

# 05 Heritage Significance

## 5.1 Heritage Items in the Vicinity

The subject site is not identified as an item of heritage significance in the Lismore LEP 2012, nor it is located within a Heritage Conservation Area.

The subject site is located within 400m walking distance of the following heritage items, which are also visible from the site:

- 1 #SHR 01044, Lismore Railway Underbridges.
- 2 #A7, Railway Viaduct, Alexandra Parade, North Lismore (State Significance, Archaeological Site).

The former school, which is a heritage-listed item, is located 800m from the subject, at the eastern end of Alexandra Parade.

- 3 #I92, Richmond River High School, 89 Lake Street, North Lismore (Local Significance, Heritage Item).
- 4 LEP #30186, Richmond River High School Grounds, 89 Lake Street, North Lismore (Local Significance, Landscape)



Figure 76: Subject site showing the existing structures and heritage items in the vicinity (shaded red).

Source: Landchecker with TZG overlay.



## 5.1.1 Lismore Railway Underbridges and Viaducts

The Lismore Railway Underbridges is a group of three steel underbridges and timber viaducts along the North Coast Railway between Lismore and North Lismore. The underbridge and viaduct at Alexandra Parade is located 300m southeast of the subject site and can be seen from the southeast corner of the site and from the top of the knoll near Farmhouse 1.

The Underbridges are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR #01044) and the site is also identified as an archaeological site of state significance in Lismore LEP (A7). The heritage inventory listing states:

### Boundary Description

The listing boundary is the area around each of the bridges including supports, embankments, abutments and formation for a distance of 20 metres around each structure.

### Description

Structures

Underbridges - steel, 3 span truss between Lismore and North Lismore 836.8km, 1894

Viaducts - 3 sets of timber viaducts over flood plain, 837.1 to 837.7km, 1x12,1x16, 1x17 spans, 1894

### Statement of Significance

The Lismore bridges and viaducts are a fine set of bridges all in one location demonstrating the problems of building railways in this flood prone area dating from 1894.

Criteria f) Rare

This item is assessed as historically rare. This item is assessed as scientifically rare. This item is assessed as architecturally rare. This item is assessed as socially rare.



Figure 78: View below the underbridge and viaduct at Alexandra Parade.  
Source: TZG Heritage, 2024.

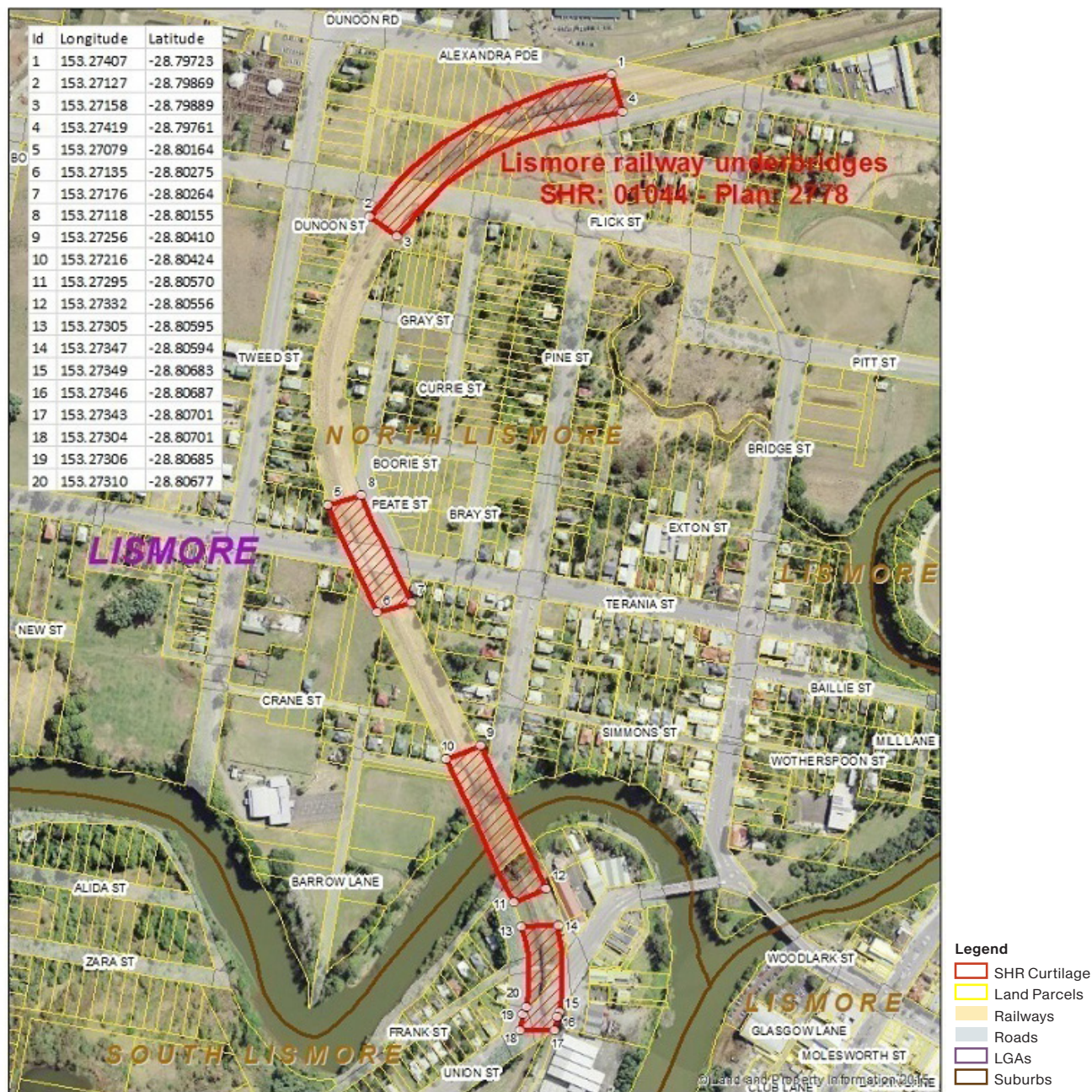


Figure 77: Railway underbridge and viaduct at Alexandra Parade.  
Source: TZG Heritage, 2024.



Figure 79: Railway underbridge and viaduct at Alexandra Parade.  
Source: TZG Heritage, 2024.





# State Heritage Register - SHR 01044, Plan 2778 Lismore railway underbridges

Gazettal Date: 02 April 1999

0 60 120 180 240  
Metres

Scale: 1:5,500

Datum/Projection: GCS GDA 1994



Figure 80: SHR Curtilage Plan 2778 - Lismore Railway Underbridges.  
Source: Heritage NSW.

5.1.2 Richmond River High School

Richmond River High School, also known as Richmond River High Campus, at 89 Lake Street is listed on the State Heritage Register (SHI #4640357) as part of the Department of Education's S170 Heritage Register and as a heritage item of local significance under the provisions of Lismore LEP. There is a separate LEP Heritage Listing for Block A and for the cultural planting within the school grounds. Richmond River High Campus is also included in the National Trust Heritage Register.

Department of Education S170 Heritage Register

The S170 heritage inventory listing for *The Rivers Secondary College - Richmond River High Campus* states:

Description

An elevated weatherboard Georgian Revival building which originally consisted of twelve classrooms with an Assembly Hall in the centre of the "E" configuration of the building. Hat Rooms and Wash Rooms were provided on ground level.

Modification Dates - Library added in 1924. Conversion of Primary classrooms into a home science, laboratory and demonstration room, a food preparation unit and showers undertaken in 1958.

Further Comments - The following Standard Plan buildings are excluded from the heritage listing; Building B00B (1961), B00C (1970), B00D (1966), B00E (1961), B00F (1958), B00G (1979), BAGA (1958) & BAGB (2009).

Statement of Significance

The original building for Lismore High School is of historical interest as the school was one of the first comprehensive high schools established in rural New South Wales in 1920. The weatherboard Georgian Revival building is of significant aesthetic interest.

Criteria a) Historic significance  
The school has historical significance as the site of one of the first comprehensive high schools established in rural New South Wales in 1920.

Criteria c) Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement  
The Georgian Revival weatherboard building has aesthetic significance.

Criterion d) Social, cultural, and spiritual  
The school has social significance for its association with the local community.

Criterion g) Representative  
The Georgian Revival weatherboard building is representative of this style of building on the New South Wales north coast.

Historical Notes

In 1917, the site for Lismore High School was acquired by resumption. A foundation stone was laid on 23 November 1918 by the local member Mr. George Nesbitt MLA. The building was completed in 1919 and the school commenced in 1920. It was one of the first comprehensive high schools established in rural New South Wales. In 1924, a library was added to the building and was officially opened by the State Governor, Sir Dudley de Chair. In 1929 the school was classified as a first class high school, the first rural high school to achieve the distinction. In 1935, the teaching of Agriculture was transferred from the Lismore Rural School. In 1942, Lismore High School was moved to the former public school site at the corner of Keen and Magellan Streets and Lismore North Public School commenced on the site. In 1958, Lismore North Public School was moved to Albert Park Public School and Richmond River High School commenced operations on the former Lismore High School site. Lismore became the first rural centre to have two full and equal high schools, with the only difference being that Richmond River High School offered agriculture in addition to the normal teaching program. In 1958, the original building was modified to provide secondary classrooms for home science, a food preparation room, a laboratory and demonstration room. An additional timber building (Building B00F) was provided for woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing rooms. In 1961, Stage 3 of the improvements at the school were completed and provided rooms for art, music, science, needlework, home science and seven general classrooms. Further classrooms were added in 1966 and, a new library/science building was completed in 1970 and a Multi-Purpose building was provided in 1979.

Historic Themes

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
6. Educating	Education	Public Education



## Lismore LEP Heritage Listing

### Heritage Item - Built, School - State (public)

The LEP heritage listing for *Richmond River High School* states:

#### Description

Elevated weatherboard school building. Constructed in an "E" shape with a steeply pitched terracotta tile roof. Fibre cement battened gables at either end and skillion section over the main entrance. The central portion of the building has an extra storey, with a gable to the front, and is capped with a copper dome. Large multi-pane double hung windows.

#### Statement of Significance

The original building is of special historical interest as one of country NSW's early public secondary schools. The changing classification of the school adds to its historical interest. This reflects both changes to the curriculum at State level and the response to the continuing, and often increasing, local demand for education. Special aesthetic interest as a weatherboard Georgian Revival design by the Government Architect's office. Little altered. Regional significance.

#### Criteria f) Rarity

This item is assessed as aesthetically rare locally. This item is assessed as historically rare locally.

#### Criteria g) Representative

This item is assessed as aesthetically representative locally. This item is assessed as historically representative regionally. This item is assessed as socially representative locally.

#### Historical Notes

Foundation stone laid in 1918 by local member, Mr G Nesbitt. The school was opened in 1920 as the Lismore High School, with Mr R Harvey as headmaster. In 1929 the school was upgraded to a "first class" school, the first country high school to achieve such a standard. In 1942 the High School moved to the former Lismore Public School site on Magellan Street (see listing 40012). This building then became the North Lismore Public School, but reopened in 1958 as the Richmond River High School.

#### Historic Themes

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
6. Educating	Education	Unknown
6. Educating	Ethnic influences	Unknown
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Unknown
7. Governing	Land tenure	Unknown

### Landscape - trees of social, historic or special significance

The LEP heritage listing for *Richmond River High School Grounds* states:

#### Description

Cultural planting to fine timber high school building. Mature planting of Cocos palms (about 13m high). These form a row along the main facade of the original 1920's building. Camphorlaurels (to about 13m), Silky Oaks (lopped to about 16m) and Tallowwood (20m) planted along the main southern frontage. Planting dates from about 1930/50 period. More recent planting of Lemon Scented tea tree and shrubs on same frontage. Row of Bottlebrush along northern boundary.

#### Statement of Significance

Cultural planting of characteristic trees from the Inter-War period. Trees enhance the architecture of the fine timber school building and create a pleasant streetscape. Planting serves as a reminder of the awareness of the value of trees in that era, on the part of a public authority. Local significance.

#### Criteria g) Representative

This item is assessed as aesthetically representative locally.

#### Historical Notes

The school opened as the first Lismore High School in 1920. Upgraded to a "first class" school in 1929. In 1942 the High School moved to the former Lismore Public School site on Keen and Magellan Streets (see listing 40012). This building then became the North Lismore Public School, but reopened in 1958 as the Richmond River High School. (For further historical information see item 20110.)

#### Historic Themes

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
3. Economy	Environment - cultural landscape	Unknown
3. Economy	Events	Unknown
7. Governing	Government and Administration	Unknown
7. Governing	Land tenure	Unknown



## National Trust Heritage Listing

The National Trust heritage inventory listing for *Richmond River High School* states:

### Description

The 1920 building is of rusticated weatherboard raised on tall brick piers, with flared bottoms to the weatherboard cladding. The Marseille tile roof replaces asbestos cement shingles. It has an E-shaped plan with a central two storey portion incorporating a cupola and flagpole. This portion (administrative areas) has a front verandah, decorative gables, flagpole and a copper cupola supported on simple posts. Classroom wings extend to the rear with the main hall forming the central rear wing. Internal detailing is simple and generally intact including main stair to two storey portion, doors and large 12-paned windows to classrooms, but ceilings have been altered and fireplaces and chimneys removed. Verandahs facing the rear yard have simple timber balustrades and board soffits. The main hall has leadlight panes to its door, board ceiling, and curious mixed scissors trusses with paired members.

There are many other later buildings at the rear including an apparently early weatherboard wing attached to the main building, of similar style with simple intact detailing; later weatherboard wings and later brick wings. The modern wing abutting the west side of the 1920 building is unsympathetic. The Lake Street elevation of the 1920 building is enhanced by symmetrically planted bangalow palms.

Curtilage to be a rectangle bounded by Lake Street, west boundary, including rear yard but excluding modern buildings (see plan). Significant items are 1920 building and bangalow palms.

### Reason for listing

The building is a well planned, well detailed and generally intact example of 1920s school construction, with a distinguished and unusual street elevation enhanced by symmetrical plantings.

### History

Built 1920.

Agitation for the establishment of a separate High School in Lismore had commenced before the First World War. The site was acquired 22/6/1917, and the foundation stone laid 23/11/1918 by George Nesbitt, the local Member of Parliament. A third class high school was established in January 1920 and moved to the Lake Street site on completion a few months later. It became a second class high school in 1924, and a first class high school in 1929 - the first country high school to attain this distinction. In 1941 the Keen/Magellan Streets public school moved to new premises, the High School moved to the Kenn/ Magellan Streets site, and the Lake Street school became North Lismore Public School. In 1957 the Public School moved to a new site to enable Lismore High School, then the largest in the State, to be split. Richmond River High School being established on the Lake Street site.



Figure 81: 1987. View of Richmond River High School from Lake Street.  
Source: National Trust of Australia (NSW) Listing, #00010597.



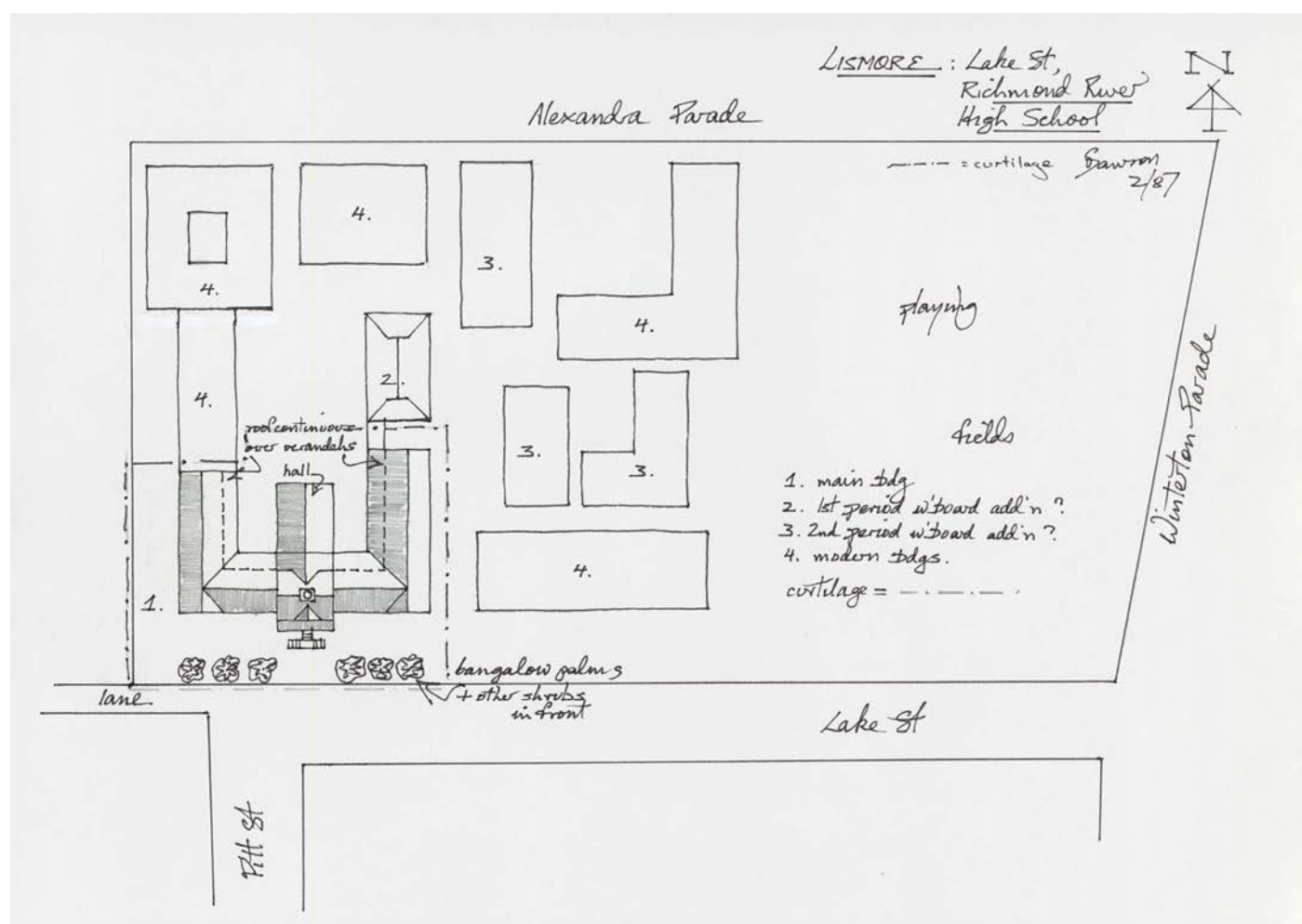


Figure 82: Site Plan showing curtilage dashed.

Source: National Trust of Australia (NSW) Listing, #00010597.



5.2 Significant Views

Views to the heritage items in the vicinity are limited to the southeast corner of the site, adjacent the intersection of Dunoon Road and Alexandra Parade or from the top of the knoll near Farmhouse 1.

The Railway Underbridge and Viaduct on Alexandra Parade can be seen from these location whereas views of the Main Administration Building at Richmond River High Campus are screened by the trees along Bridge Street - see **Figure 84**.

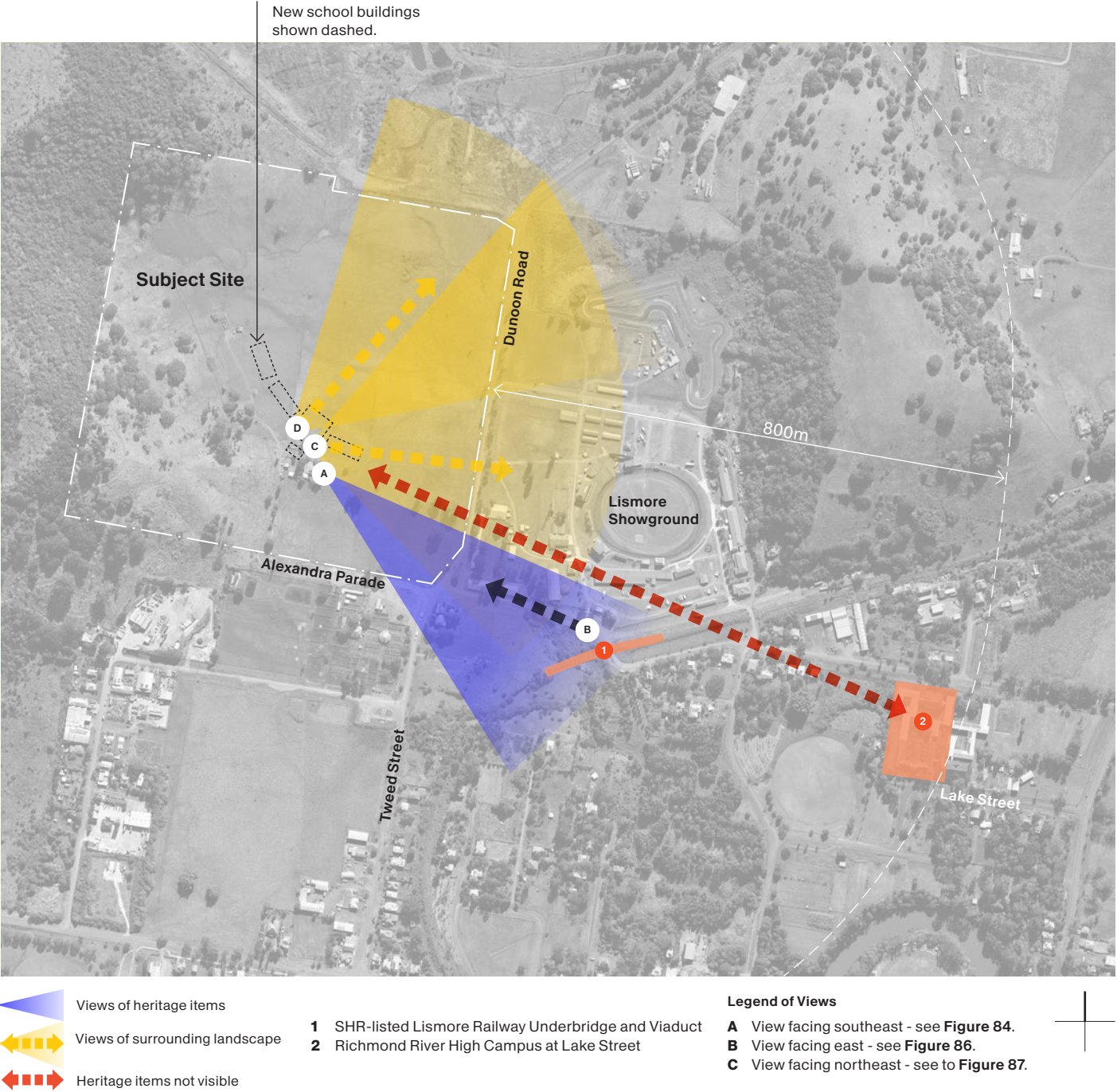


Figure 83: Subject site showing the existing structures and heritage items in the vicinity (shaded red).  
Source: Landchecker with TZG overlay.



## View A

View of the Main Administration Building at Lake Street campus is screened by trees

Lismore CBD beyond



Figure 84: View from the top of the knoll facing southeast. The heritage listed railway underbridge and viaduct on Alexandra Parade is visible but views of the Main Administration Building at Richmond River High Campus are screened by the trees along Bridge Street. INSET: Detail view of heritage item.

Source: TZG Architects, 2024.



## View B

Views of the subject site from the railway underbridge and viaduct on Alexandra Parade are screened by the buildings and trees at Lismore Showground.

Subject site



Figure 85: Views from the railway underbridge and viaduct facing west towards the subject site.

Source: TZG Architects, 2024.



The heritage items are not visible from the proposed location of the new school buildings. Refer to **Figure 86**. Views from this location are predominantly of the open paddocks, rolling hills and Lismore Showground on the opposite side of Dunoon Road. Refer to **Figure 87**.

### View C



Figure 86: Views facing east towards Dunoon Road with the Lismore Showground buildings in the background.  
Source: TZG Architects, 2024.

### View D



Figure 87: View facing northeast towards Dunoon Road and the Northern Lismore Plateau Urban Release Area.  
Source: TZG Architects, 2024.

## 5.3 Non Aboriginal Archaeology

### 5.3.1 Statement of Archaeological Potential

A preliminary investigation of the archaeological potential of the site was prepared by AMAC Group in 2023. The AMAC report described the archaeological potential of the site as follows:

The continued function and occupation of the study site for domestic and agricultural purposes has resulted in limited development phases. The site has remained largely undeveloped since its initial European occupation from the late 19th century. Uniquely, a large portion of the study site has been occupied by descendants of the Murray family for a period of more than 130 years, which could result in the creation of a long term archaeological record linked to a well-known local family.

There remains moderate to high archaeological potential for deposition associated with late 19th and 20th century domestic occupation of the study site by the Murray family, which may survive within and immediately surrounding extant domestic dwellings on the study site. Due to the limited development phases, this material is expected to survive in an intact to partly disturbed condition.

The study site holds low to moderate potential for undocumented archaeological evidence of late 19th and 20th century agricultural activities in an intact to partly disturbed condition. Structural remains hold higher potential to remain intact, which are already known to survive in the centre of the site.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 88: Historical Archaeology - Archaeological Sensitivity Map.  
Source: AMAC Group, October 2023.

The table below provides a summary of the site's archaeological potential including location, expected archaeological features, potential level, and perceived condition.

Site Type	Domestic	Agricultural
<b>Development Phase</b>	Late 19th century - 20th century	Late 19th century - 20th century
<b>Evidence for known structures</b>	Yes, 20th century aerial photographs display several dwellings on the study site, presumably at least two form domestic dwellings occupied from the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century.	Undocumented
<b>Expected archaeological features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Brick/sandstone footings/ foundations</li> <li>– Post holes/ slot trenches for timber buildings</li> <li>– Former floor surfaces (paving, flagging, tamped floors)</li> <li>– Undocumented cesspits or privies</li> <li>– Undocumented wells</li> <li>– Post holes for fences or timber outbuildings</li> <li>– Occupation deposition (underfloor deposits, yard deposits, rubbish pits, artefact scatters)</li> <li>– Landscaping (garden beds, surfaces)</li> <li>– Former services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Post holes for fences or animal enclosures, stables, sheds</li> <li>– Evidence of cultivation (hoe marks)</li> <li>– Ag drains or culverts</li> <li>– Yard deposits/ rubbish pits</li> </ul>
<b>Archaeological Potential Level</b>	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate
<b>Perceived Condition</b>	Intact to partly disturbed	Intact to partly disturbed

**Table 1: Table of expected archaeological features per site type and phase.**

Source: AMAC Group, October 2023.

<sup>17</sup>: AMAC Group, Archaeological Component for SRIS Report, Option Site 9 - Showground, North Lismore, October 2023, p.13.



### 5.3.2 Historical Archaeological Assessment

#### Statement of Cultural Significance

The Historical Archaeological Assessment prepared by AMAC Group states:

There is no discounting that the Murray family's continued occupation and presence in North Lismore for over three generations is highly significant to the cultural heritage values of the local Lismore community. However, this local significance is connected to associative and social aspects (Criterion B and D), these heritage values will not be represented in the physical material that would comprise the archaeological record of the study site.

The unknown location of the late 19th century domestic residence limits the research potential of the known archaeological resource. Intact occupation deposits specifically linking to late 19th century domestic occupation of the study site would be considered a useful resource and locally significant for their perceived research value to contribute data regarding the initial European development phases and settlement of North Lismore. The known archaeological resource lies with undocumented 20th century evidence of domestic occupation across two dwellings on site, these remains are not considered of local or State significance.

Disturbed or ephemeral archaeological remains associated with the known agricultural use of the wider site area for cattle grazing or land cultivation are not considered to form relics, nor meet the threshold of local or State significance in their limitation to contribute data of high research value to the existing historic record of the region.<sup>18</sup>

18: AMAC Group, Historical Archaeological Assessment, May 2025, p.37.

## 5.4 Potential heritage values

### 5.4.1 Previous Assessment of Heritage Significance

The Heritage Council of NSW has developed a set of seven criteria for assessing heritage significance, which can be used to make decisions about the heritage value of a place or item.

These criteria are based on the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, which espouse a holistic understanding of the potential significance of a place for both its tangible and intangible values.

A place needs to meet one or more of the seven criteria to be considered of heritage significance however, not all places will meet all seven criteria.

An evaluation of Farmhouse 1 against these criteria was undertaken as part of an initial site investigation<sup>19</sup> and revised in **Table 2** below.

Criteria	Discussion of Potential Heritage Values
<b>Criterion (a) Historical significance</b>	With the passing of the Robertson Land Act, many farming families were attracted to the North Lismore Plateau. The subject site contributes to the understanding of European settlement in the area, as part of a collection of farms established on the Plateau, however, this does not meet the threshold for individual listing under this criteria.
<b>Criterion (b) Historical association</b>	<p>The site is associated with William Murray, one of the pioneering families of Lismore, who acquired the Crown Grant in 1874 and purchased the neighbouring lot in 1921. By c1900 Murray had built a farmhouse on top of a knoll which is believed to be Farmhouse 1. A second farmhouse was constructed on the site as the family expanded, which was moved in the 1950s to its current location. Prior to the sale of the property in 2024, the farmhouse had been continuously owned and occupied by a member of the Murray family.</p> <p>Farmhouse 1 has potential historical value but primarily for its familial connection and therefore, does not meet the threshold for listing.</p>
<b>Criterion (c) Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Criterion (d) Social, cultural, and spiritual</b>	<p>Anecdotally, Farmhouse 1 has sheltered the Murray family during major periods of flooding in the area. The 2022 flood event caused widespread damage in Lismore but Farmhouse 1 was spared as the flood levels peaked just below the house. Members of the Murray family were able to help their less fortunate neighbours in the aftermath.</p> <p>There is a strong familial attachment to the site and Farmhouse 1, however, it does not meet threshold for listing under this criteria.</p>
<b>Criterion (e) Research potential</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Criterion (f) Rare</b>	<i>Comparative analysis of other early farmhouses in the local area is required to identify potential heritage values.</i>
<b>Criterion (g) Representative</b>	<i>Comparative analysis of other early farmhouses in the local area is required to identify potential heritage values.</i>
<b>Integrity/Intactness</b>	Major restoration of Farmhouse 1 was undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s. Alterations to building included construction of a new wing at the rear, reinstatement of the wrap-around verandah, but with a bullnosed profile, and a swimming pool. Immediately prior to this, the structure was in poor condition and used to store hay. The original rusticated weatherboard cladding, internal timber linings and timber framed doors and windows were, however, conserved. Expansive views of the paddocks and surrounding landscape, which relate to this historic use of the site, also remain intact.
<b>Statement of Significance</b>	<p>The Murray family has a strong connection to the site and in particular, Farmhouse 1. The site has potential value for its historical association with William Murray, who acquired the Crown Grant for the property in 1874, and is evidence of the family's long standing occupation in the area. Farmhouse 1 has sheltered members of the Murray family throughout the many floods in the history of the area including the February 2022 flood event which caused widespread destruction in Lismore.</p> <p>There is a strong familial attachment to the site and Farmhouse 1, however, it does not meet the threshold for heritage listing in its own right.</p>

**Table 2: Assessment of Significance.**

<sup>19</sup>: Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, SRISI - Site 9 Showground, 163 and 170 Alexandra Parade, North Lismore, April 2024, p.57-58.



# 06 The Proposal

The proposed activity comprises the relocation and rebuild of the Richmond River High Campus from its existing temporary location alongside The Rivers Secondary College Lismore High Campus at East Lismore to the site at 163 and 170 Alexandra Parade, North Lismore.

The school will be delivered in one stage.

A detailed description of the proposal is as follows:

- 1 Demolition of existing features including existing buildings, cattle drinking well, cattle sheds, and wire fencing, and removal of trees to accommodate school development.
- 2 Construction of new 3 storey buildings on the southeastern portion of the site for the proposed public secondary school including:
  - a General and Specialist Learning Spaces, and Workshops.
  - b Administration, and Staff facilities.
  - c Library, Hall, and Movement Studio.
  - d Construction, Hospitality, and Agricultural Learning Facilities.
  - e Amenity, Plant, Circulation, and Storage areas.
  - f Outdoor Learning Spaces and play spaces.
- 3 Landscaping including tree planting.
- 4 Public domain works comprising:
  - a Access road off Dunoon Road, comprising a separate shared bicycle/pedestrian pathway, and internal access roundabout.
  - b Kiss and ride drop-off and pick up zones.
  - c Bus transport arrangements with a separate bus zone.
- 5 Outdoor spaces including assembly zones, agricultural spaces, sports fields, games courts, dancing circles, yarning and dancing circles, seating and shade structures.
- 6 On-site carparking, including accessible spaces and provision for EV charging spaces.



Figure 89: View of the new school facing southwest.

Source: EJE Architects, drawing supplied by SINSW.



Figure 90: View of Building B and C from Sports Field 1.  
Source: EJE Architects, drawing supplied by SINSW.



Figure 92: View of Building C and D from Sports Field 1.  
Source: EJE Architects, drawing supplied by SINSW.



Figure 91: View of Building A showing the game courts and Ant Trail access ramp in the foreground.  
Source: EJE Architects, drawing supplied by SINSW.



Architectural Drawings

Demolition

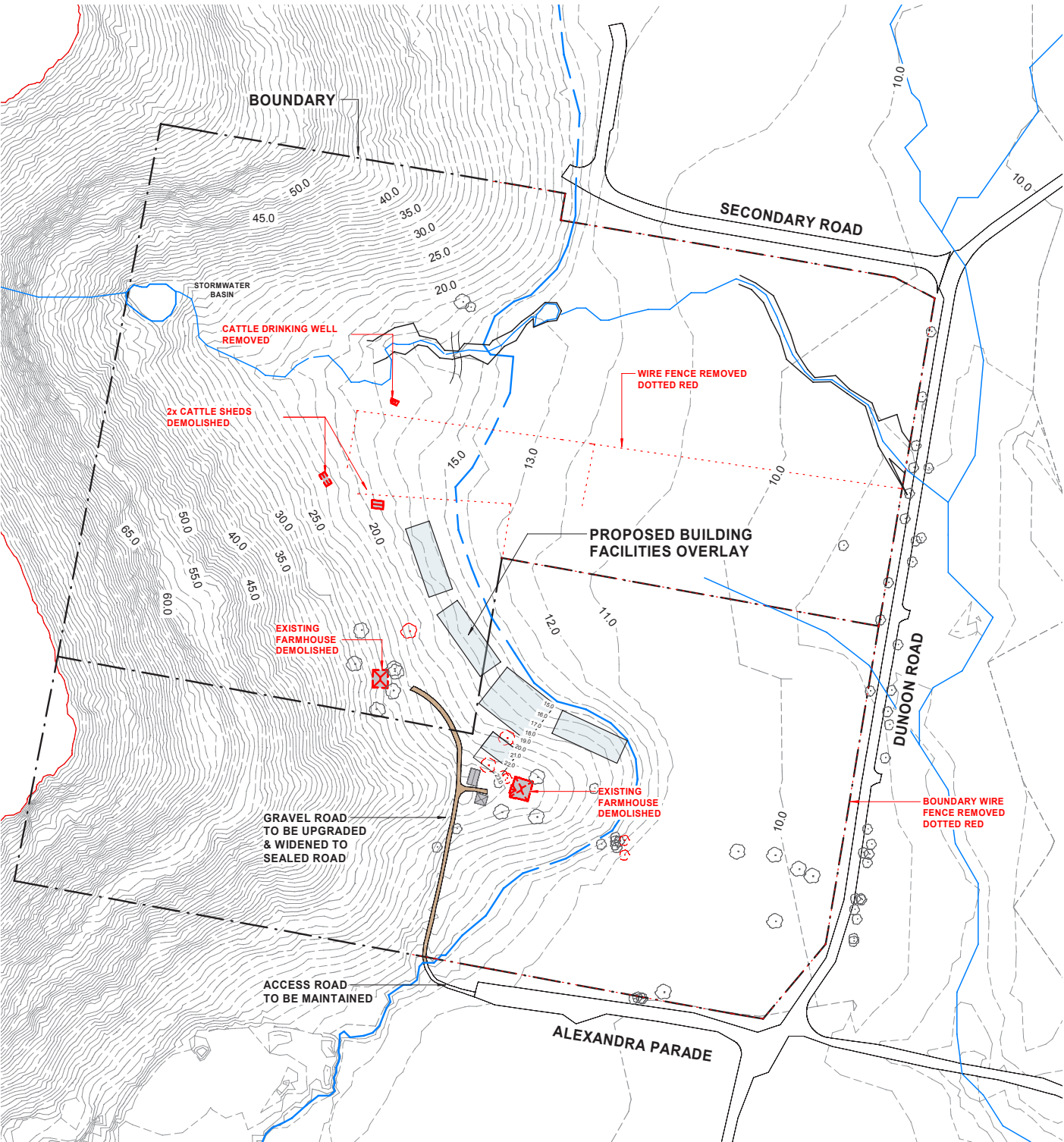


Figure 93: Site Demolition Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, drawing supplied by SINSW.



Proposed

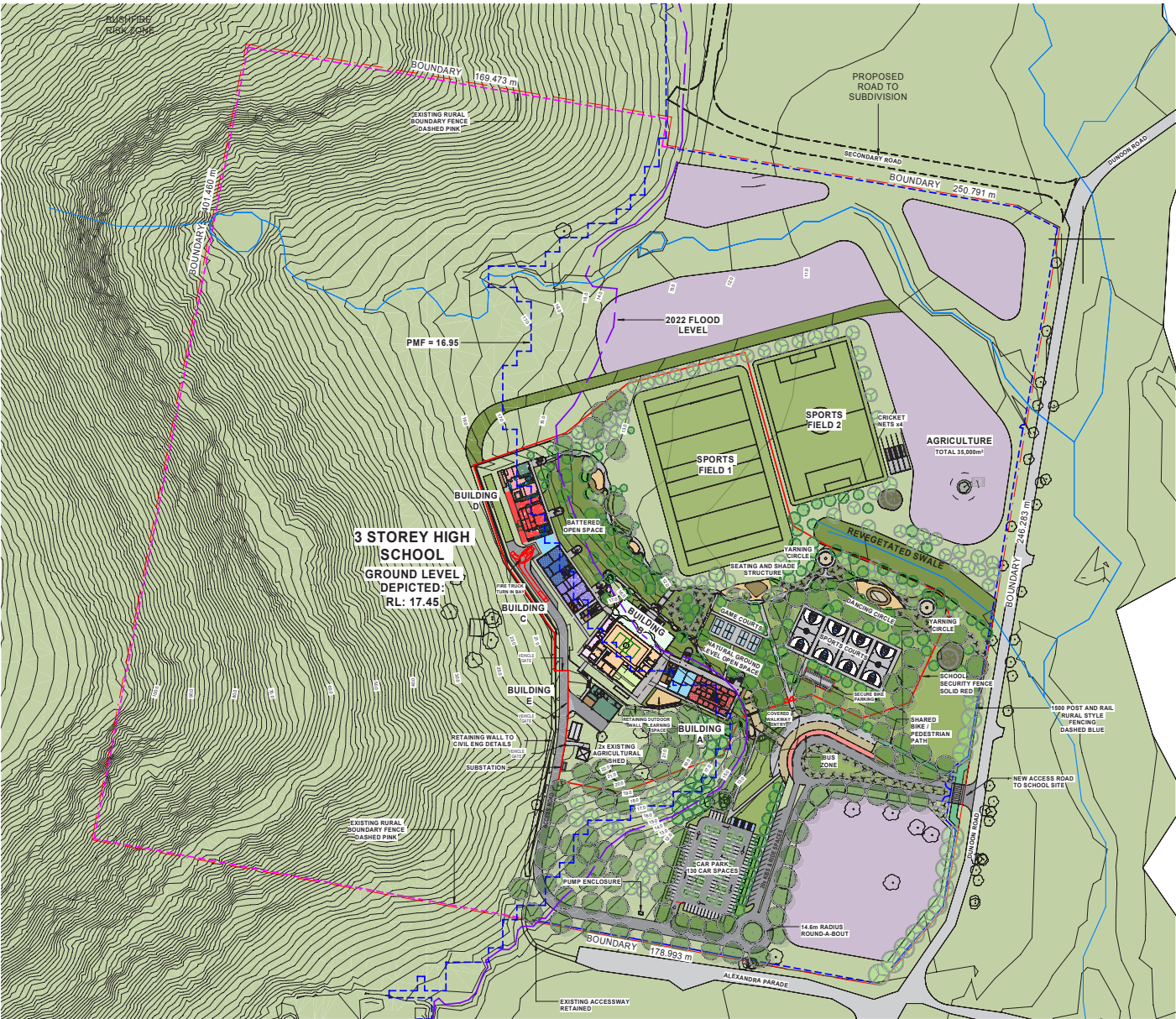


Figure 94: Overall Site Context Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



Proposed



Figure 95: Overall Ground Floor Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

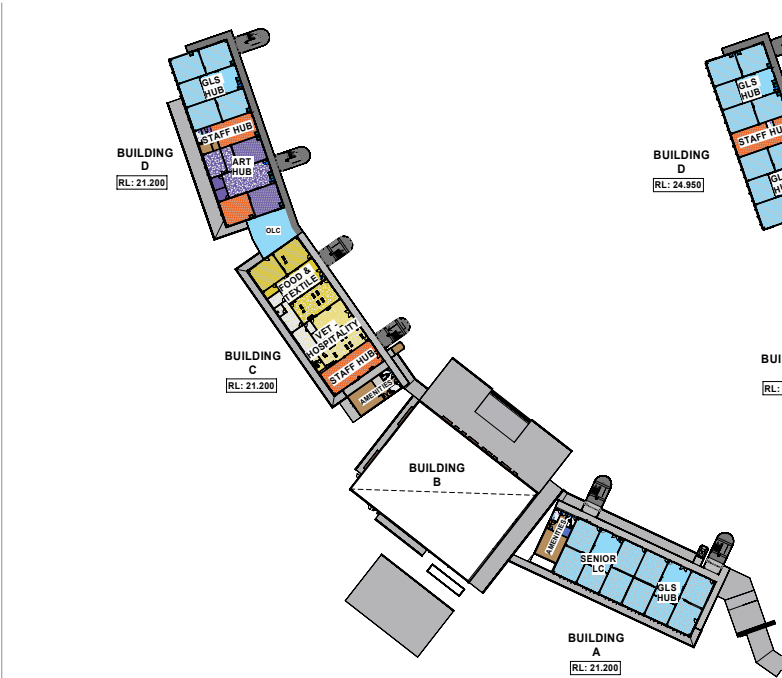


Figure 96: Overall Level 1 Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

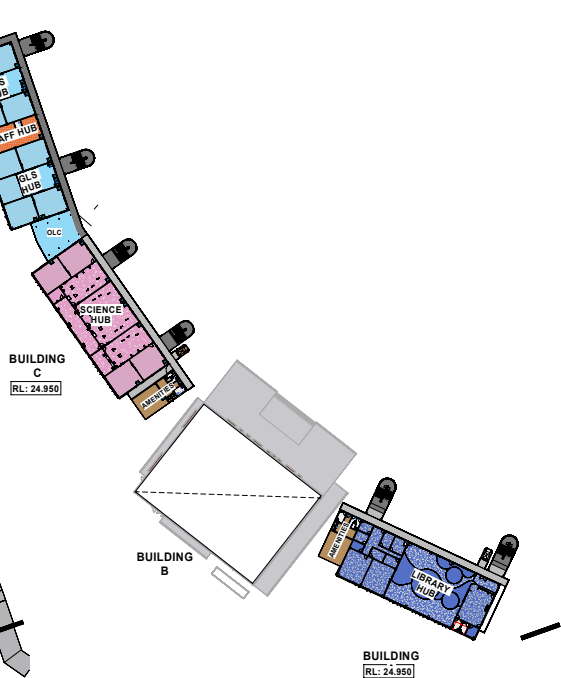


Figure 97: Overall Level 2 Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

## Proposed



Figure 98: Overall Ground Floor Plan.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



① SITE EASTERN ELEVATION - VIEW 1  
1 : 400



② SITE WESTERN ELEVATION - VIEW 2  
1 : 400

Figure 99: Site Elevations.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



## Proposed



Figure 100: Zonal Car Parking and Entry Plan.

Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

Proposed

Typical School Block - Buildings A & D



Figure 101: Typical Building Elevations.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



Figure 102: Typical Building Elevations.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



Typical School Block - Building C



Figure 104: Building C - Elevations.

Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

Proposed

Hall

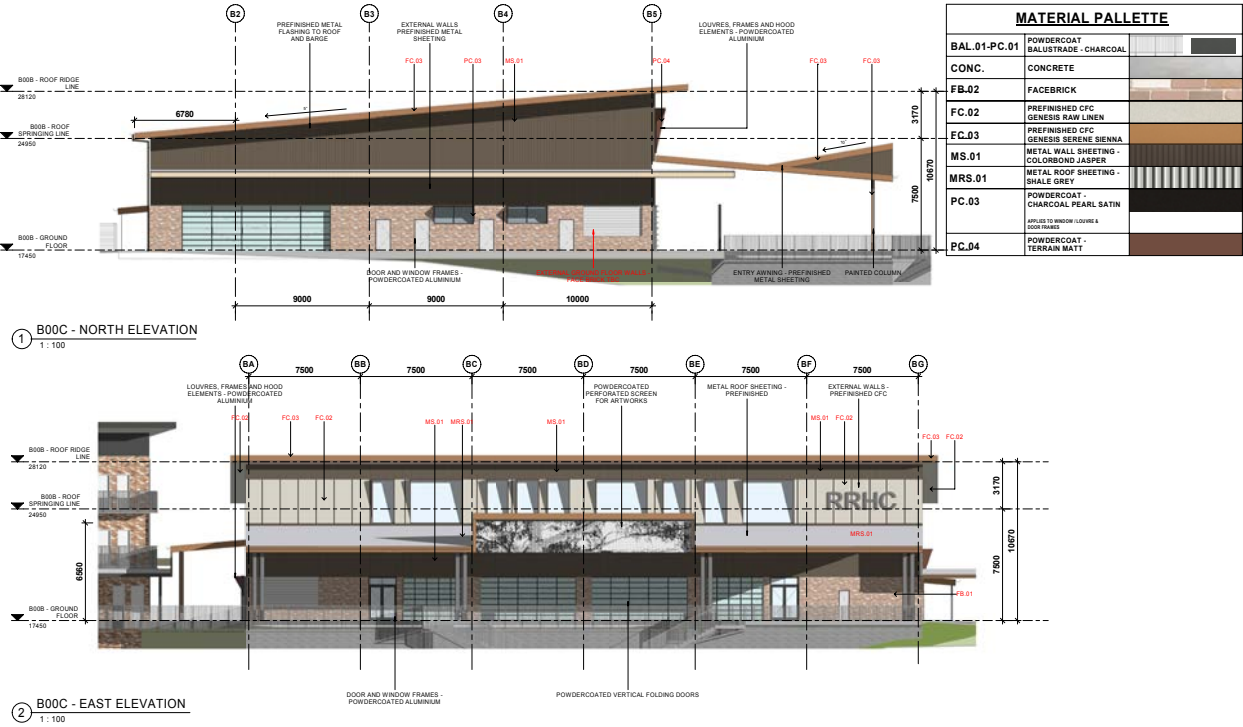


Figure 105: Building B - Elevations.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.

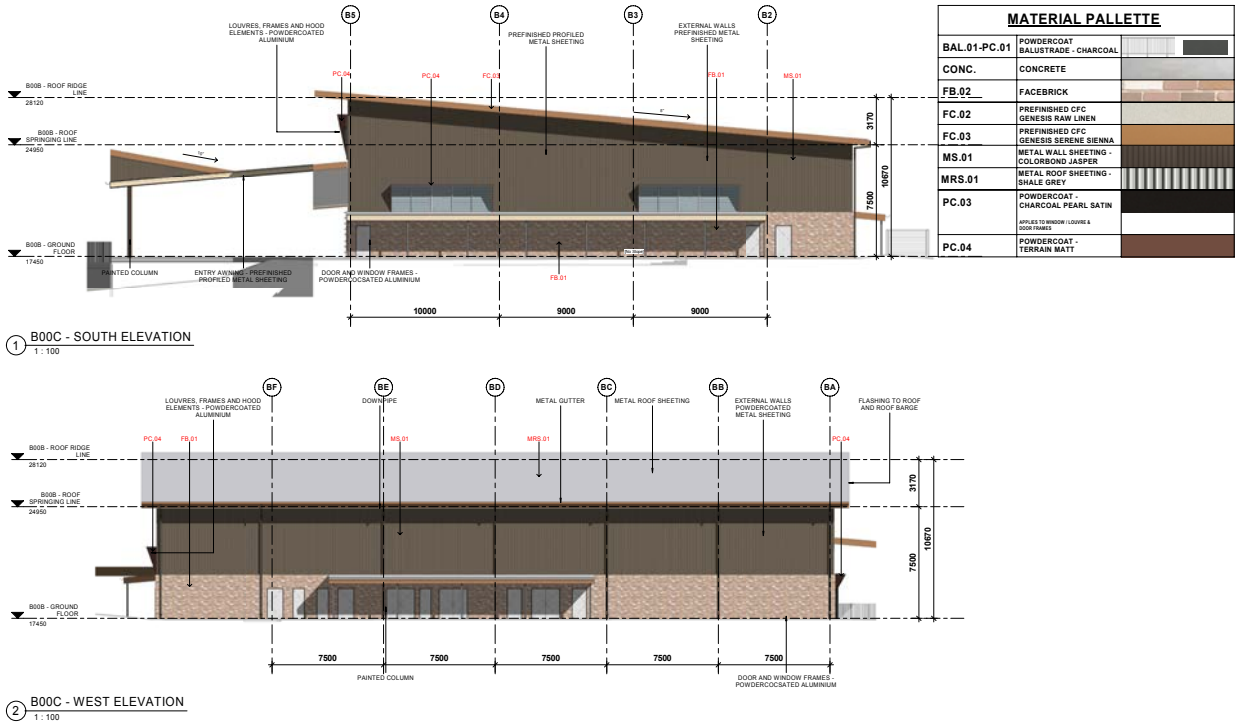


Figure 106: Building B - Elevations.  
Source: EJE Architects, 2025.



Proposed

Materials and Finishes

External Materials Palette



Internal Materials Palette

