

Planning Proposal

Site B, Castle Hill

Submitted to Hills Shire Council
on behalf of QIC



Prepared by Ethos Urban, a Colliers Company.

1 July 2025 | 2190994



'Gura Bulga'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.



'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.



'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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B. Urban Design Report and Masterplan	<i>Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day</i>
C. Architectural Statement	<i>Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day</i>
D. Landscape Masterplan	<i>Aspect Studios</i>
E. Pre-lodgement Consultation	<i>Ethos Urban</i>
F. Traffic Impact Assessment	<i>Stantec</i>
G. Geotechnical Review	<i>Douglas Partners</i>
H. ESD Report	<i>Cundall Johnston & Partners</i>
I. Economic Benefit Statement	<i>Ethos Urban</i>
J. Engagement Strategy	<i>Ethos Urban</i>
K. Draft Development Control Plan	<i>Ethos Urban</i>
L. Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Advice on Contaminated Land Management	<i>Douglas Partners</i>
M. Woods Baggot Peer Review	<i>Woods Baggot</i>
N. Ongoing Traffic Correspondence Documentation	<i>TfNSW, Eukai</i>
O. Maximum Building Envelope Design Response	<i>Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day</i>

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared by Ethos Urban on behalf of Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) (the Proponent) in support of a Planning Proposal to amend The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2019 (LEP). The Proposal intends to facilitate the future development of a Site generally bounded by Showground Road, Kentwell Avenue, Castle Street and Pennant Street, Castle Hill (the Site – see **Figure 1** below).



Figure 1 Site Aerial

Source: Nearmap, edits by Ethos Urban

The Site is located in a rapidly changing urban environment. The Greater Sydney Region Plan (2018) identifies Castle Hill as a 'Strategic Centre'. These centres provide a mix of employment, services and housing and are crucial for achieving the 30-minute vision for Sydney.

The Sydney Metro Northwest commenced operations on 26 May 2019, providing an unprecedented level of public transport capacity for The Hills region with 'turn up and go' frequency, which makes timetables redundant. The network now extends to North Sydney, the Sydney CBD and Sydenham, with connection through to Bankstown commencing in 2026 as part of the Sydney Metro South West project.

In this context, the Site must play an important role in contributing to a vibrant, high-quality Strategic Centre that meets the community's needs and delivers a high standard of architectural design.

This Planning Proposal seeks to facilitate:

- The transformation of the Site into a genuine mixed-use centre, integrated with the broader Strategic Centre and Castle Towers Shopping Centre.
- An increase in the Site applicable maximum building height and floor space ratio development standards.
- The future development of a range of land uses (already permitted), including residential accommodation, retail spaces and commercial offices.
- The Site's evolution into a contemporary and vibrant mixed-use precinct, making a high-quality contribution to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre by locating a range of land uses in immediate proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station.

A site-specific amendment to The Hills Development Control Plan 2012 has been prepared to provide more detailed planning controls for the site in respect of new buildings, streets/public domain, open space and infrastructure.

Strategic Justification

Castle Hill is designated as a Strategic Centre under the Greater Sydney Region Plan 2018 (Region Plan) and the Central City District Plan (District Plan). It contains the Castle Towers Shopping Centre, one of the most significant retail, entertainment and leisure precincts within the Central City.

In 2013, the NSW Government released the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy, which:

- Seeks to ensure growth in housing and employment is commensurate with the improved transport infrastructure.
- Identified the Site as a short-term redevelopment opportunity due to its proximity to the Metro Station and absence of significant constraints such as threatened species, existing open space, heritage, steep topography or special uses.

The commencement of Sydney Metro Northwest operations in May 2019 has significantly improved the Site's access to public transport service and connectivity.

In 2019, the Hills Shire Council released their Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). The LSPS represents The Hills Shire Council's principal strategic planning document. It builds upon and supersedes previous strategic work undertaken along the North West Metro corridor, including the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy (released in 2013) and the Hills Corridor Strategy (released in 2015). The LSPS:

- Envisions Castle Hill as a *"vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station"*.
- Builds upon Council's Hills Corridor Strategy and articulates their response to land development near Metro Stations.
- Notes that future growth in the centre should support seven identified "Planning Priorities" relating to the economy, shaping growth, infrastructure, and proactive leadership.
- Includes a Castle Hill structure plan that envisions the Site's redevelopment as a mixed-use precinct that provides housing, offices, restaurants, and retail uses. The structure plan and Council's Productivity and Centres Strategy identify a 'commercial core' adjacent to the Site, which is the primary location for employment floorspace in Castle Hill and functions to *"manage the impact residential developments crowding out commercial activity"*. Therefore, the Site is appropriately located outside the commercial core yet still within walking distance of the Castle Hill Metro Station to provide increased housing densities as per the Council's vision. This assists to ensure land within the commercial core is protected for high intensity employment uses, such as office or commercial development.

The Site is one of the largest and most centrally located single-ownership landholdings in the centre, representing a significant opportunity to deliver a vibrant mixed-use precinct in line with the Council's vision.

The rezoning of the Castle Hill North Precinct to accommodate an additional 3,300 dwellings immediately north of the Site increases the need for additional public open space in Castle Hill, this is acknowledged in the Castle Hill North Precinct Plan. The Planning Proposal envisions outcomes that are strategically aligned with the Castle Hill North Precinct:

- A precinct that will be characterised by a predominance of family households, requiring access to new open space and recreation facilities.
- Features a new 3,500sqm high-amenity public park that will serve the needs of these residents as well as future residents at the Site.
- Proposes comparable building heights along Castle Street that taper up in height toward the Pennant Street and Showground Road intersection.

The Site's current planning controls do not reflect the potential future contribution of a large strategically located site under consolidated land ownership, nor Castle Hill's strategic planning context described above. The following table illustrates the maximum building heights and floor space ratios in comparable Strategic Centres, highlighting the substantially lower controls that currently apply to the Site. There is a clear need to amend the Site's planning controls in line with comparable centres to allow Castle Hill to reflect its Strategic Centre service and function attributes.

Table 1 Comparison of Planning Controls across Strategic Centres

Centre Name	Maximum FSR	Maximum Height
The Site – existing controls	1.9:1	7m, 9m, 19m and 28m
The Site – proposed controls	Maximum GFA of 171,585sqm (equivalent FSR of 4.1:1 across the Site)	Various height ranging from 20m to 88m
Macquarie Park	6:1	120 metres
Chatswood	8:1	90m
Hornsby	5:1	77.5 metres
Blacktown	-	80m
St Leonards	25.4:1	180m
Norwest	6.5:1	-
Hills Showground	5:1	68m
Bella Vista	4:1	68m

In summary, the Planning Proposal will significantly contribute to the future growth and consolidation of Castle Hill as a regionally significant Strategic Centre as contemplated by the:

- Greater Sydney Region Plan.
- Central City District Plan.
- Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).
- Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan (Precinct Plan)

Accordingly, in seeking Council's support for the Planning Proposal, attention is further drawn to its consistency with the:

- Relevant Division 9.1 Ministerial Directions
- Region Plan
- District Plan
- North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy
- Hills LSPS

Key Objectives

The Planning Proposal's primary objective is to facilitate the Site's development into a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood that aligns with Council's vision for Castle Hill as a *“vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station”* (p. 34 of the Hills LSPS). The Planning Proposal's supporting objectives are to:

- Provide for the delivery of a high-quality mixed-use precinct on a consolidated landholding that is liveable, walkable, accessible, within proximity of infrastructure and open space and contains a diversity of apartment options.
- Contribute to the amenity and vibrancy of Castle Hill by delivering high-quality public open space integrated with nearby retail uses and the Castle Hill library.
- Create an activated and productive social destination, providing a range of active and employment generated uses.
- Apply a maximum building height limit and GFA appropriate to Castle Hill's role and function as a Strategic Centre.
- Demonstrate the strategic and site-specific planning merit of accommodating a higher density mixed-use development on the Site.
- Integrate ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and design excellence principles into the future precinct design and uses.
- Increase the Site's overall tree canopy cover.

- Manage urban stormwater and improve water quality within and around the Site.
- Assess the relevant environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposal.

Proposed Amendments

The Planning Proposal includes the following proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019:

- Amending The Hills LEP Building Height Map to facilitate increased maximum permissible building heights across the Site up to a maximum of 88 metres (currently 7m to 28m under The Hills LEP 2019).
- Amending The Hills LEP Floor Space Ratio Map to allow a maximum incentive GFA of 171,585sqm across the Site (equivalent to an average FSR of 4.1:1 - currently 1.9:1 under The Hills LEP 2019).
- Amending The Hills LEP Land Zoning Map to rezone the location of the proposed public park as RE1 Public Recreation.

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by Proposed LEP Mapping that reflects the above amendments (**Appendix A**).

The Proposal

The proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019 are supported by masterplan designed by architects Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day (**Appendix B & C**) and landscape architect Aspect Studios (**Appendix D**). The built-form and land use activities reflected in the masterplan demonstrate how a high-quality design outcome can be delivered at the Site under the proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019.

The masterplan envisions a diverse mixed-use precinct organised around an integrated, centrally located park, which will serve as a community-anchoring space, creating a fine-grain and vibrant urban environment. The masterplan includes:

- A centrally located public park, accessible via pedestrian links to Pennant Street, Showground Road and Castle Street. The park will include open lawn space for outdoor events, an extensive active play area, a fitness circuit with exercise stations and a basketball half-court.
- A fine-grain pedestrian plaza lined with café and retail tenancies and integrated with a proposed footbridge bridge over Pennant Street. The plaza will feature outdoor seating and umbrellas, catenary lighting and tree plantings.
- Connection with the footbridge pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street, which will conveniently connect residents to the urban core of Castle Hill and the Metro Station.
- Approximately 1,431 dwellings across three high-density residential developments (Lots B, C and E), three mixed-use developments (Lots A, D and F) and a residential flat building and townhouses fronting Kentwell Ave (Lot G). These dwellings will comprise a range of typologies, including stand-alone townhouses, podium townhouses and 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments.
- Approximately 27,874 sqm of commercial and retail floor space across certain buildings, including a commercial tower on Lot A.
- An internal two-way street that runs between Showground Road, around the proposed public open space and onto Kentwell Avenue.
- Approximately 1,720 car parking spaces, determined as an appropriate parking-rate given the Site's proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Planting of additional trees across the Site to increase the Site's canopy coverage from 20-30% to +40%.
- Stormwater management and water-sensitive urban design infrastructure, including infrastructure to manage overland flows from surrounding landholdings.

The Proponent will, under separate submission, provide an initial public benefit offer (offer) foreshadowing a Planning Agreement with The Hills Shire Council. The offer will constitute the following components:

- Embellishment of a new public park of approximately 3,500 square metres and include a restriction on its title for public access.
- A monetary contribution of \$500,000 to Council for short-term crisis accommodation for women and children.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of active open space.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of library integration.

The park will function as an 'urban public park' typology, contemplating:

- Highly-utilised and embellished spaces with high levels of activation from interfacing retail and businesses and high levels of surveillance from surrounding apartments.
- Diverse spaces that can host an array of recreation and leisure activities and events
- Includes work / live areas with picnic tables and a BBQ area
- A passive lawn space and an extensive play area where outdoor events can be hosted
- An exercise circuit that weaves through the park with fitness stations along the route to promote the health and wellbeing of the community and a half-court basketball court and
- Incorporates play spaces with natural play theming where all age groups are catered for with a variety of age-appropriate equipment.

Environmental Assessment

The Planning Proposal provides an environmental assessment of an indicative proposal in accordance with the amended development standards, providing a summary of the detailed environmental investigations undertaken. It includes:

- Built form, residential amenity, public domain and visual impact
- Traffic and transport assessment
- Contamination and geotechnical analysis
- Local infrastructure and servicing capacity
- Sustainability
- Economic and social impacts

The findings of the environmental assessment concludes that:

- The proposed planning controls are acceptable
- The Site and the proposal capable of delivering housing diversity and supply
- Yields public benefits whilst minimising environmental impacts
- Does not compromise the amenity of the surrounding precinct.

Analysis of Options Considered

In preparing this Planning Proposal, four options were considered to facilitate the intended outcomes as set out in **Section 4.0**, which include:

- Option 1 – Do nothing
- Option 2 – Expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre
- Option 3 – ‘Business as usual’
- Option 4 – Mixed use precinct with a central public park

Option 4 is the preferred option for the redevelopment of the Site given:

- Alignment with Council’s vision for Castle Hill as articulated in The Hills LSPS.
- More alignment with the intended position of Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre, providing a broad range of uses and level of density commensurate with its access to services, transport and other infrastructure.
- Walking distance location to Castle Towers Shopping Centre, Metro Station, community facilities, educational establishments and retail/services - opportunity for a walkable, vibrant and transit-orientated precinct.
- Resolving current deficiency of high-quality public open space servicing existing and future residents west of Castle Hill’s core, including for future residents within the Castle Hill North Precinct.
- Provision of a high-quality urban park with high levels of activation and amenity from surrounding mixed-uses.
- Removal of current factors inhibiting pedestrian and cycling connectivity to / from Castle Hill’s urban core.
- Delivery of a legible, permeable urban structure would address this challenge.

Planning Process and Next Steps

It is requested that Council consider the proposed amendments to The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2019 contained in this Planning Proposal and, should Council form the view that there is strategic merit in proceeding with the recommended amendments:

- Refer the proposal to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Gateway Determination Panel.
- Post Gateway Determination.
- Publicly exhibit the Planning Proposal to obtain community and stakeholder input.
- Concurrently exhibit the Draft Development Control Plan (post further discussion and assessment).

The Planning Proposal and proposed Site-specific DCP Amendment do not permit the carrying out of development. Future planning applications would be required for the detail and assessment of specific proposals to carry out works at the Site.



Planning Proposal Public Benefits



Housing diversity

Delivers a diversity of housing options housing within walking distance of open space, shops, services and public transport to help meet the forecast need of 207,500 new homes in the district by 2036 and realise the broader vision of a 30-minute city. The proposed housing mix and design will improve housing choices for single groups and families.



New public park

Delivers a centrally located public park designed to support urban living and serve as an anchoring community space for existing and future residents. The park will include open lawn space for outdoor events, an extensive active play area, a fitness circuit with exercise stations, a half basketball court and a live-work area.



Close to education/jobs

Located within walking and cycling distance of Castle Hill Primary and High School, the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and Castle Hills Shopping Centre and strip. The Castle Hills Metro Station provides frequent and reliable services to the Norwest Business Park, Macquarie University, Chatswood and the Sydney CBD.



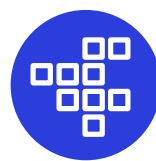
Increased urban tree canopy

By planting additional trees across the Site, the proposal will deliver a significant increase in the Site's urban tree canopy from 20-30% to over 40%. New canopy cover will contribute to urban cooling and climate resilience for future residents.



Transit Orientated Development

Delivers a transit-orientated residential and commercial precinct within walking distance of the Castle Hill Metro Station – part of the city-shaping Sydney Metro network. By doing so, the Planning Proposal will align land use and growth with infrastructure investment to ensure that infrastructure use is optimised.



Public benefits and infrastructure

Delivers public benefit infrastructure that will improve the vibrancy, walkability and function of Castle Hill as Strategic Centre. This includes the Pennant Street pedestrian bridge connection, a fine-grain pedestrian plaza, footpaths, cycleways, street plantings and integration of the sports and recreational facility.

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Ethos Urban on behalf of QIC (the Proponent) in support of a Planning Proposal to amend The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2019 (LEP). The Proposal intends to facilitate the future development of a site generally bounded by Showground Road, Kentwell Avenue, Castle Street and Pennant Street, Castle Hill (the Site – see **Figure 1**).

This Planning Proposal seeks to provide a strategic framework that enables the Castle Hill Strategic Centre to continue to grow and develop through the integration of a new mix-use precinct. Specifically, this Planning Proposal seeks the following proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019:

- Amending The Hills LEP Building Height Map to facilitate increased maximum permissible building heights across the Site up to a maximum of 88 metres (currently proposed as 7m to 28m under the draft Hills LEP 2020).
- Amending the Hills LEP Floor Space Ratio Map to allow a maximum incentive GFA of 171,585sqm across the Site (equivalent to an average FSR of 4.1:1 -currently proposed as 1.9:1 under the draft Hills LEP 2020).
- Amending The Hills LEP Land Zoning Map to rezone the location of the proposed public park as RE1 Public Recreation.

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by Proposed LEP Mapping that reflects the above amendments (**Appendix A**). A Draft Development Control Plan to amend The Hills Development Control Plan 2012 is also included in the proposal to provide more detailed planning controls to support the proposed amendments to the LEP development standards (**Appendix K**).

The Planning Proposal will enable the Site’s development to:

- Accommodate a well-designed, mixed-use precinct contributing positively to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.
- Deliver a public benefit to the community through the provision of an embellished high-quality new public open space, local amenities and well-designed diverse family-friendly housing within walking distance of amenities, the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and the Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Complement the transforming urban environment of Castle Hill, spurred by the Castle Hill Metro Station, the Pennant Street Target Area, and the vision for the Castle Hill North Precinct.

This Planning Proposal describes the Site, outlines the proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019 and provides an environmental, social and economic assessment and strategic justification for the proposed height, floor space and parking controls, building envelope and indicative masterplan.

The report should be read in conjunction with the Architectural Statement and Urban Design Report prepared by Hatch Roberts Day in collaboration with Clarke Hopkins Clarke Architects and ASPECT Studios (**Appendix B & C**) and specialist consultant reports appended to this proposal (refer Table of Contents).

This Planning Proposal has been prepared in accordance with Section 3.33 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure’s (DPHI) ‘*Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline*’ (the LEP Making Guidelines). As shown in **Table 2**, the Planning Proposal addresses the specific matters for a Planning Proposal outlined in the LEP Making Guidelines.

Table 2 LEP Making Guideline Planning Proposal Components

Component	Relevant Report Section
Part 1 - Objectives and intended outcomes	Section 5.0
Part 2 - Explanation of provisions	Section 6.0
Part 3 - Justification of strategic and Site-specific merit	Section 7.0
Part 4 - Maps	Section 9.0
Part 5 - Community Consultation	Section 10.0
Part 6 – Project Timeline	Section 11.0

1.1 Background and Context

1.1.1 The Proponent

QIC is a government-owned investment company established by the Queensland Government in 1991. QIC is a long-term investor in retail and owns and manages 44 flagship real estate assets across Australia and the United States. They are a major investor and possess significant landholdings in Castle Hill, including the Site and the Castle Towers Shopping Centre.

A breakdown of the QIC landholdings in Castle Hill is outlined in **Table 3** and shown in **Figure 2**.

Table 3 QIC Landholdings Sites

Site	Address	Existing development
Site A	6-14 Castle Street, Castle Hill	Existing Castle Towers Shopping Centre comprising three main levels of retail space with over 300 specialty stores and associated parking.
Site B (the Site)	Generally bounded by Showground Road, Kentwell Avenue, Castle Street and Pennant Street, Castle Hill	Vacant land with vegetation and trees. A mix of low-density residential dwellings front Kentwell Avenue.
Site C	3 Les Shore Place, Castle Gill	Large at-grade car park with access from Les Shore Place.



Figure 2 QIC Landholdings in Castle Hill

Source: Nearmap, edits by Ethos Urban

QIC has an investment strategy to re-invent and remix their retail environments to community-centric mixed-use town centres, activate local urban environments and town centres and take action on climate change by building ‘climate-aware’ portfolios. These strategic directions have led QIC to pursue redeveloping their sites to contribute to Castle Hill as a desirable and liveable mixed-use precinct that capitalises on its proximity to high-frequency, public transport.

1.1.2 Proposal Background

QIC acquired the Site initially as part of a strategic vision to expand the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and progressed early works and infrastructure investment towards this vision, including upgrades to intersections along Showground Road.

In early 2021, QIC appointed a project team to develop a new vision for the Site, based on a brief to deliver a sustainable urban precinct that would:

- Realise state and local planning objectives for urban densification along strategic transport corridors.
- Leverage the walkable access to the Castle Hill Metro Station and local amenity.
- Unlock the potential of the Site to support sustainable development and lifestyles.
- Deliver broad reaching and tangible community benefits.

The Planning Proposal is the culmination of the project team's detailed investigation into the Site's opportunities and constraints in line with the above brief.

1.2 Pre-Lodgement Consultation

The Proponent's team attended a pre-lodgement meeting with Council officers on 20 April 2022 to introduce the Proposal and outline key environmental and strategic matters to consider in the Planning Proposal. The Hills Shire Council provided written advice on 16 June 2022. **Appendix E** outlines the matters raised by Council in their written advice and where they are addressed in this Report. Notably, the Planning Proposal responds to the written advice by:

- Demonstrating that the proposed masterplan, including its mix of residential and commercial space, aligns with the Site's strategic context (see **Section 7.0**).
- Designing the mixed-use precinct to minimise overshadowing of public open space or communal open space (see **Section 8.1.3**).
- Providing an analysis demonstrating that the Planning Proposal delivers superior urban design outcomes to the current planning controls (see **Section 4.0**).
- Proposing a centrally located public park to address the need for open space that supports urban living for residents, including residents in the Castle Hill North precinct.

2.0 The Site

2.1 Site Location and Context

The Site is located in Castle Hill within The Hills Shire Local Government Area (LGA). The Hills Shire is located in the north-west region of Sydney, and has a land area of approximately 40,000m², stretching from North Parramatta to the Hawkesbury River. The Greater Cities Commission (GCC) identifies Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre that provides retail and community services to a large population catchment in Greater Sydney's northwest. Castle Hill is the premier centre within The Hills Shire LGA is located approximately 30km northwest of the Sydney Central Business District.

Castle Hill contains retail, commercial, residential and community uses. Its centrepiece, the Castle Towers Shopping Centre (immediately east of the Site), has expanded rapidly in the past two decades to provide a high quantum of retail floor space. Nearby education and community facilities include the Castle Hill Public School (250m to north-east), Castle Hill Library (directly adjacent to the Site), Castle Hill High School (450m to the north-west) and the Castle Hill Medical Centre (300m to the east).

Continued growth is anticipated in Castle Hill, catalysed by the opening of the Castle Hill Metro Station in 2019, which forms part of the North-West Rail Line. The Station, located within 350m of the Site, provides an opportunity for transport orientated development and the creation of a compact, walkable and mixed-use precinct.

Figure 3 below shows the Site's surrounding context, while **Figure 4** shows its regional context.



Figure 3 Site Context

Source: Nearmap, edits by Ethos Urban

2.2 Transport and Accessibility

The Site is well serviced by public transport, with the Metro Station providing frequent, high-speed services to Tallawong and Chatswood (**Figure 4**). When complete, the Metro network will provide high speed 'turn up and go' services to the Sydney CBD and Bankstown (2024-25) and from the CBD to Parramatta (~2030). In addition, the area is well serviced by existing bus routes, with bus services available to Blacktown, Parramatta, Hornsby, Epping, Pennant Hills at bus stops adjacent to the Castle Hill Metro Station. The Site is also strategically

positioned near the Sydney motorway network, with the M2 Motorway located approximately 5km south along Old Northern and Windsor Roads.

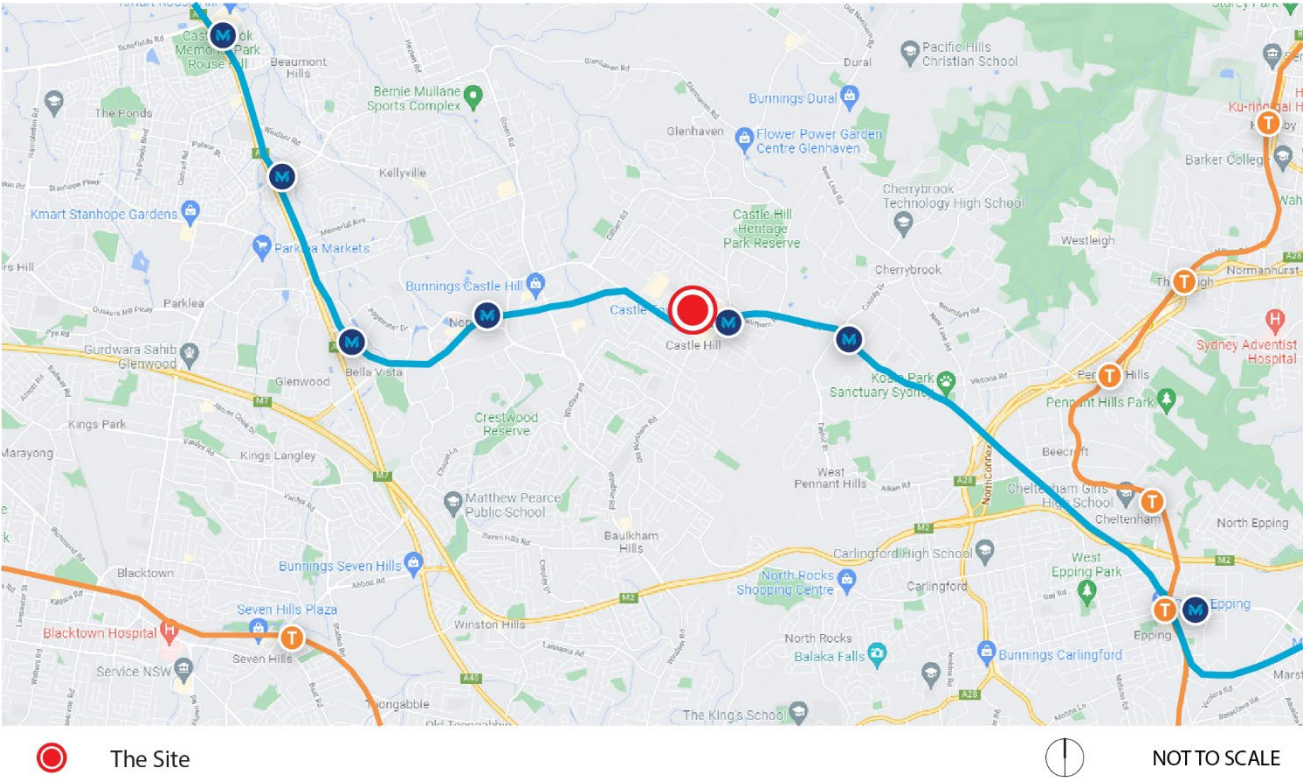


Figure 4 Regional Context
Source: Google Maps, annotated by Ethos Urban

2.3 Site description

The Site is generally bound by Pennant Street and Castle Hill Library/Horizon Apartments to the east, Showground Road to the south, Castle Street to the north and Kentwell Avenue to the west (**Figure 5**). The Site also includes several landholdings along the western side of Kentwell Ave, near the intersection with Showground Road. In total, the Site comprises 38 lots owned by QIC (listed below) and has a total Site area of approximately 4.75ha.

Table 4 Lots and DP

Lot/ Section	DP	Lot/ Section	DP	Lot/ Section	DP
191	869861	3	1073392	1	135596
192	869861	23	28896	2	135596
20	28895	24	28896	3	135596
21	28896	25	28896	4	135596
22	28896	26	28896	5	135596
11/3	2496	27	28896	6	135596
31	515782	28	28896	7	135596
32	515782	8	28135	8	135596
9/3	2496	9	28135	9	135596
8/3	2496	12/3	2496	10	135596
7/3	2496	13/3	2496	111	880469

Lot/ Section	DP	Lot/ Section	DP	Lot/ Section	DP
6/3	2496	1	137044	10	20028
2	1201722	30	28896		



Figure 5 Site Aerial

Source: Nearmap, edits by Ethos Urban

The Site is generally square in shape and is largely undeveloped. A row of existing single-storey houses is located along the Site's Kentwell Street frontage. An existing nine-storey building containing the Castle Hill Library and residential dwellings is located on the same block as the Site on the corner of Castle and Pennant Streets.

2.3.1 Topography

Castle Hill is characterised by its undulating topography. The Hills Corridor Strategy notes that "*higher parts of land [within the Castle Hill] provide an opportunity for distinctive development to capitalise on the views and mark the status of the Precinct as a transit, commercial, and cultural hub in this part of Castle Hill particularly near the future Castle Hill Railway Station.*" The Site's topography steadily increases from a height of approximately 116m AHD at the corner of Kentwell Ave and Castle Street to an approximate height 134m AHD at the corner of Pennant Street and Showground Road. As such, this street corner is an ideal location for a distinctive development.

2.3.2 Site Access

The Planning Proposal envisions connection to a pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street that connects the Site's southern corner with Castle Towers Shopping Centre and Castle Hill Metro Station. This connection has been incorporated into the masterplan presented in **Section 5.0** and will enable future residents to access public transport, shops, restaurants, cafes and services efficiently and safely in the heart of Castle Hill and enhance Castle Hill's reputation as a vibrant Strategic Centre. It also will allow the wider community to conveniently access the site's amenities, including its public open spaces and commercial uses.

2.3.3 Geotechnical & Sydney Metro Tunnel

The twin Sydney Metro tunnels between the Castle Hills and Norwest Metro Stations run below the southern part of the Site at a depth of approximately RL 119.7 to RL 111.17 metres below existing ground level.

2.3.4 Biodiversity

The Site is predominantly cleared; however, there is some remanent vegetation, particularly within the western half of the Site. This vegetation is not listed as of biodiversity significance under The Hills LEP Terrestrial Biodiversity Map. Furthermore, The Hills Shire Council Interactive Map does not identify any threatened or endangered flora or fauna species on the Site.

2.3.5 Hazards

The Site is not located in an area that is identified as bush fire prone land, nor is it near bushfire prone land. It is also not located in a flood prone area.

2.4 Surrounding development

The Site is strategically positioned at the interface between the Castle Towers Shopping Centre, the Castle Hill North Precinct and the surrounding residential neighbourhood. Its surrounding context is undergoing rapid transformation, catalysed by the Castle Hill Metro Station. Castle Hill is transitioning into a *“vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station”*, as envisioned by The Hills LSPS. Detailed strategic planning has been undertaken for the Castle Hill North precinct, immediately north of the Site, to facilitate development uplift in that area. Meanwhile, residential lands to the south and west of the Site are identified for medium to high-density residential development in The Hills LSPS. A description of existing surrounding development is provided below:

North

Low density residential developments and the modern Castle Hill Police Station are located immediately north of the Site across Castle Street. This residential neighbourhood forms part of the Castle Hill North Precinct (see **Figure 6**), which is envisioned for development uplift as an attractive and well-connected neighbourhood with an additional 3,300 dwellings by 2036. High density residential developments are intended along Castle Street and Pennant Street immediately north of the Site. Further north of the Site is a large -at grade car park across Pennant Street with access from Les Shore Place, owned by QIC and is known as Site C. This Site is used for overflow car parking for the shopping centre during busy periods. Castle Hill Public School is located at the

western end of Les Shore Place.

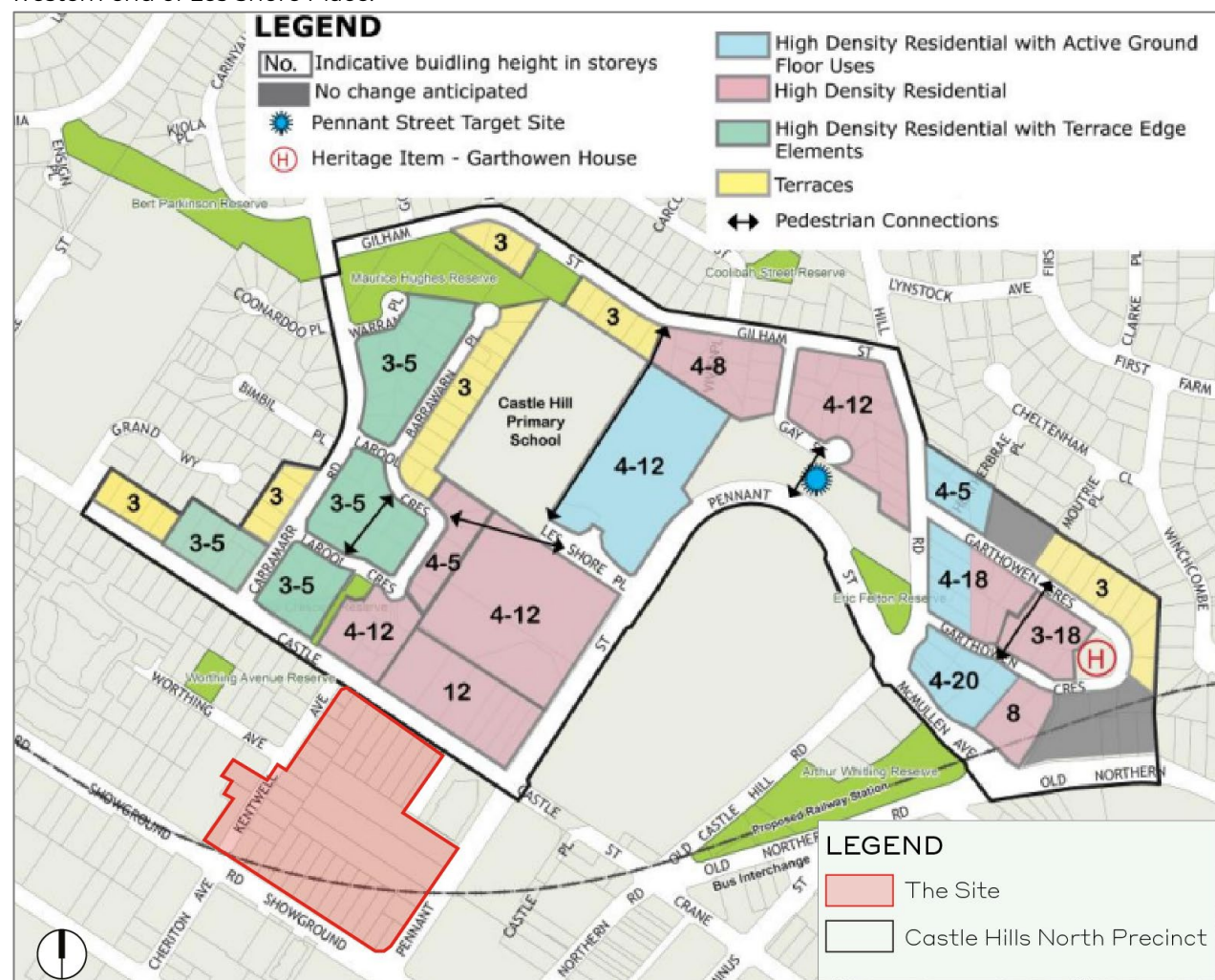


Figure 6 Castle Hills North Precinct Building Heights

Source: Hills Development Control Plan, edits by Ethos Urban

Northeast

The Castle Hill Library and Castle Grand Apartments are located directly to the northeast of the Site.

East

The Castle Towers Shopping Centre is immediately east of the Site across Pennant Street (**Figure 5**). It comprises three levels of retail floorspace. The Centre includes retailers such as David Jones, Myer, Target, Kmart, Event Cinemas, Apple, JB Hi-Fi, Coles, Aldi, a Fitness First gymnasium and approximately 300 specialty shops. The shopping centre has a current GFA of 132,635sqm and maximum building height ranging from 17.6 to 23m. The recently opened Sydney Metro station is located to the east of the shopping centre and there is a direct pedestrian linkage from the Station's concourse level to the shopping centre.

South

Medium density residential buildings, primarily comprising two to three storey apartment blocks, are located immediately south of the Site on the opposite side of Showground Road. There is also a McDonald's fast-food restaurant and the Castle Hill Baptist Church along Showground Road.

West

The Wesley Castle Hill Uniting Church and various low-density residential developments are located immediately west of the Site. The LSPS envisions medium to high-density residential dwellings in this area. Further west is the Castle Hill RSL and Castle Hill Bowling Club.

2.5 Relevant Development Applications

2.5.1 Expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre – DA864/2015/JP

On 27 September 2016, DA864/2015/JP was approved as a Deferred Commencement Consent by the Joint Regional Planning Panel (now Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP)) for the Stage 3 Expansion of Castle Towers Shopping Centre. The consent was subsequently modified by the SCCPP on 22 February 2022 (864/2015/B). The Deferred Commencement conditions have since been satisfied to activate the consent. The approved works for the Site, which are able to be completed in stages, include:

- Significant demolition, reconstruction and expansion works of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre to significantly increase the Centre's retail gross floor area from 132,779m² to 258,423m² and gross lettable area from 113,197m² to 193,457m².
- Closure of Castle Street between Pennant Street and Old Northern Road.
- Construction of a vehicular tunnel beneath Pennant Street and via Site B to provide a new direct vehicular access/egress from the centre's car park to Showground Road via the signalised intersection at Kentwell Avenue.
- Increase parking provision from 5,639 spaces to 7,996 spaces.
- Removal of 40 existing trees on Site B.

The development application was also endorsed by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) and a Voluntary Planning Agreement was entered with TfNSW to fund significant upgrade works to Showground Road to increase Castle Hill's road capacity.

Development Consent DA864/2015/B has been physically commenced by works carried out within Zone 2, including the Sydney Metro concourse connection - this consent remains active, valid and will not lapse. The expansion contemplated under this consent included the construction of vehicle access tunnels to provide access to a new basement-level carpark. As shown in **Figure 9**, these access tunnels would have inhibited the development of a significant portion of The Site. It remains open to QIC to complete the DA864/2015/B approved development and retail expansion should it wish to do so.

Notwithstanding the active DA864/2015/B consent, QIC now seeks to obtain a range of planning approvals as an alternative to this active consent that would see the Site's redevelopment align with QIC's broader corporate strategy to create sustainable mixed-use communities close to services, amenities and transport, as this better aligns with the relevant strategic planning framework. QIC also intends to pursue a separate development scheme for Castle Towers with a reduced retail provision, significantly reducing vehicle trip generation in Castle Hill, including at the Showground Road / Pennant Street intersection, compared to the existing approval.

2.5.2 Woodward Development Application

On 6 May 2024, the Woodward Development Application (DA980/2023/JP) was approved by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel for an indoor sports and recreational facility to be known as "Woodward" at the southwest corner of Site B. The facility will have two mezzanine levels comprising sporting amenities, including a skate bowl, trampolines and cheer space, climbing wall, gym, retail space, café/bar and amenities (see **Figure 7**).

It represents a significant, high-quality investment in community sporting infrastructure for The Hills Shire community aligned with Council's vision for new recreation facilities in Castle Hill. This unique sporting facility will complement the planned renewal for the Site, be compatible with future proposed uses, and provide additional amenities to the future residents of Site B.

This development application seeks consent to deliver the Showground intersection and the first part of the internal road envisioned in the masterplan. This portion of the road will remain public until it is required to service future development stages and accommodate through traffic to Kentwell Avenue and Castle Street.

The Planning Proposal and accompanying masterplan presented in **Section 5.0** have been designed to incorporate and leverage the public benefit offered by the Woodward Sports and Recreational Facility (Woodward). It is noted that the Woodward development application is capable of, and will be, delivered irrespective of the outcome of this Planning Proposal. Nevertheless, its design has been closely aligned with the development of the masterplan and is an initial integral component of the envisioned mixed-use precinct.

Figure 8 depicts an artist's impression of the facility.



Figure 7 Location of the Woodward Site

Source: Nearmap, edits by Ethos Urban



Figure 8 Artist's Impression of the Woodward Sport and Recreation Facility

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke

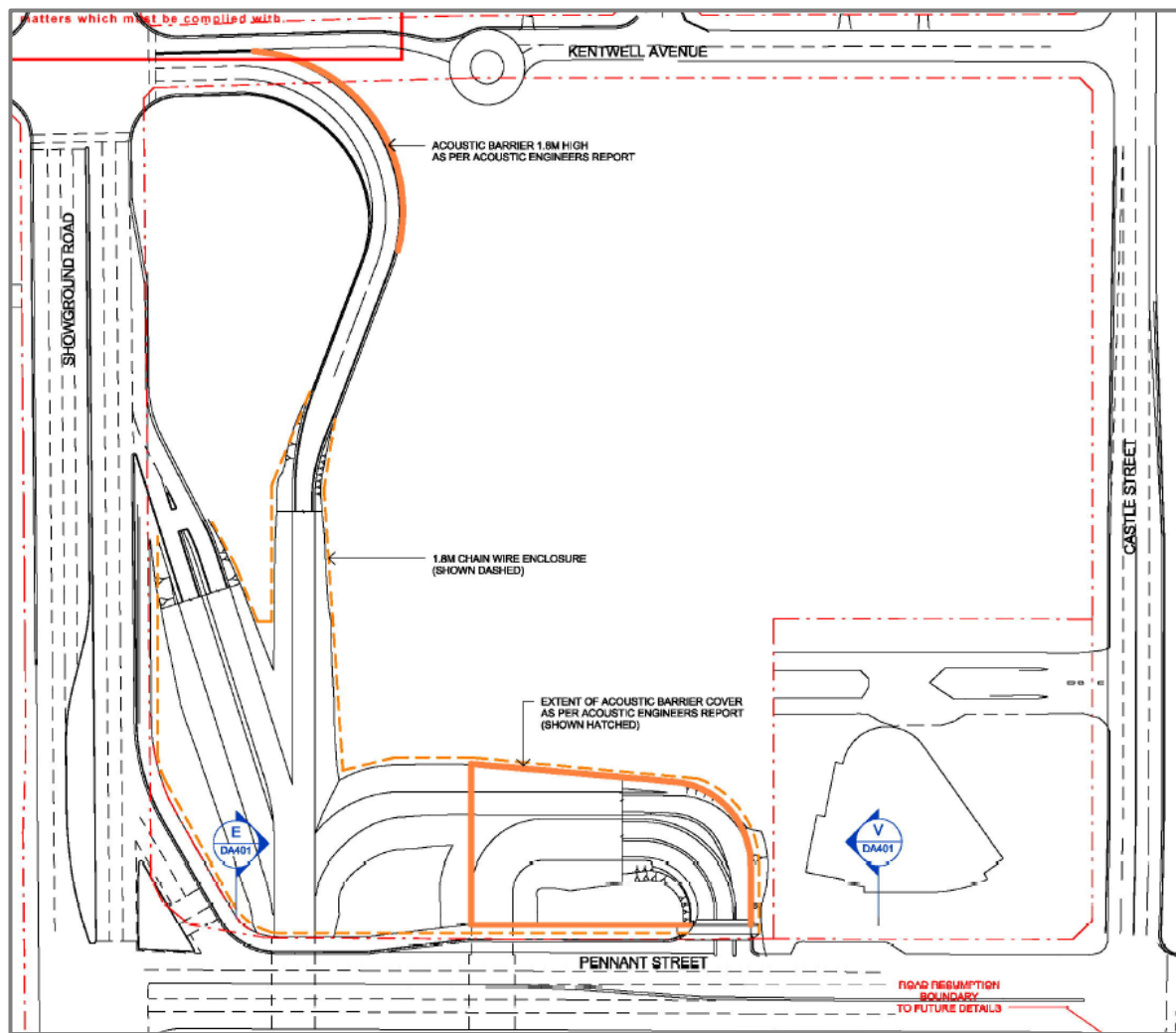


Figure 9 Proposed Access Tunnels – DA684/2015/JP

Source: UN Studio

3.0 Existing planning framework

3.1 The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2019

The key environmental planning instrument (EPI) applying to the Site is The Hills LEP 2019. A summary of the relevant existing controls in The Hills LEP 2019 is provided in **Table 5**.

Table 5 Hills LEP 2019 Controls

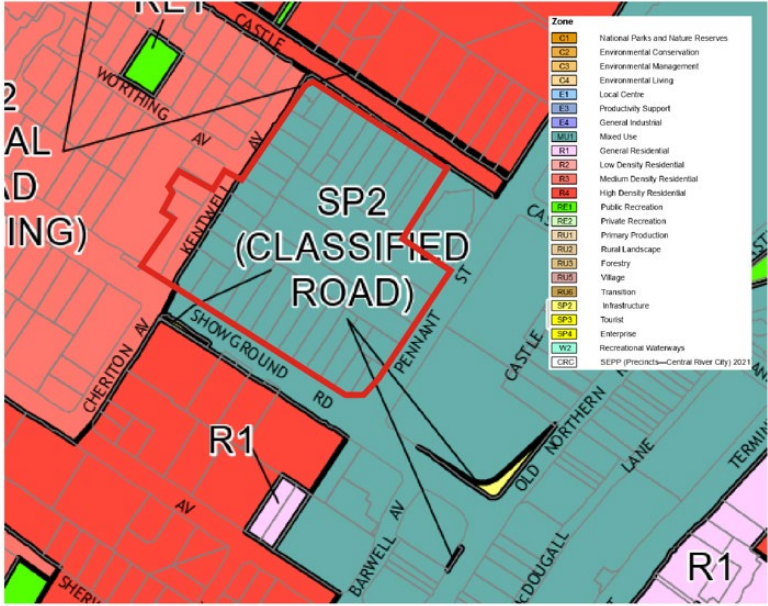
Clause	Existing Control
Clause 2.1 – Land Use Zoning	<p>MU1 Mixed Use</p> <p>R3 Medium Density Residential</p> <p>The figure below shows the breakdown of the Site's land use zoning.</p>  <p>Site Boundaries</p>

Figure 10 Land Zoning Map – Sheet LZN_024

Source: The Hills LEP 2019

MU1 Mixed Use Land Use	Permitted without consent	Home businesses; Home occupations
	Permitted with consent	Amusement centres; Boarding houses; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Car parks; Centre-based child care facilities; Commercial premises; Community facilities; Entertainment facilities; Function centres; Information and education facilities; Light industries; Local distribution premises; Medical centres; Oyster aquaculture; Passenger transport facilities; Places of public worship; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Registered clubs; Residential flat buildings; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Shop top housing; Tank-based aquaculture; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Vehicle repair stations; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4
	Prohibited	Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Electricity generating works; Environmental facilities; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Jetties; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Mortuaries; Open cut mining; Port facilities; Recreation facilities (major); Research stations; Residential accommodation; Resource recovery facilities; Rural industries; Sewerage systems; Sex services premises; Signage; Storage premises; Transport depots; Truck depots; Vehicle body repair workshops;

		Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste disposal facilities; Water recreation structures; Water supply systems; Wharf or boating facilities
R3 Medium Density Residential	Permitted without consent	Home businesses; Home occupations
	Permitted with consent	Attached dwellings; Boarding houses; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Centre-based child care facilities; Community facilities; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Group homes; Home-based child care; Multi dwelling housing; Neighbourhood shops; Oyster aquaculture; Places of public worship; Respite day care centres; Roads; Seniors housing; Tank-based aquaculture; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4
	Prohibited	Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Amusement centres; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Commercial premises; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Electricity generating works; Entertainment facilities; Environmental facilities; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Function centres; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Information and education facilities; Jetties; Local distribution premises; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Mortuaries; Open cut mining; Passenger transport facilities; Port facilities; Public administration buildings; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Registered clubs; Research stations; Residential accommodation; Restricted premises; Rural industries; Service stations; Sewerage systems; Sex services premises; Signage; Storage premises; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Transport depots; Truck depots; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Veterinary hospitals; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste or resource management facilities; Water recreation structures; Water supply systems; Wharf or boating facilities; Wholesale supplies
Clause 4.1 – Minimum subdivision lot size		600sqm 700sqm

Clause 4.3 – Height of Buildings

28.0m
19.0m
9.0m
7.0m

The figure below shows the breakdown of the Site's maximum building heights.

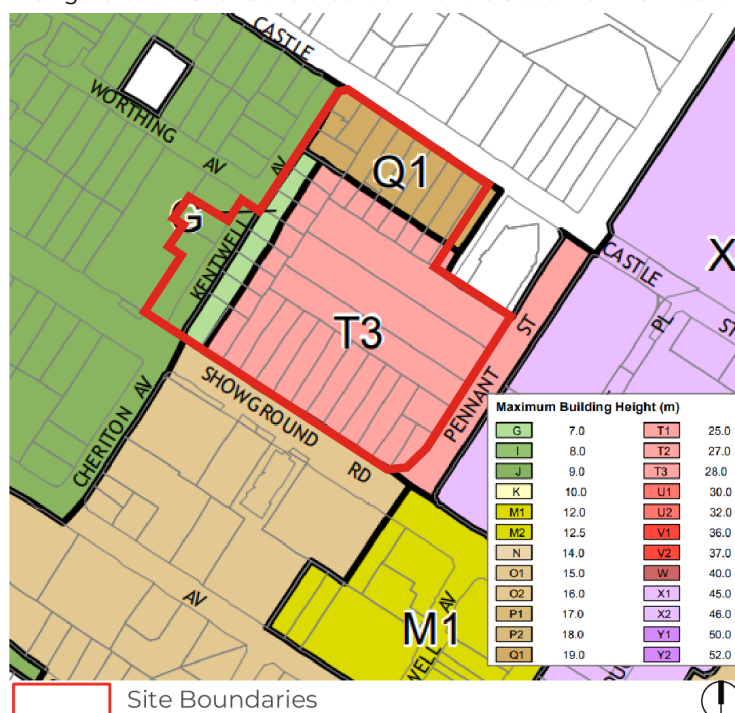


Figure 11 Height of Buildings Map – Sheet HOB_024

Source: The Hills LEP 2019

Clause 4.4 – Floor Space Ratio 1.9:1

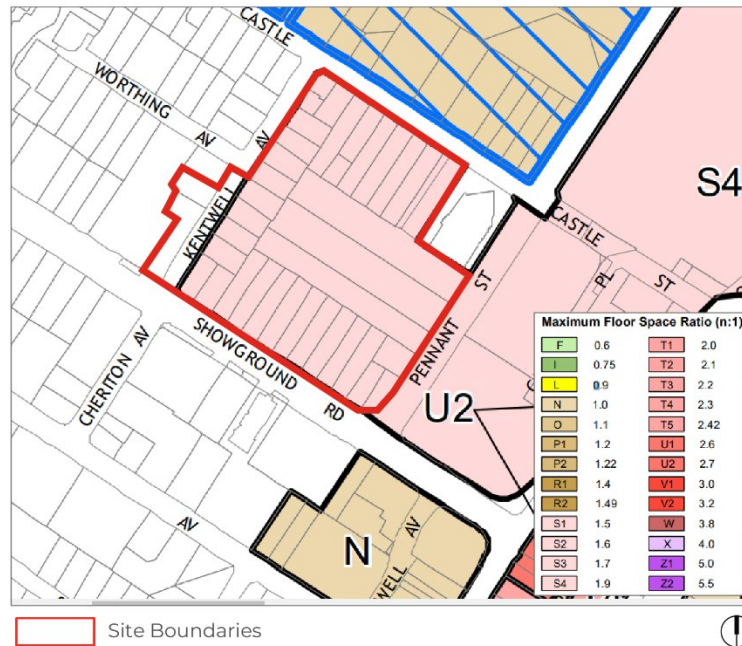


Figure 12 Floor Space Ratio Map – Sheet FSR_024

Source: The Hills LEP 2019

Clause 5.1A – Land intended to be acquired for public purposes Not applicable.

Clause 5.10 – Heritage Conservation

Applicable – The site is not listed as a heritage item, nor is it located in a heritage conservation area. Nevertheless, the site is located near three local heritage items:

- A heritage listed house at 30-34 Showground Road located immediately west of the Site (I66).
- The former police station at 264-266 Old Northern Road located approximately 100m southeast of the Site (I64).
- The former Castle Hill Public School also at 264-266 Old Northern Road (I63)

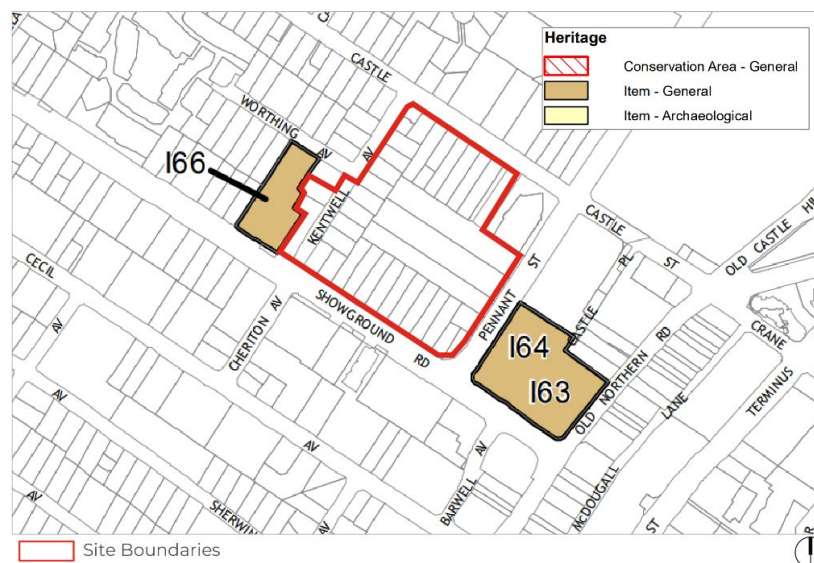


Figure 13 Heritage Map – Sheet HER_024

Source: The Hills LEP 2019

Clause 5.21 – Flood Planning	Not applicable.
Clause 7.1 – Acid Sulfate Soils	Not applicable.
Clause 7.4 – Terrestrial Biodiversity	Not applicable.
Clause 7.7 – Design Excellence	Applicable

3.2 The Hills Development Control Plan 2012

The Hills Development Control Plan 2012 (The Hills DCP) provides detailed guidance in relation to development matters beyond those standards contained within The Hills LEP 2019. A site-specific amendment to The Hills DCP will be prepared in consultation with Council. It is envisaged that the proposed DCP Amendment would be developed to allow concurrent internal Council reporting and to allow it to be publicly exhibited concurrently with the Planning Proposal. The site-specific amendment would be in the form of a new sub-chapter within Part D of the DCP and would set out specific controls for new development, streets/public domain, open space and infrastructure.

4.0 Analysis of Alternatives

The following section sets out the options that have been considered by QIC and the appointed project team in arriving at the preferred option that is the subject of this Planning Proposal.

4.1 Do Nothing

As outlined in **Section 2.0**, the Site is a largely vacant landholding located in a Strategic Centre within walking distance of the Castle Hill Metro Station, Shopping Centre, and other facilities. Given these features, the Site is well-positioned to contribute to Castle Hill's role and function as a Strategic Centre - this is recognised in the strategic policies applicable to the Site.

The Hills Corridor identifies the Site as one of the few sizeable development sites without significant constraints and notes that vacant sites near the Castle Hill Strategic Centre provide an opportunity for redevelopment. Meanwhile, the structure plan that accompanies the Hill LSPS envisions the Site as a mixed-use precinct that provides housing, offices, restaurants, and retail uses that help achieve the Council's vision of Castle Hill as a *"vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station"* (p. 34).

Council's Housing Strategy also identifies Castle Hill as a station precinct anticipated to accommodate 6,500 new dwellings by 2036. While the Castle Hill North Precinct has undergone strategic planning to accommodate 3,300 new homes, the Housing Strategy notes that the remainder of Castle Hill, including the Site, requires master planning and subsequent rezoning.

It is evident that a 'no nothing' approach is wholly inconsistent with the Site's strategic context and would significantly inhibit the future growth and long-term viability of Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre. The raft of public benefits associated with the masterplan would also be forfeited, these include:

- Provision of a high-quality public park to serve the needs Castle Hill's residents, including those families who will move into the Castle Hill North Precinct.
- An activated public plaza where residents can meet, socialise and build community.
- A new footbridge across Pennant Street and through-site links to improve walkability in Castle Hill.
- Providing a catalyst for economic growth at a time of economic recovery, through stimulating investment, construction and business activity by way of a \$700 million investment.
- Additional housing supply and choice in Castle Hill, to support population growth within a high amenity precinct, close to transport, employment opportunities as well as social and community infrastructure.

In addition to these forfeited benefits, the Site would remain a predominately visually unappealing vacant lot that inhibits pedestrian and cycling connectivity in Castle Hill - therefore, a 'do nothing' approach is not in the public interest.

4.2 Expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre

As described in **Section 2.5.1**, the Sydney North Joint Regional Planning Panel previously granted Development Consent DA864/2015/JP in 2016 to expand Castle Towers Shopping Centre. This included constructing vehicular access tunnels on the Site that would connect to the Shopping Centre's basement car parking. These works would have prevented the development of a significant proportion of the Site. QIC has effectively determined to forsake these development approved works for the Site as it fails to capitalise on the wider urban opportunities presented by the Site in the context of QIC's broader strategy to:

- Deliver community-centric mixed-used centres.
- Activate local urban environments and town centres.
- Take action on climate change by building 'climate-aware portfolios.'

Notwithstanding that this DA has been physically commenced and remains a valid consent, the development of a significant proportion of the Site for access tunnels fails to align with the Site's strategic context (described above), which envisions a mixed-use precinct. It also prevents the Site from assisting to address the housing supply targets for Castle Hill as forecasted in Council's Housing Strategy (6,500 new dwellings by 2036). This need is further emphasised in the NSW Government's housing supply forecasts, which show that an additional 11,050 dwellings are forecast as being required over the next five years in The Hills LGA compared to the 8,845 completed dwellings in the previous five years. The Stage 3 works would forfeit those public benefits outlined in the section above.

4.3 Business as Usual

The design team prepared a reference masterplan using the Site's current planning controls. The design, shown in **Figure 14**, was determined to offer minimal benefit to the community. Specifically, the scheme lacks usable public open spaces and is less legible and, therefore, walkable compared to the vision discussed in **Section 4.4** below. Furthermore, the scheme fails to provide a suitable height transition from urban core of Castle Hill to the residential neighbourhood to the west. Also, inferior outcomes in terms of solar access, cross ventilation, outlook and acoustic / visual privacy would result given the minimal spacing between building forms.



Figure 14 Business as Usual Reference Design

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

4.4 Mixed-Use precinct with central park

Following its analysis of options, the project team found that a diverse mixed-use precinct organised around a centrally located public park was the most appropriate use of the Site as it:

- Aligns with Council's vision for Castle Hill as articulated in The Hills LSPS.
- Provides a high-density mixed-use precinct to complement Castle Hill's future intended character as a rapidly transforming high-density Strategic Centre.
- Provides an opportunity for a walkable, vibrant and transit-orientated precinct given the Site's location is within walking distance of Castle Towers Shopping Centre, Metro Station, community and educational facilities
- Provides a high-quality public open space servicing existing and future residents west of Castle Hill's urban core, addressing the need for such facilities in high-density development.
- Resolves current inhibiting impacts of the Site to pedestrian and cycling connectivity to / from Castle Hill's urban core.
- Delivery of a legible and permeable urban structure to address connectivity challenges.

The project team identified four key design drivers to guide the master planning of the Site. These included:

- Creating a large public park, located away from main roads and surrounded by calm street and residential interfaces.
- Provides a footbridge at Pennant Street, improving connectivity to Castle Towers Shopping Centre and Metro Station.

- Connecting the footbridge to the public park with an attractive public plaza lined with food and beverage tenancies.
- Stepping down the precinct built-form, with the highest buildings located toward Castle Hill's urban core along main streets and lowest buildings located to the west toward residential streets.

Moreover, the precinct was also designed with consideration to achieving appropriate separation between buildings, solar access and ensuring a human context at the street level.

5.0 Objectives and Intended Outcomes (Pt 1)

This chapter of the report describes the Planning Proposal and the urban design principles that set the foundation for its structure. Further detail is provided throughout the environmental assessment in the following chapters. This chapter also sets out the first of six parts required to be addressed as part of the Planning Proposal in accordance with *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* (DPHI 2023).

5.1 Objectives

The Planning Proposal's primary objective is to amend The Hills LEP 2019 to facilitate the Site's development into a vibrant mixed-use precinct that aligns with Council's vision of Castle Hill as a *"vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station"* (p. 34 of The Hills LSPS). New controls for building height and floor space ratio are proposed to manage the scale of future development on the Site.

The Planning Proposal's supporting objectives are:

- Provide for the delivery of a high-quality mixed-use precinct on a consolidated landholding that is walkable, accessible, within proximity of infrastructure and open space and contains a diversity of apartment options.
- Contribute to the amenity and vibrancy of Castle Hill by delivering a high-quality public open space integrated with nearby retail uses and the Castle Hill library.
- Create an activated, productive social destination that provides a range of active and employment generated uses.
- Apply a maximum building height limit and GFA that is appropriate for Castle Hill's role and function as a Strategic Centre.
- Demonstrate the strategic and site-specific planning merit of accommodating a higher density residential and commercial development on the Site.
- Provide for the integration of ESD and design excellence principles into the design and future use of the precinct.
- Increase the Site's overall tree canopy cover with vegetation that is suited to the future urban character of this precinct.
- Manage urban stormwater and improve water quality within and around the Site.
- Assess the relevant environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposal.

5.2 Intended outcomes

The proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019 are supported by masterplan designed by architects Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day (**Appendix B & C**) and landscape architect ASPECT Studios (**Appendix D**). The built form and land use activities reflected in the masterplan demonstrate how a quality design outcome can be delivered at the Site under the proposed amendments to The Hills LEP 2019.

As shown in **Figure 15** and **Figure 16**, the masterplan envisions a diverse mixed-use precinct organised around an integrated centrally located park, which will serve as an anchoring community space to create a fine-grain and vibrant urban environment. The masterplan includes:

- A centrally located public park, accessible via pedestrian links to Pennant Street, Showground Road and Castle Street. The park will include open lawn space for outdoor events, an extensive active play area, a fitness circuit with exercise stations and a half basketball court.
- A fine-grain pedestrian plaza lined with café and retail tenancies and integrated with a proposed pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street. The plaza will feature outdoor seating and umbrellas, catenary lighting and tree plantings
- Connection to a pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street, which will connect residents to the urban core of Castle Hill and the Metro Station. In addition, it will provide access for the wider community to the site's open space areas and amenities.
- Approximately +1,400 dwellings across three high-density residential developments (Lots B, C and E), three mixed use developments (Lots A, D and F) and a residential flat building and townhouses fronting Kentwell Ave (Lot G). These dwellings will comprise a range of typologies, including stand-alone townhouses, podium townhouses and 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments.

- Approximately 27,874sqm of employment generating commercial and retail floor space across certain buildings, including a commercial tower on Lot A.
- An internal two-way street that runs between Showground Road, around the proposed public open space and onto Kentwell Avenue.
- Approximately 1,720 car parking spaces, considered to be an appropriate parking rate given the Site's proximity to the Castle Hills Metro Station.
- Planting of additional trees across the Site to increase the Site's canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%.
- Stormwater management and water-sensitive urban design infrastructure, including infrastructure to manage overland flows from surrounding properties.

An initial public benefit offer will be submitted by QIC with the intention that a Planning Agreement is entered into with the Hills Shire Council. This offer will contemplate the following components:

- Embellishment of a new public park of approximately 3,500 square metres and include a restriction on its title for public access.
- A monetary contribution of \$500,000 to Council for short-term crisis accommodation for women and children.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of active open space.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of library integration.

It is envisaged that the intended vision as outlined in the masterplan will be realised through the proposed planning provisions set out in **Section 6.0**. Further detail of the masterplan and intended vision for the Site is set out in the following sections.



Figure 15 Masterplan

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

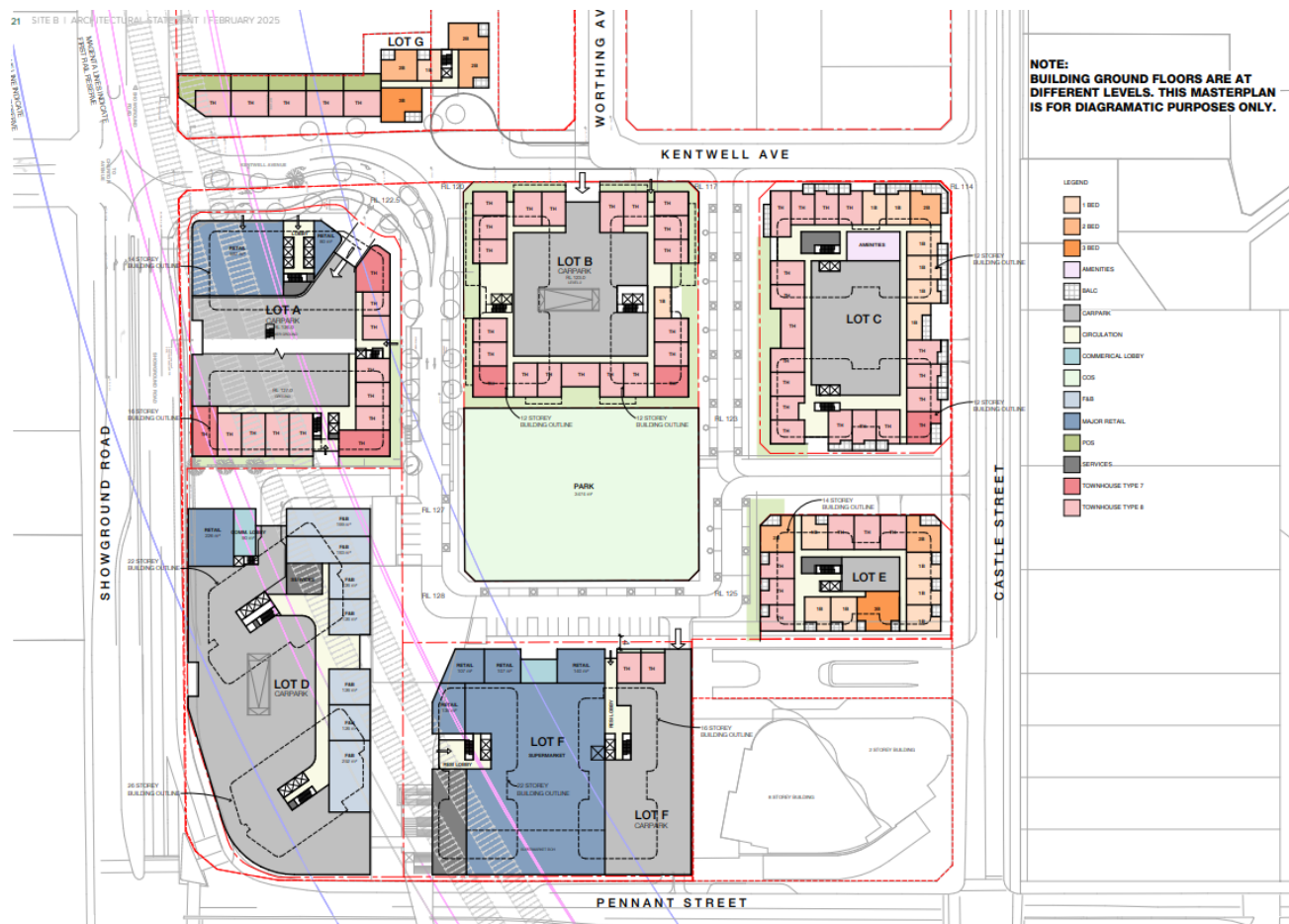


Figure 16 Masterplan Ground Floor

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

Mixed Use Development & Housing

The masterplan envisages the delivery of approximately 1,431 dwellings across a range of developments on seven lots (see **Table 6**). The built form of each development typically comprises a residential or a residential / commercial podium with a residential tower above. Lot A features both a residential and commercial tower. Medium density forms of housing are proposed on Lot G along Kentwell Street. The built form of each development has been carefully designed to respond to Apartment Design Guide (ADG) setbacks, solar access, existing context and future development heights, and human scale at street level.

Whilst most of the housing typologies proposed are apartments, Lot B, C and E also feature townhouse typologies incorporated within the podium levels. Stand-alone townhouses are also proposed along Kentwell Avenue on Lot G. The anticipated mix of apartment sizes is shown in **Table 7**.

Table 6 Indicative distribution of dwellings

Lot	Development Type	Maximum Height	Indicative Dwellings
Lot A	Mixed-use development with one residential and one commercial tower.	16 levels (57m)	165
Lot B	High-density residential	12 levels (43m)	175
Lot C	High-density residential	12 levels (43m)	198
Lot D	Mixed-use development	26 levels (88m)	420
Lot E	High-density residential	14 levels (49m)	124
Lot F	Mixed-use development	22 levels (76m)	322
Lot G	Townhouses & residential flat building (RFB)	Townhouses: 3 RFB: 5 (20m)	27

Table 7 *Apartment areas and mix*

Type	Minimum Area	Minimum Balcony	Indicative Apartment Mix
1-bedroom	50sqm	8sqm	24%
2-bedroom	70sqm	10sqm	33%
2-bedroom (family)	110sqm	10sqm	22% (41% of all 2-bedroom units)
3-bedroom	90sqm	12sqm	11%
3-bedroom (family)	135sqm	12sqm	9% (40% of all 3-bedroom units)

Lots A, D and F are envisioned to have showroom, gym, retail and commercial uses on their ground floors. A medium-scaled supermarket is intended on the corner of Lot F, interfacing the proposed internal plaza and public park. A childcare centre is envisioned on the upper podium level of Lot D, while commercial and showroom uses are anticipated on the upper podium level of Lots A and F.

Further details of dwelling design would be subject to the site-specific DCP amendment and subject of future development applications.

New Public Park

The masterplan includes a new centrally located public park around which the mixed-use precinct is organised. The park is approximately 3,500 square metres in area and comprises a mix of active and passive recreational spaces for use by the existing and future community as detailed in the Landscape Plans prepared by ASPECT Studios (**Figure 17** and **Appendix D**).

The park will function as an ‘urban public park’ akin to the parkland in Harold Park (**Figure 18**). These parks are highly utilised and embellished spaces with high levels of activation from interfacing retail and businesses and high levels of surveillance from surrounding apartments. The envisioned park will be a diverse space that can host an array of recreation and leisure activities and events. It includes a work / live area with picnic tables and a BBQ area, a passive lawn space where outdoor events can be hosted, a half-court basketball court and an extensive play area. The park incorporates two play spaces with natural play theming where all age groups are catered for with a variety of age-appropriate equipment. An exercise circuit weaves through the park with fitness stations along the route to promote the health and wellbeing of the community.

The park will deliver multiple benefits for the new and existing community, these include:

- Providing an exceptional public space where the community can meet, socialise, and host events. This will assist in fostering a sense of community and supporting social cohesion as new residents move to the area.
- Supporting the physical and mental health of the Castle Hill community by providing a space where residents can be amongst nature and participate in a range of active activities.
- Complementing the use of the existing Castle Hill library and envisioned public park and plaza and to create a neighbourhood with several great places that interact with each other.
- Improve the permeability and walkability of the new precinct by facilitating sight lines and providing walking and cycling routes to help pedestrians easily navigate through the Site.
- Contributing to an increased canopy cover for the Site to reduce the impacts of urban heat effect on the new community.
- Addressing the critical need for high-quality public open space within Castle Hill to support the future growth and development of this Strategic Centre.

Further details of the functions and design of elements to be included within the park would be the subject of further consultation with Council and the community through the preparation of the site-specific DCP amendment and the finalisation of any Planning Agreement.



Figure 17 Public Park Design

Source: ASPECT Studios



Figure 18 Harold Park

Source: City of Sydney

Urban Tree Canopy

Increasing the tree canopy creates new habitat for native fauna, combats the urban heat island effect and increases the resilience of urban places to the effects of severe weather events. The masterplan proposes to increase urban tree canopy within the Site through a combination of significant new tree planting, including within the new public park. Whilst it is likely that several existing trees will be required to be removed (subject to future development application/s), the masterplan anticipates an overall canopy increase from 20-30% to +40%, a net improvement in local biodiversity.

Sustainability

Sustainability measures are intended to be embedded into the precinct via the masterplan and site-specific DCP, and may include:

- Integration of rooftop solar photovoltaics on suitable roof areas.
- Implementation of energy-efficient design.
- Smart lighting within the public domain and public park.
- Maximising opportunities for water conservation and reuse.

Pedestrian Bridge & Public Plaza

As discussed, QIC is proposing to construct a footbridge crossing Pennant Street, connecting the southern portion of the Site with the urban core of Castle Hill, including Castle Towers Shopping Centre and Metro Station. This will provide access for the wider community to the Site's open space areas and amenities.

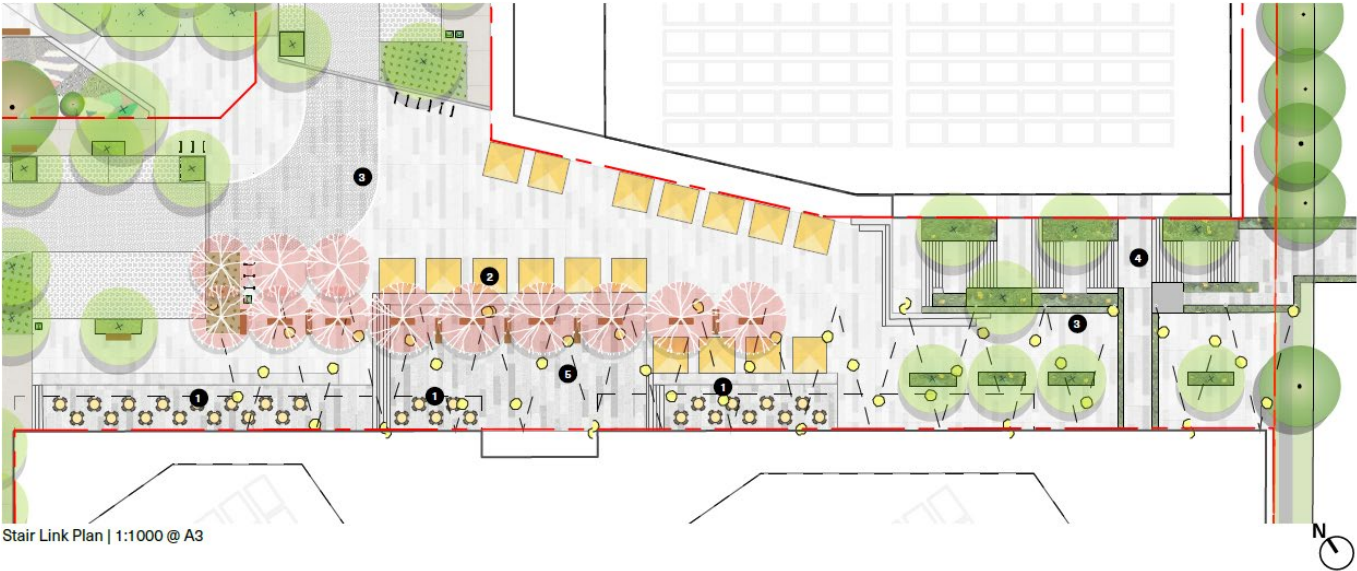
The pedestrian connection between the proposed park and footbridge, which is lined by cafes and retail spaces, presents an opportunity for the creation of a fine-grain plaza that serves as the principal civic and social space for the new quarter. As shown in **Figure 19**, the masterplan envisions terraces seating edges along the stairs to the footbridge, deciduous tree plantings, market umbrellas and café seating and catenary lighting to bring human scale and atmosphere to the plaza. A providore style mini mart will activate one corner of the plaza, providing residents with access to a local convenience retail offering. Feature lighting will increase the safety of the space

and support a day and night-time economy. Similar to the public park, the plaza will provide the new and existing community with a setting for social engagement and interaction.

The plaza, public park and envisioned street layout will also improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity between Showground Road, Castle Street, Kentwell Avenue and Pennant Street through the Site.

Appropriate rights of way would be established on title at the time of the relevant development application(s) to ensure ongoing public access between the new park/roadway and pedestrian bridge.

Delivery and funding of the pedestrian bridge requires coordination with separate future planning for Site A.



NOTES

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Cafe/ retail area with terraced seating edge opens up dining opportunities |
| 2 | Open plaza captures the northern sun with deciduous trees for shade in summer. Market umbrella overlay to show potential use. |
| 3 | A clear pedestrian path is maintained through the plaza for access between the park and connection to other developments |
| 4 | Stair link integrated with planting and trees incorporates a lift to access adjacent building levels and bridge to Heritage Square |
| 5 | Catenary lighting brings human scale to the space and atmosphere |

Figure 19 Public Plaza
 Source: ASPECT Studios

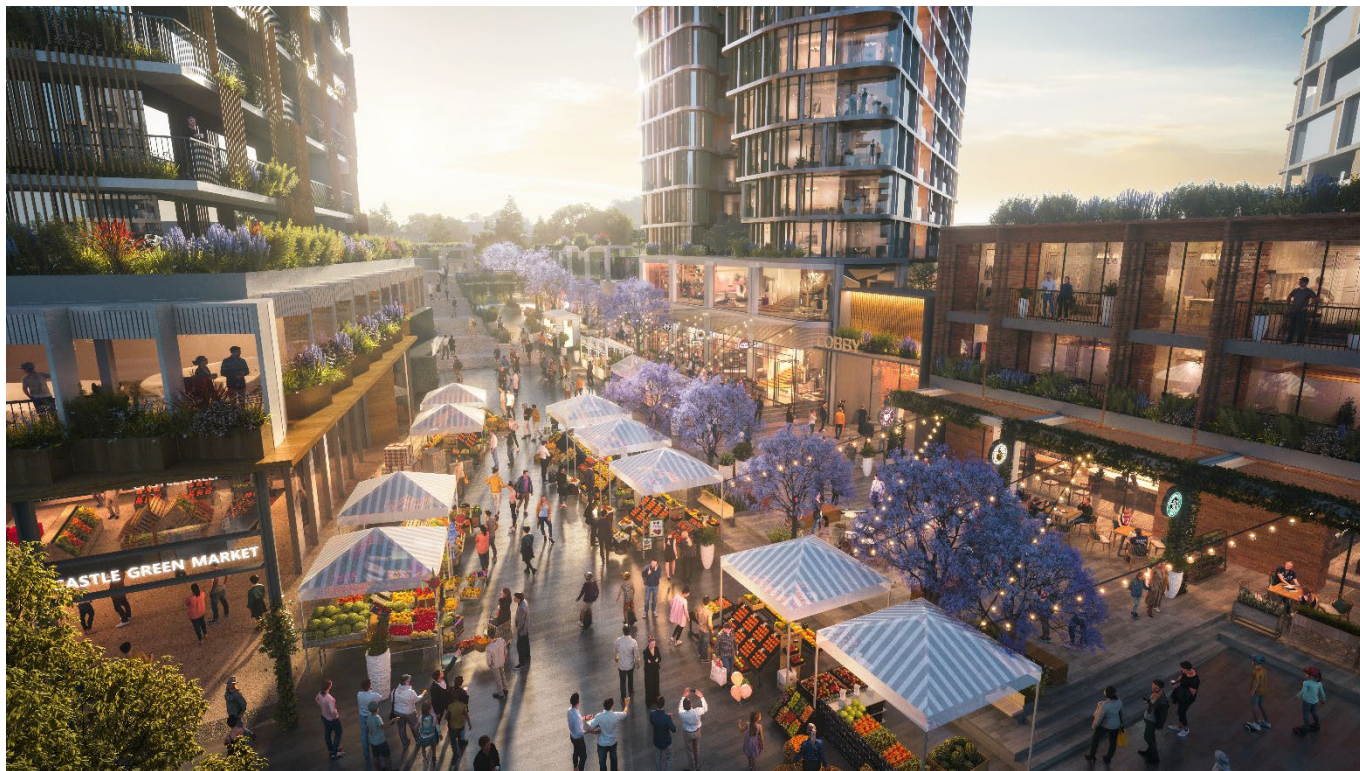


Figure 20 *Public Plaza Render*

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

6.0 Explanation of Provisions (Pt 2)

The overarching purpose of the Planning Proposal is to facilitate the development of the Site for a new mixed use precinct.

The objectives and intended outcomes identified in Part 1 (**Section 5.0** of this report) are intended to be achieved by permitting additional incentive floor space and building height on the Site through amendments to The Hills LEP 2019, amendments to The Hills DCP and by entering into a Planning Agreement with The Hills Shire Council to provide for the delivery and of a new public park. **Table 8** provides a summary of the proposed planning approach for the Site. Further detail is included in the following sections.

Table 8 Summary of proposal

Plan	Proposal	
Amendment to Hills Local Environmental Plan 2019	Maximum building height	Apply a maximum height of the following: Lot A – 183RL(m) (57m) Lot B – 169RL(m)(43m) Lot C – 166RL(m)(43m) Lot D – 209RL(m) (88m) Lot E – 174RL(m) (49m) Lot F – 207RL(m) (76m) Lot G – 146RL(m) (20m)
	Incentive floor space ratio	Apply a maximum incentive GFA of 171,585sqm across the Site (equivalent to an average FSR of 4.1:1)
	Land Use Zoning	Rezone the location of the proposed public park as RE1 Public Recreation.
Amendment to Hills Development Control Plan	A site-specific amendment to Part D of the DCP has been prepared. The site-specific DCP amendment provides further planning and design controls to ensure that the Master Plan vision is realised and addresses matters including: Setbacks, privacy and amenity controls Landscaping and tree canopy within public domain and future residential lots Road infrastructure and public domain Utilities infrastructure Car parking Open space functionality and embellishment	
Planning Agreement	Enter into a Planning Agreement with The Hills Shire Council that provides for the delivery, of a high-quality new public park on the land proposed to be zoned RE1 Public Recreation and for the dedication of the completed park and surrounding roads, landscaping, footpaths and cycle-ways to Council.	

6.1 The Hills LEP 2019

6.1.1 Land use zoning

The Land Zoning Map Sheet LZN_024 is proposed to be amended to rezone the location of the proposed public park as RE1 Public Recreation (see **Figure 21**).

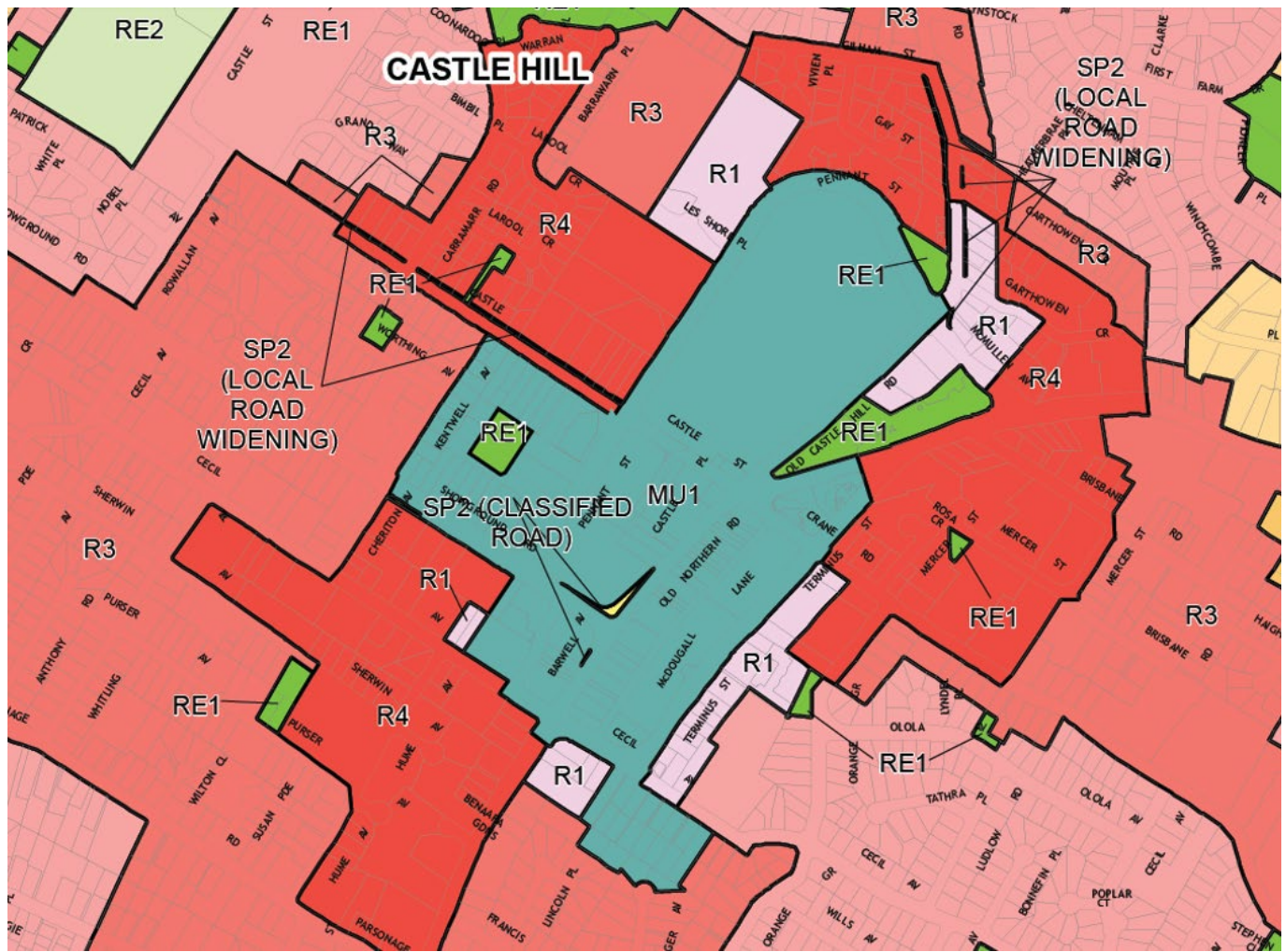


Figure 21 Proposed Land Zoning Map

Source: Ethos Urban

6.1.2 Height of buildings

The Height of Buildings Map Sheet HOB_024 is proposed to be amended to increase Site's maximum permitted height across the six lots (see **Figure 22**). These heights are proposed as a maximum RL(m).

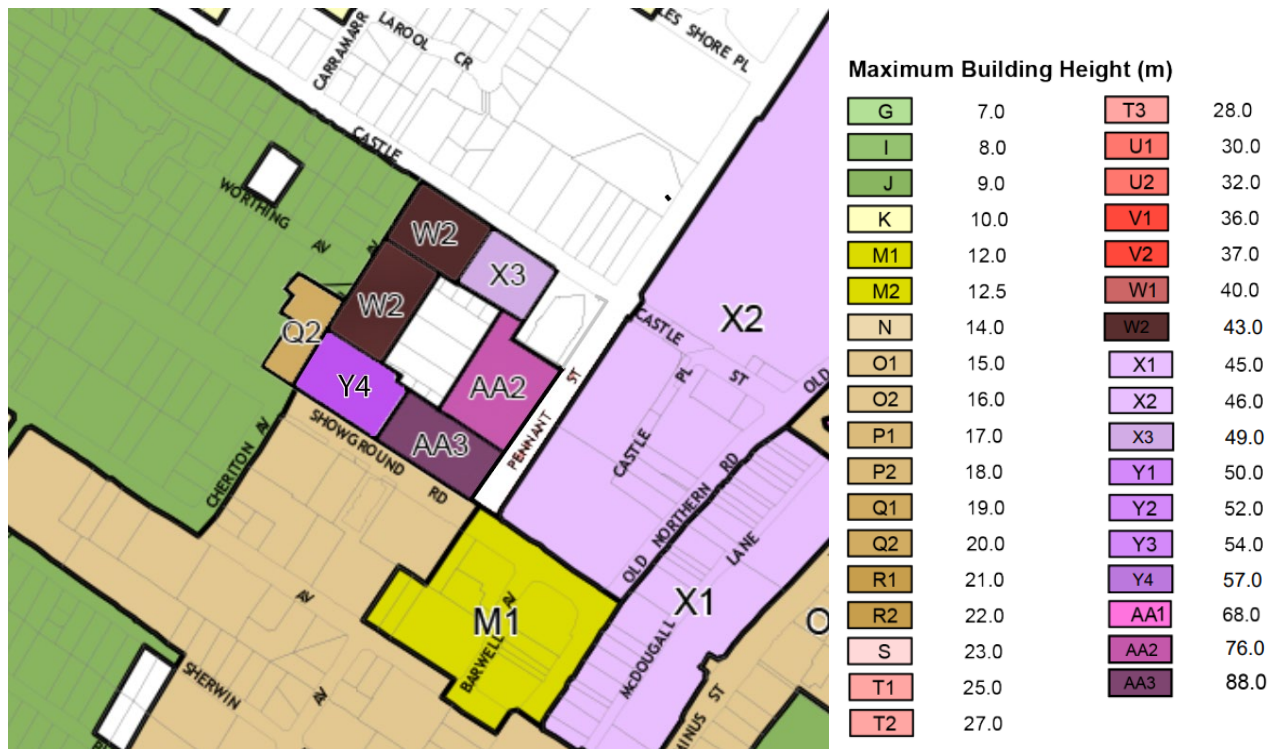


Figure 22 Proposed LEP Height Map

Source: Ethos Urban

This has also been presented in **Table 9**.

Table 9 Proposed Maximum Building Height

	Lot A	Lot B	Lot C	Lot D	Lot E	Lot F	Lot G
Proposed Maximum Permitted Building Height in meters	57	43	43	88	49	76	20

6.1.3 Incentive Maximum Gross Floor Area

The Planning Proposal seeks to introduce a new site-specific clause (Clause 7.34) into The Hills LEP 2019 to facilitate an incentive Floor Space Ratio (as outlined in The Hills Floor Space Ratio Incentive Map), which is tied to apartment mix, dwelling sizes, car parking and delivery of commercial floorspace.

This involves identifying the Site as “Area C” on the Floor Space Ratio Map (Sheet FSR_024) (refer to **Figure 23**) and introducing Clause 7.34 as an additional local provision that reads as follows:

7.34 Development at Showground Road, Kentwell Avenue, Castle Street and Pennant Street, Castle Hill

1. Despite clause 4.4, the consent authority may consent to development on land identified as “Area C” on the Floor Space Ratio Map, if the consent authority is satisfied that—
 - a. There is capacity on the land that the clause applies to for the development (which may or may not be the subject of that development application) of at least 23,000 square metres of gross floor area that is not used for the purpose of residential accommodation.
 - b. A maximum of 171,585 square meters of gross floor area is provided.
 - c. The dwelling mix comprises —
 - i. no more than 25% of the total number of dwellings (to the nearest whole number of dwellings) contained in the development are to be studio or 1-bedroom dwellings, or both, and
 - ii. at least 20% of the total number of dwellings (to the nearest whole number of dwellings) contained in the development are to be 3 or more-bedroom dwellings, and
 - iii. at least 40% of all 2-bedroom dwellings contained in the development will have a minimum internal floor area of 110 square metres, and
 - iv. at least 40% of all 3 bedroom dwellings contained in the development will have a minimum internal floor area of 135 square metres, and

- d. the maximum number of car parking spaces that are to be provided for the development is the sum of the following—
 - i. for each studio or 1 bedroom dwelling—0.5 car parking spaces,
 - ii. for each 2 bedroom dwelling—0.8 car parking spaces,
 - iii. for each 3 or more bedroom dwelling—1.3 car parking spaces,
 - iv. for every 5 dwellings—1 car parking spaces, in addition to the car parking spaces required for each individual dwelling.

By using Clause 7.34 and the Floor Space Ratio Incentive Map as the mechanism to increase the Site's density, Council can further ensure that the Site's redevelopment aligns with their vision for Castle Hill. It also provides the Proponent with an incentive to deliver a housing choice consistent with the expected future demographic of The Hills Shire.

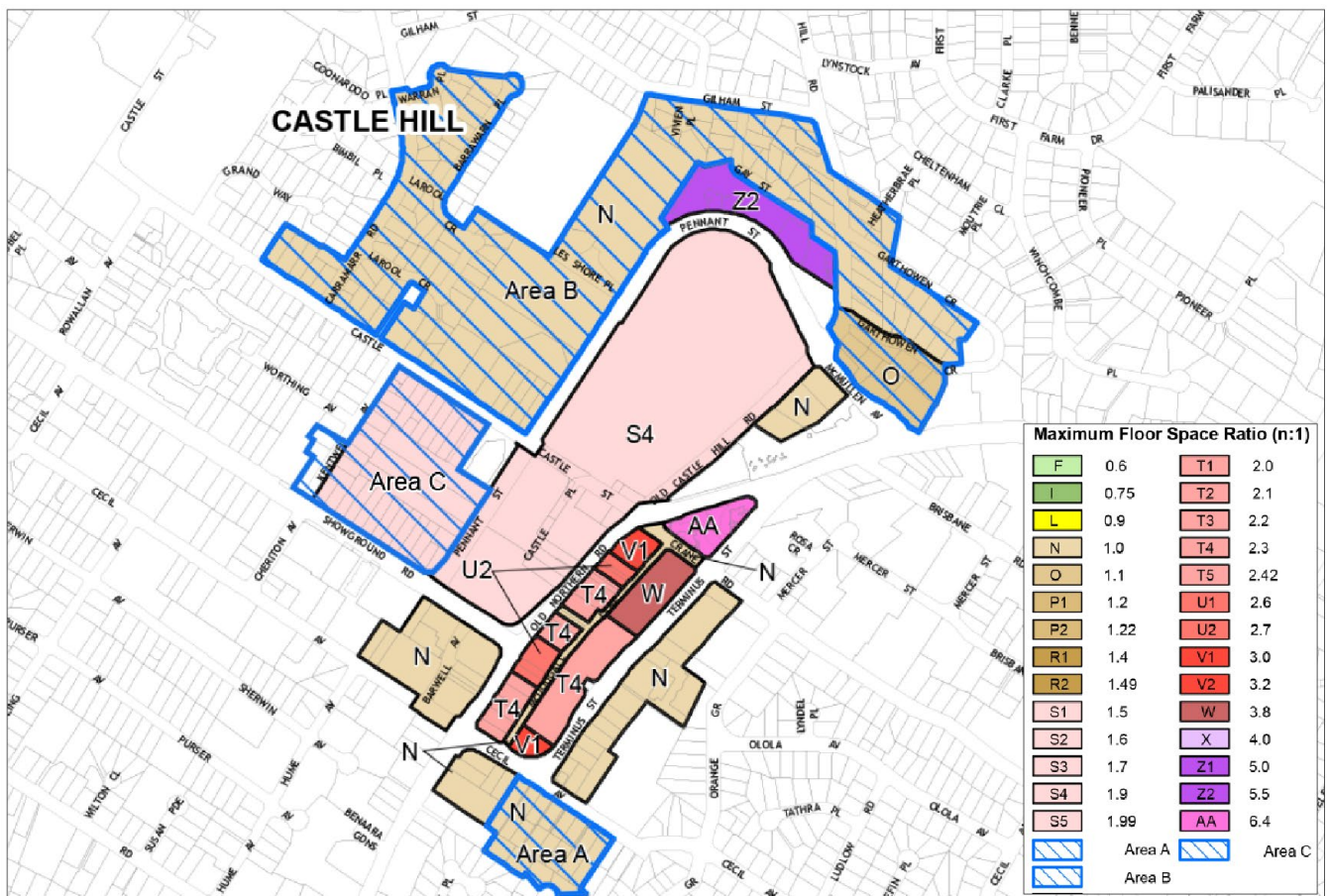


Figure 23 Proposed FSR Map

Source: Ethos Urban

6.2 Site-specific Amendment to The Hills DCP

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by a Draft Development Control Plan (DCP) to amend The Hills Development Control Plan 2012 that provides more detailed planning controls to support the proposed amendments to the LEP development standards (**Appendix K**). The site-specific amendment would be in the form of a new sub-chapter within Part D of the DCP. It sets out specific controls for new development, streets/public domain, open space and infrastructure, with controls such as:

- A structure plan, which aligns internal road, laneway and block locations with the masterplan.
- Tree planting and urban tree canopy measures.
- Street network, pedestrian network and indicative internal road and pedestrian link cross-sections.
- Streetscape character.
- Parking rates.

The draft Development Control Plan will be publicly exhibited concurrently with the Planning Proposal.

6.3 Planning Agreement

An Initial Public Benefit Offer has been submitted to The Hills Shire Council which provides for the following key components:

- Embellishment of a new public park of approximately 3,500 square metres and include a restriction on its title for public access.
- A monetary contribution of \$500,000 to Council for short-term crisis accommodation for women and children.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of active open space.
- A monetary contribution of \$5,000,000 to Council for the purpose of library integration.

7.0 Justification of strategic and site-specific merit

7.1 Strategic merit

7.1.1 Section A – need for the Planning Proposal

Q1. Is the Planning Proposal a result of an endorsed local strategic planning statement, strategic study or report?

Q2. Is the Planning Proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Council released The *Hills LSPS* in October 2019. It provides a 20-year land-use planning vision for The Hills Shire LGA informed by the GSC's Region and District Plans. The Hills LSPS identifies Castle Hill as an anchoring Strategic Centre that accommodates the majority of jobs in the LGA. It is recognised as an area capable of renewal and development uplift due to the Sydney Metro station, with an additional 5,500 jobs and 6,500 dwellings envisioned in the centre by 2036. The LSPS includes a structure plan (**Figure 24**) to guide this growth and achieve the LSPS' vision of Castle Hill as a “vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station” (p. 34).

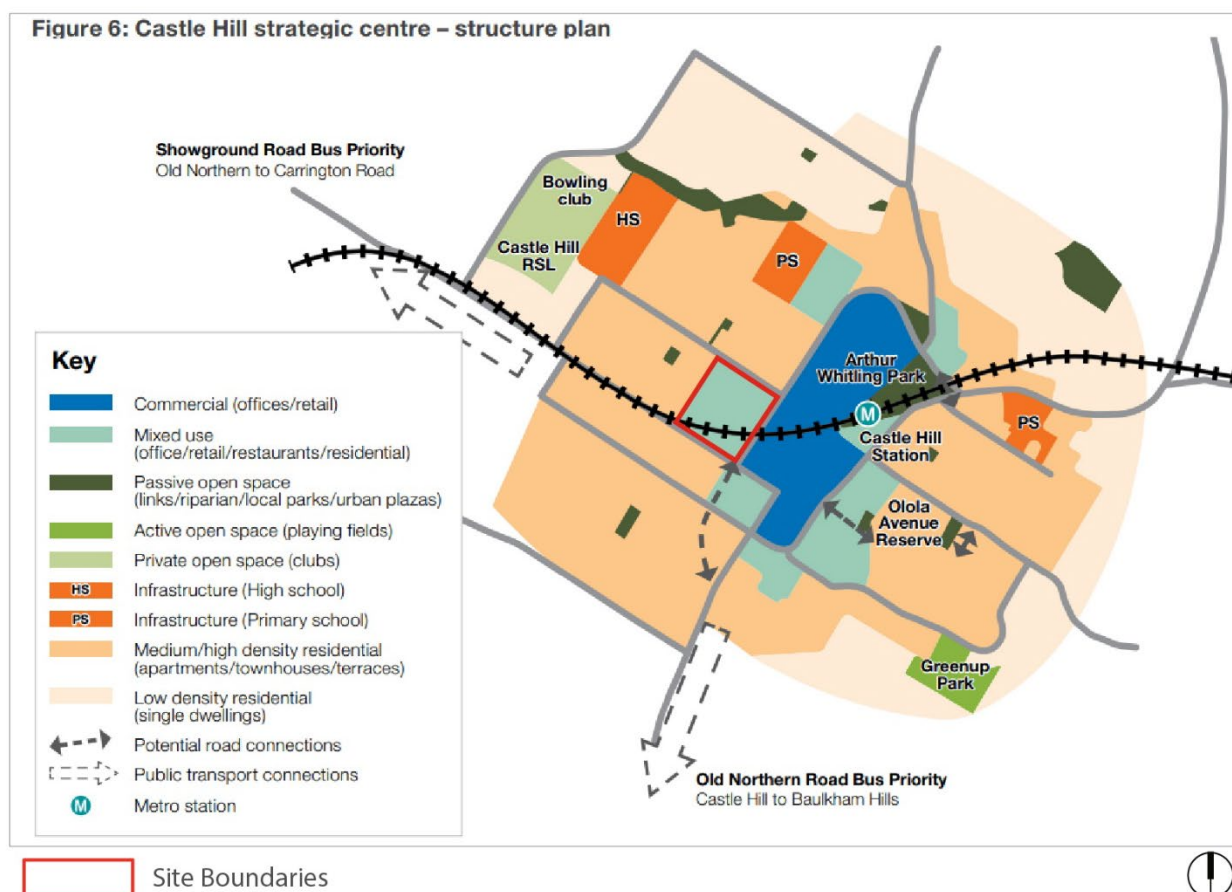


Figure 24 Hills LSPS Structure Plan

Source: Hills Council, 2019

As shown above, the Planning Proposal aligns with the structure plan's vision for the Site as a mixed-use precinct that provides office, residential and retail uses to create an active lifestyle precinct that supports the urban core. In addition, the Planning Proposal supports the LSPS's vision for Castle Hill by:

- Providing buildings with activated street levels fronting attractive and accessible streetscapes. Furthermore, the co-location of activated retail space and open space will provide the community with a high-amenity urban environment to gather and enjoy.
- Delivering approximately 1,400 apartments within walking distance of high frequency public transport, community facilities and shops to help meet the 6,500-dwelling target.
- Delivering pedestrian and cycling through site connections to improve connectivity between residents' location within the surrounds to Castle Hill's urban core and the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and Metro Station.
- Delivering a commercial tower on Lot A to provide employment generating floorspace and contribute to creating a genuine mixed-use precinct. The Proposal is anticipated to generate 930 ongoing jobs, helping meet the Hills LSPS's target of 5,500 new jobs in Castle Hill by 2036.

The LSPS includes a phasing strategy to facilitate the delivery of the Castle Hills Structure Plan. Phase 2 applies to the Site and seeks the preparation of traffic modelling, urban design and built-form analysis, infrastructure investigations and market demand analysis to support the development of the Site. This work has been undertaken as a part of the subject Planning Proposal process. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal aligns with the objectives and intended outcomes of The Hills LSPS.

7.1.2 Section B – relationship to the strategic planning framework

Q3. Will the Planning Proposal give effect to the objectives and actions of the applicable regional, or district plan or strategy (including any exhibited draft plans or strategies)?

Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities

In March 2018, the Greater Cities Commission (GCC) released the Region Plan, which sets the strategic planning direction for the region. The Plan sets out key directions that collectively form a framework for liveability, productivity and sustainability that underpins the growth of Sydney. It identifies Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre, which the GCC expects to accommodate high levels of private sector investment, enabling it to grow and evolve. The Region Plan outlines a number of specific 'planning objectives', with those of relevance to this Planning Proposal discussed further in **Table 10**.

Table 10 Consistency with the Greater Sydney Region Plan

Planning objective		Consistency with Planning Proposal	
2	Infrastructure aligns with forecast growth – growth infrastructure compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commencement of Sydney Metro Northwest operations in May 2019 represents a significant multi-billion-dollar investment in northwest Sydney. It has significantly improved the Site's level of public transport service and connectivity • Strategic planning at the State and local level acknowledges the opportunity to focus growth within walking distance of Metro Stations, including Castle Hill • By delivering a new mixed-use precinct within walking distance of the Castle Hill Metro Station, the Planning Proposal supports transport-orientated development and facilitates growth aligned with public infrastructure investment. 	✓
4	Infrastructure use is optimised		
7	Communities are healthy, resilient and socially connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Proposal masterplan envisages a healthy, walkable precinct that caters to a diverse range of households. • The new high-quality public park will provide a place for both the existing and future community to meet and connect. • The Site is located in close walking distance of early, primary and secondary educational institutions. 	✓
10	Greater housing supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney is growing, and the Region Plan notes that “a range of housing types provides for the needs of the community at different stages of life and caters for diverse household types. It means that as people age they can move into smaller homes and age in their own neighbourhoods, while young adults leaving home can stay close to their families and communities”. • This Planning Proposal directly addresses this need by delivering additional dwellings on an underutilised Site within walking distance of a 	✓
11	Housing is more diverse and affordable		✓

Planning objective		Consistency with Planning Proposal	
		<p>Metro Station that provides access to employment, education, health and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal also envisions a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments to meet the diverse housing needs of The Hills LGA. 	
12	Great places that bring people together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal and site-specific DCP Amendment will deliver a high-quality urban environment with new public open spaces. New pedestrian connections through the Site will enhance walkability and attract the community to this significant new amenity. 	✓
14	Integrated land use and transport creates a walkable and 30-minute city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Region Plan encourages co-locating activities in Strategic Centres and attracting housing in and around centres to create walkable, cycle-friendly neighbourhoods. The Planning Proposal directly addresses this objective by delivering a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood within Strategic Centre, that enjoys walkable access to a metro station. Residents within this precinct can access employment, shops, services and community facilities within the centre, supporting the 30-minute city vision. The Planning Proposal has also been designed to prioritise walking and cycling connectivity via connected grid of legible and permeable pedestrian connections and a pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street. 	✓
22	Investment and business activity in centres	<p>The Region Plan sets out the following expectations for Strategic Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of public investment. Flexibility, so the private sector can choose where and when to invest. Co-location of a wide mix of land uses, including residential. High levels of amenity and walkability being cycle friendly. <p>The Planning Proposal represents an opportunity for significant private investment in the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. Furthermore, this investment aligns with GCC's vision for Strategic Centres by providing a walkable and high-amenity precinct with a mix of land uses, including residential.</p>	✓
30	Urban tree canopy is increased	<p>The Planning Proposal increases the site's urban tree canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%, which provides key environmental benefits such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased habitat for local fauna. Cooling the urban environment. Reduction of stormwater runoff. Pollution absorption. 	✓
31	Public open space is accessible, protected and enhanced	<p>The Planning Proposal seeks to enable provision of a 3,500m² high-quality public park, increasing the community's access to public space and providing a diverse range of inclusive amenities for active and passive recreation.</p>	✓
33	A low-carbon city contributes to net-zero emissions by 2050 and mitigates climate change	<p>The Planning Proposal is accompanied by an ecological sustainable development (ESD) framework (Appendix H) to minimise emissions. The framework recommends measures such as no natural gas infrastructure, the design of energy efficient dwellings and the installation of photovoltaic panels on all roofs. These measures will be incorporated in the project.</p>	✓

Central City District Plan

The Region Plan is supported by the Central City District Plan (District Plan), which guides land use planning at the district level for the next 20 years. The District Plan reflects the Region Plan's identification of Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre capable of accommodating additional housing and jobs growth. It acknowledges the opportunities generated by the construction of the Castle Hill Sydney Metro Station to create a higher-density transit-orientated precinct. In addition to supporting the creation of such a precinct, the Proposal strongly aligns with the District Plan's broader priorities and objectives as outlined in **Table 11**.

Table 11 **Consistency with Central City District Plan**

Direction	Planning Priority/Actions	Assessment	
A city supported by infrastructure	Planning for a city supported by infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal facilitates new housing within walking distance of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre, early/ primary/ secondary education, health care and services. The Castle Hill Metro also provides 'turn up and go' services to tertiary education and other employment areas, including Macquarie Park, Norwest, Chatswood and the Sydney CBD. 	✓
A city for people	Providing services and social infrastructure to meet people's changing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal will meet the needs of the community as it will provide excellent connectivity and accessibility to essential services and facilities, employment, public transport, and social amenities. The proposed park also addresses a significant need for quality public open space in the Castle Hill, especially within the vicinity of the Site. The Planning Proposal interfaces active uses (retail, cafes and restaurants) with the park to create a great, liveable and attractive place. 	✓
	Fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich and socially connected communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal and masterplan will foster the creation of a high-quality healthy place, with walkable and pedestrian-focused streets and active recreational facilities. The Planning Proposal proposed park and plaza will provide the existing and future community with exceptional public spaces to meet, socialise, and host events. This will assist in fostering a sense of community and supporting social cohesion as new residents move to the area. 	✓
Housing the city	Providing housing supply, choice and affordability with access to jobs, services and public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal will facilitate approximately 1400 dwellings across a range of development types help meet the forecast need of 207,500 new homes in the district by 2036 and realise the broader vision of a 30-minute city. This housing will provide an appropriate apartment mix and design to improve housing choices for single groups and families. Furthermore, the Site is well-located with walking access to jobs, services and public transport in Castle Hill. 	✓
A city of great places	Creating and renewing great places and local centres and respecting the Districts heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal directly supports the creation of a new well-designed built environment that significantly improves a mostly vacant and underutilised landholding. The Planning Proposal envisions a precinct of great places, including a high-quality public park integrated with surrounding active land uses, and a vibrant fine-grained public plaza. The Planning Proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on nearby heritage items. Proposed building heights on Lot G have been designed to provide a transition in scale to the heritage listed house at 30–34 Showground Road and surrounding neighbourhood, and would be subject to further detailed assessment at the DA stage. The Planning Proposal proposes a new footbridge that will improve access and, therefore, enhance the former police station and public school at 264-266 Old Northern Road. 	✓
A well-connected city	Delivering integrated land use and transport planning and a 30-minute city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal will facilitate housing within walking distance of primary and secondary educational establishments, the Castle Towers Shopping Centres, employment opportunities and local retail and services. The Site currently lacks access to high-quality public open space; however, the Planning Proposal addresses this need through the proposed public park. Therefore, the Proposal supports the '30-minute' city vision. 	✓

Direction	Planning Priority/Actions	Assessment	
A city in its landscape	Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivery Green Grid connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal increases the Site's urban tree canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%. This will complement the wider green grid network of Castle Hill, including Sherwin Avenue Reserve, Maurice High Reserve, Bert Parkinson Reserve, Coolong Reserve, and Eric Felton Reserve. 	✓
	Delivering high quality open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal provides for 3,500 m2 of new public open space in the form of a local park with space for active and passive recreation. The new park will include an inclusive playground, informal multi-purpose sports court, fitness stations and areas for passive seating and walking. 	✓
An efficient city	Reducing carbon emissions and managing energy, water and waste efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal is accompanied by an ecologically sustainable development (ESD) framework (Appendix H) to minimise emissions and manage energy, water and waste efficiently. The framework recommends measures such as no natural gas infrastructure, the design of energy-efficient dwellings and the installation of photovoltaic panels on all roofs. These measures will be incorporated into the project. 	✓
A resilient city	Adapting to the impacts of urban and natural hazards and climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal will facilitate a development that is designed to be protected from the impacts of flooding and climate change, and includes measures to better manage overland flows during major storm events whilst the increased urban tree canopy will combat the urban heat island effect. 	✓

Q4. Is the Planning Proposal consistent with a council LSPS that has been endorsed by the Planning Secretary or GCC, or another endorsed local strategy or strategic plan?

Hills Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Hills Shire Council has undertaken substantial strategic planning work for Castle Hill, including The Hills Corridor Strategy, released in 2015, which articulated the Council's response to land development near Metro Stations. More recently, the Council released The Hills LSPS in October 2019, supported by a Housing Strategy. The LSPS builds upon and ultimately supersedes strategic planning undertaken for Castle Hill and the North West Metro corridor, including the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy (released in 2013) and The Hills Corridor Strategy (released in 2015). Central to the LSPS are the challenges and opportunities presented by the forecast growth of The Hills LGA's population by 80 per cent between 2016 and 2036 (approx. 128,00 people).

The Hills LSPS identifies Castle Hill as an anchoring Strategic Centre. It is recognised as an area capable of renewal and development uplift due to the Sydney Metro station, with an additional 5,500 jobs and 6,500 dwellings envisioned in the centre by 2036. The LSPS includes a structure plan to guide this growth and achieve the LSPS' vision of Castle Hill as a *"vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station"* (p. 34). The structure plan envisions the Site as a mixed-use precinct that provides residential and retail uses to create an active lifestyle precinct that supports the urban core (see **Figure 25**).

The LSPS is also supported by a Productivity and Centres Strategy that articulates Council's vision for employment within strategic centres and provides detail on the supply and future demand for employment floorspace. Both documents identify a 'commercial core' within Castle Hill (area shown blue in **Figure 25**), which is the preferred primary location for employment floorspace and functions to *"manage the impact residential developments crowding out commercial activity"* (Productivity and Centres Strategy, pg. 62.).

The Site is appropriately located outside the commercial core yet still within walking distance of it and the Metro Station. This provides for increased housing supply that is appropriately located and aligns with Council's vision. Therefore, the master plan's proposed mix of residential and employment floorspace responds appropriately to the Site's strategic context by providing a vibrant mixed-use precinct with a range of dwelling types for residents seeking convenient access to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre within a higher density environment.

Ultimately, the proposal respects key aims of the LSPS and its supportive Productivity and Centres Strategy, which seek to encourage the location of high generating employment uses such as high density, office and retail

within the commercial core of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre; with complementary mixed-use development being provided in its immediate surrounds.

Table 12 sets out how the Planning Proposal is consistent and gives effect to the planning priorities identified by the LSPS.

Table 12 Consistency with the Local Strategic Planning Statement

Planning Priority		Consistency with the Planning Proposal	
2	<i>Build Strategic Centres to realise their potential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LSPS acknowledges that large parts of the Shire's Strategic Centres, including Castle Hill, are considered suitable for high-density residential development. It states that development surrounding Castle Hill urban core will provide a mix of business, office, residential, restaurants and retail to create an active lifestyle precinct. The Planning Proposal aligns with this vision and provides additional housing and employment floorspace in Castle Hill to help realise its potential as a Strategic Centre. The Planning Proposal 's proposed mix of residential and employment floorspace responds appropriately to the Site's strategic context by providing a vibrant mixed-use precinct with a range of dwelling types for residents seeking convenient access to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre within a higher density environment. The Planning Proposal does not undermine the role or integrity of Castle Hill's commercial core by providing a mixed-use development consistent with the Site's existing mixed use zoning. This will support the commercial core's primary function of fostering employment generation in the office and retail sectors within the immediate proximity of the Castle Hill Metro Station. 	✓
6	<i>Plan for new housing to support Greater Sydney's Growing population</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted above, the LSPS emphasises that higher density housing must be provided in areas connected to or within reach of transport and other urban services. Castle Hill is identified as one these areas appropriate for housing growth, and that planning for the balance of the centre, including the Site. The Planning Proposal is timely to ensure that housing growth does occur in the centre. 	✓
7	<i>Plan for new housing in the right locations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal will facilitate approximately 1,400 new homes within the Castle Hill 'Sydney Metro station precinct', an area that the LSPS identifies for housing growth. The Planning Proposal provides a liveable and connected precinct where residents can enjoy a mix of uses close to transport and services. The Planning Proposal will provide high levels of residential amenity through the provision of landscaping and public domain works, such as significant new street planting and a public open space. The Planning Proposal will ensure high levels of solar access and residential amenity. 	✓
8	<i>Plan for a diversity of housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LSPS notes that most new households will comprise family groups, and that apartments need to cater for these groups. The masterplan addresses this need by proposing an apartment mix in accordance with Clause 7.11 of The Hills LEP. 	✓
9	<i>Renew and create great places</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal transforms a mostly vacant and underutilised landholding into a liveable urban place with great places that will benefit the local community. In particular, the proposed park and plaza will provide the existing and future community with exceptional public spaces to meet, socialise, and host events. These spaces have been designed to be safe and accessible, including for families with children. The Planning Proposal also incorporates increased tree canopy coverage, lighting and a permeable and legible pedestrian and cycling network to contribute to the precinct's liveability. 	✓

Planning Priority		Consistency with the Planning Proposal	
10	<i>Provide social infrastructure and retail services to meet resident's needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Urban Design Report (Appendix B) included an analysis of public open space within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. It identified a lack of activated quality open space accessible by walking or cycling. The Planning Proposal addresses the need by providing a new high-quality green and publicly accessible area of open space where people can exercise, socialise, relax and study. 	✓
12	<i>Influence travel behaviour to promote sustainable choices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal promotes a transit-oriented development approach to reduce dependence on private cars for short trips and encourage public transport use. The Planning Proposal will deliver a transit-orientated precinct to help support this shift in travel behaviour. 	✓
13	<i>Expand and improve the active transport network</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal urban structure has been organised to prioritise pedestrian and cycling connectivity through a connected grid of legible and permeable active transport connections. This includes a through-Site link to planned cycle infrastructure on Castle Street. The proposed footbridge over Pennant Street will also improve pedestrian access from the Site into Castle Hill's urban core and the Metro Station. 	✓
15	<i>Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LSPS recommends one active open space area per 4,000 people in high density areas, requiring Council to deliver 21 additional fields above those already planned. The Planning Proposal will help address this need in Castle Hill by providing new high-quality publicly accessible park. 	✓
18	<i>Increase urban tree canopy cover</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Proposal increases the Site's urban tree canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%, being consistent with the targets established in the District Plan. 	✓

Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan

The Precinct Plan was adopted by The Hills Shire Council on 11 June 2024 and sets the 20-year vision for the long-term development of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. The Precinct Plan envisages that the Castle Hill Strategic Centre by 2041 will be:

The next evolution of Castle Hill as a vibrant and resilience CBD for The Shire will be dependent on having the right mix and amount of different land uses within the Centre. The Precinct Plan identifies the need to make more capacity for job-generating commercial development and community, civic, leisure and social uses. Residents and visitors to Castle Hill will enjoy a thriving cultural landscape, with a rich offering of theatre, literary and civic events. The status of Castle Hill as a high quality Strategic Centre for The Hills will be reinforced through the promotion of quality-built form outcomes and public domain elements.

The Castle Hill Precinct Plan provides a framework and vision based on transport-oriented development to capitalise on the precinct's proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station to promote a connected and walkable precinct, which accommodates a mix of uses.

The Precinct Plan recognises the site as Focus Area 6 (refer to **Figure 25**), it is envisaged that this Focus Area will feature a high-density mixed-use development, surrounding a large open space area in the centre of the focus area. The Planning Proposal seeks to facilitate the intended outcomes identified for the Site under the Precinct Plan, delivering a thriving mixed-use precinct for the future community. A series of design principles have been developed for the Site, relating to land use, built form, public domain, connectivity and infrastructure. These are provided in Urban Design Report (**Appendix B**).

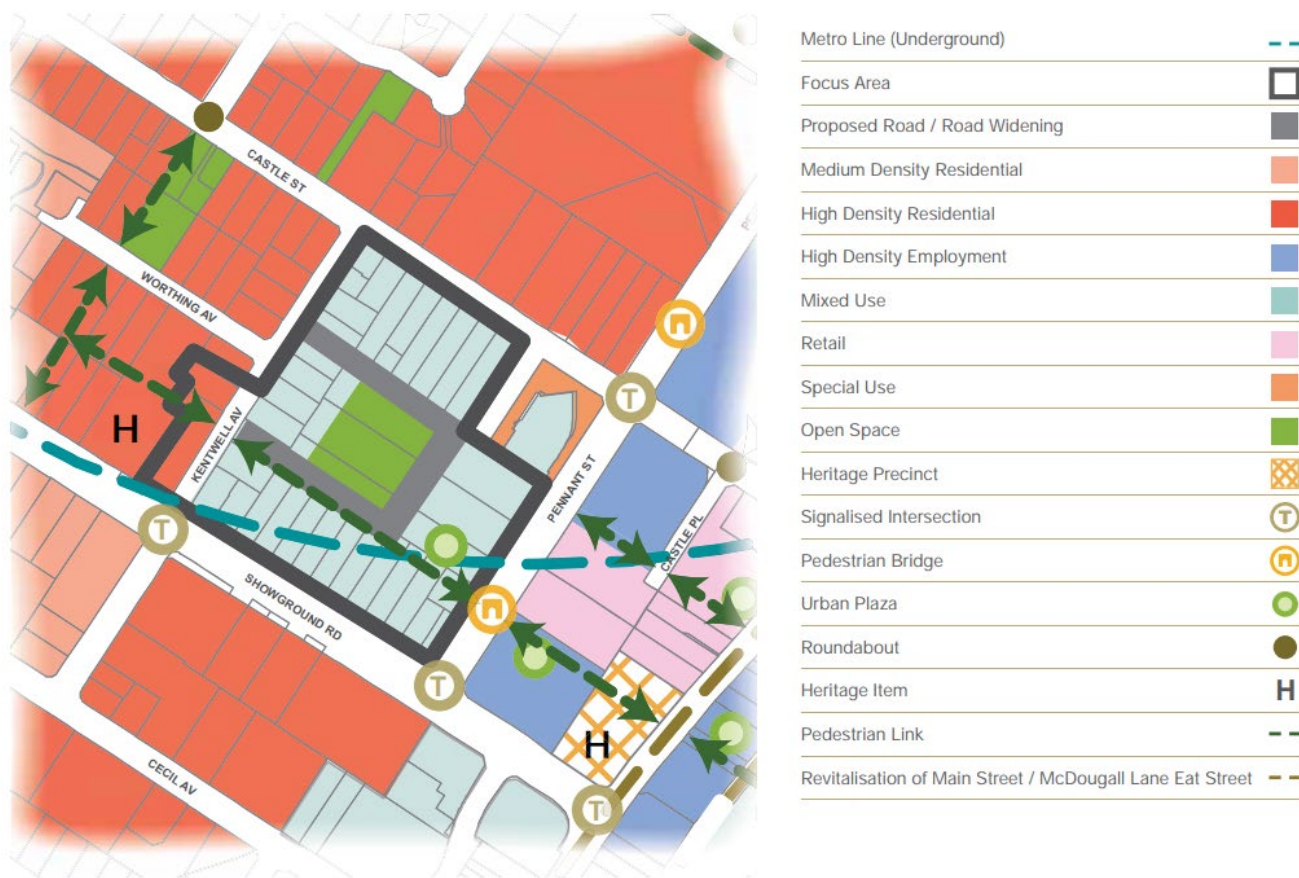


Figure 48. Indicative Layout Plan

Figure 25 Structure Plan Focus Area – Focus Area 6

Source: Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan

The Hills Housing Strategy to 2036

The Hills LSPS is supported by The Hills Housing Strategy, which plans for the growth of approximately 38,000 new homes in The Hills Shire LGA by 2036. The Housing Strategy highlights that the seven Sydney Metro station precincts in the LGA, including Castle Hill, are forecast for an uplift in jobs and housing. These precincts are intended to be carefully planned along transport-orientated principles to provide a mix of land uses, improve public areas and create walkable places.

Of the seven station precincts, Castle Hill is anticipated to accommodate the second-highest number of new dwellings (6,500 by 2036). While the Castle Hill North Precinct has undergone strategic planning to accommodate 3,300 new homes, the Housing Strategy notes that the remainder of Castle Hill requires master planning and subsequent rezoning. Accordingly, this Planning Proposal intends to facilitate this process.

Castle Hill North Precinct

In response to the northwest metro, a Precinct Plan and Planning Proposal was prepared and approved for Castle Hill North to accommodate approximately 3,300 new dwellings. The precinct is located immediately north of the Site and was identified for uplift due to its proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station and Castle Towers Shopping Centre. The Precinct Plan acknowledges the need for new open space and recreation facilities to serve the predominant family demographic anticipated to reside in the area. The Planning Proposal addresses this need through the envisioned 3,500sqm high-amenity urban public park, public plaza and integrated Woodward Sports and Recreation Facility. Therefore, the Proposal will serve the needs of residents moving into the Castle Hill North Precinct as well as future residents at the Site.

As shown in **Figure 26** below, the Precinct Plan proposes 12-storey buildings along Castle Street immediately opposite the Site. The Planning Proposal is strategically aligned with this vision by proposing complementary building heights along Castle Street (Lot C – 12-storeys & Lot E – 14-storeys), with building heights tapering up toward the envisioned marker development at the corner of Showground Road and Pennant Street. This design provides an appropriate height transition from the terraces proposed on the fringe of the North Precinct to the urban core of Castle Hill.

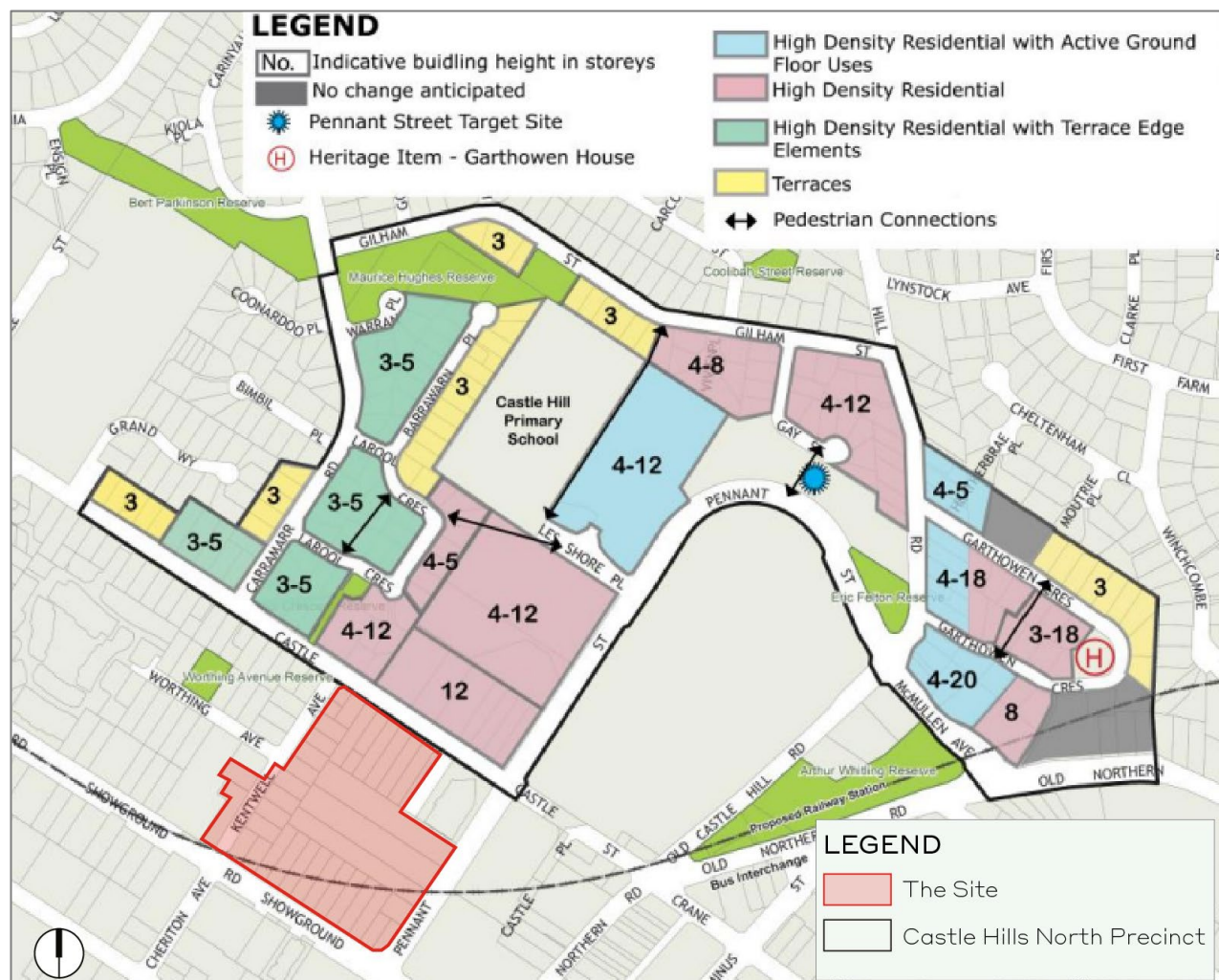


Figure 26 Castle Hills North Precinct Building Heights

Source: Hills Development Control Plan, edits by Ethos Urban

Hills Corridor Strategy

In 2015, The Hills Shire Council released their Hills Corridor Strategy (the Corridor Strategy) to articulate Council's response to land development near Metro Stations. The Corridor Strategy identified the Site as one of the few sizeable development Sites without significant constraints and noted that vacant Sites near the Castle Hill Strategic Centre provide an opportunity for redevelopment. The Strategy anticipated the Site being developed solely for employment purposes with a **minimum** FSR of 3.25:1; however, as discussed in **Section 7.0**, this vision is superseded by Council's most recent strategic planning via The Hills LSPS, which now envisions the Site as a mixed-use precinct. The Planning Proposal adopts The Hills Strategy's principles for the 'core' of Castle Hill and mixed-use development by:

- Providing activated ground floor retail and commercial ground floor uses adjacent to a new plaza and park.
- Delivering permeable pedestrian and cycling through-Site links.
- Facilitating the development of tall and well-designed buildings to reinforce Castle Hill as a high-quality Strategic Centre.

Q5. Is the planning proposal consistent with any other applicable State and regional studies or strategies?

Northwest Rail Link Corridor Strategy

In 2013, the NSW Department of Planning prepared a structure plan as part of their Northwest Rail Link Corridor Strategy to identify opportunities for growth surrounding the (at the time) proposed Castle Hill Metro Station. As part of its opportunities and constraints analysis, the structure plan identified the Site as one of the few sizeable development Sites without significant constraints such as threatened species, existing open space, heritage, steep topography or special uses (see **Figure 27**). Given the absence of constraints and the Site's proximity to the Metro Station, the plan identified the Site as a short-term opportunity for redevelopment.



Figure 27 Constraints Analysis

Source: Department of Planning, 2013

National Housing Accord and NSW Housing Targets (2024)

Under the National Housing Accord, the NSW Government commits to 5-year housing growth by targeting a state-wide delivery of 377,000 well-located homes, of which 23,300 new homes are expected to be delivered in The Hills LGA by 2029. The Planning Proposal will contribute to achieving The Hills LGA housing target by:

- Delivering approximately 1,431 dwellings that increase housing choice and provide new homes that can cater to the changing needs of the population;
- Foster the delivery of transport-oriented development by significantly increasing the supply of residential floor space in proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station;
- Facilitate a high amenity mixed use precinct by providing a total of 5 open spaces to enable adequate support for higher density living;
- Support essential residential needs by co-locating housing with the key services and infrastructure such as the Castle Hill Metro Station;
- Position housing at a high-demand location to provide better access to employment within Castle Hill and in close access to other major employment centres such as Sydney CBD and Parramatta CBD.

Future Transport 2056

Future Transport Strategy 2056 is a 40-year strategy to achieve the Government's vision for the city's transport system, supported by the Greater Sydney Region Plan and relevant District Plans. Given the increasing emphasis on growth of jobs and housing in Greater Sydney, and the need to maximise the existing public transport

network, it places a significant focus in the new plan on transport-oriented development and public transport investment. The Planning Proposal is consistent with the Strategy as it will:

- Integrate land use and transport by increasing density in close proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station;
- Improve liveability by providing key retail services, community facilities and employment floorspace within Castle Hill Strategic Centre which has been earmarked as a strategic centre, thereby allowing residents to work locally and meet the objectives of the '30-minute city';
- Improve sustainability by reducing reliance on private motor vehicles and increasing vegetative cover at the Site; and
- Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist access and safety by providing a high quality open spaces, internal off-road shared paths, through-Site links and pedestrian connections with surroundings within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. Specifically, the Proposal will connect the Heritage Square with Site B and the Castle Hill Metro Station via the future Pennant Street pedestrian bridge as well as internal pedestrian links respectively.

Summary of Strategic and Site-specific Merit

The *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* sets out that a Planning Proposal needs to demonstrate that it meets the Strategic Merit Test. The consistency of this Planning Proposal with the assessment criteria is set out below.

Does the proposal have strategic merit?

Part 3 of the *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* establishes assessment criteria for determining if Planning Proposals have strategic merit:

a) *Does the proposal have strategic merit? Is it:*

- *Consistent with the relevant regional plan outside of the Greater Sydney Region, the relevant district plan within the Greater Sydney Region, or corridor/precinct plans applying to the Site, including any draft regional, district or corridor/precinct plans released for public comment; or*
- *Consistent with a relevant local council strategy that has been endorsed by the Department; or*
- *Responding to a change in circumstances, such as the investment in new infrastructure or changing demographics trends that have not been recognised by existing planning controls.*

As outlined in the preceding sections, the Planning Proposal is:

- Consistent with all applicable strategic planning policies, including the Region Plan, District Plan, Hills LSPS and accompanying strategy for housing. Key aspects of consistency with these policies include:
 - Delivering housing within walking distance of open space, shops, services and public transport to help meet the forecast need of 207,500 new homes in the district by 2036 and realise the broader vision of a 30-minute city. The housing proposed is appropriately located outside Castle Hill's commercial core yet still within walking distance of it and the Castle Hill Metro Station.
 - Providing diverse housing options to meet the housing needs of the existing community, including improving housing choices for single groups and families.
 - Providing the community with a well-designed public open space that is integrated with the broader Castle Hill movement network and will complement the existing Castle Hill Library and proposed public plaza. This space will bring people together and support social cohesion.
 - Aligning the delivery of housing with existing infrastructure, including the Castle Hills Metro Station. Furthermore, it will deliver social infrastructure in the form of a public park to meet the shortfall of open space for future residents.
 - Delivering new residential, retail and commercial floorspace that is compatible with role and function of Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre.
 - Adopting a place-based approach to facilitate the delivery of a fine grain, walkable and vibrant mixed-used precinct that exhibits design excellence.
 - Deliver an increase in urban tree canopy to combat urban heat islands and provide habitat for native fauna, and include best-practice technologies and design measures to create a community that supports the transition to renewable energy sources.
 - Responds directly to The Hills LSPS and Local Housing Strategy, which identifies the Site as a mixed-use precinct that can help meet Council's target of 6,500 new dwellings in Castle Hill by 2036.
 - Providing additional employment floorspace to help accommodate the 6,200 to 9,700 future jobs forecast in Castle Hill.

Given the above reasons, the Planning Proposal strongly aligns with Council's vision of Castle Hill as a *"vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station"* (p. 34).

Does the proposal have site-specific merit?

Part 3 of the *Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline* establishes assessment criteria for determining if Planning Proposals have site-specific merit:

- b) *Does the proposal have site-specific merit, having regard to the following?*
- *the natural environment (including known significant environmental values, resources, or hazards); and*
 - *the existing uses, approved uses, and likely future uses or land in the vicinity of the proposal; and*
 - *the services and infrastructure that are or will be available to meet the demands arising from the proposal and any proposed financial arrangements for infrastructure provision.*

As outlined in the preceding sections of this report, the Planning Proposal has site-specific merit for the following reasons:

- The Site's existing land use zoning permits the range of uses envisioned on the Site.
- The increased density proposed at the Site aligns with the future character of Castle Hill as articulated in the LSPS. Particularly given the Site's location near the urban core of Castle Hill and adjacent to the Castle Hill North Precinct.
- Services and infrastructure are available to meet the demands of the Planning Proposal.
- The Site is not encumbered by significant constraints including, strata ownership, threatened species, existing open space, heritage, steep topography or existing special uses
- The Planning Proposal will be underpinned by a Public Benefit Offer to enter into a Planning Agreement which would provide for the delivery of a high-quality public park to contribute to the open space needs of the community. This addresses the lack of open space with the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.

Summary

This Planning Proposal achieves both the strategic merit and site-specific merit criteria, and therefore the Planning Proposal should be supported.

Q6. Is the Planning Proposal consistent with applicable State Environment Planning Policies?

The State Environmental Planning Policies directly applicable to the Planning Proposal are identified in **Table 13**

Table 13 Consistency with State Environmental Planning Policies

SEPP	Consistent		N/A	Comment
	Yes	No		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008			✓	Not relevant to proposed amendment. May apply to future development on the Site.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021	✓			<p>An assessment of the masterplan against the Apartment Design Guide (ADG) has been undertaken by Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day, which has confirmed that compliance with ADG provisions is achievable in detailed design. Refer to Appendix B.</p> <p>A detailed assessment against ADG provisions will be included at the detailed DA stage of the Proposal.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021			✓	No signage is proposed.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021			✓	The future development of the Site is likely to be deemed as 'regional development'.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Central River City) 2021	✓			No amendments to the Central River City SEPP are necessary as a result of the proposed LEP amendment.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	✓			<p>SEPP (Resilience and Hazard) 2021 aims to promote the remediation of contaminated land for the purpose of reducing the risk of harm to human health or any other aspect of the environment. It specifically requires consideration when rezoning land and in determining development applications and requires that remediation work meets certain standards and notification requirements.</p> <p>A Detailed Site Investigation and a Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Advice on Contaminated Land Management (Appendix L) were prepared for the Site as part of the Castle Towers Expansion Project (DA864/2015/JP) and for this Planning Proposal. Those investigations identified several contaminants across the Site, including asbestos in filling. The RAP outlines a recommended remediation strategy to be undertaken by an asbestos contractor as part of site preparation works. The RAP concludes the implementation of the remediation strategy will minimise the potential impacts on human health and the environment and render the Site suitable for development.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy) 2021			✓	Not relevant to the proposed LEP amendment.

SEPP	Consistent	N/A	Comment
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022		✓	Not directly relevant to the proposed LEP amendments. However, the SEPP controls may apply to future DAs, subject to the estimated development cost of residential and non-residential development components on the Site.
State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	✓		The Planning Proposal is accompanied by a Geotechnical Review prepared by Douglas Partners (Appendix G). The Review understands that Sydney Metro tunnels are located beneath the Site's southern portion at RL 119.7m, approximately 1m below the proposed basement level for this part of the Site. The Review recommends that a Geotechnical Impact Assessment is prepared at the development application stage to assess the potential impacts of a proposed development on the Sydney Metro tunnels. Section 2.100 would apply to future development applications as part of the Site is located above a Sydney Metro tunnel. The Proponent will engage with Sydney Metro to ensure that future development above the corridor does not adversely impact the Metro tunnels.

Q7. Is the Planning Proposal consistent with the applicable Ministerial Directions (Section 9.1 Directions) or key government priority?

The proposal's consistency with applicable Section 9.1 Directions is assessed in **Table 14**.

Table 14 Assessment of Section 9.1 Directions

Ministerial Direction	Consistent			Comment
	Yes	No	N/A	
Focus area 1: Planning Systems				
1.1 Implementation of Regional Plans	✓		-	As demonstrated in Section 7.0 , the Planning Proposal is consistent with the Greater Sydney Regional Plan.
1.2 Development of Aboriginal Land Council land			✓	Not applicable
1.3 Approval and Referral Requirements	✓			The Planning Proposal is not designated development, and it would not require the concurrence of the DPHI.
1.4 Site Specific Provisions			✓	The Planning Proposal does not seek to amend an environmental planning instrument to permit a certain land use.
Focus area 1: Planning Systems – Place-based				
1.5 Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy			✓	Not applicable
1.6 Implementation of North West Priority Growth Area Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan			✓	Not applicable
1.7 Implementation of Greater Parramatta Priority Growth Area Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan			✓	Not applicable

Ministerial Direction	Consistent	Comment
1.8 Implementation of Wilton Priority Growth Area Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan	✓	Not applicable
1.9 Implementation of Glenfield to Macarthur Urban Renewal Corridor	✓	Not applicable
1.10 Implementation of Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan	✓	Not applicable
1.11 Implementation of Bayside West Precincts 2036 Plan	✓	Not applicable
1.12 Implementation of Planning Principles for the Cooks Cove Precinct	✓	Not applicable
1.13 Implementation of St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Plan	✓	Not applicable
1.14 Implementation of Greater Macarthur 2040	✓	Not applicable
1.15 Implementation of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy	✓	Not applicable
1.16 North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy	✓	<p>The planning proposal is consistent with this ministerial direction as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposal aligns with the principles of transport-oriented development by facilitating a high-density, mixed-use precinct that includes a legible network of new pedestrian and cycling connections, all within close proximity of the Castle Hill Metro Station. <p>The Proposal realises the aim of the Castle Hill Structure Plan by facilitating the development of a 'short term opportunity uses' site with an appropriate balance of diverse housing and employment opportunities to create a vibrant and active centre.</p>
1.17 Implementation of the Bays West Place Strategy	✓	Not applicable
1.18 Implementation of the Macquarie Park Innovation Precinct	✓	Not applicable
1.19 Implementation of the Westmead Place Strategy	✓	Not applicable
1.20 Implementation of the Camellia-Rosehill Place Strategy	✓	Not applicable
1.21 Implementation of South West Growth Area Structure Plan	✓	Not applicable
1.22 Implementation of the Cherrybrook Station Place Strategy	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 2: Design and Place		
Focus area 3: Biodiversity and Conservation		
3.1 Conservation Zones	✓	Not applicable
3.2 Heritage Conservation	✓	Not applicable
3.3 Sydney Drinking Water Catchments	✓	Not applicable

Ministerial Direction	Consistent	Comment
3.4 Application of C2 and C3 Zones and Environmental Overlays in Far North Coast LEPs	✓	Not applicable
3.5 Recreation Vehicle Areas	✓	Not applicable
3.6 Strategic Conservation Planning	✓	Not applicable
3.7 Public Bushland	✓	Not applicable – the Site does not contain public bushland.
3.8 Willandra Lakes Region	✓	Not applicable
3.9 Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Waterways Area	✓	Not applicable
3.10 Water Catchment Protection	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 4: Resilience and Hazards		
4.1 Flooding	✓	The Site is not located within flood prone land.
4.2 Coastal Management	✓	Not applicable
4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection	✓	Not applicable
4.4 Remediation of Contaminated Land	✓	A Detailed Site Investigation and a Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Advice on Contaminated Land Management (Appendix L) were prepared for the Site as part of the Castle Towers Expansion Project (DA864/2015/JP) and for this Planning Proposal. Those investigations identified several contaminants across the Site, including asbestos in filling. The RAP outlines a recommended remediation strategy to be undertaken by an asbestos contractor as part of site preparation works. The RAP concludes the implementation of the remediation strategy will minimise the potential impacts on human health and the environment and render the Site suitable for development.
4.5 Acid Sulfate Soils	✓	The Site is not identified as being land subject to acid sulfate soils.
4.6 Mine Subsidence and Unstable Land	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 5: Transport and Infrastructure		
5.1 Integrating Land Use and Transport	✓	Not applicable
5.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes	✓	This direction does not apply to the Site.
5.3 Development Near Regulated Airports and Defence Airfields	✓	Not applicable
5.4 Shooting Ranges	✓	Not applicable
5.5 High Pressure Dangerous Goods Pipelines	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 6: Housing		
6.1 Residential Zones	✓	<p>The Planning Proposal will meet the objectives of this direction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making more efficient use of the Site's proximity to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.

Ministerial Direction	Consistent	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an increase in housing diversity and supply. • Facilitating design excellence. • Proposing a requirement that residential development is not permitted until land is adequately serviced (or arrangements satisfactory to the council, or other appropriate authority, have been made to service it). <p>Not proposing provision which will reduce the permissible residential density of land.</p>
6.2 Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home Estates	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 7: Industry and Employment		
7.1 Business and Industrial Zones	✓	<p>The Planning Proposal will meet the objectives of this direction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging employment through the provision of retail and commercial floor space across several developments. • Does not reduce overall employment floor space in Castle Hill. <p>Retaining the B4 Mixed Use zone.</p>
7.2 Reduction in non-hosted short-term rental accommodation period	✓	Not applicable
7.3 Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 8: Resources and Energy		
8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries	✓	Not applicable
Focus area 9: Primary Production		
9.1 Rural Zones	✓	Not applicable
9.2 Rural Lands	✓	Not applicable
9.3 Oyster Aquaculture	✓	Not applicable
9.4 Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast	✓	Not applicable

7.2 Site-specific merit

7.2.1 Section C – environmental, social and economic impact

Q8. Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of the proposal?

No. The Planning Proposal is unlikely to result in any impact on critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities or their habitats. These matters can be appropriately considered at the development application stage, if relevant.

Q9. Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

A detailed assessment of the environmental effects as a result of the Planning Proposal is identified in **Section 8.0** of this report. Relevant management measures are identified where appropriate and, on this basis, no unacceptable impacts are likely to result from the Planning Proposal or future development on the Site. Key management measures comprise:

- Preparation of a site-specific amendment to The Hills Development Control Plan to provide more detailed development guidance.
- Assessment of future Development Application/s for the development of the Site by Council.
- Legal mechanisms associated with the proposed Planning Agreement for the delivery of public open space.

Q10. Has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

Yes. The social and economic impacts arising from the Planning Proposal is identified in **Section 8.0** of this report. The social and economic impacts will be positive. They include:

- Providing a catalyst for economic growth at a time of economic recovery, through stimulating investment, construction and business activity by way of a \$700 million investment.
- Supporting additional housing supply, improving resident choice, and supporting population growth within a high amenity precinct, close to transport, employment opportunities as well as social and community infrastructure.
- Increasing housing diversity and choice through the approximately 1,410 apartments which will support the delivery of new housing opportunities and price points within proximity to transport infrastructure and retail amenity.
- New residents will support higher levels of activity, including retail expenditure throughout the local area. These additional residents at the Site may direct around \$35.5 million each year to retail goods and services in the area, taking into account the average level of retail spending per capita within the Castle Hill region of around \$16,800 each year. This enhances local employment and business opportunities during weekdays and also after-hours and on weekends.
- Delivering increased employment generating opportunities and flow-on economic activity both during construction and on an ongoing basis once operational. Based on a construction cost of \$700 million, the construction phase is expected to directly support employment of 1,060 job-years and deliver a direct value-add to the economy of \$146 million. On completion of the proposed development, the operational phase is expected to deliver 930 ongoing jobs and direct value-add to the economy of \$106.8 million per annum.
- Revitalising an underutilised site that is currently vacant, with little to no activity since the removal of previous buildings from the Site in 2010. The Site is in a prime position, being adjacent to Castle Towers Shopping Centre, and the existing library and theatre as well as within 400m of Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Supporting strategic priorities for Castle Hill as a growing Strategic Centre through the delivery of a contemporary mixed-use community that will support additional housing stock and walkability by activating a high-profile underutilised Site.

7.2.2 Section D – Infrastructure (Local, State and Commonwealth)

Q11. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

The Site is well serviced by public transport, with the nearby Metro Station providing frequent, high-speed services to Tallawong, Macquarie Park, North Sydney, Chatswood, the Sydney CBD and Sydenham. When complete, the Metro network will provide high speed turn up and go services to Bankstown (2026) and from the CBD to Parramatta (~2030). In addition, the area is well serviced by existing bus routes, with bus services available to Blacktown, Parramatta, Hornsby, Epping, Pennant Hills at the Metro Station's bus stops. The Site is also strategically positioned near the Sydney motorway network, with the M2 Motorway located approximately 5km south along Old Northern and Windsor Roads.

In addition to good public transport, Castle Hill contains retail, commercial and community uses. Its centrepiece, the Castle Towers Shopping Centre (immediately east of the Site), has expanded rapidly in the past two decades to provide a high quantum of retail floor space. Nearby education and community facilities include the Castle Hill Public School (250m to north-east), Castle Hill Library (directly adjacent to the Site), Castle Hill High School (450m to the north-west) and the Castle Hill Medical Centre (300m to the east).

As noted in **Section 2.5.1**, the Proponent previously entered into Voluntary Planning Agreement with TfNSW to fund significant upgrade works to Showground Road to increase Castle Hill's road capacity. These works, coupled with QIC's intention to pursue a separate development scheme for Castle Towers with a reduced retail floor

space increases the capacity of the surrounding road network to accommodate the Planning Proposal. Furthermore, services and infrastructure are available to meet the demands of the Planning Proposal.

7.2.3 Section E – State and Commonwealth Interests

Q12. What are the views of state and federal public authorities and government agencies consulted in order to inform the Gateway determination?

Given the nature of the Planning Proposal it is not expected that referral to any Commonwealth agency would be required. Where necessary, further consultation with relevant authorities will be undertaken as required in accordance with the Gateway Determination. State and Commonwealth authorities will have the opportunity to provide comment on the Planning Proposal as part of its formal exhibition. Consultation with Sydney Metro will be undertaken in relation to relationship between future development of the Site and the Sydney Metro tunnel.

8.0 Environmental Assessment

This section provides an environmental assessment of the proposed planning controls and the indicative development those controls are capable of accommodating.

8.1 Built Form and Public Domain

8.1.1 Height

The proposed building heights across the Site have been designed with consideration of the Site’s strategic context, topography and the future character of its surrounding context.

The Region, District and Hills LSPS identify Castle Hill as an anchoring Strategic Centre capable of development uplift and renewal. Each acknowledges the opportunities generated by the construction of the Castle Hill Metro Station to support a higher-density transit-orientated neighbourhood within walking distance of the Station. Indeed, the Hills LSPS states that Castle Hill is to be a “*vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station*” [emphasis added] (p. 34). The proposed building heights align with this strategic context and are comparable with other Strategic Centres in Sydney (see **Table 15**).

Table 15 Comparison of Planning Controls across Strategic Centres

Centre Name	Maximum Height
The Site – existing controls	7m, 9m, 19m and 28m
The Site – proposed controls	Various height ranging from 20m to 88m
Macquarie University	120 metres
Chatswood	90m
Hornsby	77.5 metres
Blacktown	80m
St Leonards	180m
Hills Showground	68m
Bella Vista	68m

The Site’s topography steadily increases from a high of approximately 116m AHD at the corner of Kentwell Ave and Castle Street to an approximate height 134m AHD at the corner of Pennant Street and Showground Road. As such, this street corner is an ideal location for a distinctive development as envisioned by The Hills Corridor Strategy. Therefore, the masterplan positions the tallest tower (26-storeys) on this street corner to function as a landmark development within Castle Hill’s urban core. This building will function as a major point of arrival into the heart of Castle Hill.

As shown in **Figure 28** and **Figure 29**, building heights step down from this landmark building, with the lowest towers (12-storeys) located along Kentwell Street. In addition, alignment and consistency in terms of height is achieved with the Castle Hill North Precinct, as 12 to 14 storeys are proposed for Lots C and E, which aligns with its southern edge along Castle Street.

As detailed within the sections below, the building heights proposed also result in satisfactory impacts both environmentally and visually on the Site and its surrounds. Further, as discussed previously in **Section 4.2**, the building height arrangement liberates the ground plane from dominant and centralised masses of building when compared to a compliant scheme. This enables for a greater level of public benefits to be derived in the form of generous public open spaces including a park and plazas, in addition to improved site permeability through internal streets and pedestrian pathways. Greater opportunities for tree planting and landscaping are also realised as a result.

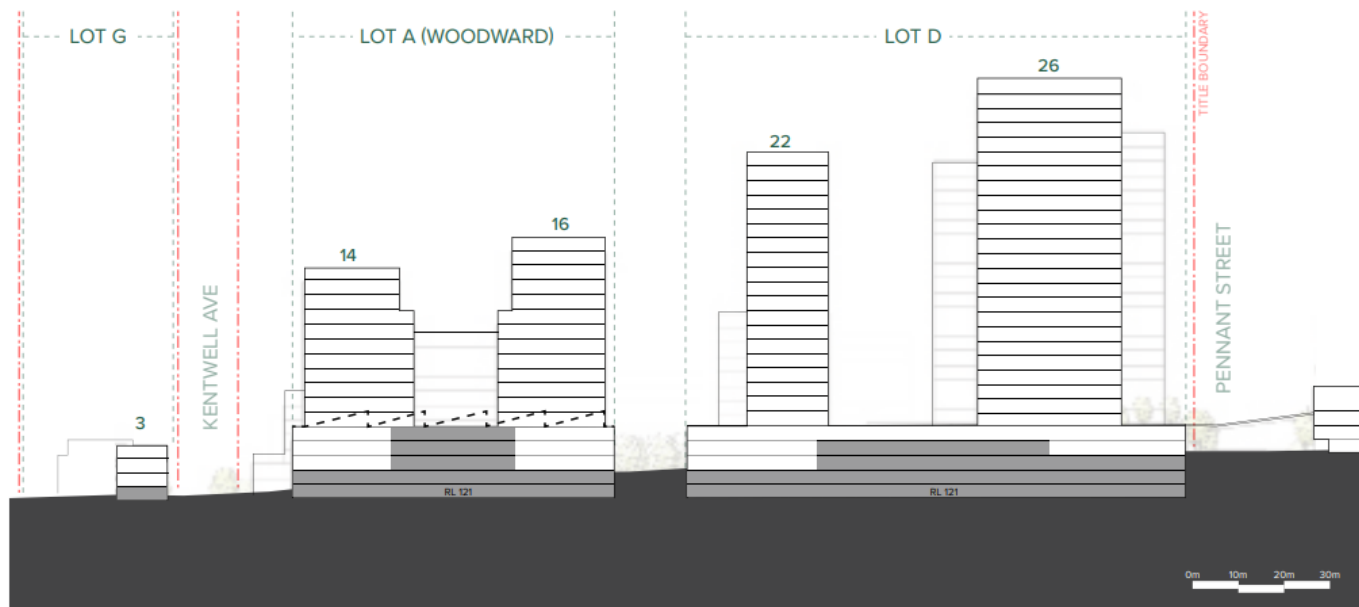


Figure 28 Site Section

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

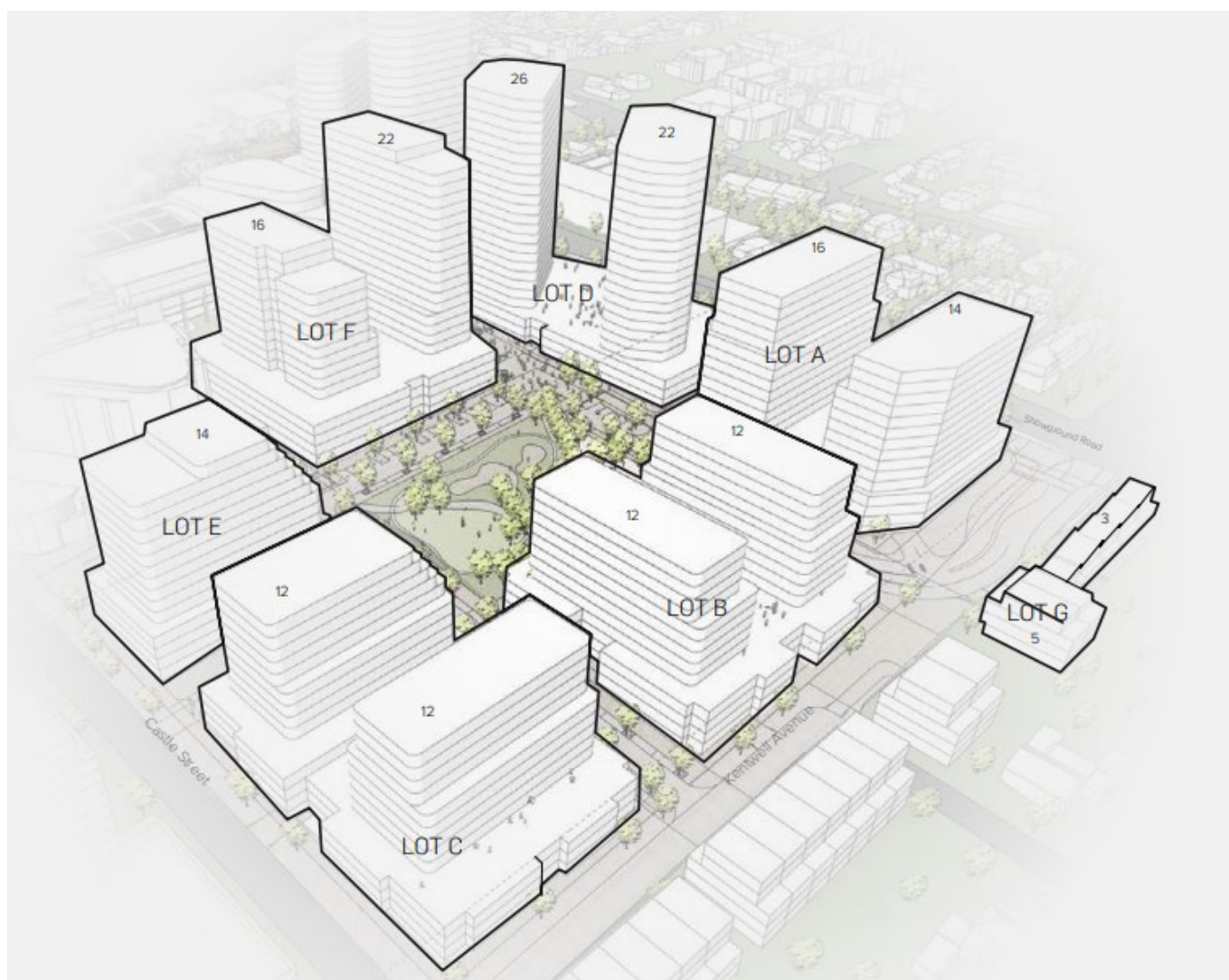


Figure 29 Site Massing

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

8.1.2 Visual Impact

Figure 30 to **Figure 33** below provide indicative photomontages that illustrate the visual impact of the Planning Proposal and masterplan from surrounding streets. As shown, the masterplan will affect existing views of the site and contribute to changing high-density visual setting of Castle Hill per its role and function as a Strategic Centre. This change is reflective of Castle Hill's strategic context, which, as described in **Section 7.0**, is envisioned as a *“vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station”* (p. 34). The Planning Proposal and masterplan appropriately manage these changes by:

Providing a landmark building on the corner of Pennant Street and Showground Road to create a visually appealing skyline and function as a major point of arrival into the heart of Castle Hill.

Tapering building heights away from the landmark building to create appropriate visual interfaces with surrounding land uses and reinforce the landmark building and adjacent commercial core as the heart of Castle Hill. As shown in **Figure 33**, this design approach creates an appropriate visual transition as commuters and pedestrians enter Castle Hill's core.

Furthermore, as shown in **Figure 30**, the tower forms in the masterplan will visually complement existing taller forms within Castle Hill's centre, including the Top Place Sky View Towers, creating a visually coherent skyline organised around the Castle Hill Metro Station and Castle Towers Shopping Centre.



Figure 30 View from 41 Castle Street

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

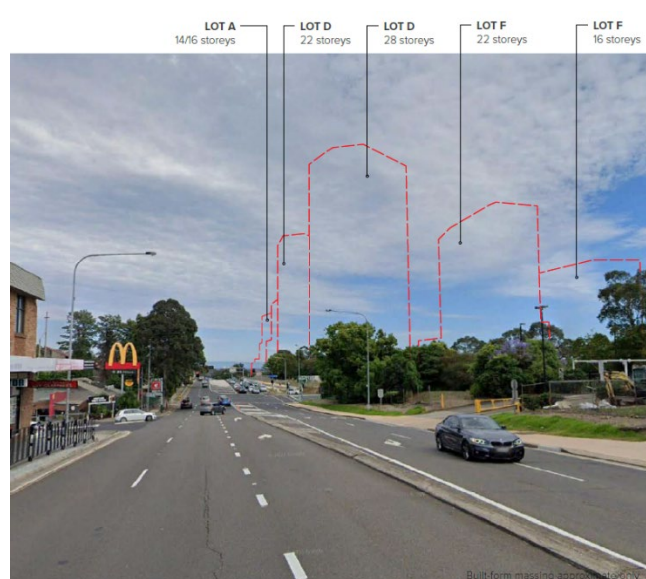


Figure 31 View from Old Northern/Showground Road

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

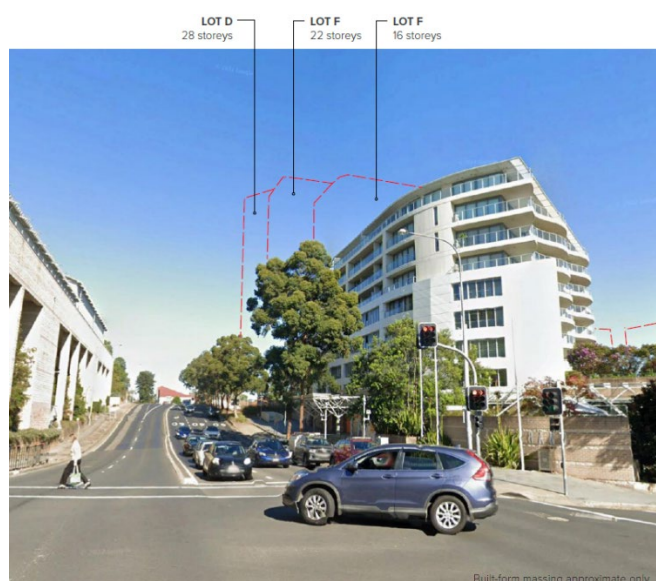


Figure 32 View from 16 Pennant Street

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

Figure 33 View from 53 Showground Road

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

8.1.3 Solar Access and Overshadowing

The layout and orientation of buildings have been designed to maximise solar access to the centrally located public park between 11am and 2pm on 21 June. This was achieved by reducing the buildings heights of towers located at the north of the Site and orientating the towers on Lot B to maximise afternoon sun.

Lower-lying residential land-uses are located to the north of the site and are thus not negatively impacted by the proposal in terms of solar access. The primary shadow impact is to south of the development, with shadows falling mainly on the wide roadways and towards the Castle Hill urban core, with only minor impact to the residential areas to the west of the site.

As shown in the below shadow diagrams, the park receives good solar access during these hours. In particular, the active play space, which was strategically located in the southern portion of the park, receives consistent solar access during these hours.



Figure 34 Shadow Diagrams (11am – 2pm on 21 June)

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

Some level of overshadowing is expected and acceptable due to the park's central location within an urban environment. The park's central location was determined as the most appropriate location for the following reasons:

- The central location maximises direct access to the park for all developments in the future precinct.
- The park will enhance the use of ground-floor retail and commercial floor space in the podiums of Lots F and D. In turn, this retail and commercial floor space will enhance the use of the park.
- The proposed footbridge over Pennant Street integrates well with the park's location and creates a fine-grain plaza between the footbridge, plaza and Lot F and D podiums. Locals and visitors will be able to transition conveniently between the park, plaza, and activated ground floor uses in the podiums.

- The park and internal street will benefit from excellent passive surveillance from future developments on all sides, creating a safer urban environment.
- The Castle Hills Library will benefit from an interface and views into the park. This will encourage library users to borrow a book and sit in the park, contributing to a vibrant and social urban environment. The park will also interface with the Woodward Sports and Recreation Facility. Again, users from the facility will be drawn to the park, reinforcing the park's potential to be an anchoring community space for the new precinct.
- Sightlines are enabled from Castle Street, Showground Road and Pennant Street into the park and vice versa. This should improve pedestrian wayfinding in the area.

Further to the above, at development application stage, the internal layout of each development will be designed to ensure that at least 70% of apartments receive a minimum of 2 hours of direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm in midwinter per solar access provisions of the ADG. Compliance with these provisions is deemed attainable given the site's orientation and location, in addition to the proposed indicative siting and layouts of the buildings, refer to **Appendix B**.

8.1.4 Building Separation

Building separation has been provided between the proposed residential towers per the ADG setback provisions. Refer to **Appendix B**.

8.1.5 Summary

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by a site-specific DCP Amendment, which includes provisions relating to density, site coverage, setbacks landscaping etc. These provisions will give effect to the Planning Proposal masterplan and will provide a further layer of planning guidance and control in order to appropriately manage the built form impacts of the development as part of the assessment of future development application(s).

The site-specific DCP Amendment also includes details of the proposed public park and public domain to be delivered within the Site, including composition, uses, structures and materials to be employed. It is likely that future Development Application/s will also include conditions of consent requiring the upgrading of footpaths and public domain adjoining the Site.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the Planning Proposal will have no adverse impacts on the built form character or amenity of the existing precinct.

8.2 Traffic and Generation

8.2.1 Traffic Generation and Impact

Stantec has prepared a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) to assess the transport impacts of the Planning Proposal (**Appendix F**). The assessment considered the Site's future development per the proposed masterplan. The report concluded:

- The future development of the Site per the proposed masterplan could potentially generate up to approximately 1,945 person trips during the weekday PM hour. It is estimated that 810 of these trips will be by public transport, 749 via active transport and 387 (inclusive of passengers) by car.
- In comparison to the currently approved and active consent for the expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre (see Section 2.5.1), the Proposal will generate significantly less traffic and thus have a lower impact on the surrounding road network. The estimated traffic generation increase resulting from the development application during the weekday PM peak hour and Saturday midday peak hour was +1,051 and +1,260 vehicle movements, respectively.
- SIDRA modelling shows the following the Site's development:
 - The proposed Showground Road / Kentwell Avenue intersection will have an acceptable intersection performance per the layout proposed in the TIA.
 - The Pennant Street / Castle Street intersection will perform acceptably irrespective of the Council's and TfNSW preferred works to this intersection.
 - The proposed vehicle access points from the Site onto Castle Street and Kentwell Avenue will operate satisfactorily.
- The Planning Proposal relates solely to a future mixed use scheme at Site B (the proposal), which should be assessed on its merits. As demonstrated, the scheme will generate less traffic than the approved retail

expansion DA for Castle Towers. Traffic generation associated with any future Planning Proposals for Site A should be assessed at the appropriate time and on its merits.

8.2.2 Parking

The TIA concludes that the parking requirements outlined in Table 1: Required Minimum Car Parking Provisions of The Hills DCP are inappropriate for the Site as:

- The DCP rates do not give sufficient consideration to the Site’s location adjacent to the Castle Hill Metro Station, which commenced operations after the DCP rates were formulated and has improved public transport accessibility significantly.
- The DCP rates do not have regard to the extent to which car parking at the Centre, and increasingly in the surrounding area, is controlled and managed. The extent of this control and management acts to constrain the available car parking supply, particularly long-term car parking, and thus reduce car parking demand.
- The DCP rates do not have regard to the changing nature of transport and the extent to which mobility as a service technology is resulting in reductions to long-term car parking demands. As the full development of the site is not expected to occur for circa 20 years, it is considered reasonable to expect car parking reliance to reduce as other modes of transport become more prevalent and accessible.

Instead, the TIA recommends parking rates guided by the Castle Hills North DCP, Clause 7.1.1 of The Hills LEP and TfNSW Guide to Traffic Generating Developments. These rates are displayed in **Table 16** below.

Table 16 Parking Rates

Description	Land Use	No. / Size	Maximum Parking Rate	Maximum Parking Provision
Residential	1-bedroom	350	0.5 spaces per unit	175
	2-bedroom	792	0.8 spaces per unit	634
	3-bedroom	289	1.3 spaces per unit	376
Commercial	Commercial Premises	19,184sqm	1 space per 100sqm GFA	384
Showroom	Bulky Goods Premises	1,011sqm	2 spaces per 100sqm GFA	20
Retail / F&B	Shop	2,619sqm	3.5 spaces per 100sqm GFA	92
Supermarket		2,210sqm	3.5 spaces per 100sqm GFA	77
Childcare Facility	Childcare	120 children (12 staff)	0.2 spaces per child	24
Total				1,675 spaces

The masterplan’s envisioned 1,781 parking spaces is generally consistent and does not exceed the maximum parking provision of 1,720 outlined above.

Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed car parking rates to be appropriate and consistent with a contemporary car parking management approach which seeks to constrain traffic generation (and therefore impact to the road network) by limiting car parking provision. This approach is also generally consistent with the endorsed Council Precinct Plan. We note that reduced car parking rates, as is proposed for Site B, should be encouraged as a proactive means to mitigate traffic congestion in the precinct.

8.2.3 Internal Road Design

The TIA includes a swept path assessment to determine the adequacy of the proposed internal road network to accommodate expected vehicle movements and concluded that it could accommodate appropriate vehicle movements, subject to minor design revisions that can be addressed in subsequent design stages. Furthermore, the internal roads are neither too narrow to accommodate expected traffic volumes nor too wide to encourage high vehicle speed.

8.2.4 Vehicle Access

The masterplan envisions four vehicle access locations to the mixed-use precinct:

- Showground Road via a signalised intersection at Kentwell Avenue.
- Pennant Street via a non-signalised left-in / left-out intersection for loading vehicles only. This intersection would be subject to further detailed design and assessment as part of future relevant development applications.
- Castle Street via a non-signalised T -intersection.
- Kentwell Avenue via a non-signalised T-intersection.

The TIA considers these access arrangements to be appropriate for the Site. SIDRA modelling indicates that the Showground Road / Kentwell intersection and the Castle Street and Kentwell Avenue T-intersections will perform acceptably. The loading dock access along Pennant Street is critical to minimise loading movements on the internal road network to suit pedestrians and cyclists. The TIA supports this intersection for the following reasons:

- The vehicle access can be designed with a fully compliant deceleration lane. The vehicle access will be more compliant than the other existing loading dock access points off Pennant Street which have no deceleration lanes.
- The vehicle access is to be restricted to loading and waste collection vehicle movements only. This restriction will mean that the vehicle access carries low level of traffic each day. These vehicle movements may also be able to be further managed to occur outside of road network peak hours via a loading dock management plan that TfNSW can enforce.
- The vehicle access is positioned at a location that was previously approved by TfNSW for a previous development on the site.

Expected Vehicle Movements

- Types of vehicles: The loading dock is expected to be configured with approximately 5 bays, inclusive of bays for vehicles up to 12.5m in length.
- The number of movements of each vehicle size during the day / peak times: Assuming 5 bays, it is expected that there will be a maximum of 5 vehicles accessing the loading dock during any hour of the day (i.e. 1 vehicle accessing each bay per hour). The vast majority of loading activity is expected to occur in the early morning and outside of any road network peak hours. Assuming a peak hour to daily ratio of 10%, this may mean that up to 50 loading vehicles (100 loading movements in total) could be expected per day.
- Full design details of the loading dock (including internal queuing storage): All loading vehicles will be able to enter and exit the loading dock in a forward direction. Further details of the loading dock layout cannot be confirmed at the Planning Proposal stage.

8.2.5 Active Travel

The TIA supports the conclusion that the masterplan's internal layout has been designed to create a walkable and permeable mixed-use precinct. The internal pedestrian network provides access points to all road frontages and the future pedestrian bridge across Pennant Street. Shared pedestrian/cycling paths are provided through the precinct in a north-south and east-west direction to encourage cycling as a preferred mode of transport. There is an opportunity to integrate these paths with Council's proposed cycling routes along Castle Street and Showground Road.

On the basis of the above, the report concludes that the proposed development will not have any unacceptable traffic generation, parking or loading implications.

8.2.6 Showground Road Project (Bus Priority Improvement)

It is understood that part of Lot 2 DP1201722 on the northwest corner of the Showgrounds Road / Kentwell Avenue intersection, which forms part of the site, may be acquired in the future to deliver a Bus Priority Improvement project on Showground Road.

the land that may be potentially acquired is expected to form part of the future road reserve set aside for the delivery of the vehicle access to/from Showground Road at this location. As such, the future acquisition of this land is not expected to impact the vehicle access arrangements or development layout associated with the Planning Proposal.

8.2.7 Intersection of Showground Road/Kentwell Avenue

The intersection has been designed to accord with TfNSW's requirements, and this is confirmed in the architectural plans for the approved Woodward DA. It should be noted that the proposed design has been future proofed to allow provision of a third exit lane if required as part of future DAs.

8.2.8 Loading Dock Access – Pennant Street

The proposed vehicle access arrangements represent the best planning and design outcome for the site, particularly given the Pennant Street vehicle access has been designed to accord with relevant design standards and thus we consider that it can be expected to operate safely.

Furthermore, based on ongoing consultation with TfNSW, it is acknowledged that there is an existing approved driveway off Pennant St. Based on this precedent, TfNSW has confirmed it may be able to consider a loading dock access/egress from Pennant St. The project team will continue to engage with TfNSW on this issue in order to demonstrate that loading access from Pennant St. is acceptable.

Notwithstanding, TfNSW in their response have highlighted that an alternative solution exists, through the proposed internal road network. This alternative solution can be explored further through a future DA process (if required).

Sight Distances

The requirements for sight distance at loading dock access driveways are set out at Figure 3.2 to the Australian Standard for Commercial Loading Facilities (AS2890.1:2004). It indicates that for non-domestic access driveways and the current Pennant Street speed limit of 60km/hr, there is a desirable sight distance of 83m and a minimum sight distance of 65m. These sight distances will be exceeded at the proposed loading dock access, as at a distance of 2.5m back from the existing kerb line, from a driver's eye height and taken 1.15m above the road surface, a minimum available sight distance of approximately 110m is available from the proposed loading exit looking south along Pennant Street. (This distance assumes the relocation of the existing trees which will not be able to be retained once the deceleration lane into the loading dock is provided).

Furthermore, it is noted by Eukai that vehicles on Pennant Street are highly unlikely to be travelling at 60km/hr given the existence of the signalised left-turn and right-turn lanes at the Showground Road / Pennant Road intersection which will stop most traffic before turning.

8.2.9 SIDRA Modelling

As noted above, the Site B Planning Proposal will generate only modest amounts of traffic compared to the previously approved Retail Expansion of Castle Towers Shopping Centre. The Site B Planning Proposal primarily includes residential land uses in a train station precinct. This proposal is entirely consistent with the aspirations of the TfNSW Transit Oriented Development program and we understand that detailed traffic modelling is generally not being completed to support the TOD precincts.

The road network in the area has been assessed in detail by Stantec (formerly Cardno) via Aimsun. This modelling was based on land use yields that are more conservative (i.e. higher) than the actual yields. We understand that Aimsun was used instead of SIDRA as it was agreed that SIDRA would not be able to accurately model this area.

The road infrastructure improvement required for the precinct have already been determined in the Stantec (formerly Cardno) modelling and referenced in Council's Precinct Plan (which has been adopted). It is unclear what additional modelling would be used to inform in the context that the intersection works have already been determined. As such it is considered that there is no current need for updated SIDRA modelling.

8.3 Contamination

A Detailed Site Investigation and a Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Advice on Contaminated Land Management (Appendix L) were prepared for the Site as part of the Castle Towers Expansion Project (DA864/2015/JP) and this Planning Proposal respectively. Investigations identified several contaminants across the Site, including asbestos in filling. The RAP outlines a recommended remediation strategy to be undertaken by an asbestos contractor as part of site preparation works. The RAP concludes the implementation of the remediation strategy will minimise the potential impacts on human health and the environment and render the Site suitable for development.

8.4 Tree Removal

The Arboriculture Impact Assessment prepared for the Stage 3 Castle Towers Shopping Centre expansion DA (discussed in Section 2.5.1) assessed the landscape significance of existing trees at the Site. That assessment identified 67 trees at the Site, comprising a mixture of exotic, introduced native and endemic species, mostly located in groups. These trees were assessed as not being consistent with or representative of an enlarged ecological community, nor were they identified as bushland as defined within The Hills Shire Council's Tree Management on Private Land. Furthermore, DA 864/2015/JP approved the removal of 40 trees at the Site under Condition 16:

16. Tree Removal

Approval is granted for the removal of thirty one (31) trees located on Site A and forty (40) trees located on Site B, as described in Arborist Report prepared by Paul Shearer Consulting on 17 December 2014 version 01, Revision 00.

All other trees, including Council street trees, are to remain are to be protected during all works. Suitable replacement trees are to be planted upon completion of construction.

Therefore, the Planning Proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity. Indeed, the masterplan will increase the Site's urban tree canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%, which provides key environmental benefits such as:

- Increased habitat for local fauna.
- Cooling the urban environment.
- Reduction of stormwater runoff.
- Pollution absorption.

In addition, any development application that results in the removal of trees from the Site will be accompanied by an Arborist Report.

8.5 Geotechnical

Douglas Partners has undertaken a desktop Geotechnical Review to provide preliminary geotechnical advice for the Site's redevelopment (**Appendix G**). This advice is presented below.

Impacts on the Sydney Metro tunnels

Excavation is required for Lots A - F to accommodate the basements envisioned for each development. A maximum excavated depth of 13-14m would be required in the Site's southern corner. The Geotechnical Review identifies existing tunnels for the Sydney Metro Northwest that traverse underneath Lots A, D and F in the Site's southern portion. The Review understands that the rail reserve lies at RL 119.7m, approximately 1m below the proposed basement level for this part of the Site. Therefore, the Review recommends that a Geotechnical Impact Assessment is required at the development application stage to assess the potential impacts of a proposed development on the Sydney Metro tunnels.

Vibration

The results of logging samples show that excavation will be required through medium and high strength bedrock. Excavation of this material using rock hammers will generate vibration, requiring the adoption of an appropriate construction methodology and equipment outlined in the Review. Subject to the conditions of the adjoining sites at the time of rock excavation, the Review recommends a vibration trial determine if smaller or different types of excavation equipment should be used for bulk or detailed excavations.

Groundwater

Groundwater monitoring results in the area indicate the presence of groundwater at depths between 2m and 10m below existing ground surface levels. The Review considers that this groundwater is primarily perched¹ water that lasts for a very short time and will cause intermittent but regular low to moderate seepages. These seepages can be adequately managed through standard 'sump-and-pump' methods.

8.6 Sustainability

¹ Perched water is confined on the top of an impervious to semi-pervious geologic layer. The perched aquifer is separated from the deeper primary aquifer by unsaturated material

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by an Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Report (**Appendix H**). It proposes an ESD framework with targets and initiatives to be carried out through the design development, construction and completion of the project to deliver an exemplar of ecologically sustainable development. These include:

- Incorporating high performance facades, responsive to orientation and overshadowing, to increase thermal comfort and reduce heating and cooling bills for residents.
- Providing sufficient electrical infrastructure capacity to provide residents with the option of having an electrical vehicle charger installed. Installing rooftop photovoltaic panels to contribute to common area electricity consumption. Guidance will also be provided to body corporates and occupants regarding purchasing renewable electricity.
- Collecting organic waste from residents.
- Incorporating green walls to some facades to provide shade, create visual interest and increase biodiversity.
- Rainwater collection from all roads to a central tank under the park for distribution for non-potable water uses (toilets, irrigation etc.) via a recycled water network.

These measures will help create a healthy, resilient, low-energy precinct with excellent access to public transport, community facilities, and employment. The ESD Report also assesses the Planning Proposal's alignment with the ESD principles outlined in Section 193 the Environmental *Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*. The table below summarises this assessment.

Table 17 ESD Principles

ESD Principle	Planning Proposal Response
The precautionary principle	The Planning Proposal does not present a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage. Instead, it will facilitate increased habitat, implement climate change adaptation principles, and apply industry best practice ESD initiatives.
Inter-generational equity	The following measures will be implemented to minimise carbon emissions. All dwellings will be designed to achieve minimum thermal comfort and energy efficiency requirements to reduce energy bills and provide resilience to a changing climate. Photovoltaic panels will be installed on roofs to generate renewable energy.
Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity	The Planning Proposal relates to previously cleared and developed land with limited biological diversity and ecological integrity.
Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms	The ESD framework proposes environmental goals have been established based on industry-recognised rating tools, designed to deliver beneficial environmental and social outcomes during construction and operation.

8.7 Heritage

The site is not listed as a heritage item, nor is it located in a heritage conservation area. Nevertheless, the site is located near three local heritage items including:

- A heritage listed house at 30–34 Showground Road located immediately west of the Site (I66).
- The former police station at 264-266 Old Northern Road located approximately 100m southeast of the Site (I64).
- The former Castle Hill Public School also at 264-266 Old Northern Road (I63).

The Planning Proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on these items. Proposed building heights have been minimised on Lot G to complement the heritage listed house at 30–34 Showground Road and surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed footbridge will improve access and, therefore, enhance the former police station and public school at 264-266 Old Northern Road.

8.8 Local Infrastructure Demand Analysis

The Planning Proposal's envisioned approximately 1410 dwellings would be capable of increasing the Site's population to 2,115 residents based on the average household size of 1.5 persons across the proposed units. This population increase will place an increased demand on local infrastructure, including open space, schools, roads,

pedestrian footpaths, public transport, community facilities and water management. The following sections outline the capacity for existing local infrastructure to accommodate this population growth.

Open Space – active/passive

The NSW Government Architect's draft Greener Places Design Guide sets the following benchmarks for access to open space within a high-density urban environment:

- Residents live within 2-to-3-minute walk / 200m metre walking distance to a local park.
- 0.15ha to 0.5ha of public open space 200m from most houses.
- 2ha to 5ha of public open space 2km from most houses.

As shown in **Figure 34** below, there are currently no local parks within 200m distance of Site B. Moreover, there is an absence of local parks for other residents within Castle Hill, particularly for residents in the Castle Hill North Precinct and to the west of the Site.

The Planning Proposal addresses this infrastructure shortfall by providing a 0.40ha local park in the centre of the Site to maximise open space access for new residents. This will ensure that all new residents will live within 200m walking distance of a local park per the Draft Guide. Importantly, the Planning Proposal will also increase the number of existing and future residents in Castle Hill (but outside Site B) that live within 200m of a local park, particularly the high-density residential dwellings envisioned along Castle Street and Pennant Street. Increasing the amount of open space within an urbanised context is a particular challenge, and so the introduction of a new high-quality local park represents a significant public benefit to Castle Hill.

The Site is also located within 2km of the Castle Hill Heritage Reserve to the north, which is a district sized public open space. Therefore, future residents will have access to a larger open space area per the Draft Guide's benchmarking.



Figure 35 Open Space within Walking Distance of Site B

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

Schools

The Proponent met with NSW School Infrastructure on 20 July 2022 to provide an overview of the project and to discuss the potential demand for school infrastructure arising from future Castle Hill residents of within the residential component of the development. Based on the projected residential population of approximately 2,100 residents, it is expected that the school-aged (primary and secondary) population of the site upon full completion and occupation of all dwellings would be in the order of 400 persons, based on the existing population of Castle Hill (noting that 2021 Census data skews in favour of more children based on the larger number of freestanding houses within the suburb). Of these, approximately 250 persons would be expected to attend government schools. Noting that full development and occupation of the site is not expected to occur before 2028, it is expected that there is ample time to account for this projected demand in infrastructure planning by Schools Infrastructure.

Road

As discussed in **Section 8.2**, the Planning Proposal is accompanied by a Traffic Impact Assessment that modelled the capacity of the surrounding road network, including nearby intersections, to accommodate the increase in traffic volumes associated with the masterplan. The masterplan is estimated to generate approximately 390 vehicle movements during the weekday PM road network peak hours. In comparison to the traffic generation associated with the approved (but no longer intended to be pursued – see **Section 2.5.1**) Stage 3 Castle Tower Shopping Centre extension under DA684/2015/JP, this represents a reduction of at least approximately 870 vehicle movements.

SDIRA modelling of the impact of the estimated traffic volumes on the performance of the Showground Road / Kentwell Avenue and Pennant Street / Castle Street intersections and the proposed Castle Street and Kentwell Avenue site access intersections determined that each intersection would operate with an acceptable level of service (Level of Service C or D). In this context and noting that Proponent previously contributed \$15m to TfNSW for the duplication of Showground Road, it is considered reasonable that additional traffic mitigation works for the Planning Proposal (above and beyond the financial contribution previously made by the Proponent) should not be required.

Active Transport and Pedestrian Facilities

Spurred by the construction of the Castle Hill Metro Station, Castle Hill has transformed into a transit-orientated Strategic Centre with the potential for walkable mixed-use communities. Leveraging the opportunities the Metro Station presents, the Planning Proposal intends to maximise active transport usage, increasing movements along existing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

In recognition of the above, the Planning Proposal seeks to improve pedestrian connections from Site B to the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and the Castle Hill Metro Station through the future pedestrian bridge over Pennant Street that connects to the Site's southern corner. This connection has been incorporated into the masterplan presented in **Section 5.0** and will enable future residents to access public transport, shops, restaurants, cafes and services efficiently and safely in the heart of Castle Hill. It also will allow the wider community to conveniently access the Site's amenities, including its public open spaces and commercial uses, reducing the dependence on the existing intersections along Pennant Street.

The masterplan's internal road network has been intentionally designed to prioritise and accommodate pedestrian and cyclist movements associated with the mixed-use precinct. These design features include wide urban footpaths with canopy coverage, cycle infrastructure, and a shared-zone crossing point between the envisioned central park and urban plaza. The masterplan will also improve pedestrian infrastructure along the Site's existing Castle Street, Pennant Street, Kentwell Avenue and Showground Road frontages through the activation of streets and improved public realm, including footpaths and street tree plantings.

Public Transport

The Traffic Impact Assessment that accompanies the Planning Proposal estimates that the masterplan will generate approximately 749 public transport trips during the weekday PM peak hour. Most of these public transport trips are anticipated to occur via the Castle Hill Metro Station, although the Site also has good access to a range of bus services along Showground Road and at the Castle Hill Bus Interchange. Noting that the current patron capacity of the Sydney Metro Northwest line is 24,000 people per hour, the anticipated increase of public transport patronage associated with the masterplan is minor.

Community Facilities

New residents to the Site will require access to a range of community infrastructure, including community centres, library space, childcare facilities, local medical centres and general practitioners and local spiritual and faith spaces. An analysis of surrounding community facilities shows that the following facilities currently exist within 800m walking distance of the Site. These facilities include:

- **Libraries** – Castle Hill Library.
- **Community Centres** – The Hills' Community Hub and the Castle Hill Cultural Centre.
- **Faith Spaces** – Wesley Uniting Church, Castle Hill Baptist Church, St Columbia's Presbyterian Church and the Adventist Church.
- **Medical Infrastructure** – Castle Hill Family Doctors, Castle Hill Medical Centre - Barwell Ave, Castle Hill Medical Centre - The Mall, Castle Towers Medical Practice, Myhealth Castle Towers, Crane Road Medical Centre and the Children's Dentistry.

The following benchmarks are standard for the above facilities within high density areas.

- Libraries – 1 per 20,000 – 30,000 residents.
- Local community facilities – 3 to 4 per 20,000 – 30,000 residents.
- Medical Centres – 1 per 20,000 - 30,000 residents.

As noted in the Economic Benefit Statement that accompanies the Planning Proposal, the residential population of the Site's 1km study area is approximately 12,530 residents and is anticipated to increase to approximately 20,770 residents by 2036. Therefore, the existing community facilities within Castle Hill are sufficient to accommodate the additional population growth associated with the Planning Proposal. Furthermore, the Planning Proposal includes an opportunity for a childcare facility, which will help address the demand for childcare in the community.



Figure 36 Community Infrastructure within Walking Distance of Site B

Source: Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day

Stormwater Drainage

A detailed stormwater management strategy will be developed for the Site at the development application stage. That strategy will incorporate water-sensitive urban design principles, including rainwater collection to a central tank underneath the park per the ESD Report that accompanies this Planning Proposal. The need for stormwater drainage upgrade works will be determined as the stormwater management strategy progresses.

8.9 Social & Economic Impacts

As stated in the Economic Benefit Statement prepared by Ethos Urban (**Appendix I**), the Planning Proposal will have a number of economic and community benefits, summarised below including:

- Providing a catalyst for economic growth at a time of economic recovery, through stimulating investment, construction and business activity by way of a \$700 million investment.
- Supporting additional housing supply, and supporting population growth within a high-amenity precinct, close to transport, employment opportunities as well as social and community infrastructure.
- Increasing housing diversity and choice through the envisioned 1,410 apartments which will support the delivery of new housing opportunities and price points within proximity to transport infrastructure and retail amenity.
- Supporting increased levels of activity, including retail expenditure throughout the local area. The additional residents at the Site may direct around \$35.5 million each year to retail goods and services in the area, taking into account the average level of retail spending per capita within the Castle Hill region of around \$16,800

each year. This enhances local employment and business opportunities during weekdays and also after-hours and on weekends.

- Delivering increased employment opportunities and flow-on economic activity both during construction and on an ongoing basis once operational. Based on a construction cost of \$700 million, the construction phase is expected to directly support employment of 1,060 job-years and deliver a direct value-add to the economy of \$146 million. On completion of the proposed development, the operational phase is expected to deliver 930 ongoing jobs and direct value-add to the economy of \$106.8 million per annum.
- Revitalising an underutilised, currently vacant site, with little to no activity since the removal of previous buildings from the Site in 2010. The Site is in a prime position, being adjacent to Castle Towers Shopping Centre, and the existing library and theatre as well as within 400m of Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Supporting strategic priorities for Castle Hill as a growing Strategic Centre through the delivery of a contemporary mixed-use community that will support additional housing stock and walkability by activating a high-profile underutilised Site.
- Embellishing a 3,500m² park for public use, which will provide a range of passive and active open spaces. This outcome has a monetary value to the Council as land for new open space is difficult or expensive to acquire. This park will deliver a raft of benefits to the community, including:
 - Providing an exceptional public space where the community can meet, socialise, and host events. This will assist in fostering a sense of community and supporting social cohesion as new residents move to the area.
 - Supporting the physical and mental health of the Castle Hill community by providing a space where residents can be amongst nature and participate in a range of active activities.
 - Complementing the use of the existing Castle Hill library and envisioned public plaza and to create a precinct with a number of interacting great places.
 - Improve the permeability and walkability of the new precinct by facilitating sight lines and providing walking and cycling routes to help pedestrians easily navigate through the Site.
 - Contributing to an increased canopy cover for the Site to reduce the impacts of urban heat effect on the new community.
- Addressing the critical need for high-quality public open space within Castle Hill to support the future growth and development of this Strategic Centre.
- Including opportunity for a childcare facility, which help address the demand for childcare in the community.
- Supporting access for new residents to a wide range of established retail, education, health and community services and open space resources within walking distance of the Site. The nearby Metro Station provides convenient access to surrounding employment centres, including the Norwest Business Park, Macquarie Park, Chatswood and the Sydney CBD.
- Redeveloping the Site with contemporary low maintenance, energy efficient apartments that will set a benchmark standard for future developments.
- Improving the setting and integration of Council's library.

The Site's redevelopment will result in an overall positive social and economic contribution to the local community.

9.0 Mapping (Part 4)

This Planning Proposal includes amendments to the following maps:

- Height of Building Map (HOB_024) to increase the Site's maximum permitted height.
- Floor Space Ratio Map (FSR_024) to identify the Site as “Area C”.
- Land Zone Map (LZN_024) to rezone the location of proposed public park as RE1 Public Recreation.
- Land Acquisition Map (LRA_024) to identify the RE1 Public Recreation

Maps of the proposed amendments to The Hills LEP are provided at **Appendix A**.

10.0 Community Consultation (Part 5)

10.1 Consultation Undertaken

Proactive engagement with key stakeholders has been a crucial focus for the project team to ensure appropriate feedback is incorporated into the design and planning process. The following table outlines key instances of consultation with relevant authorities and agencies. The project team’s response to feedback and discussion has also been noted.

Table 18 Consultation Undertaken

Stakeholder	Purpose / Forum	Comments/Outcomes
Hills Shire Council 20 April 2022	<p>A pre-lodgement meeting was held with the project team and Council.</p> <p>The project team provided an overview of the Proposal and Council staff discussed several matters relating to a future Planning Proposal for the site.</p>	<p>Feedback summary:</p> <p>Several overarching issues were discussed in relation to the proposed planning proposal including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistency with strategic plans.• Built form and the proposed public park.• Submission requirements. <p>Project response:</p> <p>QIC has taken on this feedback, noting the matters raised. QIC is working alongside their technical consultant team to ensure these concerns are addressed and the potential impacts are mitigated. The matters raised are addressed within the Planning Proposal and accompanying master plan and technical studies (see Appendix E).</p> <p>In providing justification for the strategic basis of the rezoning of the site, the Planning Proposal addresses the aims and objectives of The Hills Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), as well as any relevant Ministerial Directions under Section 9.1 of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (see Section 7.0).</p>
Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) 4 May 2022	<p>A meeting to held to present the project and discuss impacts on local transport infrastructure and services infrastructure from the planning proposal.</p>	<p>Feedback summary:</p> <p>Several overarching issues were discussed in relation to transport matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic modelling requirements• Potential reductions in traffic generation• Accessibility and entry/exit arrangements• Pedestrian accessibility and connections• Loading dock locations

Project response:

QIC and the project team will work collaboratively to ensure alignment on infrastructure delivery objectives.

10.2 Proposed Consultation

The Proponent intends to consult with the community and other relevant stakeholders on the masterplan and Planning Proposal to inform the preparation of a site-specific DCP amendment and gain community input into the design of the future public park. The Planning Proposal is accompanied by a Community Engagement Strategy (**Appendix J**) that outlines planned engagement activities. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 19 *Proposed Consultation*

Activity stream	Key channels	Proposed Methods	Purpose
Collaboration (Phase 1)	Key Stakeholder briefings and workshops	Face to face workshops, briefings and meetings at key stages to resolve challenges and opportunities on the site	To provide a forum for key government stakeholders to discuss project planning and delivery, resolve issues and provide advice and recommendations
Consultation (Phase 2)	Proactive consultation during design and planning	Community surveys Stakeholder interview/briefing Drop-In Information Sessions First nations stakeholder discussions Pop-up Stall Events in local high-traffic areas Facilitated Community Webinars or Town Hall style presentations Facilitated Community Workshops Contact channels stakeholder database and issues register set up	To provide interested residents, community, stakeholders etc with an opportunity to meet the Project Team, understand the Project and provide important feedback
Communication (Phase 2-3)	Project Website and contact channels	Project Website with engaging, interactive mapping, feedback and integrated social media functionality	To create a centralised point of project information for all stakeholders and the community members
		Project email address and 1800 number	To provide all stakeholders with a direct point of contact for any enquiries
	Communication Collateral	Electronic Newsletters	To keep the community up to date with planning and delivery milestones and share key messages about the project
		Media announcements	To provide accurate and timely project information, promote key messages and reduce misinformation in public arena
		Notifications	To inform those directly affected by any changes that may impact on individual properties, residents and businesses
		FAQs and Fact Sheets	To provide an overview of the project, upcoming milestones and high-level information around the planning process, and timing of delivery programme

The above approach will be guided by the principles set out in the Hills Shire Community Participation plan as well as best practice standards in community engagement established by the International Association of Public Participation and the NSW Government's policy for Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects published by the Department of Planning and Environment. The principles and approach outlined in the Community Engagement Report aligns with these objectives will continue to inform and guide the preparation of QIC's Proposal.

Formal public consultation will also take place in accordance with Sections 3.34 and 3.35 of the EP&A Act. This is likely to involve notification of the proposal:

- On Council's website;
- In newspapers that circulate widely in The Hills LGA; and
- In writing to the adjoining and nearby landowners; relevant community groups; and the surrounding community in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

It is noted that confirmation of the public exhibition period and requirements for the Planning Proposal will be given by the Minister as part of the LEP Gateway determination. Any future DA for the Site would also be exhibited in accordance with Council requirements, at which point the public and any authorities would have the opportunity to make further comment on the proposal.

11.0 Indicative Project Timeline

Table 20 below provides an indicative timeline for the Planning Proposal, which will be updated as required as progress occurs.

Table 20 *Indicative project timeline*

Milestone	Timing
Submission of Planning Proposal	October 2022
Reporting of Planning Proposal to Local Planning Panel	July 2023
Reporting of Planning Proposal to Council	September 2023
Rezoning Review	April 2024
Referral to Minister for Gateway Determination	April 2025
Date of Gateway determination	May 2025
Commencement and completion dates for public exhibition period	July 2025 (predicted)
Timeframe for government agency consultation (pre-and post-exhibition as required by Gateway determination)	July 2025 (predicted)
Timeframe for consideration of submissions	August 2025 (predicted)
Department finalisation of LEP	September-October 2025 (predicted)
Anticipated date Planning Panel (as RPA) will make the plan	November 2025 (predicted)
Anticipated date LEP Amendment is made	November 2025 (predicted)

12.0 Conclusion

This Planning Proposal seeks amendments to the land use zoning, maximum building height and GFA for the Site under The Hills LEP 2019, to enable:

- Development of the Site to accommodate a well-designed, mixed-use precinct that contributes positively to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.
- Delivery of a public benefit to the community through the provision of an embellished high-quality new public open space, local amenities and well-designed diverse family-friendly housing within walking distance of amenities, the Castle Towers Shopping Centre and the Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Provision a new public open space for the growing community, integrated with the surrounding pedestrian network.

The Planning Proposal will complement the transforming urban environment of Castle Hill, spurred by the Castle Hill Metro Station, the Pennant Street Target Area, and the vision for the Castle Hill North Precinct.

This Planning Proposal is justified given:

- Consistency with the objects of the EP&A Act.
- Consistency with the vision and planning priorities of the relevant state strategic planning documents, including the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Central City District Plan.
- Consistency with planning priorities outlined under The Hills LSPS and supporting housing study. In particular, it will Planning Proposal will contribute to The Hills Shire Council's vision of Castle Hill as a "vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station".
- Enablement of redevelopment of a Site that is not encumbered by significant constraints, such as strata ownership, threatened species, existing open space, heritage, steep topography or existing special uses.
- Realisation of The Hills LSPS' vision for the Site as a mixed-use precinct that provides residential, retail and restaurants to create an active lifestyle precinct that supports the urban core.
- Delivery of housing within walking distance of open space, shops, services and public transport to help meet the forecast need of 207,500 new homes in The Hills district by 2036 and realise the broader vision of a 30-minute city.
- Enablement of a new public park that serves as a meeting place and significant amenity for the existing and future community which includes an inclusive local playground, informal multi-purpose court, pathways and seating areas for active and passive recreation.
- Prioritisation of opportunities for people to walk and cycle by providing through-Site connections and a pedestrian bridge across Pennant Street.
- Alignment with land use and growth with infrastructure investment by delivering transport-orientated residential and commercial development within walking distance of the Castle Hill Metro Station.
- Provision of activated ground floor retail and commercial ground floor uses adjacent to a new plaza and park.
- Increase in the Site's urban tree canopy coverage from 20-30% to over 40%.
- Consistency with the applicable SEPPs and Ministerial Directions.

In light of the above, we request that Council considers and refers the Planning Proposal to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for a Gateway Determination and continue to work with the Proponent to develop a site-specific DCP Amendment and negotiate a Planning Agreement which will facilitate the realisation of the masterplan.

Appendix E – Pre-lodgement Consultation

Council Advice	Proponent Response
Strategic Context and Merit	
<p><i>Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) identifies the site as suitable for mixed use development, but notes that holistic precinct planning will ultimately determine the appropriate amount of residential development in the precinct having regard to infrastructure investigations and the outcomes of traffic modelling.</i></p> <p><i>Precinct planning allows the opportunity for greater regard for cumulative yield on all land within the Precinct, the associated infrastructure limitations, and the apportionment of any required funds for infrastructure upgrades. The key outcomes for the Castle Hill Strategic Centre that will underpin Council's Precinct Planning is the need for increased commercial opportunities, particularly in response to the Central City District Plan targets of additional 6,000 - 10,000 jobs by 2036.</i></p> <p><i>Both the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy and The Hills Corridor Strategy anticipate a commercial only outcome on the subject site, forming part of the Commercial Core of Castle Hill. The Hills Corridor Strategy anticipates a commercial FSR of 3.25:1 on the land (with no residential FSR envisaged). It is noted that your preliminary plans indicate a proposed FSR of 4.5:1, which comprises predominantly residential development.</i></p> <p><i>The Hills Shire Council is the only Metropolitan Council that has met its 2016-2021 housing target and is currently on track to meet its 2026 housing target. The Hills Shire has enough land currently zoned or planned for to meet and exceed its housing targets for 2036 and beyond. The Castle Hill Strategic Centre plays a critical role in ensuring that employment growth can keep pace with residential growth. In this context, it is considered unlikely that the proposed increase in residential opportunities on this site, at the expense of commercial outcomes, would satisfy the strategic merit test.</i></p>	<p>The Planning Proposal Report and accompanying technical documents have undertaken the necessary strategic planning and analysis to determine an appropriate density and mix of uses for the Site. In particular, the Planning Proposal includes or is accompanied by:</p> <p>A Local Infrastructure Analysis (Section 8.8) to determine the need and appropriate amount of residential development that can be serviced by local infrastructure.</p> <p>As detailed within the Planning Proposal Report, the Proposal strongly aligns with the aims, objectives and visions under the suite of documents that form the strategic planning framework pertaining to the Site (see Section 7.0).</p> <p>It should be recognised that housing targets are not fixed and are in a constant state of flux, nor are they a minimum target. Moreover, there appears to be a current housing shortfall against the dwelling target for Castle Hill. The LSPS's 2016 to 2036 target is for 6,500 new dwellings in Castle Hill, equating to 325 dwelling completions per year. The Great Sydney Urban Development Program data for the Castle Hill SA2s shows that an average of 179 dwellings have been completed yearly since the 2016/17 financial year (see the table below). The average number of approvals per year (300) also falls short of Castle Hill's target. Therefore, the proposed master plan will assist in achieving the target for transport-orientated housing within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.</p>

Completions data

SA2	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Castle Hill - Central	7	16	5	8	1	2	6	21	8	80
Castle Hill - East	3	3	1	9	5	26	1	2	1	
Castle Hill - North	9	6	12	6	37	13	12	4	11	437
Castle Hill - South	78	12	9	8	8	2	381	2	9	
Castle Hill - West	50	13	14	2	2	2	1		1	
Total	147	50	41	33	53	45	401	29	30	517

Approvals data

SA2	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Castle Hill - Central	31	16	28	14	13	20	24	45	104	304
Castle Hill - East	9	118	4	14	8	5	28	3	4	6
Castle Hill - North	23	16	18	13	59	29	946	25	25	27
Castle Hill - South	11	9	21	407	19	13	21	29	16	15
Castle Hill - West	11	14	18	6	2	3	2	3	1	1
Total	85	173	89	454	101	70	1,021	105	150	353

Figure 37 Annual Dwelling Completions and Approvals in the Castle Hill SA2s

Source: Greater Sydney Urban Development Program Dashboard

The Proposal responds to strong demand for residential accommodation and requires minimal upgrades to local infrastructure to support it. Importantly, it seeks to provide critically needed public infrastructure to support the anticipated growth of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre, most notably a 3,500 m² public park, in addition to new roads, cycling infrastructure and pedestrian connections.

Further, notwithstanding the anticipation of both the Northwest Rail Link Corridor Strategy (released in 2013) and the Hills Corridor Strategy (released in 2015) of a commercial only outcome on the Site, the more recent and up to date LSPS for the Hills Shire (released in 2019) envisions a mixed-use precinct, including residential and retail uses, which the Proposal seeks to provide. This is in line with the site's current B4 Mixed Use zoning in The Hills LEP 2019, which is sought to be retained expect for the proposed open space area that is to be appropriately zoned RE1 Public Recreation.

The Economic Benefit Statement (**Appendix I**) supporting the Proposal demonstrates that the mixed-use approach sought results in significant and positive economic benefits for the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. This includes 930 ongoing jobs during the operational phase and a direct value add to the economy of \$106.8 million per annum.

A Transport Impact Assessment that modelled the capacity of the local road network to accommodate the Planning Proposal's envisioned development uplift. It determined that the network could service the approximately 390 person trips via car the Proposal is anticipated to generate during the weekday PM hour. Compared to the previously approved (DA864/2015/JP), but no longer pursued, expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre (see **Section 2.5.1**), the Planning Proposal will generate significantly less traffic and thus have a lesser impact on the surrounding road network. For comparison purposes, the estimated traffic generation increase resulting from the expansion of Castle Towers Shopping Centre during the weekday PM peak hour and Saturday midday peak hour was +1,051 and +1,260 vehicle movements, respectively.

It is acknowledged that presentations have been made to Council Officers in previous meetings with respect to desired outcomes on the land. While some residential development may be appropriate on this site, the proposed land use mix of approximately 14% commercial floor space and 86% residential floor space does not align with the objectives of the prevailing strategic framework and any proposal should be amended to have greater regard to the job targets for the strategic centre and include residential development as a supplementary outcome on the site, rather than the predominant land use.

Section 7.0 demonstrates that the proposed masterplan, including its mix of residential and commercial space, aligns with the Site's strategic context for the following reasons.

While the pre-consultation letter notes that The Hills Shire Council is on track to meet its 2026 housing target, the Planning Proposal will deliver housing in an ideal location for residential development within walking distance of open space, shops, services and public transport. These dwellings will help meet the longer-term forecast need of 207,500 new homes in The Hills district by 2036.

As mentioned previously, housing targets are not fixed and are subject to constant pressure by external forces, including from population growth and market demand. The Proposal directly responds and aligns with Council's LSPS' vision for Castle Hill as a “vibrant and active centre with office, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and **increasing housing densities within walking distance of the Station**”. The LSPS is more current than previous strategies that sought solely a commercial outcome on the Site, which is considered an outdated vision based on the analysis of the Planning Proposal.

Council's Productivity and Centres Strategy and LSPS both identify a 'commercial core' within Castle Hill, which is the primary location for employment floorspace and functions to “manage the impact residential developments crowding out commercial activity” (Productivity and Centres Strategy, pg. 62.). The Site is appropriately located outside the commercial core yet still within walking distance of it and Metro Station to provide increased housing densities within walking distance of the Station per the Council's vision. Therefore, the master plan's proposed mix of residential and employment floorspace responds appropriately to the Site's strategic context by providing a vibrant mixed-use precinct with a range of dwelling types for residents seeking convenient access to the Castle Hill Strategic Centre within a higher density environment.

Castle Hill's commercial core and the Norwest Business Park are the appropriate locations for predominantly employment-generating development. The Productivity and Centres Strategy acknowledges that the Norwest Business Park's B7 zoning best protects employment lands and that businesses are migrating to this area.

The Planning Proposal will provide an appropriate apartment mix and design to improve housing choices for single groups and families.

The Proposal delivers a genuine mixed-use precinct, with ground floor retail spaces, supermarket, food and drink tenancies, commercial podium floor space, showrooms and attractive public spaces for the community to meet and socialise.

The completed precinct is anticipated to generate approximately 930 ongoing jobs to contribute to Castle Hill's jobs target.

Furthermore, the Site is not encumbered by significant constraints, such as strata ownership, threatened species, existing open space, heritage, steep topography or existing special uses that would inhibit residential development on other sites.

Built Form & Public Park

The development concept should demonstrate superior urban design outcomes to the current planning controls.

Section 4.0 of the Planning Proposal analyses alternatives, including assessing the proposed masterplan against a development concept utilising the current planning controls. The development concept using the existing planning controls was determined to offer minimal benefit to the community, as it lacked usable public open spaces and is less legible and, therefore, walkable. Furthermore, the scheme failed to provide a suitable height transition from Castle Hill's urban core to the residential neighbourhood to the west. Also, inferior outcomes in terms of solar access, cross ventilation, outlook, and acoustic and visual privacy would result, given the minimal spacing between building forms.

<i>Any planning proposal that includes residential development should provide details of floor plate sizes, setbacks, site coverage, landscaped area, deep soil zones, car parking access and arrangements and be designed having regard to the other Development Control Plans adopted by the Hills Shire Council for high density development in the rail corridor.</i>	The Architectural Statement prepared by Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day (Appendix C) details floor plate sizes, setbacks, site coverage and car parking access and arrangements. The Landscape Masterplan prepared by Aspect Studios (Appendix D) details envisioned landscaping.
<i>Any concept should also demonstrate compliance with the Apartment Design Guide.</i>	The Architectural Statement prepared by Clarke Hopkins Clarke and Hatch Roberts Day (Appendix C) details floor plate sizes, setbacks, site coverage and car parking access and arrangements. The Landscape Masterplan prepared by Aspect Studios (Appendix D) details envisioned landscaping.
<i>Development should be arranged on the site to minimise any overshadowing of public open space or communal open space.</i>	The layout and orientation of buildings have been designed to maximise solar access to the centrally located public park between 11am and 2pm on 21 June. This was achieved by reducing the building heights of towers located at the north of the Site and orientating the towers on Lot B to maximise mid to early afternoon sun. This key design move encourages the community, workers and visitors to patronise the space during lunch hours. Further, the active play space, strategically located in the southern portion of the park, receives consistent solar access during these hours also to foster community interaction. See Section 8.1.3 for further details.
<i>The proposed inclusion of a public park is acknowledged, however it is also expected that sufficient private open space will be provided in addition to a public park. The concepts indicate a significant amount of private rooftop communal open space for residential uses, but it is unclear if there is any ground level private open space proposed. Council's recent Development Control Plans for high density development in the rail corridor provide guidance on the expectations for ground level communal open space.</i>	The masterplan proposes ground level private open space as shown on the ground floor plans in Appendix C . The private open space at ground level is consistent with the design objectives under Council's Development Controls Plan for high density development.
<i>It is noted that the public park is proposed to be dedicated to Council. The concepts indicate a high level of embellishment to the proposed park. If the park is intended to be dedicated to Council, further consideration should be given to the ongoing maintenance of the park long term. Council would expect materials that require frequent replacement (such as timber elements) to be avoided and substituted with longer-life durable materials. More detailed consideration of the whether Council wishes to accept the dedication of the public park will be required, also having regard to any adjustments to the proposed land use mix within the development and the satisfactory demonstration that communal open space requirements can be satisfied, without reliance on the proposed public park.</i>	The Proponent is open to engaging with Council as the Planning Proposal progresses to shape the public park's design and treatment to meet Council's requirements for dedication.

Infrastructure Demand

Any additional development uplift on the subject site in comparison to the current planning controls has not been accounted for in the current contributions framework. It should be noted that active open space provision was a key challenge for the Castle Hill North precinct and will remain a key limiting factor in the determination of serviceable residential growth for the remainder of Castle Hill Precinct.	The Planning Proposal responds to this key infrastructure challenge by providing for 3,500 m2 of new public open space in the form of a local park with space for active and passive recreation. The new park will include an inclusive playground, informal multi-purpose sports court, fitness stations and areas for passive seating and walking. It will be facilitated by the Site's development. The park will service existing residents in the Castle Hill North precinct and new residents at the Site, in addition to the wider surrounds.
Similarly, traffic is a critical constraint in Castle Hill, particularly with respect to the intersecting regional road network at the junction of Castle Hill Centre. Regional traffic modelling is currently underway to determine the capacity of the regional road network and any required infrastructure upgrades. The results of the regional traffic model are expected to be available at the end of 2022.	As discussed above, the Planning Proposal is accompanied by a Transport Impact Assessment that modelled the capacity of the local road network to accommodate the Planning Proposal's envisioned development uplift. It determined that the network could service the approximately 390 person trips via car the proposal is anticipated to generate during the weekday PM hour. Compared to the previously approved (but no longer pursued) expansion of the Castle Towers Shopping Centre (see Section 2.5.1), the Proposal will generate significantly less traffic and thus have a lower impact on the surrounding road network than previously assumed., which consequently frees up capacity for future development within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.
The regional traffic modelling is underpinned by assumptions based on the yields within The Hills Corridor Strategy. It is therefore critical to note that the regional modelling will not account for the additional floor space proposed beyond this, nor does it factor in residential traffic generation from this site, as distinct from employment travel behaviours. It is recommended that you commence early engagement with Transport for NSW with respect to your proposal, to assist in addressing this matter throughout the application process.	The project team has met with Transport for NSW, as detailed in Section 10.0 . The team will engage collaboratively with TfNSW to ensure alignment on infrastructure delivery objectives.
It is recommended that you seek to engage with Schools Infrastructure NSW.	The Proponent will engage with Schools Infrastructure NSW as part of the consultation strategy outlined in Section 10.2 .
Further details are required with respect to the proposed elevations and levels of the pedestrian bridge to determine the accessibility and functionality of the proposed access.	These details will be provided to Council's as the pedestrian bridge's detailed design progresses.
The Development concept should also demonstrate universally accessible through site links and pedestrian movements within the site.	The development concept supports active and accessible through site links and pedestrian movements, as detailed in Section 8.2.5 .
Submission Requirements and Planning Proposal Process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application Form, Owners Consent and completed Political Donations forms 	The Planning Proposal is accompanied by these documents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Proposal Report, which addresses the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline and the matters outlined in this letter 	This document forms the Planning Proposal report.

• Master Plan/Urban Design Report	Appendix B
• Architectural Plans, including Landscape Plans	Appendix B and C
• Heritage Assessment Report addressing impact on nearby heritage items	Heritage impacts are assessed in Section 8.7 .
• Draft Development Control Plan	Appendix K
• Traffic, Parking and Accessibility Report	Appendix F
• Relevant environmental constraints reports	See table of Appendices.
• Economic and Residential Demand Analysis	An Economic Benefit Statement is included as Appendix I .
• Preliminary feedback from relevant government agencies, notably TfNSW & SINSW	Preliminary feedback is outlined in Section 10.1 .
• Local Infrastructure Analysis	Section 8.8 provides a local infrastructure analysis.
• Workshop presentation material	The project team will develop and provide workshop presentation material.