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SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING REPORT

PENRITH GOLF COURSE - SENIORS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SUBMISSION TO PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

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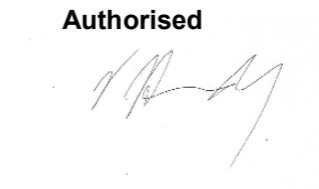
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DISCLAIMER

This report provide supplementary planning advice to accompany a Site Compatibility Certificate Application related to the subject site and is to be used for that purpose solely and for the client exclusively. No liability is extended for any other use or to any other party. Whilst the report is derived in part from our knowledge and expertise, it is based on the conditions prevailing at the time of the Report and upon the information provided by the client.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Cityscape Planning + Projects has been engaged by *AIM Developments Pty Ltd* and *Penrith Golf & Recreation Club Pty Ltd* to prepare and submit a supplementary planning submission with regard to the proposed development of the subject site for the purposes of Seniors Housing type development.

1.2 BACKGROUND

An application for a Site Compatibility Certificate pursuant to SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 has already been made to the Department of Planning for their consideration.

The documentation supporting this application has also been forwarded to Penrith City Council. At a recent meeting with Council officers a request was made for additional information with regard to the background of the evolution of the concept plan and the proposals consistency with the Councils long held policy position in regard to maintaining the landscape qualities of the subject lands.

The report therefore provides that additional information including an outline of the relevant planning policy position and provides a detailed visual impact analysis to allow for greater understanding of the proposals consistency with that policy.

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 CLUB HISTORY

Penrith Golf Club established an 18-hole golf course on the subject site in 1964. At this time, and for most of its history, the Golf Course has operated adjacent to predominantly rural land uses and activities.

In the late 1990's, residential development associated with the Glenmore Park urban release area commenced and gradually developed up to and immediately adjacent the golf courses western, southern and northern boundaries.

2.2 CLUBS CURRENT ROLE

Today the club continue to operate an 18 hole, 72 Par, Championship Golf course with a fully licensed club house and function/event facilities.

The club has a playing membership base of over 600. In recent years it has experienced significant rise in social club membership (from 91 social members in 1997 to over 4400 social members in 2009). This growing social membership is derived largely from the adjacent Glenmore Park community. In addition the club welcomes visitors to both its golf course and clubhouse. The club is looking to expand both its membership and visitor base and there is no intention to limit access to the club now or into the future.

The Golf Club therefore continues to provide what is considered a valuable community and recreational asset for both the local community and broader LGA.

2.3 FINANCIAL SITUATION

Despite the growing membership base the club is burdened by significant operating costs associated with maintaining a championship golf club together with the need to service its existing \$3.5 million debt.

In addition, like many other local sporting clubs, the Penrith Golf Club has experienced decreasing patronage and revenues in recent years as a consequence of legislative changes to smoking in licensed premises and increased gaming machines taxes.

These factors have therefore contributed a situation where the long term financial sustainability of the club is now less secure. As such the club has commenced exploring a variety of options to secure its long term future so it can continue to fulfil its valuable community and recreation role into the future.

2.4 OPPORTUNITY + CONSTRAINTS

The club has examined a wide range of options to increase revenues and reduce debt.

The expanding social membership base together with its growing function and event role clearly represents a strong opportunity, however, the design, scale and layout of the existing clubhouse building constrains the clubs ability to fully realise this potential.

The club also sees the potential in expanding its community and recreation role by providing new and improved facilities on site inclusive of gym, health and swimming pool.

The club's large landholding (approx 52 ha) also clearly represents an opportunity for exploring development opportunities. However, any development opportunities are clearly constrained by the need to maintain the golf course as an 18 hole championship facility. Also the site currently accommodates some significant environmental features inclusive of watercourses and native vegetation which represents absolute environmental constraints to development. Further, the site's interface with residential development on three sides also constrains this development opportunity. In this regard any development of the course that may jeopardise adjacent residents' outlook and amenity would be considered to be highly problematic. This is demonstrated at Figure 1. This would be even more the case if development options proposed responded to other Council strategic directions such as providing more dense and diverse housing options.

Accordingly, the club have identified those lands in and around the existing clubhouse, pro-shop, car park etc as being the greatest opportunity for redevelopment. This land area is also represented at Figure 1 and it is intended to declare that land as 'non-core' lands pursuant to the club's constitution.

2.5 PRELIMINARY CONCEPT PROPOSAL

In response to these opportunities and constraints the following preliminary concept proposal has emerged as the best strategic option for securing the golf club's long term future.

- A new or improved club facility
- additional recreational and community facilities
- new housing opportunities that appealed to the club membership demographics

- limited golf course alterations

In recent months the club have sought expressions of interest from several developer groups. As part of this process they have now selected a preferred developer (AIM Development Pty Ltd) and have refined a simple concept plan to engage with club members, Council and the Department of Planning. This concept proposal is represented at figure 2 and described further below. Importantly, the footprint of this area is considerably smaller than the developable area identified at figure 1.

The concept proposal seeks to provide for the development of 4 x apartment buildings (3-4 storeys) to provide approximately 120-150 self contained dwellings for senior housing. The dwellings are all proposed to be self-contained housing units.

The redevelopment of the subject land may require a limited redesign of course layout. This redesign will occur as an integrated element of the site master planning and could facilitate an improved layout.

Importantly the concept plan seeks to provide a new and improved club house facility. This new clubhouse will be expected to provide new and improved facilities for both club members and visitors and could include new recreation facilities such as a gym and sport related health services.

The club currently has a large social club membership and currently welcomes visitors to both the golf course and the club. There is no intention as part of the proposed development of the site for the development to operate as a 'gated community'

FIGURE 1: OPTIMUM SITE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY



FIGURE 2:

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT PROPOSAL



3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

3.1 MAINTAINING RURAL GATEWAY TO CITY

Penrith City Council has long held a planning policy position that seeks to contain the visual catchment of the City's urban footprint within well defined areas. With regard to the subject lands the intent is to contain the visual catchment of that urban footprint to lands north of the M4 Motorway and to maintain a predominantly rural type landscape along The Northern Rd south of the M4.

The implementation of this policy is evidenced by the following:

3.1.1 STATUTORY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The *Glenmore Park Major Land Use DCP* provides the following objectives:

4. Objectives

To ensure that development progresses within Glenmore Park in a manner which was intended in the establishment of the estate and its structure planning, This section sets the following objectives:

- (a) To establish major landuse areas which identify specific precincts for key development activities;*
- (b) To promote the continuation of the open, semi-rural character of the estate's edges along The Northern Road and Mulgoa Road by maintaining a low density development pattern; and*
- (c) To restrict commercial or retail related activities from establishing along The Northern Road or Mulgoa Road frontages.*

These objectives are partly represented in the DCP diagram an extract of which is provided at Figure 3.

3.1.2 LAND & ENVIRONMENT COURT MATTERS

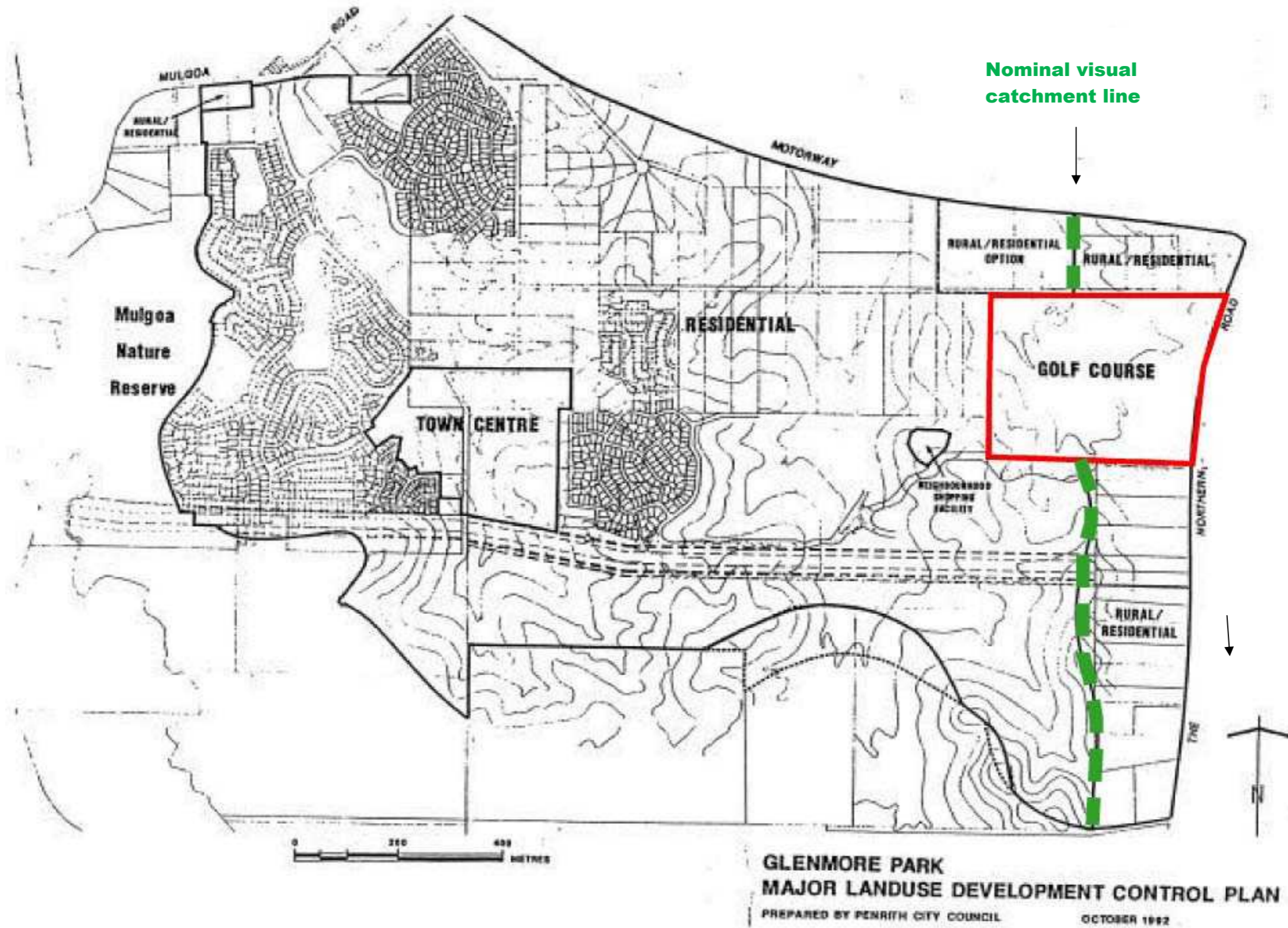
Council have maintained this policy position over many years with vigorous defence of their refusal of many developments along The Northern Rd viewshed at the Land & Environment Court. Examples of developments that Council have refused and subsequently defended at the Court include residential subdivision and commercial or fast food type developments both on the golf course itself and adjacent lands.

3.2 GLENMORE PARK - EASTERN HAMLETS DCP

Despite this overarching policy position the statutory framework does contemplate future development of the golf course and environs as demonstrated by the following *General Principles* found in the *Eastern Hamlets DCP*:

- Allow for the continued usage of the golf course for the purposes of playing golf;
- The provision of high quality housing opportunities on parts of the site with special environmental attributes such as vistas, golf course edge.

FIGURE 3: EXTRACT OF MAJOR LANDUSE



3.3 MANAGING URBAN GROWTH

The *Penrith Urban Growth Management Strategy 2005* identifies demographic characteristics of the Penrith population which will influence the range of housing forms required to accommodate future growth and demographic change in the Penrith area.

The strategy identifies a serious need to provide more diverse housing forms to cater for the demands of ageing population. Importantly, it also recommends that there is a need for denser and diverse housing forms to be provided in new urban release areas including fringe locations.

3.4 PENRITH URBAN STUDY AND STRATEGY

Council has started preparing an Urban Study and Urban Strategy which covers the residential areas (existing and proposed) and the neighbourhood centres in the City. The purpose of the Study and Strategy is to provide a strategic framework to manage future growth in the City's urban areas and to meet the housing needs of a changing and diverse community until 2031.

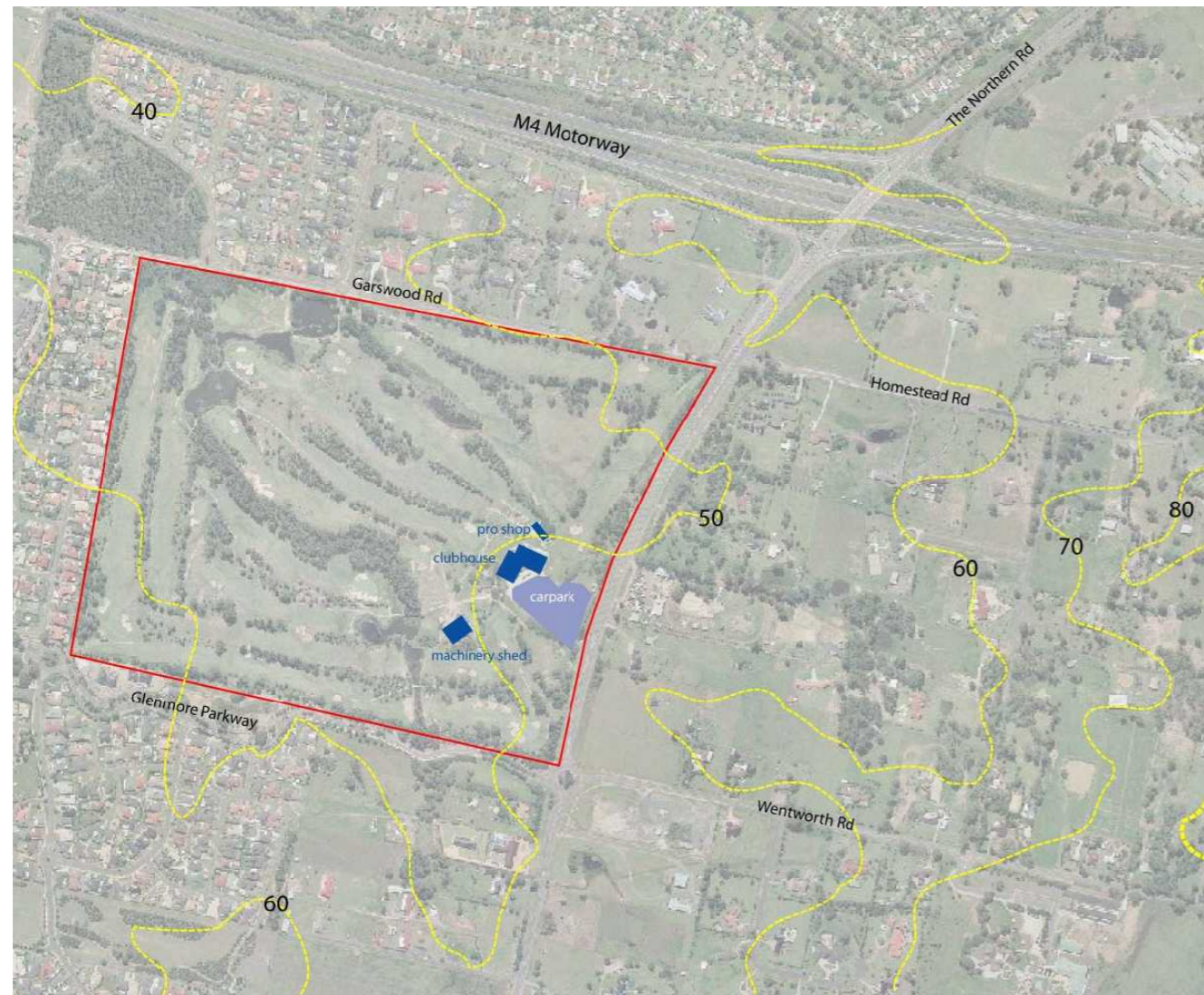
It will explore opportunities to provide greater housing choice, including more sustainable housing forms, affordable housing, accessible and adaptable housing, and will examine ways to make sure that the State Government will assist in providing the necessary infrastructure to support any areas identified for growth.

The Study and Strategy will respond to the policy directions of the Metropolitan Strategy and the North West Sydney Sub-regional Strategy.

The Urban Strategy will inform the comprehensive Citywide Local Environmental Plan (LEP 2010) and accompanying Development Control Plan (DCP) being prepared for the City.

The subject lands form part of the land that will be subject to Draft LEP 2010.

4.0 VISUAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

FIGURE 4: TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From a broader planning policy perspective the development concept clearly satisfies the objectives for new and diverse housing opportunities. However, Council have some concern that the scale and type of development proposed will compromise the potentially competing objective of maintaining the semi-rural gateway and approach along The Northern Rd. To help understand this matter further a detailed visual impact assessment has been undertaken and is represented in the following section.

4.2 EXISTING SITUATION

An important element of the visual impact assessment is to understand the existing views and viewsapes to and from the golf course site. When assessing this existing situation the following elements are most relevant.

4.2.1 TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the area plays a significant role in the availability of views to and from existing and future development. A contour plan has been prepared and is provided at Figure 4. This plan shows that the topography of the local area is characterised as gently rolling and undulating hills that typically slope down from the east to the west.

At a more site specific level there is a significant grade change at The Northern Rd frontage of the golf course. This grade change represents a drop in level of approximately 10m from The Northern Rd to the rear of the proposed development footprint.

FIGURE 5: EXISTING VEGETATION**4.2.2 EXISTING VEGETATION**

The golf course and surrounding lands accommodate significant stands of vegetation. The golf course in particular is characterised by lengthy lines of relatively dense perimeter and fairway lined vegetation.

The effect of these lines of vegetation is that they provide a significant visual screen to the interior of the golf course. The extent of this vegetation is represented at Figure 5.

4.2.3 LIMITED VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES TO SITE

The dual effect of the vegetation and topography is that existing development has a relatively limited visual presence in the landscape, with only very limited viewing opportunities internally to the golf course from the adjacent road reserve. A more detailed analysis of viewing corridors from The Northern Rd is provided at Figures 6-11.

FIGURE 6: VIEW CORRIDORS TO SITE

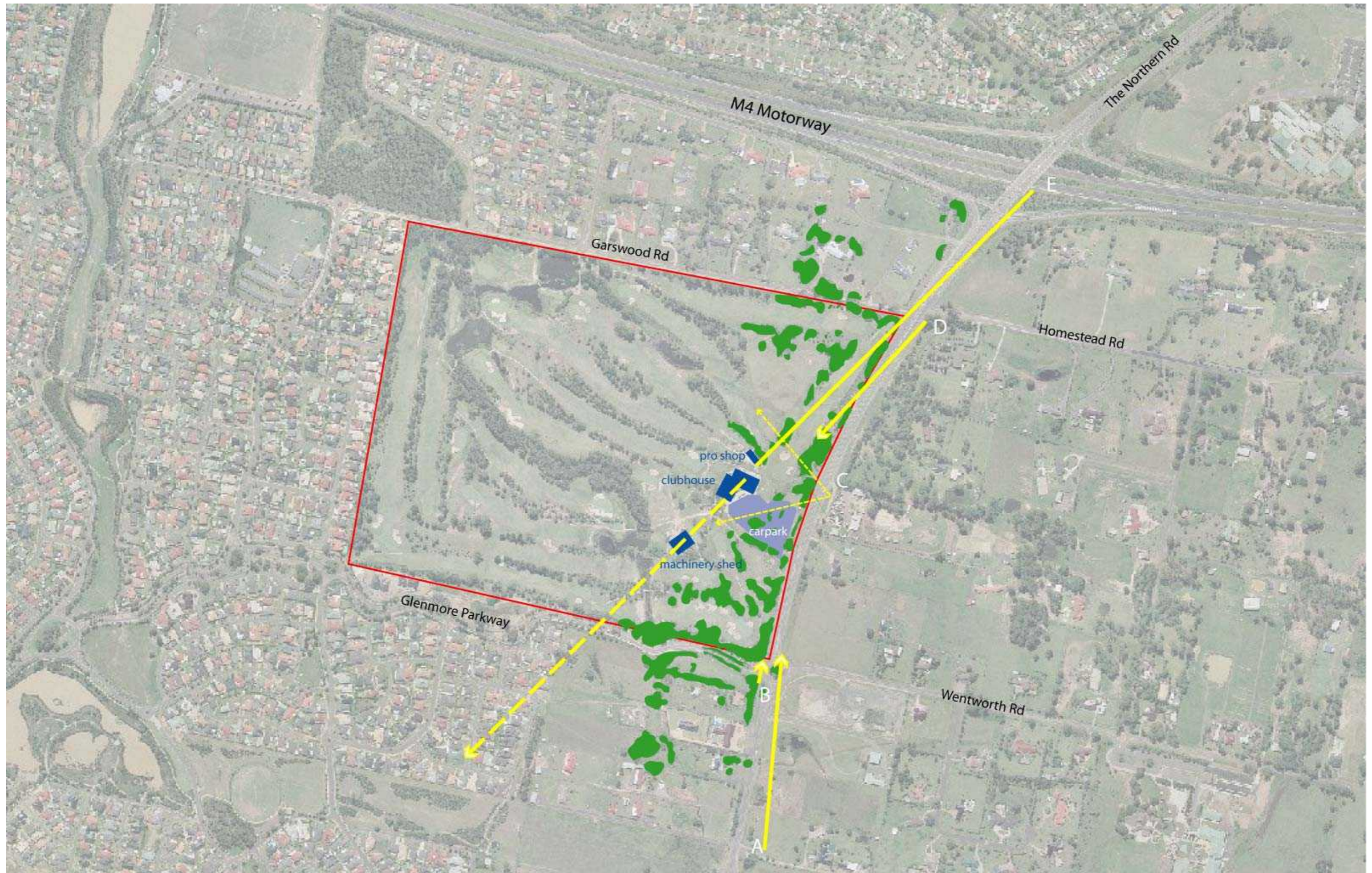




FIGURE 7: VIEW CORRIDOR A (The Northern Rd 600m south)

Golf club and car park etc screened from view by existing vegetation.



FIGURE 8: VIEW CORRIDOR B

Crn The Northern Rd and Glenmore Parkway

Golf club and car park etc screened from view by existing vegetation.

FIGURE 9: VIEW CORRIDOR C

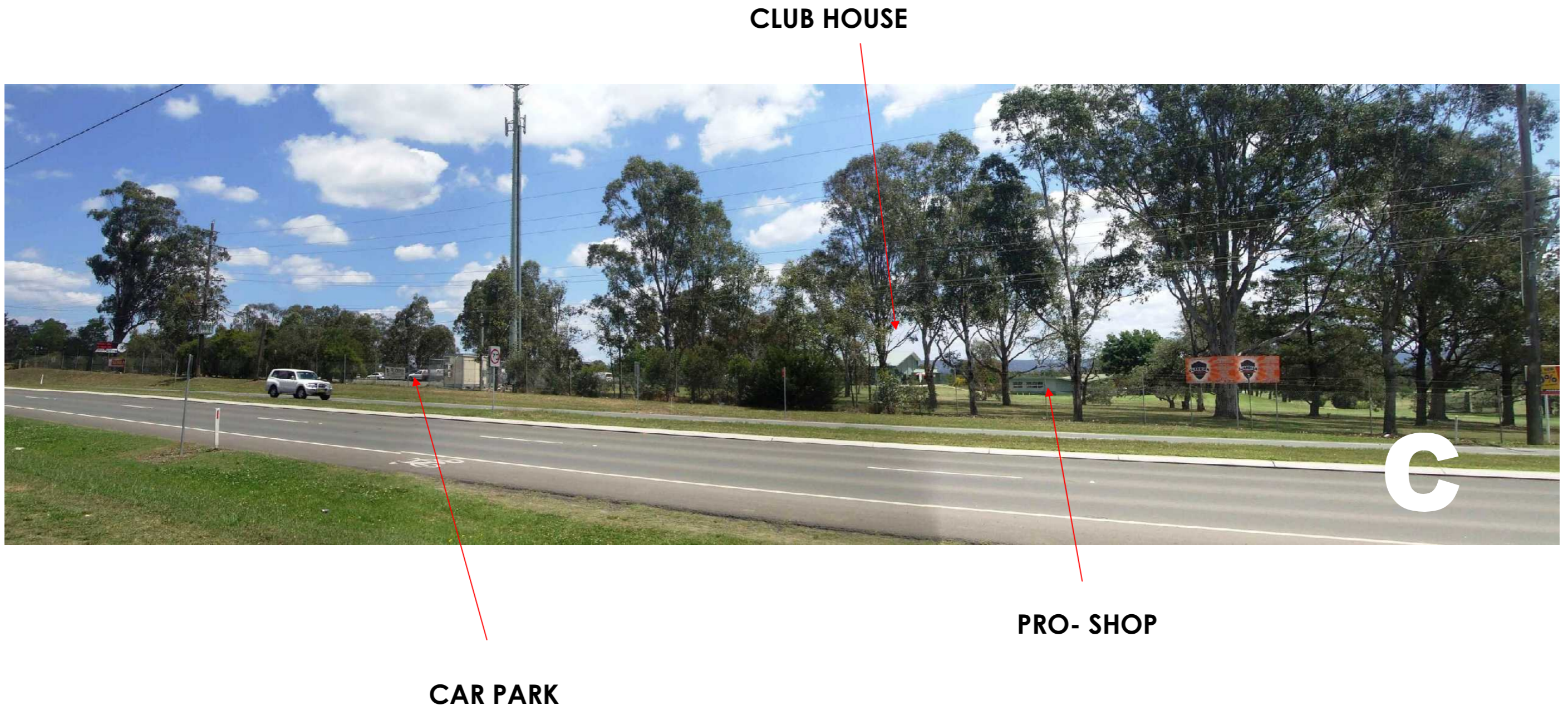




FIGURE 10: VIEW CORRIDOR D (Crn The Northern Rd & Homestead Rd)

Golf club, pro shop and car park etc screened from view by existing vegetation.

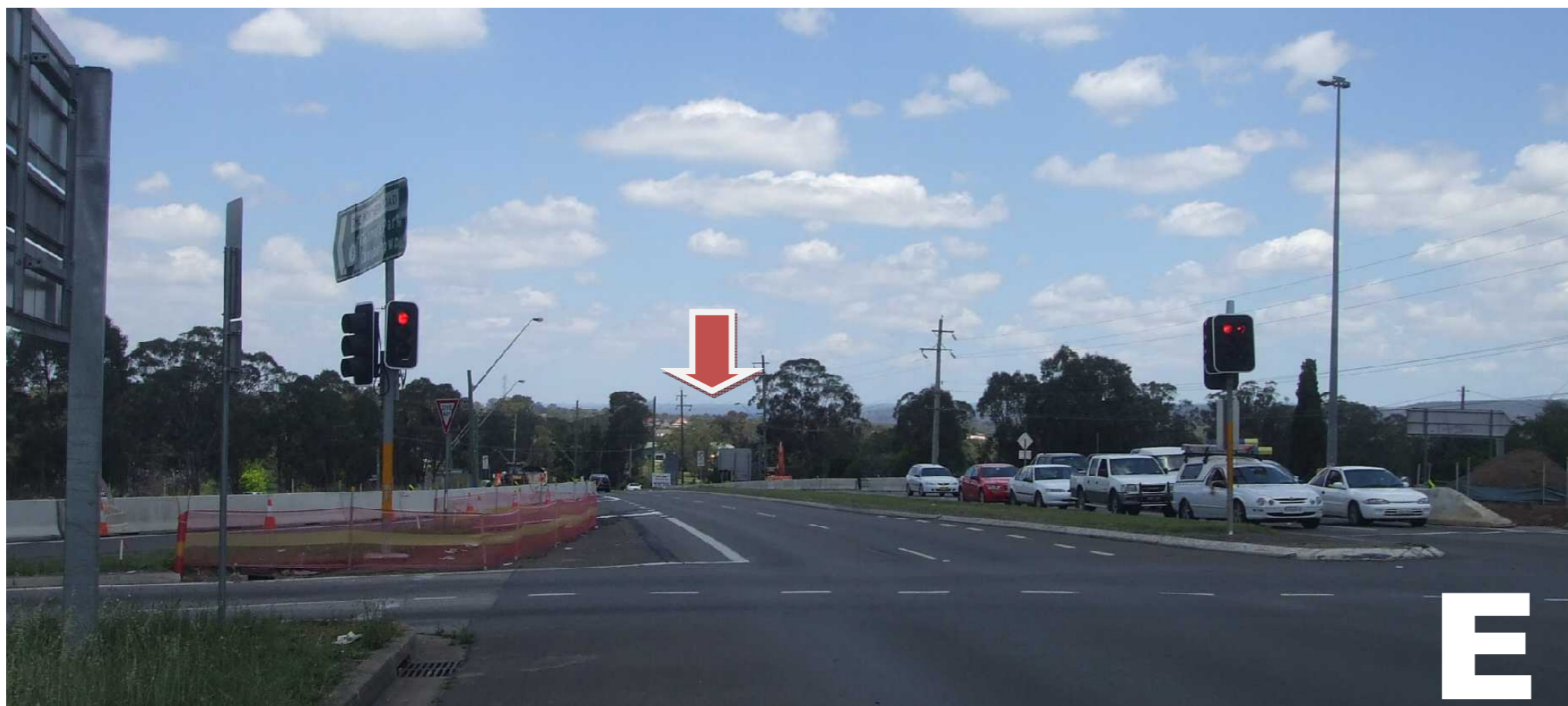


FIGURE 11: VIEW CORRIDOR E (Crn The Northern Rd & M4 Motorway)

Distant and filtered views to Golf club house. Primary view extends across golf course and towards Blue Mountains escarpment.

4.2.4 VIEWS OF EXISTING BUILT FORMS

The limited viewing opportunities currently available to the site are demonstrated by the limited presence of the existing built forms in the landscape.

As demonstrate by the images at Figure 6-11, views to the site and particularly the existing built forms are really only broadly available from two locations along The Northern Rd

1. Immediate frontage to the clubhouse and The Northern Rd
2. Intersection with the M4 Motorway.

At the immediate frontage to The Northern Rd the presence of existing vegetation ensures that these views are strongly filtered and provide only glimpses to the built form of the club house and pro shop etc.

It is also important to note that the existing machinery shed is not visible in the landscape when viewed from The Northern Rd. This is a function of the buildings distance form that corridor (ie. some 175m) and the change in level at this location which causes the building to drop below the view line at this location.

The M4 intersection provides more distant views to the golf course and club house as it is located over 700m form the club house. As such the visual impact is dissipated over this lengthy distance. Further the significant drop in grade tends to create situation where the prevailing view from this location is not to the golf course itself, but rather tends to extend over and beyond the club house and towards the lands further to the south and south west inclusive of the Blue Mountains escarpment.

Therefore despite the availability of views to the existing built forms, the limited extent of those views ensures that the existing facility does not compromise the broader planning policy that has guided development of these lands and their environs.

4.3 IMPACT OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 SITE HAS ABILITY TO VISUALLY ABSORB DEVELOPMENT

The topographical and existing vegetation characteristics of the site create a situation where significant parts of the nominated site area have limited visual presence in the viewscape from The Northern Rd.

The topography which slopes down and away from The Northern Rd will serve to lessen the perceived height of any future built forms and the existing vegetation will not only screen future development but also creates a visual reference point for limiting the height of future apartment buildings. In this regard, it is expected that the new built forms at 3-4 storeys apartments would have a height of approx 10-12m and therefore could be provided beneath that prevailing tree canopy. This is demonstrated at Figure 12.

This therefore creates a situation where the site provides significant potential to absorb new built forms without loss or adverse impact to the existing visual qualities of the local landscape.

FIGURE 12: FUTURE APARTMENT HEIGHT BELOW TREE CANOPY LEVEL



The antennae mast at the front of the golf club site has a DA approved height of 30m and therefore makes a useful reference for understanding the height of future 3-4 storey apartments.



This 3-4 storey level has been plotted on the adjacent images and demonstrates that future apartment buildings as proposed as part of the preliminary concept plan would be sited well below the prevailing tree canopy height and therefore largely obscured view from The Northern Rd approaches.

FIGURE 13: BUILDING SETBACKS + SEPARATION



4.3.2 GENEROUS SETBACKS TO THE NORTHERN RD

The area nominated for redevelopment is still to be refined through the design process, however, 3 of the 4 building footprints proposed as part of the preliminary concept plan are to be setback over 125m from The Northern Rd. Indeed one of the built forms will replace the existing machinery shed (which is not visible from The Northern Rd) and is setback approximately 170m from The Northern Rd. This is demonstrated at Figure 13.

These generous setbacks in combination with topographic and vegetation characteristics of the site will ensure that the new built forms will have very limited visual presence in the landscape.

The concept proposal does show a redeveloped club house being located closer to The Northern Rd and therefore presents a likelihood for increased visibility for this building.

This matter is discussed further in subsequent sections of this report.

4.3.3 CLUSTERED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The greatest threat to maintenance of the semi-rural landscape qualities of The Northern Rd view sheds occurs not from isolated urban development outcomes but more typically from a series of new built forms strung along the road corridor.

Anxiety about potential for ribbon type commercial (eg. development service stations and fast food takeaway) predicated much of councils concern with regard to its refusal of previous development applications and the defence of these matters at the Land & Environment Court. Rural-residential development, although providing a different land use, typically provide more sprawling development outcomes and anxiety about these built outcomes have also predicated refusal of previous development proposals in this area.

The nominated development area under the preliminary concept proposal forms a relatively tightly clustered arrangement of built forms that have only a small frontage to The Northern Rd and generous buffers of over 400m and 250m to neighbouring development to the north and south respectively. This is also demonstrated at Figure 13. This separation of built forms contrasts strongly with the prevailing character of the adjacent rural residential development which has building separation distances generally less than 100m. See Figure 14.

As such the concept proposal does not present the visual threat of ribbon type development that council has previously rejected on these and adjacent lands. Similarly it also preserves the bulk of the site frontage to The Northern Rd as an open rural character and therefore maintains the underlying policy objective.

4.3.4 QUALITY DESIGN OUTCOMES CAN BE ACHIEVED

The concept proposal does show a redeveloped club house being located closer to The Northern Rd. However, even though this facility would have increased visibility it need not compromise prevailing landscape qualities.

Even though of a commercial nature in both scale and form this development could be designed in a way that not only provides a distinctive entry statement to the Golf club itself, but can also assist in defining a more distinctive gateway to the urban areas of the City itself.

Similarly additional landscaping can be provided at the site frontages to augment existing and highly effective vegetation screening. This will ensure that the new club house will present a more discreet presence in that new location.

Further detail and refinement of these design issues would be resolved in collaboration with Council officers as part of subsequent design stages and can ensure that the broader policy is not compromised.

FIGURE 14: BUILDING SEPARATION FOR ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT





4.4 ALTERNATE OUTCOME

The context underpinning the preliminary concept plan is in a significant part an effort to ensure the financial security of the Golf course over the long term.

Should this security not be achieved then the threat exists that the golf course would cease operations. Under such circumstances, alternate land uses for the golf course site would be examined by various planning agencies.

Given the scale of the site, its proximity to regional transport infrastructure and its proximity to other urban lands, it is highly likely that state planning agencies would find urban scaled and type development a near irresistible planning outcome for the site.

Accordingly the visual impact of the preliminary concept plan must in some part be measured against that alternate planning outcome.



5.0 CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Penrith Golf and Recreation Club Pty Ltd, together with *Aim Developments Pty Ltd* have identified an opportunity to improve the existing site facility through redesign of the golf course, redevelopment of the club house and provision of new seniors housing opportunities.

The preliminary concept plan would deliver the following positive outcomes:

- Provide much needed new and diverse senior housing opportunities in the LGA
- secure the long term future of the Golf Club
- an improved community and recreational asset for the LGA

Whilst Council officers recognise the positive outcomes presented by the concept plan, including achievement of their own strategic planning outcomes related to housing diversity, there is some concern that future development of the site may compromise the competing objective of maintaining the semi-rural landscape on the approach to the cities urban edge.

A detailed visual impact assessment has been undertaken and demonstrates that the existing topographic and vegetation characteristics of the site operate in tandem to ensure that the site provides significant potential to absorb new built forms without loss or adverse impact to the existing visual qualities of the local landscape.

The preliminary concept plan seeks to take advantage of these existing site conditions and responds by siting most of the new development setback over 125m from The Northern Rd viewshed. At this location the topography and existing vegetation will screen the development from almost all locations on The Northern Rd approach.

Similarly, by clustering the development in areas that currently accommodate existing built development, the concept plan further lessens the visual impact of additional development and also preserves the bulk of the site frontage to The Northern Rd as an open rural character.

Accordingly, we remain confident that the preliminary concept plan could proceed without compromising the long held policy of seeking to maintain the semi-rural landscape on the approach to the cities urban edge.