Ropes Creek Employment Precinct
Visual Impact Assessment

Lot 5, DP 262213

Submitted to
Minister for Planning
On Behalf of Jacfin Pty Ltd

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JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Ltd ABN 84 060 735 104 ACN 060 735 104 w jbaplanning.com.au
Level 7, 77 Berry Street North Sydney NSW 2060 t 02 9956 6962 ■ 29 Beach Street Wollongong NSW 2500 t 02 4225 7680

Contents

Figures

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by JBA Planning as part of a Concept Plan Application for the proposed Ropes Creek Employment Precinct located at Lot 5 DP 262213, Ropes Creek. This VIA has been prepared on behalf of the Proponent Jacfin Pty Ltd. This VIA is based on Concept Plans dated 6 August 2010 prepared by JBA Planning.

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the site's location, context, landscape environment and topography;
- Section 3 identifies the existing visual catchment of the site and assesses the visual impact of the proposed project; and
- Section 4 summarises the key findings of this report.

The preparation of this VIA has included a physical inspection (by car and foot) of the site and its context, where possible. Viewing points of the site is limited to publicly accessible locations only.

1.2 The Proposed Project

The proposed Concept Plan for the site is illustrated at **Figure 1**. Concept Approval is being sought for the following:

- Site layout and developable areas;
- Regional road connections;
- Site infrastructure;
- Indicative building footprints; and
- Indicative project staging.

The project also includes the detailed design of the first two buildings that are located in the eastern portion of the site. The buildings (**Figure 2**) comprise a 23,100m^2 of floor space for Building 1and 16,200 m^2 for Building 2. Stage 1 also includes associated earthworks, landscaping and infrastructure.

Figure 1 – Proposed Ropes Creek Employment Precinct Concept Plan

Figure 2 – Photomontage of the Stage 1 Building One to be located in the south eastern corner of the site

Source: MNIA Architects

2.0 The Site

2.1 Site Location

The site is legally known as Lot 5 in DP 262213 and is approximately 100 hectares in area. It is located within the Blacktown local government area at Ropes Creek (**Figure 3**). The site is located on the northern side of the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) Water Supply Pipeline. Its western boundary follows the Blacktown/Penrith local government area divide and has Ropes Creek running along it in a north-south direction. The eastern boundary abuts a Transgrid Substation. Land owned by the Department of Planning sits to the north. The site is located within Precinct 6 of the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA) and is zoned generally IN1 General Industrial under the WSEA SEPP.

2.2 Site Landscape

The site is generally cleared of vegetation and is currently used for cattle grazing. A scattering of trees exists along the western boundary of the site, mainly following the Ropes Creek alignment (**Figure 4-5**).

The topography of the site (**Figure 6**).varies approximately between RL +49m (north-west corner) and RL +75m (northern boundary). The southern half of the site is generally level.

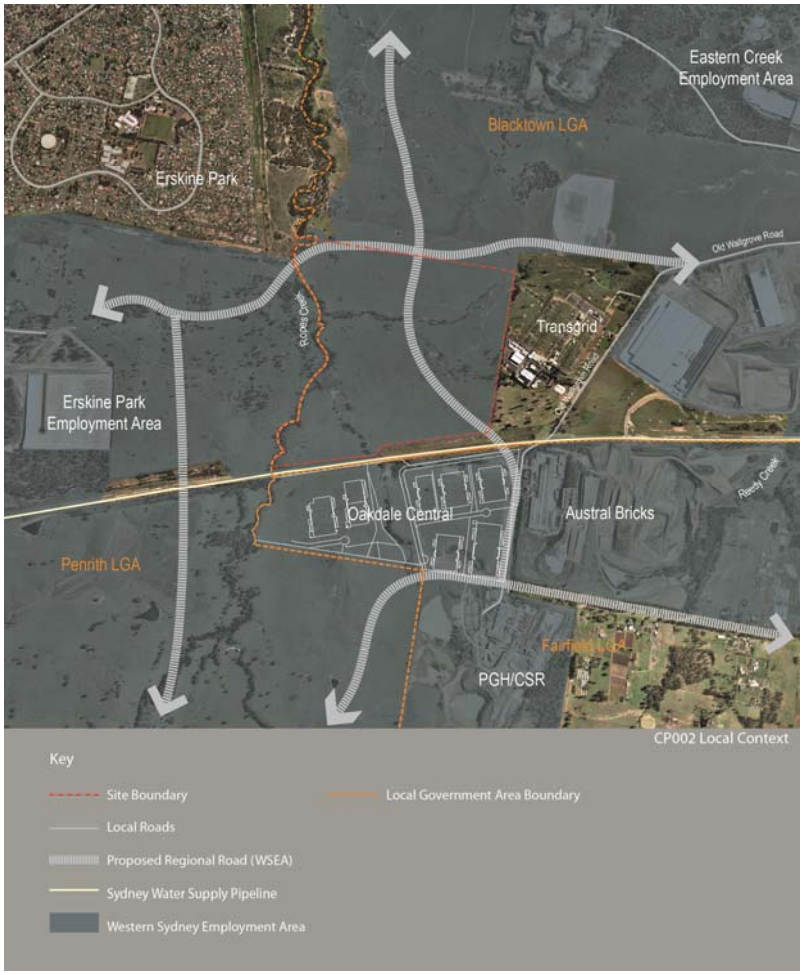

Figure 3 – Local context

Figure 4 – Aerial photograph of the site

Figure 5 - View across the site in an westerly direction towards Ropes Creek (Erskine Park Employment Area is background)

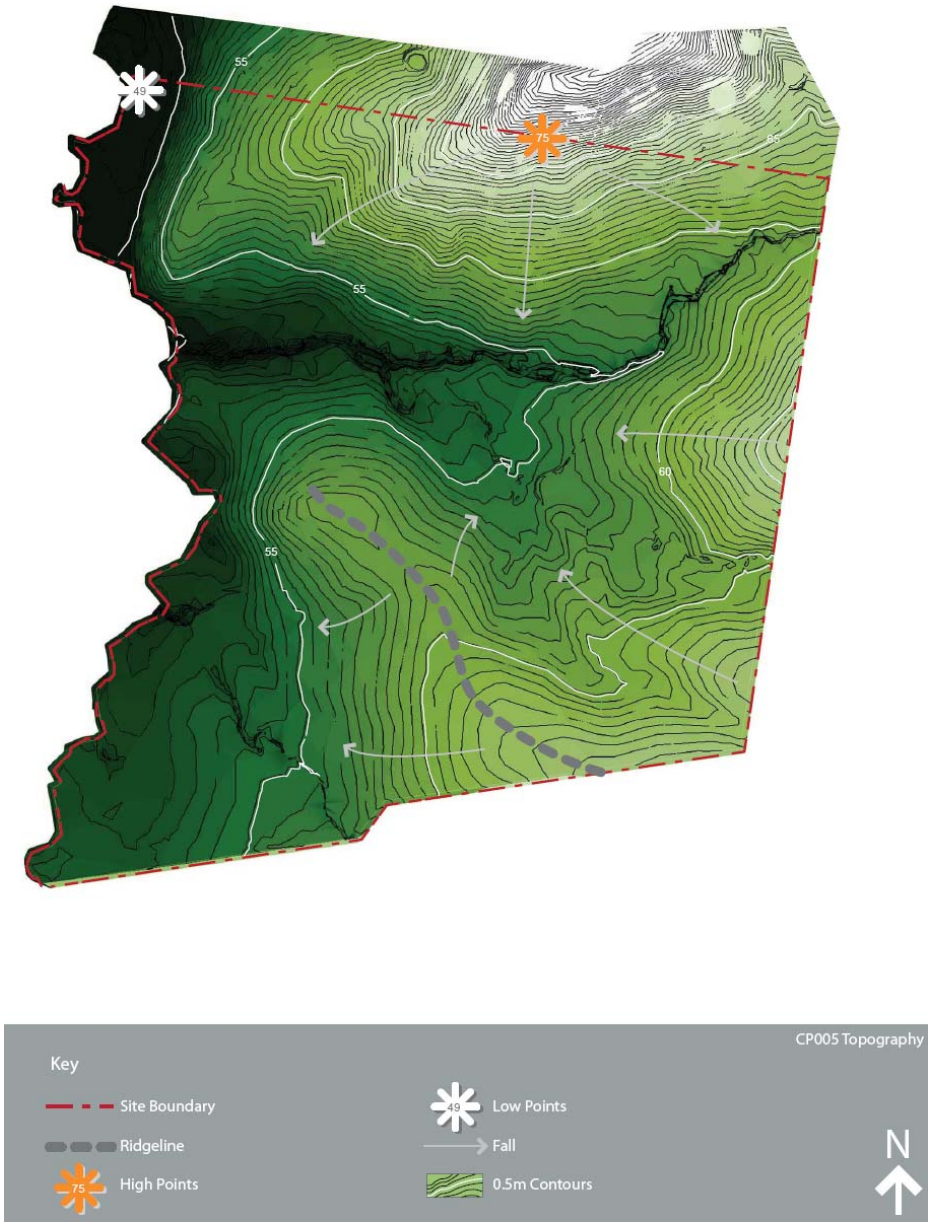

Figure 6 - Site topography

3.0 Visual Assessment

3.1 Visual Catchment

In its current form, the site is landlocked on all four sides (by private landholdings) meaning views into the site from the surrounding public domain are negligible. Physical access to these neighbouring sites was not possible with the exception of the Department of Planning land to the north of the site. The visual catchment of the site (**Figure 7**) is dominated by the electricity pylons, cables and poles which extend across to the site, and to the north, from the Transgrid Substation adjacent to the site (**Figure 8**). Views into the site is discussed in more detail below.

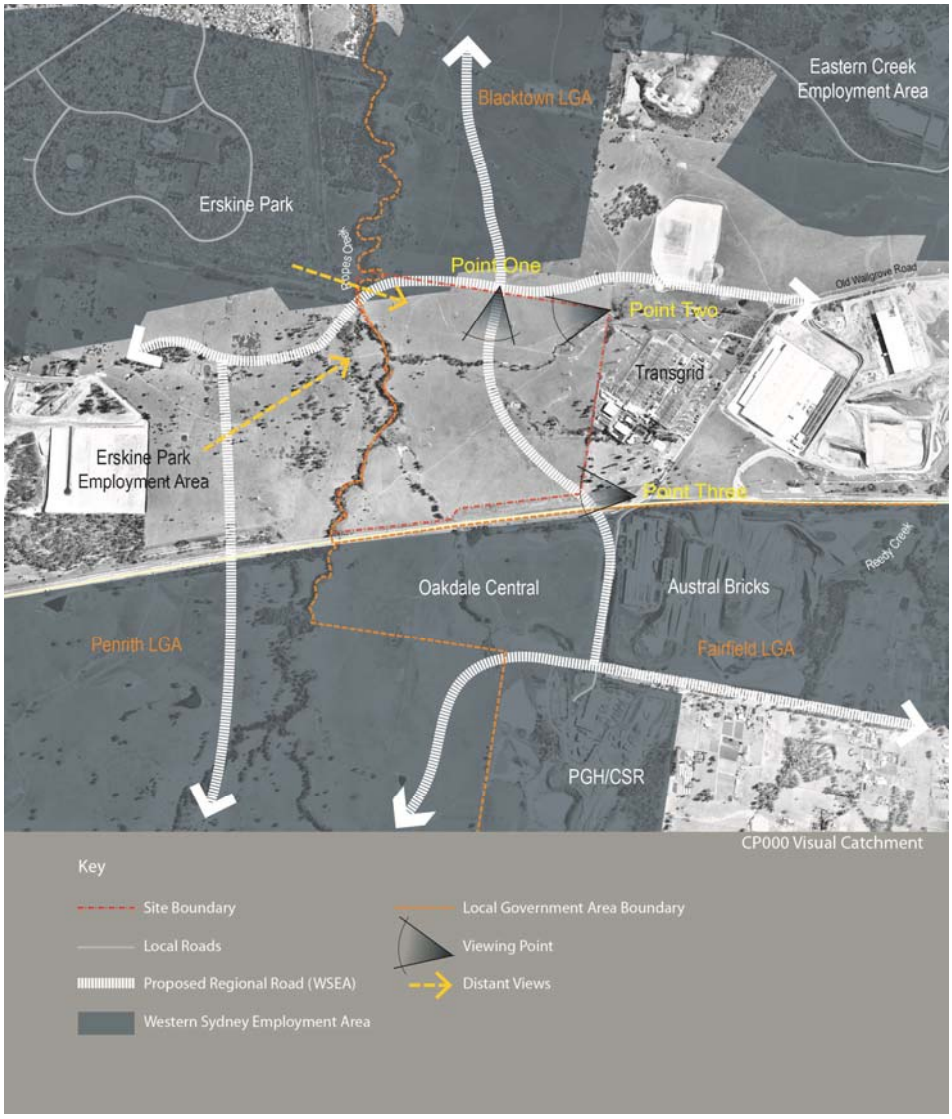

Figure 7 – Visual catchment of the site

Figure 8 – The view south-east across the site towards the Transgrid Substation

From the North

Views from the north are limited to the northern ridgeline of the site. The remainder (southern part of the site sits 15-20m below this ridgeline. The land to the north is zoned for future industrial / warehouse development similar to the site. It is future context, the Erskine Park Link Road is proposed to traverse the northern boundary in an east-west direction. Some limited short distance views into the site are available from the north-east corner (Viewing Point Two - **Figure 9**).

Figure 9 – Viewing Point Two - south-west across the site from near the north-east corner of the site

From the South

Views from the south are limited by the earth mounding associated with the Water Supply Pipeline. No access is available to the area. A limited view exists from the south-east (from Old Wallgrove Road) - Viewing Point Three (**Figure 10**).

Figure 10 – Viewing Point Three - from Old Wallgrove Road shows the Sydney Water Supply Pipeline along the southern boundary of the site

From the West

Views from the west in to the site (from the Erskine Park Employment Area) are limited by topography and the vegetation that extends along the Ropes Creek alignment. The higher northern part of the site is visible as are the electricity pylons that traverse the site (**Figure 11**). This area to the west forms part of the WSEA and is being developed for industrial / warehouse uses similar to that proposed on the site.

From the North-West (Erskine Park)

The nearest residential land to the site is the suburb of Erskine Park located (some 400m at it nearest point) to the north-west. Limited viewing points of the site are available with from within Erskine Park due to the street alignment, differences in topography and existing vegetation along the Ropes Creek alignment. The higher land along the northern boundary of the site is the most visible from Erskine Park (**Figure 11**).

Figure 11 – View to the west from the northern high point on the site. Erskine Park employment area (left) and residential area (right) with the Ropes Creek vegetation in the mid ground

3.2 Visual Sensitivity

Despite the site's open nature and lack of vegetation, the vast majority of the site is of low visual sensitivity (**Figure 12**) in that:

- the site is generally low lying relative to its surrounds;
- the existing vegetation along the western boundary and the ridgeline along the northern boundary provides a sense of containment to the site;
- the site will be surrounded by industrial / warehouse uses (including the substation) on all boundaries; and
- the lack of sensitive residential uses immediately adjacent the site.

The elevated area along the northern boundary is moderately sensitive due to its visibility from surrounding areas, including parts of Erskine Park residential area. This area however will be bordered on two sides by the future industrial development outside the subject site.

Figure 12 – The visual sensitivity of the site is low with some moderate sensitivity to the steepest and more visually apparent areas near the northern boundary

3.3 Visual Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

The development of the site for industrial warehouse uses is not expected to generate any adverse visual impacts on the surrounding environment. No specific mitigation is required apart of the application of the proposed Development Design Guidelines for the site.

The development of the site for large scale industrial / warehouse uses will sit comfortably in the surroundings.

The most significant features are the electricity pylons, poles and cables which stem from the Transgrid land to the east. The impact of these can be mitigated to

a small degree from within the site by the careful planting of low-level trees and the orientation of buildings. The Concept Plan demonstrates the placement of indicative buildings up against the line of easements. This can help reduce the amount of open space around the pylons and to a limited degree mitigate their impact from the street. Their height however means that no future development will comprehensively screen these pylons from public view altogether.

4.0 Conclusion

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by JBA Planning as part of a Concept Plan Application for the proposed Ropes Creek Employment Precinct located at Lot 5 DP 262213, Ropes Creek Employment Precinct.

The site is approximately 100 hectares in area and is located within the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA). The Concept Plan for the site envisages large scale industrial / warehouse development. The site is currently rural is character and is generally cleared of vegetation with the exception of the Creek on the western side.

The absence of residential properties on neighbouring land deems this site to be of low visual sensitivity. Proposals for industrial development at this location follow the pattern of land use in the area and are appropriate given the minimal visual impact of the site.

The strategies in this report will be developed in more detail as part of future project applications when exact details of the layout, pad levels and building footprints are known.