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ROUSE HILL ANGLICAN COLLEGE MASTERPLAN 2016

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

3 October 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

Design 5 have been engaged by Anglican Schools Corporation to assess the heritage impact of the proposed Masterplan on the curtilage of Rouse Hill Estate. This report is to be read in conjunction with Masterplan drawings prepared by Terroir as listed in Section 1.3 of this report.

The report is set out in the following manner:

1. Introduction.
2. Site Analysis.
3. Assessment of Heritage Impact.
4. Conclusion.

Design 5 has had a long association with the Rouse Hill Estate, having advised the Historic Houses Trust on the conservation of the structures on the site and the implementation of the Conservation Management Plan between 1998 to 2006. This report relies on our long association with the site and surrounding area and existing study reports listed in Section 1.2 below.

This report was written by Robert Gasparini of Design 5 - Architects.

1.2 The Masterplan

The works considered in this report are as set out in the Masterplan drawings prepared by Terroir (referred to as the Masterplan) and are set out in the table below. The Masterplan provides a strategic framework for the expansion of the school that will be implemented in stages as the student population increases. The Masterplan includes:

- A junior school area at north of site expanded via relocation and further student growth with 3 new classroom modules, new roadway and carparking and associated landscaped areas.
- Senior school area extended at south of site with demolition and replacement of previous 2 no. teaching modules with new teaching spaces including for specialist teaching streams, a new roadway and associated landscaped areas.
- New library, multi-purpose building and associated landscaped areas shared between the junior school and senior school.

The drawings considered in this report are set out below:

Drawing no.	Description	Revision
MP-00-00	Cover Page	01
MP-00-01	Existing Site Plan	01
MP-00-02	Site Analysis	01
MP-00-03	Solar Analysis	01
MP-00-04	Site Demolition Plan	01
MP-00-04a	Site Demolition Plan with Extent of Proposed Works	01
MP-10-00	Proposed Site Plan	01
MP-10-01	Proposed Hub and Junior School Roof Plan	01
MP-10-02	Proposed Hub and Senior School Roof Plan	01
MP-10-05	Phase 01 – K Block and Carpark	01
MP-10-06	Phase 02 – Block L & Carpark	01
MP-10-07	Phase 03 – Senior School	01
MP-10-08	Phase 04 – Library and COLA	01
MP-10-09	Phase 05 – Senior School	01
MP-10-10	Phase 06 – Multipurpose and Gym Awning	01
MP-10-11	Stage 07 - Block M, Canteen and Bike Shed	01
MP-20-00	Proposed Site Sections and Elevations	01
MP-30-00	3D Visualisations	01
MP-30-01	3D Visualisations	01
MP-HB-10-01	Proposed Learning Hub Ground Plan	01
MP-HB-10-02	Proposed Learning Hub Mezzanine Plan	01
MP-HB-10-03	Proposed Learning Hub Roof Plan	01
MP-HB-20-00	Proposed Learning Hub Elevations	01
MP-HB-20-10	Proposed Library Elevations	01
MP-HB-20-20	Proposed Multipurpose Hall Elevations	01
MP-HB-30-00	Hub Sections	01
MP-HB-40-01	Learning Hub Landscape Plan And Details 01	01
MP-HB-40-02	Learning Hub Landscape Plan And Details 02	01
MP-JS-10-01	Proposed Junior School Extension Ground Plan	01
MP-JS-10-02	Proposed Junior School Extension Mezzanine Plan	01
MP-JS-10-03	Proposed Junior School Extension Roof Plan	01
MP-JS-10-04	Proposed Junior School Extension Carpark Plan	01
MP-JS-10-05	Proposed Junior School Extension Entry Ground Plan	01
MP-JS-20-00	Proposed Junior School Extension Elevations 1	01
MP-JS-20-01	Proposed Junior School Extension Elevations 2	01
MP-JS-20-02	Proposed Junior School Extension Elevations 3	01
MP-JS-30-00	Proposed Junior School Extension Sections 1	01
MP-JS-30-01	Proposed Junior School Extension Sections 2	01
MP-JS-30-02	Proposed Junior School Extension Carpark Sections	01
MP-JS-40-01	Proposed Junior School Landscape Plan And Details Carpark And Maintenance Shed	01
MP-JS-40-02	Proposed Junior School Landscape Plan And Details Block K And Block L	01
MP-JS-40-03	Proposed Junior School Landscape Plan And Details Block M And Bike Shed	01
MP-SS-10-01	Senior School Ground Plan	01
MP-SS-10-02	Senior School First Floor Plan	01
MP-SS-10-03	Senior School Second Floor Plan	01
MP-SS-10-04	Senior School Roof Plan	01
MP-SS-20-00	Senior School Elevations 1	01
MP-SS-30-00	Senior School Sections	01
MP-SS-40-01	Proposed Senior School Ground Plan	01

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 The Site

The Rouse Hill Anglican College is located within Growth Area 20. The precinct includes Rouse Hill House and Farm, part of the Rouse Hill Regional Park and falls within the Blacktown City Council (BCC) Local Government Area. The Godden Mackay Logan report describes the character of the area as:

The Area 20 Precinct is a semi-rural area of small to medium-sized lots that contain a mix of agricultural and a few light industrial uses. A quarry operates on Schofields Road at the southern edge of the study area. The subdivision pattern reflects the post war subdivision of the Rouse Hill House property for generally rural residential use.¹

The precinct boundary of Area 20 including RHAC and Rouse Hill House and Rouse Hill Regional Park is shown in **Figure 2.1** below.

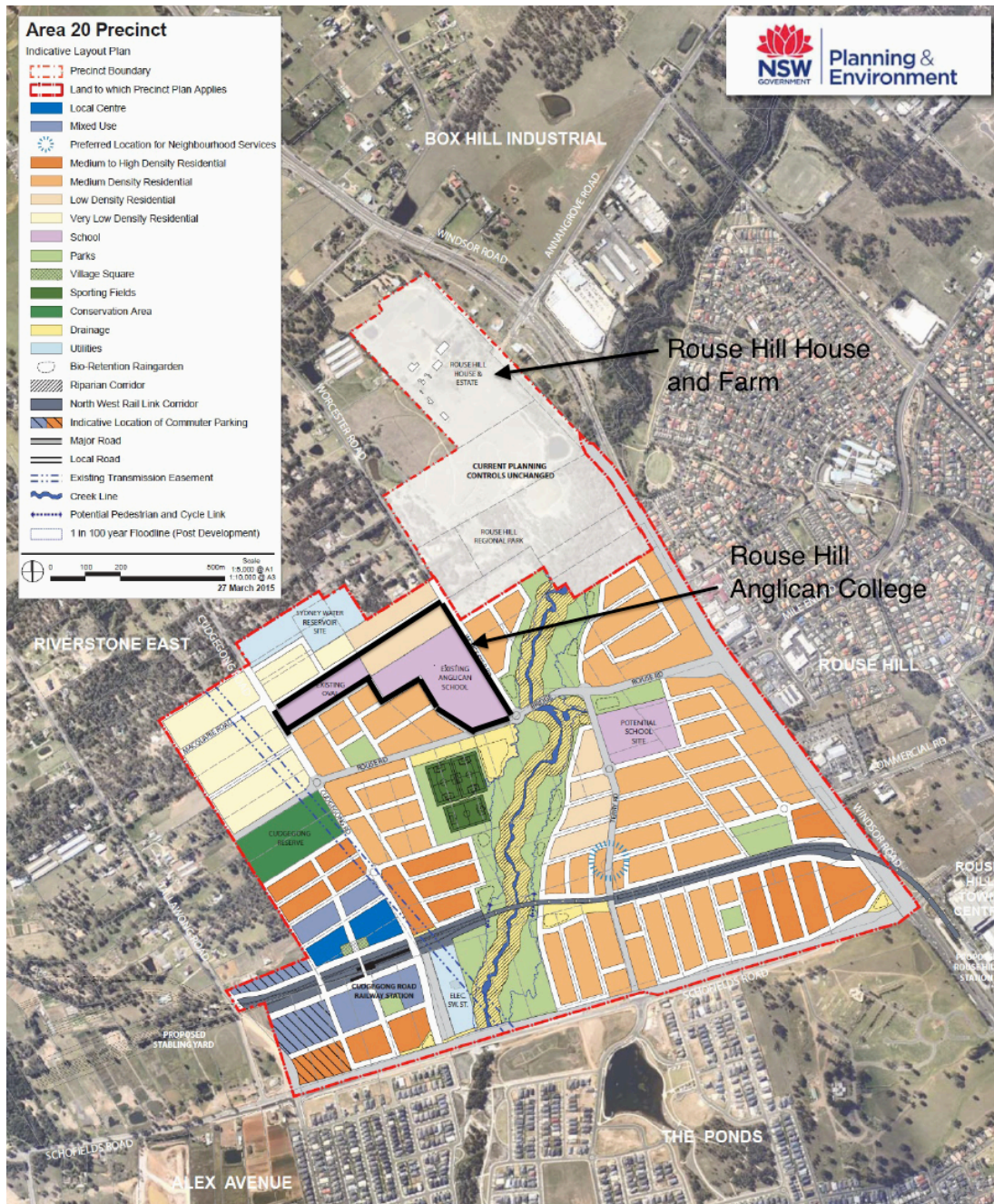


Figure 2.1: Location plan showing Rouse Hill Anglican College (RHAC) - outlined in black in relation to Rouse Hill House and Farm. The subject site is located within Area 20 Precinct. (Source: Planning NSW.)

¹ Godden Mackay Logan. GCC Area 20 Precinct – Non Indigenous Heritage Assessment, November 2010, p.36.

2.2 Heritage Listings

The Rouse Hill Anglican College is not listed as a heritage item; however, it is situated close to the Rouse Hill Regional Park and the Rouse Hill House and Farm which are both listed properties. A description of heritage items in the vicinity of the RHAC include:

- Rouse Hill Estate and Farm – NSW State Heritage Register (SHR listing 00002).
- Rouse Hill House including Stables and Outbuildings - Register of National Estate (ID2985).
- Rouse Hill House and Garden – Register of National Estate (ID2985).
- Rouse Hill House and Farm – Blacktown Local Environmental Plan (Schedule 5, I107).
- Rouse Hill House and Farm – S170 NSW Heritage and Conservation Register (Historic House Trust of NSW).
- Old Windsor Road and Windsor Road heritage Precincts – S170 NSW heritage and conservation Register Roads and Maritime Services.

2.3 History

It is beyond the scope of this report to prepare the historical analysis of the site and surrounding properties. Key historic information about the area and nearby Rouse Hill Estate and Farm is summarised below from the Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy prepared by GML:

- Traditional owners of the area are Dharuk (Darug) speaking people.
- 1789: European exploration of the area and government farms set up in Toongabbie soon after.
- 1794: Hawkesbury Road laid out (later renamed Windsor Road).
- 1813: The Rouse Hill Estate was established (450 acres) and Rouse Hill house built soon afterward. By 1823, the estate was enlarged to 1200 acres encompassing the current site of RHAC.
- 1842: Map shows Rouse Hill estate as one of the few cleared sites.
- 1931: House and estate passed to Nina Rouse and George Terry (following the death of Edwin Stephen Rouse). At this stage, the estate still extended across the entire Area 20 Precinct.
- 1947: Aerial photos indicate that large areas previously cleared for grazing have returned to substantial tree coverage.
- 1950s-1968: Subdivisions in 1950s and further subdivisions following Nina's death in 1968 reduced the estate to 20 acres.
- 1979: Permanent Conservation Order placed on Rouse Hill House. The Planning and Environment Commission (later The Department of Planning) administered the site, with the Department of Public Works undertaking restoration work.
- 1986: The Department of Planning transferred the property and the historic collection of furniture and other items associated with the house to the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.
- 1997: As part of recommendations of SREP 19 (1989), 42 hectares around Rouse Hill House were declared as the Rouse Hill Regional Park by the NSW Government.
- 1999: Following the death of Gerald Terry (the last of the Terry family to occupy the house), Rouse Hill House and Farm was opened to the public and a visitor centre constructed.

2.4 Statement of Significance

Rouse Hill Estate and Farm is located nearby to the RHAC and within the Area 20 Growth Area. The SHR inventory provides the following Statement of Significance:

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rouse Hill House is one of the most significant and substantial houses of the Macquarie period which dates from 1810 to 1822. Rouse Hill House Estate is the largest and most complete publically owned physical record - in the form of buildings, furnishings, artefacts and landscape relationship - of the occupancy and culture of a European-Australian family, encompassing the tastes, fortunes, and endeavours of seven generations from the early 19th century to the late 20th century (Historic Houses Trust 1997:8).

The property is perhaps unique for its survival as a largely intact estate with an unbroken chain of occupancy, allowing the survival of major garden and interior elements of every period of its history to the present. This layering of artefacts and fashions is especially prevalent in the gardens where designs and physical details such as edging, fencing, planting containers, bed designs and paths provide a case history for the study of the development of garden practices in Australia.

The garden is perhaps Australia's oldest surviving colonial garden in relatively intact form. The surviving physical evidence in the gardens includes borders in a variety of materials, fence and gate remnants, fragments of trellis and arbours, paving and numerous soil displacements that become evident with the location's annual dry spells. These physical remains, matched with pictorial evidence from photographs, drawings and engravings of the property, and writings, have resulted in the identification of four stages of the garden's development: c.1825, c.1865, c.1885 and c.1968. This continuity and evidence of evolution of a very early intact garden from the first quarter of the 19th century to the Edwardian era and 20th century is extremely rare in Australia. (Bogle, 1993 adapted by Read, S., 2004.)

3 HERITAGE IMPACTS

This report will assess the heritage impact that the proposed Masterplan will have on the area and specifically, on Rouse Hill Estate. The Masterplan is assessed against the following heritage and curtilage studies that have been prepared for the Growth Area 20:

- Area 20 Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage, Conybeare Morrison, March 2010.
- Blacktown City Council Growth Centre Precincts Development Control Plan, Schedule 4 Area 20 Precinct Cudgegong Road Station, March 2015.
- Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy, prepared by Godden Mackay Logan (GML), November 2010.

3.1 Assessment against Area 20 Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage (Conybeare Morrison, March 2010)

The visual and landscape analysis was prepared for The Department of Planning to inform the Masterplanning process of Area 20. The Masterplan identifies areas of visual sensitivities with Area 20, particularly in relation to the curtilage of Rouse Hill Estate (RHE). The relevant visual sensitivities from RHE toward the RHAC are listed below:

- Woodland and topography – wooded character to assist in screening potential development from RHE. These include the Rouse Hill Regional Park and Second Ponds Creek riparian vegetation.
- Protecting the ridgeline landscape - providing continuity of the rural character and visual buffer for RHE.

Rouse Hill House is located on the highest ridgeline in the area. Views to the south from Rouse Hill Estate are described in the report as follows:

*Middle view to the south and southeast include descending views to Second Ponds Creek with RHE outbuildings amongst pasture in the foreground. The dense eucalypt canopy stands out visually as a significant visual buffer. Due to its elevated viewpoint, urban development beyond the canopy of the trees is evident in distant views.*³

Comment

The south and southwest foreground views from Rouse Hill House are a highly sensitive part of the cultural landscape and setting of the heritage item. The school site (including the part subject to the Masterplan) is located within a recess that forms the northern gully of Second Ponds Creek. The ridgeline above the school contains a dense eucalypt canopy and is in direct line between Rouse Hill Estate and the school. Sensitive views to the south include direct line of sight to Second Ponds Creek and the urban development beyond – most notably, the Rouse Hill Town Centre is clearly seen to the south. Diagrams describing both the ridge top planting and ridgeline are provided in the Conybeare Morrison report and are shown below in **Figures 3.1 and 3.2**.

Photographs taken close to the main house at Rouse Hill Estate and on the ridgeline looking south and southwest are provided in **Figures 3.3 and 3.4**. The photographs confirm topographical information and the description above. The report recommends the protection and enhancement of the ridgeline trees, as important to the curtilage of RHE.³

It is noted that the Sydney Water reservoir on the adjacent allotment north of the RHAC was constructed between June 2009 and May 2010. The Conybeare Morrison report dated March 2010 does not show the reservoir in any of their images and is likely that it was built after the photographs were taken. The reservoir referred to in the above is at RL90mm⁴ while the highest structure proposed in the Masterplan is RL71.125m; however, most new structures proposed in the Masterplan sit well below this level. **Figure 3.6** of this report shows how the new buildings cut in to the site of the hill, below the height of the ridge located further to the north.

The proposed structures in the Masterplan are sited below the ridgeline between RHAC and Rouse Hill House and are screened by the buffer ridgeline planting. Based on this evidence, we confirm that new structures will have no impact on the sensitive cultural landscape setting of Rouse Hill House and Farm.

³ Area 20 Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage (Conybeare Morrison, March 2010).

⁴ ibid, Section 6, Strategy 1.4.

⁵ Schedule 4 of the Blacktown City Council Growth Centre Precinct Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014: Area 20 Precinct Public Domain and Landscape Strategy, prepared by LFA (Pacific), dated August 2011, Section 3.2.



Figure 3.1: Existing Native Vegetation. (Source: Figure 9, Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage, Conybeare Morrison, March 2010.)



Figure 3.2: Existing topography of Rouse Hill house and RHAC. (Source: Figure 10, Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage, Conybeare Morrison, March 2010.)



Figure 3.3: View from House Hill Farm looking south and west. (Refer to Figure 3.4 for a closer view of the boxed section.)

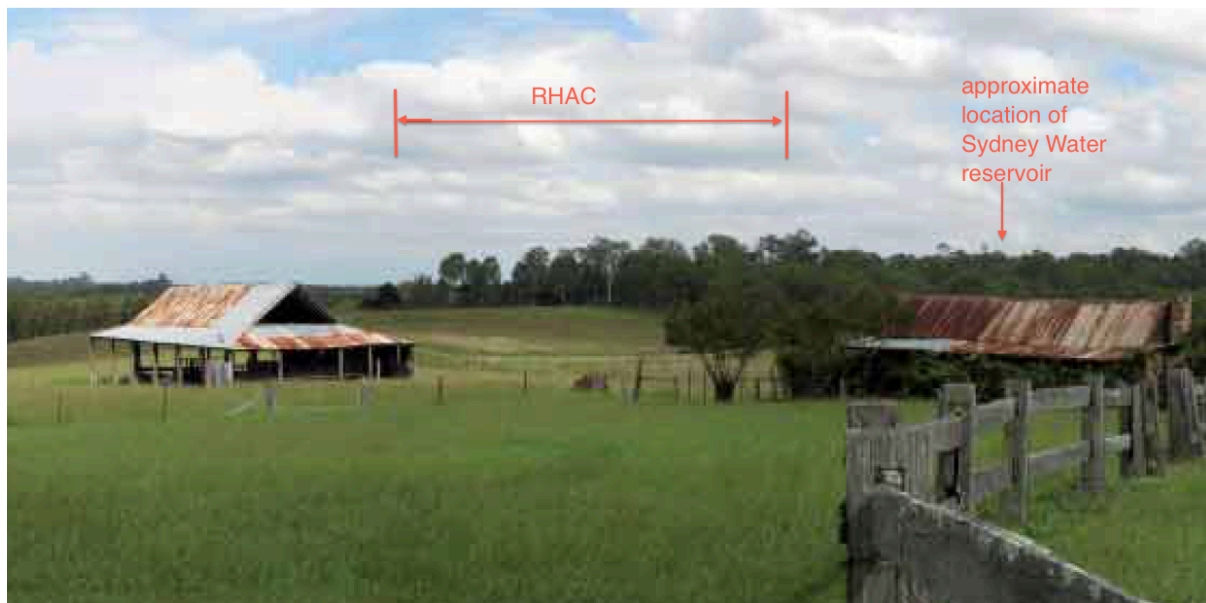


Figure 3.4: Close up view of the highlighted area from **Figure 3.3**. Arrows indicate the direction of the RHAC site. Note that the Sydney Water reservoir located on the ridgeline is not visible in this image. The photo is likely taken prior to its construction between June 2009 and May 2010.

3.2 Assessment against Schedule 4 of the Blacktown City Council Growth Centre Precincts Development Control Plan

The relevant clauses are quoted from Schedule 4, Area 20 Precinct, of the Blacktown City Council Growth Centre Precincts Development Control Plan, March 2015. Relevant parts of the Precinct Planning Vision are underlined.

2.1 The Area 20 Precinct - Precinct Planning vision

The vision for Area 20 Precinct is to create a series of new walkable residential neighbourhoods supported by local retail, employment, community, open space and recreational opportunities. The majority of housing will be in medium density forms, such as semi-detached and townhouses, though the Precinct will provide for a range of densities, dwelling types and affordability options including larger lots and standard detached houses, with apartments in close proximity to Rouse Hill Town Centre and its associated public transport opportunities.

The proposed North West Rail Link and new rail station near Cudgegong Road will introduce opportunities for a village centre linked to the station with surrounding higher density residential development and mixed use areas adjacent to the village centre and station. This will offer local residents improved access to jobs and services within the Precinct. Detailed provisions for the Cudgegong Station Area will ensure that the station, commuter car park and rail design is properly integrated with the surrounding land uses.

The Precinct is closely associated with the nationally significant Rouse Hill House Estate and the adjacent Rouse Hill Regional Park. New development will incorporate ecological sustainability principles and measures to ensure that the important historic, environmental and visual sensitivities are recognised and protected for future generations.

The public domain will respect and interpret the cultural heritage of the Precinct and its relationship to the rural past, as well as conserve significant stands of remnant vegetation, particularly along the Second Ponds Creek Corridor. This will preserve biodiversity and contribute to a strong woodland character.

Objectives regarding public domain and landscape character are relevant to heritage matters and are quoted below with relevant parts underlined.

Objectives

To establish a public domain and urban character that respects and interprets the cultural heritage of the farmland and historic context and linkages of the Precinct and the nationally significant Rouse Hill Estate.

- *To minimise the visual impact of development on Rouse Hill House Estate and its landscape context through sympathetic architectural design and the retention of existing woodland*

canopy trees in prominent locations (e.g. the northern ridgeline) and additional native tree planting within subdivisions and along key road corridors.

- To retain elements of the existing rural landscape character at the interface with Rouse Hill Regional Park and to establish a visually appealing approach to Rouse Hill House Estate as viewed from the historic Windsor Road travelling north-west.
- To create a consistent and coordinated landscaped gateway at the Rouse Road entrance to the Precinct (at Windsor Road) and to retain elements of the rural landscape character along this section of Rouse Road.
- To improve amenity for residential development adjacent to Windsor Road through the provision of a landscape buffer and architectural facade treatments within dwellings.

Comment

The impact of the development on the views and vistas from Rouse Hill Estate and its landscape setting is addressed in **Section 3.1** of this report. The combination of topography and tall trees on the ridgeline will effectively screen all development within the school site. The proposed Masterplan will not impact any of the existing woodland canopy trees or the rural landscape setting of Rouse Hill House and Farm.

The school was established in 2002³ and has approximately ten medium to large sized buildings (attached and detached), and playing fields and car parking on site. The school is appropriately located to the south of a ridgeline and forms part of the gulley feeding into the historic Seconds Ponds Creek in the southeast corner of the site.

The architectural character of the existing buildings within the school is inspired by the rural vernacular forms and materials. The design of the new buildings takes on a similar aesthetic and approach, incorporating emphasis on metal roof forms, single storey wrap-around verandahs, and masonry walls. Their size and breakup with opportunity for garden landscaping and tall trees in between comply with the objectives of the DCP and we consider this to be desirable for the area.

We also make the point that the buildings proposed in the Masterplan will be constructed as the student population expands, which in turn is a direct response to the population and densification of the area. The design is inspired by the country and rural vernacular and is appropriate to the setting of the place as the surrounding area becomes more populated and urbanised.

A new road is proposed along the school's northern boundary connecting Worchester Road with Cudgegong Road which will open opportunity for the enhancement of native tree planting along this new road corridor.

3.3 Assessment against the Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy, prepared by Godden Mackay Logan, November 2010

The interpretation strategy provides advisory recommendations to help integrate heritage interpretation to Area 20 and to guide future development. Section 6.3.1 of the Interpretation Strategy provides recommendations on how new development can interpret the area's historic themes and is quoted below (relevant parts underlined).

6.3.1 New Built Development

New development in Area 20 may also enhance the appreciation of heritage values through the measures outlined below. Such measures will help reinforce the character of the rural landscape:

- **Materials and colours:** Materials of new buildings, roof and wall colours should be recessive—neutral and non reflective to ensure minimal visual impact on the cultural landscape of the wider setting of the Rouse Hill House Estate.
- **Height, bulk, scale:** The location and design of new buildings should minimise the impact of future urban development on the cultural landscape character of the area through management of height, bulk and scale.

Section 6.5 provides further recommendations (relevant parts underlined):

Interpretation of the history and significance of Area 20 is an integral part of the future planning for the site. Interpretation on the site may contain the following elements:

³ Rouse Hill Anglican College, Website <http://www.rhac.nsw.edu.au/>

- *Acknowledgement of the local Aboriginal people's use of the site and its Aboriginal cultural values.*
- *Integration of interpretive stories at key locations within Area 20 through walking trails and signage.*
- *Use of natural and cultural landscape and important aspects of the site's history in design of play equipment and public facilities.*
- *New built form should help interpret the rural history and heritage of the area through contemporary architecture that uses features such as verandahs, extended eaves etc. Colours should be drawn from the muted tones of the natural woodland so they are visually recessive.*
- *Strengthen existing cultural plantings to convey former rural landscape qualities of Area 20.*
- *Use of aspects of the area's heritage significance in place-naming.*
- *Integrate high-quality public art that interprets the history and significance of the precinct.*
- *In conjunction with HHT and DECCW, support public heritage programmes such as children's events, fairs, performances or re-enactments to emphasise local/regional heritage themes and stories.*

Comment

As discussed in **Section 3.2** above, rural vernacular forms and shapes inspire the architectural language and character of the new buildings. The size and break-up of each of the modular buildings (block K, L and M) is similar to the existing modules on the site and consistent with a rural style building (refer to discussion under **Section 2.3** above).

In terms of height, the proposed modules follow the natural topography but are cut into the hill along the northern elevation, thus minimizing the height, bulk and scale of new buildings along the northern boundary (refer to **Figures 3.5 and 3.6**). When viewed from the street level perspective of Worcester Street, block M would effectively screen buildings behind it. The development will be seen as a single level building with a deep verandah and rural character.

The slightly skewed alignment of the buildings to Worcester Street adds interest to the form and architecture. It adds to the quiet sense of random and unregulated nature that rural buildings have in the landscape and supports a rural landscape setting.

The design of the senior school will front Rouse Road which is adjacent to medium density zones and opposite open parkland. The design approach and density to Rouse Road is different to Worcester Road where the character is sympathetic to the rural aesthetic and riparian corridor opposite with deeper setback and parking / landscape areas. The existing condition and presentation of the school along Rouse Road is poor with paling fence and screen planting designed for privacy and inward views. The proposed building presents as a two storey building to the street and increases to a three storey building further back with the grade of the terrain. The proposed character of the senior school as viewed from Rouse Road is consistent with the proposed zoning plans for medium density residential (further west along Rouse Road) and is therefore supported.

We consider the architectural design and character to be consistent with the recommended interpretation initiatives in the GML Report.

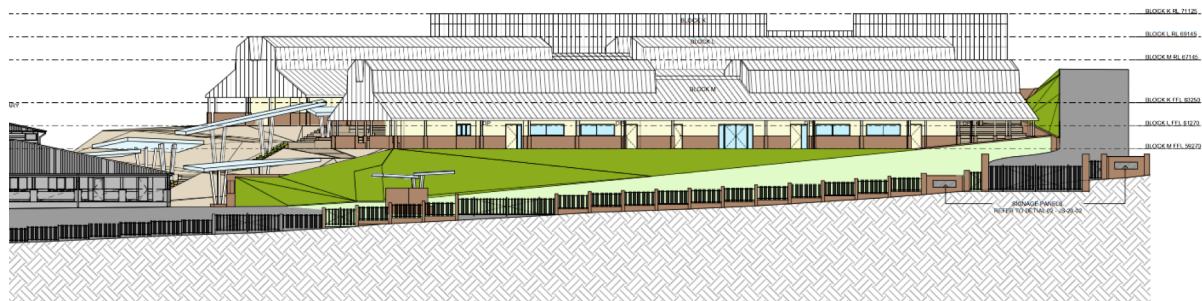


Figure 3.5: Excerpt of Worcester Road elevation (drawing MP-JS-20-02). Block M will be visible from Worcester Road, while blocks L and K will be screened from the road perspective.

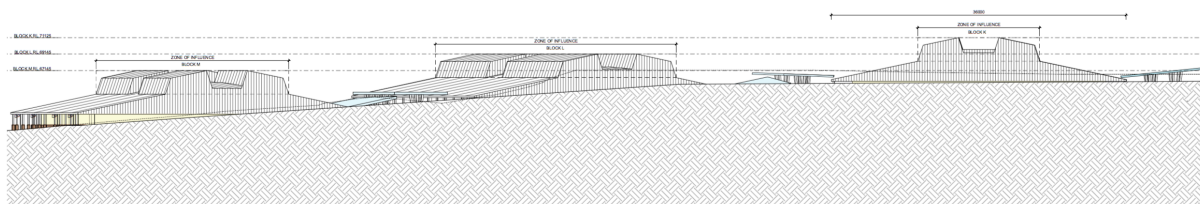


Figure 3.6: Excerpt from the northern elevation of the Junior School (drawing MP-JS-20-01). This elevation shows the extent to which the buildings are cut into the side of the hill.

4 CONCLUSION

The RHAC falls within Area 20 as part of the North West Sector Land Release Strategy. This area has been identified for the development of an additional 2500 dwellings including single dwelling and medium density housing on 245 hectares.⁶ The RAHC falls within the area of Expanded Visual Curtilage of Rouse Hill Estate, established to protect the heritage qualities of the place. Rouse Hill House and outbuildings is one of the most significant and substantial houses of the Macquarie period and is one of the most significant heritage sites in Australia. This significance is related to both the built fabric and the cultural landscape setting. Consequently, development that occurs within the vicinity of RHE requires close consideration to minimise heritage impacts to its curtilage and setting.

We support the proposals contained in the Masterplan as being consistent with the heritage and landscape objectives contained within the guiding documents for Area 20 (referenced in **Section 3**) and the site, of which the main issues are summarised below:

- The topography and tall trees on the ridgeline between RHAC and the Rouse Hill House and Farm will effectively screen new buildings proposed in the Masterplan.
- The proposed Masterplan will not impact the cultural landscape setting of Rouse Hill House and Farm.
- The new buildings, particularly modules K, L and M are cut into the northern slope of the site, minimising their height, bulk and scale.
- The size and break-up of each of the modular buildings (block K, L and M) is similar to the existing modules on the site and consistent with a rural character. The design of the proposed buildings in the Masterplan is inspired by the rural vernacular materials and forms incorporating emphasis on metal roof forms, single storey wrap-around verandahs, and masonry walls.
- The Masterplan will be constructed as the student population expands, which in turn is a direct response to the population and densification of the area. Further development in the area proposed under Area 20 land release strategy will mean that the school will expand within the context and character of a more urbanised area.
- Form, scale and setback of the senior school along Rouse Road in line with a medium density zone further west.

It is our opinion that the proposed Masterplan will constitute no heritage impact to Rouse Hill Estate and Farm and that it is consistent with the heritage interpretation initiatives for Area 20.

We support the application for the Masterplan and recommend that it be approved.

Robert Gasparini
Associate
Design 5 – Architects

3 October 2017

⁶ Area 20 Landscape and Visual Analysis including Rouse Hill Estate Curtilage (Conybeare Morrison, March 2010), page 69.