

Appendix G8

Visual Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Statement

for Alterations and Additions to
St Philip's Christian College,
Cessnock



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

St Phillips Christian College Cessnock



Prepared for: St Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Moir Landscape Architecture (MLA) have been commissioned by St Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the site master plan/proposed development located over four sites at Lot 1 DP 126765, Lot 1 DP 744377, Lot 2 DP 600895 and Lot 518 DP 837571, 10 Lomas Lane, Cessnock, New South Wales (Refer to **Figure 1**). The VIA will support the application for State Significant Development for the proposal, lodged for assessment with the Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE).

The purpose of this report is to provide a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the visibility and potential visual impacts of the proposal.

Survey work was undertaken on 9th November 2021 using key viewpoints and locations with potential views towards the site. The report details the results of the field work, documents the assessment of the landscape character and visual setting, and assesses potential visual impacts associated with the proposal.

The report also provides an overview of the proposed landscape treatments which will assist in the mitigation of potential visual impacts. This information is provided to assist in understanding the likely impacts and how they may be managed to ensure that the positive character of the immediate area and surrounding visual landscape are not overly eroded or diminished.



FIGURE 1: Site Locality Plan (Source: Nearmap, 2021, scale:1:5000)

2.0 Study Method

2.1 Overview of the Visual Impact Assessment

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is used to identify and determine the value, significance and sensitivity of a landscape. The method applied to this study involved systematically evaluating the visual environment pertaining to the site and using value judgements based on community responses to scenery. The assessment was undertaken in stages as noted below:

The first stage of the process involves:

- Objective assessment of the relative aesthetic value of the landscape, defined as visual quality and expressed as high, medium or low. This assessment generally relates to variety, uniqueness, prominence and naturalness of the land form, vegetation and water forms within each character type.
- Determination of the landscape sensitivity and its ability to absorb different types of development on the basis of physical and environmental character.
- An assessment of viewer sensitivity to change. This includes how different groups of people view the landscape (for example, a resident as opposed to a tourist), and how many people are viewing and from how far.
- The undertaking of a viewpoint analysis to identify areas likely to be affected by development of the site and a photographic survey using a digital camera and a hand held GPS unit to record position and altitude.
- An assessment of visual impacts and the preparation of recommendations for impact mitigation. Suggestions are made for suitable development patterns that would maintain the areas visual quality.

The second stage of the assessment involves a quantitative approach. The quantification of the visual impacts is defined by methods including:

- Preparation of photo montages depicting the proposal and recommended mitigation measures.

The purpose of the above methodology is reduce the amount of subjectivity entering into visual impact assessment and to provide sufficient data to allow for third party verification of results.

2.2 Overview of the Study Method

Survey work was undertaken on the 17th August 2020 using key viewpoints and locations with potential views towards the site. The report details the results of the field work, documents the assessment of the landscape character and visual setting, and assesses potential visual impacts associated with the proposal.

Based on the existing policies and framework and MLA's experience in landscape and visual impact assessment, the following provides an overview of the study method utilised for undertaking the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA). The VIA was undertaken in the stages as noted below in **Figure 2**:

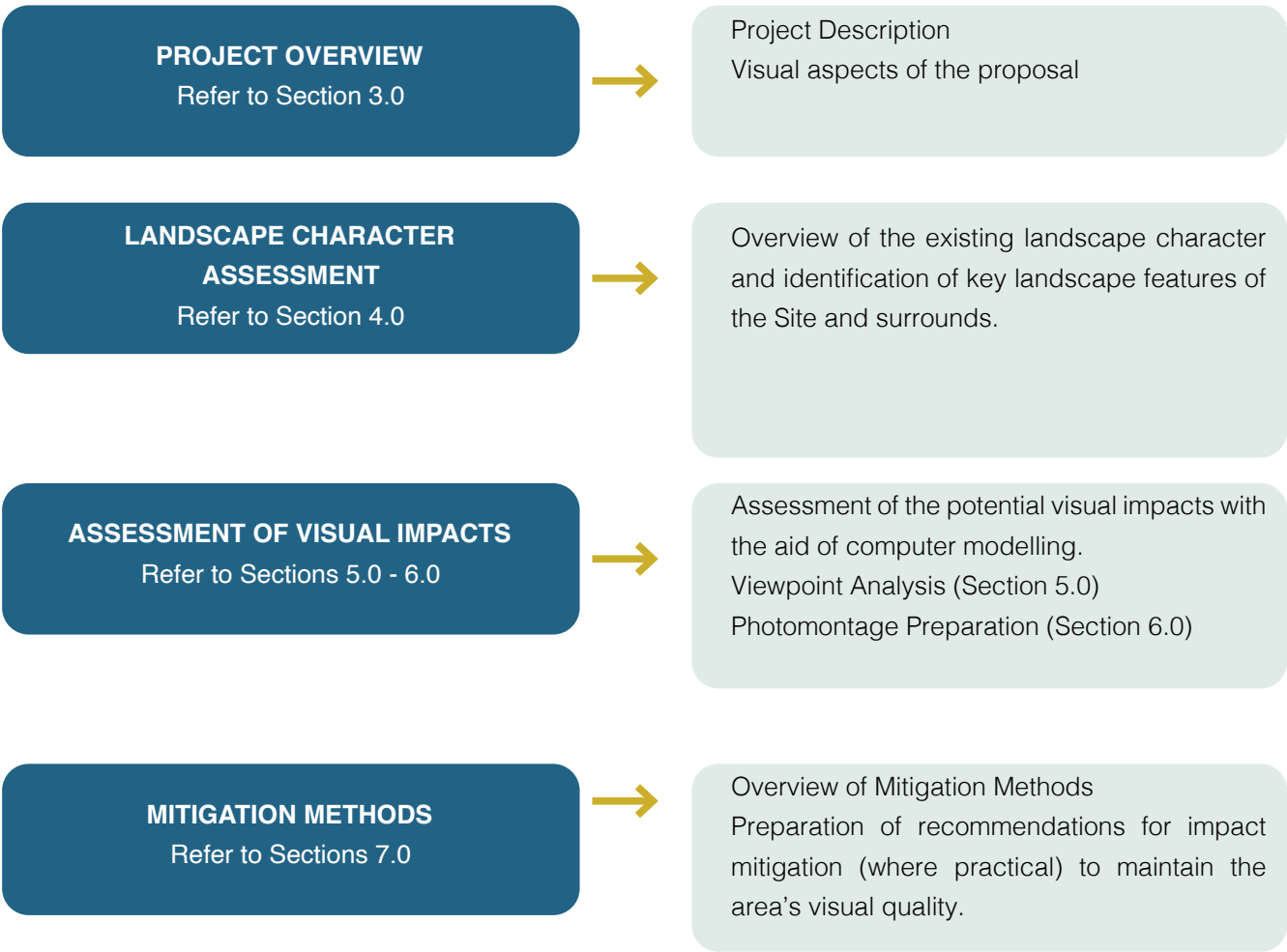


Figure 2: Study Method

2.0 Study Method

2.3 Existing Character Assessment

The character of a site refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects how particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement create a particular sense of place for different areas within the landscape (The Landscape Institute and the institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002).

The landscape character of the Study Area has been assessed at a regional, local and site scale. The Landscape Character Assessment is provided in **Section 4.0**.

2.4 Visual Impact Assessment

The potential visual impact of the Project is assessed based on the relationship between the visual sensitivity (refer to **Section 2.5.1**) and visual magnitude (refer to **Section 2.5.2**) see **Figure 3**:

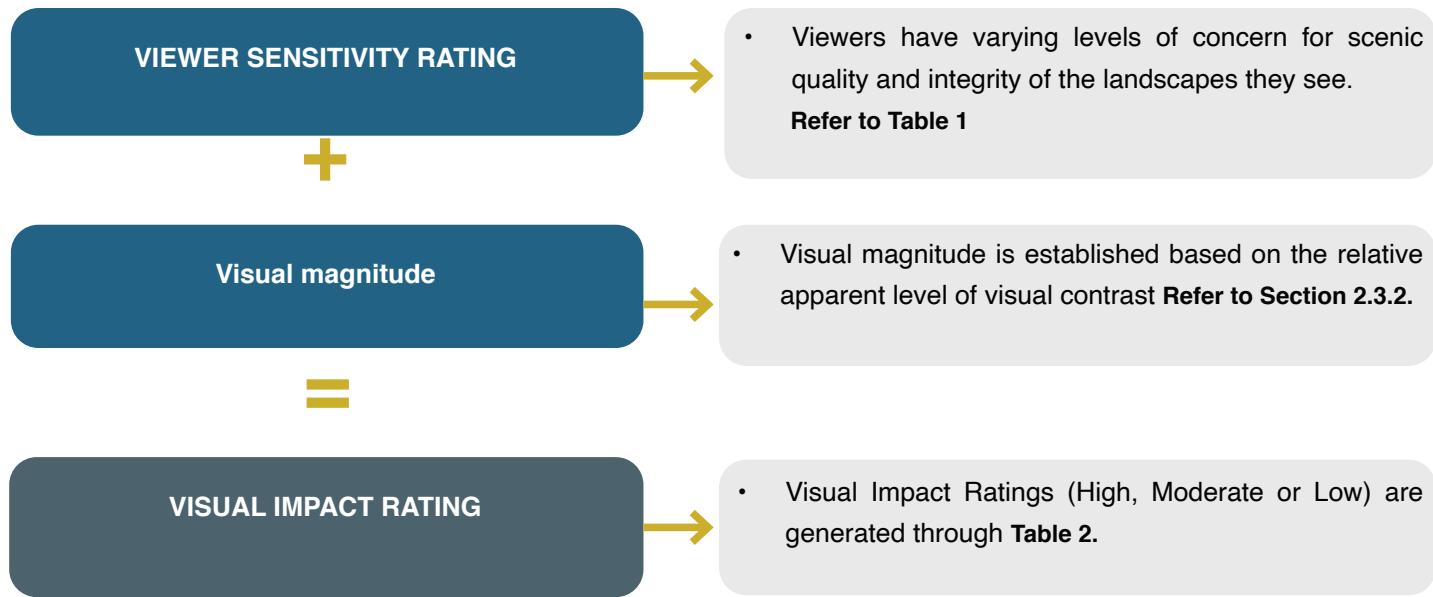


Figure 2: Visual Impact Assessment Method

2.4.1 Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a measure of how critically a change to the existing landscape is viewed by people from different areas. The assessment is based on the number of people affected, land use, and the distance of the viewer from the proposal (EDAW, 2000).

For example, a significant change that is not frequently seen may result in a low visual sensitivity although its impact on a landscape may be high. Generally the following principles apply:

- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time decreases.
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the number of potential viewers decreases.
- Visual sensitivity can also be related to viewer activity (e.g. A person viewing an affected site whilst engaged in recreational activities will be more strongly affected by change than someone passing a scene in a car travelling to a desired destination).

Sensitivity ratings are defined as high, moderate or low and are shown in the **Table 1** below (adapted from URBIS, 2009).

VISUAL SENSITIVITY RATING					
	DISTANCE FROM SITE				
LANDUSE	0-1 km	1-2 km	2 - 4.5 km	4.5 -7 km	> 7 km
Townships	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Recreational Reserve	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Homestead	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Rural Township	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NIL - LOW
Main Highway	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW	LOW	NIL - LOW
Local Roads	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW	LOW	NIL - LOW
Farm Road	LOW	LOW	NIL - LOW	NIL - LOW	NIL
Agricultural Land	LOW	LOW	NIL - LOW	NIL - LOW	NIL

Table 1: Visual Sensitivity Rating Table (Adapted from Urbis, 2009)

2.0 Study Method

2.4.2 Visual Magnitude

Visual magnitude refers to the extent of change that will be experienced by receptors. Factors that are considered when assessing the magnitude of change include:

- the proportion of the view / landscape affected;
- extent of the area over which the change occurs;
- the size and scale of the change;
- the rate and duration of the change;
- the level of contrast and compatibility.

(Source: AILA, 2018)

2.4.3 Visual Impact

Visual impact refers to the change in appearance of the landscape as a result of development. (EPHC, 2010). Visual impact is the combined effect of visual sensitivity and visual magnitude. Various combinations of visual sensitivity and visual magnitude will result in high, moderate and low overall visual impacts as suggested in **Table 2** below (Transport for NSW, 2020).

VISUAL IMPACT RATING					
		VISUAL MAGNITUDE			
		HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE
	MODERATE	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE

Table 2: Visual Impact Rating Table (Adapted from Transport for NSW, 2020)

3.0 Project Overview

3.1 Site Description

The subject land, referred to as “the Site” occupies a four large lots described as Lot 1 DP 126765, Lot 1 DP 744377, Lot 2 DP 600895 and Lot 518 DP 837571 at 10 Lomas Lane, Nulkaba, New South Wales, located within the Cessnock (LGA). The Site fronts a 1000m long section to the eastern side of Wine Country Drive with the main site entry point located off Lomas Lane. The eastern boundary is defined by Black Creek and the site has an overall area of 41.8 hectares.



IMAGE 1: View towards the existing Site buildings from Lomas Lane.



IMAGE 2: View towards the existing Site buildings from Wine Country Drive.



FIGURE 3: The Site Master Plan Proposal (Source: MLA)

3.0 Project Overview

3.2 Proposed Development

The proposal is for alterations and additions to the St Philip’s Christian College Campus. The school caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 and also incorporates an Early Education Centre and Prep program as well as a special school for students requiring an alternate learning environment.

The proposed development, to be constructed in several stages, consisting of seven (7) new buildings and additions/alterations to six (6) existing buildings. As part of this work existing pre-fabricated buildings will be removed to make way for new permanent buildings.

A new intersection is proposed for the southern end of the campus providing direct access to the school from Wine Country Drive. The Wine Country Drive and Lomas Lane intersection is to be upgraded to facilitate access, while Lomas Lane will also be widened to facilitate the provision of bus bays and a bus layover area.

The site-wide master plan identifies the proposed building/development areas and seeks to enhance the site’s overall amenity and sustainability through consideration of connectivity, shade, views, materiality and water management using best practice water sensitive urban design.



IMAGE 3: Example of proposed development



IMAGE /FIGURE 4: Example of proposed development

4.0 Existing Landscape Character

4.1 Existing Landscape Character

Urban development within the area is low and consists of a mix of large lot residential, semi rural/agricultural lots and commercial premises. A large part of the local land use is associated with the Hunter Valley tourism operations, including wineries and their cellar doors, restaurants and accomodation.

LAND USE

The Site is occupied by the St Phillips Christian College, with the northern part of the four development lots having existing development associated with the college campus. It sits between the local town centres of Branxton to the north, Cessnock to the south and Kurri Kurri to the east. Land immediately surrounding the Site is predominately made up of dense vegetation associated with Black Creek, open grasslands for grazing livestock, vineyards and commerical premises. Further north and south of the Site are a number of commercial and light industrial buildings predominantly fronting Wine Country Drive.

Local places of note include the following; Crowne Plaza and Hunter Valley Golf/Country Club, Hunter Valley Air Strip and Visitor Information Centre all approximately 1km to the north. Cessnock Town Centre 4km to the south and Kurri Kurri Town Centre 12km (in a straight line) to the east.

ROADS

The Site sits on the corner of Wine Country Drive and Lomas Lane. Wine Country drive is a major connector road within the Hunter Valley wine region and provides strong links between the Cessnock township residential areas in the south to the Hunter Expressway approximately 17km north. A network of minor connector roads, residential roads and laneways weaves its way through the area connecting local town centres to their communities.

TOPOGRAPHY

Land in the Study Area is generally flat to gently undulating with water bodies/water storage areas sitting in low points of the site adjacent to the wine country drive frontage.

VEGETATION

The Site is generally cleared with stands of existing trees scattered across the open grassed areas and through low lying areas of the site. It is bounded to the east by dense vegetation associated with Black Creek and this forms a buffer to rural residential lots further to the east.

Vegetation located along a 150m of the Wine Country Drive Frontage appears to be an addition as part of more recent building additions on the site. This planting has successfully established and created a buffer that visually fragments views onto the site from Wine Country Drive but also reflects the general character of local roads which support large stands of vegetation.

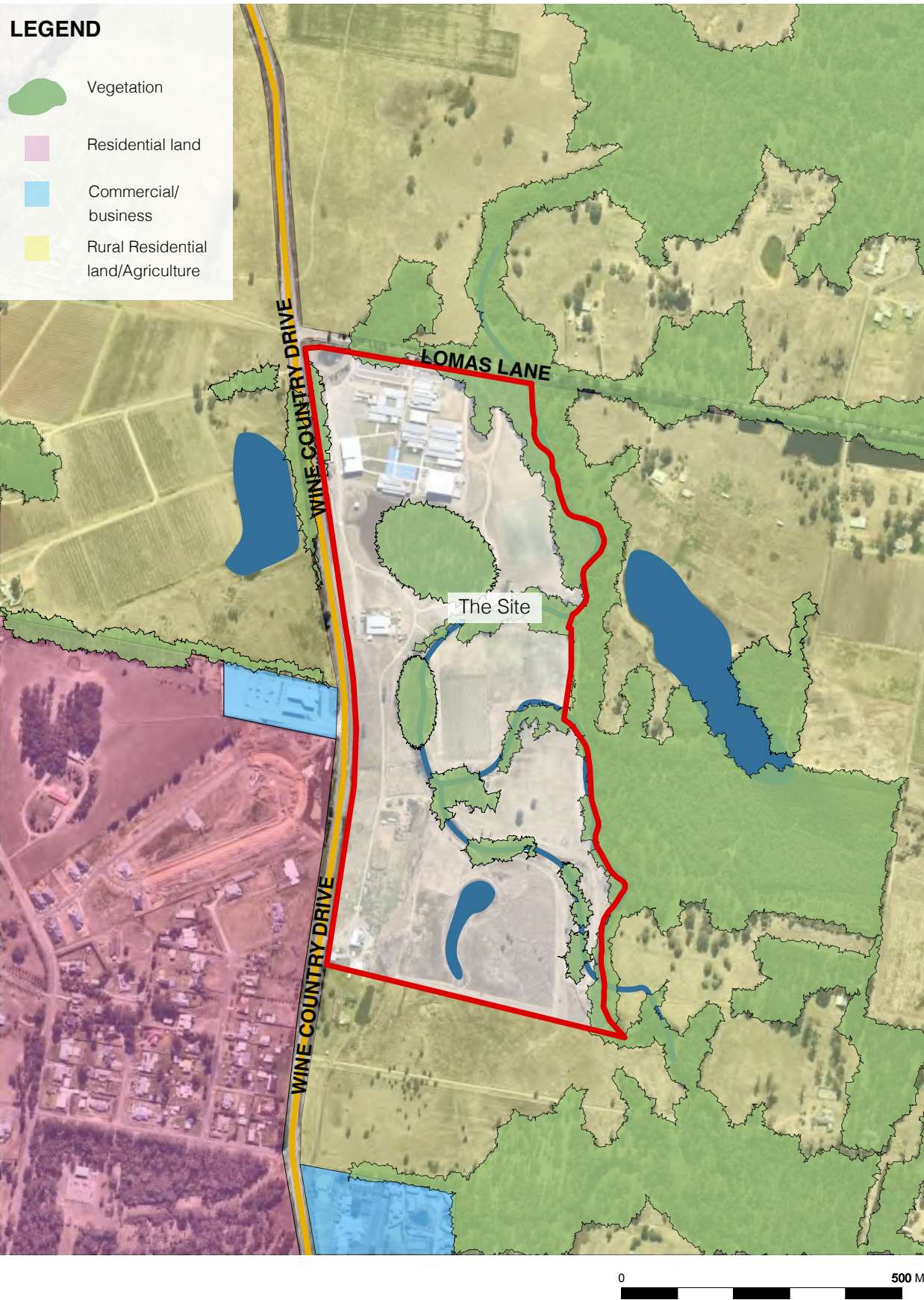


FIGURE 5: Existing Visual Character (Aerial Image Source: Nearmap 2021)

4.0 Existing Landscape Character



IMAGE 4: View north along Wine Country Drive.



IMAGE 5: View along Fletcher Street, east towards Wine Country Drive.



IMAGE 6: View west along Lomas Lane.



IMAGE 7: View west along Lomas Lane.

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

5.1 Viewpoint Analysis

This part of the visual assessment considers the likely impact that development would have on the existing landscape character and visual amenity by selecting prominent sites, otherwise referred to as viewpoints.

5.1.1 Viewpoint Selection Process

Viewpoints are selected to illustrate a combination of the following:

- Present landscape character types.
- Areas of high landscape or scenic value.
- Visual composition (e.g. focused or panoramic views, simple or complex landscape pattern).
- Range of distances.
- Varying aspects.
- Various elevations.
- Various extent of development visibility (full and partial visibility).
- Sequential along specific routes.

Viewpoints have been carefully selected to be representative of the range of views within the study area. The selection of viewpoints is informed by topographical maps, field work observations and other relevant influences such as access, landscape character and the popularity of vantage points.

A total of **6 viewpoints** were taken as part of the field work process. The majority of these viewpoints were taken from publicly accessible roads surrounding the site. The viewpoints which have been included represent the areas from where the development would appear most prominent, either based on the degree of exposure or the number of people likely to be affected.

It is important to note that viewpoints for this study have been taken only from accessible public land (refer to **Figure 6** for locations).

5.1.2 Process of Viewpoint Analysis

Once the viewpoint had been selected, panoramic photographs were taken at eye level from the viewpoints towards The Site. Photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mark III digital SLR through a 50mm lens to best represent the human eye.

The visual impact of the viewpoint was then assessed both on site and with the topographic and aerial information to ensure accuracy. Viewpoint photographs and analysis is included the following pages. The findings of the viewpoint analysis have been quantified and are summarised in **Table 4**.



FIGURE 6: Viewpoint Assessment Locations (Source: Nearmap 2021, scale:1:5000)

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

5.2 Overview of Viewpoint Analysis

As discussed in the rationale for the viewpoint selection process, where possible these viewpoints have been selected to represent the worst case scenario. For each viewpoint, the potential visual impact was analysed through the use of a combination of topographic maps and on site analysis.

The visual sensitivity and visual magnitude of each viewpoint have been assessed which, when combined, result in an overall visual impact for the viewpoint (**Refer to Table 3**).

Of the 6 viewpoints assessed as part of this VIA, the proposal would be visible from a total of 4 viewpoints. Of the 4 viewpoints from which the proposal would be visible, three (3) of these have been assessed as having a negligible visual impact, while one (1) has been rated as low, while one (1) has been rated as moderate and one (1) viewpoint has been rated as having a high visual impact.

Generally, the viewpoints rated as having a moderate visual impact were taken within a close proximity of the proposal and within a residential area (resulting in a high visual sensitivity). The visual magnitude (the level of visual contrast) is likely to be nil - low or low for the majority of locations.

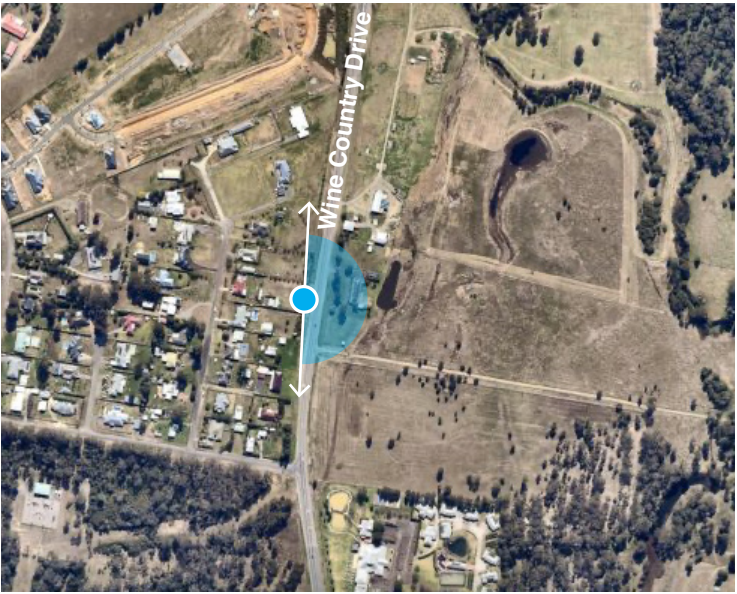
VIEWPOINT	VISUAL SENSITIVITY	VISUAL MAGNITUDE	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
VP01	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE
VP02	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	LOW
VP03	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	MODERATE
VP04	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
VP05	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE
VP06	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE

TABLE 3: Viewpoint Visual Impact Summary

*Please note the Viewpoint Visibility Assessment Summary is based on the visibility assessment criteria outlined in Section 2.1 of this report.

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP01 Wine Country Drive

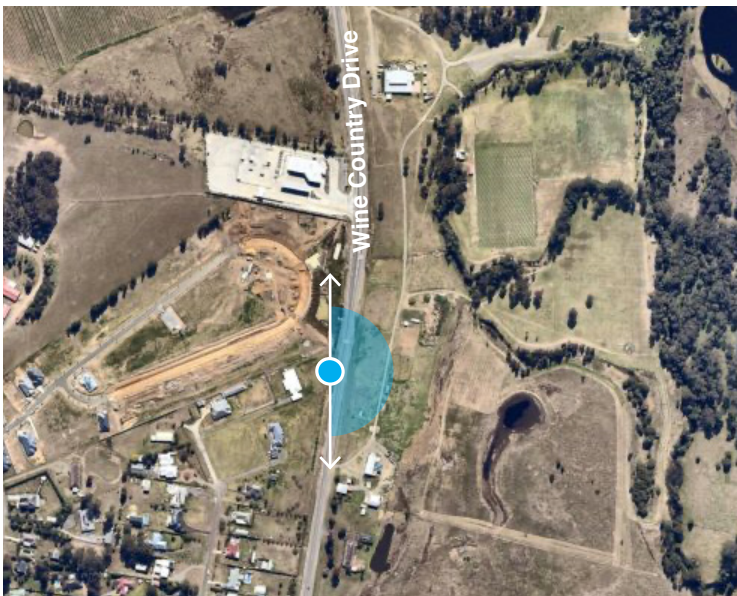


VP01 Location

VIEWPOINT VP01			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from Wine Country Drive looking in a generally east direction towards the Site. Views from this location are generally contained by gently undulating topography, existing large lot residential dwellings and their associated groups of vegetation.	From this location views of the proposed development to the north east will be restricted as a result of existing residential development, vegetation and overhead powerlines, in the foreground, along Wine Country Drive.
COORDINATES	32° 48'12.67"S 151°20'56.75"E		
ELEVATION	66m		
VIEWING DIRECTION	Generally East	Existing powerlines are the features in the visual landscape. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as Moderate due to the land use and close proximity to the Site.	The visual magnitude is likely to be Negligible resulting in an overall visual impact rating of Negligible .
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 100m		
LAND USE	Main Connector Road		
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	Negligible		
VISUAL IMPACT	Negligible		

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP02 Wine Country Drive



VP02 Location

VIEWPOINT VP02			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from Wine Country Drive looking in a generally east direction towards the Site. Views from this location are generally contained by gently undulating topography, existing large lot residential dwellings and their associated groups of vegetation.	From this location the southern portion of the proposed masterplan will be visible. A single building is nominated for a location slightly off centre of the image above, but set back from the Wine Country Drive road reserve.
COORDINATES	32° 48'05.98"S 151°20'58.29"E		
ELEVATION	66m		
VIEWING DIRECTION	East	Existing powerlines are the features in the visual landscape. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as moderate due to the land use and the proximity to the Site.	The visual magnitude is likely to be Low resulting in an Moderate - Low overall visual impact.
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 800m		
LAND USE	Main Connector Road		
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	Low		
VISUAL IMPACT	Moderate - Low		

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP03 Wine Country Drive

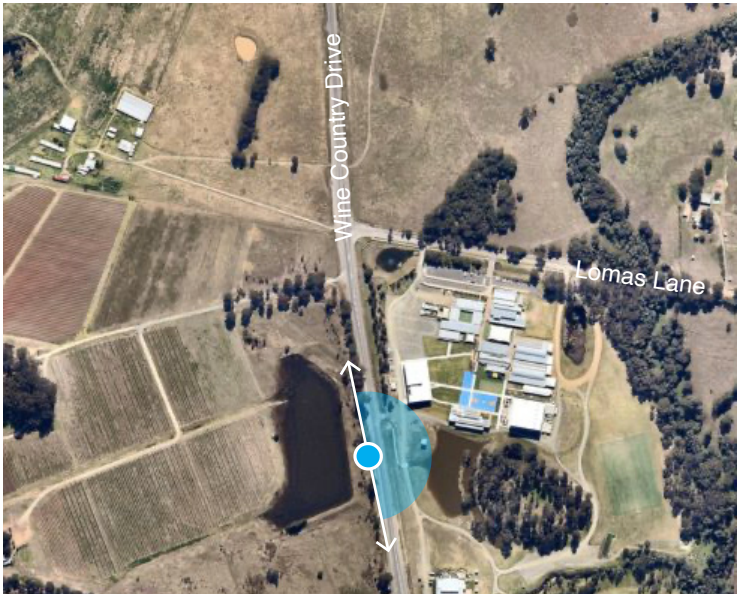


VP03 Location

VIEWPOINT VP03			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from the edge of Wine Country Drive looking in a generally east direction toward the site. Wine Country Drive has been widened and is slightly elevated at this point in relation to the commercial premises located on the western side of the road. Views from this location are somewhat contained by vegetation along the road reserve to the western edge of the Site.	From this location the southern portion of the proposed masterplan will be visible. A single building is nominated for a location to the right hand side of the viewpoint above, but set back from the Wine Country Drive road reserve. The existing juvenile trees along Wine Country Drive will screen some views of the proposed building.
COORDINATES	32° 47'57.93"S 151°20'59.54"E		
ELEVATION	62m		
VIEWING DIRECTION	North East		
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 30m		
LAND USE	Main Connector Road	The visual sentitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as moderate due to the land use and close proximity to the Site.	The visual magnitude is likely to be Moderate resulting in a Moderate - Low overall visual impact.
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	Moderate		
VISUAL IMPACT	Moderate - Low		

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP04 Wine Country Drive

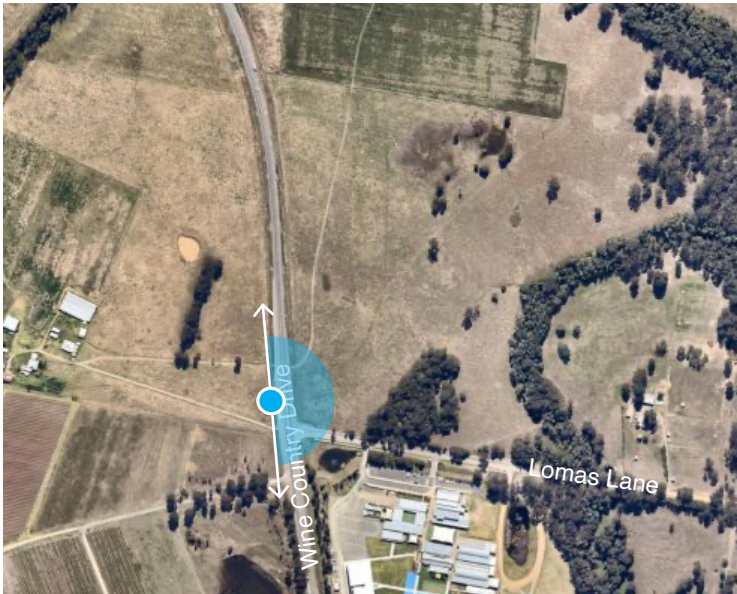


VP04 Location

VIEWPOINT VP04			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from Wine Country Drive adjacent to existing building infrastructure on the site. The site is highly visible from this location.	From this location proposed development as part of the masterplan will be highly visible. The majority of new buildings will be situated along this section of the Wine Country Drive frontage.
COORDINATES	32°47'45.78"S 151°20'58.01"E		
ELEVATION	62m	Existing powerlines and street signs are the features in the visual landscape.	The visual magnitude is likely to be high resulting in an overall visual impact as High.
VIEWING DIRECTION	Generally East		
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 20m	The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as moderate due to the land use and the proximity to the Site.	
LAND USE	Main Connector Road		
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	High		
VISUAL IMPACT	High		

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP05 Wine Country Drive

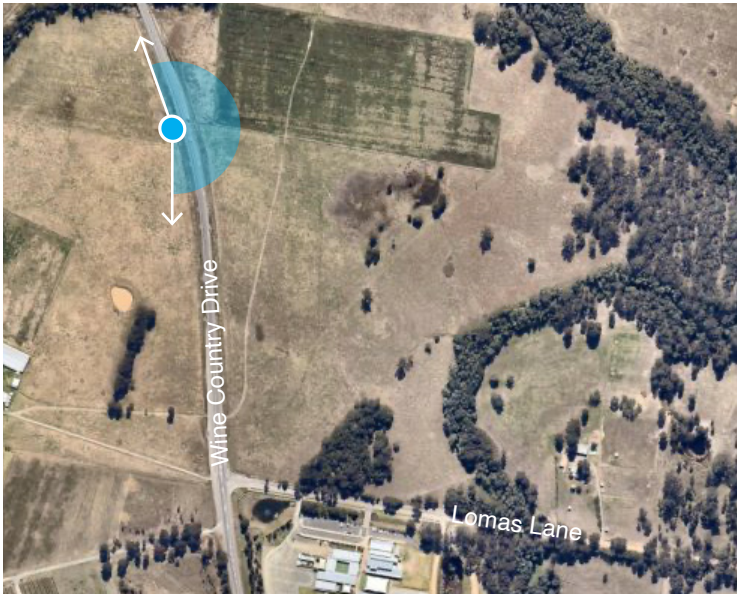


VP05 Location

VIEWPOINT VP05			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from Wine Country Drive looking generally east towards the Site. Views from this location are partially screened by mature vegetation and existing powerline along the Lomas Lane and Wine Country Drive. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as Moderate due to the land use and the proximity to the Site.	From this location some of the proposed northern most development will be visible between the existing vegetation located on the subject site. It is likely the existing vegetation will remain a dominant element of the landscape from this location. The visual magnitude is likely to be Negligible resulting in an overall visual impact of Negligible .
COORDINATES	32°47'34.28"S 151°20'55.87"E		
ELEVATION	64m		
VIEWING DIRECTION	Generally East		
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 350m		
LAND USE	Main Connector Road		
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	Negligible		
VISUAL IMPACT	Negligible		

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

VP06 Wine Country Drive



VP06 Location

VIEWPOINT VP06			
SUMMARY OF VIEWPOINT		VIEWPOINT DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
LOCATION	Wine Country Drive, Nulkaba	View from Wine Country Drive looking generally east towards the Site. Views from this location are partially screened by mature vegetation and existing powerline along the Lomas Lane and Wine Country Drive. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as moderate due to the land use and the proximity to the Site.	From this location some of the proposed northern most development will be visible between the existing vegetation located on the subject site. The vegetation will remain a dominant element of the landscape from this location. The visual magnitude is likely to be Negligible resulting in an overall visual impact as Negligible .
COORDINATES	32°47'21.03"S 151°20'54.23"E		
ELEVATION	58m		
VIEWING DIRECTION	Generally East		
DISTANCE TO SITE	Approx. 600m		
LAND USE	Main Connector Road		
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	Moderate		
VISUAL MAGNITUDE	Negligible		
VISUAL IMPACT	Negligible		

6.0 Photomontages

6.1 Photomontage Development

A photomontage is a visualisation based on the superimposition of an image (ie building, road, landscape addition etc) onto a photograph for the purpose of creating a realistic representation of proposed or potential changes to a view. (Horner and Maclellan et al, 2006). Photomontages have been utilised in this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to assist in the impact assessment of the proposed development.

6.1.1 Photomontage Development Process

Photomontages are representations of the development that are superimposed onto a photograph of The Site. The photo simulations based on photography from typical sensitive viewpoints are included within the following analysis section. The images that the photo simulations have been based on have been captured with a Canon EOS 60D Digital SLR through a 24mm lens

6.1.2 Photomontage Selection Process

Two photomontages of the proposed development within the existing context were selected as key views and as a good indicator of general visibility of the Site. Photomontages have been prepared for Viewpoint VP05/ PM01 to illustrate the Proposal from the North (southbound along Wine Country Drive) and Viewpoint PM02 to illustrate the Proposal from the south (northbound along Wine Country Drive).

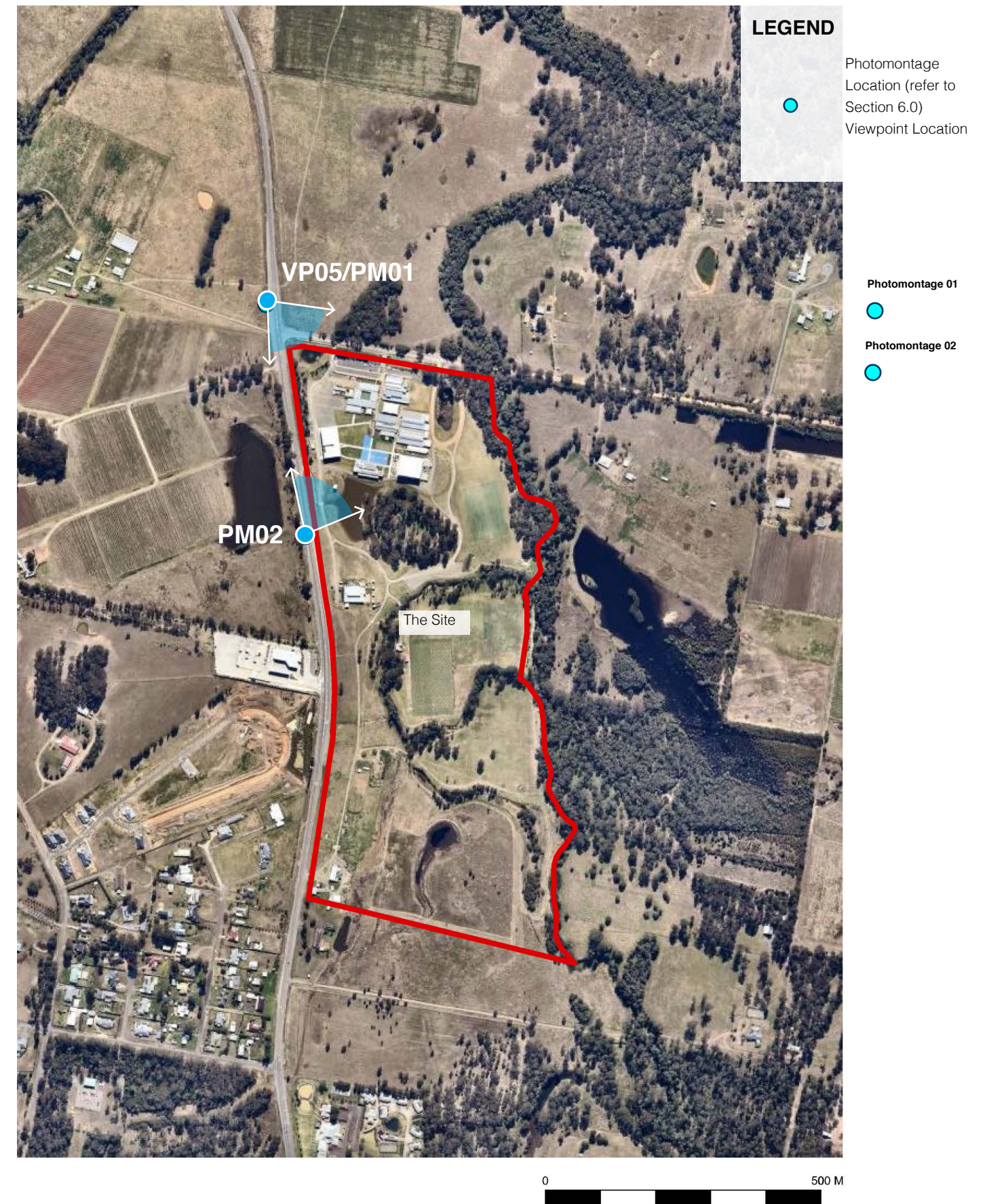


FIGURE 7: Photomontage Locations (Source: Nearmap 2021, scale:1:5000)

6.0 Viewpoint Analysis

Photomontage 01: Viewpoint **VP05** - Looking southeast along Wine Country Drive (just north of Lomas Lane)



Existing View

6.0 Viewpoint Analysis

Photomontage 01: Viewpoint **VP05** - Looking southeast along Wine Country Drive (just north of Lomas Lane)



Proposed View

Artist impression only. Building model showing built form only. Final building layout and colour scheme by Shac Architects

6.0 Viewpoint Analysis

Photomontage 02: Looking northeast along Wine Country Drive



Existing View

6.0 Viewpoint Analysis

Photomontage 02: Looking northeast along Wine Country Drive



Proposed View

Artist impression only. Building model showing built form only. Final building layout and colour scheme by Shac Architects

7.0 Summary of Visual Impacts

7.1 Assessment of Visual Impacts

In addition to the photographic viewpoint assessment the following section provides an overview of the potential visibility from local areas surrounding the site. This is by no means an exhaustive description of the visibility from every residence or locality. It is intended to provide an overall assessment of the potential visual impact on areas potentially affected by the proposal.

The existing landscape character is predominately rural residential, tourism/commercial premises and bushland with more densely populated residential areas located as part of the local town centres of Branxton in the north, Cessnock to the south and Kurri Kurri to the east of the proposal. Existing vegetation around the Site (along Black Creek and along the northern site frontage to Wine Country Drive) provides not only a buffer between the Proposal and residential areas, but also aids in visually fragmenting the existing built form. Due to the extent of dense vegetation surrounding the Site, there are extremely limited opportunities to view the proposal in its entirety from anywhere to the east of the subject site.

The proposal will be visible to motorists travelling along Wine Country Drive, particularly when travelling north towards the Site. This road is a major travel corridor which runs through the area and local infrastructure associated with the road corridor ie. power lines, light poles, traffic lights and street signs form apart of the visual landscape. While the proposal may be discernible from fixed points, views of the new buildings would be fleeting from a vehicle due to existing vegetation and the speed of travel. It is likely that over the years post construction however that tree and shrub planting nominated as part of the site plan would begin to reduce the initial visual impact of the additional built form. This can be evidenced by planting seen along Wine Country Drive at the Northern end of the site where buffer planting has been successful.

Views from residential areas to the west of the proposal are generally contained by houses and associated domestic vegetation. There are a small number of locations within these residential areas from which the proposal will be visible, however due to the surrounding vegetation, existing land use and the nature of the development it is likely only proposed buildings fronting Wine Country Drive will be visible.

It is unlikely the proposal will have significant impact on the overall visual character of the area. In the context of surrounding residential and commercial development, the proposed additional built form would be seen as being in context with other developments in the area. As the proposal is concentrated to the northern portion of the site any new built form will be in character with existing buildings located on the site.

7.2 Mitigation Method Recommendations

The proposed mitigation measures attempt to lessen the visual impact of the proposed development whilst enhancing the visual character of the surrounding environment. These design principles have been incorporated into the design and seek to achieve a better visual integration of the proposal and to maintain the existing visual character at both, local and regional scales.

Recommendations for mitigating this potential impact include:

Implementation of the following recommendations will assist in reducing any potential visual impacts associated with the proposed development.

- Retention of existing canopy trees where possible during construction.
- Consideration of the architectural design and construction materials to provide a quality architectural and visual 'subject' in a controlled visual sequence for passing motor vehicle traffic
- Consider building setbacks similar to other developments to the North of the site allowing a buffer to the Road reserve for tree and shrub planting.
- Implement screen planting following construction to replicate existing successful planting along the northern portion of the Wine Country Drive site frontage, while allowing breaks in the planting to achieve controlled views to the quality architectural 'subjects' of the Library (for south bound traffic) and the southern Administration Building (for northbound traffic).
- Implement screen planting to the southern most portion of the site to aid in visually fragmenting the built form from the residential dwellings located to the south of the fuel station site along the Western portion of Wine Country Drive and those existing dwellings immediately located along the southern boundary.

7.0 Summary of Visual Impacts

7.3 Conclusion

With all visual impact assessments the objective is not to determine whether the proposal is visible or not visible, it is to determine how the proposal will impact on existing visual amenity, landscape character and scenic quality. If there is a potential for a negative impact on these factors it must then be investigated if and how this impact can be mitigated to the extent that the impact is reduced to an acceptable level.

The existing landscape character has a low-moderate level of development. Existing infrastructure including power poles, transmission lines and lighting forms apart of the existing landscape character of the area. To the north of the site there is a high level of commercial development including hotel, commerical and tourism related infrastructure and immediately to the west of the site a new petrol station has been developed.

Although the scale of proposed development is large, new work is concentrated to the northern portion of the site where existing development has been focused in the past. The scale of the proposal is in keeping with surrounding developments and includes retention of existing vegetation. Supplementary planting is proposed along Wine Country Drive to assist in minimising the scale of the proposal from passing vehicle traffic.

When implemented with appropriate environmental management and employment of the recommended mitigation measures, the proposed development could be undertaken whilst maintaining the core landscape character of the area with a minimal visual impact on the surrounding visual landscape.

8.0 References and Bibliography

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MAPS

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