



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (Incorportating VIEW ANALYSIS + VISUAL ANALYSIS)

Gillieston Public School Redevelopment and New Public Preschool

Visual Impact Assessment for a (736 Student) Primary School at Gillieston Heights, NSW

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Contents

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----|
| 1.0 | INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| 1.1 | VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND | 5 |
| 1.2 | WHAT IS A VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT? | 5 |
| 2.0 | METHODOLOGY | 6 |
| 2.1 | METHODOLOGY STATEMENT | 6 |
| 2.2 | VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERA | 7 |
| 2.2.1 | SENSITIVITY | 7 |
| 2.2.2 | MAGNITUDE | 7 |
| 2.2.3 | OTHER FACTORS | 7 |
| 3.0 | EXISTING VISUAL ASSESSMENT | 8 |
| 3.1 | GREATER REGION | 8 |
| 3.2 | VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE | 9 |
| 3.3 | EXISTING VIEW POINT | 10 |
| 3.4 | VISUAL CATCHMENT | 11 |
| 4.0 | PROJECT OVERVIEW | 12 |
| 4.1 | PROPOSED ACTIVITY | 12 |
| 5.0 | VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS | 13 |
| 5.1 | METHODOLOGY | 13 |
| 5.1.1 | PROCESS OF ANALYSIS | 13 |
| 5.2 | VIEWPOINT 01 (VP1) | 14 |
| 5.3 | VIEWPOINT 02 (VP2) | 15 |
| 5.4 | VIEWPOINT 03 (VP3) | 16 |
| 5.5 | VIEWPOINT 04 (VP4) | 17 |
| 5.6 | VIEWPOINT 05 (VP5) | 18 |
| 5.7 | VIEWPOINT 06 (VP6) | 19 |
| 5.8 | VISUAL IMPACT VIEWPOINT SUMMARY | 20 |
| 6.0 | SUMMARY OF VISUAL IMPACT | 21 |
| 6.1 | ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSION | 22 |
| 6.1.1 | PHYSICAL ABSORPTION CAPACITY | 22 |
| 6.1.2 | VIEWPOINT IMPACTS | 22 |
| 6.2 | CONCLUSION | 22 |
| 7.0 | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 23 |

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Preamble

ACTIVITY

The Gillieston Public School have been identified by the NSW Department of Education (DoE) as requiring redevelopment. The proposed is driven by service need including increase in expected student enrolments and the and removing demountable structure and replacement with permanent teaching spaces.

The activity comprises the following:

- Demolition and removal of existing temporary structures.
- Site preparation, including demolition, earthworks, tree removal.
- Construction of new:
 - 32 permanent general learning spaces and 3 support teaching spaces
 - Administration and staff hubs
 - Hall, canteen and library
 - Out of school hours care
 - Public preschool (standalone building for 60 places)
 - Covered Outdoor Learning Areas (COLAs)
 - Outdoor play areas, including games courts and yarning circle
 - New at-grade car parking
 - Extension of the existing drop-off / pick-up area and new bus bay
 - Realignment of the existing fencing
 - Associated stormwater infrastructure upgrades
 - Associated landscaping
 - Associated pedestrian and road upgrade

SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Based on the identification of potential impacts and an assessment of the nature and extent of the impacts of the proposed, it is determined that all potential impacts can be appropriately mitigated to ensure that there is minimal impact on the locality, community and/or the environment.

The architectural design process identifies and addresses an extensive number and type of ‘potential impacts’ which have mitigation measures applied as part of the design process. Major ‘potential impacts’ and their mitigation measures that have been addressed in the design stage of the project are captured in the architectural Schematic Design Report.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site is identified as 100 Ryans Road, Gillieston Heights (Lot 51 DP1162489) and 19 Northview Street, Gillieston Heights (Lot 2 DP1308605).

The Site is located within the Maitland Local Government Area (LGA) and is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape and R1 General Residential zone under the provisions of the Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011 (MLEP2011).

- Existing attributes of the subject site are noted as follows:
- The subject site exhibits an area of approximately 23,385m² and is located in the suburb of Gillieston Heights;
- The subject site has a frontage to Ryans Road to the east, Gillieston Road to the north, and Northview Street to the south;
- In its existing state, the subject site comprises the existing Gillieston Public School. Existing school buildings are primarily located in the west portion of the subject site with a large area of open space situated in the eastern portion. There are limited permanent structures located on the subject site with thirteen (13) existing demountable classrooms currently occupying the subject site. Permanent buildings consist of the Main Administration Building, Original Brick Cottage, Library and GLS building located in the centre of the subject site; and
- Carparking is provided from Gillieston Road for staff. Pedestrian access is available via this main entrance from Gillieston Road and via a separate pedestrian-only access gates on Northview Street and Ryans Road.

The existing site context is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

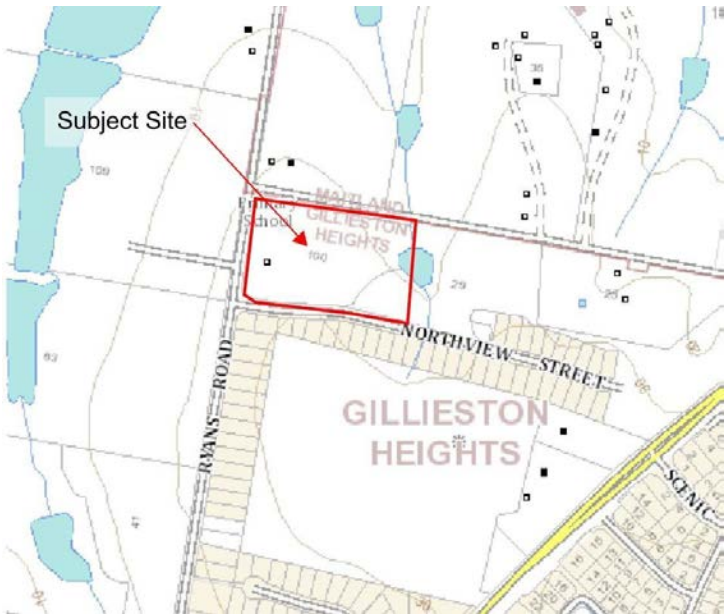


Figure 1: Cadastral Map (Source: NSW Spatial Viewer, 2024).



Figure 2: Site Aerial Map (Source: Near Map, 2024).

Executive Summary

This report outlines the activiy for the re-development of a primary school in Gillieston Heights. The following report will:

- Define a Visual Impact Assessment and describe the methodology to be used for the report,
- Explain the size, volume, content, and general design intent of the activty
- Accurately display and assess the impacts of the activity on the context of the location.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

SHAC have been engaged by the client, NSW Department of Education, to undertake and prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the project at 100 Ryans Road and 19 Northview Street, Gillieston Heights, legally described as Lot 51 DP 1162489 and Part Lot 213 DP 1186997. This assessment is to support an approval pathway for three proposed buildings, housing general learning spaces, hall facilities and a childcare within the region of Gillieston Heights.

The objectives of this report are to:

- Identify and describe the existing characteristics of the land and immediate context in which the activity is sited,
- Provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential visual impacts of the activity from key viewpoints of surrounding publicly accessible locations, and
- Summarise any visual impacts the activity may cause and suggest recommendations on how best to reduce these impacts to the existing landscape and surrounds.

1.2 WHAT IS A VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

A Visual Impact Assessment is undertaken to understand the potential impact of the activity so that any adverse effects to the existing visual landscape can be mitigated at an early project stage. This could include suggestions of avoiding, remedying, or reducing visual impacts. This is done through the analysis of a number of viewpoints that a member of the public or affected demographic may view the proposed activity on site.

It is important that the viewpoints that make up the body of the Visual Impact Assessment are captured utilising photography techniques that closest mimic the human eye. This is generally achieved using a 50mm focal length on a full frame DSLR camera, and panoramas are not completely stitched together to ensure there is minimal distortion.



Figure 3: Site Locality (Source: Nearmap, 2024, NTS).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 METHODOLOGY STATMENT

The process in which this assessment was completed is as follows:

- Objective assessment of the existing aesthetic value of the surrounding landscape and categorising in terms of high, medium, and low. This assessment takes into consideration uniqueness, variety, prominence, and heritage of the natural land formations, views, vegetation, and water,
- Overview of the activity, any major physical and contextual features, and key built forms visible to the public,
- Determination of the visible changes to the landscape from a variety of demographics that may be present on site through multiple viewpoint analyses including photographic surveys,
- Preparation of a summary of recommendations for impact mitigation suitable for the activities motifs to maintain the project’s visual quality.

The general methodology adopted for this report includes map based assessments, existing character assessments, and viewpoint assessments. The following steps have been followed to achieve these outcomes.

SHAC has utilised several guidelines and published methodologies to prepare this VIA, including:

- Guideline for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment,
- Landscape and Visual Assessment, AILA Guidance Note for Queensland, and
- Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment practice note EIA-N04.

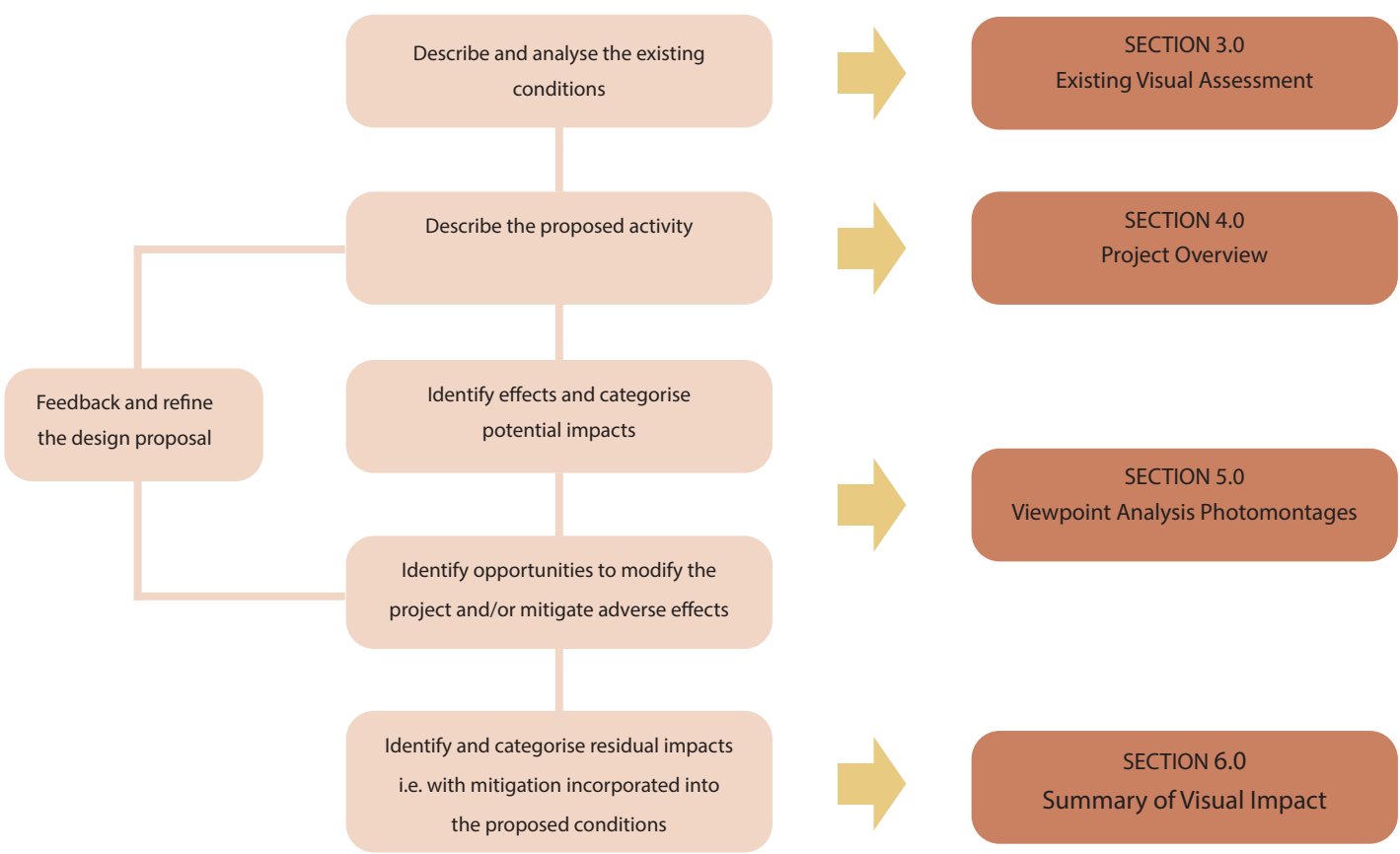


Figure 4: Methodology framework (adapted from AILA Guidance Note for Queensland).

2.2 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Based on the Transport for NSW Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment (June 2023) document, the method to measure the impact of a proposed activity on the natural landscape is based on the combination on SENSITIVITY and MAGNITUDE. A rating is then assigned to these factors and defined as high, medium, and low impact.

2.2.1 SENSITIVITY

The term sensitivity refers to the physical qualities of an area, the quantity and type of users, and how susceptible an area is to the proposed change of activity. For example, an urban city centre may be less sensitive to a proposed shopping centre than within a rural, residential area.

Some contextual factors come into play when assessing the visual sensitivity of the activity, and the following principles can be applied:

- Minimising public viewing time will decrease the visual sensitivity of a site,
- Minimising the quantity of viewers will also decrease visual sensitivity,
- The demographic or activity of viewers should be considered, i.e. a passerby vs an active user.

2.2.2 MAGNITUDE

The term magnitude refers to the physical scale of the activity, its distance to existing characteristics, and the difference of use it is having to the surrounding context. The following factors will be considered in determining a magnitude rating:

- Visual proportion towards and from the affected area,
- Physical extent of the activity,
- Duration of use,
- Increase of population and traffic,
- Compatibility with existing usage in context.

The above factors will be described for each visual viewpoint presented, including detailed descriptions for each principle, and a rating will be given. Ideally, a project will fall within the lower categories of the following matrix, and if a high rating is identified, significant mitigation will be investigated, and recommendations will be suggested to further minimise visual impact.

| | | MAGNITUDE | | | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| SENSITIVITY | | HIGH | MODERATE | LOW | NEGLIGIBLE |
| | 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 1: Visual Impact Rating Matrix (Adapeted from Transport NSW).

2.2.3 OTHER FACTORS

Some other factors that will be considered in this Visual Impact Assessment are as follows, and described in Table 2, and are rated as Low (ideal), Medium, and High:

- Scenic quality
- Visual character
- View composition
- Relative viewing level
- Viewing period
- Viewing distance
- View loss or obstruction

| FACTORS | LOW IMPACT (IDEAL) |
|-------------------------|---|
| Scenic Quality | No negative effects to deatures of high scenic quality i.e. panoramic views, dominant features, proportions ect. |
| Visual Character | No decrease in existing visual character elements i.e. built form, scale, urban fabric. |
| View Composition | Uninterrupted panoramic vo Uninterrupted panoramic views, original feature views maintained, and no restricted views from new structures. |
| Relative View Level | Elevated positions such as ridge tops with views over and beyond the site. |
| Viewing Period | Minimal length of time viewing proposed activity i.e. passing by in vehicle |
| Viewing Distance | Distant views to surrounding context (>1000m) |
| View Loss / Obstruction | No loss of views or obstructions |

Table 2: Additional Factors matrix (Adapted from Urbis, 2022).

3.0 EXISTING VISUAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 GREATER REGION

The subject site sits within the suburb of Gillieston Heights and is part of the greater city of Maitland. Maitland, renowned for its rich history and heritage, showcases its preserved 19th-century architecture, a testament to its storied past as a prominent town in the Hunter Valley. Nestled within close proximity to major metropolitan areas—just 176 kilometers from Sydney, 35 kilometers from Newcastle, and 79 kilometers from the vineyards of the Hunter Region—Maitland has evolved into an intrastate tourist hub, drawing visitors eager to explore its unique blend of history and modern allure.

Nestled within the topographical backbone of the Watagans and Brokenback Range, the site sees a diverse and coherent backdrop of natural mountain ranges, eucalyptus trees and sprawling farmland. The Brokenback Mountain Range has three notable lookouts: Mt. View, Mt. Bimbadeen, and Mt. Bright.

The immediate context of the site includes residential subdivisions to the south and farmland to the north and west, including the construction of subdivisions underway to the west of the school and in place for new subdivisions to replace paddocks to the east and north of the site. Dams and waterways are also visible west of the site adding to the natural vibrancy of the sites surrounding context. Gillieston Heights as a suburb is subject to urban sprawl with the majority of the suburb expanding, with notable medical, sporting, grocery and childcare facilities. Maitland is located only 5km from Gillieston making it the major recreational and service centre for the area.



Figure 5: Gillieston Heights (source: Google Earth, 2024, NTS)

3.2 VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE

LAND USE

The subject site is at Lot 51 DP 1162489 and Lot 2 DP1308605, known location as the corner of Northview Street and Ryans Road, Gillieston Heights. The lot is zoned RI – General Residential and RU2 – Rural Landscape which envelops most of Gillieston Heights.

The site is currently utilised by the school with large demountables, and a single heritage listed cottage, all located towards the western half of the site. The northeastern portion of the site encompasses a drainage easement. The overall site area is approximately 23,385m².

ROADS

The project site is accessible via, Gillieston Road and Ryans Road which are secondary roads connecting Cessnock Road, a major road in the area which links to the Hunter Express Way. The site is also accessible via Northview Street coming off Ryans Road. All access roads are currently bitumen without line markings.

TOPOGRAPHY & VEGETATION

Much of the site is undulating grasslands of native and rural typologies with remnant mature trees surrounding the site. A natural ridge to the south of the site with views of Mount Sugarloaf on the horizon and views to the Swamp Creek, and mountain ranges can be seen from the north of the site.

VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

As outlined by Maitland City Council, some areas of the LGA are categorised as Visually Significant Areas, where a visual impact statement is required. Although the subject site does not fall within the specific 'significant area' this report has been completed to address, manage, and reduce any potential visual impacts to the broader community.

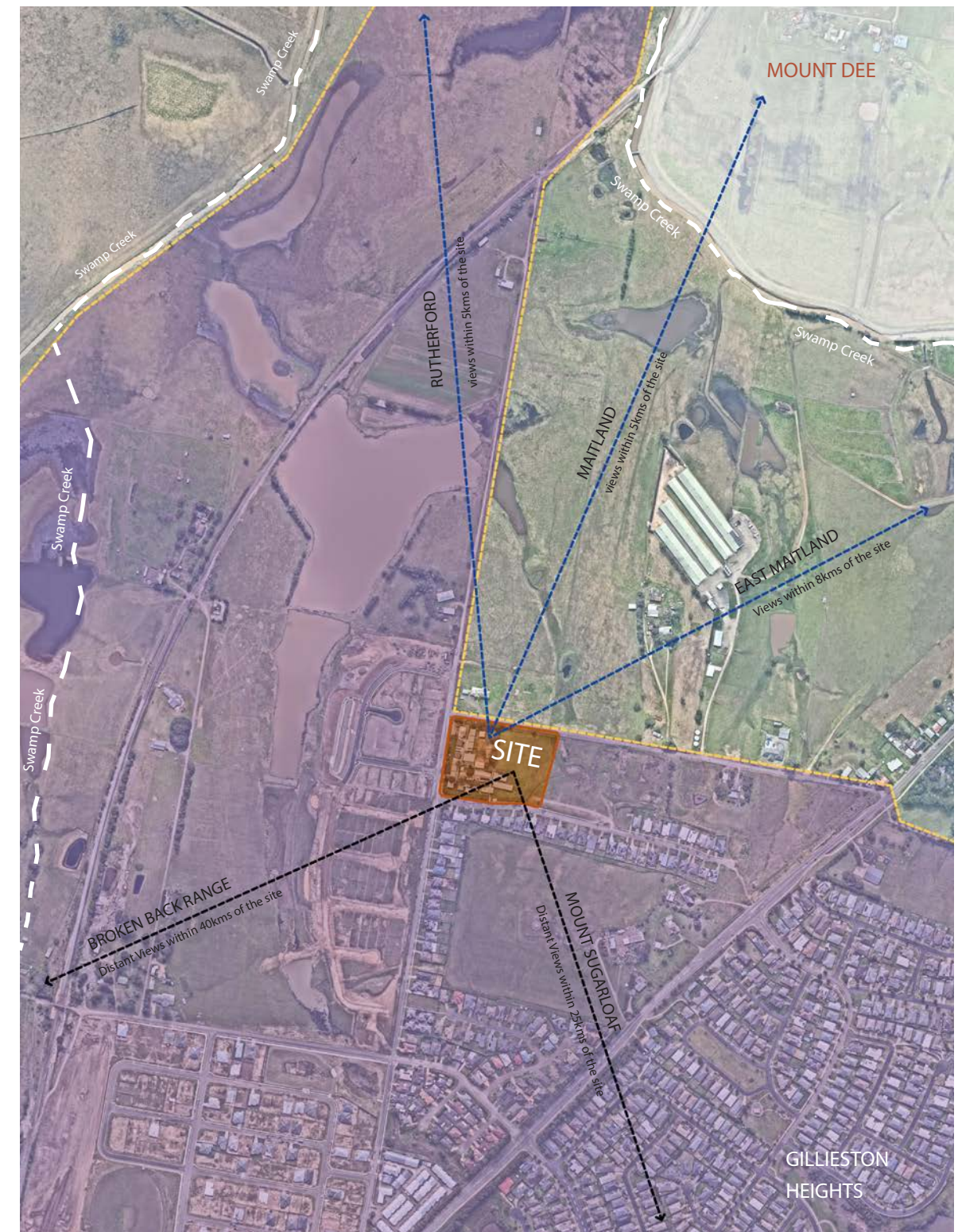


Figure 6: Context Analysis (NTS)

3.3 EXISTING VIEW POINT

The following images illustrate the existing areas of the site; however, these photos have been taken on private land not generally accessible to the public. It should be noted that the western subdivision is continuing to expand and the empty paddock in 'Existing Viewpoint 1' is changing daily into a new subdivision.

The adjacent map shows the location of where each photo was taken, labelled E(x) as Existing Viewpoint.

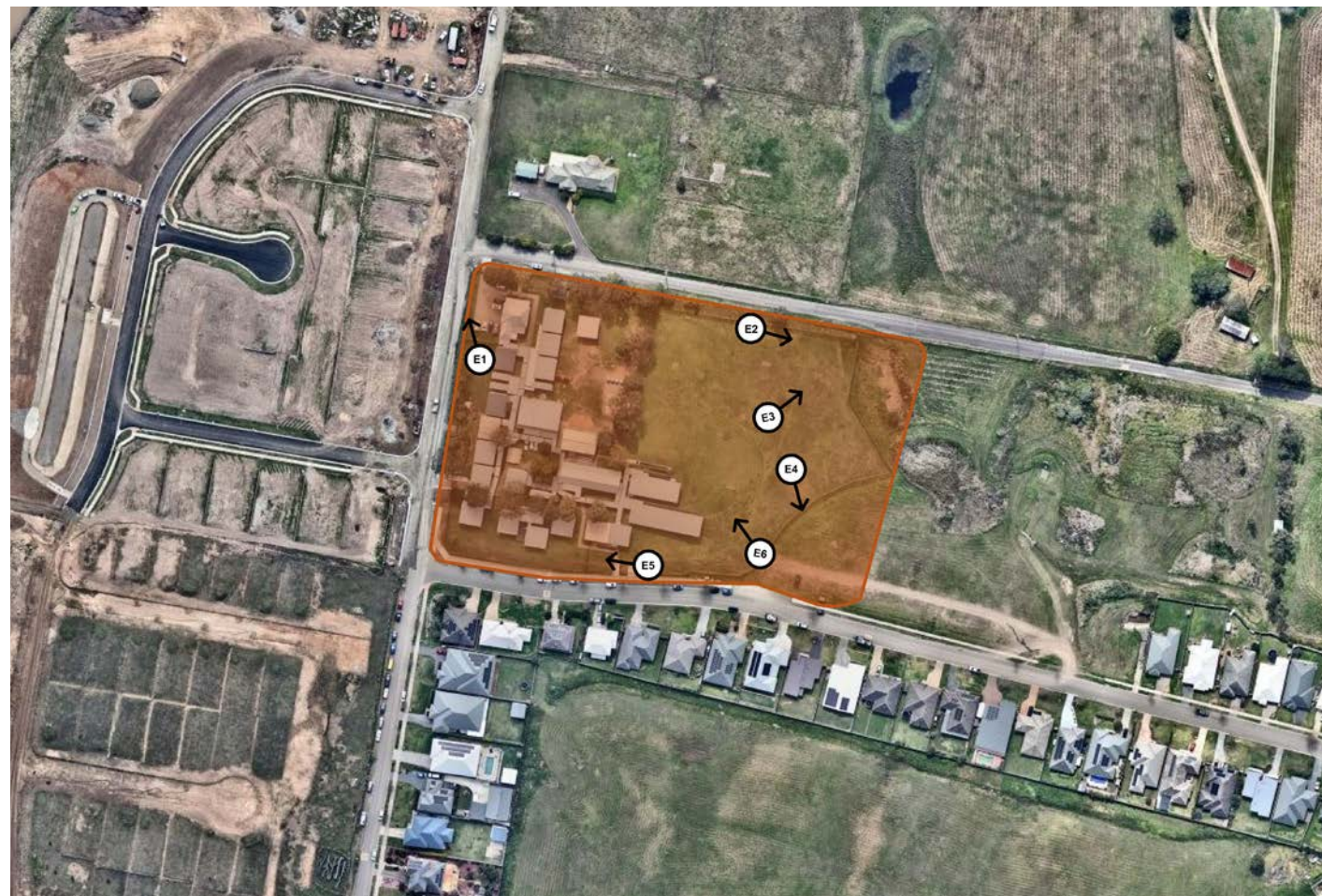


Figure 7: Existing Viewpoint Map (NTS)



Existing Viewpoint 1: Looking North West of the site towards Farley.



Existing Viewpoint 4: Looking southwest of the site.



Existing Viewpoint 2: Looking east of the Site towards Cessnock Road.



Existing Viewpoint 5: Looking west of the site.



Existing Viewpoint 3: Looking northeast of the site.



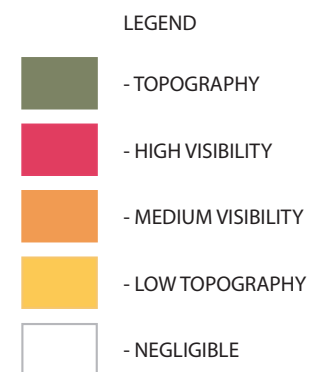
Existing Viewpoint 6: Looking northwest of the site.

3.4 VISUAL CATCHMENT

Visual Catchment is defined as a diagrammatic area of where the proposed activity may be visible. This is dependent of existing typography, built forms, major vegetation, or infrastructure. The Visual Catchment is then utilised in the selection of the viewpoints assessed in the next section of this report.

The Visual Catchment was initially determined through a desktop review of the site and surrounding locality with a nominal radius of 2km, which is the average distance to nearby road intersections, utilising aerial imagery, maps, and information supplied by the Client. Additional information was then gathered through on-site walkthroughs, and visits to neighbouring streets. Through this analysis, the proposed activity was determined to be visible from the following viewpoints:

- Gillieston Road, Maitland.
- North View Street, Gillieston Heights.
- Cessnock Road, Gillieston Heights.
- Cartwright Street, Gillieston Heights.
- Figtree Lane, Gillieston Heights.
- Junction Street, Mount Dee.



The proposed site is visible to a greater extent from each elevation, the view appears less significant to the east when moving towards Cessnock Road, the main connecting road to Maitland. The site's undulating topography does assist in fragmenting the proposed design from distant views. The proposed activity is further screened with existing landscaping acting as a buffer to the boundaries of the site and the general landscaping proposed across the site will provide an additional visual buffer from public locations.



Figure 8: Visual Catchment (Base Map; Nearmaps, 2024)

4.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

4.1 PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The proposed activity on the Gillieston Heights site consists of a large primary school facility, with learning spaces and core facilities. The proposed design includes 32 general learning spaces, a library, hall, canteen, OSHC, administration unit, staff hub and a preschool.

There is proposed to be 3 new buildings with associated parking which are accessible via Gillieston Road and Northview Street. An existing heritage building is located on site, which will remain in use. The design utilises the natural fall of the land to place built forms along the northern and southern edges of the site. The buildings enclose a large open space with flat terraced landscaping for outdoor activity, learning and travel.

Additional significant landscaping is proposed surrounding the built forms, retaining existing trees where viable. The existing heritage building will also receive landscaping to help create a coherent balance across the site.

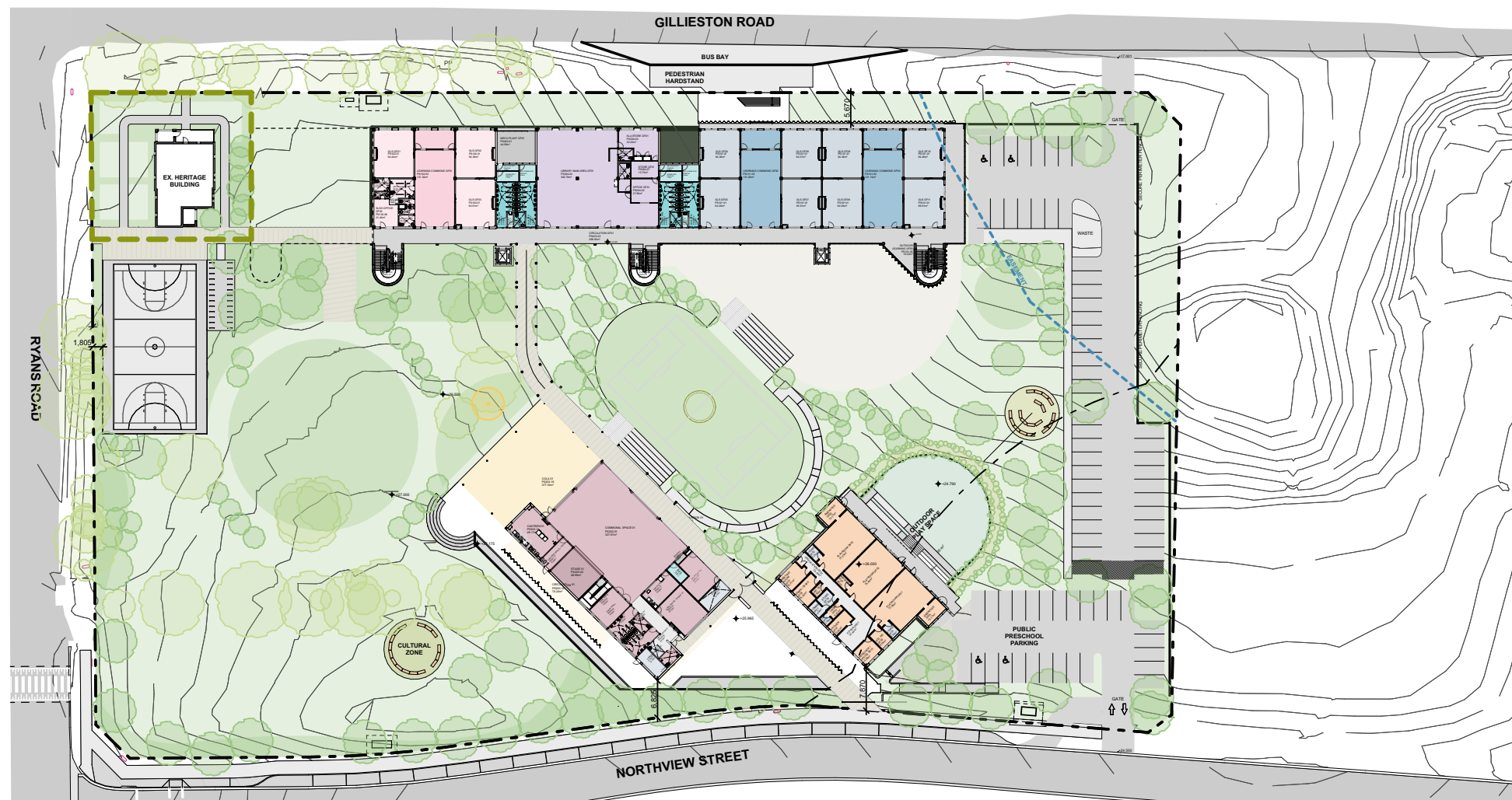


Figure 9: Proposed Site plan

5.0 VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

5.1 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of a Viewpoint Analysis is to investigate the likely impacts a development may have on the visual amenity of a landscape. The full extent of which the activity is visible for viewers / users will be defined through a visual envelope map which refers to the area where a project can be seen at eye level above ground, taking into consideration existing vegetation, landforms, and any built elements.

The selection of suitable, appropriate, and most affected viewpoints has taken the following into account:

- The existing landscape character,
- Any areas of high visual quality,
- Viewpoint sensitivity and magnitude,
- The range of view distance,
- Public and private user visibility.

It is important to know that most viewpoints are to be taken only from publicly accessible land, unless views are directly impacted on private land.

5.1.1 PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

Once the most appropriate viewpoints have been selected, panoramic photographs were taken with a DSLR camera at a focal length of 50mm which best represents the human eye. A visual assessment was then undertaken considering both the physical and photographed topography for accuracy. Some viewpoints have been ‘stitched’ together as a panorama of the outlook, while still retaining the 50mm focal length, and have been labelled accordingly.

The following table lists all viewpoints assessed:

| VIEWPOINT | ANALYSED VIEW |
|-----------|---|
| View 01 | View South East from proposed site looking from Northview Street. |
| View 02 | View South West from proposed site looking from Ryans Road. |
| View 03 | View from Gillieston Road looking West towards the proposed site. |
| View 04 | View South West from proposed site looking from Formation Road, at the intersection of Cartwright street. |
| View 05 | View West from proposed site looking from Figtree Lane. |
| View 06 | Looking northeast from Junction Street. |



Figure 10: Viewpoint Locations (NTS)

5.2 VIEWPOINT 01



Figure 11: EXISTING - View SE from proposed site looking from Northview Street.



Figure 12: EXISTING - View SE from proposed site looking from Northview Street.



Figure 13: PROPOSED: South Elevation of Main Building and Childcare Building.



Figure 14: PROPOSED: South and Southeastern Elevation - Main Building

| VIEWPOINT 01 (VP1) | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| SUMMARY | | | |
| COORDINATE | 32°45'11.8"S 151°31'56.5"E | VISUAL COMPOSITION | Low |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Close Range (<100m) | RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Low |
| SENSITIVITY | High | VIEWING PERIOD | High |
| MAGNITUDE | High | VIEWING DISTANCE | Moderate |
| IMPACT | HIGH | VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Low |
| DISCRIPTION | | | |
| The viewpoint was taken to the rear of the proposed site on Northview Street, where residential and farmland coexist. The terrain is categorised as undulating and the clearance of vegetation to the rear of the site enhances visibility of the proposed building, making it a prominent viewpoint for neighboring residences. | | | |
| The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been identified as being HIGH, this rating is attributed to its proximity to neighbouring residences. | | | |
| POTENTIAL IMPACT | | | |
| The activity has high noticeability within the landscape, views of the rural landscape will modify and change the character of the viewpoint. Consideration has been made towards proposed materiality with the intention of being coherent and align with the exsiting character of the site. Proposed landscaping towards the rear of the site acting as screening. | | | |
| As such, the visual magnitude of change is HIGH resulting in a HIGH visual impact rating. | | | |

5.3 VIEWPOINT 02



Figure 15: EXISTING - View SW from proposed site looking from Ryans Road.



Figure 16: PROPOSED - View SW from proposed site looking from Ryans Road.

| VIEWPOINT 02 (VP2) | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| SUMMARY | | DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL IMPACT |
| COORDINATE | 32°45'11.2"S 151°31'48.1"E | This viewpoint was taken from the corner of Ryans Road and Northview Street, this viewpoint captures the site ascending to the West with pedestrian paths running parallel to each intersecting road. Residential property can be seen to the south of the site, with demountables occupying the front of the site. Vegetation is scattered throughout the center of the site. The visual sensitivity from this viewpoint has been identified as being LOW, primarily due to the existing demountables occupying the front of the site. | From this location the portions of the southern and western façade will be visible, existing and proposed vegetation is likely to assist in fragmenting views towards the project. The demountables that are existing are proposed to be removed with landscaping replacing their location. The greatest visual impact will be to neighboring residences to south but proposed vegetation along the boundary lines should help minimise the magnitude of the projects impact. The proposed activity is unlikely to diminish or modify the existing character. As such, the visual magnitude of change is MODERATE resulting in a MODERATE-LOW visual impact rating. |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Close (<100m) | | |
| SENSITIVITY | Low | | |
| MAGNITUDE | Moderate | | |
| IMPACT | MODERATE-LOW | | |
| SCENIC QUALITY | Low | | |
| VISUAL CHARACTER | Low | | |
| VISUAL COMPOSITION | Moderate | | |
| RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Negligible | | |
| VIEWING PERIOD | High | | |
| VIEWING DISTANCE | Moderate | | |
| VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Low | | |

5.4 VIEWPOINT 03



Figure 17: EXISTING - View from Gillieston Road looking West towards the proposed site.



Figure 18: PROPOSED -View from Gillieston Road looking West towards the proposed site.

| VIEWPOINT 03 (VP3) | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| SUMMARY | | DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL IMPACT |
| COORDINATE | 32°45'09.7"S 151°32'11.1"E | The viewpoint was taken from Gillieston Road. The terrain is characterised as undulating, rising to the west where the road meets a ridge point, beyond this point the terrain slopes down towards the proposed site. To the south there is rural land with scattered vegetation, denser foliage dominating the western end. To the north there are developed areas of residential rural land. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been identified as MODERATE due to the viewpoint being taken from rural landscaped areas. | From this location the eastern elevation is likely to be visible. The existing vegetation should assist in fragmenting the views towards the project. The proposed building is likely to be a visible element in the landscape but not cause significant modification to the character of the viewpoint due the small portion in which change is to occur from this location and the duration that it will be viewed. As such, the visual magnitude of the change is LOW resulting in a MODERATE-LOW visual impact rating. |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Medium Range (100 - 1,000m) | | |
| SENSITIVITY | Moderate | | |
| MAGNITUDE | Low | | |
| IMPACT | MODERATE-LOW | | |
| SCENIC QUALITY | Moderate | | |
| VISUAL CHARACTER | Moderate | | |
| VISUAL COMPOSITION | Moderate | | |
| RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Low | | |
| VIEWING PERIOD | Low | | |
| VIEWING DISTANCE | Low | | |
| VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Low | | |

5.5 VIEWPOINT 04



Figure 19: EXISTING - View SW from proposed site looking from Formation Road, at the intersection of Cartwright street.



Figure 20: PROPOSED - View SW from proposed site looking from Formation Road. Viewing the western elevation of the proposed.

| VIEWPOINT 04 (VP4) | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| SUMMARY | | DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL IMPACT |
| COORDINATE | 32°45'30.3"S 151°31'31.4"E | The viewpoint was taken along Formation Road at the intersection of Cartwright Street. The terrain is predominantly flat, gently sloping down to the northeast, transitioning into a ridge where taller vegetation can be observed. This area is primarily developed, with Cartwright Street serving as a key thoroughfare for accessing low-rise residential housing lots. | From this location, the southwestern façade of the project will likely be visible. A large extent of the activity will be filtered by vegetation located to the west and south of the site. Potential visual impacts are likely to be experienced by residents when looking northeast of their property. |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Medium Range (100 - 1,000m) | | |
| SENSITIVITY | Low | In the foreground, vegetation has mostly been cleared for subdivision activity enhancing surrounding visibility. Meanwhile, the distant views retain patches of greenery, providing appropriate sightlines. | The magnitude of change from the project is unlikely to disrupt the local character of this view however, it will be a dominant element in the distance when bulk and scale are considered. As urban sprawl continues, and residential developments are completed within this area, the project is likely to be read as part of the built landscape. |
| MAGNITUDE | Moderate | | |
| IMPACT | MODERATE-LOW | The visual sensity of this viewpoint has been identified as LOW, due to the viewpoint being in a low residential subdivision. | As such, the visual magnitude of change is MODERATE resulting in a MODERATE-LOW visual impact rating. |
| SCENIC QUALITY | Low | | |
| VISUAL CHARACTER | Negligible | | |
| VISUAL COMPOSITION | Low | | |
| RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Moderate | | |
| VIEWING PERIOD | Low | | |
| VIEWING DISTANCE | Negligible | | |
| VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Low | | |

5.6 VIEWPOINT 05



Figure 21: EXISTING - View West from proposed site looking from Figtree Lane.



Figure 22: PROPOSED - View West from proposed site looking from Figtree Lane. Viewing the eastern elevation

| VIEWPOINT 05 (VP5) | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| SUMMARY | | DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL IMPACT |
| COORDINATE | 32°45'03.2"S 151°31'33.7"E | The viewpoint along Figtree Lane offers a perspective of gently undulating terrain that ascends to the east toward the proposed activitysite. Surrounding residential lots are located to the north and south. The landscape retains key rural characteristics, although it is currently undergoing clearing for a future residential subdivision. Dense vegetation fills the front of the site, with scattered vegetation extending to the north and south. | From this location, the northwest façade will be visible, existing vegetation will assist in partially fragmenting views and minimise the overall impact on the surrounding landscape. While the activity will be a noticeable element, the limited visibility and fragmented nature suggest that it will not significantly alter the character of the viewpoint. |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Medium Range (100 - 1,000m) | | |
| SENSITIVITY | Low | | |
| MAGNITUDE | Low | | |
| IMPACT | LOW | | |
| SCENIC QUALITY | Low | The visual sensitivity from this viewpoint has been identified as LOW, primarily due to the impending residential subdivision. | As such, the visual magnitude of change is assessed as LOW, leading to a LOW visual impact rating overall. |
| VISUAL CHARACTER | Low | | |
| VISUAL COMPOSITION | Low | | |
| RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Negliable | | |
| VIEWING PERIOD | Moderate | | |
| VIEWING DISTANCE | Low | | |
| VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Low | | |

5.7 VIEWPOINT 06



Figure 23: EXISTING - Looking northeast from Junction Street.



Figure 24: PROPOSED - View NE from proposed site looking from Junction Street. Viewing the northern elevation.

| VIEWPOINT 06 (VP6) | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| SUMMARY | | DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL IMPACT |
| COORDINATE | 32°44'29.5"S 151°32'17.3"E | The viewpoint was taken from Junction Street, Mount Dee. The terrain from this location to the proposed site is gently undulating with surrounding land being used as residential and farmland . To the southwest of the viewpoint there are single story long lineal farm sheds, to the west are farm and dam views. The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been identified as LOW, due to the fragmented views to the residential outlooks. | This viewpoint is located to the northeast of the site. Although the viewpoint itself is restricted, it is likely that the property will have fragmented views of the north façade of the proposed building. These residential properties will lose distant uninterrupted panoramic views. The top of the building envelope will be visible; however, because the proposed site is situated on low-lying land, the rising terrain towards the viewpoint will assist in fragmenting the neighbours outlook. As such, the visual magnitude of change is assessed as low, leading to a LOW visual impact rating overall. |
| DISTANCE CLASS | Distant (>1,000m) | | |
| SENSITIVITY | Low | | |
| MAGNITUDE | Low | | |
| IMPACT | LOW | | |
| SCENIC QUALITY | Low | | |
| VISUAL CHARACTER | Moderate | | |
| VISUAL COMPOSITION | Low | | |
| RELATIVE VIEW LEVEL | Low | | |
| VIEWING PERIOD | Low | | |
| VIEWING DISTANCE | Low | | |
| VIEW LOSS / OBSTRUCTION | Moderate | | |

5.8 VISUAL IMPACT VIEWPOINT SUMMARY

Through the thorough selection and analysis of the above viewpoints, a summary has been provided on the potential sensitivity, magnitude, and visual impacts of the proposed re-development of Gillieston Public School.

As the views were selected utilising the previously mentioned criteria, it is important to note they are ‘worst case scenarios’ in which direct views are sought out instead of natural viewpoints from the passing public. Of the total 6 viewpoints presented, the proposed activity was ‘high’ in visibility in 1 viewpoint, moderate to low visibility in 3 viewpoints, low visibility in 2 viewpoints.

Overall, where a rating of moderate was given, it was due to the limited landforms or existing built features that are similar in bulk and scale in the surrounding context, so the activity is automatically more prominent. However, as stated in the individual analysis, the activity of significant planting and landscaping will provide a reduction in visual impact.

| VIEWPOINT | SENSITIVITY | MAGNITUDE | POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| VP1 | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH |
| VP2 | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE-LOW |
| VP3 | MODERATE | LOW | MODERATE-LOW |
| VP4 | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE-LOW |
| VP5 | LOW | LOW | LOW |
| VP6 | LOW | LOW | LOW |

6.0 SUMMARY OF VISUAL IMPACT

6.1 ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSION

Having undertaken an analysis of the existing site on Ryans Road, Gillieston Heights, the new activity for the re-developed Gillieston Public School, and affected viewpoints surrounding the proposed activity, SHAC is able to summarise our assessment of the activities potential visual impacts.

Although the utmost consideration has been given to the selection of the 6 viewpoints presented, it is to be noted that these are not the only viewpoints in which the activity is visible, however, they have been selected as an overview of the general visual impact the activity may pose. This was carried out by walking the site and surrounds and identifying at the given time where the most impactful viewpoints may be.

As Gillieston Heights, and Maitland as a whole, is already well known as a prominent town in the Hunter Valley, the activity facilitates a functional and necessary service to the community following the typology of this region.

6.1.1 PHYSICAL ABSORPTION CAPACITY

Adapted from the GLVIA Guidelines, the concept of the Physical Absorption Capacity means the ability for an existing landscape to reduce or eliminate the visibility or perception of a proposed activity, in which existing elements can physically hide or screen the built forms. This is inclusive of colours, materials, scale, and character between the existing elements and the proposed activity.

The existing landscape directly surrounding the subject site is generally visually open and with undulating terrain, giving the activity a difficult starting point as any activity in the high-lying areas would be visually impactful. To counteract this, the built form follows the natural contours of the site descending in build form and proposed landscaping in conjunction with existing tree effectively screen the bulk of the form behind a natural buffer.

6.1.2 VIEWPOINT IMPACTS

The viewpoints classified with a high and moderate-low impact rating (VP1, VP2, VP3) view the subject site from a closer proximity than the other viewpoints presented, and generally from the south, west and east where the surrounding topography is elevated on Ryans Roads and descends towards Northview Street and Gillieston Road.

From VP4 there is a potential impact rating of moderate-low due to the proposed site being elevated from this viewpoint, to alleviate the magnitude of this line-of-sight proposed landscaping is dense towards the front of the site. The remaining viewpoint show very minimal visibility and character change by the proposed activity.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, SHAC believes that:

- The visual impact of the activity creates generally a low to low-moderate effect on the surrounding landscape's scenic quality and visual character.
- Only 1 of the viewpoints presented showed a high rating and 3 a moderate-low rating for the visual impact assessment, and the remaining showed a low impact. From views at a distance, the most affected is immediately opposite (perpendicular) to Ryans Road from the immediate residential properties between the proposed activity and land clearing.
- The scale, materiality, location on site, and proposed landscaping of the activity provides minimal interruption to the existing character of its context.
- The proposed activity typology is in keeping with the greater region. The proposed Gillieston Public School would have very minimal impact to the visual quality of the greater Maitland area and moderate initial impact to the immediate area until the vegetation screening properly matures.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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