

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Statement of Visual Impact for
Greenvalleys Mountain Bike Park Planning
Proposal

Date: 26 November 2024

Reference: 22-0047

Address and property description:

Greenvalleys Mountain Bike Park
Illawarra Highway, Tongarra

Lot 1 DP 881927

Prepared By:

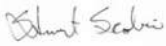
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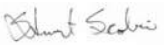
For:

Nick Haertsch



REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
A	23 September 2022	Draft
B	10 October 2022	Final
C	6 June 2023	Amendment for Planning Proposal
D	26 November 2024	Amendment for Planning Proposal

Prepared By:	Stuart Scobie	Signed:
Position:	Director / Senior Landscape Architect	
Date:	26 November 2024	

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Date:	26 November 2024	



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1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment is to determine the visual impact of a Planning Proposal for the Greenvalleys Mountain Bike Park. The Site Plan and aerial photograph/photo location plan are included as Appendix A. The existing context is shown in photographs included as Appendix B to this assessment.

1.1 Background

The existing mountain bike park has been operating on a temporary development application basis for approximately 10 years requiring annual permission to continue. A planning Proposal has now been prepared which seeks to allow the ongoing operation of the park in its existing form with no new bike trails or other development works under Clause 2.5 of the Shellharbour LEP 2013.

1.2 The Project

The existing mountain bike park is spread over approximately 38 hectares of land adjacent to the Illawarra Highway in Tongarra. (Refer to aerial photograph in Appendix A). This land includes level cleared grassland and forested slopes. The rear of the property abuts Lakeview Road which provides access for bike riders via the park's shuttle service. The closest element of the mountain bike facility to the Illawarra Highway is located approximately 21 metres from the site boundary. The closest adjacent residence to the facility is located approximately 212m from the park boundary and is accessed from Lakeview Road. The Bike Park Hub facilities consist of shipping containers and other rudimentary outbuildings. Tracks and ramps are carved into the property which rises up a hillside to the south.

The site has an existing vehicular access from the Illawarra Highway to the main carpark with good sightlines in both directions.

Off-street parking for park users is provided in and around the central hub. An all-weather gravel surface forms the base to the overflow parking area, while the main car parking area comprises a grassed paddock.

1.3 Methodology

The Visual Impact Assessment of the mountain bike park involves the assessment of the visibility of the existing facility, the identification of key existing viewpoints and their sensitivity followed by the assessment of their visual impact.

In terms of this project, the visual impact from a road corridor is assessed considering static (generally long term) and mobile (generally short term) receptors. The impact varies based on the type of receptor:

- Static receptors are people with views from their dwellings or places of work
- Mobile receptors include drivers and pedestrians

This assessment followed a site visit on Wednesday the 17th of August 2022 which allowed evaluation of the facility both within looking outwards and from multiple locations outside the park looking inwards.

2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Landscape Context

The context is a typical rural landscape with open pastures for dairy cattle. The property is distinguished by an extensive avenue of established trees equally spaced for several hundred metres along the Highway frontage.

Directly across the Illawarra Highway from the park, on the same lot, is a working dairy farm and boutique milk bottling plant that generate a sense of that rural landscape with the addition of a light industrial theme from the sheds and other infrastructure.



2.2 Built Form Character

The built form character is a small grouping of containers forming storage and an office as the central hub with smaller more dispersed timber structures forming mountain bike jumps. The buildings are small in scale, low key and sit comfortably in the rural/light industrial context.

The larger portion of the park is set within a forested landscape with mountain bike trails snaking down the hillside through a variety of jumps, turns and mounds that also sit comfortably in a working rural landscape where gravel roads through properties are commonplace.

2.3 Network Context

The site is bounded by the Illawarra Highway to the north. The only other roads in the vicinity are minor access lanes leading to rural properties. Tongarra Lane is 0.75km to the west and Tongarra Mine Road 1.2km to the west. Lakeview Road 1.0km to the east.

2.4 Land Use

The balance of the property across the Illawarra Highway is a functioning dairy including the historic homestead “Lothlorien” with 95 years history in the one family.

2.5 History

A separate Heritage Impact Statement in relation to this proposal includes historical research which outlines a brief history of the property from both European and indigenous perspectives.

It is noted that the Wodi Wodi clan Inhabited the land with that nation extending from Lake Illawarra in the north, Shoalhaven River in the south and Mittagong to the west. The nearby Macquarie Rivulet forms the northern border of the current property and would have provided a source of water and food for the indigenous population.

The Heritage Impact Statement research traces the European history of Albion Park from a Governor’s grant to Samuel Terry in 1821. Known as the Meadows, the property was passed on to family members with the land on which Lothlorien farmhouse is erected granted to Rosetta Terry in 1857. Purchased by Stanley Mattinson in 1928, the property was passed on to daughter Gwendoline who married Sydney Haertsch and is now owned by their son, Peter Anthony Haertsch. It is some legacy that the property and Lothlorien farmhouse have remained in the same family for approaching 100 years.

3. VISUAL IMPACT

The visual impact is assessed in accordance with the *design principles* outlined in Chapter 34 of the Shellharbour Development Control Plan.

3.1 Roads and Private Access Driveways

3.1.1 Assessment of Planning Proposal

The original road pattern has been preserved with existing access points to the Highway retained.

Existing landscape will be retained to increase visual integration of the road with the landscape.

There is no impact to roads and the private access other than a likely future intersection upgrade of a specific type that will be confirmed following further traffic analysis on the Southern side of the Illawarra Highway. This upgrade will be unlikely to alter the visual impact of the park in any substantial way. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

3.2 Drainage

3.2.1 Assessment of Proposal

Existing drainage systems are retained.

There is no impact to drainage systems and therefore no mitigation measures are proposed.

3.3 Road Signage



3.3.1 Assessment of Proposal

Existing signage within the site is to be retained and no new road signage is proposed.

There is no impact to signage and therefore no mitigation measures are proposed.

3.4 Boundary Treatment

3.4.1 Assessment of Proposal

The existing mountain bike park is located as illustrated on the Site Plan. It is set back from the Highway boundary by approximately 21 metres. No changes are proposed to existing fencing.

Whilst there is no impact to the existing boundary treatment, it would be beneficial to plant an additional 2m high evergreen shrub layer behind the tree avenue to provide an additional level of visual mitigation of the Park Hub structures to drivers on the road.

3.5 Entrance

3.5.1 Assessment of Proposal

The entrance trees, shrubs and gateway treatments are to be retained.

There is no change to the existing entrance gateway and private access. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

3.6 Buildings

The mountain bike park hub sits in the context of other rural, industrial buildings creating a cluster providing for the storage of equipment and management of the facility. The bulk and the scale of the hub is appropriate to the existing activities.

The northern elevation presenting to the Highway is painted in muted grey colours that align with the visual expectations of rural sheds and other structures when viewed from the Highway.

3.6.1 Assessment of Proposal

The hub structures sit comfortably within the rural context. It is set further back from the Highway and is substantially screened by existing trees which will be supplemented by additional shrub plantings within the property as noted previously.

The visual impact of the existing hub building to the public roads is considered acceptable.

3.6.3 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures discussed with the owner include additional shrub screen planting within the property and will be incorporated into the final design. No further mitigation measures are required.

3.7 Associated Vegetation

3.7.1 Assessment of Proposal

As noted above, the existing hub building will be substantially screened by existing trees which will be supplemented by additional landscape treatment as noted above.

There is no impact to existing vegetation and therefore no mitigation measures are proposed.

3.8 Electricity Lines

There are no changes to power poles or sub stations proposed.

3.9 Development on a Skyline

The Planning Proposal does not impact a skyline.

3.10 Lighting

3.10.1 Assessment of Proposal



No lighting exists at the facility as it is only operated during daylight hours. There is no impact as the result of obtrusive light and therefore no mitigation measures are proposed.

4. CONCLUSION

The visual impact of the Planning Proposal has been assessed following an inspection of the property and considering the criteria outlined in Chapter 34 of the Shellharbour Development Control Plan.

Considering the static or mobile receptors as defined in the introduction to this assessment it is noted that:

Static receptors (people with views of the proposal from their dwellings and places of work) are limited to those working at the facility and those dwellings located on the same property. In addition, one property on Lakeview Rd can view a portion of the mountain bike tracks on the partly forested north-east slope. Other residences that may have a partial long view of the facility (in excess of 2.5km away) have been excluded from the assessment as being beyond a reasonable impact distance. Those residents and workers on the same property have expressed no concerns with the visual quality of the mountain bike park and support its presence on the site. The closest visible residence from Lakeview Rd can only view a small portion of the facilities trails which present as visually similar to vehicular tracks in paddocks and therefore are not out of character with visual expectations within the local context. There are no other residences or places of work in a line of sight of the existing hub structures.

Mobile receptors, drivers and tourists using the Illawarra Highway, will be travelling at 90 km/hour partially screened from the existing facility by the established avenue of trees along the highway noting that this vegetation will be enhanced by additional shrub screening.

The assessment has determined that there will be no significant change to the boundary with the highway, existing access driveways, entry gates or drainage systems and existing infrastructure such as the electricity lines. The visual impact of the Planning proposal is considered acceptable. On this basis, it is concluded that the existing mountain bike trail park is appropriate in the context and does not have undue visual impact on the road corridor, the Illawarra Highway.

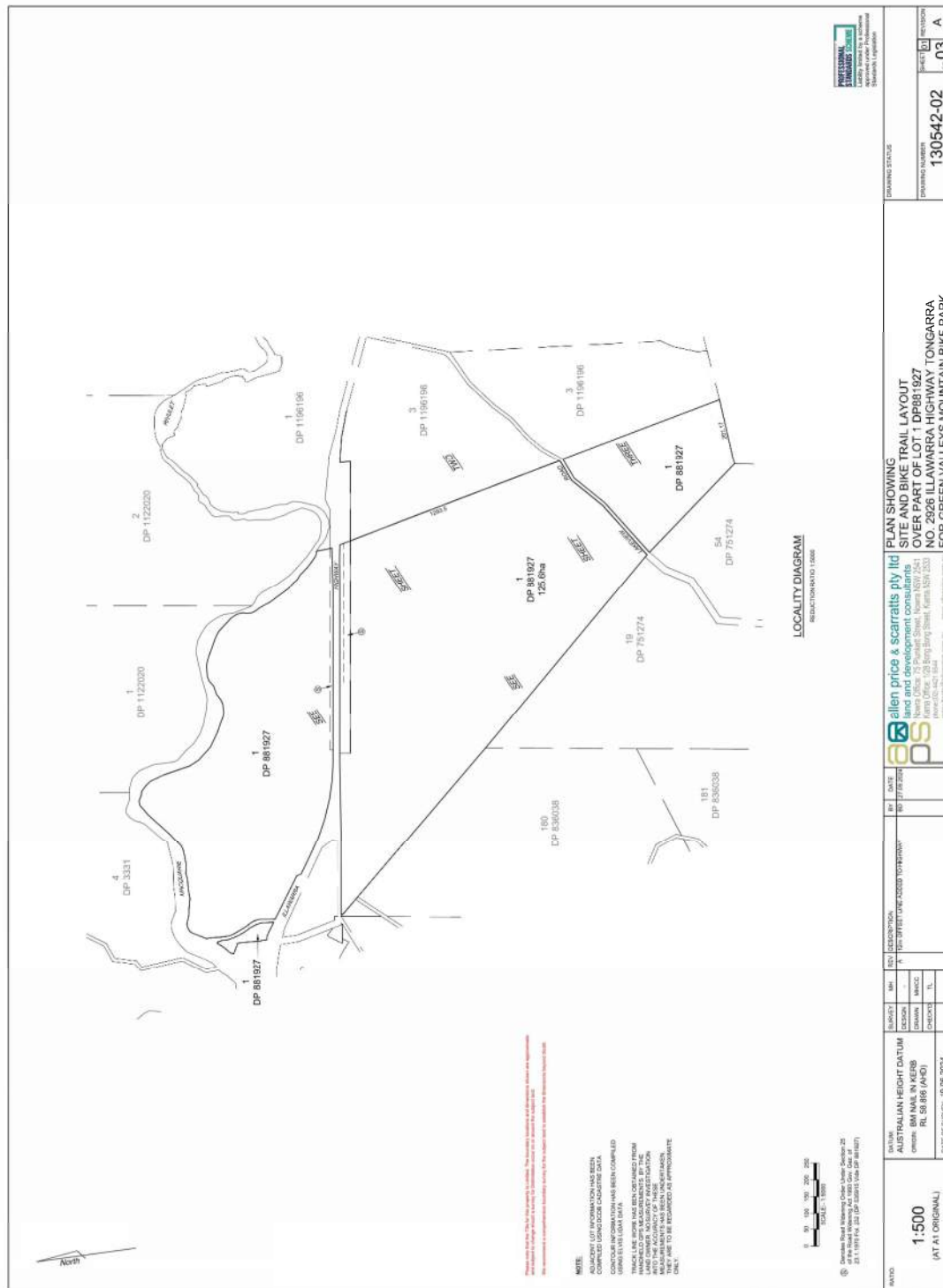
Appendix A – Site Photos Location Plan, Drone Image, Site & Bike Trail Layout Plans



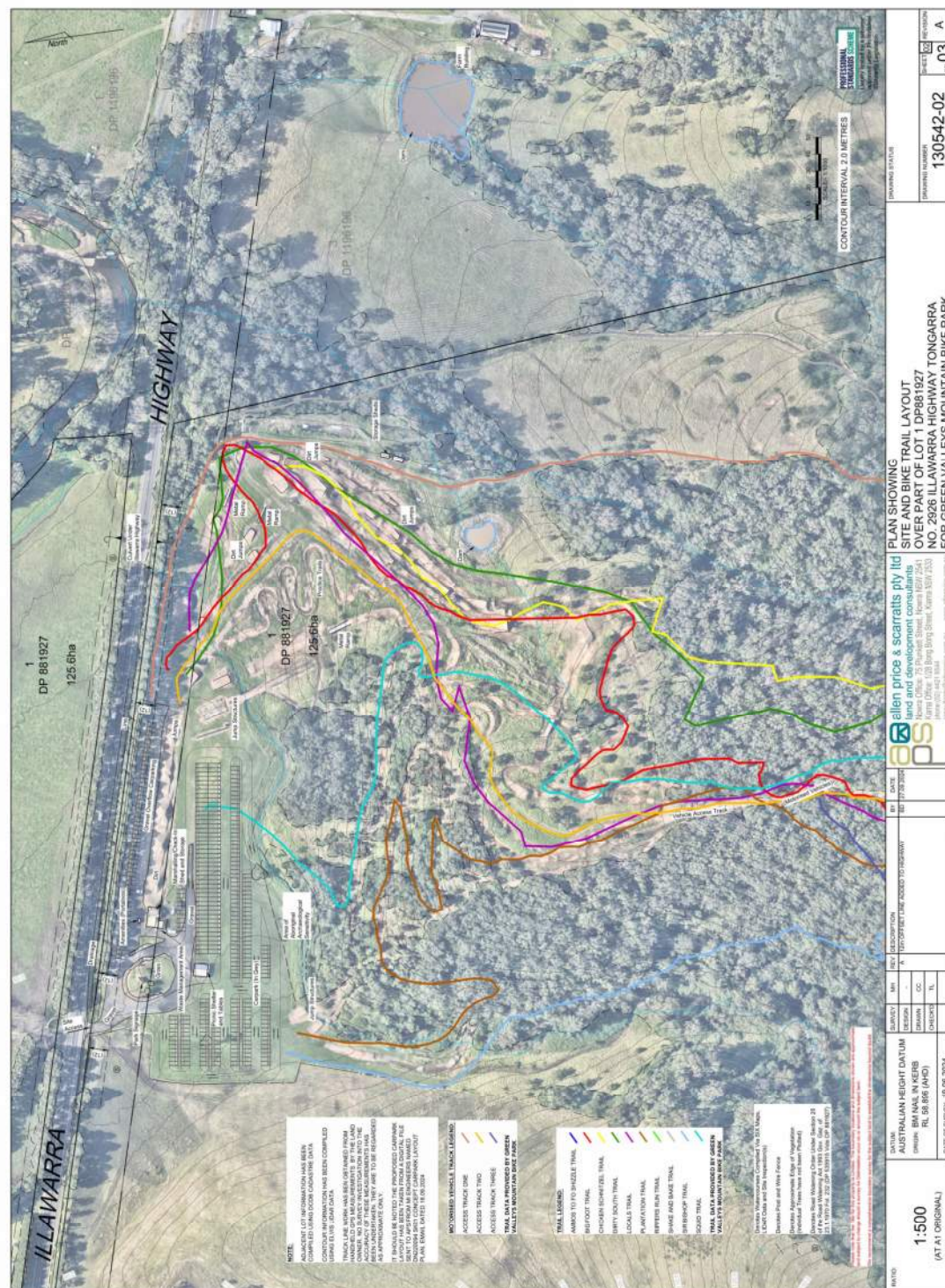
Aerial Photograph Image & Site Photos Location Plan (Sixmaps)



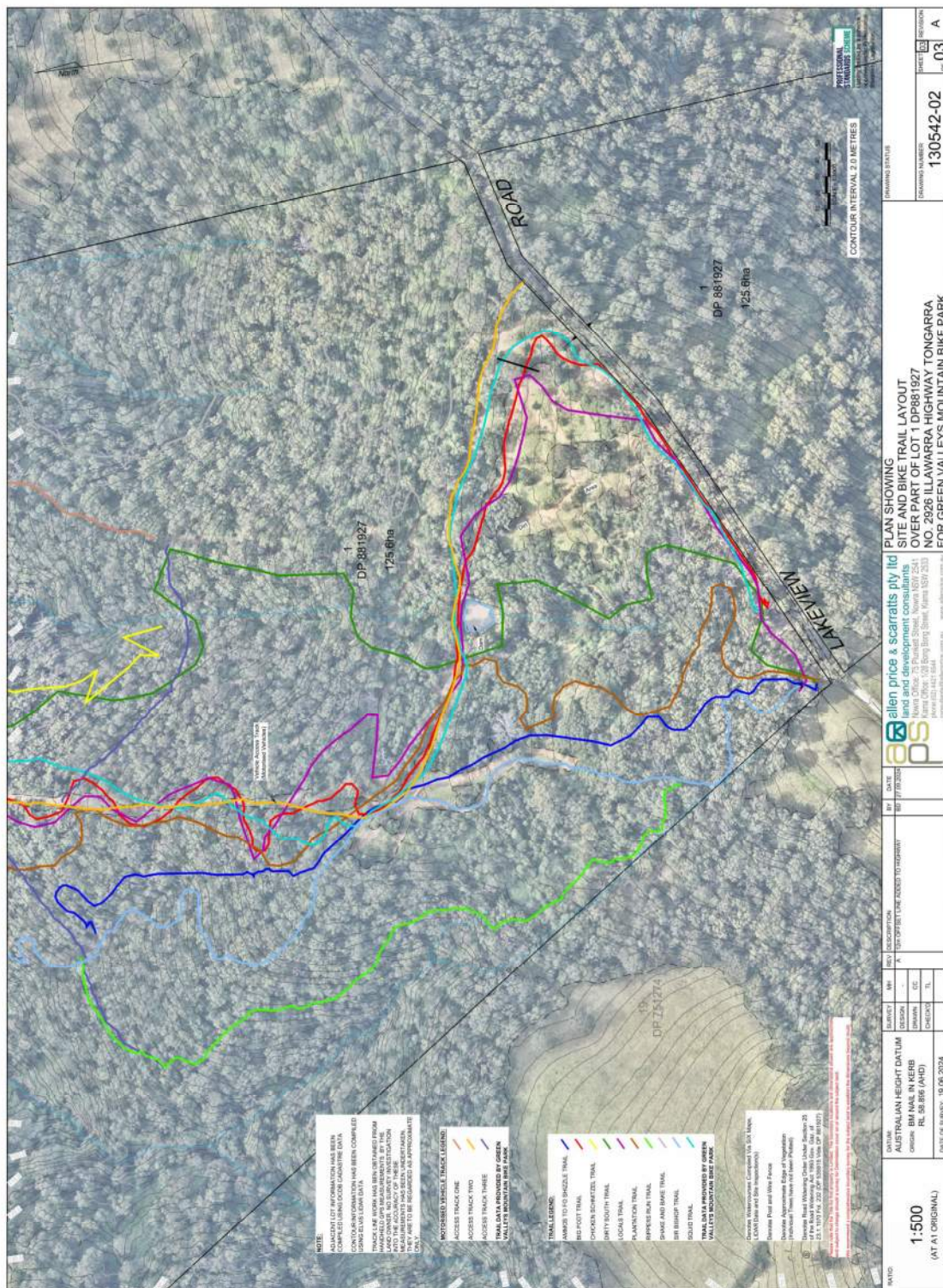
Drone image of Park Hub adjacent to Illawarra Highway (Edmiston Jones)



Greenvalleys Mountain Bike Site & Bike Trail Layout Plan - Part 1



Greenvalleys Mountain Bike Site & Bike Trail Layout Plan - Part 2



Appendix B – Assessed Receptor Location Photos



1. Tongarra Mine Road looking East – low impact



2. 100m West of site looking East on the Illawarra Highway – no impact



3. Looking into site from Lothlorien Strongbark Dairy driveway entry – moderate impact



4. Opposite site entry looking East on Illawarra Hwy – moderate impact



5. 100m East of site looking West on the Illawarra Highway – low impact



6. 200m East of site looking West on the Illawarra Highway – no impact



7. Lakeview Rd intersection looking West on the Illawarra Highway – low impact



8. 1Km East of site looking West on the Illawarra Highway – low impact



9. View from 10 Lakeview Road towards site – low impact



10. View from Lothlorien farmhouse to site – no impact



11. View from Parent's home of site owner to site – low impact



12. View from Green Valley farmhouse to site – no impact