

Heritage View Analysis

June, 2012

Camellia West

181 James Ruse Drive

Camellia NSW 2142

Prepared for

Statewide Planning

Prepared by Cracknell Lonergan Heritage Architects

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage View Analysis prepared by Cracknell & Lonergan Architects will accompany the planning proposal for proposed works to the site at 181 James Ruse Drive. The site is a vacant lot of approximately 6 hectares. It is located between James Ruse Drive and the Carlingford line rail corridor, on the southern bank of the Parramatta River. The context of the site comprises of the Camellia heavy industrial precinct to the west of the site, the Rosehill Racecourse to the north and the University of Western Sydney (UWS) to the south.



Fig.1 Location of the site (Source: Google Maps, 2012)

Integral aspects of the site context which have been considered during the design process include the site's relationship with the Parramatta River; environmental heritage items namely the Wetlands bordering the northern part of the site along the river; heritage items in the vicinity namely the Subiaco archaeological site in Rydalmere, and existing built heritage items including the Rydalmere Hospital Precinct (state listed), the Clyde Carlingford Rail Bridge Abutments, the sewage pumping station on Grand Avenue, Elizabeth Farm (state listed) and the Oak Street cottage group.

The works proposed involve redevelopment of the site and the introduction of mixed use development which will allow for dwellings to be located above ground floor retail or business premises.

2.0 Heritage Significance

2.1 Identifying existing heritage Items

Heritage items in the area include:

- Wetlands stretching along the Parramatta River, Camellia, Clyde, Rydalmere and Ermington
- Rydalmere Hospital Precinct, an item of state and local significance, which included the former Female Orphan School, the former Protestant Orphan School which are part of the UWS Parramatta Campus
- Clyde Carlingford Rail Bridge Abutments
- Sewage Pumping Station 67 located along Grand Avenue North, Camellia
- Elizabeth Farm which is an item of state and local significance and has an Heritage Conservation Area placed around it
- Oak Street Cottage Group including Victorian and Federation cottages at 4 (demolished), 6, 8, 10 and 12 Oak Street

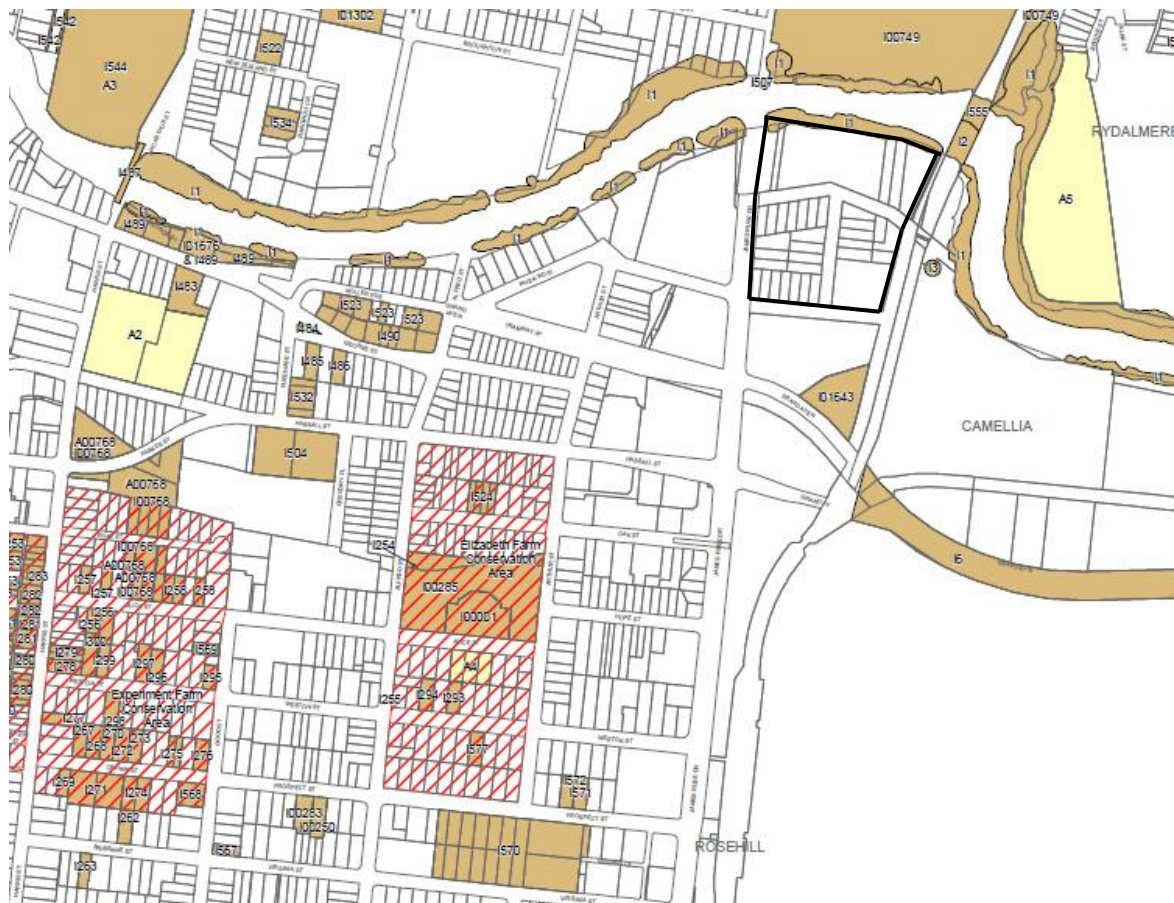


Fig.2 Map showing heritage items in the vicinity of the site (Source: Parramatta City Council, Sheet_HER_010, Parramatta LEP 2011)

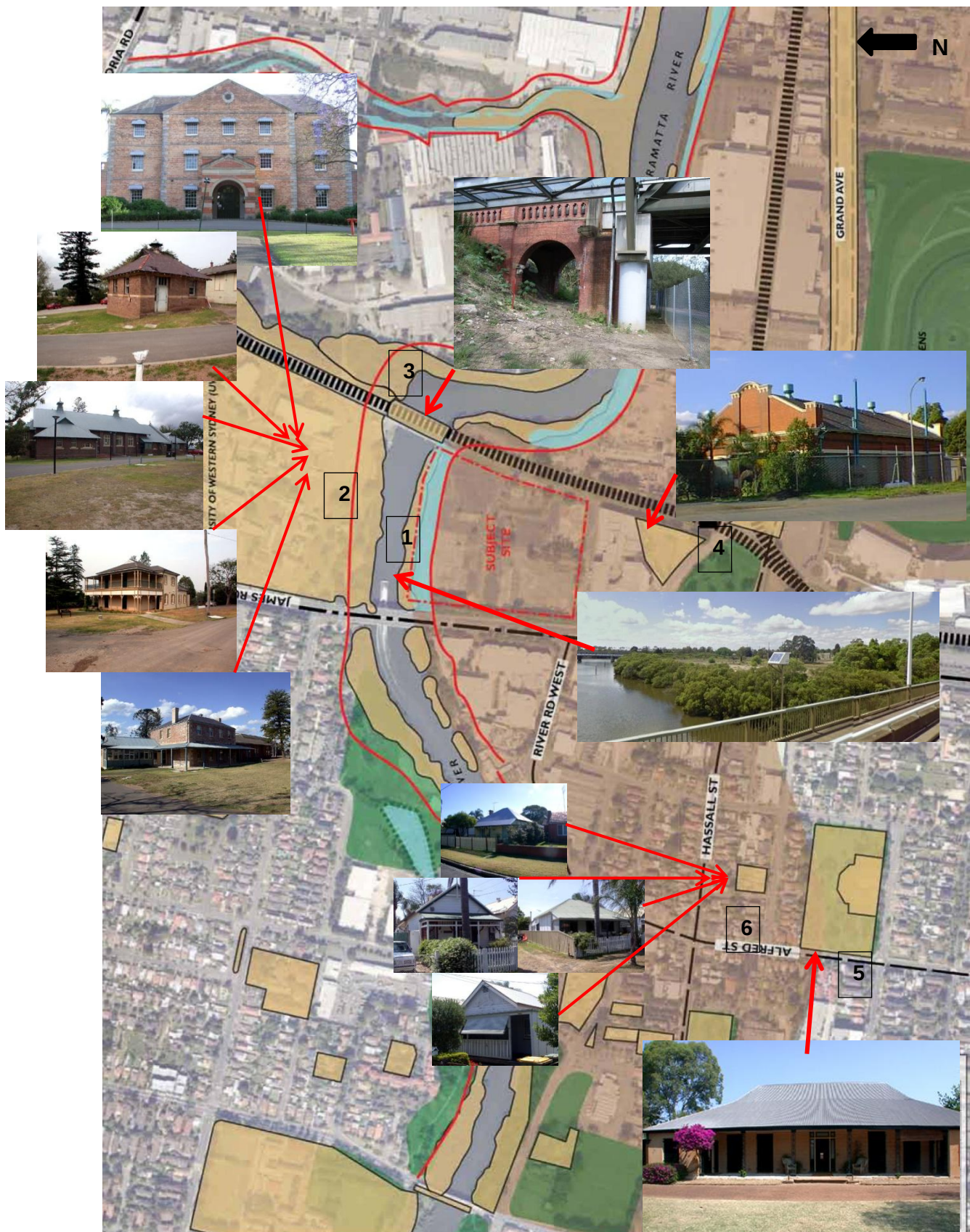


Fig.3 Views of heritage items in the vicinity:

1. Wetlands; 2. Rydalmere Hospital; 3. Clyde Carlingford Rail Bridge Abutments; 4. Sewage Pumping Station 67; 5. Elizabeth Farm; 6. Oak Street Cottage Group

Situated within the Camellia and Rydalmere Strategic Precinct the subject site falls within an identified “area of height sensitivity” which entails that the height of any proposed development does not adversely affect “identified views to the Female Orphan School (University of Western Sydney Rydalmere Campus) and its emergent trees, the Parramatta River Corridor and Pennant Hills open space ridge line”.¹ It also forms part of the James Ruse Drive Corridor Special Area.

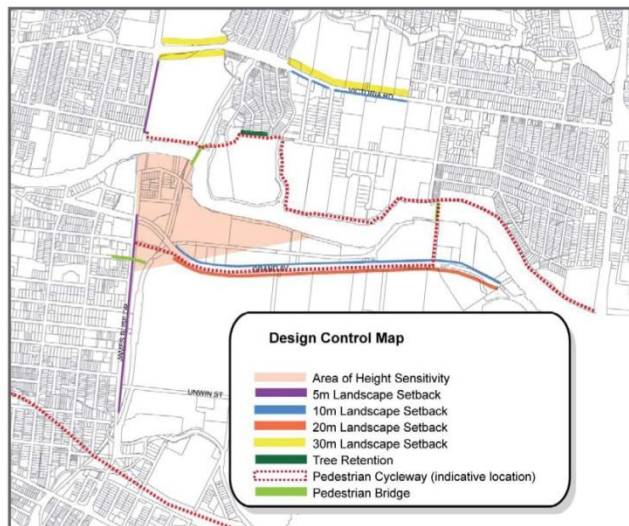


Fig.4 The map shows the Camellia and Rydalmere Strategic Precinct showing the site within the “area of height sensitivity” (Source: Parramatta Council, 2012)

The subject adjoins the Harris Park Precinct which is recognised as containing considerable amount of Parramatta’s heritage including “an extensive collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century houses, shops, public buildings and landscapes. Of particular note are Australia’s first land grant and oldest European building, Elizabeth Farm House, as well as two other important colonial houses, Experiment Farm and Hambledon Cottage”.² Several Special Areas are also identified within the Harris Park Precinct Special Areas Map and these include the Harris Park River Area and the Area of National Significance.

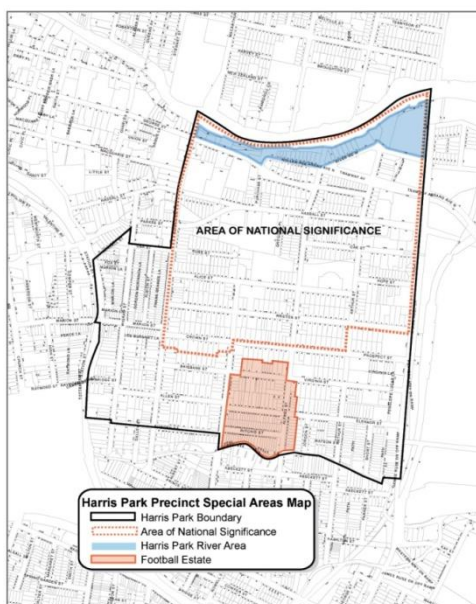


Fig.5 The map shows the Harris Park Precinct Special Areas Map which the Area of National Significance and the Harris Park River Area (Source: Parramatta Council, 2012)

¹ Parramatta City Council, 2011, Part 4: Special Precincts in *Parramatta DCP 2011*, p. 166

² Ibid, p. 177

2.2 Historical images of key historical/heritage buildings in the Parramatta area

This section presents historical and early images of the Parramatta area, showing the wetlands along the Parramatta River and other landmarks such as Government House, Parramatta Gaol, the Female Orphan School and Elizabeth Farm. These historic images show that the varied topographical conditions of the area and an approximate situating of the subject site.

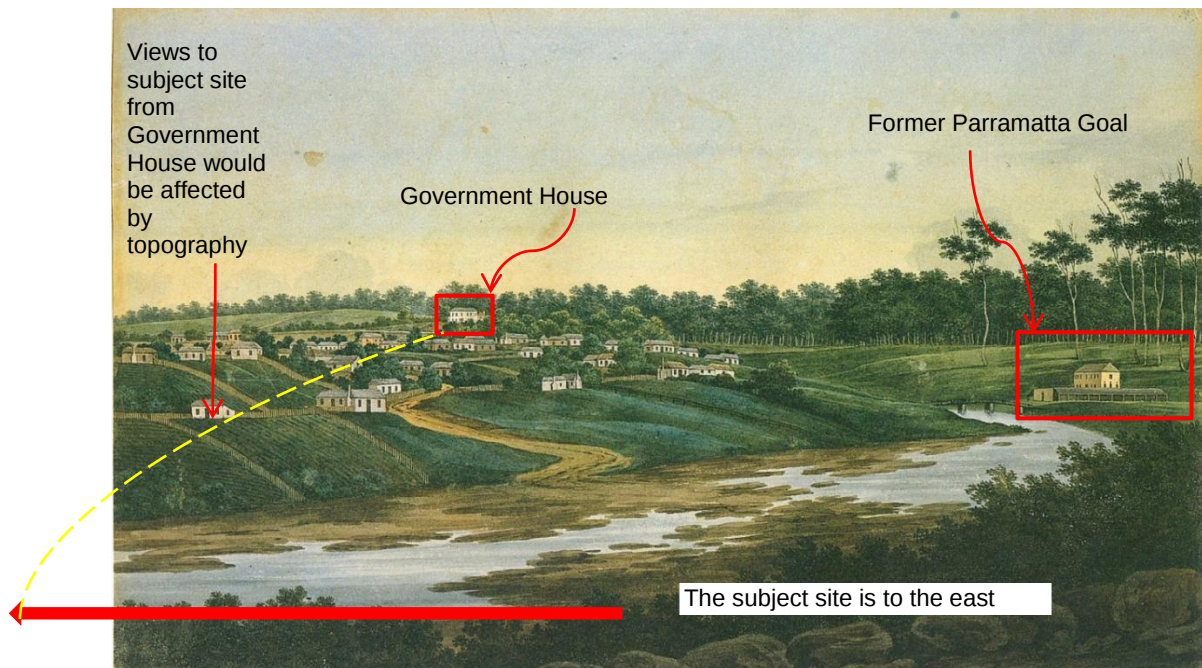


Fig.6 View of Parramatta River, ca. 1809 looking west, and showing the Parramatta Gaol to the right corner of the image and Government House to the centre of the image. To the forefront of the images are wetlands along the river front. Any views to the subject site shown approximately in the easterly direction would be affected by the undulating topography (Source: Mitchell Library PXD 388 Vol. 3. f. 6)

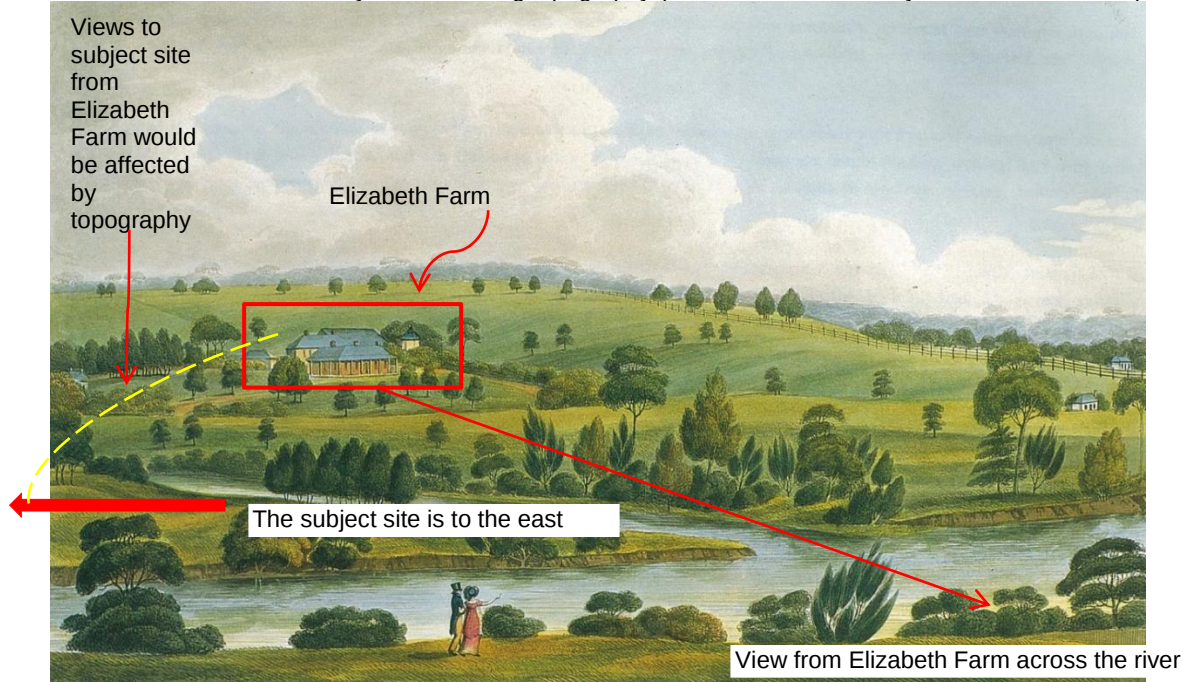


Fig.7 View of Elizabeth Farm in 1822 as seen from banks of Parramatta River. The Farm is set within a valley and the most direct view across the river is not to the subject site which is shown approximately in the easterly direction, and would be affected by the undulating topography (Source: Joseph Lycett, *Views in Australia*, 1824, pl.13)

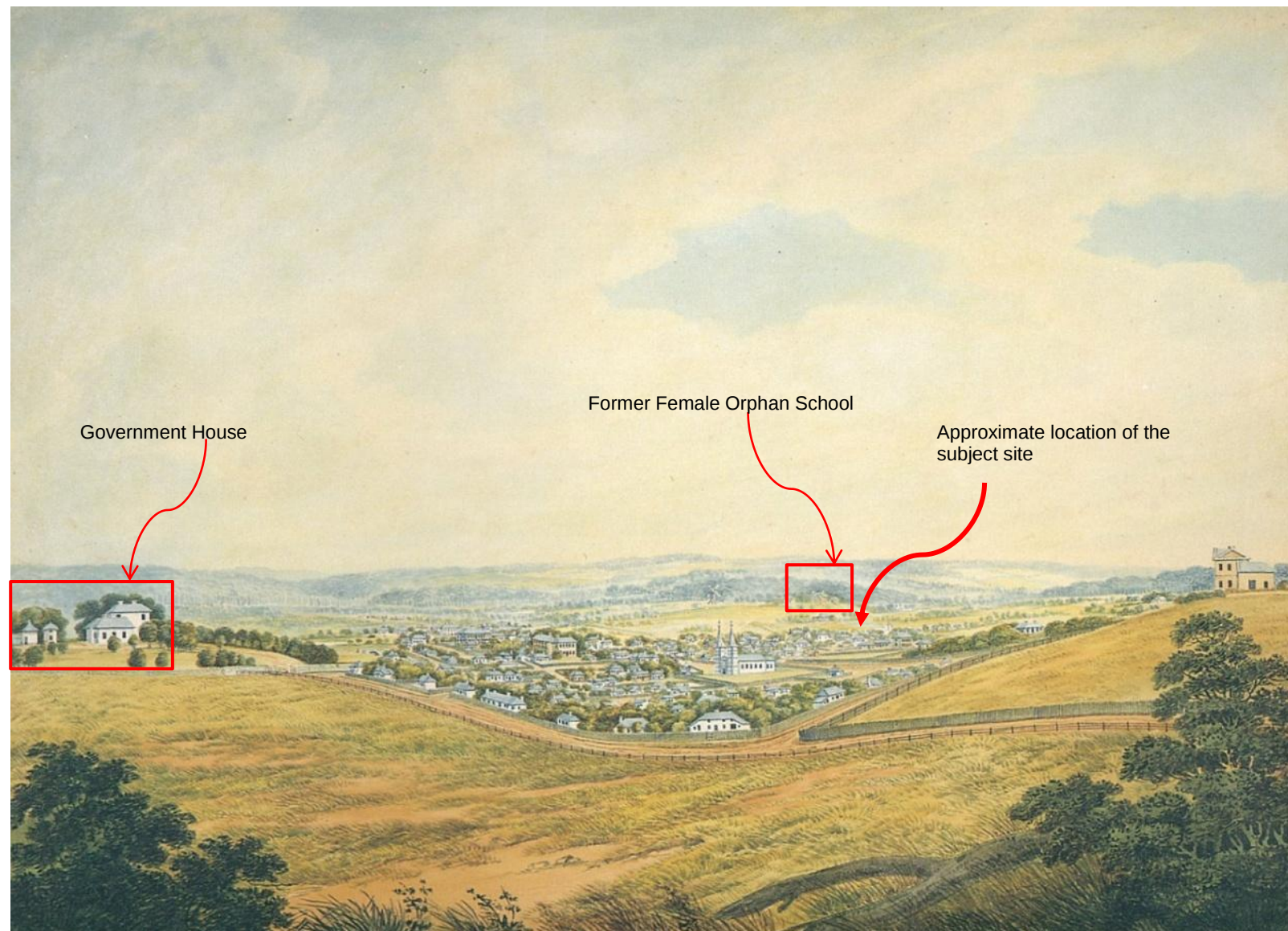


Fig.8 View of Parramatta, 1820, with the Government House to the left side of the image, and to the centre rear of the image is the former Female Orphan School (Source: Mitchell Library VIB/PARR/23)

2.3 Identifying Historic view corridors and other heritage views

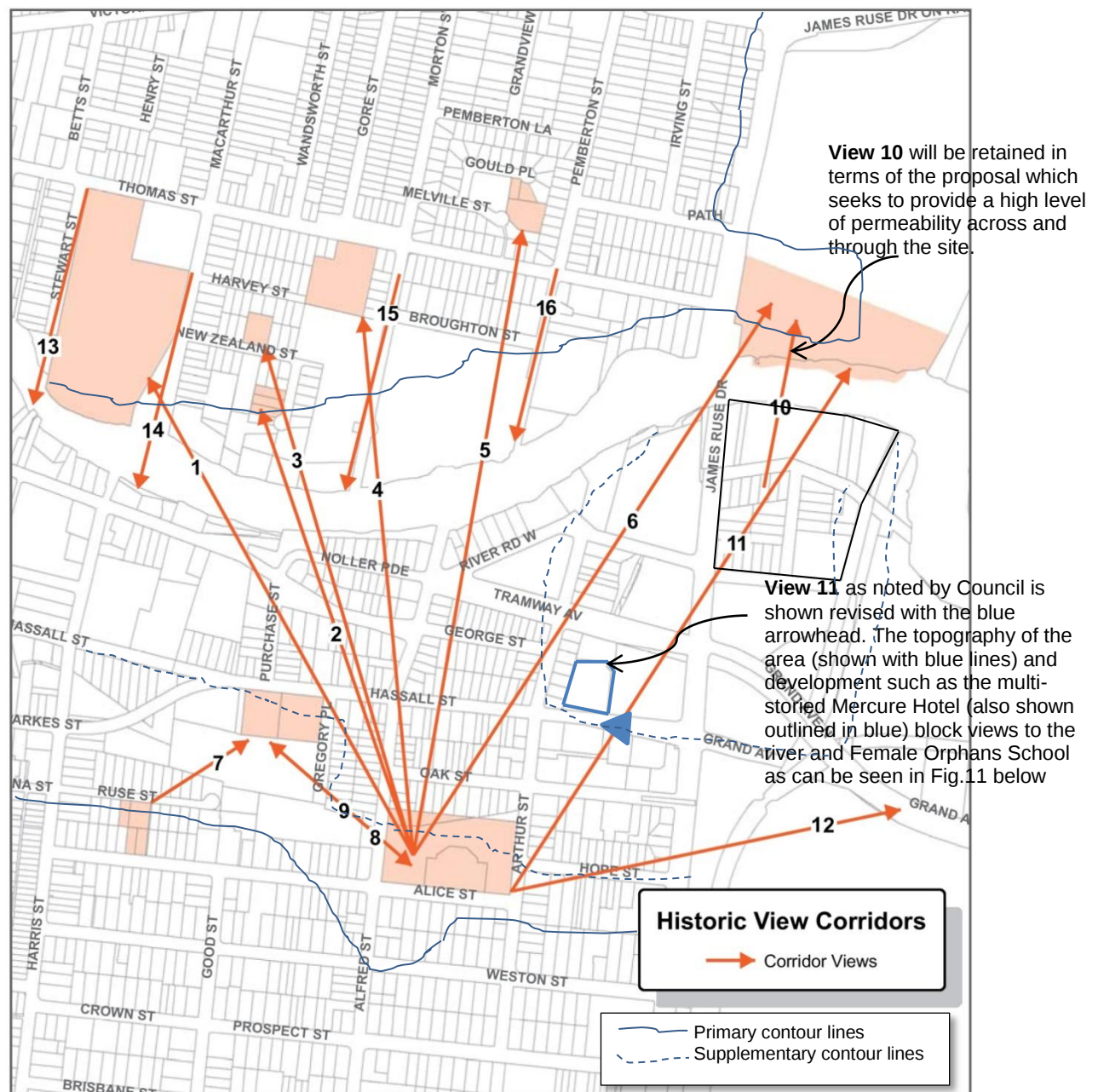


Fig.9 Historic view corridors in the Harris Park area as has been identified by Parramatta City Council in its DCP 2011 (Source: Parramatta City Council, 2012).

The section seeks to identify and explore historic view corridors and heritage views in the area surrounding the subject site. The Parramatta City Council Development Control Plan (DCP) 2011 has been referred to, in particular Section 2 Views and Vistas of the Appendix. The Historic View Corridors study for Harris Park reproduced above (Fig.9) shows heritage items and associated historic views in the Harris Park area identified by Parramatta Council. The importance of view corridors in the Harris Park Precinct has been emphasised by Council in Part 4: Special Precincts of the Parramatta DCP 2011:

Although development has obscured some key views, the topographical setting is still apparent today from many vantage points. In particular, there are significant views from places such as Elizabeth Farm, north to the Parramatta River and the hills beyond. Conversely, there are views from the north side of the river looking south where significant sites such as Elizabeth Farm can still be identified. These views and vistas contribute significantly to the sense of place for the Harris Park Precinct and for Parramatta in general.

As seen in the Fig. 9 Views 6, 10 and 11 are relevant in terms of the proposed development. View 6 and 10 are of the Female Orphan School/ UWS Campus in Rydalmere from Elizabeth Farm and the subject site and James Ruse Drive. View 11 is from Elizabeth Farm looking across James Ruse Drive and the subject site to the wetlands along the river.

Analysis of Views 6, 10 and 11

The analysis for the relevant views has been undertaken with the help of photographs of the area and a consideration of the setting of the area including the built fabric, topography and vegetation.



Fig.10 View from the east of Elizabeth Farm Reserve along Arthur Street, which is in the same direction as View 6. The ridgeline of hills in the distance is noticeable, but the existing built fabric and development and vegetation have blocked out any views to the river and the former Female Orphans School (Source: Google Street View, 2012).



Fig.11 View from south-eastern corner of Elizabeth Farm Reserve – corner of Alice Street and Arthur Street, looking in same direction as View 11. However views to the river and the former Female Orphan School and the subject site have been blocked by residential fabric and commercial development such as the multi-storied building in the background which is the Mercure Sydney Parramatta at Hassall Street, Rosehill and the local shopping area along Hassall Street and Arthur Street to its front (Source: Google Street View, 2012).



Fig.12 View from James Ruse Drive looking across the subject site showing trees across the river. This is in the same direction as View 10 and will be retained in terms of the proposal (Source: Google Street View, 2012).



Fig.13, 14 and 15 (top to bottom) View of Elizabeth Farm and Reserve, looking in the direction of subject site showing some of the tall tree planting associated with the Farm that should be retained (Source: Google Street View, 2012).

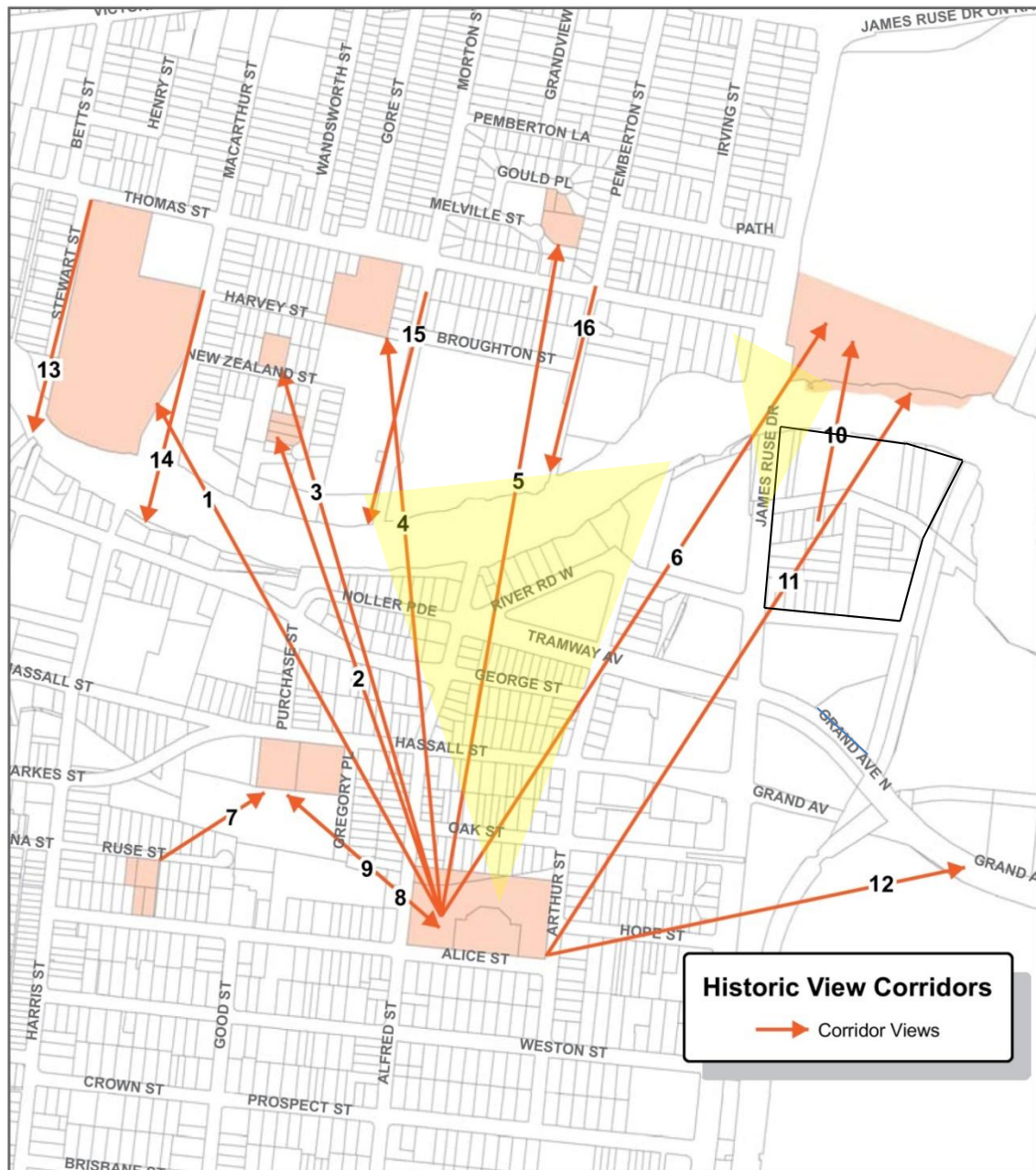


Fig.16 Views 6 and 11 from Elizabeth Farm across the river to the former Female Orphans School are not applicable in terms of the development on the subject site as most parts of these views are blocked by residential development and the existing topography. The views from Elizabeth Farm which should be retained are the ones shown within the shaded view cone and the views from James Ruse Drive which should be retained are shown by the smaller shaded view cone.

View 6 and 11 from Elizabeth Farm have little significance as apart from the views to the hills and some trees on Elizabeth Farm which are visible, views to the former Female Orphan School/UWS Campus, the Parramatta River, the wetlands and trees along its banks have been hindered by two factors – the topography of the area (as shown in Fig. 9 above) which shows Elizabeth Farm at a slightly lower level than the adjoining areas, and the subjects site located on a knoll. The other factor affecting View 11 is development in the area including warehouses, hotels and shopping precincts set amidst residential fabric. The views across the river from Elizabeth Farm which should be retained are indicated in terms of the shaded view

cone in Fig. 18 which has been determined by the topography of the area. The significant views from James Ruse Drive through the subject site to the river and former School are shown with the help of the smaller shaded view cone in Fig.18. View 10 is from the subject site across the river, looking towards the Female Orphan School and the wetlands and it will be retained by the proposed development which seeks to maintain a high level of permeability across the site with views to the river being maintained throughout.

3.0 The proposal

The redevelopment of the site seeks to respond to the surrounding site conditions by dividing the site into three identifiable precincts – James Ruse Drive Precinct along the western boundary of the site bordering the arterial road, the River Precinct occupying the northern portion of the site along the Parramatta River and a Central Precinct located along the eastern portion of the site along the Carlingford line rail corridor. New roads will be introduced to break the site up into the proposed precincts with the main access road along the southernmost edge of the site allowing vehicular access to the site from James Ruse Drive. A main street will cut across the length of the site establishing a visual link with the river, foreshore and the UWS campus across the river. A 20m foreshore public access area will be maintained along the river front which will be free of development. Proposed development along the river front will include activities with a high level of public interaction such as recreation areas, food courts, café and bistros.

The preliminary scheme involves construction of one and two-storied podiums for each of the precincts, on top of which will be placed 7 to 16 storeyed point towers. The proposed use of point towers will help reduce the overall massing of the development and care has been taken to ensure that the orientation and shape of the towers helps maximise permeability to the river. There is a gradual build up in terms of the number of storeys with 7 storeyed towers forming part of the River Precinct, 10 to 14 storeyed towers occupying the James Ruse Drive Precinct, and 10 to 16 storeyed towers forming the Central Precinct.



Division of site into 3 precincts

The yellow arrow shows consideration of the identified view cone from James Ruse

Fig.17 The proposed development on site showing the divisions of the site into three precincts; retention of the Wetlands; and recognition of views from James Ruse Drive across the Wetlands and Parramatta River and to UWS. It also shows consideration of the identified view cone from James Ruse Drive.



The view across the length of the site is in keeping with View 10

Fig.18 The proposed development on site showing the level of permeability across the site to the Wetlands and Parramatta River and to UWS, achieved through the shape, size and massing of the point towers and podiums

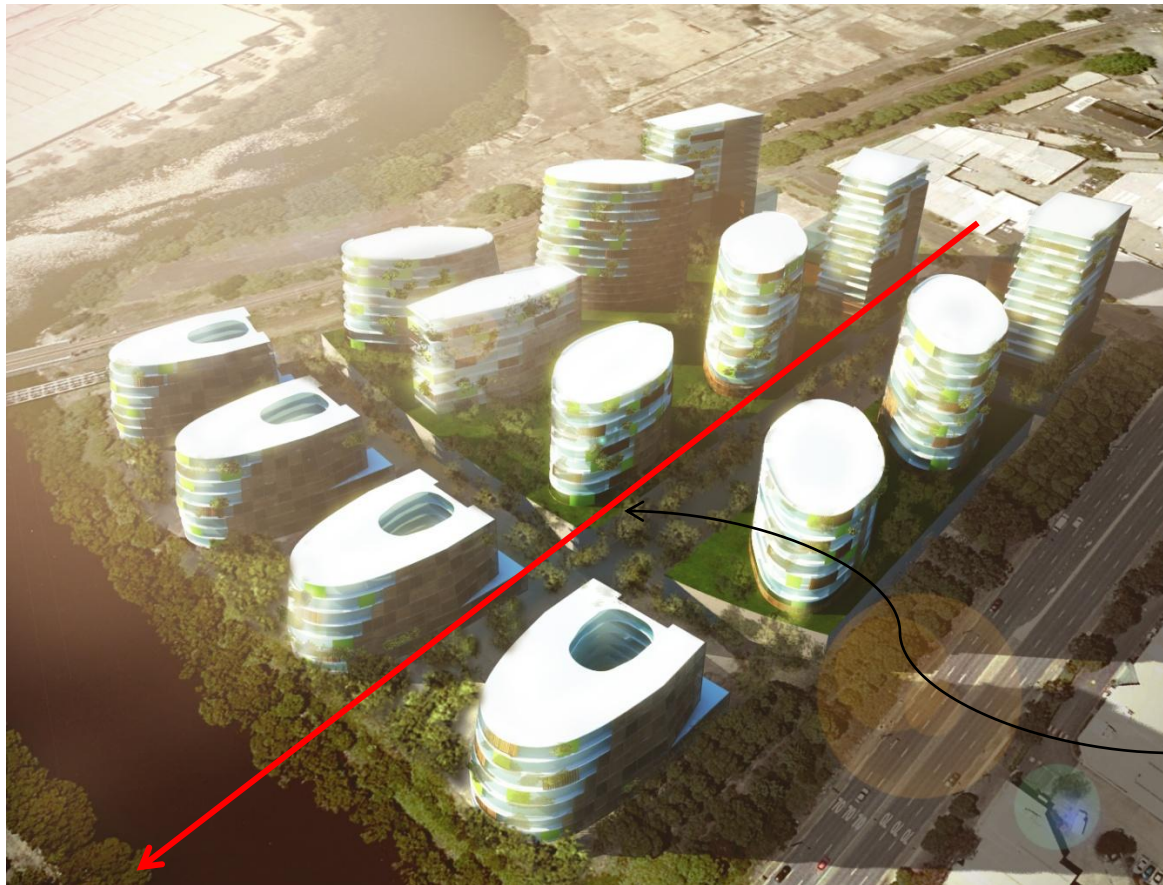


Fig.19 The proposed development on site includes establishing a direct visual link d across the length of the site looking towards Wetlands and Parramatta River and to UWS. This is in keeping with View 10 as identified by Council

4.0 Impact of proposed development on heritage sites

1. Wetlands – while the Wetlands fall outside the boundaries of the site, the proposal recognises their environmental and heritage value and seeks to retain the wetlands as a 20m wide continuous Riparian Foreshore Activation Zone along the river front. The point towers facing the wetlands will have 1 storey continuous podiums containing recreation areas, food courts, café and bistros.

2. Rydalmere Hospital – the state listed Hospital precinct which is currently a part of the UWS campus will not be affected by the proposed development as the permeability achieved through the use of point towers and a main street running along the length of the site, will help establish a visual link with the UWS campus and the heritage items.

3. Clyde Carlingford Rail Bridge Abutments – the abutments which are marginally visible from the site will be retained and the road maintained along the eastern edge of the site will ensure clear visual access to the heritage items.

4. Sewage Pumping Station 67 – this is the closest heritage item to the subject site, but as there is existing development in between the subject site and the heritage item, the impact of the proposal on the heritage item will be minimised and the proposed towers will only form a visual backdrop to the heritage item.

5. Elizabeth Farm; 6. Oak Street Cottage Group

The state listed Elizabeth Farm and the group of cottages are situated within residential development and are at a distance from the subject site. Therefore the proposed development will have minimal impact on the items expect in terms of appearing a visual backdrop at a distance.

5.0 Conclusion

This report has identified the views from Elizabeth Farm and from James Ruse Drive which should be retained. The proposed mixed use development at 181 James Ruse Drive will have no adverse impact on these identified views and on the heritage items in the vicinity of the site. The preliminary design of the development responds sympathetically to its surroundings and to the river front by seeking to minimise the massing of the development through the use of point towers and maximise the permeability through the site.