



**1020
MELIA
COURT**

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

'ROGANS HILL PARK' - JANUARY 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	Executive Summary	23	Conclusions and Recommendations
05	Introduction and Project Description	24	Appendices
07	Methodology		
11	View Assessment		



Quality Control

Final Draft: Issued 24 November 2023 - Written by KC, Checked by BL.
Final: Issued January 2024 - Written by KC
Final V2: Issued February 2024 - Written by KC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audax Urban has been engaged by Castle Hill Glen Pty Ltd to conduct an independent Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) of the proposed residential development 'Rogans Hill Park' for the site located at 1020 Melia Court, Castle Hill. The purpose of this report is to assess the visual effects of the proposal on the existing views within the site's surrounding residential context with special regard to:

- Scenic landscapes
- Aesthetic and scenic qualities of the locality
- Surrounding vantage points

This visual impact assessment provides an independent opinion on the potential visual impacts of the proposal when viewed from key publicly accessible areas in the surrounding context. The report also discusses the visibility of the site from lower areas in the district (medium to long distance locations). This study has analysed the broader and local context and considered the masterplan included as part of the planning proposal as seen from its surrounding visual catchment.

For this, over 167 images were documented of the surrounding context during two separate visits. Out of these, 21 were identified as being in the general direction of the subject site. Through a further sieving and analysis of the locations' aesthetic and scenic qualities, 6 views were selected for the detailed view assessment, including:

- 01** - Doris Hirst Place - End of cul-de-sac
- 2a** - Melia Court - Panoramic view
- 2b** - Melia Court - Framed view
- 03** - Glen Road - end of cul-de-sac



Figure 1 Selected Views in relation to the subject site boundary (in yellow) adapted from SixMaps

- 04** - Within the site near proposed lifestyle trail
- 05** - Within the site near the eastern boundary

Figure 2
Existing View 01
Doris Hirst Place - End of cul-de-sac

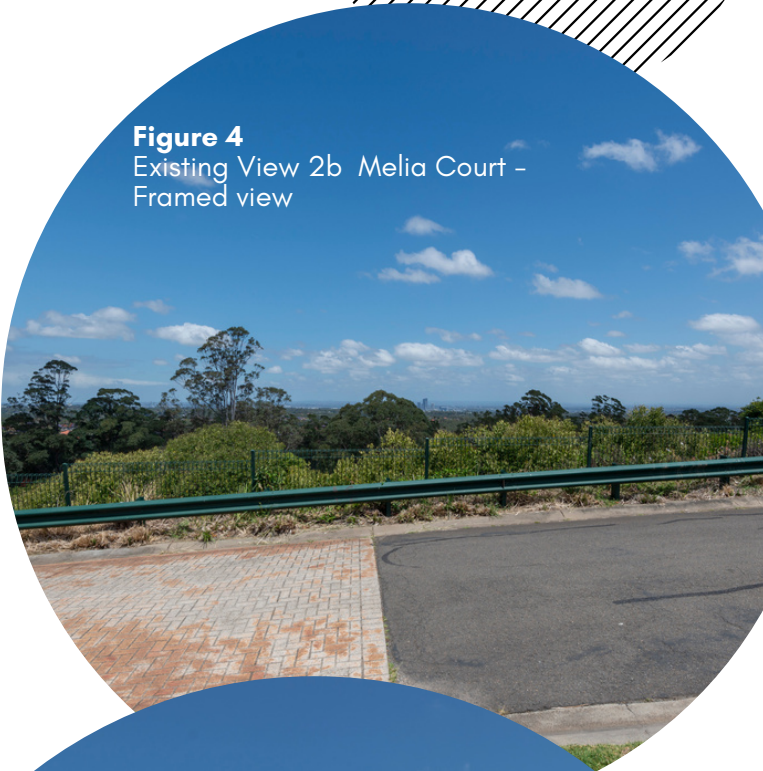


Figure 4
Existing View 2b Melia Court - Framed view



Figure 3
Existing View 2a Melia Court - Panoramic view

The 6 views were selected as visually relevant locations within the site, from the immediate surrounding context and from local streets. The view documentation was carried out by a professional photographer from Rock Hunter and surveyed by a registered surveyor from Chadwick Chen Surveyors following court certifiable guidelines. Refer to the Methodology Report in Appendices A-B.

The findings of the Visual Impact Assessment are that Views 1, 2a, 2b and 5 – views investigated in the detailed analysis – have a nil or negligible view impact. This is in part due to the low-laying nature of the proposal, the topography and the thick vegetation within the site. This is a positive outcome.

View 3 has a high level of visibility, but the visual catchment is limited and the built form will be well screened by the proposed vegetation. View 4 was found to be fully within the site and having nil aesthetic and scenic qualities visible from the locality. Therefore, this view was not found to be relevant as per the selection criteria and was not included as part of the 'before and after' testing.

In general, the proposed massing is considered acceptable due to its negligible or nil level of visibility. No part of the massing or built form will be visible above the tree canopy from medium to long distances. Therefore, no further mitigation measures are necessary for district views.

The proposed masterplan will be visible from location No. 3, which is immediately adjacent to the public domain at the entry point to the site. High level of visibility from this location is considered to be a positive outcome being part of the arrival sequence. Legibility from the road at this location is important as it will assist with 'way-finding', address legibility and the sense of arrival.

The overall findings of this analysis show:

- The site sits at a lower topographical point from the taller part of the ridge running along Castle Hill Road (Contour line 194 refer to Figure 16). The site is concealed from the available views from the lower valley floor, district wide precinct and the Parramatta CBD.
- The site sits at a lower topographical point when compared to the surrounding residential precinct to the north of Melia Court, thus preserving the available views of the precinct and the Parramatta CBD for the residents along Melia Court.
- The proposed pavilion forms help to reduce the perception of a continuous massing allowing for breaks and vegetative fingers across the site that further conceal the built form from the residential dwellings to the east of the site to both sides of Doris Hirst Place and Hoop Pine Place.
- The scale, siting and grouping of the built form helps to conceal the proposed massing from the south due to the preservation and planned management of dense groups of existing trees and the Blue Gum High Forest.
- The proposed landscape strategy will assist the proposal to further blend in with the surrounding landscape character. Important landscape components include:
 - Roof gardens
 - Green Roofs
 - 418 additional trees including street trees along the internal loop road
 - planting on structure
 - Terraced gardens
 - 80% total landscaped area (36,123 sqm)

In general, the proposal is found to have a negligible or nil level of visual impact from View 1, viewed from the surrounding neighbourhood context. There is no view affectation from points 2a and 2b, which are at taller topographical levels. The proposal will be visible from point 3, which is a positive outcome from a legibility point of view, but the analysis also confirms the the proposed vegetation is sufficient to make a significant reduction in the level of visibility of the proposed building facades.

Out of Views 4 and 5, which are within the site, only View 5 was found to be relevant to the selection criteria. View 5 has a low level of visibility as it is well screened by the existing site vegetation. In general, the proposed built form and massing will be screened behind the existing vegetation and below the tree canopy.

Due to the low levels of visibility from the short, medium and long distances, the proposal is considered to have a good contextual fit and to be acceptable from a visual impact point of view.



Figure 5
Existing View 03
Glen Road



Figure 7
Existing View 05 within the site
near the eastern boundary



Figure 6
Existing View 04
Within the site near the
proposed lifestyle trail

INTRODUCTION

Audax Urban has been engaged by Castle Hill Glen Pty Ltd to conduct an independent Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) of the proposed residential development 'Rogans Hill Park' for the site located at 1020 Melia Court, Castle Hill.

The purpose of this report is to assess the visual effects of the proposal and to address the comments issued by The Hills Shire Council after the *Scoping Proposal & Prelodgement Meeting* held on 1 June 2023 for the *Melia Court and Glen Road, Castle Hill proposal (5/2023/PPLP)*.

Pre-lodgement feedback and comments by Council officers expressed the view that "the planning proposal would appear to enable a built form that would be visible above the tree canopy on the ridgeline and that would detract from the significant district views".

They referred, in particular, to "the bulk and scale of the proposed development", which "is likely to detract from district scenic views along the ridge line of Castle Hill Road".

The letter also stated that "one of the objectives of the current zoning of the site, C4 Environmental Living is to maintain the scenic and district views (in this case along the ridgeline of Castle Hill Road) consistent with the Central City District Plan". The letter explained that "the existing low density neighbourhood... is constrained by environmental values and identified for low-impact development only in order to protect and maintain the environmental, aesthetic and scenic qualities of the locality".

The letter also pointed out that Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) seeks to provide housing in the right locations, close to transport and to protect biodiversity and scenic landscapes.

The Assessment section of this report will address the points raised by Council officers paying particular attention to any potential intrusion into district views, topographical elevation and existing vantage points from the surrounding context. The height of the existing vegetation and the potential visibility of the proposal above the tree canopy are also discussed.

This analysis has mainly considered views during the day. Lighting impacts at night have not been considered given the sunken nature of the site below the ridge and the height of the existing vegetation on the southern part of the site, which significantly reduces visibility from vantage points in the district. Also, this report does not include the assessment of private views from surrounding residential areas. However, an analysis of residential or night-time views can form part of a separate assessment at a later stage of the Planning Proposal application, if required.

Although this report has not considered view impacts from within private residences, the findings of this report indicate that any private impacts are likely to be negligible due to the proposal's relative lower topographical location to that of surrounding residential dwellings at the top of the ridge.

Also, the 'fine grain', 'pavilion-like' massing of the proposed buildings, the transition in scale of the proposed built form to the edges of the site and the site's dense retained and managed vegetation assist in reducing visibility and private view affectation from the surrounding residential context to the north and east.

The proposal seeks the rezoning of a uniquely shaped triangular site (approx. 4.5 ha). Access is via Glenn Rd to the west of the site connecting to Castle Hill Road. The planning proposal aims to amend the Hills LEP 2013 Land Use Zoning Map to rezone the C4 Environmental Living zoned land to:

- R3 Medium Density Residential,
- R4 High Density Residential,
- RE1 Public Recreation, and
- C2 Environmental Conservation

This rezoning aims to develop approximately 2.3 hectares of previously cleared land and preserving and managing the remainder as Blue Gum High Forest and remnant non-indigenous bush regeneration area.

The proposed built form comprises residential flat buildings (6), terraces (38), open spaces and parkland arranged around a central loop road. Building heights vary between 3 storeys at the periphery of the site up to a single building of 6 storeys at the central and least visible part of the lot.

The site is currently vacant with no existing facilities or structures. The topography of the triangular site generally drops from north to south with the widest portion of the wedge being approximately 21 to 28 metres below Melia Court generally at Contour Line 192 (Refer to Figure 16). The lowest point (from survey) is RL 130.45. Therefore, the site has a drop of approximately 61.5m from the top of the site to its lowest point.

As discussed later in this report, the site location, existing topography and tall vegetation contribute greatly to reducing the levels of visibility of the site.

Figure 8 Subject Site within existing immediate context – Courtesy of EinV



According to Zone C4, Environmental Living the objectives of the zone are:

- *To provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values.*
- *To ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.*

Based on the visual impact analysis, the levels of visibility of the site are low. The proposed massing has been distributed across the site to 'tuck away' the taller form at the centre of the site and below the escarpment. The proposal significantly improves upon an existing approval increasing the levels of retained and managed vegetation. Therefore, the proposal responds well to the objectives by preserving and enhancing both, the aesthetic and ecological values of the site.

According to the Central City District Plan (henceforth, the Plan or CCDP), *Action 67* recommends the enhancement and protection of views of scenic and cultural landscapes from the public realm".

The Plan also states that, "remnant vegetation should be recognised as an asset that can be incorporated into the planning and design of neighbourhoods, for example in parks, school grounds and streets". The CCDP clearly states that this responsibility is that of "Councils, other planning authorities and State agencies".

However, the Applicant is very much in agreement with *The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, which discusses the range of tools available to protect biodiversity on private land, including biodiversity conservation agreements, among others.

The Applicant has made a commitment to preserve approximately 70% of the land as conservation area which includes the retention and management of existing Blue Gum High Forest. The proposal also seeks to revegetate the site and increase the existing tree canopy by approximately 40%. These commitments not only address the objectives of the zone, but will also assist Council to meet the CCDP *Actions*.

The proposal has undergone an extensive design development process to arrive at the proposed density and height. The current built form has been informed by the input from the project team and the feedback by Council Staff during the pre-PP. The placement of built form has been informed by an extensive analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site including the surrounding existing context, sloping topography and the site's biodiversity assets, i.e. remnant Blue Gum High Forest and non-indigenous bush land vegetation.

In turn, this analysis lead the project team to the formulation of site specific urban design principles with a high emphasis on the preservation and enhancement of bio-diversity values, even when the "existing trees and shrubs are highly disturbed" according to the project's Bushfire Specialist from Blackash Bushfire Consulting.

The proposed building placement preserves the larger clusters of vegetation to the north and south within the site, grouping the buildings on the cleared portion of the lot on lower topographical levels. Green corridors are proposed to run across the site, linking the northern remnant non-indigenous bush regeneration area to the southern Blue Gum High Forest.

The proposed management strategy also seeks to increase the tree canopy by 40% also enhancing the site's developable areas. The green corridors will create visual breaks within the site and further decrease the already low visibility from surrounding development.

As discussed in the next chapters of this report, the visual impact assessment has concluded that the proposal will have a negligible or nil visual impact on the surrounding district views at the top of the ridge.

The bio-diversity and tree management strategies in combination with the drop in the site's topography, and the proposed 'fine grain' groupings of pavilion-like buildings transitioning to multi-dwelling terrace buildings at the periphery of the site, all respond to the objectives of the zone and the *Actions* of the Plan.

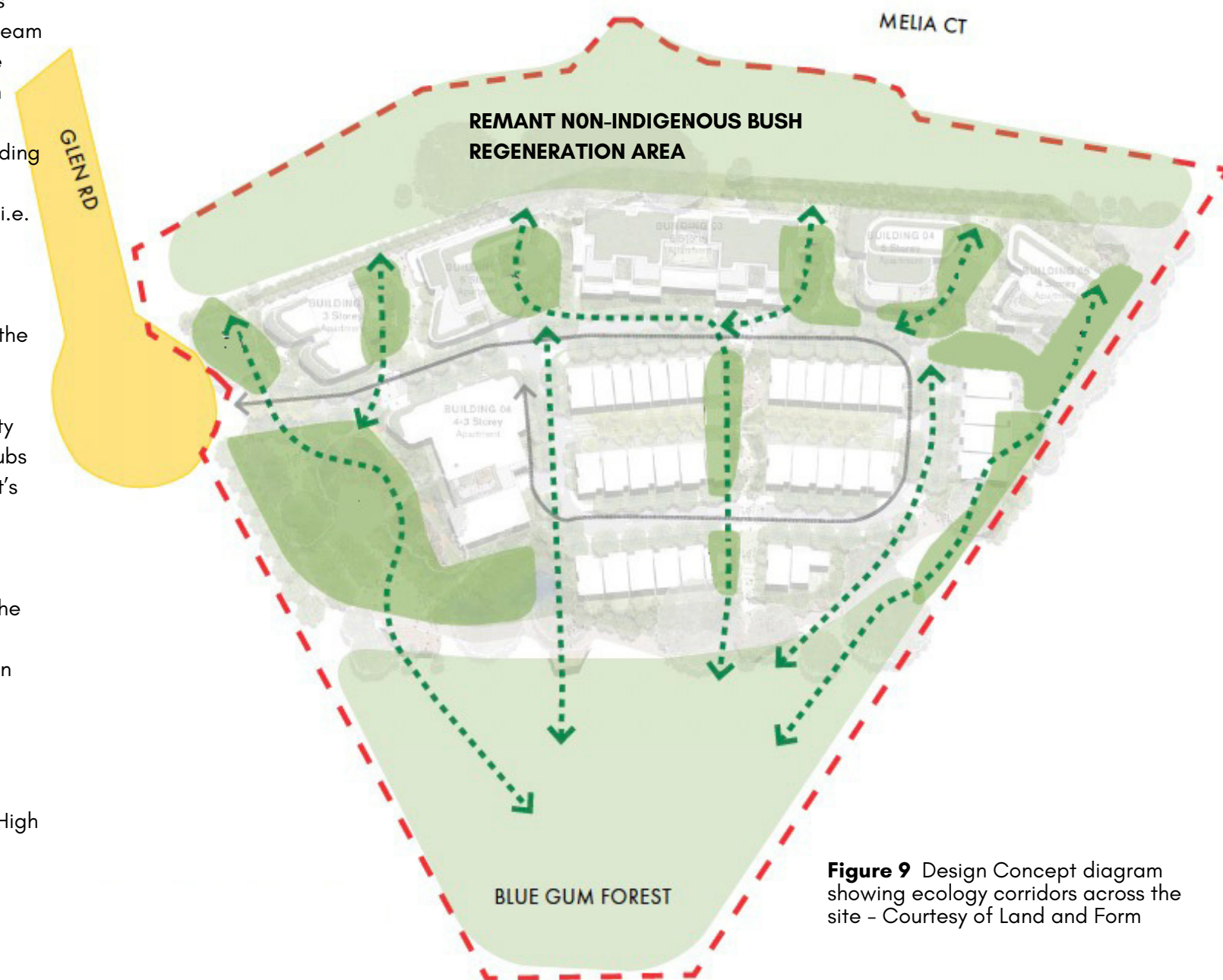


Figure 9 Design Concept diagram showing ecology corridors across the site - Courtesy of Land and Form

METHODOLOGY

In assessing the proposal's visibility, **Audax Urban** has considered the site context, reviewed the proposed massing, and analysed 'before and after' diagrams from the surrounding context with a special focus on existing district views. 'Before and after' scenarios are compared in order to determine the extent of perceivable change within the selected views. The 'before' scenario represents views to the existing condition or site. The 'after' scenario (showing an outline of the proposed massing) is then superimposed onto the existing views.

In the case of 1020 Melia Court, the surrounding context to the east is a well-established conurbation. The sites immediately to the northwest are vacant or yet to be redeveloped. The site to the south-west is owned by Sydney Water and it is generally vacant with a large reservoir at its centre.

The methodology has included a review of The Hills Shire Council's strategic instruments including the LEP, LSPS and Central City District Plan, two separate site visits and a photographic documentation session with a registered surveyor.

This report has taken into consideration the following documents:

- Rogans Hill Park Urban Design Report by DKO dated November 2023
- Landscape Architecture Design Report by Land and Form dated 2023
- 1020 Melia Court, Castle Hill Landscape Masterplan – Rev 1 by Land and Form
- Flood Impact and Risk Assessment by Northrop – Rev B dated 19 November 2023
- Site Survey – Details and Levels Ref: 42119/D4-MGA by ChadwickChen Consulting Surveyors dated 01.11.2023
- Scoping Proposal & Pre-lodgement Meeting Feedback Letter by The Hills Shire Council dated 14 June 2023 Ref: 5/2023/PPLP
- Statement on Methodology Report by RockHunter dated November 17, 2023 (refer to Appendices A-C)

This report has also taken into consideration applicable controls and strategies including:

- Transport for NSW Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment – Practice Note EIA –N04
- The Hills Shire Council Local Environmental Plan 2019
- The Hills Future 2036 Local Strategic Planning Statement October 2019
- Central City District Plan – Our Greater Sydney 2056

Methodology

The methodology used for the evaluation of the proposal's visual impact has been adapted from and is generally based on the NSW "Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment" (practice note EIA-No4) and it involved several stages:

- **Stage 1:** Identification of Existing Viewpoints and Sensitivity to Change
- **Stage 2:** Digital Recreation of future Context and Visibility
- **Stage 3:** Evaluation of Impact – 'Before and After' Diagrams
- **Stage 4:** Discussion of Findings and Potential Mitigation Measures

Stage 1 – Identification of Existing Viewpoints and Sensitivity to Change

The Visual Impact Assessment has documented the existing context (estimated visual catchment ranging approx. 0.2 – 0.7 km sq.) A preliminary desk top circuit of points was drawn within reasonable distance of the project and within the estimated visual catchment of the district. The desk top circuit was used as a guide for the preliminary walk through when over 164 locations were documented starting from Castle Hill Road moving to the residential precincts to the east of Doris Hirst Place, followed by Glen Road and the site (See Figure 13).

Notable elements documented on the site visits included the scale and massing of existing dwellings, height of surrounding vegetation including clusters of tall Hoop Pines in the vicinity of the site. The visit ended with a thorough walk along the common boundary with the residential dwellings to the east.

Figure 12
Central City
District Plan



Figure 10
NSW VIA
Guideline



Transport for NSW

Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment

Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-N04

Centre for Urban Design

Figure 11
LSPS



Out of the original 167 views documented, 21 locations were identified as being in the general direction of the subject site. The 21 viewpoints were rated as to their sensitivity to change and likelihood of viewers to see the proposal from that location. Visual sensitivity refers to the quality of the existing view and how sensitive the view is to the proposed change.

Views were also assessed against the length of exposure and frequency of visitation and further sieved to avoid duplication and repetition. After the 2nd round of sieving, a short list was agreed in consultation with the project team. The shortlisted images were selected due to their level of sensitivity, accessibility, and scenic quality. Other factors included the proposal's potential visibility, and the viewpoint's topographical location.

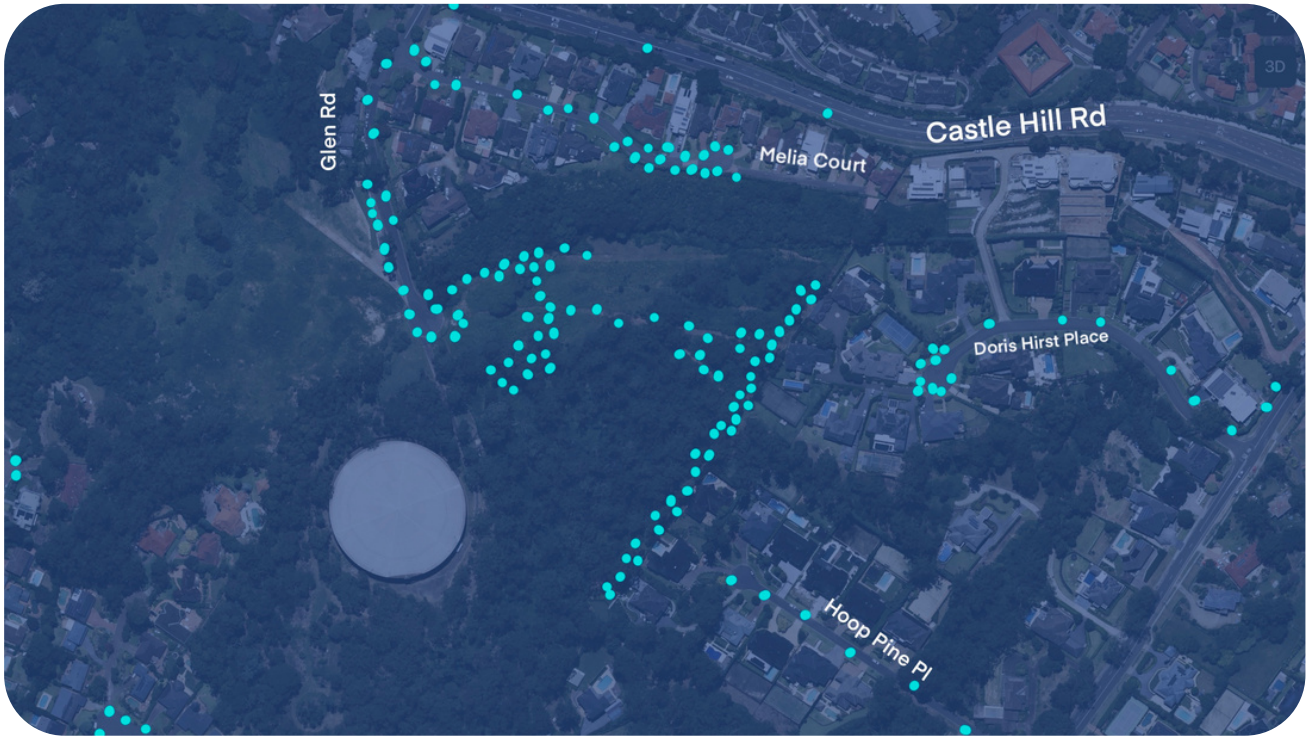


Figure 13 Circuit of initial 167 locations visited

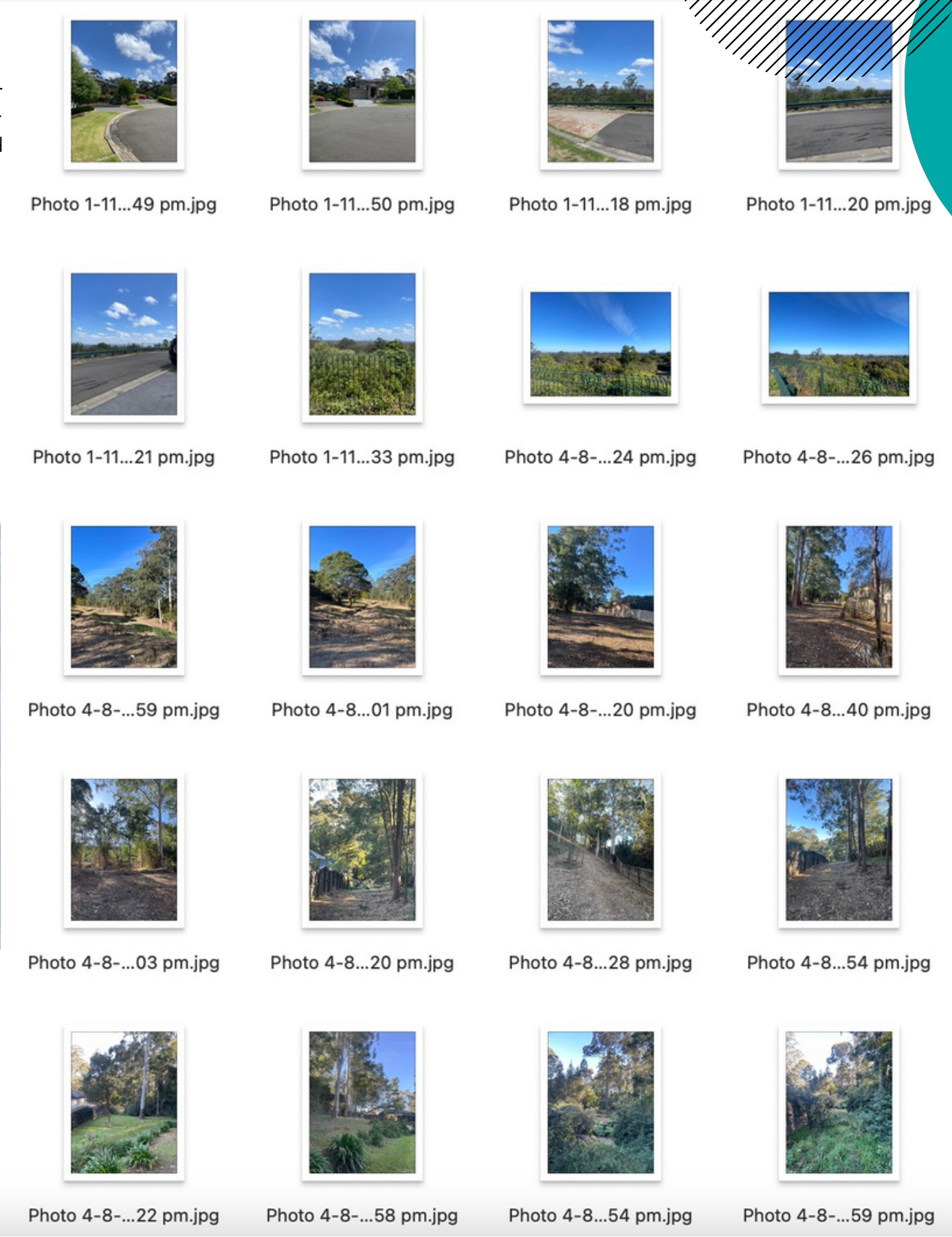


Figure 14 Shortlisted Views and Vistas

Sensitivity

Sensitivity refers to the qualities of an area, the number and type of receivers and how sensitive the existing character of the setting is to the proposed nature of change. For example, a pristine natural environment is likely to be more sensitive to change than a built-up industrial area. The design quality of the proposed development does not make the area less sensitive to change but instead affects the magnitude of the impact.

Magnitude

Magnitude refers to the physical scale of the project, how distant it is and the contrast it presents to the existing condition. A visual impact assessment containing a predominance of high or high-moderate ratings does not automatically mean a high level of impact. Visibility of the proposal depends, inter alia, on the proposed massing, topography, and surrounding context.

Figure 16 - Contour Map - Adapted from Northrop

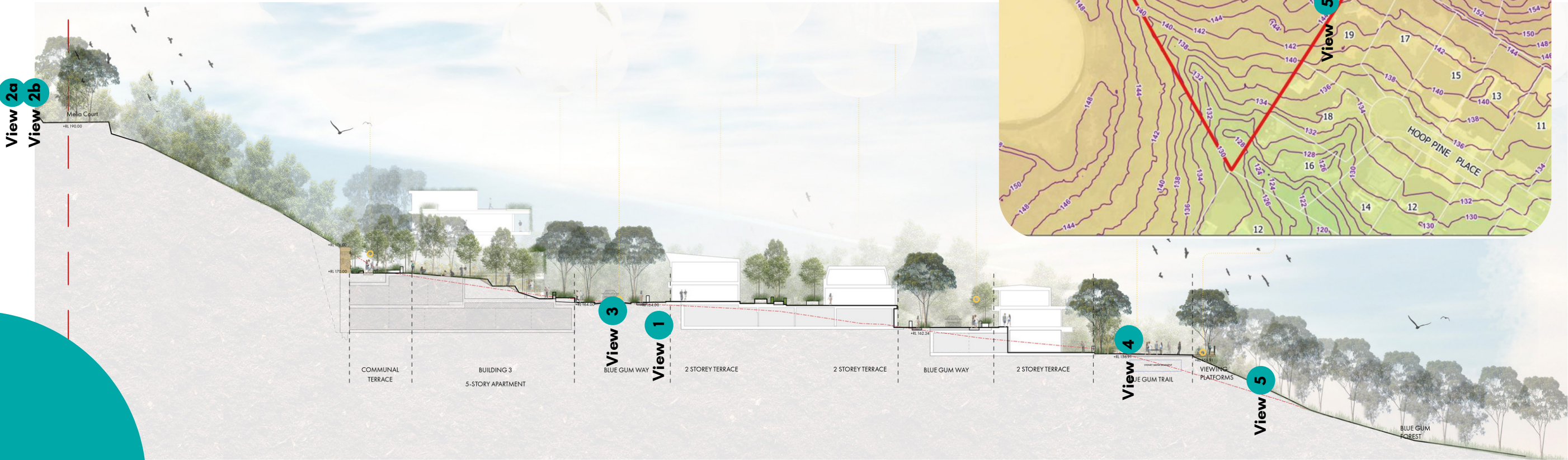
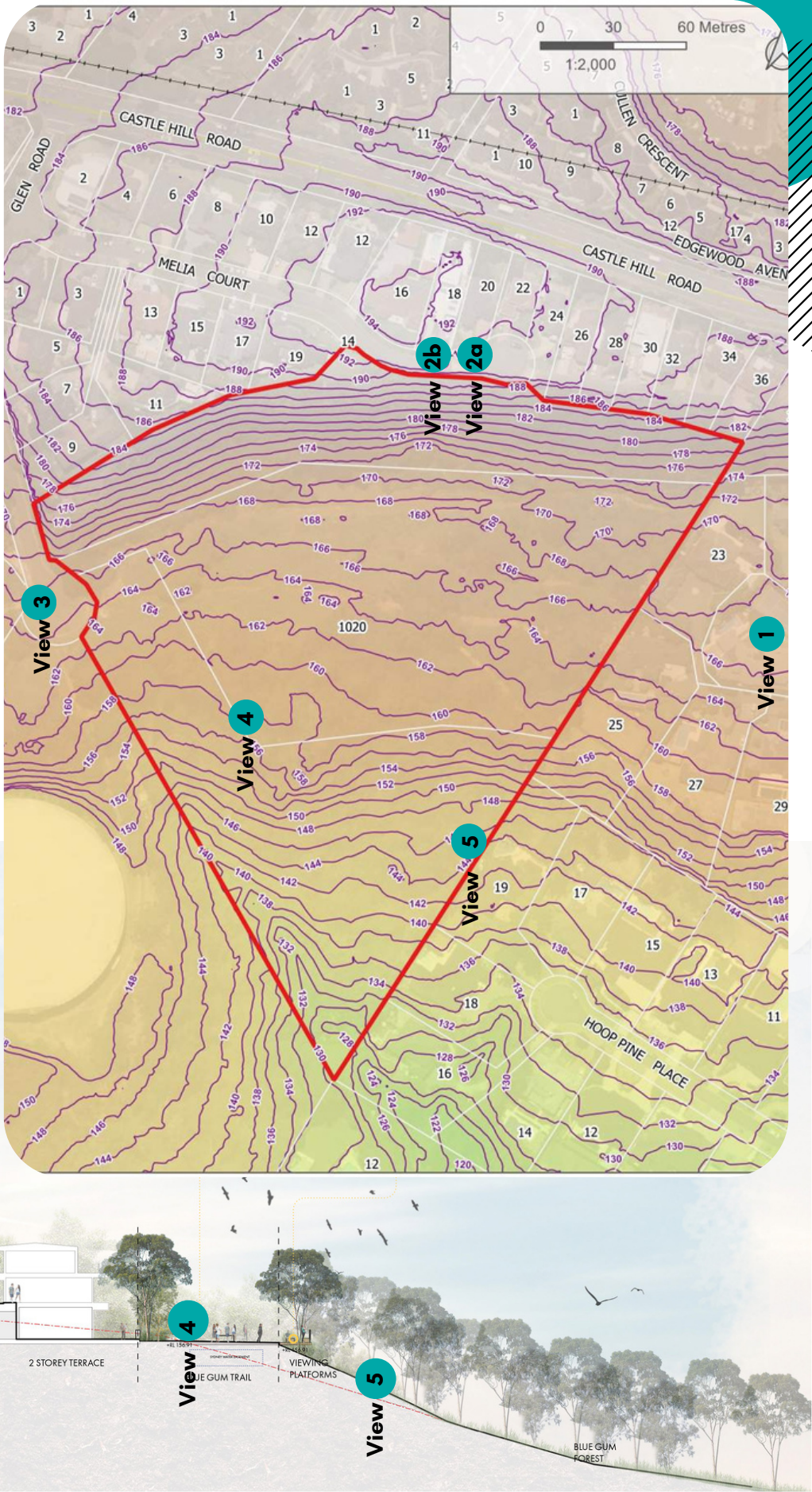


Figure 15 View location relative to site's topographical level - Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report - Courtesy of Land And Form

Stage 2 – Digital Recreation of Future Context and Visibility

Viewpoints selected during Stage 1 were photographed using a Nikon D800, with an AF-S Nikkor 16–35mm f/4G ED VR lens set to 35mm/16mm focal length, corresponding to horizontal fields of view of 54.4deg / 96.7deg, respectively. Each location was professionally surveyed by Chadwick Chen Surveyors. Refer to Appendices A–B for a complete methodology and list of survey points.

A 3D Model of the proposal was provided by DKO Architects. All photos were pre-processed in Adobe Camera RAW to correct for geometric distortion based on lens characteristics, as 3D rendering software assumes perfect rectilinear lenses. Each photomontage was created in Autodesk 3DS MAX 2023 and Adobe Photoshop, from a SketchUp 3D model imported to 3DS MAX and aligned with survey data, in line with the L&E Court's policy on the use of photomontages. Conventional plan survey information available for the site was also consulted to cross check levels. The virtual model environment was used to recreate the outline of the proposed buildings within the existing photographs.

Stage 3 – Evaluation of View Impacts – The consideration of magnitude is based on the amount of change or visibility which can be inferred within a particular viewpoint. The 'Before and After' diagrams were considered in the assessment of the magnitude, visibility or degree of change within the existing views. The potentially visible parts of the proposal are shown as white frame elements within the views and those which are not visible (hidden behind other elements) have been included for reference within each photograph to illustrate the 'after' of the proposed change in its setting.

Stage 4 – Discussion of Findings and Mitigation Measures – The magnitude of impact of the proposal was assessed within each of the selected views, using qualitative descriptions of the level of change from what presently exists. If adverse effects or unacceptable levels of impact were to be found, mitigation measures would be considered to reduce the level of impact.

Mitigation – If a residual adverse impact is identified in the assessment, mitigation measures would be recommended for integration into the concept design. The discussion of mitigation measures includes a discussion of any impact already avoided or minimised through the design process. This provides a more complete approach that complements concept design work, which aims to avoid impact. The aim of mitigation measures is to further minimise impact.

The findings of the visual impact assessment are discussed in the next section of this report.

Format of Assessment

The objective of this stage is to review the 'before and after' visualisations to assess the level of Sensitivity and Magnitude of the proposal within each view. In the case that the impact is not considered acceptable within the view or not achieving the desired future character expressed by the controls i.e., it may alter the scale, scenic quality of the view, mitigation measures are recommended. If the impact is considered nil or negligible, mitigation measures may not be necessary. For each view, key features may be described, including:

- The approximate distance from the viewing location
- Whether the view is from an open space, a street, or a major destination
- A rating of the location and timing of pedestrian activity

The outcome of this analysis is a preliminary conclusion based on the existing photographs only. This provides a broad categorisation of the view level of sensitivity and potential visibility.

View Sensitivity – Key factors which may influence sensitivity of the view location include:

- Whether landmarks and iconic features exist
- Whether the view is open or enclosed

- Whether the view includes water and/or land-water interfaces
- Whether the view composition is interrupted
- The key elements in the foreground, middle ground and background
- Visitation levels during day, night and weekends
- Whether the space and location are used for large events and gatherings

Categories used in identifying view sensitivity include:

Low A view that contains no memorable focal points, quality vegetation, iconic features or framing elements.

Medium A wide/deep/continuous view that contains memorable focal points, quality vegetation, iconic features or framing elements but is somewhat interrupted.

High A wide/deep/continuous and uninterrupted view that contains highly memorable focal points, quality vegetation, iconic features or framing elements.

Magnitude – Refers to the potential visibility and scale of change within the view. This is an assessment of the extent to which the proposal is likely to be seen within or alter an existing view. Key factors which may influence magnitude include:

- Overall potential visibility within the view
- Distance of the proposal from the view location
- Viewpoint elevation relative to the proposal
- Whether the proposal is a major component, or secondary to other elements
- Whether the proposal is part of an existing skyline silhouette, adjacent to neighbouring buildings or an object against the sky
- Whether the proposal obstructs existing views to any key locations or icons

Categories used to identify magnitude are:

Nil The proposal will not be visible.

Negligible The proposal may be visible in part but to a very minor extent and blends with the view.

Low The proposal will be noticeable, however doesn't significantly change the view.

Medium The proposal may be reasonably visible and obscure a reasonable extent of the existing sky or reduces views to non-iconic built form or natural elements.

High The proposal may be highly visible and may significantly change the scale of the view, or may obscure or significantly reduce views to landmark items or water.

Acceptability – Relates to whether the impact of the proposal within the view is positive or adverse. It relates to the view sensitivity and the magnitude of the view. The proposal is more likely to have a beneficial quality if it:

- Complements the character of its setting
- Follows the relevant planning objectives, and/or
- Improves or does not materially change the view

The categories used in defining acceptability are:

Acceptable The proposal's impact is beneficial, balanced, or if adverse, the impact and the level of sensitivity are low.

Acceptable with mitigation measures The proposal will have some adverse effects, however, these can be eliminated, or reduced significantly by specific measures.

Unacceptable The adverse effects are too excessive and are unable to be mitigated.

VIEW ASSESSMENT

The level of sensitivity and magnitude as well as the level of acceptability are discussed for each of the selected 6 views including a detailed assessment.

VIEW 01

Description: Doris Hirst Place – End of cul-de-sac.

This view is approximately 99 m from the eastern boundary of the subject site and the direction of the view is due northwest. The location is on the footpath of Dwelling No. 06 Doris Hirst Place facing No. 21. This is a publicly accessible location, but the point itself is not a gathering space. This location was selected because it is at the end of Doris Hirst Place, which is the access road for the neighbouring dwellings and it is the closest residential street to the east of the site.

The view includes a medium distance view of the existing dwellings organised around the cul-de-sac, their driveways and their front fencing. The site is located to the centre of the image. There are no landmarks or iconic features within the view. The view to the property is completely screened by the existing structures, hedges and existing vegetation. The proposal is not visible from this location.

Distance to site: 114 m (approx.) to the northeastern corner and 274 m to the south eastern corner of the site.

Topography: The proposal's site is generally located between contour line 192 to the north and 128 to the south according to Figure 16 – Contour Map. View 01 is located on RL 165.28 outside of the site.

Pedestrian activity: Low during day and night-time, weekdays and on weekends. This location is more frequented by private vehicles to gain access to their private residences.

Sensitivity: The view has a low level of sensitivity as the view is of a residential streetscape at the end of no-through local street.

Magnitude: The proposed built form as part of the masterplan will cascade with the topography. Future buildings will be fully screened by the existing dwellings and vegetation. The vantage point is topographically lower than the site, which assists the development to be screened by the land; the entirety of future roof profiles will be below and behind the existing dwellings. The proposed built form will be secondary to the existing vegetation and the top of the ridge. The proposal's skyline will be seen against the remnant non-indigenous bush regeneration area. The proposal does not obstruct any iconic elements, landmarks or view corridors between the street and the top of the ridge. Therefore, the magnitude is negligible.

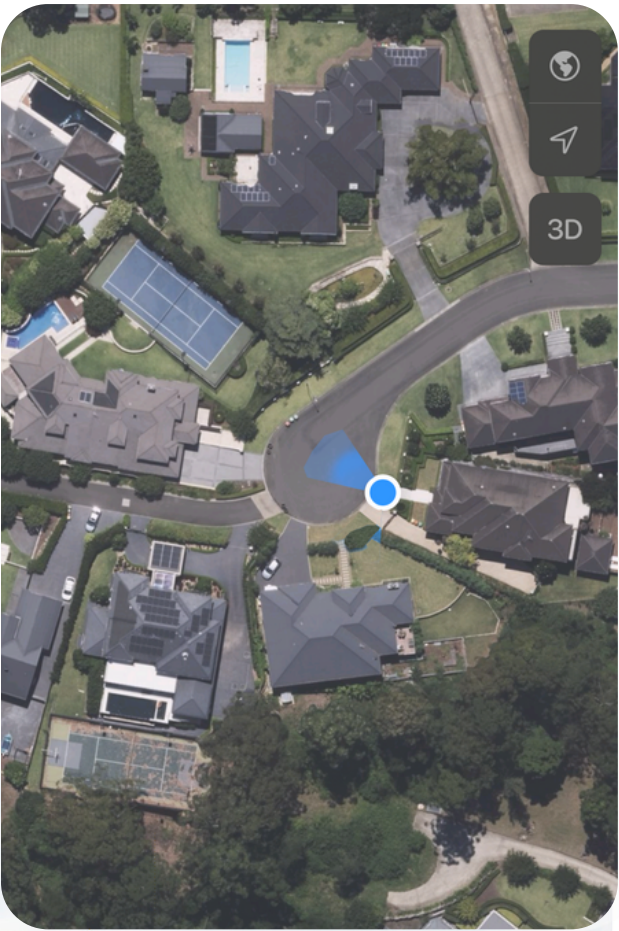


Figure 18 View Location

Assessment: Acceptable

The proposal does not materially change the view. The view's level of sensitivity is low, and the magnitude of the change is negligible and therefore acceptable.

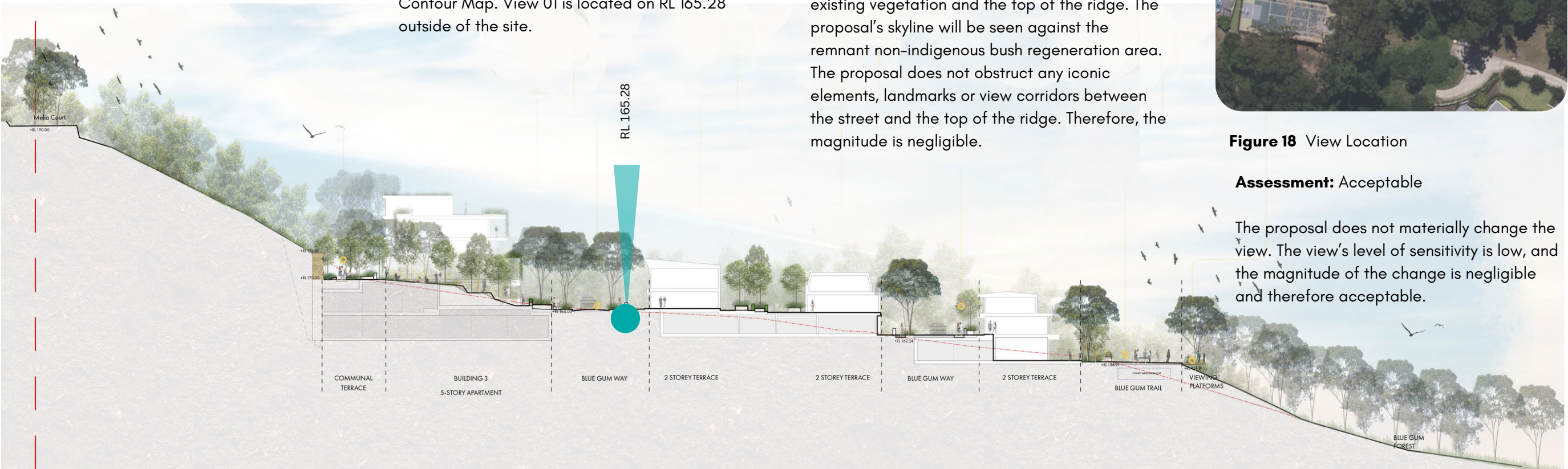


Figure 17 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form



Figure 19 View 01 - Courtesy of RockHunter

View 1 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED

VIEW 2a

Description: Melia Court – Panoramic view.

This view is approximately 10 m from the northern boundary of the subject site. The location is on the publicly accessible verge in front of No. 20 Melia Court. The view is due South. However, it does not constitute a gathering place or a destination. This view was selected because of the existing district views available to the residents of this street.

The view includes a wide panoramic district view of the LGA including the skyline of the city of Parramatta; however, there are no landmarks or iconic features within the view. The view generally looks south and contains an open sky, the top of the tree canopy, a guard rail, a steel flat fence and the road.

View Parameters: Camera Lenz: 16mm (panoramic view)

The site is generally located below the horizon line. The panoramic view is uninterrupted.

Distance to site: 10m (approx.) to the site's northern boundary.

Topography: The site has a significant drop from this location. View 2a is located at RL 193.86, and the future buildings closer to the northern boundary 01-05, sit at RL 164.24 – 169.74. The drop in the topography ranges approximately from 24 – 29m, which contributes to maintaining the top of the future buildings fully below the view line.

Pedestrian activity: Low at night-time, weekdays and weekends. This location is frequented by local residents on foot and vehicle entering the private driveway at the end of the cul-de-sac. The road is a dead end and mainly services local residents.

Sensitivity: The view has a medium level of sensitivity as the continuous precinct view is pristine and undisturbed; however, the view has no memorable focal points.

Magnitude: The scale of the future 'pavilion' buildings generally stays below the existing canopy and it will be fully screened by the road, guard rail and existing non-indigenous vegetation.

The vantage point is topographically higher than the site, which assists the development to be screened by the land and the vegetation; the entirety of the roof profile will be below the top of the canopy. One of the gaps in the canopy provides direct views to the Parramatta CBD and this view is preserved. The proposed north south vegetation corridors between the future buildings will also increase the vegetation visible from this location.

The land and thick uninterrupted foliage obstructs views to the site. The vantage point is higher than the site and the proposal is below the horizon line. The proposed built form will be secondary to the existing vegetation and the proposal's skyline will not be seen against the sky. The proposal does not obstruct any iconic elements, landmarks or view corridors between the ridge and the precinct. Therefore, the magnitude is nil.

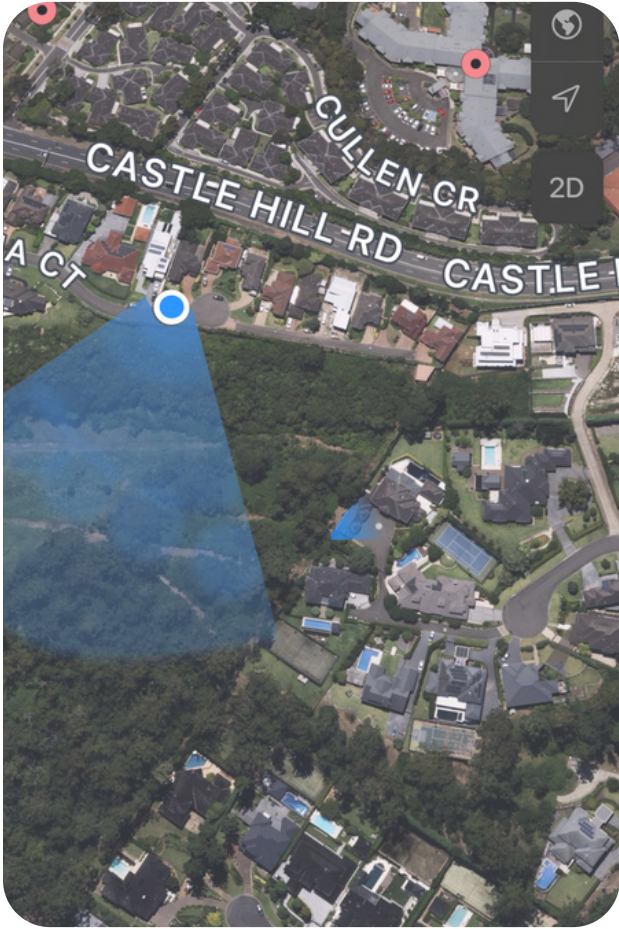


Figure 21 View Location

Assessment: Acceptable

The proposal does not materially change the view. The view's level of sensitivity is medium, and the magnitude of the change is nil. There is no perceived alteration or change to the view. Overall, the impact is nil and therefore, it is acceptable.

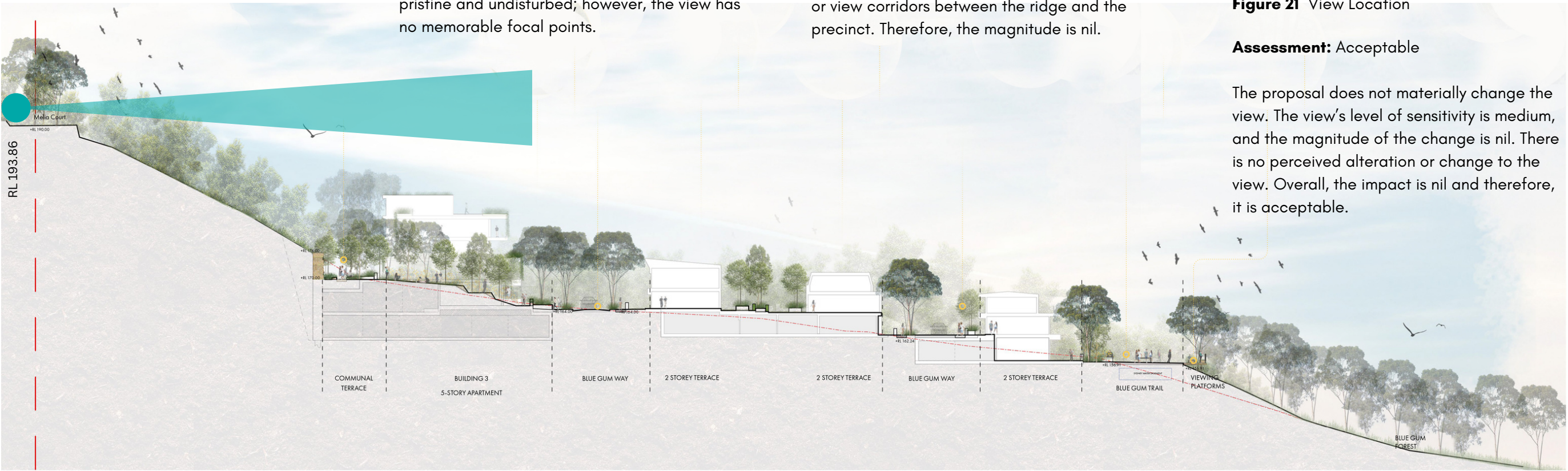


Figure 20 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form



Figure 22 View 2a - Courtesy of RockHunter

View 2A (FL=16mm) - PROPOSED

VIEW 2b

Description: Melia Court – Framed view.

This view is approximately 9 m from the northern end of the subject site. The view is similar to 2a, but it utilises a different camera angle to capture more closely the view aperture as seen by the human eye.

The location is on the publicly accessible verge in front of No. 18 Melia Court. The view is due South. However, it does not constitute a gathering place or a destination. This view was selected because of the existing district views available to the residents of this street.

The view includes a wide panoramic district view of the LGA including the skyline of the City of Parramatta; however, there are no landmarks or iconic features within the view. The view generally looks south and contains an open sky, the top of the tree canopy, a guard rail, a steel flat fence and the road.

View Parameters: Camera Lenz: 35mm

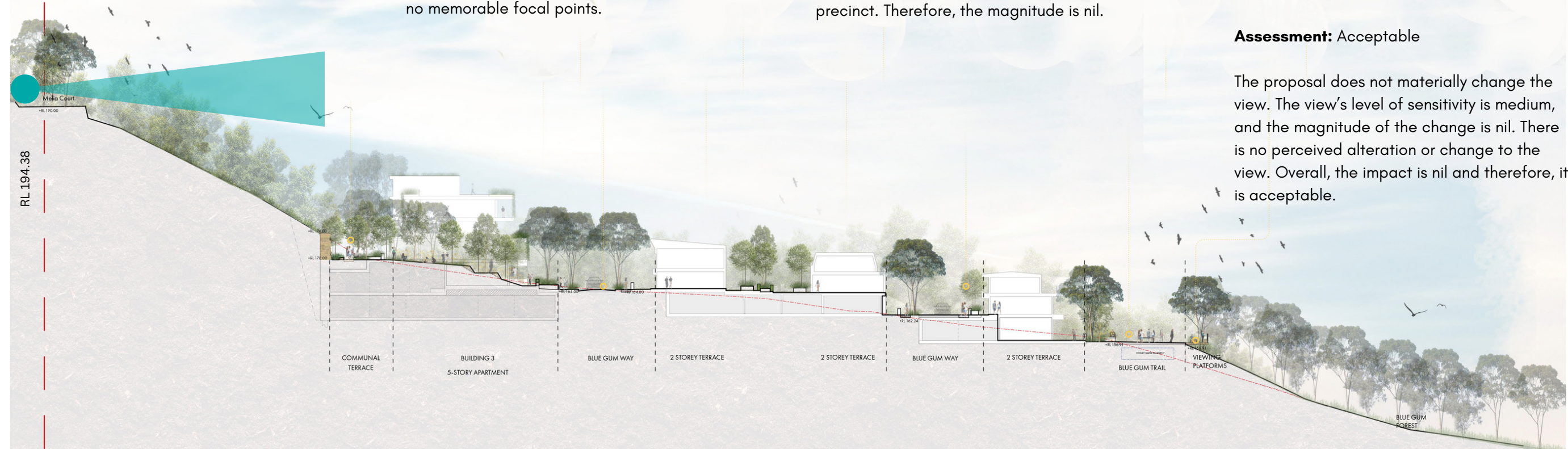


Figure 23 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form

The site is located fully below the horizon line. The panoramic view is uninterrupted.

Distance to site: 9m (approx.) to the site's northern boundary.

Topography: The site has a significant drop from this location. View 2b is located at RL 193.86, while the future buildings closer to the northern boundary 01-05, sit at RL 164.24 – 169.74. The drop in the topography ranges approximately from 24 – 29m, which contributes to maintaining the top of the future buildings fully below the view line.

Pedestrian activity: Low at night-time, weekdays and weekends. This location is frequented by local residents on foot and vehicles entering the private driveway at the end of the cul-de-sac. The road is a dead end and mainly services local residents.

Sensitivity: The view has a medium level of sensitivity as the continuous view to the precinct is pristine and undisturbed; however, the view has no memorable focal points.

Magnitude: The scale of the future 'pavilion' buildings will generally stay below the existing tree canopy and it will be fully screened by the road, guard rail and existing non-indigenous vegetation.

The vantage point is topographically higher than the site, which assists the development to be screened by the land and the vegetation; the entirety of the roof profile will be below the top of the tree canopy. One of the gaps in the vegetation provides direct views to the Parramatta CBD and this view is preserved. The proposed north south vegetation corridors between the future buildings will also increase the vegetation visible from this location.

The land and uninterrupted foliage obstruct views to the site. The vantage point is higher than the site and the proposal is below the horizon line. The proposed built form will be secondary to the existing vegetation and the proposal's skyline will not be seen against the sky. The proposal does not obstruct any iconic elements, landmarks or view corridors between the ridge and the precinct. Therefore, the magnitude is nil.

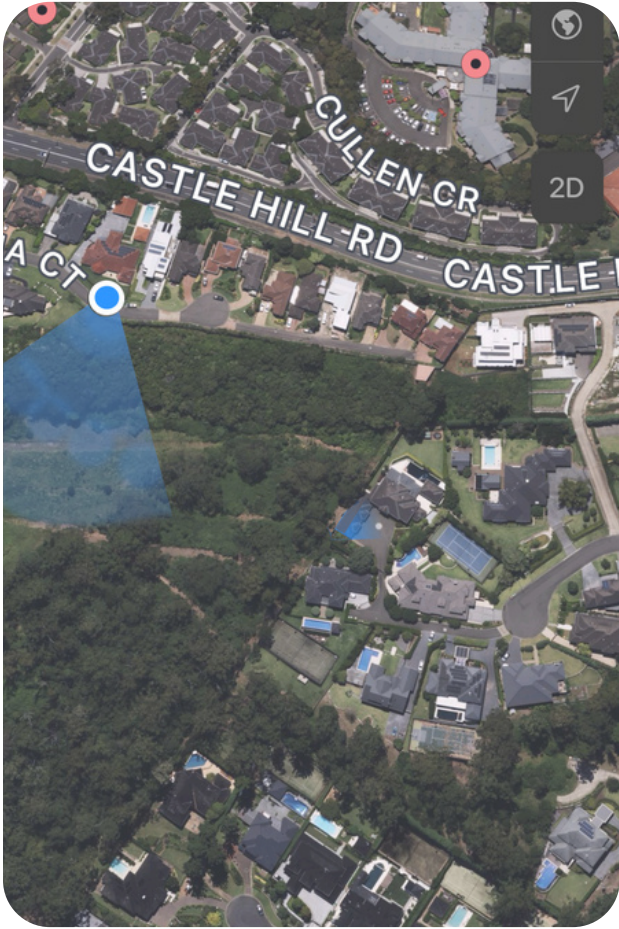


Figure 24 View Location

Assessment: Acceptable

The proposal does not materially change the view. The view's level of sensitivity is medium, and the magnitude of the change is nil. There is no perceived alteration or change to the view. Overall, the impact is nil and therefore, it is acceptable.



Figure 25 View 2b - Courtesy of RockHunter

View 2B (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED

VIEW 03

Description: Glen Road – End of cul-de-sac.

This view is approximately 25 m from the subject site's western boundary. The location is across the street from the future entry point to the loop road. The site is located due east from this location. Views are to existing disturbed vegetation and the cleared part of the site. The Blue Gum High Forest will be partly visible from this location. The vantage point is on the publicly accessible verge, but it does not constitute a gathering place or a destination. This view was selected because it is part of the entry sequence. Views to the future buildings will be filtered by the proposed vegetation on the entry boulevard and Rogans Hill Park.

The view includes a framed panorama of the site with filtered views of the adjacent developments to the east and their boundary fence. The sky is visible above the top of the tree canopy. Views of the street and existing temporary fence are also visible in the foreground.

There are no recognisable landmarks or iconic features within the view. The view generally looks east, and it is important to note that this is the access road to the site, and it ends at this point. The subject site is generally visible across the entire aperture of this view.

Distance to site: 25 m (approx.) to the western boundary and 46 m to the northwestern corner of the site.

Topography: The proposal's site is generally located between contour line 192 to the north and 128 to the south according to Figure 16 – Contour Map Courtesy of Northrop. View 03 is generally at the same topographical level of the future access road at RL 166.04.

Pedestrian activity: Low at night-time, weekdays and weekends. This location is frequented by service vehicles servicing the Sydney Water property to the southwest of the subject site.

Sensitivity: The view has a low level of sensitivity as the view is framed and contains no memorable or iconic elements. It is also an isolated location as the road is a dead end. The road currently services the subject site and the Sydney Water site.

Magnitude: The proposal will be reasonably visible across the aperture of the view; however, it does not reduce views to iconic built form or vegetation. Future buildings 03, 05 and 06 will be visible from this location. However, the proposal will be well concealed by the proposed street trees and park's retained and proposed vegetation and trees. The vegetated entry boulevard will be the most prominent feature from this location. The proposed built form will be secondary to the proposed vegetation and the sculpted built forms and roof lines for each of the pavilion forms will create a varied skyline. Each of the future buildings conceals the next building behind. The proposal's skyline does not obstruct the sky and it will be seen below the tree canopy and street trees. Therefore, the magnitude is medium.

Assessment: Acceptable

The proposal materially changes the view. The view's level of sensitivity is low, and the magnitude of the change is medium. There are no iconic elements within the view and the level of visitation is low. Overall, the impact is low and therefore, it is acceptable.



Figure 27 View Location

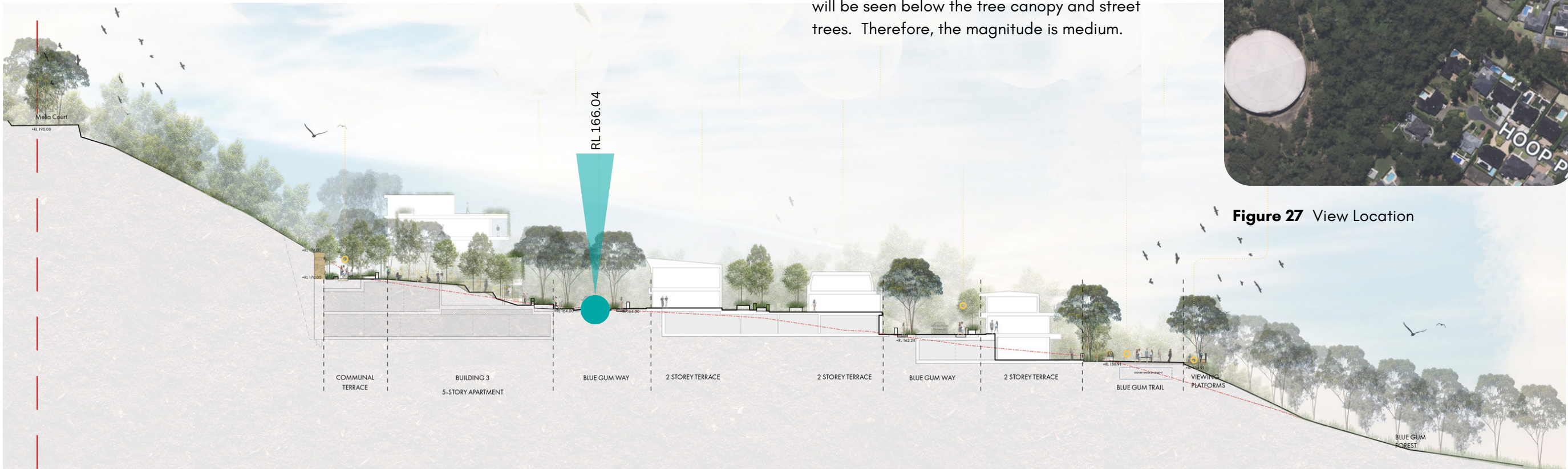


Figure 26 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form



Figure 28 View 03 – Courtesy of RockHunter

View 3 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED

VIEW 04

Description: Within the site – Near the proposed lifestyle trail.

This view is within the site approximately 55 m from the entry point along the western boundary. Filtered views to the north include the existing and remnant non-indigenous bush regeneration area and the cleared flatter areas of the site. No surrounding development is close to this point as it is fully within the site.

Views to the future development from this location will be directly to Building 06 from the proposed lifestyle trail.

There are no recognisable landmarks or iconic features within the view. This location has no scenic views looking away from the site.

Distance to site: within the site.

Topography: The subject site generally traverses contours 192 at its northern end to Contour 128 on the southernmost point. This point is generally located between Contour 156 and 158, roughly at the midpoint of the site.

Pedestrian activity: Nil.

Sensitivity: The view has a low or no level of sensitivity as the view is within the site and contains no recognisable landmarks.

Magnitude: The future proposed Building 06 will be within the aperture of the view. However, this pavilion building will be approximately 50m from the western boundary and partly buffered by the proposed vegetation for Rogans Hill Park. Therefore, there is no possibility of views to and from this location by any surrounding dwellings or pedestrians in the local roads.

Assessment: Acceptable

The view's level of sensitivity is low, and the magnitude is negligible with no visibility from the street. This view was not selected for a 'before and after' analysis.

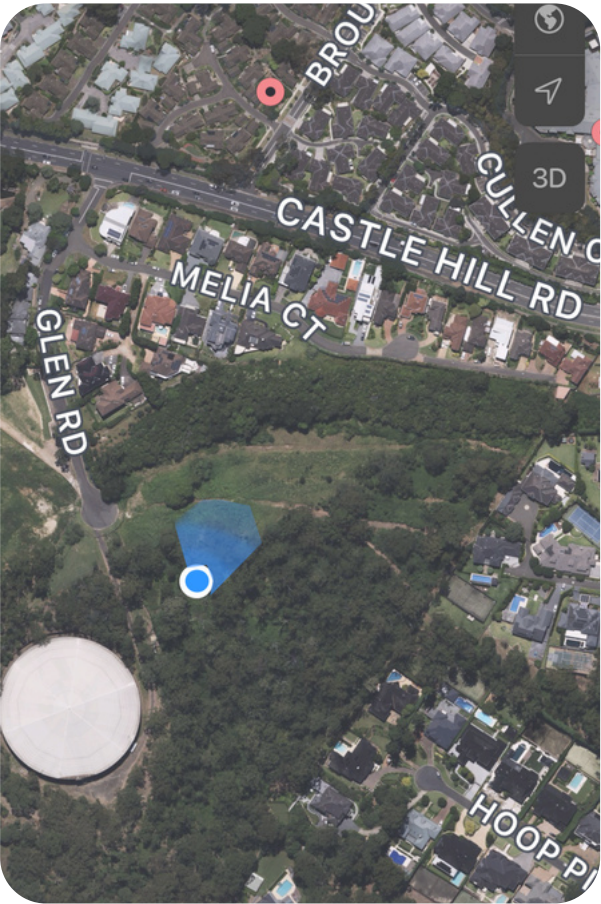


Figure 30
View Location

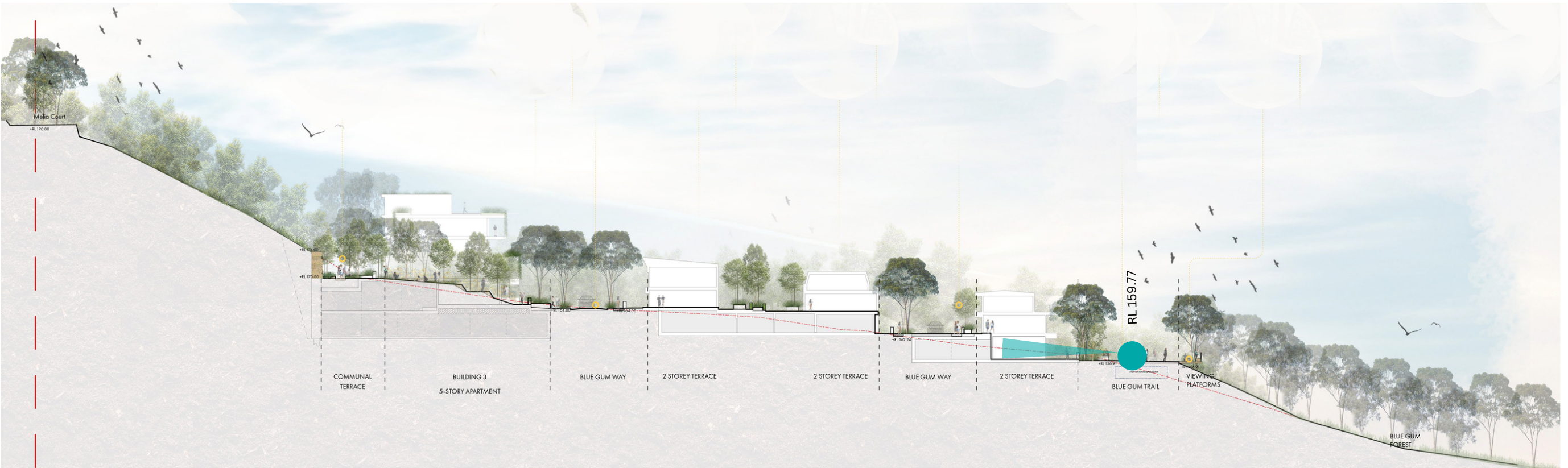


Figure 29 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form

VIEW 05

Description: Within the site – Near the eastern boundary.

This view point is located within the subject site near the eastern boundary. Views to the Blue Gum High Forest are available to the north and west within the subject site. This point is close to the private open space of private dwellings facing Doris Hirst Place across the common boundary fence.

This location does not constitute a gathering place or a destination. This view was selected because it is a close vantage point to the neighbouring residential dwellings and their recreational spaces. Views to the site will be oblique, but potentially obstructed by the common boundary fence. Views to the future development from this location (within the site) will be from the managed Asset Protection Zone (APZ).

The view includes a framed panorama of the Blue Gum High Forrest and the dropping topography. Filtered views to the open sky are available only above the tall tree canopy. Future views will retain part of the managed APZ. There are no recognisable landmarks or iconic features within the view. The view is generally due northwest.

Distance to site: within the site approximately 190m from the northeast corner.

Topography: The proposal's site is generally located between contour line 192 to the north and 128 to the south according to Figure 16 – Contour Map Courtesy of Northrop. View 05 is at RL 146.40.

Pedestrian activity: Nil

Sensitivity: The view has a low or no level of sensitivity as the view is within the site and contains no recognisable landmarks.

Magnitude: Filtered views of the terrace typology and elevated viewing platforms will be visible from this location. The filtered views of the multi-dwelling terrace component will stay below the existing canopy, and of the retained and managed Blue Gum High Forrest. The proposal will be partly concealed by the managed vegetation. Therefore, there will be low visibility from this location to the lower scale elements of the proposal.

Vantage point 05 is topographically the lowest point tested on the subject site, and the proposal is well concealed by the dense vegetation and the embankment. The proposed built form will be secondary to the existing vegetation. The proposal's skyline is not seen against the sky and the proposal does not obstruct iconic elements or landmarks in any available view corridors. Therefore, the magnitude is nil.

Assessment: Acceptable

The proposal does not materially change the view. The view's level of sensitivity is low, and the magnitude of the change is negligible. There is low levels of perceived alteration or change to the view and therefore the impact is acceptable.

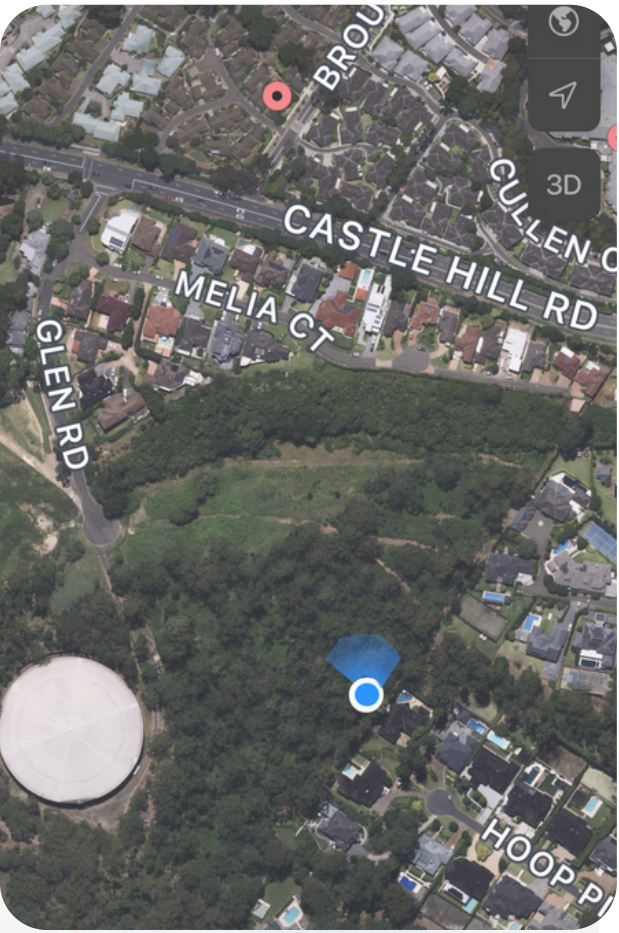


Figure 32 View Location

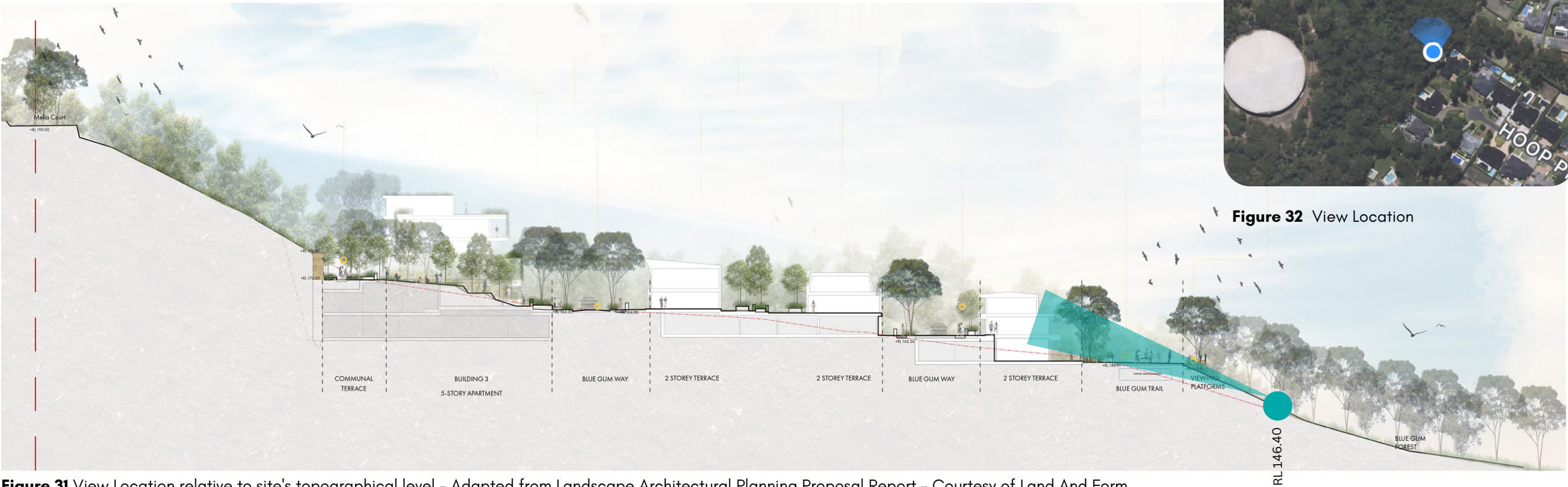


Figure 31 View Location relative to site's topographical level – Adapted from Landscape Architectural Planning Proposal Report – Courtesy of Land And Form



Figure 33 View 05 - Courtesy of RockHunter

View 5 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the proposed massing will have low levels of visibility within the existing context and therefore the magnitude of change ranges between nil or negligible and medium. The proposal has undergone a rigorous design process that arrives at a sympathetic urban design response to the site's constraints and its existing surrounding residential context.

The following areas of the overall proposal and the concept design assist in achieving a positive visual fit with the surrounding context:

- The absence of any adverse visual impacts generated by the proposed built form ensures the preservation of the scenic values and visual sensitivity of the ridge along Castle Hill Road.
- The retention and management of remnant vegetation preserves the site's scenic character.
- The proposal takes advantage of the existing topography and vegetation as a guiding principle of where and how to locate the built form, which ensures the sympathetic placement of massing on site.
- The built form transitions to surrounding residential properties and the Sydney Water site, which assists in reducing the perception of bulk and scale.
- Visual impacts from both medium and long-distance receptors are already mitigated by the location of the form on the topography and especially by the proposal's integration with the existing and proposed vegetation.

The following mitigation measures have already been implemented in the design, which have assisted in avoiding impacts through the design process:

- Understanding of the existing site's landscape character and vegetation to locate and distribute the proposed massing behind and among the existing significant remnant vegetation.
- Taking advantage of the changes in topography to preserve existing district views.
- Understanding of the height of the existing site vegetation as a guide to determining the maximum height of future development to generally stay below the top of the tree canopy.
- Introducing landscape features as way-finding elements.
- Taking advantage of the site's relative lower topography to that of higher-up residential precincts on Melia Court to conceal the proposed massing and preserve panoramic views.
- The proposal has utilised the following appropriate built form and urban design principles that consider the site's visual sensitivity:

1. Access and circulation via a loop road to integrate street trees as part of the 'way-finding' strategy and green corridors across the site.
2. Containment of basements and parking 'out of site' underneath building footprints.
3. Introduction of 'fine grain' built form that increases visual permeability and view corridors across the site.
4. Utilisation of natural and recessive materials that blend with the existing vegetation.
5. Varied building heights below the tree canopy inclusive of roof gardens, which helps to reduce the perception of bulk and scale and reduce general visibility of built form.

Based on the design principles and mitigation measures already present, no further mitigation measures are required. In response to The Hills Shire Council's feedback after the Scoping Proposal & Prelodgement Meeting held on 1 June 2023 (5/2023/PPLP), the view analysis has evinced that:

- The height and massing of the proposed development will not be visible from the lower vantage points in the district and will not have a significant intrusion on the setting of the ridge along Castle Hill Road.

- Given the dropping topography (from north to south), the proposal is virtually below the line of sight of vantage points within the district.
- Due to the varied scale of the proposed development, the profile of the individual pavilion buildings will be hidden behind the existing vegetation and below the tree canopy from vantage points located along the residential areas to the east of the subject site.
- Building types are in the form of 2 different residential typologies i.e. RFBs and Terraces, contemporary architectural styles and high performing building materials. Due to the recessive material palette, they complement each other harmoniously and are subservient to the landscape setting.

In summary, the independent visual impact assessment has concluded that the proposal in its current form will have low or negligible levels of visibility from the surrounding context and therefore the proposal has an acceptable visual impact. The proposed scale and massing are appropriate, have regard and respond sensitively to the scenic qualities of the surrounding context.

Photomontage Report for 2 Glen Road, Castle Hill

Prepared by David Murgatroyd
17 November, 2023

Rock Hunter Australia Pty Ltd
85 Monteith Street
Warrawee NSW 2074
Ph 0430 054 111
ABN: 41 141 899 669

17/11/2023

ROCKHUNTER

Rock Hunter Australia Pty Ltd
85 Monteith Street
Warrawee NSW 2074
Ph 0430 054 111
ABN: 41 141 899 669
www.rockhunter.com.au

Statement on Methodology - Photomontages for 2 Glen Road, Castle Hill

The computer generated photomontages were prepared from a SketchUp 3D model by DKO Architects for 2 Glen Rd, Castle Hill (13294 - Glen Road Castle Hill - PP Site Model.skp) and survey by Chadwick Cheng (Ref 42119/D4-MGA). Photography was obtained by the author on 1 November, 2023 between 1:00pm and 2:30pm. Camera locations were surveyed after capture using a marked point below the camera lens nodal point with a consistent vertical offset of 1.5m, as shown on the Camera Location Plan on the following page. Camera locations were provided in MGA (GDA2020) coordinates to align with the detail survey. Where detail survey data for alignment was insufficient or impractical, camera targeting was assisted with Elvis pointcloud data downloaded from NSW Spatial Services.

Tree representations in View 3 from Glen Road consist of small (~5m), medium (~9m), and large (~10-13m) canopy heights, and have been placed in accordance with the indicative Landscape Masterplan (Ref drawing PP100, 02.11.23). Similarly, existing trees have been removed or retained in accordance with this masterplan. 3D tree types were guided by the Planting Palette, but are in any case indicative only.

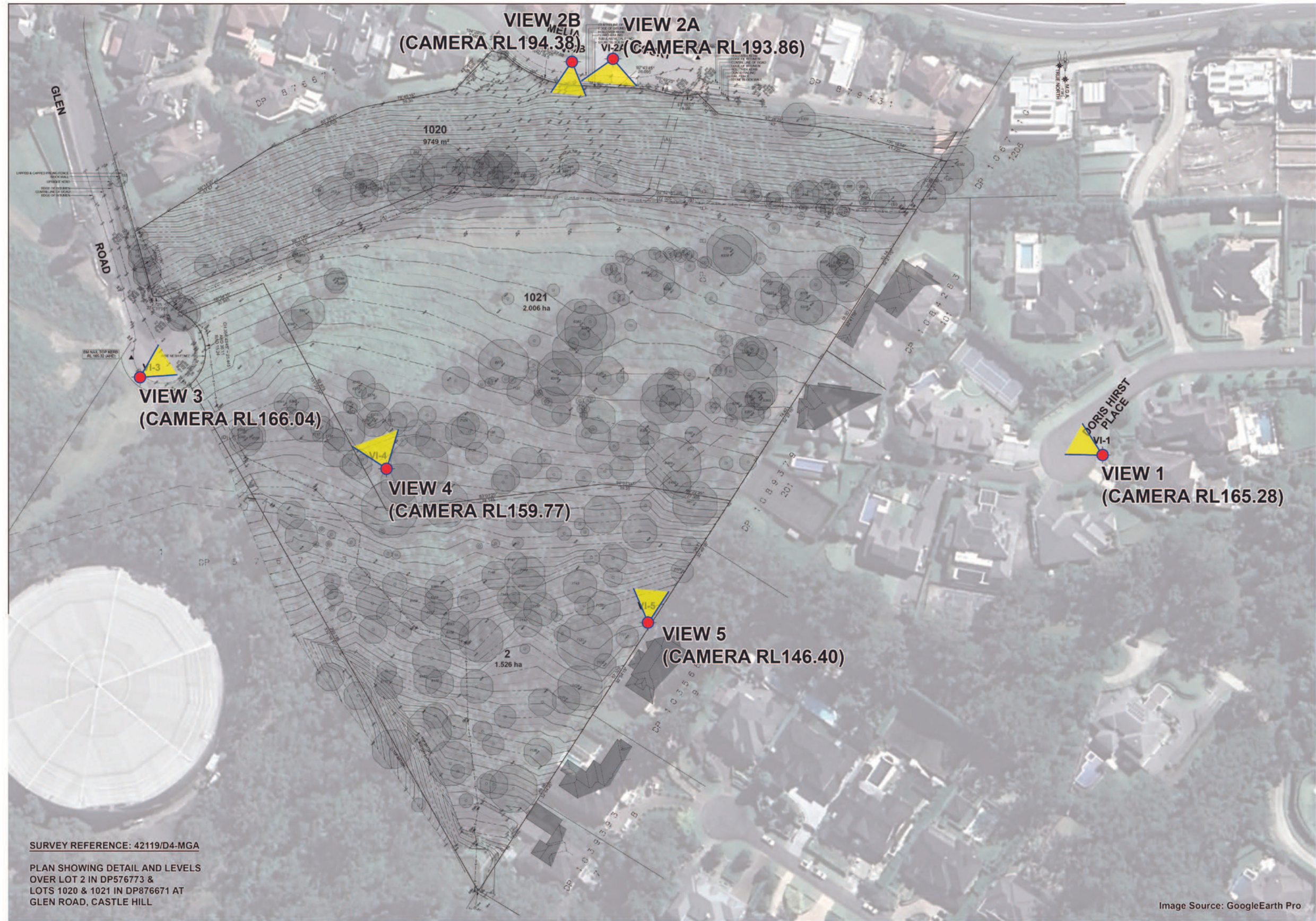
All photos were pre-processed in Adobe Camera RAW to correct for geometric distortion based on lens characteristics, as 3D rendering software assumes perfect rectilinear lenses. Each photomontage was created in Autodesk 3DS MAX 2023 and Adobe Photoshop, from SketchUp 3D model imported to 3DS MAX and aligned with survey data, in line with the Court's policy on the use of photomontages. This information was relied upon to both locate virtual cameras for each photomontage, and position virtual camera targets to align with referenced building elements.

The camera used was a Nikon D800, with an AF-S Nikkor 16-35mm f/4G ED VR lens set to 35mm/16mm focal length, corresponding to horizontal fields of view of 54.4deg / 96.7deg, respectively.

Signed



David Murgatroyd
B. Ind Des (UNSW)



Camera Location Plan (not to scale)

APPENDIX A

Photomontage Report for 2 Glen Road, Castle Hill by David Murgatroyd , 17 November 2023



View 1 (FL=35mm) - EXISTING



View 1 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED



View 1 (FL=35mm) - SURVEY WIREFRAME



View 2A (FL=16mm) - EXISTING
7 of 18



View 2A (FL=16mm) - PROPOSED
8 of 18



View 2A (FL=16mm) - SURVEY WIREFRAME
9 of 18

APPENDIX A

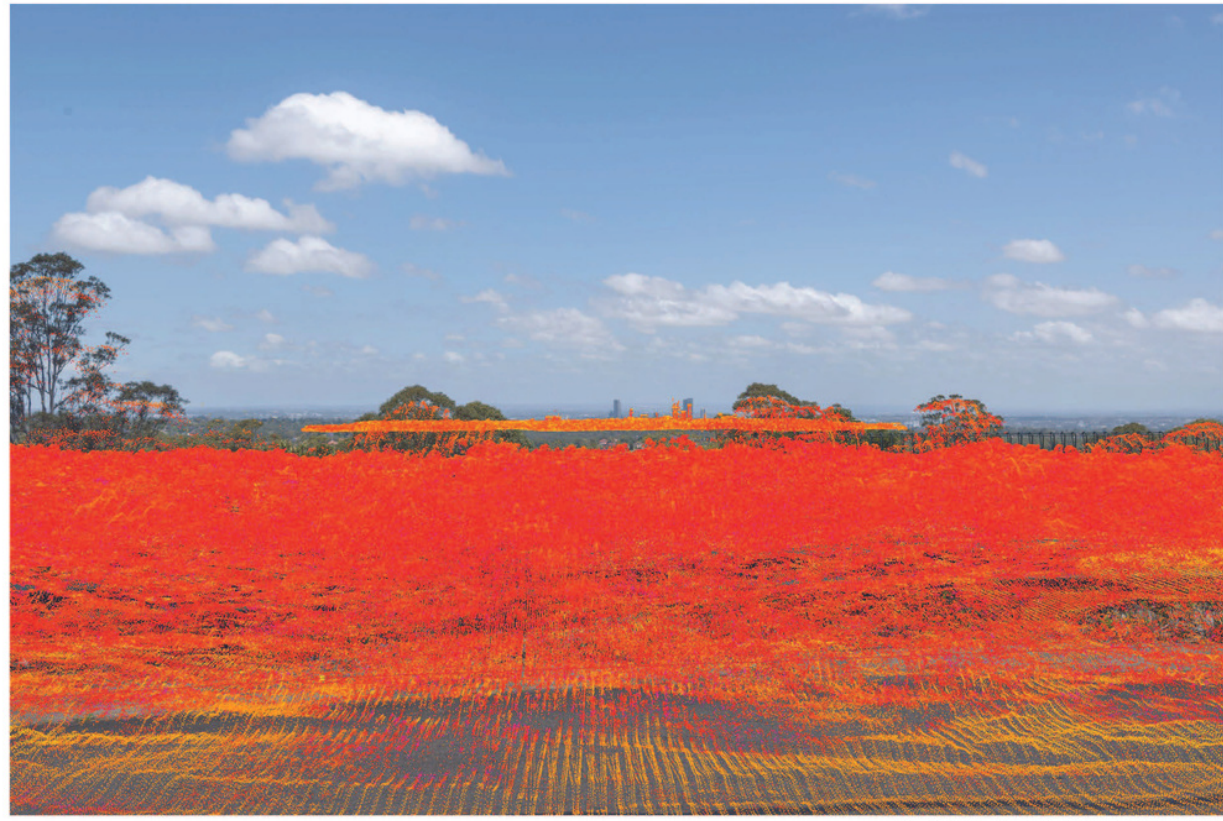
Photomontage Report for 2 Glen Road, Castle Hill by David Murgatroyd , 17 November 2023



View 2B (FL=35mm) - EXISTING
10 of 18



View 2B (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED
11 of 18



View 2B (FL=35mm) - SURVEY WIREFRAME
12 of 18



View 3 (FL=35mm) - EXISTING
13 of 18



View 3 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED
14 of 18



View 3 (FL=35mm) - SURVEY WIREFRAME
15 of 18



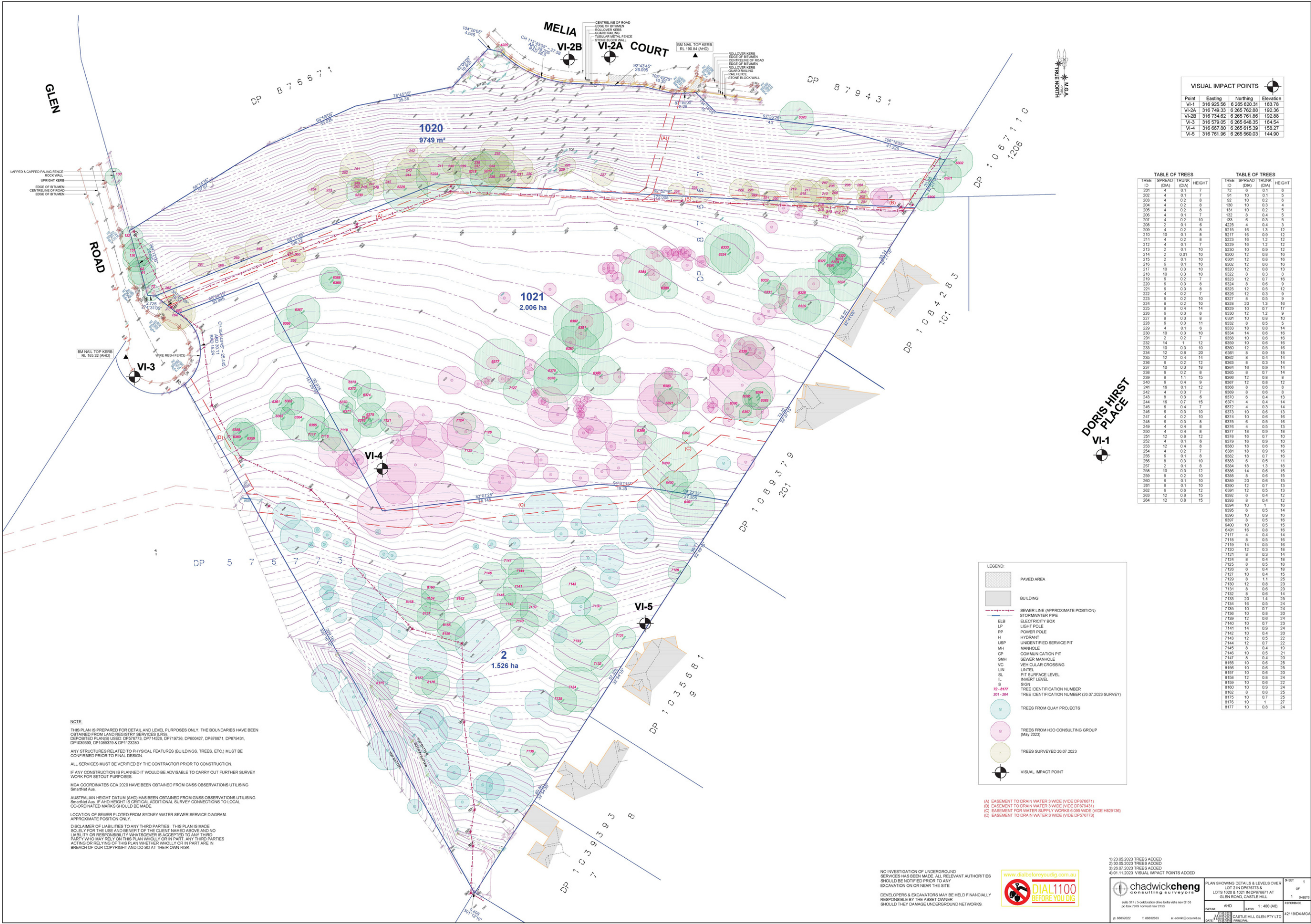
View 5 (FL=35mm) - EXISTING
16 of 18



View 5 (FL=35mm) - PROPOSED
17 of 18



View 5 (FL=35mm) - SURVEY WIREFRAME
18 of 18





Audax Urban

Suite 5, 46 Morton Street
Wollstonecraft , NSW 2065

Contact:

Karla Castellanos, Director of Urban Design

Email: karla@audaxurban.com

Mob: 0406975688