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APPENDIX 5

rla
richard lamb & associates

Gladesville Shopping Village, Cowell Street, Gladesville

Visual Assessment

Report prepared for Gladesville Shopping Village Pty Ltd
by Dr. Richard Lamb and Jane Maze-Riley
Date 6th October 2015

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

Richard Lamb and Associates (RLA) has been appointed by GSV Developments in respect of a Planning Proposal to amend the building height and floor space ratio controls of the Hunters Hill LEP 20110 to facilitate a proposed mixed use development in Gladesville.

RLA has extensive experience in scenic resource management and heritage conservation over the last 20 years. The company specialises in landscape assessment, landscape heritage conservation, visual impacts and strategic planning for visual protection and conservation of cultural environments. The primary author of this report, Dr Lamb, has 30 years' experience in teaching, research and professional practice in landscape planning and heritage conservation and has published in local and international journals on perception, aesthetic assessment and landscape management.

RLA has been engaged to prepare a visual assessment with particular attention to the likely visual effects of the proposal in relation to the surrounding visual context and catchment.

Our findings have been based on field assessments undertaken on several occasions in 2014 and early 2015, concerning various options for the site, with further reviews on 6th May and 12th August 2015. Architectural information including plans, elevations, 3-dimensional views and block model montages prepared by Robertson and Marks Architects (RM) in July and August 2015 in respect of the recent and preferred option for the Planning Proposal, have assisted our analysis.

This report analyses the visual effects and potential impacts of new built forms within the local and wider visual environment in relation to preferred option.

1.2 The proposed development

This proposed mixed use development replaces all the existing built form on the subject site (refer to Robertson and Marks drawings A110.11, A110.11, A120.01 and 02 and A102.1,.5,.7,.9, .11 and 103.13) and includes a podium which varies from between 1 - 3 storeys across the site, three main tower forms located along the western side of the site and another lower, longer building located closer to the eastern podium edge toward Flagstaff Street. Each of the tower forms include retail or commercial space at podium level and residential apartments above. The majority of the bulk and scale of the development is in the west part of site and is set back approximately 100m from Victoria Road.

Wire frame montages have been prepared for the preferred option as described below and form part of the basis of our assessment.

The preferred option is similar to the previously preferred Option 1 in terms of the number of tower forms present, their general location and spatial arrangement. We note that this option has been amended to reflect advice provided at a second pre-lodgement meeting by Hunters Hill Council and specialist consultants Architectus, employed by the Council to provide guidance.

In summary, the preferred option includes a 2-3 storey podium with 4 separate building forms above it. If considered from north to south, the buildings are labelled as building A, A1, B and C. A fourth lower, longer building D is aligned closest and approximately parallel to Flagstaff Street. The tallest buildings are the tower forms of building B and building A1 which are 16 stories and 15 stories above podium height respectively. Building B reaches RL 101m whilst building A1 to the north is lower at RL 98m. Building C has two main components with a tower of 10 storeys and lower component of 6 storeys in height.

Key differences compared to the previous preferred Option 1 include;

- Building A1 has a reduced footprint and greater articulation between it and Building A.
- Building B is reduced in height by 9 storeys but has a slightly larger floorplan and in this regard has moved closer to Cowell Street and to building C by approximately 4m.
- To accommodate the movement of Building B, the floor plan of building C has been reduced so that it remains in the same location as in Option, 1 but is lower by one floor.
- Public access between buildings A1 and B has been widened to increase visual and physical permeability into the site from the right of way and for pedestrians arriving via Victoria Road. This wide spatial separation between tower forms is also evident when viewing the development from many locations within the public domain visual catchment.
- The scheme also includes enhanced public access from Massey Street to the proposed public open space located at podium level in the north east part of the site.

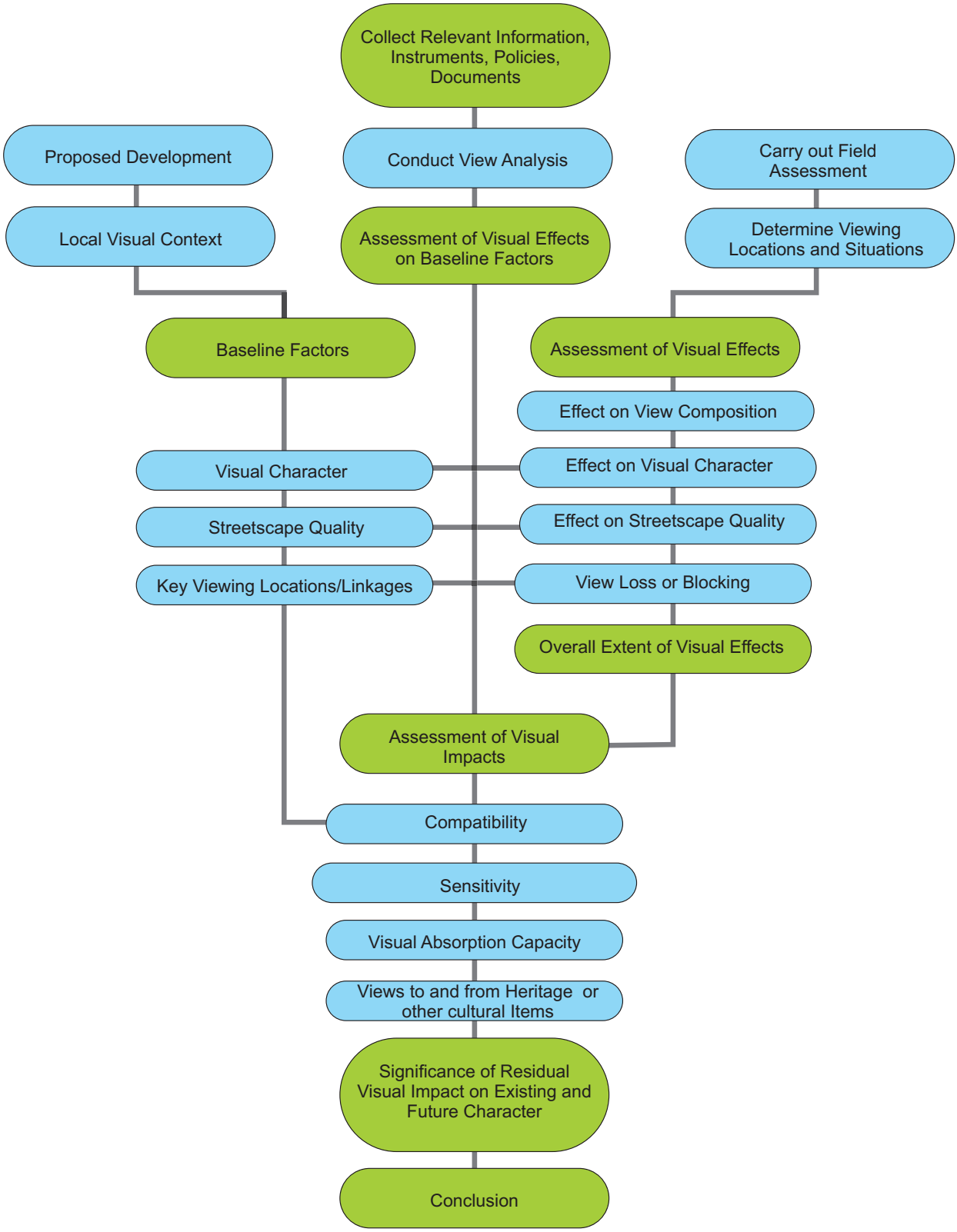
There is a general height transition from the tallest to lowest built elements from west to east and from building B to the north and south. The majority of the bulk and scale of the development in the west of site is set back approximately 100m from Victoria Street and is set back approximately 50 from Flagstaff Street.

1.3 Documents consulted

- Architectural information and block model photomontages provided by Robertson and Marks May, July and August 2015.
- Gladesville Council's first and second Pre-lodgement Meeting notes with reference to Council's independent consultants, Architectus.

1.4 Visual impact assessment methodology

RLA adopted a methodology specifically designed for assessment of large scale urban projects. A flow chart below is a graphic representation of the parameters of the assessment and the logic and sequence of analysis and assessment tasks undertaken.



Richard Lamb and Associates Development Assessment Method Flow Chart

2.0 Visual Character and Visual Resources Analysis

2.1 Visual character of the site

The proposed development is located on the eastern side of Victoria Road between Massey Street and Cowell Street. The site has a cross fall generally from west to east and is characterised by existing retail development, car parking, a residential flat building, a bungalow and a heritage building.

The site has been identified as Development Precinct 4 and part Precinct 3 within the Gladesville Village Key Site map as shown in Figure 4.1, in the Hunters Hill consolidated DCP 2013 and is zoned B2 mixed use in the HHLEP 2012. We note that the LGA changes in the vicinity of the site along the west side of Victoria Road and north of Pittwater Road to Ryde Council.

2.2 Visual character of surrounding context and streetscapes

Victoria Road runs broadly in a north-south alignment and is located along the top of a ridgeline which is a notable high point within the local environment. The landform falls to the west and east of this ridgeline between the Parramatta and Lane Cove River catchments, making the existing and proposed development along this ridgeline potentially visually prominent. The ridge also falls to the south toward the confluence of Tarban Creek and the Parramatta River in the Gladesville Bridge locality.

East of the Victoria Road corridor retail strip and in particular east of Flagstaff Street, the local visual context is characterised by residential development of mixed architectural style and age including many examples of individual residences circa late 19th to early to mid-20th Century in origins. Flagstaff Street also includes contemporary residential flat buildings which comprise ground floor commercial uses and underground car parking.

We observed the presence of a number of Heritage Items within the vicinity to the east and north of the site and that the predominant streetscape character includes wide grass verges and mature street trees. This general suburban vernacular prevails from the eastern boundary of the site further east. The wider visual context of the subject site east of Venus Street is predominantly characterised by early and mid-20th C residential development and tree lined streets, across a gently undulating series of local ridges and slopes. In this regard, only intermittent views may be available to the site from some elevated locations.

North of the site along Massey Street the area is characterised by 1 and 2-storey development, commercial premises and heritage buildings, with mature street trees located within its road reserve.

The visual context in the vicinity of the site along the west side of Victoria Road includes one to two-storey commercial development, Gladesville Public School, Trim Place public open space and the prominent, taller RSL and community club building, adjacent to an on-grade carpark. To the north and south, more recent 3 to 7 storey buildings have been constructed along Victoria Road, with higher buildings under construction and proposed.

Within the wider setting, the visual character of Victoria Road changes continuously along its length and appears to be in a constant state of flux north of Gladesville Bridge to Top Ryde, where its character oscillates between existing residential development, commercial development, industrial, health, educational or recreational precincts. However in this section of the road, the Gladesville shopping area appears to provide the largest and most visually significant hub of commercial and retail activity.

2.3 Visual resources of the site

The key visual resources of the subject site ca be summarised as follows;

1. The overall scenic quality of the visual context of the subject site is considered to be moderate to low. This is due to:
    a. the presence of the existing car park and undistinguished buildings on Cowell Street;
    b. high exposure to blank exteriors of the shopping centre;
    c. lack of public open space;

Gladesville Shopping Village

Approximate site location

Photo-montage and view place locations (1)

d. low visual permeability and uninviting through-links;

e. backs of existing retail and commercial buildings;

f. low quality retail frontages to Victoria Road, and:

g. many buildings of no architectural merit on or adjacent to the site.

2. The presence of the adjacent and established residential context adjacent to the site to the south and east and the presence of mature street trees in the vicinity gives a slight up-weight to the overall low scenic quality. However this is derived from the higher quality surrounding the site and not to the site itself.

3. The presence of some contemporary mixed use developments along the Victoria Road corridor provides an opportunity for a mixed use development of high architectural standards of a complementary character, of the nature proposed.

4. Proposed development of the RSL Club along the western side of Victoria Road and for sites including the ground level car parking areas will provide opportunities for future interaction including pedestrian linkages between the two precincts.

5. The sloping nature of the site and its relationship to three surrounding streets Massey, Flagstaff and Cowell provide both challenges and opportunities for on-grade access to the site at various points. The existing public right of way allows pedestrian access into the site and a short cut from Massey Street to Cowell Street. That opportunity has been realised with the inclusion of generous on-grade pedestrian access from Cowell and Massey Streets, and provision of a large public open space which links with the right of way.

6. There is scope on the subject site for a development of the nature proposed subject to appropriate treatment of the various interfaces with the adjacent land uses, setbacks, appropriate podium heights as external and internal street wall heights, spatially separated tower forms and pedestrian linkages.

7. The east and west edges of the site require quite different treatments, to make greatest use of the potential visual resources. The eastern edge of the subject site is a critical interface between future built form and adjacent low-scale residential development.

8. The western edge, being widely separated from Victoria Road and of low visual quality, presents a significant opportunity for the location of taller built form and the opportunity for the minimisation of the environmental impacts of that taller form on residential areas.

9. We note that the spatial separation of the tower forms from the eastern boundary and with the bulk of the development located to the west, as well as the public right of way ‘walkway’ and north eastern public access gardens (near on grade), provide opportunities for visual and physical permeability and through-site links, which are appropriate responses to the low attractiveness, permeability and legibility of the eix visual and physical context.

2.4 The proposal and its response to visual resources

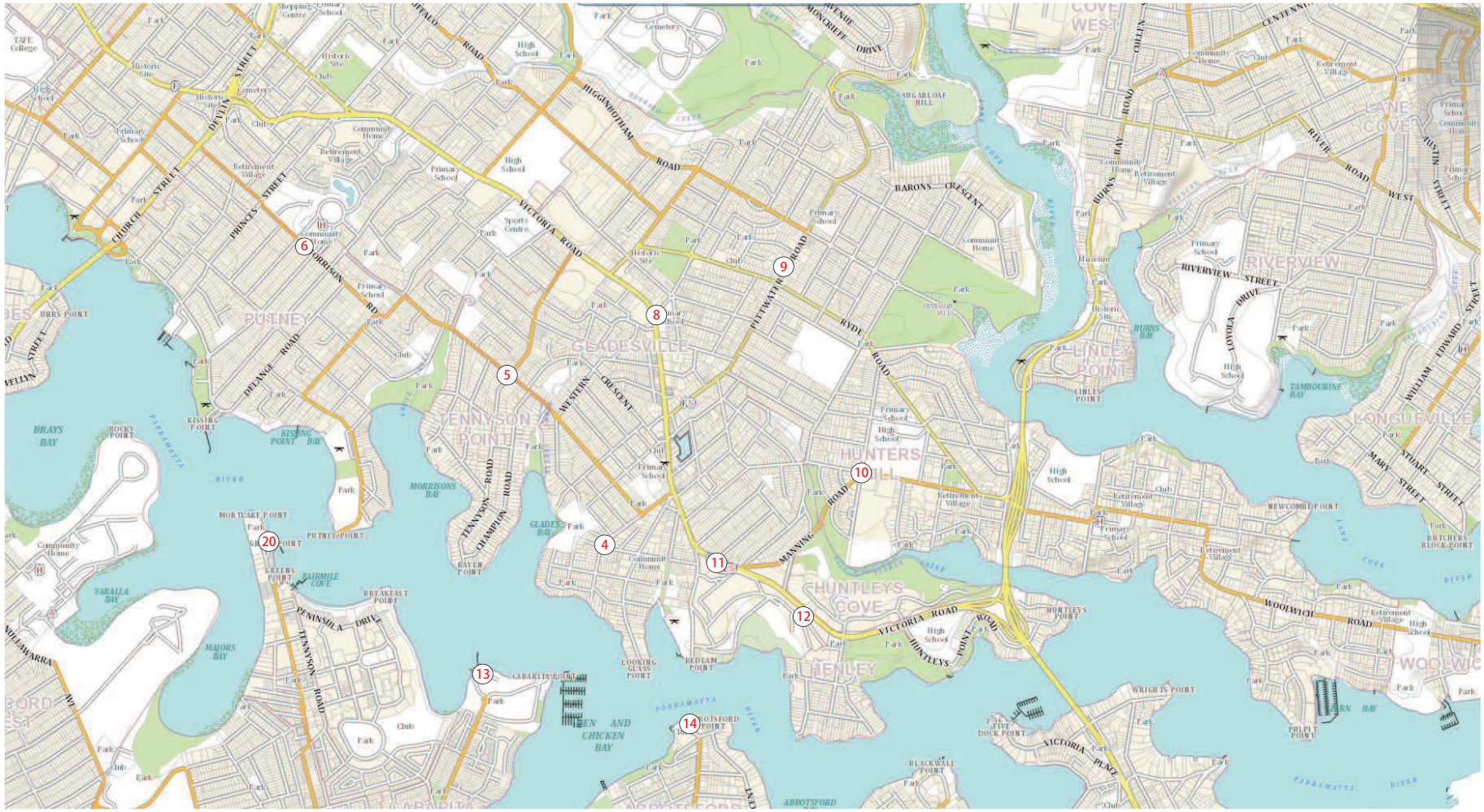
10. The proposal is for a mixed use development comprising residential, commercial, retail and community uses with basement car parking, 3 podium levels and up to 16 levels above podium height.

11. This provides visual and physical access to the proposal and provides permeability and a sense of invitation to the precinct which currently does not exist.

12. A Public Access Podium is designed at a level which provides direct on grade pedestrian access links from Massey and Cowell Streets into the site via a right of way. This podium includes large areas of public space, soft and hard landscape areas with excellent solar access and a good aspect. It appears to respond positively to the surrounding context by providing an opportunity for community open space, potential community uses and passive recreation of a type not currently available within Gladesville Shopping precinct.

13. A new wide tree lined footpath has been included along the western side of Flagstaff Street where no pedestrian pathway existed previously.

14. The main retail entry is located at grade on Cowell Street and outlets are arranged so as to provide an active frontage or glazed street wall in relation to Flagstaff Street, Glazing to the retail floor along Flagstaff street will provide visual permeability and interaction.



Gladesville Shopping Village

Approximate site location

Photo-montage and view place locations (5)

15. The bulk of above the podium built form is aligned to the laneway with the tallest tower building B positioned between slightly lower buildings A1 and C, midway along the western edge of the site. In this option the three towers are spatially well separated allowing each vertical form to stand alone surrounded by open space and sky in many views.
16. This arrangement produces a notional 'bell curve' for the precinct, or a progression in height of the form, from highest at the centre to lowest built form at the edges of the site adjacent to street and residential interfaces.
17. The spatial separation between towers and particularly that between building A1 and B introduces east-west through-site view corridors and visual permeability into the site from viewing locations in the public domain for example Trim Place on Victoria Road or Gladesville Public School.
18. Massing the tallest built forms to the west well back from neighbouring residential development to the north, east and south creates exaggerated setbacks which assists in mitigating the visual effects, perceived scale and shadow impacts of the buildings in close views particularly.
19. Vehicular entrance to the subject site will be via a Flagstaff Street loading bay and car park entry and car parking levels are confined to the basement.
20. In our opinion the bulk, scale and spatial arrangement shown responds appropriately to the interfaces with adjacent land uses, with regard to setbacks, podium heights, tower forms and pedestrian linkages. In our opinion the isolated tower forms and spatial arrangement provides the best outcome in terms of visual effects and potential impacts within the wider visual context.
21. The general setbacks and pedestrian areas proposed are appropriate. The open spaces within the development will provide potential pedestrian links with Victoria Road, Cowell and Flagstaff Streets. These add merit to the proposal and assist in providing a high level of permeability in to the subject site.

2.5 Summary comments in respect of this preferred option

The proposed development includes a taller and narrow central tower (building B), medium height northern tower (building A1) and lower scale tower forms at the north (building A) and south (building C). Building D is of low overall height being 4 levels above podium and in a form and location that offers a wide setback from Flagstaff Street. The spatial separation of the central and tallest tower from other tower forms provides for potential cross site views above podium height, where areas of sky will be present in views from Victoria Road. This option includes a wide spatial separation between Building A1 and Building B which is aligned to the axis of view from Trim Place to maximise the perception of separation from this location, which we consider to be appropriate. That gap is also approximately on the alignment of the through-site link from Victoria Road to the site, via the existing internal laneway shared zone. As a result, there is a suggestion of invitation, or visual and physical permeability of the Victoria Road street wall. This could be further developed.

Separation between the towers will be perceivable from various viewing directions, including views from the residential areas to the south east and east and from higher parts of Hunters Hill. In the more distant views, where the podium levels are unlikely to be visible because of the leafy nature of the intervening landscape, the slim tower forms in this preferred option are in our opinion, appropriate within the visual context.

3.0 Visual Effects Analysis

3.1 Visual exposure of the site and the proposal

As part of the field assessment, the visual exposure of the site and the proposal was documented by visiting a number of viewing locations and making observations following interrogation of aerial, topographic and cadastral maps. The likely visual exposure to the private domain was determined by making observations from the streets.

Representative photos and wire frame photomontages of the proposed development and the viewing locations analysed and assessed are shown on Map 1.

The public domain visual catchment of the proposal is relatively large but diffuse, in that many areas relatively close to the site will not necessarily be exposed to direct views of the development on the site and some viewing locations further afield will be exposed to direct, but distant views. Therefore the potential visual catchment cannot be accurately defined but is determined by a number of factors such as topography, intervening landform and vegetation and by the location, height and bulk of built form, in relation to the viewer's location.

Parts of the proposed development on this relatively elevated site will be visible to a lesser or greater extent from surrounding locations including from parts of Victoria Road and other roads in the vicinity, in particular those on secondary ridge lines. The extent of the development's visibility is influenced by the viewing location, the nature of intervening street tree vegetation and built development, as well as the height of the street wall to each street (particularly in close views).

In our opinion although the proposed development has a large potential visual catchment, views from Victoria Road to the tops of towers (or podium) are likely to be experienced from moving viewing situations in many cases and to be oblique, incidental and distant. The road alignment of Victoria Road suggests that views may be available for a greater distance to the site from the north and north west, but are relatively restricted from the south due to a change in road alignment and fall in elevation.

Viewed from more distant locations to the north west on Victoria Road, only the upper parts of the tower-form structures would be visible. The visibility would decrease rapidly with distance because of the blocking effect of the built form and vegetation in the foregrounds.

Views from Victoria Road close to the site are generally constrained to the road corridor by two to three-storey retail development on both sides of the road and limited through-site links which are intermittent and occur at oblique angles relative to the street in response to the underlying subdivision pattern. Trim Place is a public space located in front of Gladesville Public School (a listed Heritage Item) and will have no direct views to the podium form and limited exposure to the tops of the tower forms. However a generous setback of approximately 120m exists by default because of existing development between the site and Victoria Road. Future development permitted by existing controls in this area would significantly limit future potential for views to the podium and the taller tower forms behind them.

As a result of the site's ridge top location, there are no significant views through or over the site that feature scenic, iconic or culturally significant items. Therefore while the tower elements will be visible against the sky from many locations, regardless of their form and precise locations, they will not cause any significant blocking of views.

3.1.1 Visual exposure to Roads

The tallest parts of the towers and partial views of parts of the podium may be available from surrounding close or main roads including Victoria Road, Cowell Street, Flagstaff Street, Massey Street, Pittwater Road, Ryde Road and Morrison Road.

Where possible, representative views from such locations have been selected and analysed with the assistance of wire frame model photomontages of the preferred option. The montages provide indicative potential effects on views in close range and more distant viewing places. Commentary on representative views is included in section 5.0 below.

3.1.2 Reserves and recreation areas

A small number of reserves and or recreation areas are located within one kilometer of the proposed development. These include Darri Reserve (which adjoins Gladesville Public School west of the site), Peel Park to the north west, Monash Park to the north and Tarban Creek Reserve to the east. Of these locations direct views to the site are potentially most available from Darri Reserve where views to the tops of the towers may be available over intervening development located upslope and east of this location.

Our fieldwork throughout the potential visual catchment and block model montages indicate that from all other locations listed above that potential views if available will be filtered or substantially screened particularly in views from the east where by the effects of mature street tree planting across much of this part of Gladesville and Hunters Hill.

3.1.3 Residential areas, industrial and commercial areas and public school

Potential views may be available to the site from adjacent residential suburbs, commercial and industrial areas north and south along the Victoria Road ridgeline to a lesser or greater degree depending on the viewing location in relation to road alignment, settlement pattern and orientation of dwellings and intervening vegetation and development. The visual amenity of the subject site as seen from some residences close to the site will be improved compared to the existing environment that is seen from these developments.

The visual catchment of the site from the private domain is limited to those within close proximity to the site although there is potentially a wider catchment when viewed from further away to the north east, east and south-east. In our opinion views from these directions would not be degraded by visibility of the development. The building forms would not cause loss of views of scenic, iconic or culturally significant items.

Residences potentially most affected by the proposed development are those which are located opposite the site on Cowell Street and Flagstaff Street all of which are exposed to views of the existing commercial precinct, Council car park and/or Coles supermarket, which form the foreground to the views.

We note that only one residential flat building (shop top housing) exists opposite the site on Flagstaff Street whilst two bungalows in the street house health services providers. In other words the housing is essentially commercial in function and as a result is unlikely to provide significant viewing opportunities from significant living areas. In any event, there are no scenic, iconic or culturally significant items visible from these houses.

The houses at either end of the Flagstaff Street present only side boundaries to the street and are not orientated toward views that could be affected. In our opinion, in the context of views from this street, the proposed street wall height of the podium and further transitions in height and scale of the development vis-à-vis the street would be appropriate.

The settlement pattern of residences, tightly spaced and with narrow side setbacks along Cowell Street east of Flagstaff and in Massey Street is such that the proposed development is unlikely to be the focus of main views. We note further that these streets are not aligned to the site to provide focal views to the site and that they include mature street trees which provide screening effects to many potential views.

We observed that buildings on Massey Street are generally two-storey in form. They are orientated toward the street and face away from the rear of commercial premises backing onto Massey Lane and commercial/ heritage buildings. While the views from the rear would be significantly changed by the proposal, any complying development across the site would have a similar effect. In addition, the view across the existing site does not contain any significant scenic, iconic or culturally significant items the view of which would be lost if this or any similar or complying development is constructed.

4.0 Visual Effects

4.1 Verification of Accuracy of Photomontages

For the certification of photomontages, the fundamental requirement is that there is a computer model of the proposed future development envelopes that can be accurately located and merged with representative photographs taken from key viewing places, to produce a photomontage.

The model of the proposed buildings needs to be a 3D model, the location and height of which can be verified with respect to surveyed features of the existing development on the site and/or surveyed and verified 3D reference points in the surrounding areas. The 3D model is then inserted into (merged with) high definition digital images of the existing environment.

This principle is now recognised by a Practice Direction of the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, which requires that the 3D model of the proposed development can be shown to match the physical features of the existing environment, the features or which can be verified by qualified surveyors and that the images used are taken at an appropriate and known focal length. Other requirements for accuracy are explained below.

The key to being able to certify the accuracy of the resulting photomontage is being able to demonstrate that the 3D model of proposed building envelopes has a good fit to known surveyed markers or fixed features of the site or locality which are shown on a survey plan that is itself certified for accuracy by registered surveyors. The second level of fit that is critical is the fit of the model to a realistic photographic representation of the site in its context.

4.1.1 Creation of the 3D model

Robertson and Marks Pty Ltd have used a 3D model created in the Revit program, based on survey information that includes a number of buildings and facades located along Victoria Road, a landmark construction crane located relatively close to the subject site and a terrain model, to represent the visual environment of the site.

The models of the proposed development has been merged with photographic images only after the accuracy of fit of the base 3D Revit model to the individual photographic images has been established. Other models of development scenarios are aligned in relation to the Revit model, so each is of equal accuracy as regards its location vis-à-vis the photographic images.

We am satisfied that the fit of the 3D Revit model to each image used to create photomontages of views from the public domain has been checked and verified to the extent that is reasonable in the circumstance.

4.1.2 Limitations on preparing photomontages of big sites in close views

There are close viewing locations to this site in which the horizontal extent of the site takes up most or all of the foreground. Large sites and tall or wide buildings present special problems for both the modelling and the photography that provides the base images for preparation of photomontages in these circumstances. This is because standard lenses used to take landscape photographs (eg. 50mm lenses with a full frame camera) do not have sufficient horizontal field of view to take in the height and horizontal scale of the sites and future buildings such that they can represent a realistic field of view. Large sites also present some problems with getting the model of the building envelopes to fit onto the sites at the correct base level and without vertical distortion.

A single image photograph is however, the best base onto which to fit the computer model of the building envelopes and this has been used for all of the viewing places represented. This is because the conventions of perspective which are used by the computer software to generate a 3D image of the proposed development area are relatively consistent with the geometry of a single photographic image because both have a flat picture plane and one centre of view. The requirement for a single image however means that the focal length of the lens used for standard landscape photographs does not encompass enough of the site and some of the adjacent context when close views are required, such as those that represent views from residences close to the site.

Because the horizontal and vertical accuracy of the model of the building envelopes needs to be cross checked with 3D reference items that are also visible in the photographs, there is a limit on the width of view

that can be captured in any single image. Commonly for architectural photography, a wider angle lens has to be used for closer views.

A common technique used to deal with the problems of showing big sites and tall buildings in photographs from close range viewing locations is to electronically 'stitch' a series of photographs into a composite image that shows what looks like the field of view that is available to the eye. However, this can lead to a problem of getting the computer model to fit properly into every part of the image, because there are distortions that occur in the composite image. This is because the computer model does not conform to the artificial geometry of the total composite image.

In the current situation, the camera focal length cannot be standardised in all of the images used to create the photomontages. The chosen solution to this common dilemma is the strategy adopted here, which was to use a 35mm lens for the middle distance views and a 17mm wide angle T/S lens for the close range but very wide angle of view from Trim Place. This avoids the problem of using stitched together images for the close range views, in which the building envelopes depicted would be distorted and in which the foreground of the view in particular would be totally unrealistic.

4.1.3 Checking the montage accuracy

The accuracy of the fit of the 3D Revit computer model to the individual photographic images was checked in more than one way.

The model is checked for alignment and height with respect to the surveyed location of the camera, which is included as part of the 3D model. It is then cross checked in relation to fixed features which are visible in the images and which have also been surveyed. The Revit model shows a generally high level of fit to the 3D reference items in the images including the existing buildings. For an accurate 'triangulation' of the relationship between the camera and the existing features on the site to be established in 3-dimensions, at least five 3D reference points or surveyed fixed features need to be visible. It is not possible for a perfect fit to occur of the Revit model to all of the features visible on the images. This is because of distortions that occur with the camera lens in different parts of the image and because of significant differences that occur in the visibility of reference objects caused by the distance between the view place and the item. Many more than the requisite five 3D reference points are visible in every image. We are satisfied that there are no significant inaccuracies in the matching process used.

One exception occurs with the fit of the Commonwealth Bank building, which is approximately on the axis of View Place 2 (Time Capsule in Trim Place). As other shop fronts, awnings and surveyed features represented by the wire diagram of the survey information to either side have a good fit to the photographic image, it appears that there may be an error on the survey plan.

In the final montages, there are items which will not be present if the application is approved and these features have been removed from the photomontages. There is no way to represent what may be gained in the view in those cases (ie. it is not possible to electronically take away a feature of the image to see what would be behind it. Since the alignment of the model had been verified prior to rendering of the final photomontage, this does not affect the accuracy of the location and scale of the envelopes of buildings shown in the final images.

This process is the most accurate method of aligning a 3D model that is currently used in preparing photomontages of these kinds of developments, as it has both formal and other informal cross-checks.

4.1.4 Images used to prepare photomontages

The montages were created with our supervision and advice. RLA nominated the viewing locations based on the findings in our field assessment and these are shown on Map 1 in this report and the montages are in Appendix B in this report. The viewing locations were selected to represent the kind of views available from the whole visual catchment and the range of locations from which they are available. In determining the potential visual catchment of the site RLA identified a number of representative viewing locations from which the site or part of the site was visible within the public domain and within approximately two kilometres in various directions.

The photographs used for architectural block models were taken by RLA, lens 1.6m above ground level using a Canon EOS 5D Mark 2 Full Frame DSLR camera. The original photographs can be found in Appendix A and these representative viewing locations are listed below;

- L1 West side of Victoria Road south of the site.
- L2 Victoria Road opposite the site
- L3 West side of Victoria Road north of the site
- L4 Meriton Road opposite Doody Place.
- L5 Intersection of Tennyson and Morrison Roads view south east
- L6 Morrison Road view South east
- L7 Intersection Western Crescent and Ross Street.
- L8 South east Intersection Westminster Rd and Victoria Road view south.
- L9 Pittwater Road east of its intersection with Ryde Road axial view south west
- L10 From south side of Manning Road at Gladesville Road roundabout, view west
- L11 South west corner of Punt Rd and Victoria Road intersection view north
- L12 West side of Victoria Road
- L13 From Cabarita Point view north east
- L14 From Abbotsford Point ferry wharf view north
- L15 North end of Cowell Street
- L19 Massey Street opposite the end of Flagstaff Street
- L22 The south east corner at the intersection of Flagstaff Street and Cowell Street

The montages were created with our supervision and advice and original base photos provided by us. The Revit model created by Robertson and Marks from the architectural plans for the proposal became the base layer later to be inserted into the photographs, using the Adobe Photoshop program.

The 3D camera was matched to the focal length of the image in each case and the location of the place and the ground level plus camera height was determined. The 3D camera was then rotated to match known surveyed buildings as well as possible, to ensure that the computer model of the building envelopes was correctly located.

The wire frame photomontages represent the visual effects and exposure of the proposed building envelopes as shown in the preferred options and their siting with regard to the topography and the surrounding built and natural character.

The planning proposal is only for the concept, massing and overall building footprints of the buildings and therefore the detailing of the individual buildings is not part of the present application. Although the current proposal is schematic which is adequate for this assessment we are advised that individual buildings will be of contemporary style and detailing, providing visual interest, articulation and modulation of the facades. Such potential contemporary forms of high architectural standards will be compatible with other the character of other recent commercial mixed use developments visible along Victoria Road and the emerging and desired future character of the locality.

The photomontages are grouped at Pages 24-63, with a discussion of each. A number of images depicting the character of the existing environment are included among the photomontages.

4.2 Summary of Montage Views Analysis

Our analysis of the wire frame montage views (Pages 24-63) can be summarised as follows:

In more distant views, the tallest parts of the development including Building A1 and B are visible as slim tower forms springing from a local ridgeline, characterised by commercial and retail development of varying heights. In all distance views the tower forms do not block any recognised or significant scenic or iconic views, but will contribute a new bulk and scale of built form to the vicinity, which is modulated and articulated to provide interest and an attractive outcome.

In closer views from within the visual catchment the separation of tower forms and potentially the treatment of the street wall and podium level will be visible. The arrangement of building footprints and wide open public spaces will allow space and views to flow between the forms. Closer views are often from lower relative viewing locations causing the tower forms to block only areas of open sky in upward views. The same outcome in that regard would occur for a complying envelope scenario, but with much poorer address to the bounding streets of Flagstaff, Massey and Cowell Streets.

The proposed development includes generous spatial separations between the tower forms so as to minimise bulk and create visual permeability. Overall in our opinion the proposed development in this option will not generate any significant negative visual effects or potential visual impacts, and those which may arise will be similar to those generated as a result of any new contemporary mixed use tower development, which is constructed within a similar visual context.

5.0 Character and streetscape quality

Change in the intrinsic character of the site is a description of the extent and nature of visual changes when considered in relation to the site's present character before the intended development is constructed.

A change to the visual character of a site or the immediate surroundings can be positive, neutral or negative and does not directly lead to visual impacts. The more important question to be investigated is the contribution of the proposal to the visual, sensory experience of the surroundings, the desired future character and with the underlying zone objectives and permissibility.

5.1 Extent of change

In our opinion the proposal will have a moderate to high effect on the existing character of the site on the six point evaluation scale described below in relation to sensitivity. The character of the site will change from an retail-commercial character with the existing open carpark and dated low scale commercial buildings to a high quality mixed use and residential apartment development with a high quantum and quality of the public domain, and increased accessibility to pedestrian permeability, legibility and security. The existing environment has no such spaces, no accessible public domain, no visual presence to the adjacent environment and little visual permeability. The effect of the proposal will be a positive one in regard to amenity. The proposal includes visually linked internal open spaces which interact visually and physically with existing and proposed new external open spaces.

The current preferred option achieves these outcomes, as it achieves higher permeability, sense of spaciousness and reduced bulk and scale of vertical elements.

In relation to streetscape quality, the treatment of each of the street wall facades is of a high quality form incorporating active frontages and pedestrian permeability. These features will enhance the existing streetscape quality and introduce visual interest and variety. This will be seen by many as a significant improvement in the quality of the streetscape compared to the current situation.

5.2 Specific Visual effects

5.2.1 Visual privacy

There will be no visual privacy impacts of the development on residences outside the proposed development. Visual privacy between neighbours within the proposal as well as with adjacent existing, approved and proposed residential development will be maintained by commitments to appropriate setbacks, building separations, building orientations, locations of doors, windows and balconies, and landscaping. The tower forms are well separated from adjacent residential dwellings. There is very little opportunity for potential visual privacy impacts to occur accept for dwellings located along Massey Street. Any potential impacts would be addressed during the fine grained design phases prior to a DA being prepared and submitted.

5.2.2 View loss or Blocking effects

It is considered that overall this preferred option with generous, wide spatial separation between towers will offer greater opportunity for long term scenic views from within the precinct. The development will not interrupt specific scenic, significant or iconic views for adjacent developments as these do not currently exist in the vicinity.

Residential development located west of Victoria Road may have views to the subject site but in almost all cases the development will not block views to further distant views. This is because the viewing locations to the west are generally from lower elevations in which the Victoria Road ridgeline provides the view blocking effect and horizon in such views. The exception to this situation occurs only if the viewing location is elevated relative to the proposed development site where views beyond the Victoria Road ridgeline exist (as in viewing location 6 from a high point on Morrison Road).

Views from residential areas east of the subject site may include parts of the proposed development including the taller tower forms, but views do not extend past the subject site due to the existing height and landform of the Victoria Road ridgeline which provides the horizon in most views from this general direction.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal will not cause any significant blocking of views of any scenic items from its public and private domain visual catchment.

5.3 Overall visual effects

Based on the analysis presented above on each factor, it is assessed that the overall visual effects of the proposal will be low on the six point evaluation scale.

6.0 Visual Impacts Assessment

The criteria in Section 5.0 provides an assessment of the extent of the visual effects of the proposal when seen from specific viewing places. The extent of the visual effects is the baseline analysis against which to judge the visual impacts.

There is a fundamental difference between analysing visual effects (Section 4.0) and the assessment of visual impacts. Whether or not a visual effect is an impact of potential significance cannot be equated directly to the extent of the visual effect. For example, a high visual effect can be quite acceptable, whereas a small one can be unacceptable. In this regard, the site is strategic and designated by Council for landmark development which will fundamentally change the future character of the site and wider Gladesville Shopping Village in the short to medium term. In that context, many high visual effects of change will not be considered to be significant.

In the same way, a small effect may be significant, for example loss of permeability, blocking of views, effects on culturally significant items with visual significance or negative effects on highly sensitive locations or features.

As a result, it is necessary to give an explicit weighting to the assessed levels of visual effects, to arrive at an assessment of the importance (significance) of the impact.

This method therefore does not equate visual effects directly to visual impacts. The approach is to analyse the visual effects as detailed in Section 4.0 above to arrive at an overall level of visual effect of the proposal and then to assess the significance of the level of impact, if any, by giving differential weighting to relevant impact criteria. By this, the relative importance of impacts is distinguished from the size of the effect.

It is considered that three weighting criteria are appropriate to the overall assessment of visual impacts in this project, i.e., Physical absorption capacity, Visual Compatibility and Sensitivity. Each of these addresses the primary question of the acceptability of the visual effects and changes caused by the proposal.

6.1 Compatibility of the proposal weighting

Compatibility is different from change. While change is objective in the sense that what is proposed can be directly compared to what already exists, the measure of visual compatibility is intended to evaluate the extent to which the change conforms with or acceptably fits into the future visual context of the site and its surroundings. Compatibility also means that the development responds appropriately to the desired future character if this has been determined by strategic planning instruments or polices and guidelines. High compatibility means low visual impact. In the context of this Planning Proposal, the existing instruments and policies can form a general guide to compatibility, but are not the only yardstick that is appropriate.

6.1.1 Compatibility with the character of the site

Compatibility with the existing character of the site is a measure of how the proposal responds to the natural and built features such as vegetation, topography, scenic features and existing developments within the site as well as its potential impact on the visibility of those features from external viewing locations. It is also an assessment of how the proposal takes into consideration the future retention, management and conservation of such natural features. .

The proposal has moderate to high compatibility with the character of the site. It is responsive to the surrounding land uses, streetscape character, slope and right of way. It does not require any significant landform alteration in terms of its existing topography. It proposes increased and improved visual and pedestrian linkages to and from the subject site, additional view corridors and significant public open spaces.

The proposal will result in a positive change to the existing ‘built form’ character of the site and is responsive to its resources. While the change to the subject site would be dramatic, the change would be compatible with its potential and existing resources.

6.1.2 Compatibility with the character of the surrounding context

Visual compatibility of the proposal with the surrounding built and natural character is an assessment considered over its total visual catchment and is not confined to the subject site.

From the assessment undertaken, the visual compatibility of the proposal with regard to the existing, emerging and future character of the site is judged to be moderate-high. The reasons for this judgment are:

i. The proposal is responsive to the character of the various edges and interfaces of the subject site with its surroundings. It is responsive to the existing and potential future adjacent development within the Gladesville Shopping Village area with regard to street wall heights, overall building heights, setbacks and footprints.

ii. The proposal is responsive to the unique, strategic location of the land in the context of existing infrastructure which surrounds it and to which it is immediately accessible on all sides and the general expansion of residential density in the vicinity.

iii. Appropriate commitments have been embodied within the design such that the proposal will not result in any significant potential visual or related amenity impacts, including visual privacy and that a high level of internal residential amenity and amenity with the neighbours will be maintained particularly in relation to setbacks to Flagstaff Street.

iv. The proposal maintains the existing right of way and provides for increased pedestrian linkages and public amenity. The main large public open space will contribute a central open space and focal point in the immediate environment for the local community.

v. The proposal has a positive effect on the overall visual character and scenic quality of the locality.

6.2 Sensitivity weighting

Sensitivity relates to the number of viewers who would be likely to see the proposal and their likely expectations for visual quality. It is usually considered that a visual impact on a sensitive location in the public domain is considered more important than one of similar quality on a less sensitive site or seen from a private viewing place.

The visual sensitivity of the subject site for the proposal is assessed to be moderate on the scale of negligible, low, low-moderate, moderate, moderate-high and high. This is for the following reasons:

i. It is located in the vicinity of a major road. The upper parts of the towers as shown in various viewpoints are visible predominantly from moving viewing locations. This is considered to result in low visual sensitivity for road users.

ii. The existing context of the subject site is part commercial, part retail and part residential. This context is also considered to be of existing low sensitivity.

iii. The public domain visual catchment of the proposal is potentially large but the view blocking effects and potential impacts on access to scenic features within the catchment in our opinion are limited.

iv. The proximity of residential development provides an up-weighting in sensitivity but due to the alignment of roads, settlement pattern and orientation of blocks and undulating landform we consider the weighting of proximity can to be partly negated. In addition the podium street wall height and articulation and generous amount of open space included at podium level also serve as a down weight.

v. There are no significant scenic or natural features in the vicinity of the subject site which could be negatively affected by the proposal. The proposal responds positively to the low-moderate scenic quality features of the existing environment.

vi. The scenic quality of the context of the subject site is rated as low to moderate, leading to lower expectations of viewers. The viewer sensitivity is overall considered to also be moderate.

vii. The proposal will be seen in the context of other mixed use residential developments such as those located along Victoria Road to the north.

6.3 Physical absorption capacity weighting

Physical Absorption Capacity (PAC) means the extent to which the existing visual environment can reduce or eliminate the perception of the visibility of the proposal.

PAC includes the ability of existing and future elements of the landscape to physically hide, screen or disguise the proposal. It also includes the extent to which the colours, material and finishes of buildings allows them to blend with or reduce contrast with others of the same or closely similar kinds to the extent that they cannot be easily distinguished as new features of the environment. High physical absorption capacity means low visual impact.

We note the construction of buildings along the west side of Victoria Road in Meriton Road and proposed construction adjacent to the Ross Street carpark which will include contemporary built forms and massing which once constructed will contribute to a change in the future visual character of the area including the site. This in turn increases the PAC of the site within its wider visual context and decreases visual impacts.

The building forms, scale, heights, articulation and modulation proposed are in keeping with the existing development located along Victoria Road and the desired future character of the locality. Therefore in our opinion the surrounding context provides moderate physical absorption capacity for the proposal on the subject site.

Details, materials and colours will be subject to fine grain design treatment at the respective DA stages and are not considered in detail in this report.

6.4 Application of the weighting factors on impact significance

1 Physical absorption capacity

PAC was rated overall as Moderate, although increasing with the construction of other mixed use development in the vicinity. It is considered that this should result in a neutral effect on the significance of impacts compared to the level of effects.

2 Compatibility

Compatibility with the site's visual resources and the wider setting was rated as moderate, to high leading to a down-weight on the significance of impacts compared to the level of visual effects.

3 Sensitivity

Sensitivity was judged overall to be moderate leading to a neutral effect on the significance of impacts compared to the level of visual effect.

6.5 Overall visual impacts

The overall level of visual effects was determined to be low. Two of the weighting factors were considered to be down-weights and the other neutral, in determining overall significance of impacts compared to the level of effects. When the weighting factors are applied, the overall impact significance of the proposal was determined to be low, ie. the same as the level of visual effects. There would be substantial visual change to the environment, but no unacceptable impacts.

6.6 Address to relevant Planning Instruments

RLA have not addressed specific planning issues in this assessment given that the proposal is the subject of a Planning Proposal. We have left it to others who specialise in this field to make further comment.

6.7 Views to and from Heritage items

Although a number of small and isolated heritage items listed in the HHLEP are located in the vicinity of the development, in our opinion no significant views to and from such items will be diminished or blocked by it.

7.0 Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, we conclude that with regard to the potential visual impacts, the proposal is acceptable and does not result in any significant negative visual effects or impacts on its visual catchment. The proposal will cause a substantial and positive change to the existing character of the site and the surroundings. It will be compatible with the existing and emerging character of the locality and its surroundings which are currently undergoing transformation to higher density and taller built forms. In our opinion such a development on this visually and physically prominent site may be perceived as being a positive 'place marker'.

The preferred option is responsive to the visual opportunities and constraints of the subject site and its surroundings. Its streetscape interfaces along Cowell and Flagstaff Street respond appropriately to adjacent existing character and land use.

The development proposed is compatible with the unique combination of wide setbacks from existing residential areas, existing infrastructure and the emerging mixed residential areas to its immediate north and the potential to create an identifiable, discrete and high quality urban environment.

The layout of the development is such that the massing is concentrated along the western side of the podium and built form is set back from more sensitive boundaries including from residential development located along Massey, Flagstaff and Cowell Streets, which helps to mitigate potential view and amenity impacts.

The taller buildings will not be prominent or overbearing in views from Victoria Road due to the alignment of the road and the future street wall height of development along its western side.

The subject site and the context have high potential for the quantum of built form and a favourable physical absorption capacity for the proposal. The proposal is not anticipated to significantly affect views to any significant scenic features from within the visual catchment.

The proposal increases the visual and pedestrian permeability into and out of the site by maintaining the existing streets and view corridors and proposing new vehicular extensions and pedestrian linkages.

The amended lower height preferred option is supportable in visual terms.

Dr Richard Lamb
Richard Lamb & Associates

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Plate 1: Location 1: View north from Victoria Road, south of Cowell Street

Plate 2: Montage view from Location 1

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 1: West side of Victoria Road, south of the Cowell Street intersection

The upper parts of the western and southern elevation of buildings C and B are visible in this view. The tops of both tower forms appear above the existing development along the eastern side of Victoria Road. There is a substantial horizontal spatial setback from the façade of this existing development to the proposed podium (unseen) and a further setback to the staggered heights of Building B and C's façades. The height of Building B is only partly in view at present but will be potentially obscured by future complying development.

The development overall introduces new built form into the composition of the view where the podium appears to create a new horizon above the existing street wall height. The new built components do not create any view loss of blocking effects to any scenic or significant views in this vicinity. For road users from moving viewing locations the axial view along Victoria Road created by existing development and nil setbacks will largely remain the same.

Plate 3: Location 2: View north east across Victoria Road from Trim Place

Plate 4: Wire frame montage from Location 2

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 2: Victoria Road at Trim Place, opposite the site

The upper part of the western elevation of Buildings A1 and B are visible in this view. The tower forms protrude only marginally above the potential complying envelope in relation to roadside development along Victoria Road, and are back from the street wall, so that in either scenario the existing roadside development with its variety of building style and facades will remain visually independent. Neither tower component creates any view loss of blocking effects to any scenic or significant views in this vicinity. In our opinion the proposed development is not dissimilar to that being constructed elsewhere in Sydney where urban centre renewal includes similar height tower forms. In our opinion the proposed development can contribute positively to the future visual context and character of Gladesville.

Plate 5: Location 3: View south along Victoria Road south of Linsley Street

Plate 6: Wire frame montage from Location 3

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 3: West side of Victoria Road north of the site

This view includes the north and west elevations of Buildings A1 and B which introduce new mass and form into the context of the view. The upper part of the long low podium form will provide a narrow horizontal element in the existing view visible just above existing street wall height built form. There is a wide horizontal separation between the tower forms and the eclectic lower scale built form along Victoria Road allowing it to remain visually independent. We note that all views to the podium will be blocked by potential complying envelope development which may occur along Victoria Road.

Neither tower nor podium components create any view loss or blocking effects to any scenic or significant views in this vicinity and in our opinion the proposed development is compatible with the existing context. The tower forms are not dissimilar to those being constructed elsewhere in similar visual contexts across Sydney and will contribute positively to the emerging character of Gladesville.

Plate 7: Location 4: view east from the corner of Doody Place and Meriton Road

Plate 8: Wire frame montage from Location 4

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 4: Meriton Road opposite Doody Place

The western and southern facades of buildings C and B are partly visible through existing vegetation. This view is likely to be further blocked by intervening development under construction at the north east end of Meriton Road. The most obvious change is the introduction of the slim tower element of Building B which appears to be isolated in space, relative to the much lower building C which merges into to the existing visual context. The tower form does not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion is compatible with the kind of contemporary mixed use development being constructed elsewhere along Victoria Road and will contribute positively to the existing and desired future visual context

Plate 9: location 5:View east from the intersection of Tennyson Road and Morrison Road

Plate 10: Wire frame montage from Location 5

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 5: Intersection of Tennyson and Morrison Roads view south east

This is a distance view toward part of the Victoria Road ridgeline which includes several examples of commercial development along it. A small part of building C and the tower forms of building A1 and B are the most visible in the background of the view. The precinct will introduce new built form in the composition of the view which includes other multi storey commercial buildings to the north and the RSL building immediately west (or to the right in this view), present in the immediate Gladesville shopping area. Buildings along the Victoria Road ridgeline in this vicinity including the proposed development and others shown in green, contribute to the existing horizon. The proposed development will provide a new focal point within the existing commercial-retail hub and within a wider horizontal view.

Although the horizontal separation between towers is not evident in this view, the vertical separation between the central, slim tower form of building B and buildings A1 and C helps to reduce the overall bulk and scale of the development. The tall slim tower element which appears to be isolated in space, relative to the much lower building C which merges into to the existing visual context. The tower form does not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion is compatible with the kind of contemporary mixed use development being constructed elsewhere along Victoria Road.

Plate 11: Location 6: view south east from Morrison Road

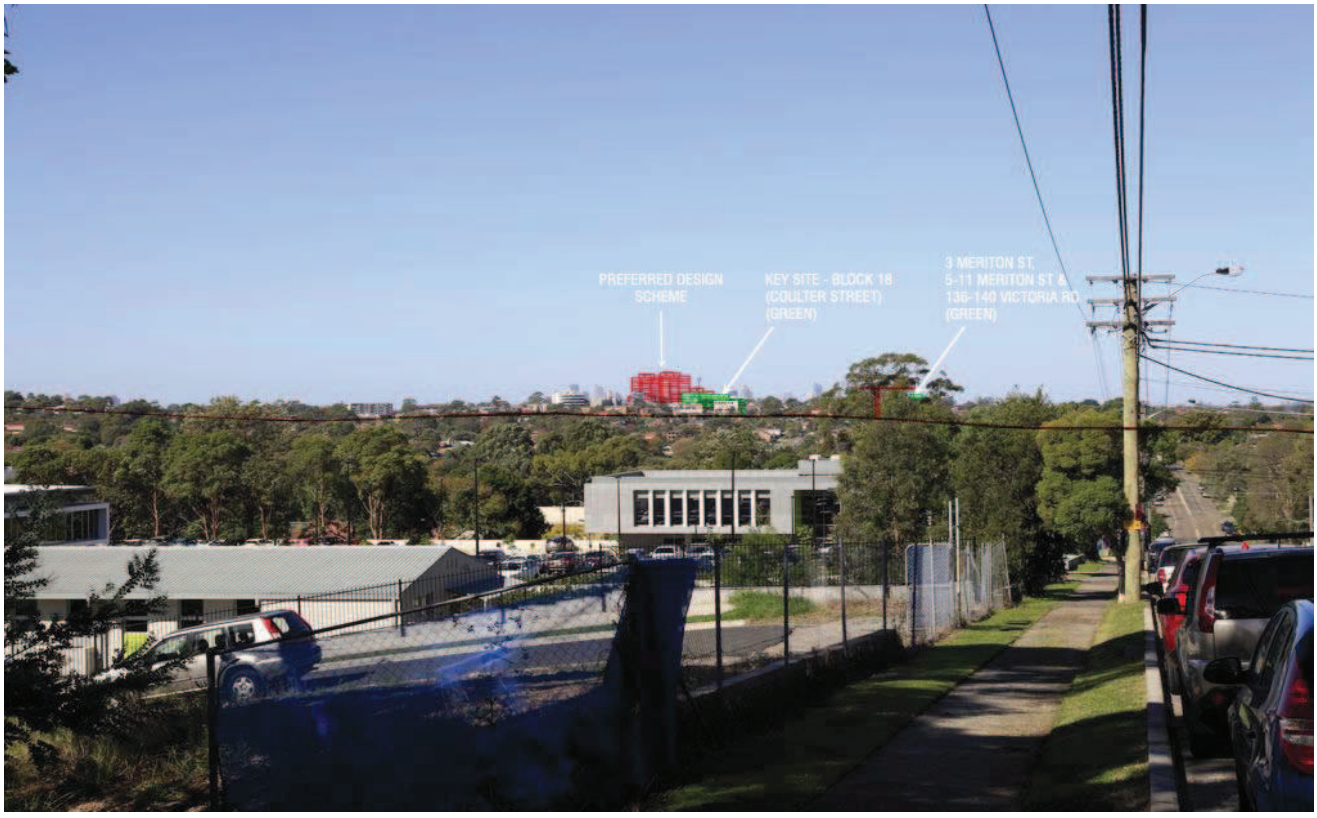

Plate 12: Wire frame montage from Location 6

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 6: Morrison Road view south

This is a distance view to the subject site from a higher viewing location relative to the Victoria Road ridge line. Parts of the podium and all tower forms are visible in the mid-ground of the view as one combined group. The proposed development will provide a new focal point within the composition which includes the existing commercial-retail hub within a much wider horizontal view. The wider visual context includes a visual horizon in the background created by landform of a similar scale to the mid-ground but which includes the eastern suburbs and Sydney City CBD skyline. Although elements of the CBD skyline are well known and recognisable, this view does not include any iconic items or significant scenic views which should be protected such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Opera House or Sydney Harbour.

The potential view blocking effects to part of the CBD skyline are limited to a small part of the overall view which remains available and unaffected from the public domain. If the viewer moves south or north of this location or indeed elsewhere within the visual catchment the view will be revealed and in our opinion the effects and potential impacts will be minor when considered as part of a wider visual context. Although the horizontal separation between towers in not evident in this view, the vertical separation between the central, tallest tower form of building B and building C helps to reduce the overall bulk and scale of the development.

The tower forms provide new vertical elements in the view which as a group are isolated in open space surrounded by sky. In our opinion the vertical visual separation from Building B to Building C prevents the collective form and scale from dominating the existing visual context in this view.

The overall mass of the development does not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion is not dissimilar to other contemporary mixed use development being constructed elsewhere along Victoria Road within similar existing visual contexts and will contribute positively to the existing and desired future visual context.

Plate 13: Location 7: View east from the from the south west corner at the intersection of Western Crescent and Ross Street

Plate 14: Wire frame montage from Location 7

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 7: Intersection of Western Crescent and Ross Street

This view from ground level west of the subject site is to the western elevation of Building C. Views to the podium and other parts of the development are blocked by existing vegetation located in the foreground and partially filtered by the same in respect of buildings B and C. The most obvious change is the introduction of the slim central tower element which appears to be isolated in space, relative to the lower building C. The tower form does not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion includes contemporary forms of a kind being constructed elsewhere within similar existing visual contexts.

Plate 15: Location 8: View south from the north east corner of Westminster and Victoria Roads

Plate 16: Wire frame montage from Location 8

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 8: South east intersection of Westminster Road and Victoria Road, view south

This view from ground level north of the subject site is to the northern elevation of building A1 which screens most of building B. The podium is not visible in this view. Views to both components are heavily filtered by existing vegetation and development located in the foreground along the eastern side of Victoria Road. The composition of the view is predominantly characterised by the road corridor, and the almost continuous commercial and retail development along it. Only a small upper part of the tower form of Building B is visible and introduces a new slim vertical element into this view composition and appears to be isolated in space. It will not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion is compatible with the existing visual context in this view.

Plate 17: Location 9: View west from Pittwater Road east of its intersection with Ryde Road

Plate 18: Wire frame montage from Location 9

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 9: Pittwater Road east of Ryde Road intersection, view south west

Pittwater Road provides an axial view to the development site whereby part of the low forms of the podium and Building A and tower forms of Buildings A1 and B are visible. Views to all building components are partially filtered by existing vegetation and development located in the foreground along the road. From this vicinity the horizontal separation between towers A1 and B is evident and in this regard the development to include a number of separate components.

The perceived bulk and scale of the overall development is mitigated by the vertical stepped separation and will be further improved with more fine grained design resolution later in the development process. This is not a critical view but rather an incidental neighbourhood view which will generally be seen from moving viewing situations, to an area which is characterised by urban renewal and redevelopment within a commercial-retail context. The proposed development will not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion is not dissimilar to the kind of view experienced in many locations within or near to areas with a similar existing and visual contexts. In our opinion the proposed development will contribute positively in form as a ‘place marker’ for the emerging visual context.

Plate 19: Location 10: View west from the intersection of Manning Road and Gladesville Road

Plate 20: Wire frame montage from Location 10

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 10: South side of Manning Road intersection view north

This is a distance view from the east where each of the new built forms apart from the podium will form part of the composition of the background view. The eastern elevations of each tower form are visible above the dense treeline and will contribute to the existing horizon in the view. The proposed development will provide a new focal point but one which is characterised by vertical and horizontal spatial separation of the tower forms.

The horizontal separation between the tower forms is evident in this view and the vertical separation between the central tower form of Building B and C helps to reduce the overall bulk and scale of the development. The built forms do not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion are of a kind being constructed within similar existing visual contexts in many parts of Sydney.

Plate 21: Location 11: View north from the south west corner at the intersection of Punt Road and Victoria Road, approximately 400m south of the site

Plate 22: Wire frame montage from Location 11

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 11: South west corner of Punt Road and Victoria Rd

This is a representative view from Victoria Road experienced by northbound road users. In this vicinity only one storey of building B appears to be visible due to the blocking effects of intervening development located along the east side of Victoria Road in the foreground.

The composition of the view is predominantly characterised by the road corridor, and the intermittent mixed use commercial and retail development along it. The development will not make any significant contribution to the composition of views from this vicinity and in our opinion the forms, height and scale of the building even if visible, would not be out of place in this visual context. Whilst the tower form of building B is a new vertical element in the composition of this view it will not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views. In our opinion this appearance is compatible within the existing and emerging visual context.

Plate 23: Location 12: view north from the west side of Victoria Road approximately 800m south of the site.

Plate 24: Wireframe montage from Location 12

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 12: West side of Victoria Road

This is a representative view from Victoria Road similar to that experienced by northbound road users. In this vicinity a heavily filtered view to the top of Building B may be potentially available subject to the location of the viewer and intervening roadside vegetation. All remaining components of the development are blocked from view. The development creates minor visual effects which will not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views. In our opinion this type of form is typical of the kind of contemporary mixed use development being constructed in urban centres in Sydney and is compatible within similar visual contexts.

Plate 25: Location 13: view north from Cabarita Point

Plate 26: Wire frame montage from Location 13

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 13: Carbarita Point, view north east

This is a distance view from the south west where each of the new built elements will form part of the composition in the background of the view. The south and west elevations of each tower forms are visible above suburban development and vegetation present. These will contribute to and may provide a new focal point within the existing horizon, but one which is characterised by vertical and horizontal spatial separation. The gradation in height helps to reduce the overall perceived bulk and scale of the development and in our opinion its mass and scale sits comfortably within the existing visual context and in relation to other proposed developments shown in green.

The built forms do not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant views and in our opinion are not dissimilar to the kind of contemporary development being constructed within similar existing and emerging visual contexts along other parts of the Victoria Road ridgeline corridor.

Plate 27 Location 14: View north from Abbotsford Point Ferry Wharf

Plate 28 Wire frame montage from Location 14

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 14 from Abbortsford Point ferry wharf view north

This is a distance view from the south where no parts of the preferred development are visible. Therefore there will be no change in the composition of views from this vicinity.

Plate 29: Location 15: view west from the north east end of Cowell Street

Plate 30: Wire frame montage from Location 15

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 15 from the north east end of Cowell Street

This is a close viewing location from the east where each of the new built forms contribute to the composition of the mid-ground view. Part of the eastern elevation of each tower form is visible but partially filtered from view by street tree canopy vegetation which exists along Cowell Street.

The proposed development and particularly Building B will provide a new focal point but one which is characterised by vertical and horizontal spatial separation of the tower forms. The wide horizontal separation between Buildings A1 and B is evident and allows sky open space to flow between them above the podium. The partial screening of tower forms will depend on the location of the viewer as they move along Cowell Street.

The built forms do not create blocking effects to any scenic or significant features of recognised views, but provide a contemporary development which is compatible with the built form of that being constructed within similar existing and emerging visual contexts along other regionally significant roads in the Sydney region.

Plate 31: Location 16: view east from the south west corner of Linsley Street and Victoria Road, opposite Massey Street.

Plate 32: Location 17: view east from the Coulter Street on the western side of Victoria Road

Plate 33: Location 18: view south from the north west corner of Jordan Street and Victoria Road

Plate 34: Location 19 view south from northern side of Massey Street opposite the end of Flagstaff Street.

Plate 35: Wire frame photo montage from Location 19

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage location 19: North side of Massey Street opposite Flagstaff Street

This is a relatively close viewing location from the north east at a similar elevation to the podium level. The podium and tower forms of building A, A1 and B provide new built forms in the composition of the mid-ground view. The tower forms of A1 and B introduce slim forms above the podium. Although the horizontal spatial separation between tower forms A1 and B is not open in this view, the building forms and mass are differentiated by their relative angles and orientation. This as well as the effects of more fine grain detailing and articulation yet to be designed, will help to reduce the visual effects of the building mass and accentuate the physical differences between forms. The tallest forms are located centrally within the development and are separated to the north and south by both vertical and horizontal separation between the lower forms and smaller masses of building A and D.

In this view the presence of the landscaped public space located at podium level adjacent to Flagstaff will provide visual permeability into the site, and help soften and filter views to the new built form at a pedestrian level.

Built forms in this view will block views to a small area of sky and not to any scenic or significant views. This scale and design of the street wall interface and podium environment will add vibrancy, interest and a variety of pedestrian scale forms into the composition of the view and to the existing visual context generally. In our opinion this kind of visual change is typical of the kind which would occur as a result of any similar scale development and in this regard is acceptable.

Plate 40: Location 19 wire frame photo montage showing a complying development envelope

Plate 36: Location 20: View north east from the Mortlake Car Ferry approach

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Location 19: Complying development envelope, same location

Forms in the complying envelope are massed further to the east and would be aligned more closely to the street wall and podium. This oversized vertical scale may dominate or over-power the existing and proposed pedestrian environment and lower surrounding built form along Flagstaff Street.

The built form in the complying envelope overall is lower and more squat than in the preferred option. The forms are more homogenous in shape and give the appearance of a conjoined long low mass. The lack of vertical and horizontal separation between the main forms in our opinion exaggerates the horizontal scale and mass of a development complying with the controls. The lower form and massing in this option does not offer any additional benefits in terms of scenic or important views being revealed or in reducing the potential for view blocking. Overall we do not favour the homogeneity of the form and scale.

Plate 37: Location 21 View north from the intersection of Pearson Street and Victoria Road

Plate 38: Location 22 view west from the south east corner of Flagstaff Street and Cowell Street.

Plate 39: Wire frame montage from Location 22

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 22: South east corner of Flagstaff Street and Cowell Street

This is a close viewing location from a low elevation relative to the podium and tower forms. The uniform street wall height along the Cowell and Flagstaff Street boundary of the site will form a new long low component in the view. The street wall proposed includes a variety of uses which are visually or physically permeable such as active or glass façades at the retail level and a variety of setbacks and built forms, on-grade pedestrian access, retail uses and open spaces above this at podium level. Further to this, wide horizontal setbacks to building D and C above and additional landscaped public open spaces separate the vertical forms at podium level. In addition the separation between tower forms B and C is filled with open space which provides a break in the continuous building from this perspective.

Each of these components help to modulate and articulate the scale and bulk of the new built forms in this view and provide an appropriate transition in scale in relation to the lower built forms located along Flagstaff and Cowell Streets.

As will occur with any feasible development of the site, the proximity of built forms in this view creates blocking effects in relation to areas of open sky, but not to any scenic or significant views. This new pedestrian, street wall interface and podium environment will add vibrancy, interest and a variety of pedestrian scale forms into the composition of the view and to the existing visual context generally. In our opinion this kind of visual change is typical of the kind which would occur as a result of any similar scale development and in this regard is acceptable.

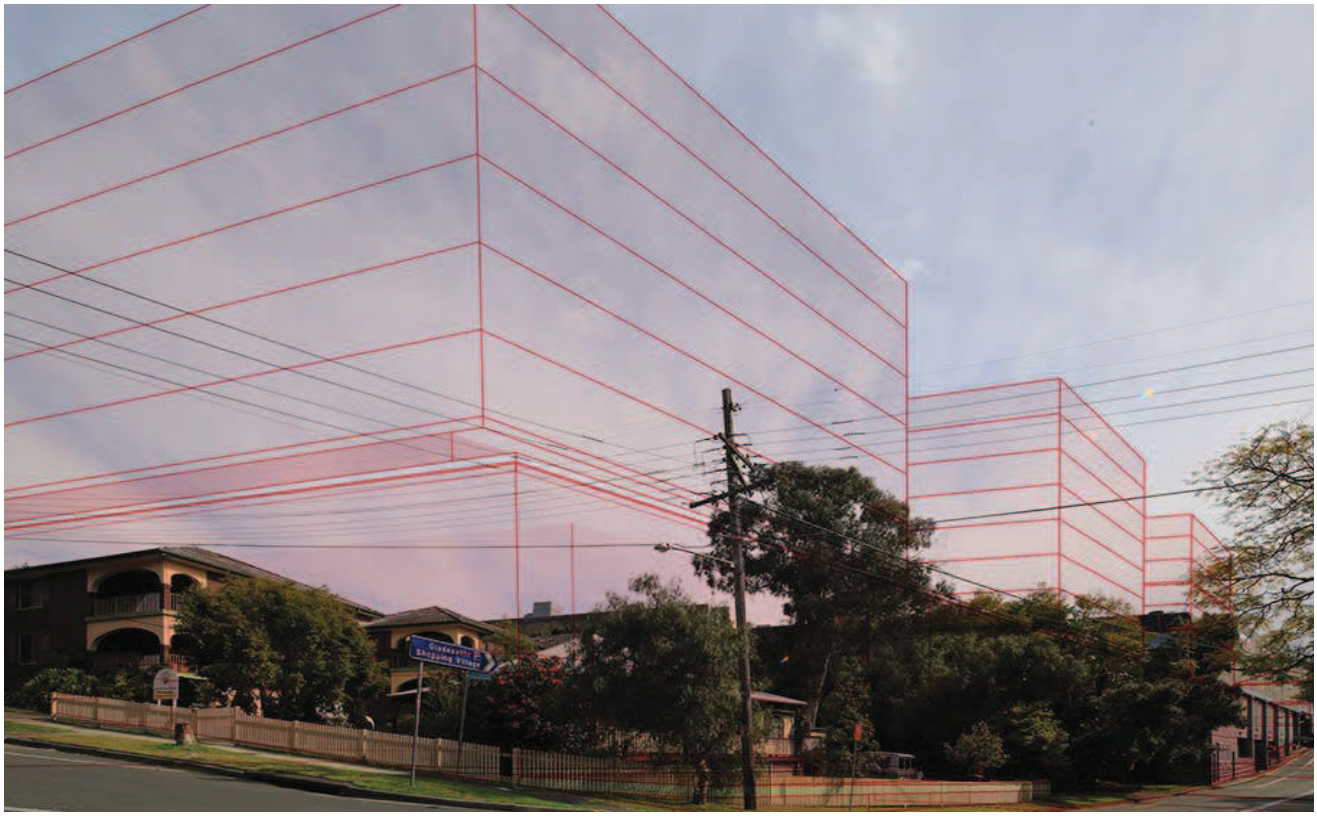

Plate 41: Location 22 view of wire frame photo montage showing a complying development

Assessment of Views as shown in Photomontages

Montage Location 22: Complying development envelope, same location

Forms in the complying development envelope would be massed further to the south and east and are aligned closely to the corner of Flagstaff and Cowell Street with a reduced setback above street wall height compared to the preferred option. The tower forms are squat and low and are regularly spaced along the Flagstaff Street boundary. No horizontal separation between the forms would be evident in this scenario. Their relatively uniform height close to the eastern site boundary helps to accentuate their vertical scale close to the street which visually over-powers the existing pedestrian environment and the lower surrounding built form along Flagstaff Street.

The complying forms overall are lower and more squat than in the preferred option. The lack of vertical and horizontal separation between forms, in our opinion exaggerates the scale and overall mass of the proposed development. The uniformity of the forms will provide a dominant feature in the composition of this view. The lower heights in the complying envelope, compared to the preferred option, do not offer any benefits in terms of scenic or significant views being revealed or in reducing any potential view blocking. Overall in visual terms we strongly favour the preferred option.

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Summary Curriculum Vitae: Dr Richard Lamb

Summary

- Professional consultant specialising in visual and herittage impacts assessment and the principal of Richard Lamb and Associates (RLA)
- Senior lecturer in Architecture and Heritage Conservation in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydne, 1980-2007
- Director of Master of Heritage Conservation Program, University of Sydney, 1998-2004.
- 30 years experinence in teaching and research in environmental impact, heritage and visual impact assessment.
- Teaching and research expertise in interpretation of heritage items and places, cultural transformations of environments, conservation methods and practices.
- Teaching and research experience in visual perception and cognition, aesthetic assessment and landscape assessment,.
- Supervision of Master and PhD students postgraduate students in heritage conservation and environment/behaviour studies..
- Experience in academic empirical research into human aspects of the built environment, in particular aspects of aesthetic assessment, visual perception, landscape preference and environmental psychology.
- Richard Lamb and Associates provides:
    - professional services, expert advice and landscape and aesthetic assessments in many different contexts
    - Strategic planning studies to protect and enhance scenic quality and landscape heritage values
    - Scenic and aesthetic assessments in all contexts, from rural to urban, provide advice on view loss, view sharing and landscape heritage studies.
- Dr Lamb provides:
    - Expert advice, testimony and evidence to the Land and Environment Court of NSW and Planning and Environment Court of Queensland in various classes of litigation.
    - Specialisation in mattes of heritage landscapes, visual impacts, and urban design
    - Appearances in over 150 cases and submissions to several Commissions of Inquiry and the principal consultant for over 400 consultancies.
- Qualifications
    - Bachelor of Science - First Class Honours, University of New England
    - Doctor of Philosophy, University of New England in 1975
    - Accredited Administrator and Assessor, Myers Briggs Psychological Type Indicator
- International Journals for which Publications are Refereed
    - Landscape & Urban Planning
    - Journal of Architectural & Planning Research
    - Architectural Science Review
    - People and Physical Environment Research
    - Journal of Environmental Psychology
    - Australasian Journal of Environmental Management
    - Ecological Management & Restoration
    - Urban Design Review International