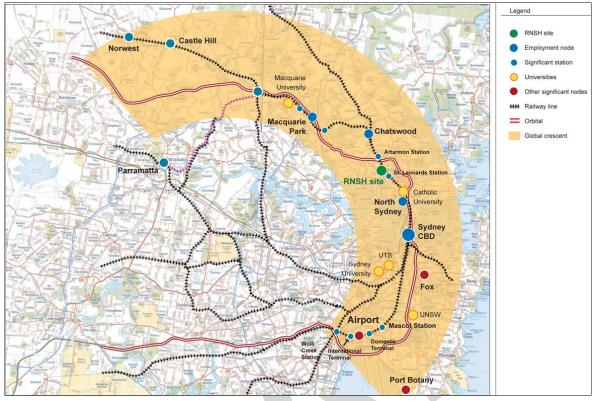


Figure 6. Global Economic Corridor as identified in Sydney Metropolitan Strategy *Source: Cox Richardson Architects* 



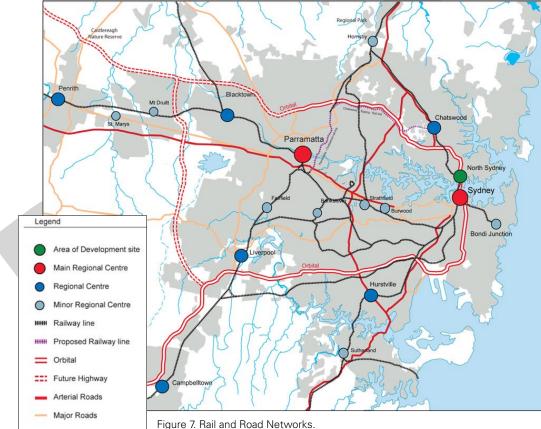


## 6.4 TRANSPORT

The site has convenient access to public transport, especially rail and bus routes on Pacific Highway. The redevelopment of the site in close proximity of St Leonards Railway Station will make a major contribution to the transit oriented development principles of the Metro Strategy.

Transport issues for consideration will be:

- Traffic impacts on the external road system.
- The efficiency of new roads on the site.
- Integration of the new roads with the established roads adjacent to the site.
- Pedestrian connections to and through the site with particular reference to convenience of access to the station.
- Provision of service and emergency access.
- Opportunities for bus access onto the site.
- Consistency with draft SEPP 66 principles.
- Measures to promote public transport usage.



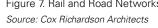




Figure 8. St Leonards Railway Station











The site is easily accessible from the Pacific Highway and is immediately adjacent to St Leonards Railway Station. Specialist traffic consultants (Masson Wilson Twiney) have been engaged to determine potential impacts on the Pacific Highway and surrounding road networks.

The site also adjoins Herbert Street and connects to Reserve Road. These are major collector roads through the Artarmon industrial area. Vehicular access is proposed to both of these with studies being undertaken to optimise this.

It is intended to continue to transfer patients to the hospital by helicopter in emergency situations. The number of helicopter admissions to the facility are likely to be in the order of approximately 5 - 7 flights weekly. Helicopters will follow approved flight paths determined by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). Specialist acoustic consultants will be engaged to determine potential noise impacts of various helicopter route options and specialist advice will be obtained with regard to potential aviation hazards.

It is proposed to provide commercial and residential parking generally in accordance with Willoughby Council's development control plan. Hospital and special uses parking will be provided in accordance with needs subject to a program by the hospital to encourage staff to minimise private car usage.

Issues for access will be:

- Quality and convenience of vehicular access for different user groups.
- Quantity and disposition of parking.
- Safety and noise impacts of helicopter access.

## 6.5 HERITAGE

Hospital use commenced on this site in 1903, replacing an earlier cottage hospital located on a site in Crows Nest. Over the subsequent decades the hospital site grew through acquisition of adjacent lands with buildings and landscaping added in virtually every decade.

No structures/elements on the site have been formally listed as having state heritage significance, although the site retains the group of four (4) original hospital buildings erected on the site in 1903, including the RMOs Building and adjacent wards. These, and the two former cottages in the northeast corner of the site, are of greatest significance with later buildings mostly of moderate to low heritage significance.

Some of the landscape areas and trees have heritage value, in particular, those around the early buildings and lining Reserve Road. The latter is an historic alignment that pre-dated the hospital. The part of Eileen Street adjacent to Reserve Road is also an historic alignment. There are also several areas of mature trees on the eastern side of Reserve Road and avenue planting to the southern part of the site.

The majority of existing buildings on the site have been added to or altered in some way, as is customary for major public hospitals. Detailed heritage investigations have been undertaken to ensure that built and landscape heritage values on the site are identified and the most significant items protected and appropriately managed. Godden Mackay Loggan will provide heritage advice for the Concept Plan.

Godden Mackay Logan have commenced an Archaeological Assessment, although the site's archaeological potential is expected to be low.



Figure 8. Heritage Building on Site





## 6.7 PUBLIC/PRIVATE DOMAIN

Whilst the RNS campus is currently publicly owned, general public access to much of the site is limited. Public access will be maintained to the main hospital facilities and the rationalisation of surplus public land will also create opportunities to provide new public spaces, enhance and protect the public domain and provide new pedestrian connections through the site to the Gore Hill Oval, St Leonards Railway Station, UTS North Sydney TAFE and north south links to other employment areas.

## 6.8 SURROUNDING LAND USE CONTEXT AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

The 2005 Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney places St Leonards at the heart of the northern section of the 'Global Economic Corridor'. This Corridor contains the bulk of Sydney's knowledge-based jobs. Located at the heart of the 'Global Economic Corridor', the St Leonards centre catchment has the potential to grow a wide range of knowledge-based jobs, both at the RNS hospital site and in the surrounding industrial precinct at Artarmon and the business district to the south and east of the St Leonards railway station.

However, the site is adjacent to a range of residential, commercial, industrial, open space and 'special uses' with potentially conflicting functions. A key planning issue will be to ensure that the mixed use character of the development fits contextually into, and interfaces appropriately with surrounding development including Gore Hill Park, Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery, the former ABC Studios, UTS, North Sydney TAFE, the Forum Development and St Leonards Railway Station.

## 6.9 BUILT FORM/URBAN DESIGN

The key issues to be considered in determination of the built form include:

- Heights relationship to topography and diverse range of surrounding heights.
- FSA with particular regard to infrastructure capacity.
- Street edge with regard to existing and desired townscape character of St Leonards.
- Shadows with particular regard to public domain space.
- Views consideration of existing and potential view lines, sky lines and legibility of the St Leonards Town Centre.
- Activation in particular the pedestrian and street system, in order to create a vibrant precinct and a vital, safe circulation system for campus users at all times of the day
- Sense of place desire to create a memorable, contemporary, distinctive public domain that celebrates the inherent qualities of the site heritage, topography, landscape and social history.
- Connectivity for pedestrians, public and private transport in moving through the campus and linking with adjacent educational, recreational, employment and residential land uses.
- Address the need for a clear sense of address and identity to the various functional zones on site
- Planning controls with particular regard to recent specific planning controls such as SEPP 65.

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## 6.10 TREES

The landscape on the hospital campus has developed over time with a number of layers of planting evident from the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Several areas of mature trees are located on the eastern side of Reserve Road and avenue planting to the southern part of the site.

Detailed heritage investigations have commenced to ensure that landscape heritage values on the site are identified and the most significant elements protected and appropriately managed. A specialist Arborist Consultant will also be engaged to assess condition and anticipated impact of development on existing vegetation.

## 6.11 ACOUSTICS

Road traffic using the Pacific Highway generates high levels of noise. Noise associated with the Hospital operations includes vehicles entering and existing site, ambulances travelling along the Pacific Highway and helicopter movements.

An acoustic assessment will be undertaken measuring the effect of noise from traffic, ambulances sirens and helicopters and how it is proposed to mitigate any negative impact on the amenity of future and existing occupants of residential development.

## 6.12 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The major redevelopment will facilitate the provision of a contemporary medical facility and enhancement of health facilities for the Lower North Shore. Opportunity exists to provide a range of new and expanded high quality health services on the site. The redevelopment will also provide a significant source of employment in the locality, reinforcing St Leonards as a 'Specialised Centre for Employment'.

## 6.13 INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed usage of the site could increase the services loads including water supply, sewer, stormwater, electricity and gas. The respective utilities will be consulted to allow them to plan for any infrastructure augmentation required.

## 6.14 CONTAMINATION

A preliminary contamination assessment of the site was carried out in 2004. The investigation was for the main hospital area to the east of Reserve Road. Included in the investigation was a desktop review of available records and limited sampling and laboratory testing of the site.

Based on the limited data, it is unlikely that widespread soil contamination is present on the site. Some local areas of contamination were identified that would require remediation. However given the site history and limited contamination results it is anticipated the site can be remediated for hospital, residential and commercial use. Additional testing to EPA guidelines will be required to determine the extent of remediation works.

Groundwater contamination is unlikely to be present on the site, which is also to be confirmed with further testing.

## 6.15 GEOTECHNICAL

A preliminary geotechnical investigation has been carried out on the site. The subsurface conditions indicated by limited boreholes indicated typical conditions that would be expected in this area. There should be no significant geotechnical constraints to the proposed developments. Further testing will be required during detailed design.

**ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL** 



## 7 AGENCIES TO BE CONSULTED

AGENCIES CONSULTED							
Agency	Persons in agency contacted	Consultant	Phone number	Email address			
Willoughby Council	John Owens and Greg Woodhams	Burns Bridge and Cox Richardson	9777 7650	Greg.Woodhams@willoughby.nsw.gov.au			
Heritage Office	Susan Macdonald, Vince Sicari, Rajeev Maini and Murat Gul	Godden Mackay Logan	9873 8500	susan.macdonald@heritage.nsw.gov.au			
Energy Australia	Michael Rourke	Bassetts	9477 8217	mrourke@energy.com.au			
Sydney Water	Peter Gray	Bassetts	9350 4206				
AGL	Shaun Ruddy	Bassetts	9921 2467				
Broadcast Australia	Gary Wallace	Burns Bridge	8425 4666	gary.wallace@broadcastaustralia.com.au			
AGENCIES TO	AGENCIES TO BE CONSULTED						
Road and Traffic Authority		Masson Wilson Twiney					
Department of Transport		Masson Wilson Twiney					
State Rail Authority		Burns Bridge					
Sydney Buses		Burns Bridge					
Telstra		Bassetts					
Civil Aviation and Safety Authority		Hassell/Silver Thomas Hanley Architects					
North Sydney Council		Burns Bridge and Cox Richardson					
Lane Cove Council		Burns Bridge and Cox Richardson					

