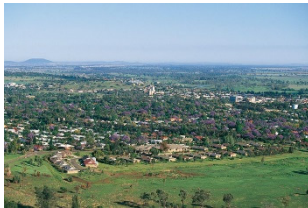


## APPENDIX C



## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

32-42 BROOKS PARADE,  
BELMONT

*Strategic Planning and Urban Design Analysis*

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**PROJECT:** Strategic Planning and Urban Design Analysis

**CLIENT:** Coeve Design/KML Joint Venture

**OUR REFERENCE:** 13/0524

**VERSION:** Final, December 2016

|                |               |                               |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

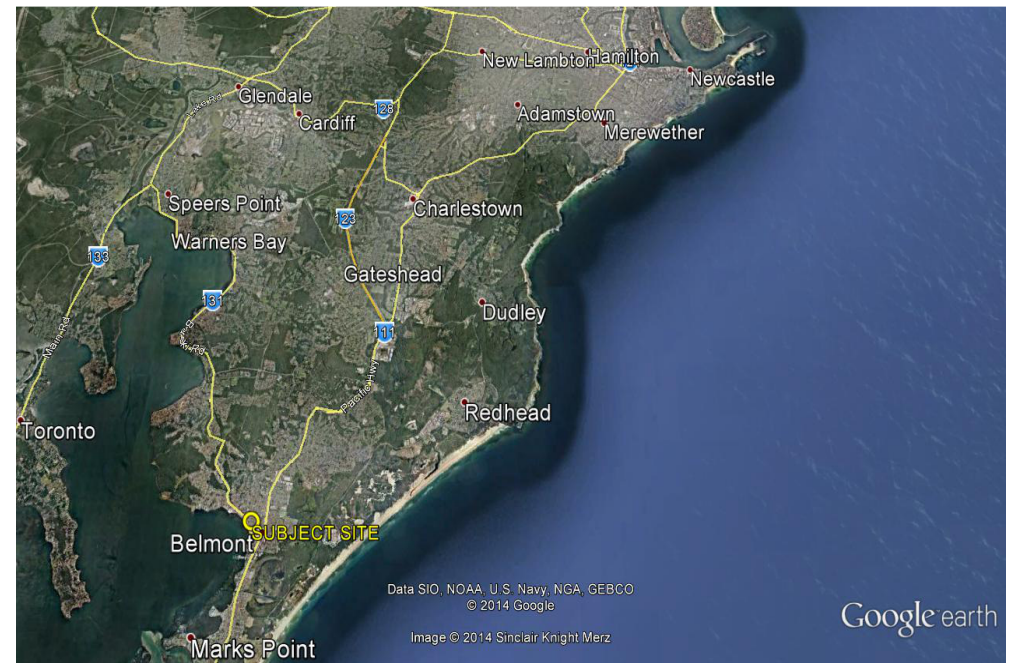
This report has been prepared on behalf of Coeve Design and KML Joint Venture in relation to a potential development of several adjoining lots at Brookes Parade, Belmont (the subject site). Earlier iterations of this report has also been previously reviewed by Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) officers. This report provides a strategic overview and design analysis of a site at Brookes Parade in Belmont.

The aim of the report is:

1. To examine the strategic planning context of the site and the proposal for multi-storey residential development of the site in regards to current and proposed planning controls.
2. To consider any proposed development on the site in relation to potential environmental constraints (and opportunities).
3. Provide an urban design analysis for the subject site. It is noted that an assessment against State Environmental Planning Policy Number 65 (SEPP 65) has been prepared by and architect in accordance with the SEPP.

Lake Macquarie City Council's development controls identify the subject site as a significant site in the Belmont Town Centre. Part of the strategic planning assessment undertaken in this report will consider whether the site and the surrounding area. To justify any variation to the existing standards and controls, or amendment of proposed standard and controls, a comprehensive examination of

the site and future potential development in the context of Belmont town centre and wider Lake Macquarie LGA is necessary.



**Figure 1-1: Locality Map (Google Earth, 2014)**

## 2 SUBJECT SITE

The subject site is located in the town of Belmont in the local government area of Lake Macquarie (Figure 1-1) approximately two hours drive north of Sydney, and 17 kilometres from Newcastle CBD. The subject site is comprised of fourteen lots in the Belmont Town Centre, bounded by Brooks Parade, Sharp Street and Edgar Street (Figure 2-1). The particulars for each lot are shown below in Table 2-1. The total site area is approximately 6,848m<sup>2</sup>. A site analysis plan is presented in Figure 2-2.

The site is a prominent location on the Belmont foreshore. The site frontage to Brooks Parade is approximately 85 metres, which is currently the largest combined street frontage of any development site along Brooks Parade.

An open stormwater channel runs through the north part of the site, across two lots, which connects the stormwater network in Edgar Street to the outfall into Lake Macquarie.

There is slight fall from Edgar Street toward Brookes Parade across the site. The site is lower in topography than the Pacific Highway to the east. Stormwater from the existing dwellings drains directly to the street.

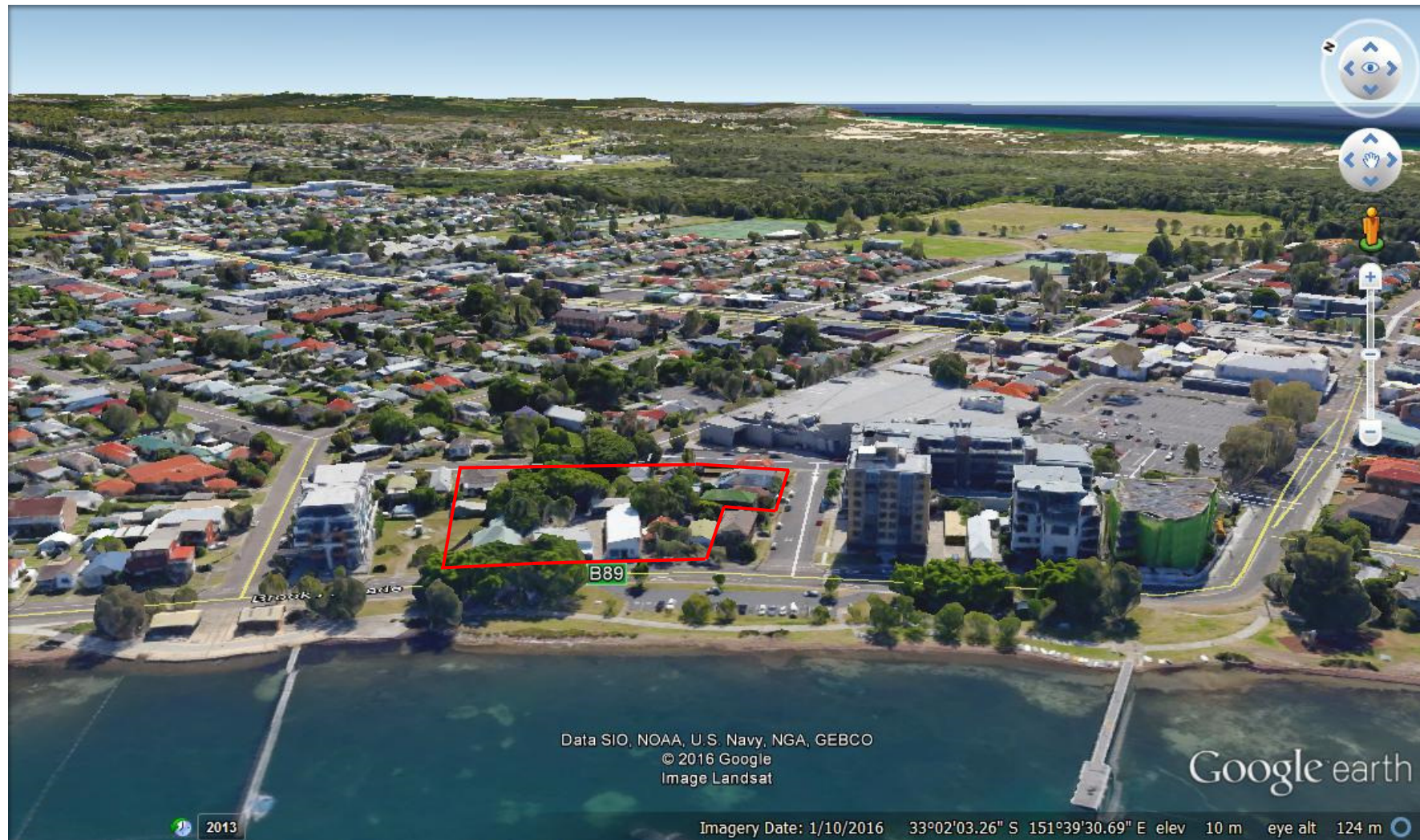
Access to the site is available from Brooks Parade, Sharp Street and Edgar Street.

Current uses on the site and in the area are predominantly for residential purposes. The dwellings comprise a mix of one and two storey buildings, and redevelopment of some sites for dwellings up to six storeys.

Reticulated water and service, electricity, and telecommunications are available to the site.

**Table 2-1:** Lot Particulars

| Lot | Section | DP     |
|-----|---------|--------|
| 11  | B       | 585    |
| A   | -       | 400644 |
| B   | -       | 400644 |
| 2   | -       | 353066 |
| 1   | -       | 353066 |
| 4   | -       | 12898  |
| 5   | -       | 12898  |
| 6   | -       | 12898  |
| 10  | B       | 585    |
| 8   | -       | 12898  |
| B   | -       | 339105 |
| A   | -       | 339105 |
| 4   | B       | 585    |
| 3   | B       | 585    |



**Figure 2-1:** Subject Site, Brooks Parade, Belmont



**Figure 2-2:** Site Analysis Plan

### 3 URBAN AREA ANALYSIS

The subject site is located in the town centre of Belmont. Belmont town centre is a busy centre divided down the middle by the Pacific Highway. The Pacific Highway is the main road and public transport route linking Belmont to Newcastle CBD and the regional centre of Charlestown to the north, and Swansea to the south.

#### 3.1 LAND USE

Land use in Belmont Town centre is prescribed by the Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2014. The Plan identifies a Land Use Zone that applies to each parcel of land, as well as the land uses permissible in each zone. Figure 3.1 identifies the current B4 Mixed Use zoning. The zoning map reveals that the site has been identified for mixed use, higher density residential development.

The land use pattern in Belmont consists of a commercial core on both sides of the Pacific Highway, supported by mixed uses around the core, and then medium and higher density development beyond that. Some residential buildings near the Highway have been converted to business uses.

The objectives of the relevant zone under LEP 2014 are presented in Table adjacent.

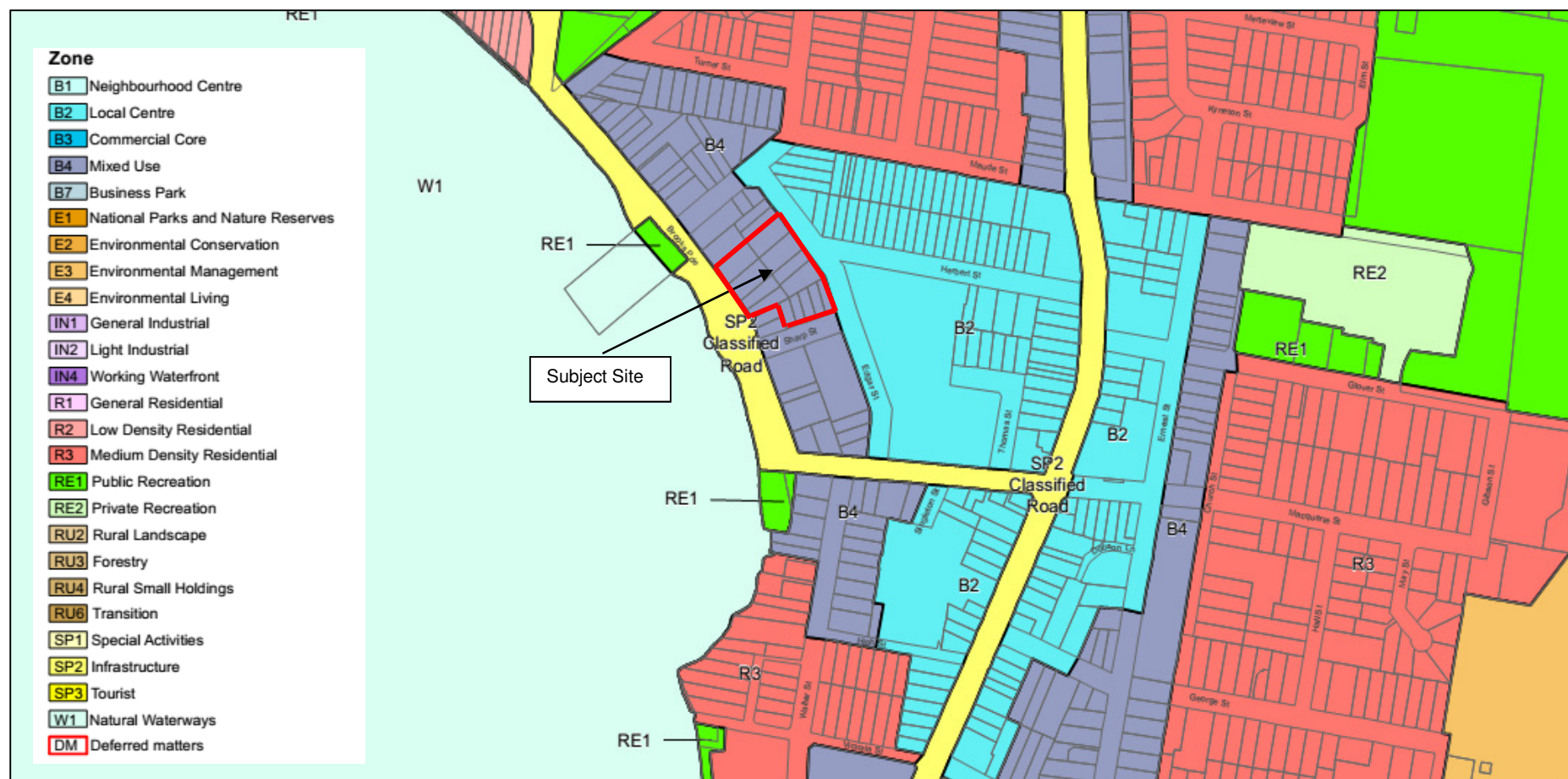
The subject site is zoned as B4 Mixed Use Development. Potential development on the subject site can include mixed use development to provide retail and commercial uses, typically on the ground floor and lower floors of buildings, and residential dwellings above those floors. However, it may be appropriate for residential uses to be provided on the ground floor in appropriate locations within the development site.

As is discussed later in this report the Hunter Regional Plan prepared by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment applies to the subject site. There are no sub-regional strategies that apply to the Lower Hunter, only the regional strategy and Council's local planning strategies. Nonetheless, within Lake Macquarie, Belmont is a sub-regional centre providing a number of services and facilities of a typical sub-regional centre including court house and other civic functions. The current LEP identifies the Belmont town centre for future higher density development reflecting the strategic direction of the town centre identified by Council.

**Table 3-1:** Objectives of relevant zones under LEP 2014

| Zoning<br>LEP 2014 | Zone objectives (LEP 2014)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B4 Mixed uses      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.</li> <li>To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.</li> <li>To enable development that complements and enhances the core retail function and trading performance of the B2 Local Centre and B3 Commercial Core zones.</li> </ul> |

# STRATEGIC PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS



**Figure 3-1:** Land Use Zoning (LEP 2014)

### 3.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Belmont town centre has a variety of community facilities that are located in close proximity and easy to access (Figure 3-2).

Two shopping centres are located within close proximity to each other: Belmont Citi Centre and Belmont Central Shopping Centre. Major supermarkets (Coles, Woolworths and Aldi) are present in Belmont. All the major banks are represented, as well as local building societies, such as the Newcastle Permanent Building Society and the Greater Building Society.

Newsagencies, butchers, bakeries, the post office and various specialty shops are located in the major shopping centres and the connecting streets, such as Macquarie Street and the Pacific Highway. Major food outlets, such as McDonalds and Subway, and cafes are scattered around the town centre to cater for weekday and weekend trade.

Medical services available in the town include several general practitioners and dentists, while Belmont Public Hospital is located within 5 minutes drive. Other personal services include pharmacies, hairdressers and beauty salons.

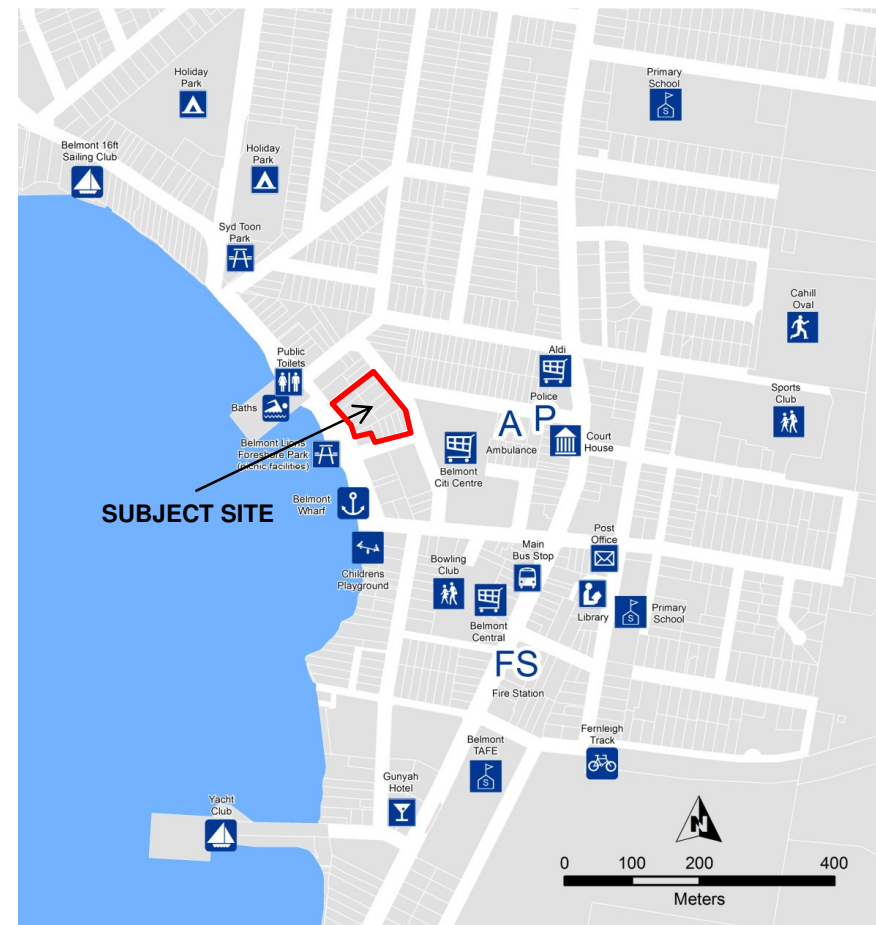
Belmont has retained various civic services. The local Court House operates daily, and is supported by Belmont Police Station in the adjacent Herbert Street. Belmont Ambulance Station is also located Herbert Street.

Education facilities in Belmont include two primary schools, a high school and the Hunter Institute of Technology Belmont Campus.

A variety of community facilities operate in Belmont, such as neighbourhood centre, Public Library, various sporting fields and

courts, as well as commercial clubs including Belmont 16ft Sailing Club and Belmont Yacht Club.

Overall, the social and civic facilities at Belmont are reflective of its status as a major sub-regional centre in Lake Macquarie.



**Figure 3-2: Community Facilities**

### 3.3 OPEN SPACE

Open space in the vicinity of the subject site is considerable. Lake Macquarie is a vast water space at the western side of the town centre that is adjoined by Belmont Lions Park (Figure 3-3). This foreshore park has public facilities such as picnic tables, benches, and public toilets. Further south is a children's playground. Other facilities include the Belmont Rotary Park, Belmont Baths and Belmont Wharf.

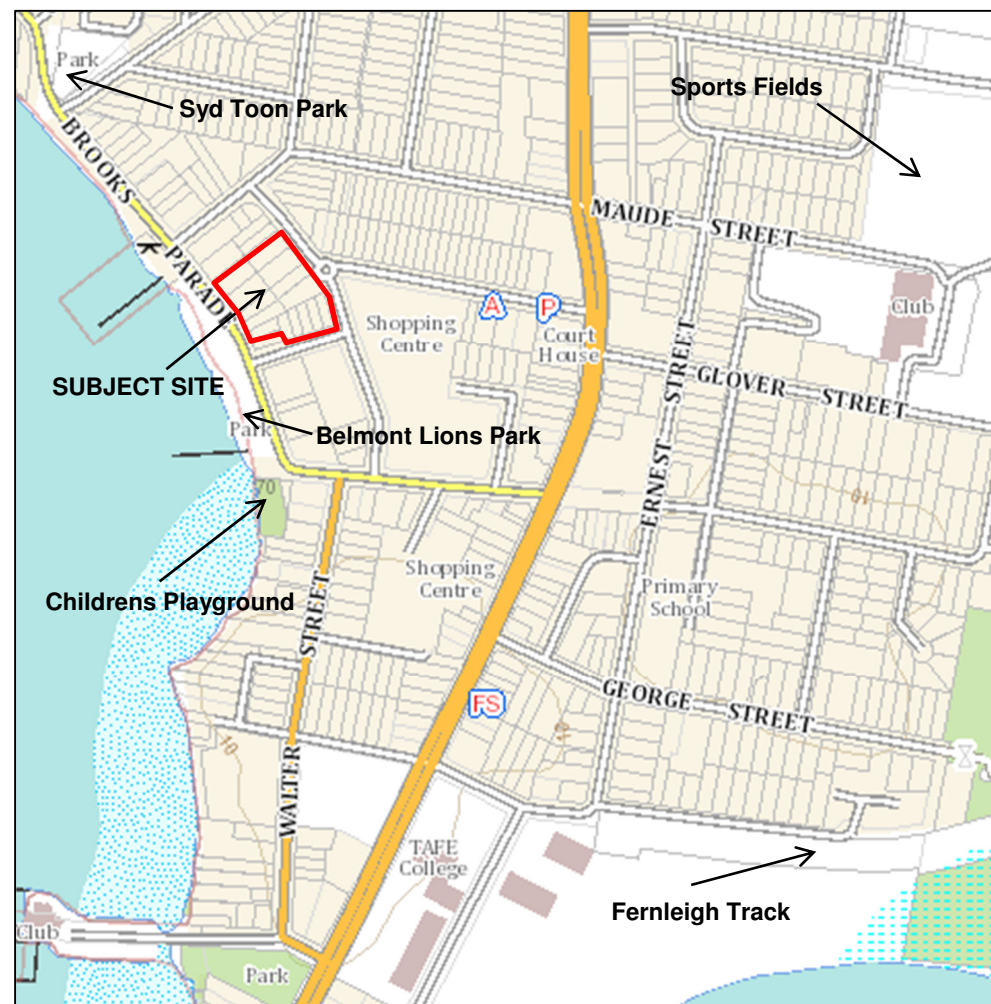


Figure 3-3: Open Space Network

### **3.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The subject site is within 400 metres walk of bus stops for major routes (Figure 3-4).

Public transport is provided by government and private bus companies. Newcastle Buses provides several routes to various local centres, town centres, north to Newcastle City Centre and south to Swansea, and weekday services to Morisset Rail Station. Private bus companies also service Belmont town centre. Busways route 99 provides access beyond Swansea to Catherine Hill Bay, Nords Wharf and Lake Haven. Bus routes to Belmont are shown in Figure 3-5.

Bus Routes:

#### **310 – Belmont to Newcastle**

Daily service via Belmont via Valentine, Eleebana, Mount Hutton, Charlestown, and to Newcastle;

#### **313 – Belmont to Charlestown**

Monday to Saturday via Belmont Hospital, Valentine, Croudace Bay, Eleebana and on to Charlestown;

#### **317 – Belmont to Newcastle**

Belmont via Charlestown to Newcastle;

#### **318 Belmont to Belmont Hospital**

Monday to Friday service between Belmont and Belmont Hospital;

#### **322 Belmont – Newcastle**

Belmont, Jewells, Redhead, Dudley, Whitebridge, Charlestown, Kahibah, Kotara, New Lambton and on to Newcastle;

#### **349 Swansea – Newcastle**

Swansea, Pelican, Marks Point, Belmont, Gateshead, Charlestown and on to Newcastle;

#### **350 Swansea Heads – Newcastle**

Caves Beach, Swansea, Belmont, Jewells, Gateshead, Charlestown, Adamstown and on to Newcastle;

#### **352 Morisset Rail Station – Belmont Depot**

Morisset, Wyee, Doyalson North, Lake Munmorah and Swansea to Belmont.



**Figure 3-4:** Major Transport Routes and Bus Stops



**Figure 3-5:** Bus Routes

### 3.5 ROAD HIERARCHY

Belmont Town centre is serviced by the Pacific Highway, which is an arterial road that runs north from Charlestown town centre (major employment area), and to the south toward Swansea, connecting with the M1 motorway (Figure 3-6).

The distributor roads in the town centre that connect with the subject site are Macquarie Street, Brooks Parade, Ross Street and Evens Street. Ross Street continues north to Valentine and Warners Bay.

Collector roads include Mark Street, Maude Street and Edgar Street.

Local roads include Sharp Street and Herbert Street. These streets carry less traffic than all the surrounding streets.

Access from the road network is available from Brooks Parade, Sharp Street and Edgar Street. The final access point will be subject to traffic engineering requirements, however, several access points are available.



Figure 3-6: Road Hierarchy

### 3.6 PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Overall, Belmont Town Centre is walkable and well connected.

The pedestrian network in Belmont Town Centre is complete on one side of most streets. The footpaths are standard width, with the exception of the area along the Pacific Highway and the foreshore, which are wider.

The main pedestrian movement network around the subject site is shown in Figure 3-7 below.



**Figure 3-7:** Pedestrian Movements around the Subject Site

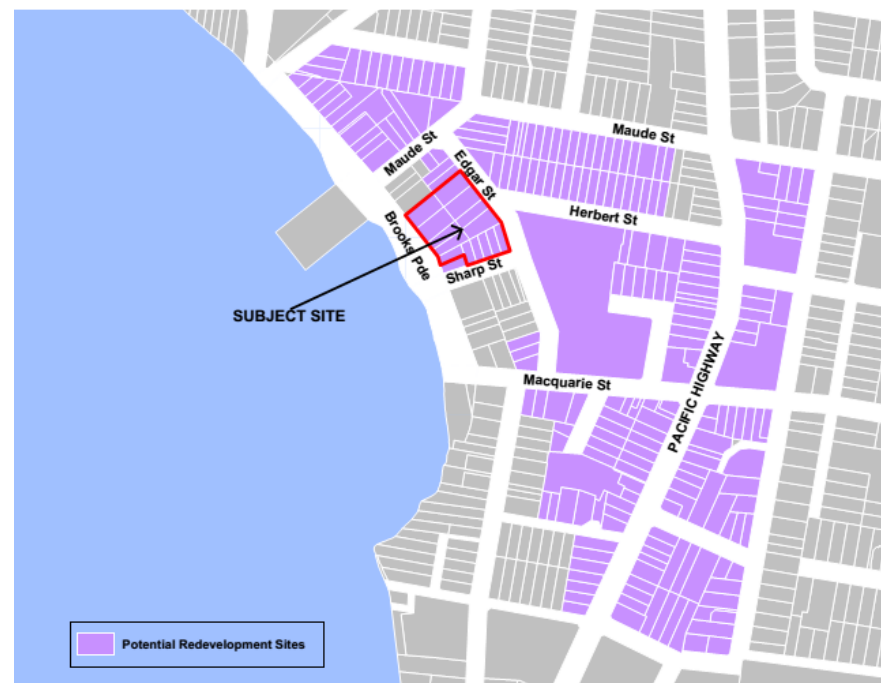
### 3.7 URBAN PATTERN AND DEVELOPMENT

The urban pattern is formed by the series of urban blocks and lots within each of the blocks. The street network in Belmont is a classic grid (Figure 3-8). The Pacific Highway is a spine that runs from Belmont South to Belmont North, and splits Belmont almost down the middle into east and west. This corridor is 26 metres wide, and supports pedestrian walkways on both sides. The highway is connected to collector streets, normally at right angles. Local streets connect to collector roads at right angles as well. The street widths are uniform, approximately 20 metres, and generally with a pedestrian footpath on one side of the road.

The lot layout within each urban block is also uniform for most blocks. The rear boundary of any lot is generally shared within only one neighbour. The lot layout in Belmont facilitates consolidation of existing lots into larger lots for development capable of accommodating larger built forms, and therefore higher density of dwellings.

The urban pattern in Belmont Town Centre provides several sites for significant future development of a single lot, or through lot consolidation of several lots into a single lot. Opportunities exist for substantial future development adjoining the subject site. The key single lot for significant development is the Belmont Citi Centre site. Belmont Central Shopping Centre could consolidate with adjoining lots for substantial development. Other lots on the Pacific Highway have potential through consolidation.

The subject site is a significant development lot in the development of Belmont Town Centre, particularly as the site fronts the foreshore of Lake Macquarie. The site is currently the consolidation of fourteen lots, and represents a particular opportunity to achieve a high quality development on the site consistent with the development pattern on surrounding lots.



**Figure 3-8:** Urban Pattern and Development

### 3.8 BUILT FORMS

The subject site is adjoined in each major direction by different forms of development within 300 metres (refer to Figure 2-2). The key built forms for new development are tower blocks and rectangle blocks (Figure 3-9). Each urban block and built form use is discussed in detail below, and images in Table 3-1.

#### North

The urban block that accommodates the subject site, also accommodates:

- Rectangle-block, five storey mixed use development at the intersection of Brooks Parade and Maude Street (24-26 Brooks Parade), known as Santorini Apartments, and;
- Single storey residential development;
- An open stormwater channel that provides connection for the stormwater network to Lake Macquarie;
- A sewer pump station that is part of Hunter Water Corporation's infrastructure, which is immediately north of the channel and faces Brooks Parade.

Urban blocks beyond Maude Street are mostly characterised by detached single storey residential dwellings, and a limited number of two-storey unit blocks.

#### South

Sharp Street adjoins the site at the south.

The urban block immediately south is characterised mostly by recent mixed use development, including:

- 46 Brooks Parade, tower block, eight storeys, directly opposite the subject site at the intersection of Brooks Parade and Sharp Street. Belmont Towers is a residential apartment building with

large setbacks to the street and ground floor single garages that face the street;

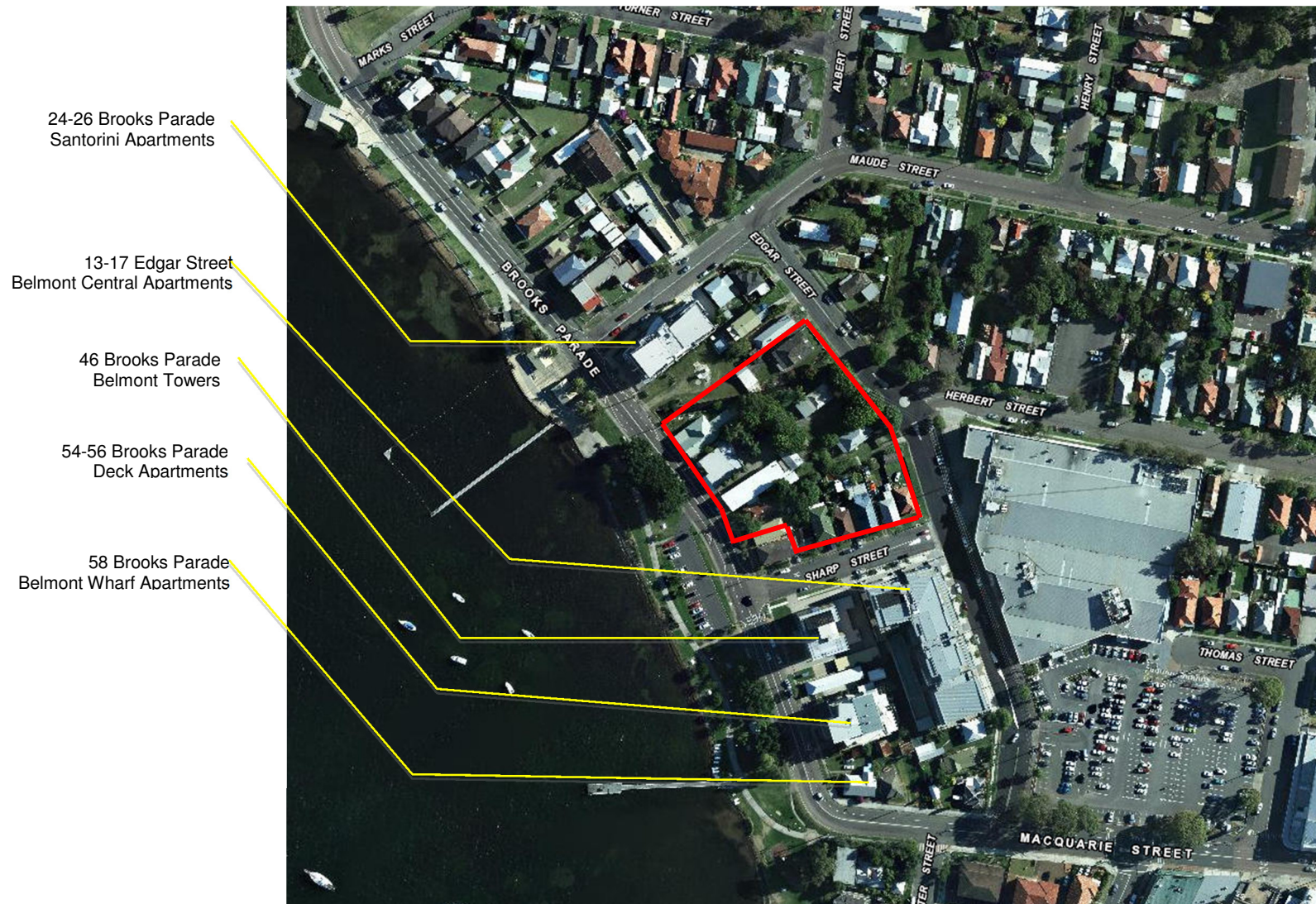
- 13-17 Edgar Street, rectangle block, six storeys, at the intersection of Edgar Street and Sharp Street is a mixed use development, with ground floor commercial space and upper floors for residential use. The development was completed in 2010;
- 54-56 Brooks Parade, tower block, six storeys, is a mixed use development with ground floor cafe and single driveway access from Brooks Parade, and was completed in 2007;
- 58 Brooks Parade, tower block seven storeys, is currently under construction and will comprise mixed use development for a residential flat building.

#### East

Herbert Street runs perpendicular from the site to the Pacific Highway, and creates two distinct urban blocks. The block on the north side of Herbert Street is predominantly detached single storey dwellings. The block on the south side of Herbert Street is mostly retail and commercial uses. The dominant development is Belmont Citi Centre shopping centre and open air car park. The loading dock entrance at Herbert Street faces the subject site. Shop top development along the Pacific Highway edge of the urban block is further to the east.

#### West

Directly across the street is Belmont Lions Park, an open space area that separates the road (Brookes Parade) from the foreshore of Lake Macquarie. A pedestrian footpath runs through the park that connects to a small children's playground some 200 metres to the south, and public facilities at the end of Maude Street. The only built form on this site is a toilet block. Built forms exceeding one storey on this site are unlikely to be erected in the future. Several mature fig trees are located along the street edge of the park.



**Figure 3-9:** Adjacent Multi Storey Development

**Table 3-1:** Adjacent Built Forms



24-26 Brooks Parade (Santorini Apartments)



46 Brooks Parade (Belmont Towers)



56 Brooks Parade (Deck Apartments)



58 Brooks Parade (Belmont Wharf)



13-17 Edgar Street (Belmont Central)

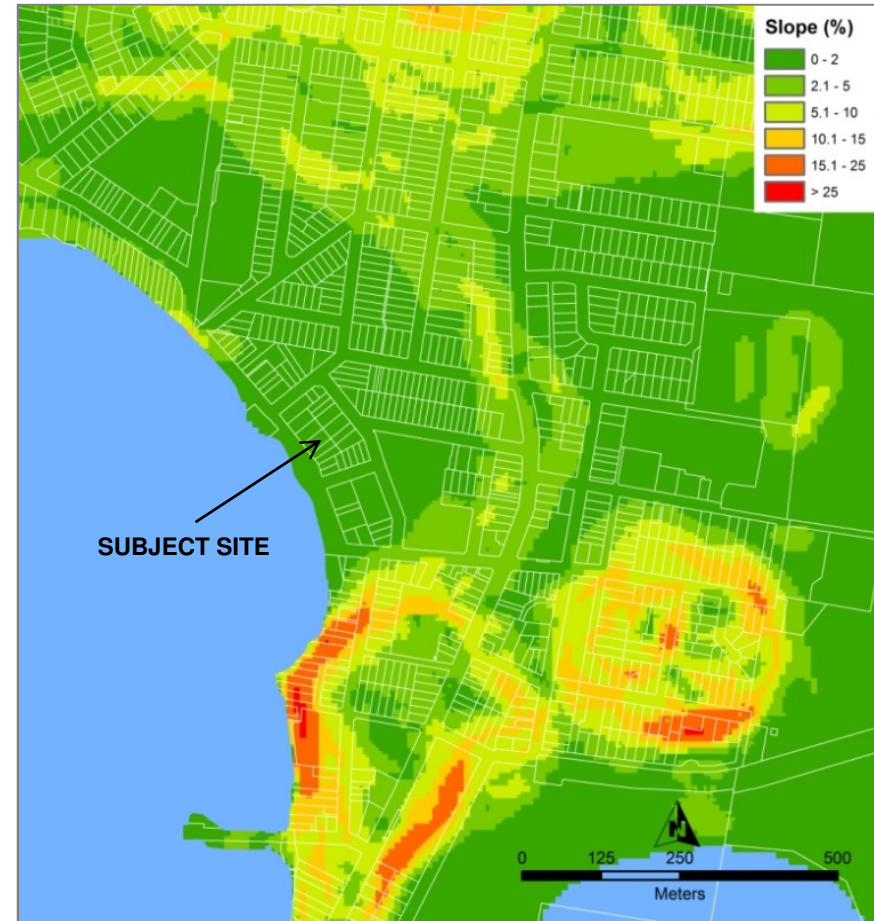


13-17 Edgar Street (Belmont Central)

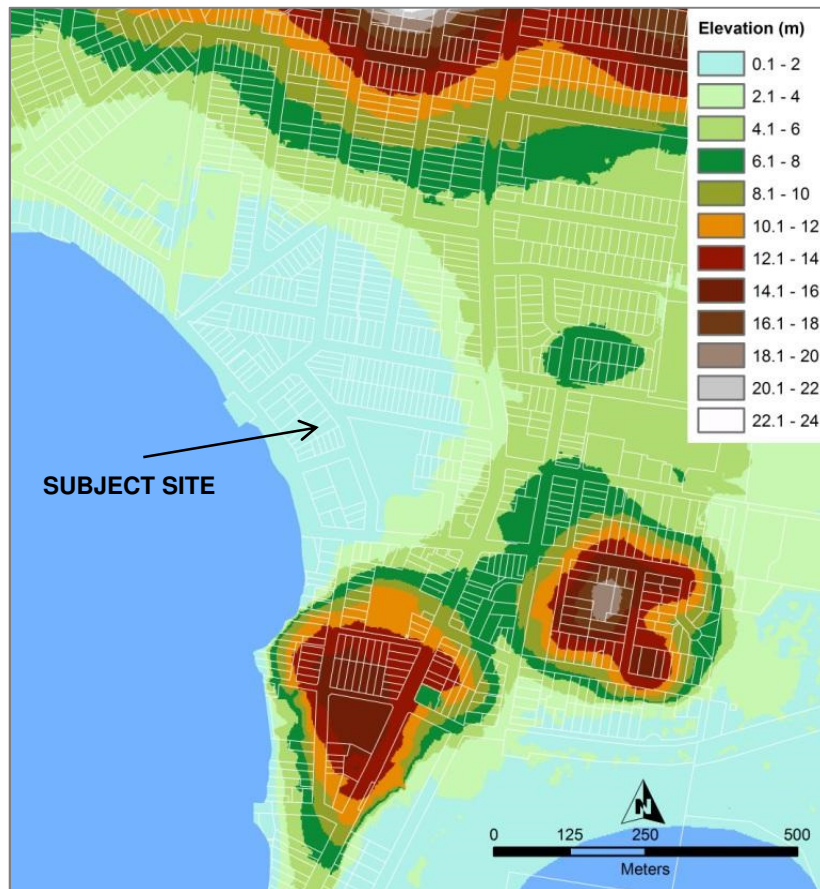
### 3.9 TOPOGRAPHY

The land form of Belmont Town Centre and the surrounding area is a consistent grade, approx 1° (Figure 3-10), rising from Lake Macquarie in the west, and reaching 16 metres in elevation at the eastern-most edge of development in the town centre.

The importance of the topography of the Belmont town centre cannot be underestimated in the visual setting of the town centre and foreshore. From the foreshore the town centre slopes upwards in an easterly direction to the Pacific Highway and further upwards to the south east. The highest point in the area is near the TAFE to the south of the subject site. This high point to the south east is approximately 14 m high than the subject site (Figure 3-11). Proposed height limits and controls in the Belmont area will mean that higher buildings on the foreshore area will actually blend with other developments along the foreshore and on the hilltop in Belmont centre.



**Figure 3-10:** Slope Analysis



**Figure 3-11:** Elevation of Belmont Town Centre

### 3.10 VISTAS AND VIEWS

The topography and built form combine to provide vistas and view corridors (Figure 3-12).

Vistas from outside the town centre toward the centre exist from other hilltops. Several streets north of Evans Street have views south to the town centre; the top of Wommora Avenue with views to the south west; Belmont North looking south, and; the vicinity of Green Point looking south east. Finally, marine craft users on Lake Macquarie have uninterrupted vistas of the Belmont foreshore.

Several view corridors in the town centre are available to the Lake. The key view corridor to the Lake is provided between buildings from the Pacific Highway down Macquarie Street (Figure 3-13), which terminates at the Lions Club Park. Mark Street, Maude Street (Figure 3-14) and Sharp Street (Figure 3-15) provide short view corridors as a result of the change in direction of the streets. Mark Street provides a corridor 300 metres long, however it is not a significant street. Maude Street changes direction 140 metres before the foreshore, while Sharp Street does not align with Herbert to continue the corridor. There are no view corridors to the lake from Herbert St.

View corridors through urban blocks in the town centre have not been achieved, and are challenged by environmental constraints to deal with solar access, flooding and inundation.



**Figure 3-12: Vistas and Views**



**Figure 3-13:** View Corridor Macquarie Street



**Figure 3-15:** View Corridor Maude Street



**Figure 3-14:** View Corridor Sharp Street



**Figure 3-16:** Fig Trees on Brooks Parade Obscure Subject Site

### 3.10.1 View Corridors – Subject Site

As identified in Figure 3-12 above there are view corridors into the subject site. However, as previously noted there are some viewpoints from which the site is barely visible, even with potential heights of 8-10 storeys, given the topography of the Belmont area. The most prominent views are from the Lake.

Figure 3-17 views the site from Macquarie Street looking north. Apartments on Edgar Street block the views into the site such that Belmont Towers is barely visible even from this short distance away.

Figure 3-18 views the subject site from the Pacific Highway. Even with current one and two storey buildings the site is barely visible and is unlikely to be seen if redevelopment occurs in accordance with the current controls under LEP 2014.

The main view corridors into the street will be from Sharp Street, Brookes Parade, Edgar Street, Maude Street (Figures 3-13 to 3-16) and from Lake Macquarie. Even from nearby Herbert Street looking west (Figure 3-20) current views into the site are obscured.

As noted topography is an important aspect of the view corridors in the area. South of Macquarie Street the site is barely visible and when looking north and north west. The site is also barely visible from the Pacific Highway to the west. In this sense the potential view corridors are very localised. Consideration was afforded to views from the hillslopes to the north of the site. Clearly most of Belmont town centre is visible from areas to the north (e.g. Tingira Heights, Floraville), however, if future development is consistent with current controls the subject site will not be prominent given the potential surrounding development.



**Figure 3-17:** Macquarie St looking north to the subject site



**Figure 3-18:** Pacific Hwy looking west to the subject site



**Figure 3-19:** Eastern End of Coles Car Park Looking West



**Figure 3-20:** Hebert Street and Pacific Highway Looking West  
(current Belmont Towers is obscured in the background)

### **3.11 FLOODING AND INUNDATION**

The subject site has a ground level of RL 1 metre AHD - to RL 1.2 metres AHD across the site. Development below 3.0 metres is subject to Council's sea level rise policy. Consequently, development will need to be elevated.

A podium level for future development is a potential solution, potentially at a height of 1.5 metres. Accurate flood information is available from Council, but for the purpose of the analysis, it is assumed that the podium level will be 1.5m, with an overall RL of 2.5-2.7 metres AHD for the site. The impact of flooding is considered manageable.

A stormwater channel also runs through and to the north of the site. The channel services the stormwater water network further north from Mark Street, and connects to Lake Macquarie at the north-west corner of the site and Belmont foreshore park.

### **3.12 SOLAR ACCESS AND OVERSHADOWING**

The subject site is likely to enjoy good solar access within the site, while future development of the site is likely to have minimal solar impact on adjoining sites (Figure 3-21). The site is largely oriented to the north. The stormwater channel provides approximately 5 metres separation from blocks to the north. Hunter Water's sewer pump station is unlikely to be built out, providing uninterrupted solar access. The site enjoys winds from the north-east in summer.

Overshadowing existing development is considered limited. Existing development to the east and south of the subject site are separated by Edgar Street and Sharp Street respectively, which are both 20 metre road reserves. Adverse solar impact to Edgar Street

development is highly unlikely. This site enjoys uninterrupted access to the north via Herbert Street. Solar access impacts to Sharp Street development are likely to be minimal from future development of the subject site, or could occur at the ground floor (commercial level), depending on building mass and heights.

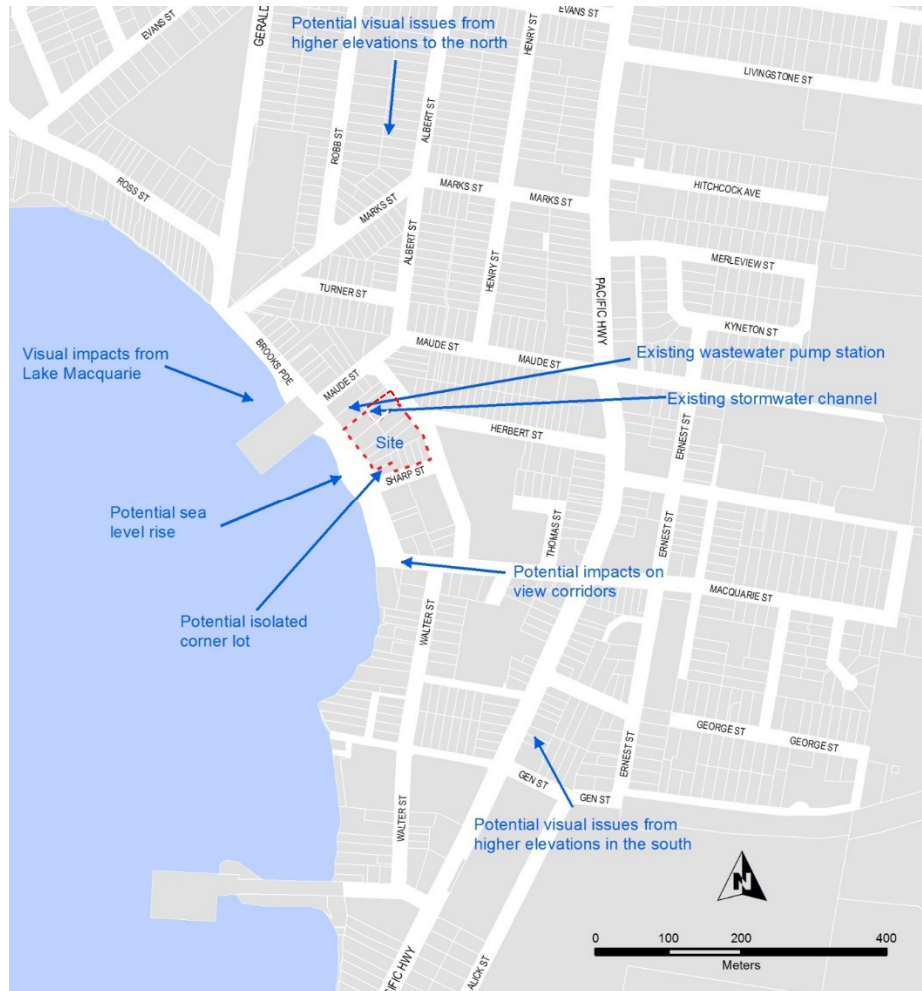


**Figure 3-21: Solar and Wind Access (JBA 2012)**

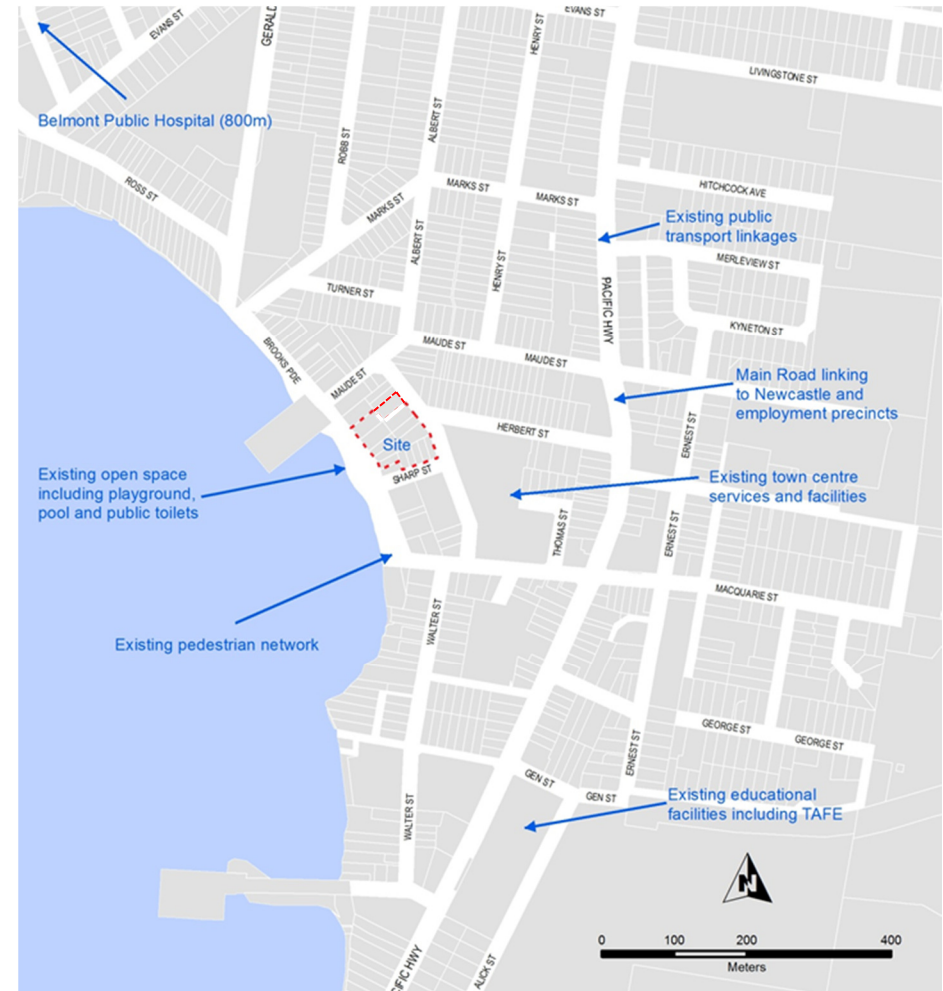
(Note: Previous application over more lots than proposal)

### 3.13 SUMMARY

This section has examined the site in its broader context in relation to a number of issues including existing land uses, topography, visual corridors, flooding, open space, pedestrian movement, built form and the existing built form. The site presents a number of potential constraints which are presented in Figure 3-22. Conversely, the site also presents a number of opportunities for redevelopment which are outlined in Figure 3-23.



**Figure 3-22: Potential Site Constraints**



**Figure 3-23: Opportunities Plan**

## 4 PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

To develop the design principles for the proposed development a number of guides and charters were considered. These publications included:

- Our Cities, Our Future (Australian Government, 2011);
- Creating Places For People: an urban design protocol for Australian cities (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2012);
- Coastal Design Code (Coastal Council of NSW, 2003).

A discussion of the design principles in each publication are provided below. A summary of the findings and list of site specific principles are included in Section 4.4 of the report.

### 4.1 OUR CITIES, OUR FUTURE

The Federal Government prepared Our Cities, Our Future (also known as the National Urban Policy) in 2009 to inform the development of Australian cities into the future. The policy provides a framework to assist with further policy development by setting of goals, objectives and principles. These goals, objectives and principles are summarised by the following:

- Efficiency - Our cities and the social and economic infrastructure and services that support them should be planned and managed to maximise their efficient use
- Value for money - Investments in our cities should be cost-effective to return maximum benefits to communities and investors
- Innovation - The planning, design, construction and management of our cities requires creative ideas and solutions to meet the current and future challenges
- Adaptability - Our cities need to be adaptable to changes in the economy, population, demographics, technology and the environment
- Resilience - Our cities need to be resilient to events such as natural disasters, the effects of climate change and global socio-economic processes
- Equity - Our cities should support the equitable distribution of access to resources and opportunities, including education, jobs, housing, services and facilities
- Affordability - Households should have affordable options for where they live and work, how they travel and access services and facilities, and for leisure opportunities
- Subsidiarity - Planning and services should be delivered by the most local level of government that has sufficient scale and capability to reasonably deliver them
- Integration - Policies and programs need to be integrated across the different levels of government, across portfolios and with industry and communities
- Engagement - Planning, policies and programs need to be informed by the views of all sectors of the community

The policy also recommends that a National Urban Design Protocol be developed to provide a more detailed set of guidelines for the future development of Australian Cities.

#### **4.2 CREATING PLACES FOR PEOPLE: AN URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIES**

*Creating Places for People* was prepared as a direct response to the National Urban Policy to direct urban design on a national level. The policy was prepared to include the following broader urban design principles:

##### **Productivity and Sustainability**

Enhance local economy and environment, connect physically and socially, provide diversity and ensure sustainability.

##### **Liveability**

Comfort, vibrant, safe and walkable.

##### **Leadership and Governance**

Work within the planning environment, engage with stakeholders and consider custodianship.

The broadly reflect the principles of Our Cities, Our Future discussed above.

#### **4.3 NSW COASTAL DESIGN GUIDELINE**

The NSW Coastal Design Guideline was prepared by the NSW Coastal Council to “provide a framework for discussion and decision making involving coastal planning, design and development proposals between all stakeholders in the context of caring for the natural beauty and amenity of coastal beaches, headlands, waterways and ecologies upstream.”

The guidelines provide a hierarchy of coastal settlement that includes:

- Coastal Cities
- Coastal Towns
- Coastal Villages
- Coastal Hamlets

Belmont is characterised as a Coastal Town as it has a population of approximately 6,500 residents and provides the facilities and services that include commercial development, a main street, retail town centre, parks, playing fields, churches, education institutions and medical facilities.

The NSW Coastal Design Guideline identifies the main urban design principles applicable to Coastal Towns as:

1. Relationship to the environment
2. Visual sensitivity
3. Edges to the water and natural areas
4. Streets
5. Buildings
6. Height

#### 4.4 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Belmont is a rapidly developing sub-regional centre and is coming under increasing pressure for redevelopment, particularly for mixed use development and residential apartments. The following design principles have been developed to specifically address these issues.

The following design principles have been developed from the review of the relevant guidelines and charters above. The principles have also been informed by the urban form analysis presented above, including environmental and topographical constraints and potential connectivity with existing networks

In the current situation the application of these principles will be locally specific. For example, the site is not within a heritage conservation area. The local area also contains a mix of uses with a large span of time between different developments within the Belmont Town Centre.

- Interaction with Natural & Urban Context

The three main considerations in relation to the site context are the visual sensitivity of the surrounding urban development, view corridors from the surrounding area and interaction with the Lake.

The prominence of Brookes Parade is one of the main considerations of this report. The road contains the older Belmont Towers and a number of recently constructed residential developments. The reduction in the visual prominence of Belmont Towers was identified in several previous studies. The interaction with the existing urban fabric is therefore vitally important.

The topography of the Belmont town centre provides an important component to the view corridors into the site, as does the Lake. The topography of the Belmont town centre provides view corridors from the Pacific Highway to the Lake along Macquarie Street and Sharp Street. Other views into the subject site are limited by the specific topography of the area. The Pacific Highway and the two supermarkets near the Highway provide central activity points in the area.

Interaction with the foreshore area is also an important issue that was considered during the concept design. The foreshore area of the Lake provides a sensitive landscape, with various recreational and social functions.

- Physical Connections

The Lake and its foreshore area are important destinations and are considered to be a community asset. The retail/commercial area on the Pacific Highway and the public transport linkages along the Highway are also considered to be important destinations.

The physical connections to these areas will be an important consideration to the design of any future development.

- Sustainability

It is noted that the foreshore area in Belmont may be subject to future sea level rise and this should be considered in any future proposal.

Intertwined in this is ensuring the final design on the site considers the impact of sea level rise including on adjacent sites.

- Vibrancy & Diversity

The creation of and activated street frontage along Brookes Parade is an important consideration. Attracting people to the foreshore should be encouraged to ensure a safe and vibrant area for the community.

The inclusion of a range of residential development and ground level commercial development should be considered to provide a diverse range of services.

- Planning Environment

The provisions of the current NSW planning framework should be used to guide the design process.

- Community

This report did consider the community particularly in relation to the foreshore area of the Lake opposite the subject site as well as ensuring connections to local public infrastructure and services were enhanced.

Intertwined within this principle as well as others noted above is the principle of amenity. This will be to ensure the amenity of the Belmont town centre is not significantly impacted by any development on the subject site.

Other guiding principles were also considered as part of this study including convenience and character. There is significant overlap between these principles and the ones identified above.

For example, Belmont is a town centre and the subject site is conveniently located to the services and facilities in Belmont town

centre. The final design of the building at the DA stage will be an important contributor to the character of Belmont and the existing streetscape.

The character of the town centre is a mix of old and new buildings, some of better design than others. The final detailed design should address this issue.

## 5 **SWOT ANALYSIS**

### 5.1 **STRENGTHS**

The subject site has several strengths, which are also derived from its location in the Belmont town centre:

#### **Site**

- Water front location.
- Lot orientation providing wind and solar access.
- Wide street frontage to Brooks Parade and foreshore.
- Separation from adjacent development.
- Three street frontages for greater access.

#### **Belmont Town Centre**

- Close proximity to, and good supply of, public and privately operated local amenities and community facilities.
- Good public transport connection.
- Walkable neighbourhood.
- Existing retail and commercial activities.
- Topography is generally at low grades around the lake and shopping precinct, while ground elevation increases south of Macquarie Street.
- Open space provided by Lake Macquarie and foreshore areas.

### 5.2 **WEAKNESSES**

Few weakness or constraints were identified for the site.

- Stormwater channel – the location of the channel results in fragmentation of the subject site. The cost to relocate the channel is likely to be prohibitive for the future developer of the site. Therefore, the analysis assumes that the location of the channel is not changed.
- Sewer pump station – the sewer pump station is assumed to be fixed, and consequently that this lot is unlikely to be developed. The costs to relocate the station are likely to be prohibitive, unless an upgraded station in an alternative location is required. As such, this site is assumed to continue to be used for sewer infrastructure.
- Landmark corner reduced – the absence of the lot at 44 Brooks Parade from the subject site reduces the opportunity to realise a landmark corner on Brooks Parade as part of the potential development and high quality urban environment on the Belmont foreshore. The decision by the landowner of No. 44 is regrettable, but could be reconsidered following approval of potential development on the subject site.

### 5.3 **OPPORTUNITIES**

The potential development of the site presents several significant opportunities that deliver on the desired strategic outcomes for Belmont town centre:

- Efficient land use - development within the existing urban footprint is an efficient use of the land, infrastructure and other resources;

- Increase activity within the town centre – stimulate economic development through spending in local businesses and uplift community spirit through greater number and diversity of persons to participate in community life;
- Diversify housing types – provide range of apartment sizes and types to supplement the supply of detached single storey dwellings in the area;
- High-quality streetscape and public domain – provide high-quality design to new buildings that face three streets in Belmont town centre, as well as enhance the frontage to the foreshore area;
- Greater building height and mass – the topography of Belmont town centre and open space provided by the lake allow the area to accommodate greater building scale across the site, and stepped development to connect development north of the site with development to the south.

Parade withdrew from the potential development, the full potential development for the site will not be achieved.

The development potential is discussed in greater in the following sections of this report.

#### 5.4 **THREATS**

The key threat to the potential development of the site is:

- Site dislocation – the potential dislocation of the development site as a whole into smaller development lots could diminish the potential to realise the opportunities identified above. This site has significant development potential when all the identified adjacent lots can be developed at the one time under a single plan. For example, if the site became two or three smaller development sites, or one of the central lots fronting Brooks

## **6 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS AND PREVIOUS STUDIES**

### **6.1 HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN**

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies Belmont as a 'centre'. The Hunter City Plan identifies growth opportunities along the Pacific Highway corridor between Charlestown and Belmont to support the viability of existing centres. The proposal would be consistent with the vision for Belmont as identified in the Regional Strategy.

The subject site is located in Belmont. Belmont is identified as a town centre in the strategy. Towns such as Belmont are characterised by shopping and business activities, such as health and professional service for the district, as well as supplying medium and higher density development. Belmont is also central to other employment lands within one kilometre of the town centre and to industrial lands five kilometres away at Redhead.

The subject site can deliver higher levels of housing within a major centre, close to employment lands, making efficient use of existing infrastructure and providing good amenity. Potential development could provide up to 130 units – a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms – in the town centre and adjacent to Lake Macquarie, in addition to retail and commercial units. Several other sites in the immediate vicinity have been similarly developed.

Development of the site is considered consistent with the objectives of the Hunter Regional Plan, and will make a positive contribution to realise the strategy through the provision of higher density development in a major sub-regional centre.

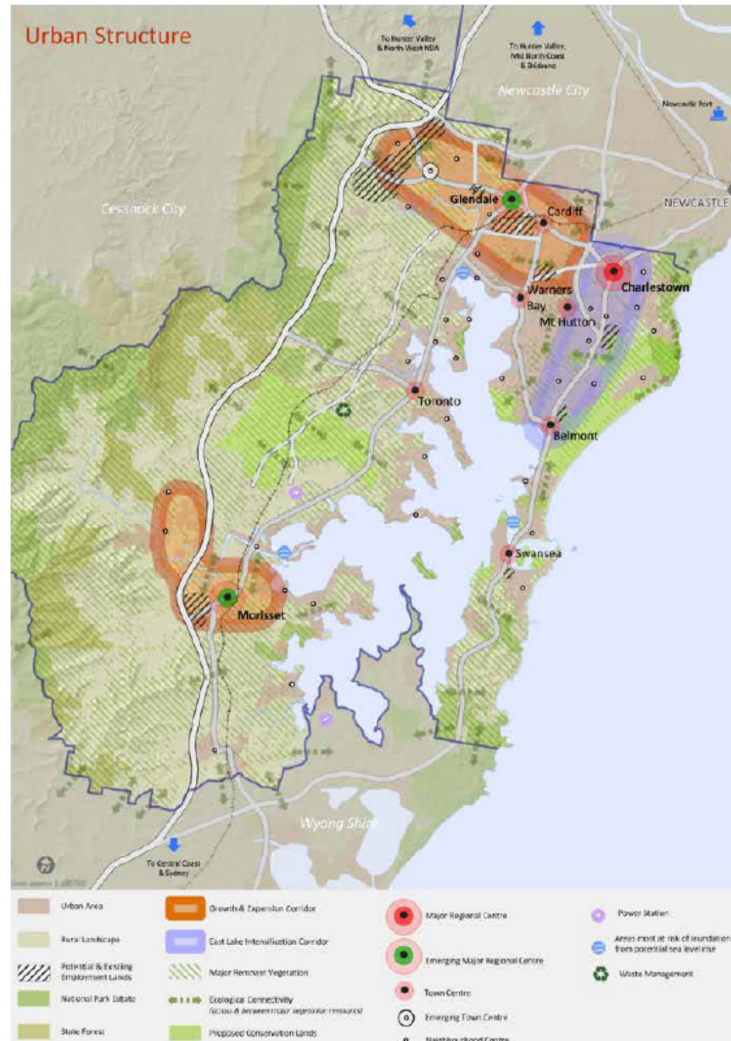
### **6.2 LIFE STYLE 2030 STRATEGY**

Lifestyle 2030 Strategy is the eminent Strategic plan prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council to inform the development of the local government area. The current strategy was adopted by Council in March 2013.

The local government area surrounds the shores of Lake Macquarie, extending north to the border with Newcastle Local Government area, south to Wyong Shire Council, east the Pacific Ocean, and west to the Watagan State forest before adjoining Cessnock local government area. The extent of Lake Macquarie local government area and its urban structure are illustrated in Figure 6-1 below.

#### **6.2.1 Belmont Town Centre**

Belmont is identified in the Strategy as a Town Centre within the East Lake Intensification Corridor. The strategy expects urban zoned land in the corridor to be developed for multi-unit housing close to centres and well serviced by public transport routes, as well as employment, community services and facilities. The intensification for housing assists to maintain the supply of industrial land for manufacturing activities in the corridor, such as Redhead and Bennetts Green, which plays an important role in the local and regional economy. Intensification limits the growth of the urban footprint, protecting ecological lands along the east and west sides of the corridor from Belmont to Charlestown.



**Figure 6-1: Urban Structure (Lifestyle 2030)**

## 6.2.2 Strategic Directions

Lifestyle 2030 has seven strategic directions, each illustrated by numerous statements of the desired outcomes. The key desired outcomes for each strategic direction are supported by the potential development of the site, and presented below in Table 6-1.

**Table 6-1: Lifestyle 2030 Strategic Directions Development Response**

|    | City Strategic Direction                                            | Potential development response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | A city responsive to the environment                                | The development is located within the existing urban footprint of Belmont. Habitable areas within the site will be elevated to protect against the effects of flooding and/or sea-level rise. The scenic quality of the area is preserved by high quality urban design and maintaining view corridors to the lake from the Belmont town centre.                                                                                   |
| 2. | A city that make an equitable contribution to global sustainability | Though the construction of the new dwellings will require some materials will higher levels of embodied energy, the development will provide long term water and energy efficiency measures in accordance with BASIX requirements, as well as reduced dependence on fossil fuels for transportation by locating development closer to complimentary activities and high frequency public transport routes (e.g. Pacific Highway). |

|    |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. | A well designed adaptable and liveable city | <p>Stronger function and urban design relationships between the Lake and Belmont town centre is facilitated by the development. A break between the unit blocks provides a view and pedestrian corridor through the development site to the Lake. Building setbacks above the forth storey can be incorporated into the development to reduce scale and mass of development, and allow wind and solar access to the street and surrounding development.</p> <p>Frontage to the Lake will be landscaped with gardens and provide pedestrian access through the development to the Lake, as well as around the perimeter of the development site.</p> <p>Finally, the potential development will offer different bedroom/study combinations for the dwellings for different household sizes.</p> |
| 4. | A well serviced and equitable city          | <p>Belmont is identified by Council as suitable for further urban infill development, and adopted a Town Centre Development Control Plan. Potential development can be consistent with the controls, with the exception of the current controls that prescribed the number of storeys. Despite the non-conformances, potential development can provide outcomes that are consistent with the objectives of the strategy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|    |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                                                                    | <p>Car parking can be provided within the development site, however public transport is accessible within 400 metres, with services to other town in Lake Macquarie, such as Warners Bay and Charlestown, and onwards to Newcastle.</p> <p>Pedestrian and cycle networks are available long the Lake Macquarie foreshore in front of the development on Brooks Street.</p>                                                                                       |
| 6. | A city responsive to the wellbeing of its residents                | <p>Different bedroom/study combinations for the dwellings for different household sizes will be offered.</p> <p>Potential development will provide quality housing, landscaping, and diverse retail opportunities. Commercial services will also be available to locate within the development.</p> <p>The subject site is also located centrally to shopping centres, health services and various community centres that are vital for community wellbeing.</p> |
| 7. | A city that practices participatory democracy and is well governed | <p>State and local government strategic planning policies (e.g. climate change considerations) have been incorporated into the development. The ground floor level is elevated to mitigate the impacts associated with climate change that may affect the foreshore of Lake Macquarie. Council is responsive to the need for higher residential development and to create and apply appropriate development controls.</p>                                        |

Overall, the potential development is consistent with the objectives of the Lake Macquarie Lifestyle 2030 Strategy.

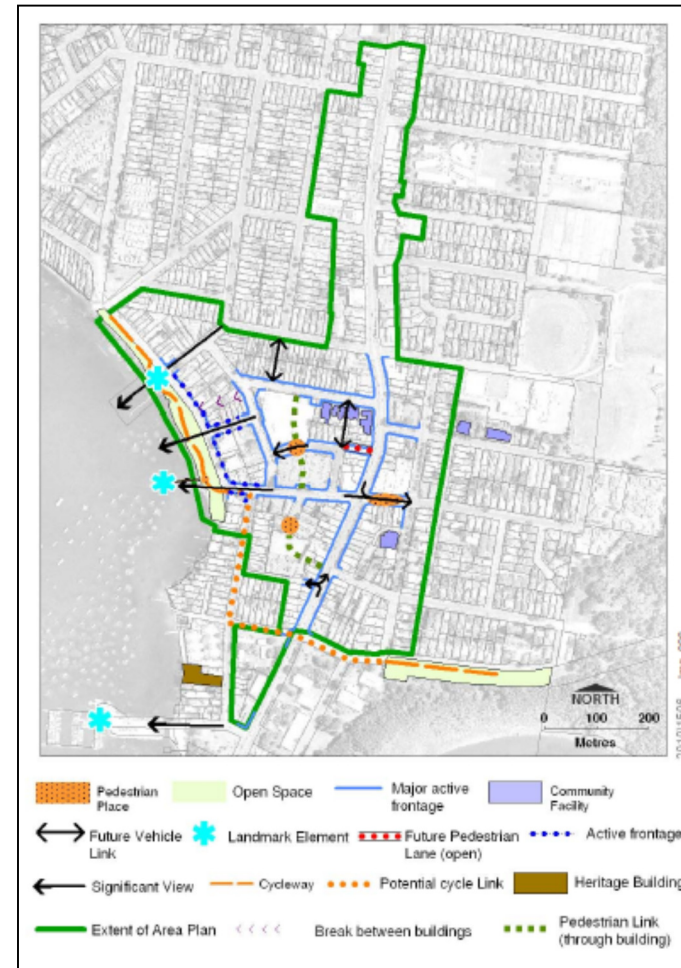
### 6.3 LAKE MACQUARIE TOWN CENTRES DCP – TOWN CENTRE AREA PLANS – BELMONT

The Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan (DCP) provides general controls for development in Lake Macquarie. The subject site falls within the provisions of the Lake Macquarie Town Centres DCP.

The Belmont Town Centre Area Plan (Area Plan) describes the future desired character, environmental constraints and development controls that will apply. The plan will inform development in the town centre, between Maude Street in and Victoria Street in the south, as well as development on both sides of the Pacific Highway from Evans Street to the Gunyah Hotel. The application area of the plan, and future structure plan, are illustrated in Figure 6-2.

The Area Plan describes the existing and desired future character of the area, environmental constraints, development controls, and certain urban blocks and their specific controls in the area.

The desired structure of Belmont Town Centre as presented in the Plan, is shown below in Figure 6-2 and the Block Control Plan in Figure 6-3 below.



**Figure 6-2:** Belmont Town Centre Area Structure Plan



**Figure 6-3:** Extent of Area Plan and Blocks

The DCP provides Block Controls for each urban block affected by the Area Plan. The subject site is located within Block C (Figure 6-3).

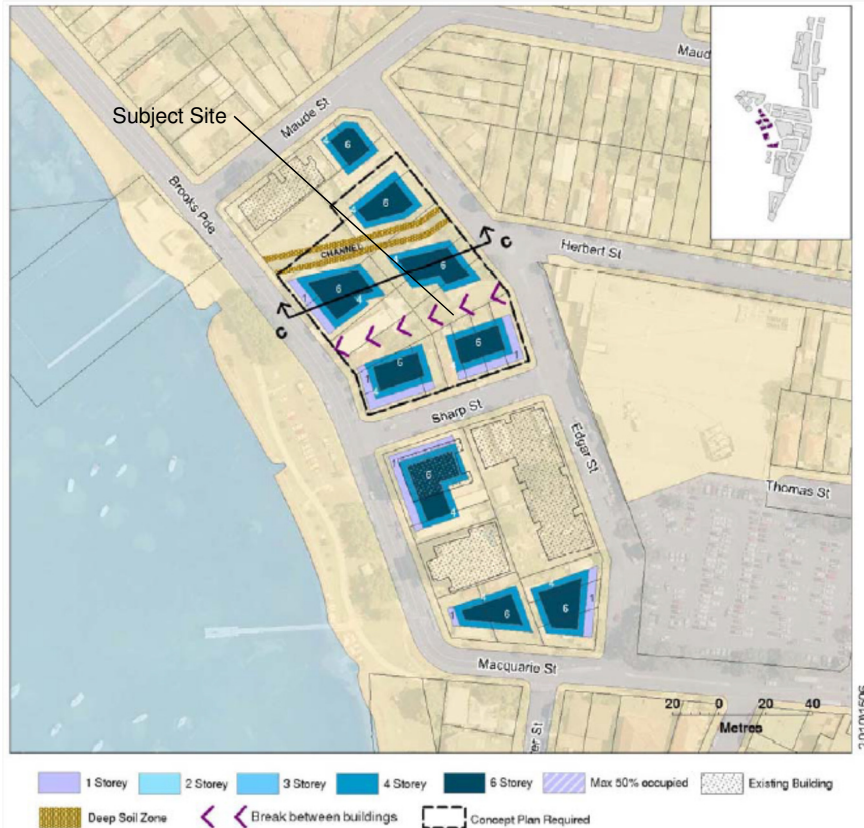
The DCP Block Controls provides general building envelopes including heights/storeys and indicative building footprints. The objectives of the block controls are:

- To improve the amenity and connectivity of the public domain;
- To improve vehicle circulation and access to public transport;
- To ensure that building scale, height and setback contribute to the desired future character of the town centre.

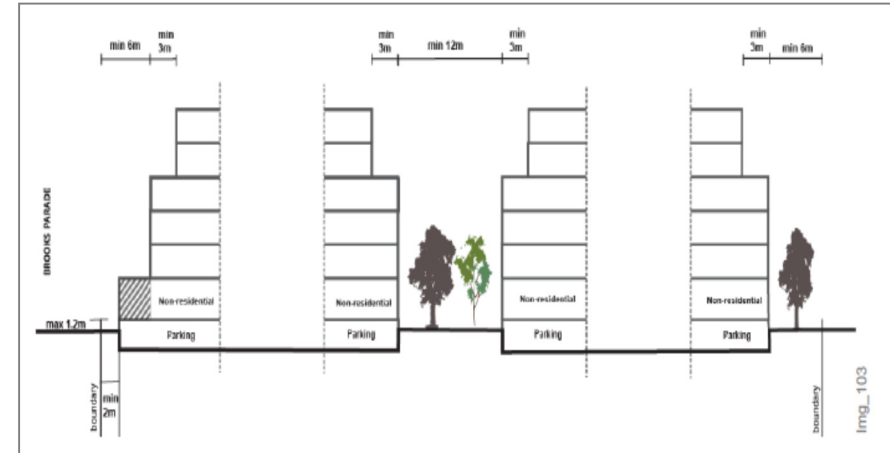
The Area Plan requires the preparation of a Concept Plan due to the significance of the subject site to the Belmont Town Centre (Figure 6.4). The aim of this requirement is to ensure that future development provides benefits to residents and the community based on a sound concept plan, informed by strategic, environmental and comprehensive urban analysis. Comprehensive environmental analysis would be undertaken when a development application is prepared and lodged with Council.

Specific building types, heights and massing specified in the Plan apply to the site. Extracts from the Plan are shown in Figure 6.4 and 6.5. The Plan shows that buildings are proposed to have a maximum height of six storeys, stepped down to 4 storeys. Additionally, development may encroach the setback for up to 50% of the building frontage on level one along Brooks Parade, Sharp Street and Edgar Street. Separation between the buildings should be 12 metres based on the C Section in Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5. The distance of the east-west break between buildings is not specified.

The potential development on the subject site will be a balance of the requirements of this Plan, the Local Environmental Plan, the Apartment Design Code, and a feasible development outcome for the site. Compliance with the DCP is addressed in the Statement of Environmental Effects.



**Figure 6-4:** DCP Block Control Plan Applicable to Subject Site



**Figure 6-5:** DCP Block Control - Building Section

The potential development should be able to achieve the majority of development controls in the Plan, in particular:

- Separation between the building blocks on the east-west axis through the site;
- Setbacks in accordance with the Plan on most sides – the minor exception being Brooks Parade where the corners of balconies of the lower floors will encroach the 6-metres building setback.

The non-conformances with the DCP may be considered a satisfactory strategic outcome for the site, following consideration of the urban design and environmental factors discussed in the Statement of Environmental Effects.

#### **6.4 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2014 AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN 2014**

The current LEP and DCP were enacted in 2014. The LEP identifies a mixed use development zoning for the site. Higher densities are encouraged on the site and within the town centre more generally. This is consistent with Council's current strategic planning framework.

The Belmont Area Plan as presented above forms part of the DCP. There is also a residential flat DCP that would need to be considered for the proposed development. The Area Plan though provides more specific local provisions.

#### **6.5 COUNCIL REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRES DCP AND BELMONT AREA PLAN**

Lake Macquarie City Council strategic planning section undertook a review in November 2013 of the Town Centre DCP and Belmont Area Plan with respect to the subject site.

This planning and design report has considered findings of this review.

#### **6.6 SUMMARY**

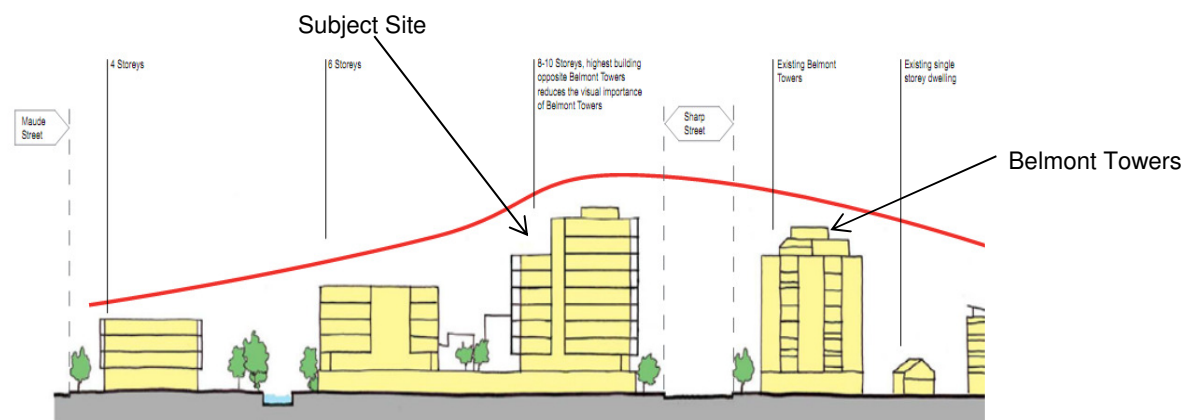
Overall, the potential development for mixed use development at Brooks Parade, Belmont is consistent with the strategic objectives of the planning instruments that apply. The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy identifies Belmont as a town centre in the Hunter that is capable of accommodating greater levels of urban activity, such as increased dwellings, employment and community activities. Lake Macquarie's Lifestyle 2030 also supports further development of

Belmont. The town is identified as a centre in the urban structure of Lake Macquarie, connected to other centres by a local and regional bus network, and in proximity of industrial and other employment lands. The potential development supports the strategic directions for the development of Belmont, locating dwellings in the heart of the town, close to local shops and various other facilities, while providing a high quality urban design in a prominent location on the foreshore. Finally, the potential development achieves the objectives of the desired future character albeit with some non-conformances to controls. In sum, mixed use development on the site is strategically supported.

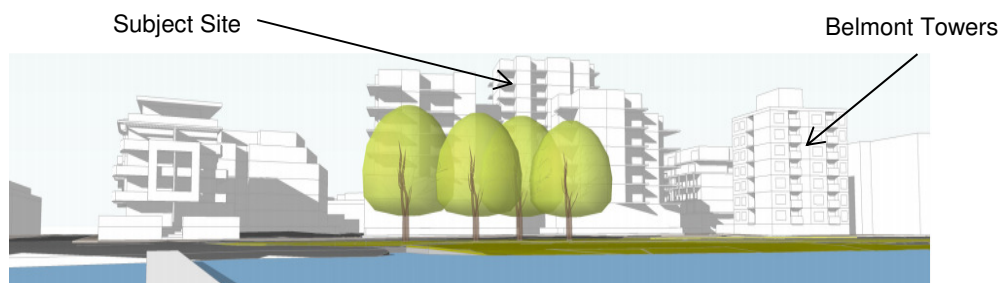
#### **6.7 BACKGROUND STUDIES**

There have been a number of studies prepared for the site and the immediate area including Deicke Richards, Killen and Doran, Cardno, Lake Macquarie City Council, Monteath and Powys, and JBA. All studies promoted higher density forms of housing on the subject site. The Belmont Design Guidelines prepared by Council in 2001 identified development of similar height to Belmont Towers. However, more recent work, particularly by Deicke Richards identified development of between 8-10 storeys adjacent to Belmont Towers falling away to 6 storeys (on the subject site moving further north). These latter two studies particularly identified that the 1960s-70s development known as Belmont Towers should not be the focal point for Belmont along Brookes Parade and more appropriate architecturally designed buildings on the subject site should be encouraged to reduce the prominence of Belmont Towers. JBA identified seven storeys adjacent to Belmont Towers but up to 12 storeys at the Edgar Street frontage (to the east). Similarly, they proposed reducing the prominence of Belmont Towers.

**Figure 6-6: Concepts from Previous Studies**



(Deicke Richards 2007)



JBA (2012)

## 7 MARKET DEMAND AND ANALYSIS

### 7.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

An analysis was conducted of Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census surveys in 2001, 2006 and 2011 ('the period') for Belmont and the local government area of Lake Macquarie. Where possible, Belmont was analysed at the lowest possible statistical area.

Flats, unit and apartments accounted for 15.5% of the stock of dwellings in Belmont, second only to separate houses, which accounted for 71.2% of dwellings, at the 2011 Census.

Growth in the market for flats, units or apartments in the period was reasonable. In Lake Macquarie, this market grew by 1.5%, which significantly outstripped growth in separate houses (0.1%) and semi-detached, row, terrace house and town house development (0.0%). Furthermore, Belmont achieved 3.6% growth in this market compared against all dwelling types.

Across Lake Macquarie, the number of persons residing in flats, units in apartments for the period is generally constant, typically one person (60%), followed by two persons (30%), while three or more persons accounts for the remainder (10%). An examination of household types shows reveals that lone person households is consistently accounted for 57% of all household types residing in flats, units or apartments. Significantly, couples with no children living in this dwelling type increased from 15% to 20% over the period. One parent families accounted for fewer than 10%.

Flats, units or apartments were examined by tenure and household type across Lake Macquarie. Owner occupiers and renters are

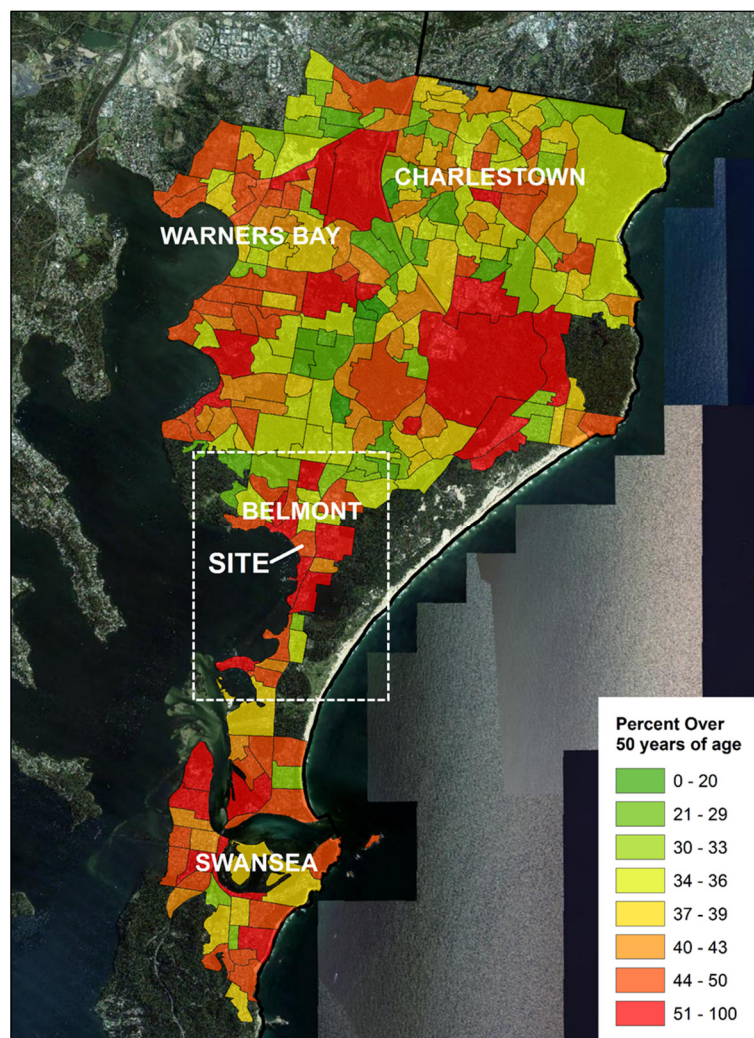
generally 25% and 75%, respectively. However, owner occupation grew by 5% over the period (2001-2011), which suggests a trend may be developing for apartments in the area. An examination of household types reveals that "couple families without children" increased in flats, units or apartments - as a proportion of total dwelling types, it rose from 2.2% in 2001 to 3.9% in 2011. Lone person households' rose by 2.7% over the same period.

The increase diversity of dwellings in the Belmont town centre will allow elder residents to age in place, with persons aged over the age of 55 years accounting for 32% of the population of Belmont.

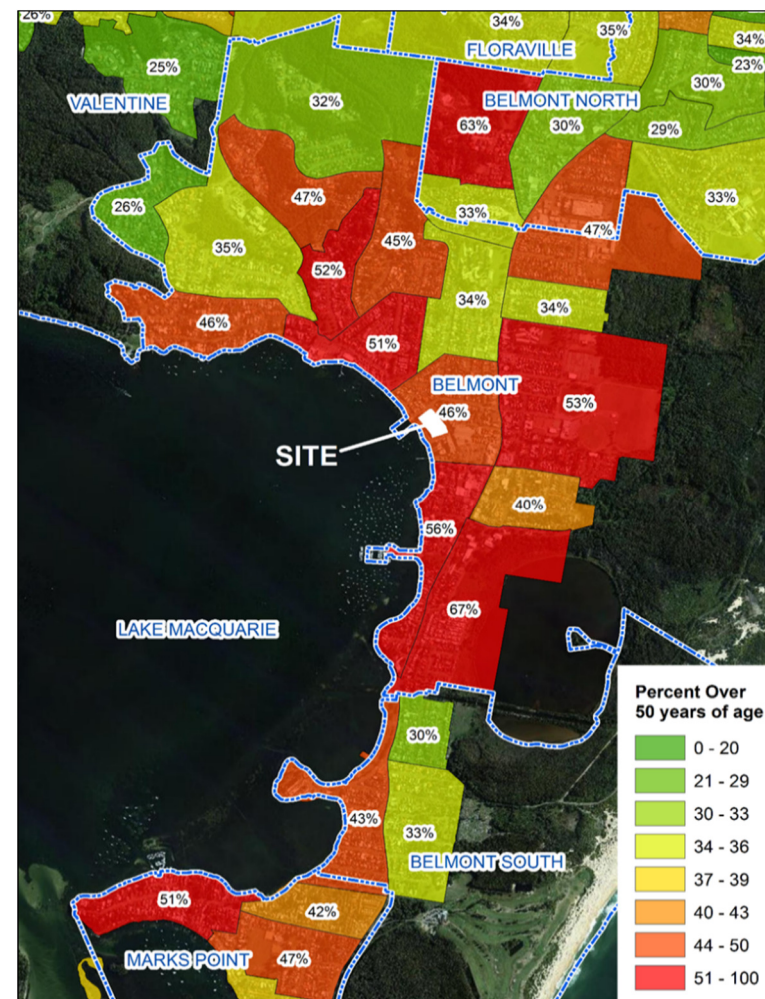
Figures 7-1 and 7-2 show that the number of persons over 50 in surrounding suburbs (by Statistical Area Level 1), accounts for more than 50% of the population. Over 50s may have higher demand for units and apartments as they look to down size – i.e. to sell a detached dwelling and purchase an apartment for less money and using the residual for future income.

**Table 7-1:** Persons aged over 50 years of age (2011)

| Area                                                     | Persons Over 50 | Percentage of Person over 50 (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Statistical Area Level 1 which includes the Subject Site | 216             | 46%                              |
| East Lake Macquarie                                      | 95,423          | 39%                              |
| Lake Macquarie LGA                                       | 73,194          | 39%                              |



**Figure 7-1:** Percentage of Persons Aged Over 50 Years – Eastern Lake Macquarie



**Figure 7-2:** Percentage of Persons Aged Over 50 Years - Belmont

The results above show that there is a high proportion of older persons in the Belmont area. Higher density development in Belmont will allow these residents to age in place.

## 7.2 **BUILDING APPROVALS AND SUPPLY**

Within the Belmont Town centre, several mixed use developments incorporating several storeys of residential flats have been approved, constructed and occupied in the past several years as identified in Table 7.2.

The built form for each development is comprised of a single block building, with generally commercial / retail on the ground storey, and the remaining storeys for residential use. Car parking and utilities are provided in basement levels or at ground level.

Table 7-2 also reveals that there is variation in the median sales price of dwellings in approved multi-unit development in the area. There is obviously a high end market, which may be related to waterfront location and amenity. Some penthouses on the foreshore area have sold for upwards of over \$1 million. There is also a lower end market providing more affordable housing in the area. Higher density housing in Belmont is providing housing diversity.

There will be different markets also within buildings, between dwellings on lower storeys and penthouse apartments at the top. There is also a mix of unit sizes. Importantly, as discussed previously there has been an increase in owner-occupation of flats and units in Belmont between the Censuses in 2001 and 2011. There is an increasing tendency for owner occupiers in this market in Belmont.

There are many nearby existing suburbs from Swansea, Marks Point in the south through to Valentine and Eleebana in the north, which have an older demographic. Higher densities in Belmont will allow these people to age in place. Belmont is obviously an attractor for residents in the eastern Lake Macquarie area. It has many civic functions as it is a sub-regional centre, and there are existing public transport services linking other centres, as well as recreation facilities in the area, particularly along the foreshore. The higher density housing in Belmont is servicing a number of markets from the older retiree who is asset rich but income poor, but also those who can afford lakeside living. The TAFE and public transport links also provide opportunities for young persons to live in a sub-regional centre providing linkages to other employment opportunities in Charlestown and Newcastle. There are obviously affordable housing options for these individuals as well.

**Table 7-2:** Approved Developments in the Vicinity of the Subject Site

|                                   | Development Application (DA) | Occupation Certificate (OC) | Units | Median Sales Price |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| 13-17 Edgar Street                | 28/06/2006                   | Not Available               | 48    | \$510,000          |
| 54-56 Brooks Parade               | 01/11/2005                   | 12/01/2007                  | 13    | \$825,000          |
| 24-26 Brooks Parade               | 10/10/2008                   | Not Available               | 17    | \$735,000          |
| 635 Pacific Highway               | 07/07/2005                   | 23/11/2007                  | 17    | \$375,000          |
| 11 Ernest Street/ Pacific Highway | 10/08/2012                   | Not Available               | 109   | \$357,250          |

Note: Not Available means OC was not publicly available online or has not been issued.

## **8 URBAN DESIGN AND BUILT FORM**

The following sections discuss the key elements of the urban fabric of Belmont Town Centre, and the impact of development on the site, adjoining development, and the wider urban area in Belmont.

### **8.1 CONSULTATIONS**

The Urban Design Review Panel (SEPP 65 Panel) established by Council (consisting of external consultants) considered Council's Review of Town Centres DCP and Belmont Area Plan in December 2013. The Panel noted this work needs to be taken to a more strategic level before it focuses on specific site outcomes. This means that the site needs to be considered in the context of the broader urban locality i.e. Belmont Town Centre. The Belmont Area Plan is now incorporated into Council's DCP. Previous urban design reports have also been presented to the SEPP 65 Panel. Due to the lack of feedback from the previous Panel meetings (December 2013 and June 2014) the landowners had all previous urban design reports (refer to Section 6.7) peer reviewed by Annand Associates Urban Design (AAUD). AAUD's comments included: significant urban design already undertaken for the site; future planning should consider future landscaping including deep soil planting, podium planting; consider any public domain plans; consider pedestrian linkages along the canal; consider CPTED as part of the detailed design and showing how the isolated lot may be incorporated. Comments from AAUD were incorporated into the design.

### **8.2 BUILT FORM OPTIONS**

Previous design schemes for the subject site have identified a mix of densities and heights, with buildings up to 12 storeys in height (JBA 2012). Some schemes had lower height limits along Brooks Parade with higher heights along Edgar St (Cardno 2012) while others had higher height limits along Brooks Parade (e.g. Deicke Richards 2007, Monteath and Powys 2014) such that Belmont Towers was not the predominant building along the foreshore.

### **8.3 SUITABLE LAND FORM AND URBAN PATTERN**

The existing landform, street grid and lot layout are suitable for potential development. The subject site is largely flat, with approximately 1° fall from east to west. As discussed earlier in the report, the town centre has a slight slope, making pedestrian connection in the area relatively easy.

To mitigate flood and inundation issues, this analysis assumes a podium of 1.5 metres would be required, which raises the RL to the top of the podium to approximately 2.5 metres AHD.

The subject site comprises almost entirely of a single urban block. This provides for the redevelopment of the block consistent with the Area Plan and efficient use of the land.

As noted in Section 3.9, the Pacific Highway to the east and the southern end of Belmont town centre are at higher elevations. Given current building heights and even proposed, future height limits under current controls views into the subject site are limited.

## 8.4 BUILDING TYPES AND CONFIGURATION

### 8.4.1 Building Types

Similar adjacent developments generally incorporate two built forms:

- Square-base tower types, such as Belmont Towers at 46 Brooks Parade, Deck Apartments at 56 Brooks Parade, and apartments under construction at 58 Brooks Parade, which are typically narrow and tall (six storeys and over) and;
- Rectangle block types, such as Belmont Central at 13-17 Edgar Street and Santorini Apartments at 26 Brooks Parade, which are typically long and low (up to six storeys).

### 8.4.2 Building Configuration

The Belmont Area Plan identifies four individual square-shaped building forms for the site, with desired setback and building separations shown in Figure 6-4 and Figure 6-5. These are typically tower blocks, with a large separation through the site.

The use of rectangle block form does not appear to be encouraged by the Area Plan. The form appears to conflict with the objectives of the Area Plan and one of the controls. Firstly, this type of built form appears to conflict with the objective that *“development provides large breaks between buildings located between Edgar Street to Lake Macquarie”*. The intent appears to be to provide views, or glimpses, through buildings to the Lake. However, the subject site would be the only site burdened with this requirement. The block between Sharp Street and Macquarie Street cannot accommodate this requirement, which arguably is the most important urban block in

the Area Plan. No other urban block or site has achieved this requirement, and is unlikely to achieve it. Furthermore, views to lake are available through Macquarie Street (to the south of the site) and Maude Street (to the north of the site) as previously identified. Views to the lake from the Highway/town centre are physically not possible through the subject site.

Secondly, the controls for Brooks and Edgar Street require that built forms should not exceed 30 metres length. This effectively prevents rectangle buildings like the development at 13-17 Edgar Street (Belmont Central) and 26 Brooks Parade (Santorini apartments). If this control is enforced in the area, Belmont Central will be more conspicuous by the lack of similar buildings type diverse building shapes.

## 8.5 BUILDING HEIGHT

In general, the height of buildings excludes building plant rooms and equipment located above the roof line. The height of buildings is measured to the part of the building that extends from the building base and to the rooftop of habitable rooms in the building. It is not measured to the top of small structures used to service the building, such as lift facilities and air conditioning units, or architectural features of the roof structure. These structures are not major obstructions to views or vistas because, typically, they have a small footprint compared to the overall roof size, and generally located in the centre of the building. These structures are generally not visible from the street or neighbouring buildings.

### 8.5.1 Existing Development Approved Before LEP 2004

This built form analysis has not considered the heights of buildings approved and constructed prior to the LEP 2004 in Belmont. The height of much existing development in Belmont, generally does not exceed 8 metres in height. Rather, the building heights contained in the LEP 2014 provide for significant increases in height across the town centre. Consequently, it is not considered appropriate to compare to existing low-rise development to potential development as the increase in the building height limit will encourage redevelopment in the area to the new building heights. This is an important point, as future development on the site, including current controls promote higher density development. It is important that any future development on the site consider the potential scale of current controls and approvals in the area as is demonstrated in the images below.

**Table 8-1:** Relevant Building Height, Relevant Level (RL) for Similar Developments

| Location                                   | Height (No. of Storeys) | Building Height (m) | Building height Max RL <sup>1</sup> (m)  |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 46 Brooks Parade (Belmont Towers)          | 8                       | -                   | 24.66 <sup>2</sup><br>27.05 <sup>3</sup> |
| 13-17 Edgar Street (Belmont Central)       | 6                       | 19.8                | 20.98                                    |
| 58 Brooks Parade                           | 7                       | 22.76               | 23.78                                    |
| 54-56 Brooks Parade (Deck Apartments)      | 6                       | 20.28               | 21.3                                     |
| 24-26 Brooks Parade (Santorini Apartments) | 5                       | 16.05               | 17.39                                    |
| 29 Macquarie Street                        | 3                       | <13                 | 19.0                                     |
| 635 Pacific Highway                        | 4                       | 15.7                | 28.2                                     |
| 571 Pacific Highway                        | 4                       | 15.92               | 22.5                                     |
| 600 Pacific Highway                        | 4                       | 16.1                | 26.2                                     |
| 11 Ernest Street (Belle Apartments)        | 6                       | 20.2                | 25.6                                     |

<sup>1</sup> Relative level from sea level (0m) to the roof line of the building, excluding building plant such as lift rooms and air conditioning units

<sup>2</sup> Top of main parapet

<sup>3</sup> Top of splayed setback parapet

### 8.5.2 Maximum Building Heights - LEP 2014

The building heights in the LEP 2014 are illustrated in Figure 8-1 below, as is the extent of the area analysed. Under the LEP, the subject site will be permitted to have a maximum building height of 22 metres, as will much of the foreshore along Brooks Parade.

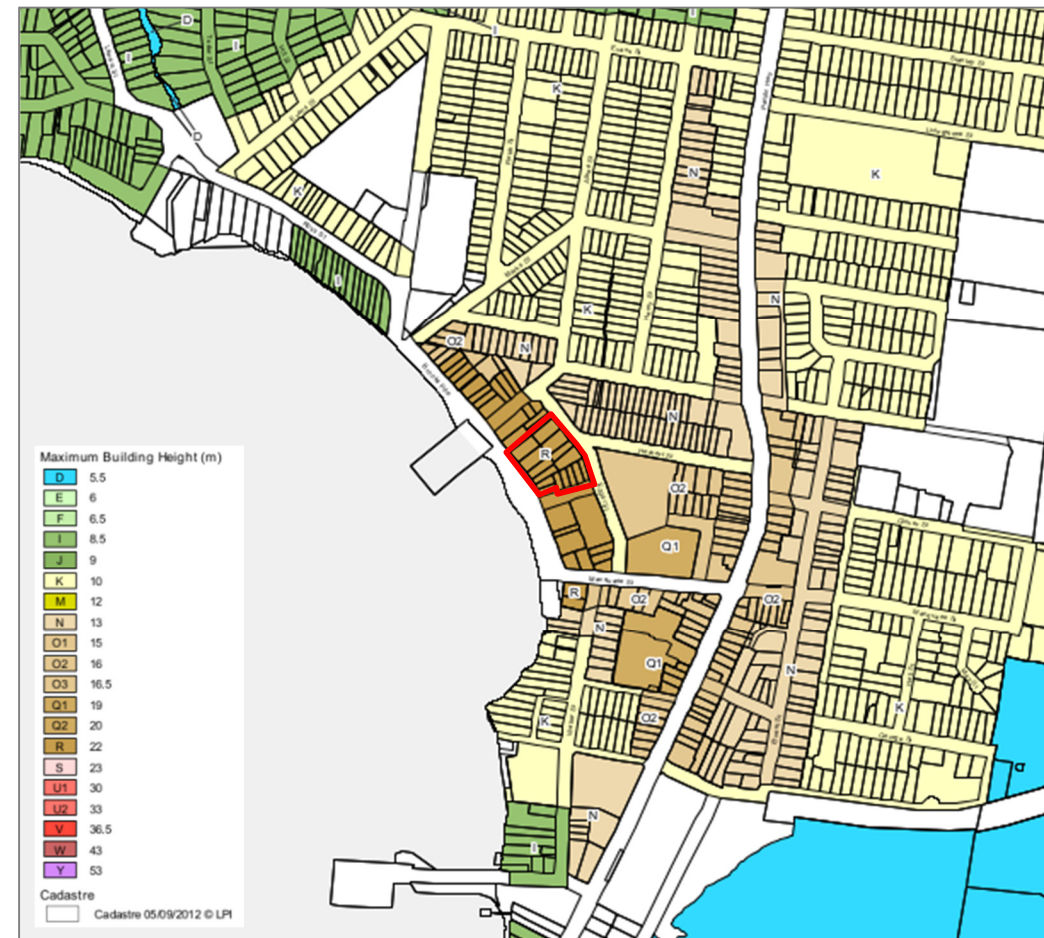


Figure 8-1: Height of Buildings, LEP 2014

### 8.5.3 Maximum Relative Level in Belmont Town Centre

The probable maximum relative level (Elevation + Height of Building (HOB)) attainable in Belmont town centre is approximately RL 32.00 (Elevation 13m + HOB 19m). This is in the vicinity of Victoria Street, Gen Street and the Pacific Highway, and the Belmont Central Shopping Centre site.

Based on consideration of the topography, and consistently noted in this report, and LEP 2014, the tallest building in a potential development on the subject site could reasonably be expected to extend to RL 32 – RL 33. This is consistent with the potential maximum RL for the other key sites in the Belmont town centre, such as Belmont Central shopping centre.

### 8.5.4 Building Height Considerations

The height of buildings in the subject site is a key opportunity to establish a visual connection between existing and future development. This is particularly important at the intersection of Brooks Parade and Maude Street. The building height of the Santorini Apartments is 16 metres. Under the permissible building heights in the LEP 2014, this building could be 6 metres lower than its nearest neighbours to the north, south and east. Therefore, potential development within the subject site could step up the height of buildings along Brooks Parade (north to south) to create a visual connection to height of existing and future buildings. Additionally, buildings within the site could step up from east to west to connect the site with future development on the Belmont Citi Centre site on the opposite side of Edgar Street.

## 8.6 BUILDING MASSING

In addition to building height, building mass is determined by several factors. To determine appropriate building massing and form for the site and within the context of the Belmont town centre, several factors have been considered:

- Building types;
- Setbacks and maximum occupied area;
- Separation between buildings;
- Site coverage.

Building types appropriate for the site include square towers and rectangle blocks, which were discussed in Section 8.4. The mass for each of these forms is modified by setbacks to the street, separation from surrounding development, and site coverage.

### 8.6.1 Setbacks

Setbacks determine the distance of the potential development from the site boundary to the street and adjoining development lots. The most significant street in the site context is Brooks Parade, which faces the Belmont Foreshore. Sharp and Edgar Streets are less significant. Sharp Street is a connector street to the foreshore for vehicles and pedestrians. Edgar Street is a circulation street for vehicles around the shopping centre.

Sharp Street is a continuous line to each connecting street. The boundary changes direction along Brooks Parade, and at the

intersection of Herbert Street and Edgar Street, which is reflected in the different building alignments and overshadowing within the site.

### **8.6.2 Separation Between Buildings**

Separation between the buildings within the subject site is considered in the SEPP 65 assessment (in association with the Apartment Design Guide) and in this case the Area Plan. Building separation controls work together with building height controls to affect the bulk and scale of buildings. Bulk and scale can affect not only the streetscape character and appearance of an area, but also the environmental performance of building within the site and surrounding areas, such as reduced visual and acoustic privacy, overshadowing, and loss of open space.

The Apartment Design Guide (ADG) links in with the design quality principles of the State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Development. As a State policy, it overrides the requirements of local development controls.

In general, the level of separation increases as building height increases. These matters are addressed in the SEPP 65 statement included with the DA.

Consideration was also afforded to the existing separation distances between recent apartment buildings constructed in the area

### **8.6.3 Site Coverage**

Site coverage is generally accepted as the amount of site land covered by impervious surface, such as buildings and driveways. The subject site is currently within a mixed use zone. At the first level it is necessary to raise the site ground level with a podium due to flooding

issues. Above the podium level, the site coverage is reduced by requirements for setbacks and building separation, and potentially landscaping requirements. Effectively, the site cover is the footprint of buildings erected on the podium, and excludes balconies.

## 8.7 VISUAL IMPACT

As noted earlier in this report, the topography of Belmont town centre affects the height of development and, therefore, visual impact of development in the town centre. The visual impact on Brooks Parade arising from potential development of the subject site appears to be minimal. The potential development can sit comfortably within the scale of existing and future development along the foreshore. The reason for this is that the height and scale of development in Belmont increases gradually from the periphery of the suburb to the peak at Belmont Central Shopping Centre. The building scale increases from the north of the town centre at Evans Street, starting at 10 metres, rising to 13 metres from Maude Street, 16 metres at Herbert Street, and peaking at 19 metres at Macquarie Street. However, the peak continues south beyond Macquarie Street as a result of the sloping land form, until it plateaus near Victoria Street. The height of potential development in the subject site is unlikely to overwhelm the foreshore or the town centre, and is considered strategically acceptable.

When viewed from Lake Macquarie, approximately 500 metres from the foreshore in Belmont, development along the foreshore from Mark Street to Macquarie rises gently. Sharp Street provides separation so that height on the subject site will not appear to overwhelm Belmont Towers. South of Macquarie Street, the elevated landscape and building heights (including the Pacific Highway) block views into the site. Consequently, the building heights and mass of all the site (including in the future) are unlikely to have unacceptable impacts on the vistas from the lake.

## **9 PREFERRED OPTION**

The preferred option for the site is presented in Figures 9-1, 9-2 and 9-3 below. There have been a number of options considered on the site in the past as identified earlier. The current configuration has been based on all information presented above including planning, environment and the existing development within Belmont.

### **9.1 BUILDING TYPE AND CONFIGURATION**

The preferred building type and configuration provides an even distribution of mass across the site. This facilitates good building separation and coverage within the site, which is clear from the illustrations.

The preferred option varies the appearance of the development along Sharp Street and is consistent with development along Brooks Parade.

All balconies are in excess of eight square metres and greater than two metres in width.

### **9.2 BUILDING HEIGHTS**

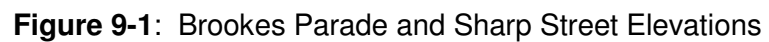
The preferred option consists of four tower blocks with retail/commercial premises also included in the proposal. The building locations identify visible pedestrian connections through the site.

The two tower blocks on the northern boundary of the site are at approximately 21.5 RL. The tower block at the juncture of Edgar Street and Sharp Street is also approximately 21.5 RL. The tower

block at the juncture of Brooks and Sharp Street is the tallest building at approximately 27.66 RL.

The preferred option has the tallest building adjacent to Belmont Towers on Brooks Parade, and will be of similar height to the top of the splayed setback parapet at Belmont Towers (27.1 RL).

The other three buildings on the site are similar in height to the Deck Apartments to the south but lower than other buildings in the area (e.g. 58 Brooks Parade, Belmont Towers). Some other images of the proposed development in relation to the current situation and potential future redevelopment of the area under LEP 2014 are presented in Appendix A.





**Figure 9-2:** Edgar Street Elevation and Elevation from Northern Boundary of the Site

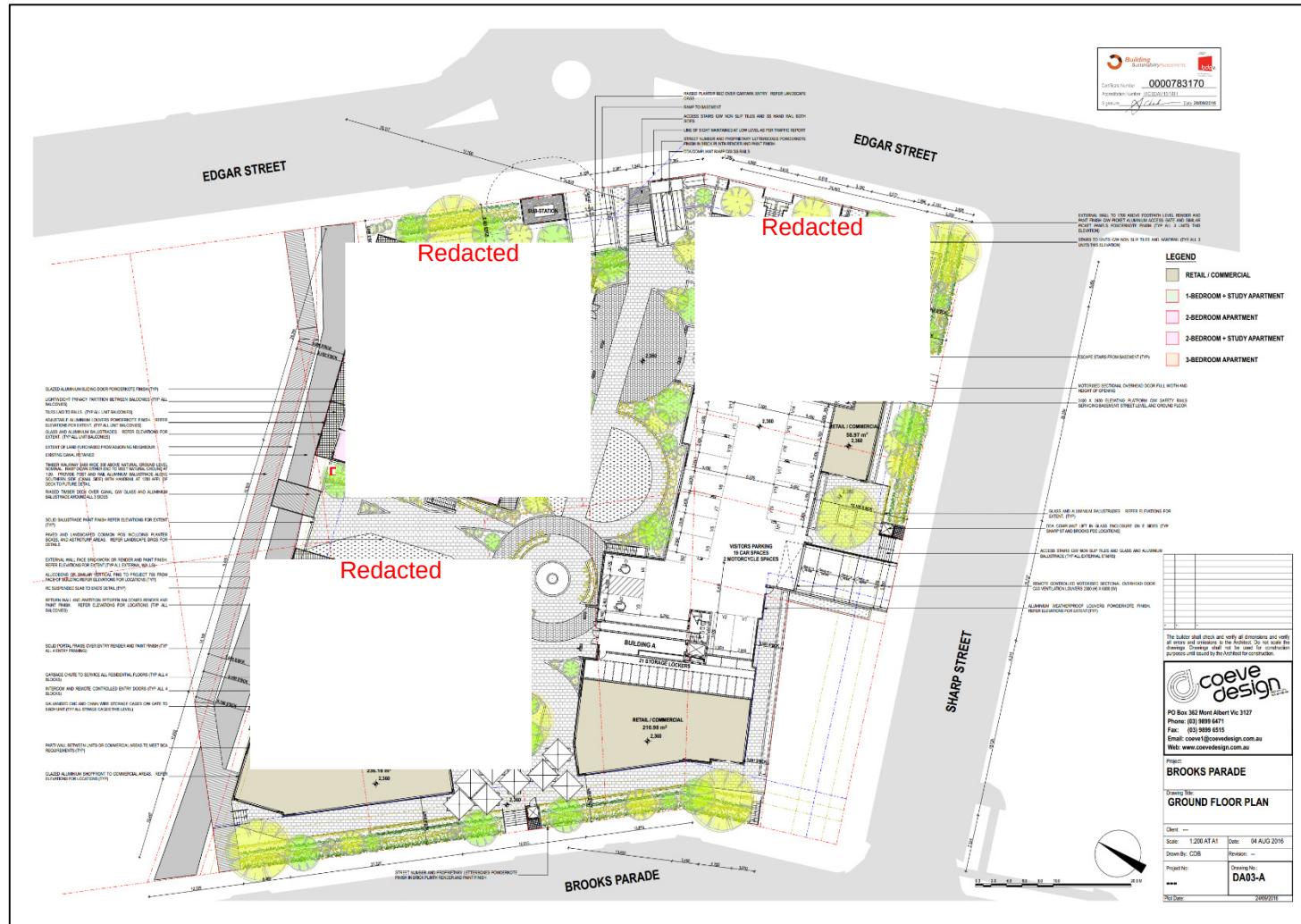


Figure 9-3: Site Overview

### 9.3 SETBACKS

The proposed development has setbacks of at least six metres for all living spaces. Buildings on Brooks Parade will be set back six metres, while setbacks from the canal (northern end are at least six metres). Setbacks from the isolated lot (corner of Brooks and Sharp) are three metres. The residential tower blocks on Edgar and Sharp are at least six metres from the boundary. There is some overhang of non-habitable areas on the corner of Edgar and Sharp which are setback three metres from the boundary.

### 9.4 SEPARATION BETWEEN BUILDINGS

The preferred option can achieve separation between room types. The buildings are separate by 12 metres. At higher levels the separations are increased.

### 9.5 SITE COVERAGE

Site cover of existing development in the vicinity of the subject site ranges from 42% to 51% of the site (Table 9-1).

Site coverage is estimated to be 36% of the site area excluding podiums. There is some conjecture around podiums in current controls and thus with podiums (including landscaping podiums) the site coverage is approximately 65%.

**Table 9-1:** Site Coverage and Floor Space Ratios for Existing Development

| Existing development                        | Site coverage (%) | 'Estimated FSR' from Approved Plans |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 46 Brooks Parade (Belmont Towers)           | N/A               | NA                                  |
| 13-17 Edgar Street (Belmont Central)        | 45%               | 2.30                                |
| 58 Brooks Parade (Belmont Wharf Apartments) | 46%               | 2.03                                |
| 54-56 Brooks Parade (Deck Apartments)       | 42%               | NA                                  |
| 24-26 Brooks Parade (Santorini Apartments)  | 51%               | 2.16                                |
| 29 Macquarie Street                         | N/A               | NA                                  |
| 635 Pacific Highway                         | N/A               | 2.71                                |
| 571 Pacific Highway                         | N/A               | 1.81                                |
| 600 Pacific Highway                         | N/A               | 2.61                                |

The subject site proposes an FSR of approximately 2.0 to 1. Once 'common areas' (e.g. lift wells) etc are considered the FSR would be lower than 2:1, which is well within the range of other developments in the area.

Floor space ratio (FSR) is also an indicator of building mass that expresses the buildings total area as a ratio of the land area where the building will be located. Generally, car parking and balconies are excluded from the calculation. Lake Macquarie City Council does not use FSR as a development standard to control development, however, it does provide an indicator of mass to compare existing development. Therefore, FSR is a guide to compare the scale and bulk of surrounding development, and should not be seen as a hard and fast limit on the development potential of the site.

Existing surrounding development in Belmont in since 2006 has been able to achieved floor space ratios between 1.8 and 2.6 (Table). In order to produce built outcomes with consistent scale and massing on the site, potential development on the site could achieve an FSR in a similar range, though not less than 2.0. It should also be borne in mind that the potential development of the site could be limited by other factors that are not related to built form, such as car parking, which is discussed later.

## **9.6 VISUAL IMPACT**

Overall, the preferred option sits comfortably into the subject site and with the surrounding development, which can be seen from the massing diagrams in Appendix A.

The selected vistas are unlikely to be affected by future development of Belmont town centre. Future development in the car park of Belmont Citi Centre will obstruct views to the subject site from Macquarie Street and Thomas, and so these view points are not been represented in the analysis.

## **9.7 LANDSCAPING**

Landscaping along each boundary will vary with the character and function to the street or boundary, as well as the desire and availability for deep soil planting. Approximately 18% of the site will be landscaped.

Landscaping within the setback to Brooks Parade is desirable to soften the development edge between the foreshore and the built form, particular the podium wall.

The interface with Edgar and Sharp Streets would also be enhanced with landscaping. However, plantings should avoid obscuring vision between the street and ground floor commercial uses. Landscaping in the setback should balance the requirement for visibility of the street from the development with the appearance of landscaping on each setback.

## **9.8 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION**

The preferred option supports pedestrian connection in the town centre. It can provide pedestrian access at each street frontage, disabled lift facilities or a ramp entrance. These accesses will not be obscured by landscaping. The pedestrian network at street level will be preserved. A proposed walkway is also proposed along the northern boundary of the site providing additional pedestrian access.

## **9.9 CAR PARKING**

The car parking rates applicable to potential development on the site are set out in the architectural plans which provides an excess of parking. The subject site is within is within 400 metres walk major bus routes that operate on the Pacific Highway.

The preferred option provides car parking for the residential dwellings within the subject site, spaces for visitor parking, and commercial tenants.

### **9.10 ISOLATED LOT**

The significance of the subject site is partly attributed to the opportunity to consolidate small adjacent lots into a single development at a prominent location in Belmont. At the time of writing, the lot identified as 44 Brooks Parade, at the corner of Brooks Parade and Sharp Street, is an isolated lot and not within the subject site for future development. The lot is 10 metres wide to Brooks Parade, and 29 metres long to Sharp Street. Plans have been included in the development application to show how this site would work, if incorporated into the subject site.

### **9.11 SOLAR ACCESS AND OVERSHADOWING**

Solar access and overshadowing has been presented as part of the architectural drawings. The subject site has limited impact on neighbouring properties due to its topography and physical location. Over 70% of balconies and living areas are subject to relevant solar access provisions.

### **9.12 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed development complies with the LEP except for an overrun on one of the buildings in relation to height (Sharp/Brooks corner). Other buildings comply with the LEP. It is understood a Clause 4.6 variation is being sought. It is noted that there are several urban design reports previously prepared including the peer review undertaken by AAUD that supports a slightly higher height in this corner.

The proposal is supported by strategic planning documents identifying Belmont as a sub-regional centre with capacity to deliver higher density housing.

The preferred option generally complies with the Lake Macquarie DCP. There are some minor variations regarding street awnings in trying to balance landscaping and access to retail premises, and front fencing. There are some minor technical discrepancies relating to the flood level on the site which translates into other matters (e.g. podiums). There is some inconsistency with setbacks relating to Council having both commercial and residential flat building DCPs in the context of a mixed use development.

### **9.13 ADDRESSING DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

At the beginning of this report a number of principles were considered in designing the preferred option for the site. These are considered below:

- Interaction with the Natural and Urban Context – the visual sensitivity of the lake and foreshore areas have been considered in the proposed development. No view corridors from the west to the lake will be impeded by the development. The site has linkages through the site to the lake.

- Physical Connections – pedestrian linkages through the site and around the site including the canal have been proposed. Internal security as well as public linkages were also considered in the final design.
- Sustainability – the site meets the requirements of BASIX.
- Vibrancy and Diversity – the development proposes mixed uses with some retail components providing active street frontages. Linkages to the Belmont town centre and main shopping centre have been considered. The units provide a diversity of sizes (1-3 bedroom) as well as universally designed units and disability legislative requirements.
- Planning and Environment – the environmental constraints have been considered in detail for the site. The accompanying statement of environmental effects provides more detail on these matters. The planning controls and guidelines have been considered in the design process (see also section 9.12 above).
- Community – the foreshore and public areas in Belmont will not be impacted by the proposal. Public linkages to these areas for internal and external residents has been considered. The amenity of the foreshore area has been maintained. The future re-development of the town centre has also been considered in the proposal.

## **10 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The strategic planning and urban design analysis has demonstrated that the preferred option represents an appropriate and efficient use of a significant site in the Belmont town centre, and provide high quality development in a prominent location on Lake Macquarie's foreshore.

It is identified that the site can accommodate mixed use development within the strategic planning framework prepared for the site. Consideration of the urban design, environment, and supply and demand factors for residential dwellings in Belmont indicates that the potential development is consistent with the desired strategic outcomes for Belmont, Lake Macquarie and the Lower Hunter. This report also finds that potential development would be largely consistent with Town Centre Area Plan. A review by Council accepts that variations other controls, could yield an acceptable outcome, based on merit provided any adverse effects are adequately addressed.

# APPENDIX A

*Images*



Western Viewpoint – Current Imagery



Image Landsat  
© 2016 Google  
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Google earth

Imagery Date: 1/10/2016 33°02'10.76" S 151°39'22.59" E elev 1 m eye alt 47 m

2012

South West Viewpoint – Current Imagery



**Southern Viewpoint – Current Imagery**



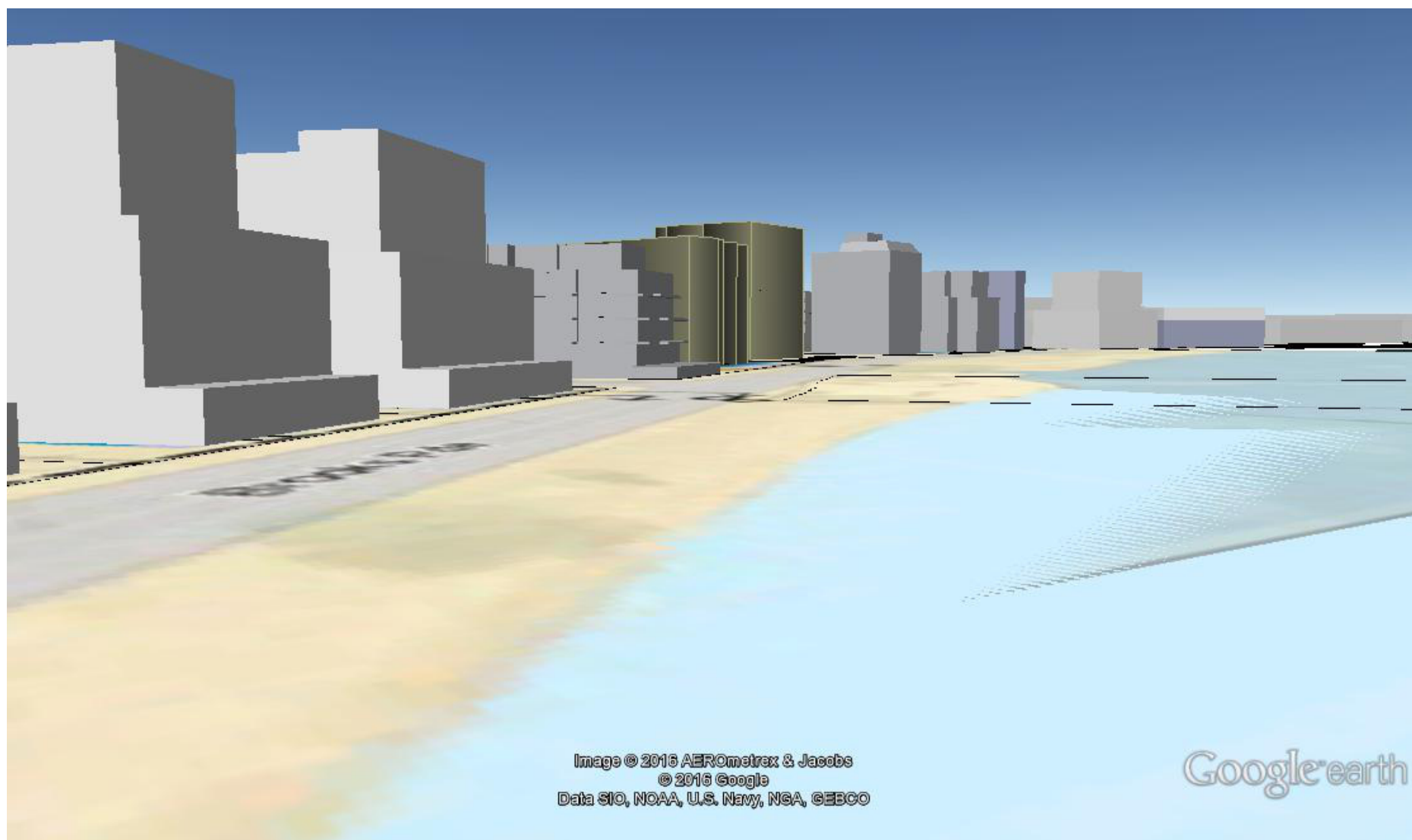
North Western Viewpoint – Current Imagery



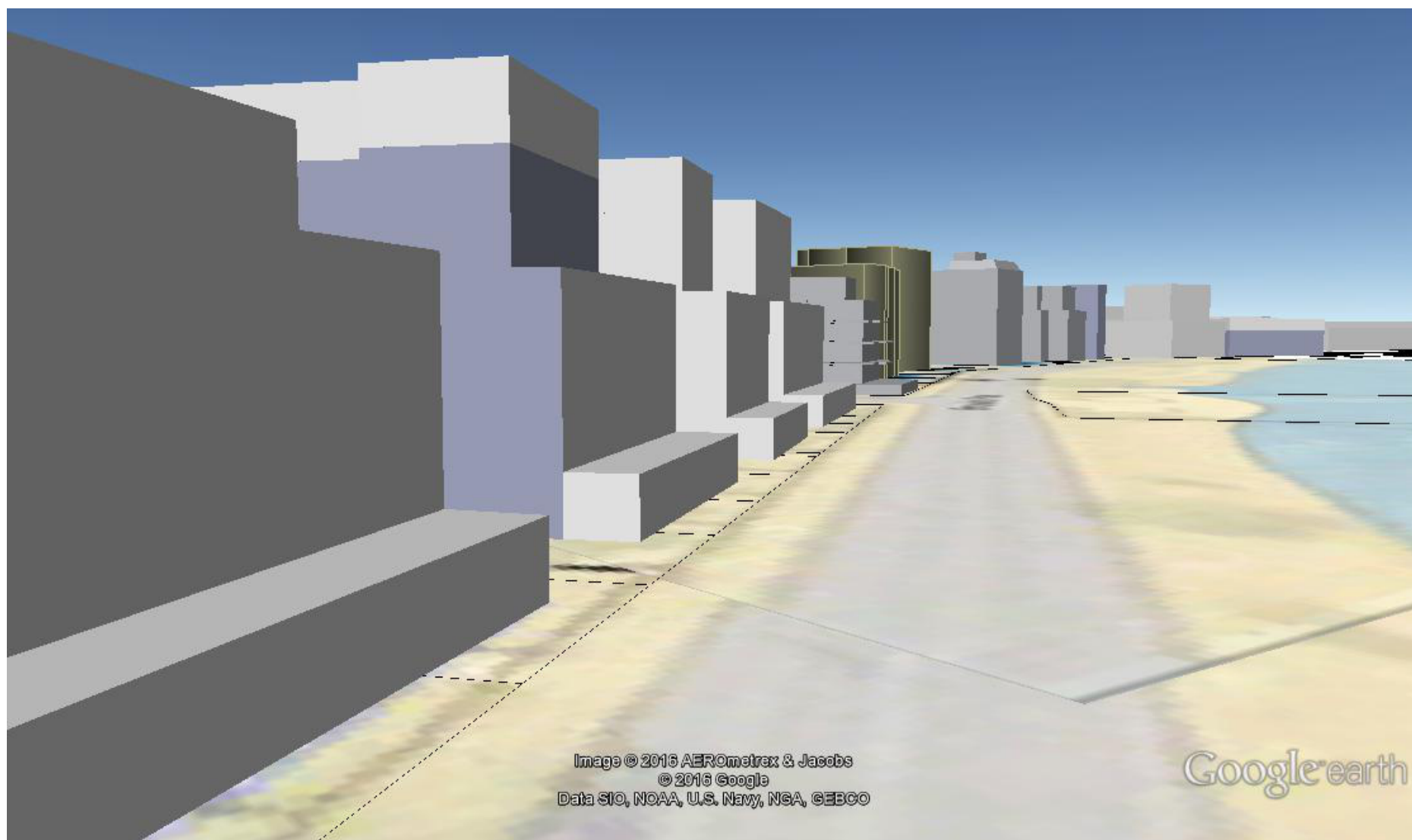
North Eastern Viewpoint – Current Imagery



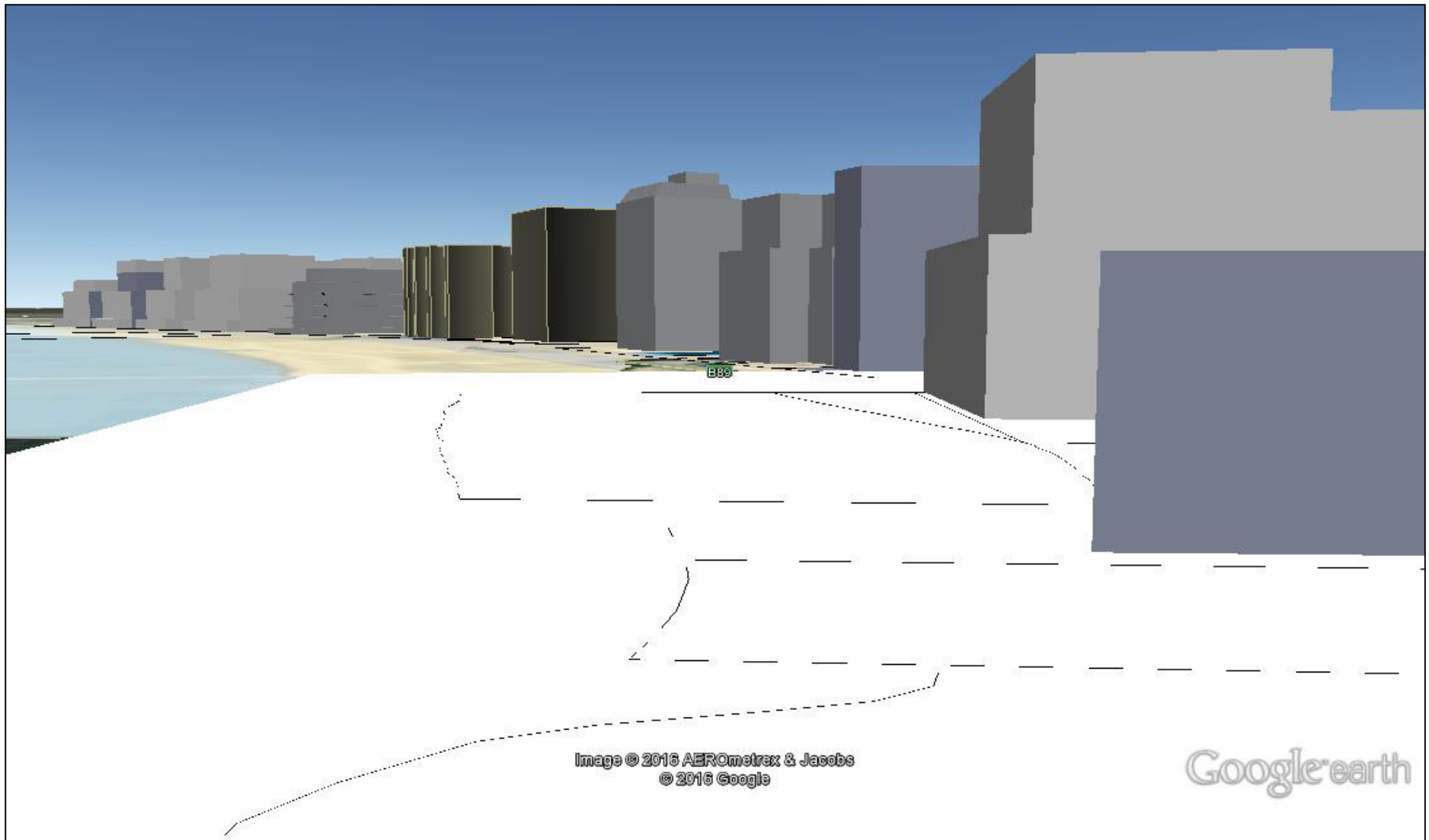
Looking North from TAFE – Current Imagery



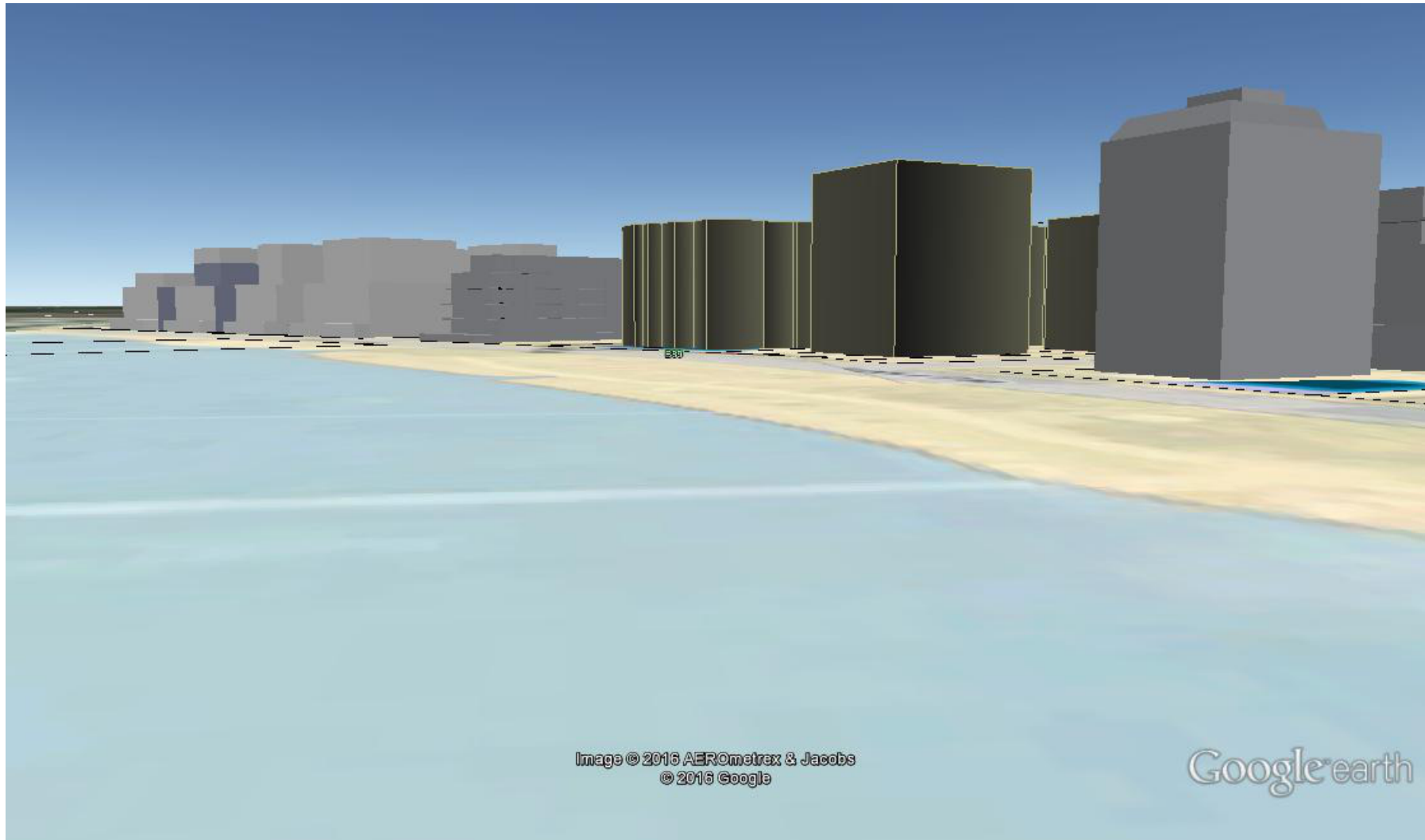
**Northern Viewpoint at Future Development Potential**



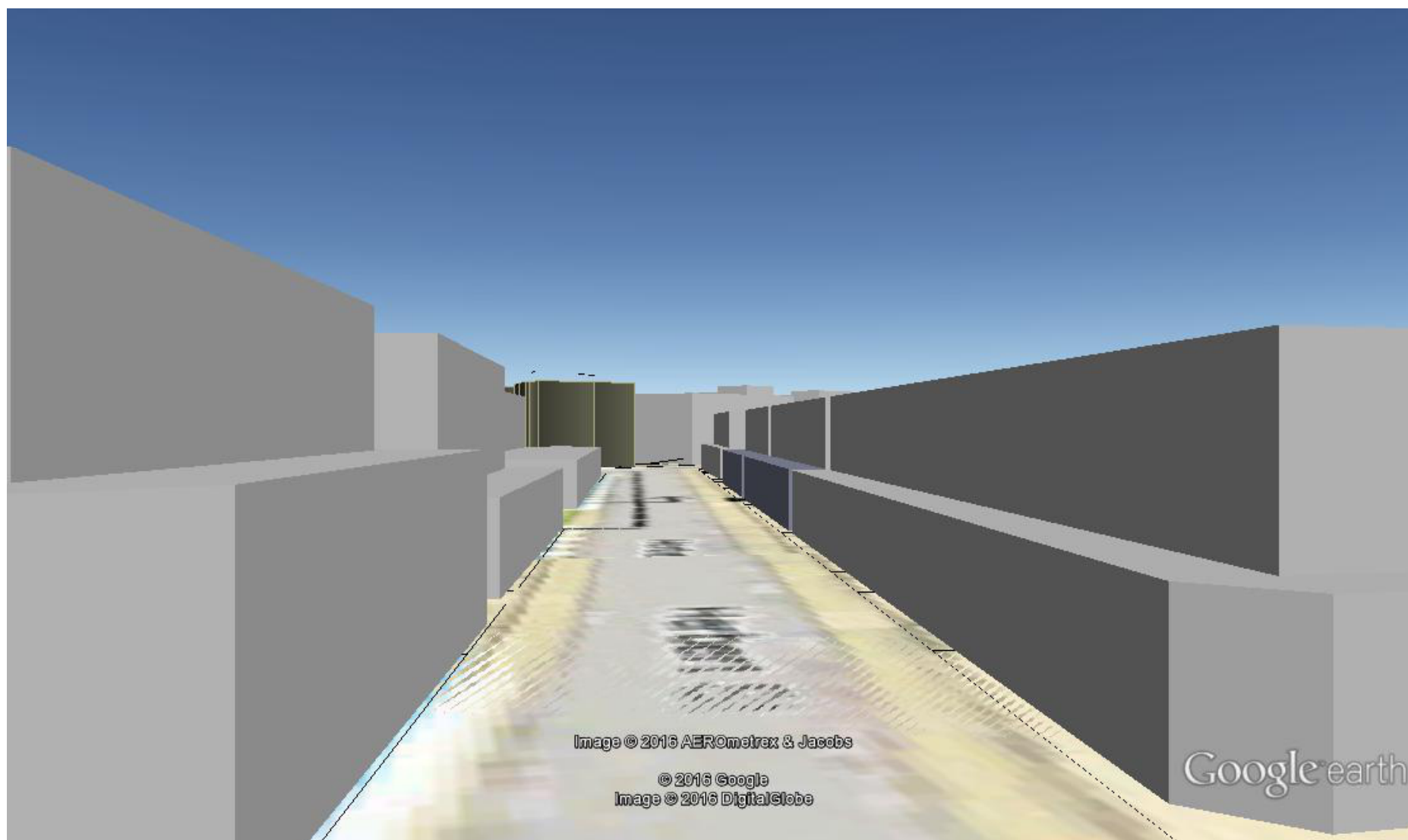
**Brooks Parade Looking South at Full Development Potential**



**Brooks Parade Looking North at Full Development Potential**



**Brooks Parade Looking North at Full Development Potential**



**Herbert Street Looking West Towards the Lake at Full Development Potential**