



IRF25/1208

Gateway determination report – PP-2022-3644

Kentwell Avenue Precinct, Castle Hill (+1,400 dwellings & +930 jobs)

June 25



Published by NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

dpie.nsw.gov.au

Title: Gateway determination report – PP-2022-3644

Subtitle: Kentwell Avenue Precinct, Castle Hill (+1,400 dwellings & +930 jobs)

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2025. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live and work and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

Contents

1	Planning proposal.....	1
1.1	Overview	1
1.2	Objectives of planning proposal.....	1
1.3	Explanation of provisions.....	2
1.4	Site description and surrounding area	3
1.5	Mapping	5
1.6	Background	6
2	Need for the planning proposal	6
3	Strategic assessment	7
3.1	District Plan	7
3.2	North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy 2013	7
3.3	Local.....	8
3.4	Local planning panel (LPP) recommendation	9
3.5	Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions.....	10
3.6	State environmental planning policies (SEPPs)	12
4	Site-specific assessment	13
4.1	Environmental	13
4.2	Social and economic	17
4.3	Infrastructure	17
5	Consultation.....	18
5.1	Community	18
5.2	Agencies	18
6	Timeframe	18
7	Local plan-making authority	18
8	Assessment summary	18
9	Recommendation.....	19

Table 1 Reports and plans supporting the proposal

Relevant reports and plans
Attachment A – Planning Proposal

Relevant reports and plans

Appendix A - Proposed LEP Mapping

Appendix B - Urban Design Report and Masterplan

Appendix C - Architectural Statement & Shadows

Appendix D - Landscape Masterplan

Appendix E - Pre-lodgement Consultation

Appendix F - Transport Impact Assessment

Appendix G - Geotechnical Review

Appendix H - ESD Report

Appendix I - Economic Benefit Statement

Appendix J - Engagement Strategy

Appendix K - Draft Development Control Plan

Appendix L - Remediation Action Plan

Appendix M - Woods Baggot Peer Review & Shadows

Appendix N - Maximum Building Envelope Design Response

Appendix O - Rezoning Review Determination May 2024

Appendix P – Consolidated TfNSW Correspondence

Appendix Q – The Hills Local Planning Panel Report and Minutes (23 July 2023)

1 Planning proposal

1.1 Overview

Table 2 Planning proposal details

LGA	The Hills Shire
PPA	Sydney Central City Planning Panel (The Panel)
NAME	Kentwell Avenue Precinct
NUMBER	PP-2022-3644
LEP TO BE AMENDED	The Hills Local Environment Plan 2019 (The Hills LEP 2019)
ADDRESS	Most of the land generally bound by Pennant Street, Castle Street, Showground Road and Kentwell Avenue, Castle Hill.
DESCRIPTION	N/A
RECEIVED	28 April 2025
FILE NO.	IRF25/1208
POLITICAL DONATIONS	There are no donations or gifts to disclose and a political donation disclosure is not required
LOBBYIST CODE OF CONDUCT	There have been no meetings or communications with registered lobbyists with respect to this proposal

1.2 Objectives of planning proposal

The planning proposal contains objectives and intended outcomes that adequately explain the intent of the proposal. The objectives of the planning proposal are to:

- amend The Hills Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2019 to facilitate higher density residential development through higher building heights and increased Floor Space Ratio (FSR);
- support housing diversity to address community needs with a range of housing types and sizes;
- enable approximately an additional 1,400 dwellings in proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station providing access to employment centres such as Norwest Business Park, Macquarie Park, Chatswood and the Sydney CBD;
- deliver a number of public benefits through the provision of a 4,000m² public park; and
- supporting the strategic growth of Castle Hill by delivering offices, retail, and community facilities to meet demand

The proponent intends to prepare a site-specific development control plan (DCP) (**Appendix K**) to enhance urban design and public amenity for the site.

The proponent intends to negotiate a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with The Hills Shire Council to deliver public benefits such as a public park, roadways and associated infrastructure,

crisis accommodation (in the form of a 6 bedroom unit for women and children in need), and payment of a financial contribution to Council for upgrades. The estimated value of the intended VPA is \$30 million.

1.3 Explanation of provisions

The planning proposal seeks to amend The Hills LEP 2019 per the changes below:

Table 3 Current and proposed controls

Control	Current	Proposed
Zone	R3 Medium Density Residential MU1 Mixed Use	R3 Medium Density Residential MU1 Mixed Use RE1 Public Recreation
Maximum height of the building	7m, 9m and 28m	20m, 43m, 49m, 57m, 76m and 88m
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	1.9:1	No change
Total number of dwellings	11	1,400
Number of jobs	0	930

Additional local provisions

The proposal intends include a new local provision to identify the site as 'Area C' on the FSR Map to facilitate an incentive maximum GFA of 171,585m² (equivalent FSR of approximately 4.1:1 across the site), subject to meeting certain requirements for apartment mix, dwelling sizes, car parking, and delivery of commercial floorspace. These requirements include:

- a minimum non-residential GFA of 23,000m² (commercial or similar, excluding residential use)
- a maximum GFA cap of 171,585m² for the purposes of residential accommodation in the following dwelling types:
 - no more than 25% of dwellings may be studio or one-bedroom units; and
 - at least 20% must comprise three or more bedrooms; and
 - at least 40% of two-bedroom units must have a minimum internal floor area of 110m²; and
 - at least 40% of three-bedroom units must meet a minimum internal floor area of 135m².
- a maximum number of car parking spaces as per the following rates:
 - for each studio or 1 bedroom dwelling – 0.5 car parking spaces;
 - for each 2 bedroom dwelling – 0.8 car parking spaces,
 - for each 3 or more bedroom dwelling – 1.3 car parking spaces, and
 - for every 5 dwellings – 1 car parking spaces, in addition to the car parking spaces required for each individual dwelling.

The planning proposal contains an explanation of provisions that adequately explains how the objectives of the proposal will be achieved.

1.4 Site description and surrounding area

The subject site comprises 38 individual land parcels. The site is predominantly vacant and contains ten 1-2 storey residential dwellings fronting Kentwell Avenue and Castle Street (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Subject site identified in red (source: NSW Spatial Viewer)

The site is bordered by Pennant Street, Castle Street, Showground Road and Kentwell Avenue, Castle Hill. The site does not include the Castle Grand development and Castle Hill Library on the corner of Pennant and Castle Streets. The site also includes two additional parcels to the west at 2-4 Kentwell Avenue.

Directly north of the site are low-density residential developments and the Castle Hill Police Station on the corner of Castle and Pennant Street. This neighbourhood forms part of the Castle Hill North Precinct, which is targeted for development uplift, with an expected addition of approximately 3,300 dwellings by 2036. High-density residential developments are planned nearby along Castle Street and Pennant Street, signalling that the area is in transition to a different character to the current 1-2 storey residential dwellings.

Adjacent to the east is Castle Hill's commercial core, including Castle Towers Shopping Centre, which functions as a major retail and employment hub. South and west of the site are characterised by existing medium-density residential developments and some commercial uses. These boundaries of the site interfaces with the broader residential neighbourhood.

The subject site is close to key transport options, such as Castle Hill Station containing several bus stops A-E on Old Northern Road and Old Castle Hill Road and the Castle Hill Metro Station (**Figure 2**). Approximately 70 metres to the southwest on Showground Road is a bus stop. The Castle Hill Metro Station is located approximately 350m to the east, enabling easy access to employment centres such as Norwest Business Park, Macquarie Park, Chatswood, and the Sydney CBD.



Figure 2: Site context, subject site identified in red (source: NSW Spatial Viewer).

The site is not listed as a heritage item or located within a heritage conservation area, but is in proximity to three local heritage items (**Figure 3**). These include a heritage-listed house at 30–34 Showground Road (I66), located immediately west of the site; the former police station (I64) and former Castle Hill Public School (I63) at 264–266 Old Northern Road, located approximately 100 metres southeast.

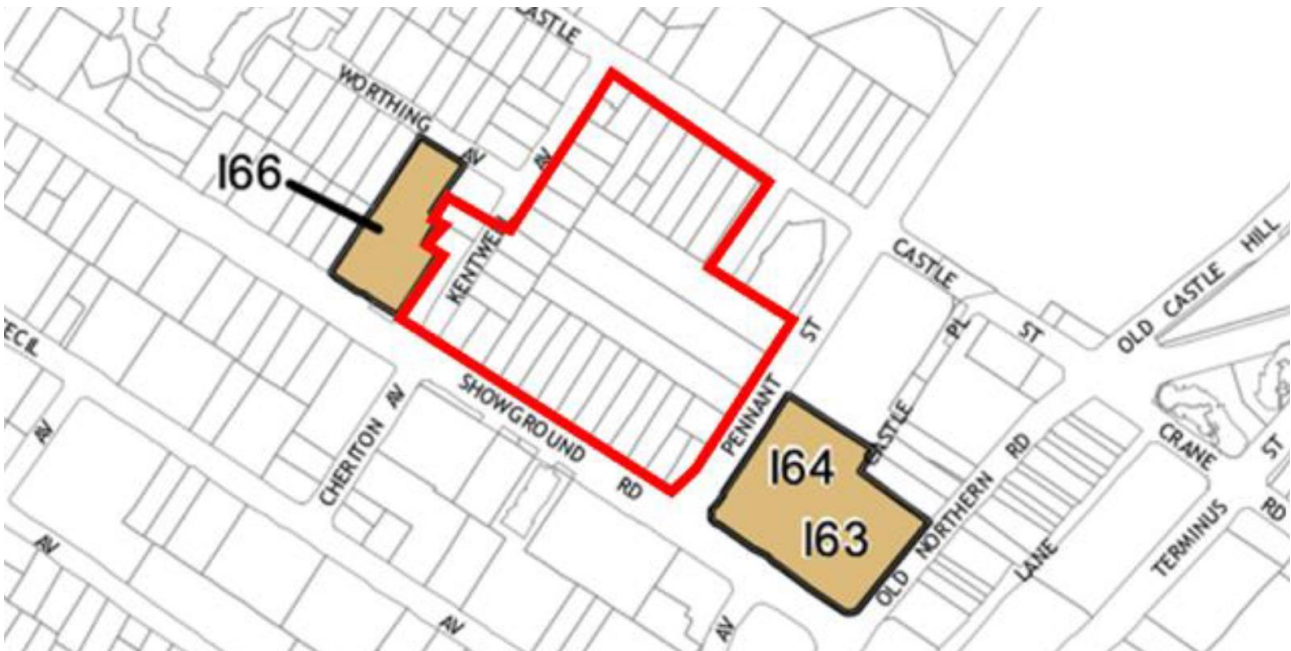


Figure 3: Site in red above and local heritage items (source: Submitted planning proposal report)

1.5 Mapping

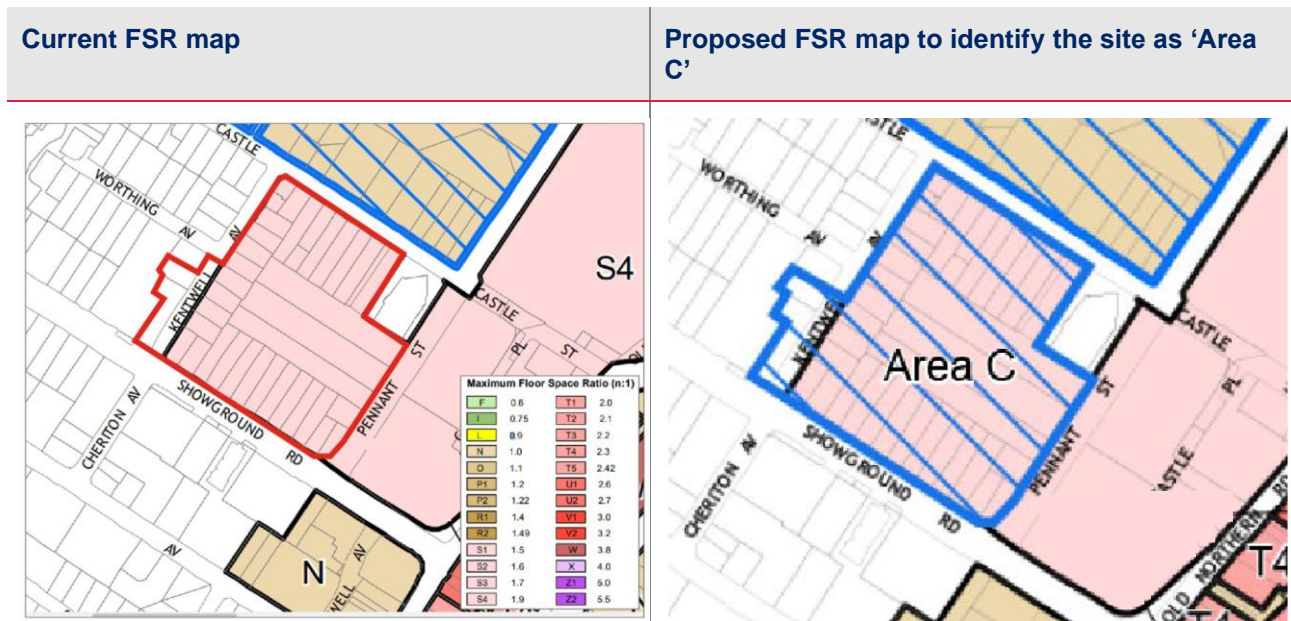


Figure 4: Current and Proposed FSR Map. Note that proposed additional location provision to identify the site as 'Area C' on the FSR Map through an incentivised GFA (source: submitted planning proposal)

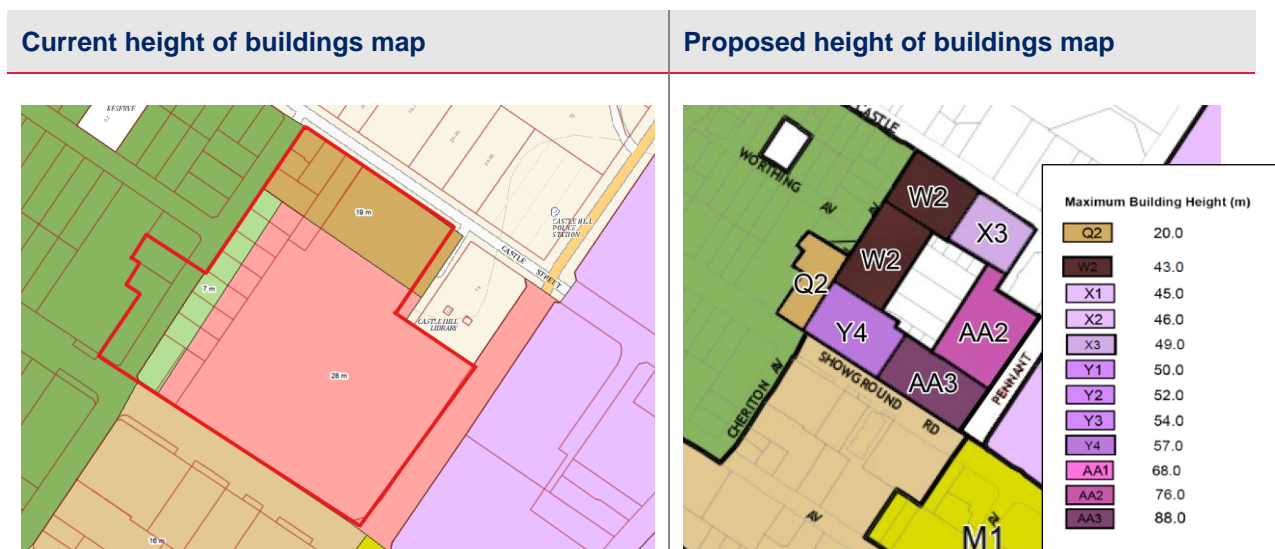


Figure 5: Current and proposed height of buildings (source: NSW Spatial Viewer and the submitted planning proposal)



Figure 6: Current and proposed land use zones (source: NSW Spatial Viewer and submitted planning proposal)

1.6 Background

The following timeline sets out the background to the planning proposal:

- **24 January 2024:** rezoning review request lodged by proponent.
- **8 May 2024:** The Sydney Central City Planning Panel (Panel) determined that the planning proposal should be submitted to the Department for Gateway assessment on the condition that a number of changes stipulated in the attached Record of Decision (**Appendix O**) are made to demonstrate site-specific merit. The Panel acknowledges that the proposal has demonstrated strategic merit.
- **August 2024 and March 2025 :** The proponent provided revised reports and studies to the Department's Planning Proposal Authority (PPA) team seeking to address the Panel's rezoning review decision.
- **8 April 2025:** The Department's PPA team submitted an adequate revised documents package to the Panel recommending the proposal proceed, with the Panel's rezoning review conditions now adequately addressed.
- **9 April 2025:** The Panel confirmed that its rezoning review conditions had been adequately addressed and agreed with the recommendations, including that the planning proposal be submitted for a Gateway determination.
- **28 April 2025:** The planning proposal was submitted for a Gateway determination.

2 Need for the planning proposal

The planning proposal is not the result of any site-specific study or report and is a landowner-initiated planning proposal.

This planning proposal is considered to respond to three key strategic documents: the Central City District Plan, the Hill's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), and Council's adopted Castle Hill Precinct Plan 2024.

The proposal seeks to amend existing controls to permit taller building heights and increased FSR. The proposed uplift will allow approximately 1400 additional new dwellings within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre. The uplift will support expected growth in population and employment, taking advantage of its proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station, existing public transport links, supported by a range of existing services and facilities.

The site is identified as Focus Area 6 in the Castle Hill Precinct Plan 2024, which sets out a vision for high-density mixed-use development around a central open space. The planning proposal supports this vision by delivering a mixed-use precinct with a centrally located public park, transport-oriented development, and high quality urban design.

3 Strategic assessment

3.1 District Plan

The site is located within the Central City District. The Greater Sydney Commission released the 'Central City District Plan' (District Plan) on 18 March 2018. The District Plan contains planning priorities and actions to guide the growth of the district while improving its social, economic and environmental assets. The planning proposal is consistent with the priorities for infrastructure and collaboration, liveability, productivity, and sustainability in the plan as outlined below.

Table 3: District Plan assessment

District Plan Priorities	Justification
C1 Planning for a city supported by infrastructure	The proposal is situated within the Castle Hill Precinct that adjoins Castle Towers Shopping Centre. There are several transportation options nearby the proposal, including existing bus stops, and the Castle Hill Metro Station. As a result, the proposal will facilitate an easily navigable and well connected city, consistent with this priority.
C5 Providing housing supply, choice and affordability, with access to jobs, services and public transport	The planning proposal will facilitate the construction of 1400 dwellings. It will provide a diverse mix of housing options within walking distance of essential services and public transport. This aligns with the District's housing goals, which aim to accommodate the population growth in the region with access to public transport with direct services to strategic centres along the Sydney Metro Northwest line being Norwest, Rouse Hill, Epping, Chatswood, Macquarie Park, North Sydney and Sydney CBD.
C6 – Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage	The proposal will assist in enhancing Castle Hill Precinct as a strategic centre through activating land for inclusive housing opportunities whilst aligning with the local residential and heritage sentiment of the area.
C9 Delivering integrated land use and transport planning and a 30-minute city	The proposal contributes to creating a 30-minute city by optimising the location for residential living and access to transport, facilitating active and public transport usage, and implementing mixed-use development principles. By promoting urban liveability and sustainability, the proposal will allow residents to live closer to work and essential services.

3.2 North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy 2013

The North West Rail Link (NWRL) Corridor Strategy provides a strategic framework to guide the development and growth of North West Sydney connecting Epping to Rouse Hill (**Figure 7**).

The strategy aligns with state and regional planning policies to promote sustainable, transit-oriented development along the corridor. The strategy emphasises creating mixed-use centres that foster vibrant, active communities by minimizing residents' and workers' need to travel for daily needs. It aims to develop clear, accessible precincts that enhance connectivity to rail stations and key amenities.

The planning proposal aligns with the strategy as it builds on the site's location near the Castle Hill Metro Station to promote transit-oriented development, increase residential density, and deliver a mix of residential, retail, and commercial uses in a well-connected precinct.

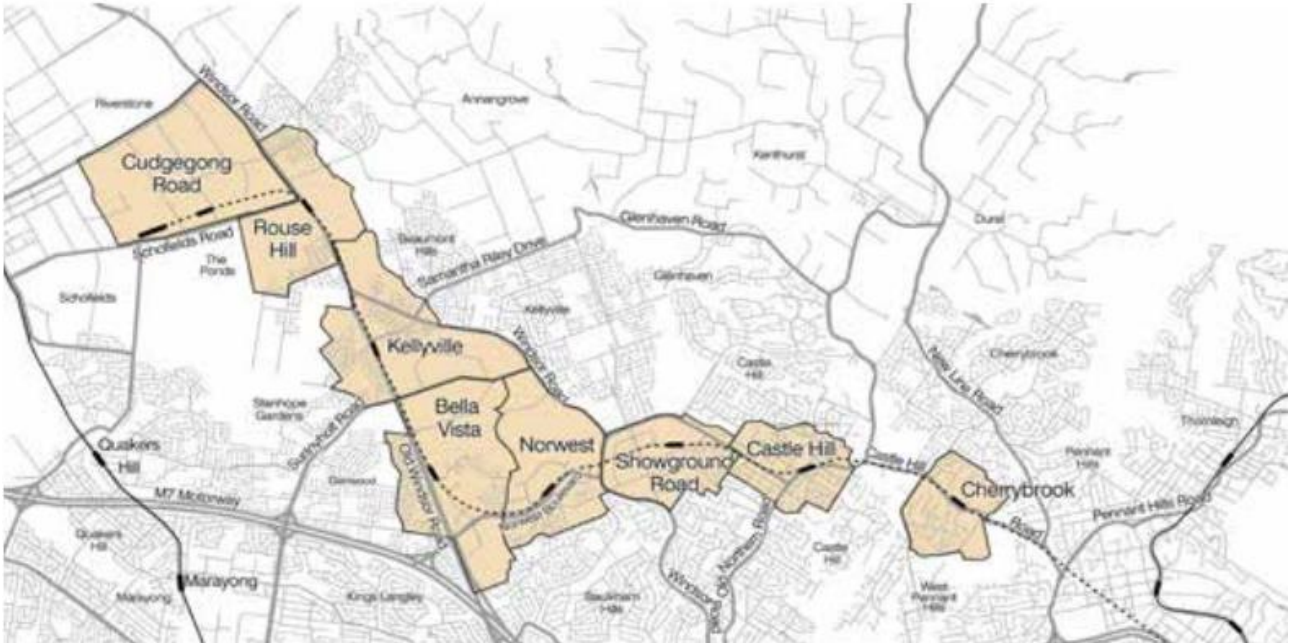


Figure 7: North West Rail Link and its stations (source: NWRL Corridor Strategy 2013)

3.3 Local

Table 4 Local strategic planning assessment

Local Strategies	Justification
The Hills Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	<p>The planning proposal aligns with the LSPS sections related to Castle Hill's structure plan, housing target delivery, employment generation, transport connectivity, and place-making principles promoting a vibrant mixed-use strategic centre. Specifically, the proposal aligns with the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers approximately 1,400 new dwellings within the Castle Hill Sydney Metro station precinct, responding to LSPS targets for 6,500 new dwellings in Castle Hill by 2036; and contributing of additional employment floorspace to accommodate 5,500 additional jobs envisioned for Castle Hill, including a commercial tower generating 930 ongoing jobs.

Local Strategies	Justification
Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan 2024 (Precinct Plan)	<p>The planning proposal aligns with the strategic vision and objectives set out in the Precinct Plan, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports mixed-use development consistent with the site's identification in the Precinct Plan as suitable for a mix of residential, commercial, and retail uses; • integrates a centrally located public park and plaza, complementing the Precinct Plan's focus on providing high-quality, accessible public spaces; • adopts a place-based approach that promotes walkability, activated ground-floor retail, pedestrian and cycling permeability, and fine grain urban form as envisaged by the Precinct Plan's vision; • identifies a capacity for no less than 22,300m² of non-residential floor space; • supports building heights and FSRs that reflect the land use and built form enabling tall and well-designed buildings that reinforce Castle Hill as a high-quality strategic centre; and • promotes increased commercial opportunities and employment floorspace to support the Precinct Plan's economic goals and Central City District Plan's targets of additional jobs by 2036.
Economic Growth Plan 2023	The planning proposal aligns with the Economic Growth Plan 2023 by providing new commercial and retail spaces that support job creation, including an estimated 930 ongoing jobs and 1,860 construction jobs. It also encourages investment and mixed uses within Castle Hill Strategic Centre to boost economic activity.
Smart Places Strategic Framework 2024	The planning proposal promotes transport-oriented development near the Castle Hill Metro Station, improving liveability with integrated retail, community facilities, and employment floorspace within a walkable strategic centre. The planning proposal enhances sustainability by reducing private vehicle reliance, increasing urban tree canopy (over 40%) and vegetative cover, and prioritises pedestrian and cyclist connectivity with high-quality open spaces and active transport links.
The Hills Housing Strategy 2019	The planning proposal aligns with The Hills Housing Strategy as it delivers 1,400 new dwellings contributing to the long-term housing targets of 207,500 by 2036. It also delivers diverse housing near the Castle Hill Metro Station.
The Hills Corridor Strategy 2015	The proposal aligns with The Hills Corridor Strategy and its core principles such as promoting activated retail and commercial frontages, enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity, and supporting tall, well-designed buildings to strengthen Castle Hill as a Strategic Centre.

3.4 Local planning panel (LPP) recommendation

3.4.1 The Hills Local Planning Panel (LPP)

On 19 July 2023, the Hills Local Planning Panel (LPP) advised that the previous planning proposal should not proceed, due to a range of identified strategic and site-specific merit issues (**Appendix Q**). The previous planning proposal sought for heights ranging from 20m to 94m, base FSR of 0.5-1.9 with incentives to equate an approximate GFA of 190,960m² (equating an average of 4.5:1 FSR across the site), a minimum GFA of 22,300m² of non-residential floor space.

In regard to the Hills LPP concerns on strategic merit, the Department notes that the provisions of additional housing in this location has strategic merit and is responding to a change in circumstances that has not been formally recognised by the existing planning framework.

Regarding site-specific merit, the proposal has evolved since the Hills LPP advice and is discussed in the following sections 3.4.2 and 4.1 of this report.

3.4.2 Rezoning Review

The Strategic Planning Panel of the Sydney Central Planning Panel (Panel) has considered the planning proposal. On 8 May 2024, the Panel determined at a rezoning review that the planning proposal had strategic and site-specific merit, subject to revisions required prior to submitting the planning proposal to the Department for a Gateway determination (**Appendix O**).

The Panel recommended that the planning proposal be revised to address the following:

1. Confirmation to be obtained from Council about accepting the RE1 land;
2. Revised scheme changes:
 - undertake a detailed analysis of a revised scheme regarding the height and yield changed of 4.1:1;
 - design changes to address councils design concerns;
 - demonstrate the scheme can achieve the precondition for activating the proposed incentive clause and consistency with the Apartment Design Guide; and
3. Updated FSR and building height maps;
4. Request that the Department's PPA team undertake a review of the material to confirm that it addresses the Panels recommendations.
5. The Panel supports the minimum commercial floor space as part of the incentive clause within the proposal;
6. Consultation with TfNSW to confirm specific requirements that may affect the site in terms of road widening or other matters relevant only to the planning proposal stage (**Appendix P**).

On 9 April 2025, the Panel confirmed that its rezoning review conditions had been adequately addressed and agreed with the Departments PPA team recommendations, including that the planning proposal now be submitted for a Gateway determination.

3.5 Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions

The planning proposal is consistent with the relevant section 9.1 Directions, in is discussed below:

Table 5 9.1: Ministerial Direction assessment

Directions	Consistent/ Not Applicable	Reasons for Consistency or Inconsistency
1.4 – Site Specific Provisions	Inconsistent, justified.	<p>The objective of this direction is to discourage unnecessarily restrictive site specific planning controls.</p> <p>The proposal is inconsistent with this direction as it introduces a new local provision to facilitate an incentive maximum GFA of 171,585m² (equivalent FSR of approximately 4.1:1 across the site), subject to meeting certain requirements for apartment mix, dwelling sizes, car parking, and delivery of commercial floorspace.</p>

Directions	Consistent/ Not Applicable	Reasons for Consistency or Inconsistency
		<p>This performance-based approach does not impose inflexible development limits. Instead, it provides incentives for achieving strategic outcomes aligned with housing diversity, employment generation and design quality. This approach supports flexibility and innovation in future development, consistent with strategic intent of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre.</p> <p>While the inconsistency with the direction is considered justified, the Department notes that the planning proposal does not provide any justification against this Direction. Prior to the exhibition, the planning proposal must be updated to justify its inconsistency with this direction.</p>
1.16 – North West Rail Link (NWRL) Corridor Strategy	Consistent.	<p>This direction aims to promote transit-oriented development and manage growth around the eight NWRL stations, ensuring alignment with the NWRL Corridor Strategy and relevant Precinct Structure Plans.</p> <p>The NWRL Corridor Strategy identifies the site as a short-term redevelopment opportunity due to its proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station.</p> <p>The planning proposal supports the objectives strategy by enabling a well-designed, mixed-use precinct that leverages the site's strategic location within walking distance of Castle Hill Metro Station. The proposal promotes increased housing and employment densities consistent with the Strategy's goal of integrating land use and transport investment. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with this direction.</p>
3.2 – Heritage Conservation	Consistent.	<p>The objective of this direction objective of this direction is to conserve items, areas, objects and places of environmental heritage significance and indigenous heritage significance.</p> <p>There are several heritage items located adjacent to the site and in close proximity. These heritage items are listed as local significance under The Hills LEP 2019.</p> <p>The proposal is consistent with this direction as The Hills LEP 2019 and DCP 2012 include adequate provisions to ensure that heritage issue can be properly evaluated and managed in any future development application.</p> <p>The planning proposal does not provide any justification against this direction. Prior to the exhibition, the planning proposal must be updated to demonstrate consistency with Direction 1.9.</p>
4.4 – Remediation of Contaminated Land	Consistent.	<p>The objective of this direction is to reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment by ensuring that</p>

Directions	Consistent/ Not Applicable	Reasons for Consistency or Inconsistency
		<p>contamination and remediation are considered by planning proposal authorities.</p> <p>A detailed site investigation and Remediation Action Plan (RAP) (Appendix L) was conducted for the site, identifying contaminants including asbestos in filling. The RAP recommends a remediation strategy to ensure the site is suitable for its intended uses, including engagement of a licenced asbestos contractor during site preparation.</p> <p>Further assessment in line with SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 will be conducted at the development application stage to confirm the suitability of the site for both residential and public open space.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore consistent with this Direction.</p>
5.2 – Reserving Land for public purposes	Unresolved	<p>This Direction requires that where land is reserved for public recreation purposes, the land is to be outlined and annotated on the Land Reservation Acquisition Map, and the relevant acquisition authority is identified.</p> <p>The planning proposal seeks to introduce an RE1 Public Recreation zone with Council identified as the acquisition authority to deliver some of the intended public open space.</p> <p>Consistency with this Direction is unresolved as Council has not given approval to be the acquisition authority. It is understood that necessary approvals for a RE1 zoning will be resolved through a VPA process.</p> <p>The nominated acquisition authority must provide its approval prior to making the LEP in accordance with the Direction and the Act. The Gateway has been conditioned accordingly.</p>
7.1 – Employment Zones	Consistent.	<p>This direction applies to all relevant planning authorities when preparing a planning proposal that will affect land within an existing or proposed employment zone.</p> <p>The proposal supports the objectives of the Direction by increasing the gross floor area for employment-generating uses across the site by introducing a local provision that incentivises additional density subject to delivering a minimum of 23,000m² of non-residential GFA (commercial or similar, excluding residential uses). While a portion of the site will be rezoned RE1 Public Recreation, this will not reduce the overall employment floorspace potential, and the MU1 zoning is retained over the balance of the site to continue supporting mixed commercial and residential development.</p>

3.6 State environmental planning policies (SEPPs)

The planning proposal is consistent with all relevant SEPPs as discussed in the table below.

Table 6: Assessment of planning proposal against relevant SEPPs

SEPPs	Consistent	Reasons for Consistency or Inconsistency
State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021	Yes	<p>This policy provides principles to ensure that residential apartments are of high-quality design and maximise amenity both internally and externally for occupants. The SEPP is supported by an Apartment Design Guide (ADG) which provides further guidance on how to achieve the principles of the SEPP. Minimum separation between towers, solar access and cross ventilation are all key principles of the SEPP and ADG.</p> <p>An urban design concept has been prepared with consideration of SEPP and ADG (Appendix B), which indicates the suitability of the site for the proposed built form. The Department notes that any future development application for the site would be subject to a detailed assessment under the SEPP and compliance with the ADG.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	Yes	<p>The SEPP addresses contamination risk and remediation. A Detailed Site Investigation and Remediation Action Plan (RAP) has been prepared (Appendix L), identifying contaminants such as asbestos and recommending remediation measures to render the site suitable for development. Compliance with the SEPP will be achievable at development application stage.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	Yes	<p>The SEPP identifies consent, assessment and consultation requirements for certain types of infrastructure and adjacent development. This includes consideration of development in or adjacent to rail corridors.</p> <p>The supporting Geotechnical Impact Assessment (Appendix G) identifies the southern part of the site is above the Sydney Metro tunnels. Further assessment will be undertaken to assess the potential impacts on the tunnels in accordance with the SEPP. It is recommended that consultation with Sydney Metro is undertaken.</p>

4 Site-specific assessment

4.1 Environmental

Urban Design and transport-oriented development

Urban design and transport considerations have been a key focus of the planning proposal, following the Panel's recommendations to revise the concept scheme. The proposal has been refined through extensive urban design testing, evolving from an initial GFA of 190,960m² (FSR of 4.5:1) to a GFA of 171,585m² (FSR of 4.1:1). Building envelopes have also been refined, including a reduction in Lot D's maximum height from 28 storeys to 26 storeys. The commercial floor space has increased from 22,300m² to 23,000m² to support an employment and mixed-use outcome.

The site is intended to deliver a high-density, transit-oriented, mixed-use precinct aligned with vision and objectives of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan. The proposed built form

distributes density to support a clear urban hierarchy. Taller buildings (up to 26 storeys) are concentrated the core of the Castle Hill Strategic Centre and near the Castle Hill Metro Station, stepping down to lower-scale built form at the site's edges to create a sensitive transition to surrounding areas.

A fine-grain urban structure is proposed, with podium forms activating streetscapes and public spaces. Ground-floor uses will include civic spaces, retail, and live-work townhouses to contribute to a vibrant, walkable environment. A new public park and enhanced pedestrian and cycling connections will further improve access and permeability across the site and to surrounding centres.

Transport and connectivity outcomes have also been a core design consideration. The proposal facilitates sustainable travel by strengthening pedestrian and cycling links to the Castle Hill Metro Station and the wider strategic centre, thereby reducing car dependency.

The Department is satisfied that the planning proposal can provide for an adequate built form in accordance with the Apartment Design Guide (ADG) and the anticipated outcomes on neighbouring land, identified in the supporting urban design report (**Appendix B**), including:

- Maximum 950m² residential floor plates,
- Adequate setbacks and separation,
- Maximum residential tower lengths of approximately 50m,
- Residential Tower Setbacks of 6m and greater along key frontages including Kentwell Avenue, and
- Approximate 5m setback to Wesley Church.

A peer review (**Appendix N**) of the GFA and FSR was also undertaken which supports the targeted maximum GFA of 171,585m² (FSR 4.1:1) based on 75% residential floor plate efficiency and 85% non-residential floor plate efficiency.

Furthermore, the proposal is intended to be supported by a site-specific DCP to refine the design outcomes and ensure amenity is protected. The proposed site specific DCP (**Appendix K**) will consider factors such as building placement in relation to the street, building interfaces and neighbouring properties, future character, landscaping, public domain and amenity.

Overall, the planning proposal demonstrates a strong alignment with key urban design principles, and the desired future character of the area. The design aims to activate the public domain, improve apartment interfaces with open space, and ensure adequate natural ventilation and solar access for future residents, meeting the expectations of the Apartment Design Guide.

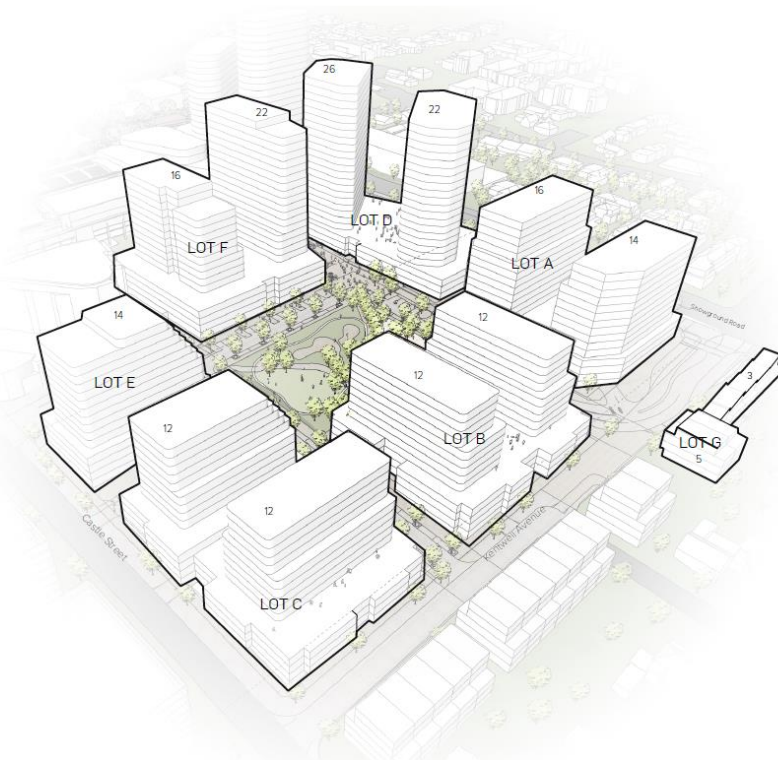


Figure 8: Proposed density and future concept design looking from the North (Source: Appendix B – Urban Design Report)

Solar Access

Solar access has been considered through a future design and modelling, incorporating solar access and impact assessments to minimise overshadowing of the public open space within the site. Building layouts and orientations are designed to maximize sunlight in the centrally located public park during midday on June 21, the winter solstice (**Figure 9**).

This is achieved by reducing tower heights towards the north and orienting towers to capture late afternoon sunlight. These measures ensure consistent solar access to public open space areas. While some overshadowing is expected, primarily affecting roadways and areas south of the development. The impacts are acceptable as the overshadowing meets the ADG, requiring a minimum of 2 hours of solar access to living spaces during winter solstice.



Figure 9: Shadow impacts during the winter solstice (Source: Appendix M, Woods Baggot Peer Review & Shadows)

Transport and Traffic Impacts

The Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) (**Appendix F**) has been prepared to support the planning proposal. The TIA anticipates an increase in traffic volume, with approximately 390 additional vehicle trips during weekday peak hours. Comprehensive traffic modelling and intersection analysis indicates that the existing road network and key intersections generally capable of accommodating this growth while maintaining acceptable levels of service.

The proposal supports transport-oriented development strengthening pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and improving connectivity to Castle Hill Metro Station. This encourages sustainable transport choices and helps reduce car dependency.

Preliminary engagement with TfNSW has identified several issues that require further assessment including the need to confirm traffic volumes and test key intersections using an updated network model (**Appendix P**). TfNSW has also suggested intersection upgrades, such as extending the right turn lane from Pennant Street northbound into Castle Street eastbound, which may require land acquisition and have implications for the proposal's design and development potential.

It is recommended that a Gateway condition require consultation with TfNSW to consider relevant traffic and transport matters prior to public exhibition.

4.2 Social and economic

Social impacts

The planning proposal will create positive social outcomes within the area. The proposal provides for uplift that will revitalise a vacant site, creating a vibrant, activated urban precinct with mixed uses, improving the local urban environment and sense of place. The proposal will facilitate the redevelopment of land to provide diverse housing close to public transport, education facilities and local shops. The activation of the undeveloped site for commercial, retail and a childcare centre will create opportunities for passive surveillance. Additionally, the proposed public open space offers a public place for the community to meet, socialise, host events, strengthening social ties and a sense of belonging.

Economic impacts

The proposal is supported by an Economic Benefit Statement (**Appendix I**), which assesses the site's economic potential under two scenarios. Under the first is the "Do Nothing" scenario, the site remains largely vacant and underutilised since 2010. Under "Scenario B", the site would be redeveloped into a mixed-use precinct featuring 1,400 residential apartments and substantial commercial and retail space. This redevelopment is projected to boost local economic activity, increase population, enhance retail spending, create new jobs, and deliver wider community benefits compared to the current dormant state of the site.

The proposed redevelopment is projected to generate significant positive economic impacts at both the local and regional levels. The site is located within the Castle Hill Strategic Centre, where retail trade is a major employment sector. Within the 1 km study area, retail trade accounts for 30.5% of employment, reflecting the role of major centres such as Castle Towers and Castle Hill Mall. In the broader 3 km area, retail remains the largest sector, supporting 18.9% of local employment.

Upon completion, the future development is estimated to directly support approximately 930 full-time equivalent jobs and contribute \$107 million in annual value added. Including indirect impacts, total employment effects are projected to reach 1,630 jobs with an overall annual contribution of nearly \$195 million to the regional economy. The addition of approximately 2,115 new residents is projected to drive \$35.5 million in annual retail expenditure, supporting local businesses and strengthening the Strategic Centre's role as a retail and employment hub.

In summary, the proposed redevelopment of this underutilised site will deliver substantial and well-justified economic benefits, supporting the Strategic Centre's growth, enhancing its employment and retail functions, and contributing to local and regional economic resilience.

4.3 Infrastructure

Local Infrastructure

The planning proposal notes that the site is serviced by a range of existing infrastructure, utilities, public transport, variety of social support services and recreational facilities.

A public benefit offer is intended to be made to Council. The offer includes the delivery of local infrastructure on the site such as the construction of a 4,000m² central public park, development of new roads, footpaths, and cycleways to improve connectivity, and the provision of a 6-bedroom crisis accommodation dwelling for women and children. The offer also includes a monetary contribution of \$10 million. The Department considers this a suitable mechanism to deliver local infrastructure as this aligns with Council's strategic plan for Castle Hill which identifies open space and pedestrian connectivity for the precinct.

Alternatively, Council can seek to update their local contributions plan to deliver local infrastructure.

State Infrastructure

The Department notes that the Housing and Productivity Contribution (HPC) has commenced on 1 October 2023. It is intended that the HPC will secure funding towards state infrastructure to support growth.

5 Consultation

5.1 Community

The planning proposal is categorised as a complex under the LEP Making Guidelines (September 2022). Accordingly, a community consultation period of 30 working days is recommended and this forms part of the conditions to the Gateway determination.

5.2 Agencies

It is recommended the following agencies be consulted on the planning proposal and given 30 working days to comment:

- The Hills Shire Council.
- Sydney Metro;
- Transport for NSW;
- Endeavour Energy; and
- Sydney Water.

6 Timeframe

The LEP Plan Making Guidelines (August 2023) establishes maximum benchmark timeframes for planning proposal by category. This planning proposal is categorised as a complex.

The Department recommends an LEP completion date of 17 July 2026 in line with its commitment to reducing processing times and with regard to the benchmark timeframes. A condition to the above effect is recommended in the Gateway determination.

7 Local plan-making authority

The Sydney Central City Planning Panel has not requested delegation to be the Local Plan-Making authority.

In this instance it is considered appropriate that the Department retain the Local Plan Making Authority role.

8 Assessment summary

The planning proposal is supported to proceed with conditions for the following reasons:

- it is consistent with the objectives and priorities of the Greater Sydney Region Plan, the Central City District Plan, the North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy and The Castle Hill Strategic Centre Precinct Plan;
- it is consistent with the strategic direction and objectives of The Hills Local Strategic Planning Statement (2019), Economic Growth Plan 2023, Economic Growth Plan (2023), Smart Place Strategic Framework (2024), The Hills Housing Strategy, and The Hills Corridor Strategy;

- the proposed uplift will allow for approximately 1,400 additional new dwellings and 930 ongoing jobs in proximity to the Castle Hill Metro Station supporting the 30-minute city vision; and
- the dedication of a 4,000m² public open space provides for public benefit, subject to consultation with the Hills Shire Council;

9 Recommendation

It is recommended the delegate of the Secretary:

- agree that any inconsistencies with section 9.1 Direction 1.4 Site Specific Provisions is justified.

It is recommended the delegate of the Minister determine that the planning proposal should proceed subject to conditions.

The following conditions are recommended to be included on the Gateway determination:

1. Prior to community consultation, the planning proposal is to be updated to:
 - (a) Consult with Council on the proposed RE1 zoning for the central public park. The proposal should be updated following Council consultation to adequately address their feedback.
 - (b) Provide a response to Ministerial Direction 1.4 Site Specific Provisions and Ministerial Direction 3.2 Heritage Conservation.
 - (c) Consult with TfNSW to ensure relevant traffic and transport matters raised in their correspondence are resolved prior to public exhibition.
2. Consultation is required with the following public authorities:
 - Sydney Metro;
 - Transport for New South Wales;
 - Endeavour Energy;
 - Sydney Water; and
 - The Hills Shire Council.
3. The planning proposal should be made available for community consultation for a minimum of 30 working days
4. Prior to finalisation, ensure an appropriate mechanism is in place to deliver the proposed community benefits.

The timeframe for the LEP to be completed is on or before 17 July 2026



14 June 2025

Peter Pham

Manager, Local Planning and Council Support (Central, West and South)



20 June 2025 (NB Revised 9, July)

Tina Chappell

Director, Local Planning and Council Support (Central, West and South)

Assessment officer

Clay Logan

A/Senior Planning Officer, Local Planning and Council Support (Central, West and South)

6650 7158