

# MEREWETHER

# GOLF COURSE AND SENIORS LIVING PRECINCT

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

**JUNE 2019** 

Title:	Merewether Golf Course and Seniors Living Precinct Visual Assessment
<b>Prepared for:</b>	Merewether Golf Club
Reference:	THI MAC
Date:	June 2019
Prepared by:	RobertsDay Sydney
Approved by:	Stephen Moore

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Roberts Day	
Level 4, 17 Randle Street	Surry Hills NSW 2019
T: +612 8202 8000	www.robertsday.com.au
ABN 53 667 373 703	ACN 008 892 135

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### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Proposed Seniors Development has aimed to respond to visual impacts by addressing the compatibility of built form within the context of its existing surroundings.

This Visual Assessment Report has reviewed and assessed the sensitivity and magnitude of the proposed changes from various key locations to assist people with interpreting any impacts they believe may exist.

The proposal has a confined area of visibility due to existing dense vegetation and established trees in the Golf Course and along the boundary. Potential public viewpoints at ground level are also mainly blocked by existing housing and vegetation.

Our findings revealed that the proposal incorporates a number of key measures designed to mitigate the potential visual impacts:

- The proposal is located in the central north of the Merewether Golf Course with generous setbacks in all directions
- Retaining or reinstating dense vegetation, established trees and other landscaping surrounding the site for screening
- Additional landscaping to reduce the visual impact
- Use of facade treatment, articulation and colour selection to reduce the height impact

The design proposal sits most favourably in the context of its environment and residential buildings located in north and south of the proposal will experience minimal visual impact as the result of the proposal.

Overall, the visual impacts assessed from multiple viewpoints surrounding the site consistently result in impacts considered to be in the LOW to NEGLIGIBLE ranges.

The proposed Seniors Development is also consistent with strategic planning environment of Adamstown which encourages higher density along the Adamstown Renewal Corridor in close proximity of the Merewether Golf Club.

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### 1.1 Purpose of this report

RobertsDay has been engaged by Thirdi Group to carry out Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for seniors living precinct located in Merewether Golf Course.

The VIA investigates on the possible impacts that proposed buildings may have on the surrounding and adjacent publicly accessible areas. RobertsDay inspected a number of locations to understand the landform, scenic qualities and visual prominence of the site and cross referenced these locations with aerial photography to identify potential viewpoints.

The photos labelled 'existing' in the Visual Impact Assessment chapter were captured during a site visit performed on Friday 6th March 2019.

#### 1.2 Proposal overview

The subject site will be developed as a Seniors Development. It is located in the central north of the Merewether Golf Course and comprises the clubhouse, a portion of the golf course and the ongrade parking.

The proposed design incorporates Ageing design principals and will be sympathetic to both the adjoining residential homes & its natural landscape setting. The concept has been crafted and sleeved so that building scale & form fit seamlessly within the existing green landscape of the existing landform and surrounding golf course. Merewether Golf Course | Proposed Built Forms



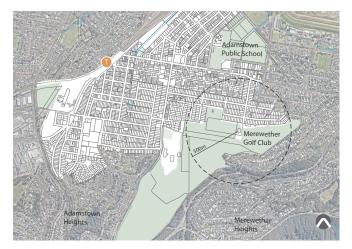
Figure 1-1 : Site Aerial Perspective- (Source: Marchese Partners)





# 2. CONTEXT OF EXISTING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

#### **General Context**

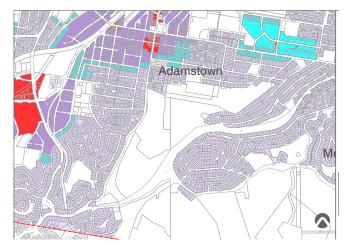


The site of the new Seniors Development is located in Merewether Golf Club, Adamstown. Adamstown is a well located and accessible suburb in Newcastle featuring different sport and recreational facilities, local parks, schools and commercial activities along Brunker Road.

Adamstown has a mixture of large detached dwellings and attached/semi-detached townhouses. Medium and high density housing make up 33% of housing, however the number is increasing as a result of the existing strategic planning environment.

No heritage site is in close proximity of the proposal.

#### **Planning Environment**



The area of Adamstown that surrounds the proposed site is covered by the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Development Control Plan 2012.

Adamstown is going through some transformation by introduction of Adamstown Renewal Corridor which consists of land along Brunker Road and a segment of Glebe Road between Adamstown railway station to the west, and Adamstown sporting fields to the east.

The Renewal Corridor reinforces and encourages residential densities and commercial development along the corridor.

#### Landscape Character



The proposal has generous setbacks to the existing low density residential buildings along the Merewether Golf Course boundary. The landscape character of the surrounding area of the Golf Course is primarily urban with some valuable views to Glenrock Conservation Area.

The landform is gently sloping with high points along Brunker Rd and Pacific Hwy. Adamstown has a native landscape and offers access to different formal and informal green spaces. There are Generally legible trees lining along the neighbouring streets with established Eucalyptus trees along the Merewether Golf Course.

# **3. VISIBILITY AND SELECTION OF VANTAGE POINTS**

Established trees along the boundary

In general, the proposal has a confined area of visibility due to:

- Generous setbacks from the Golf Course boundary
- Dense vegetation and established trees along the boundary and within the Golf Course which significantly reduces any potential visual impact on surroundings
- Topography of the site (the proposal sits roughly 25m lower than residential buildings along the southern boundary)

The key vantage points for the purpose of visual assessment have been determined through a site visit and focus on the areas that are more likely to be affected by the proposal:

- King street as the only public street with views to the proposal
- Private views from residential buildings along the Golf Course particularly where the views are more likely to be affected due to:

- A gap in existing vegetation/ trees

- Closer proximity to the proposal

• Public views along the residential buildings

In general, people involved in recreational activities including sports have low sensitivity to visual change of their surroundings. As a result, selected public views are limited to the views from King Street and along the adjacent residential buildings.



# 4. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

#### General

A qualitative assessment of the visual impacts and changes to landscape has been undertaken with reference on the RMS Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Note: Guidelines for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2013).

Under the guideline, the main type of visual effect (or impacts) is assessed:

• effect on key viewpoints (visual impact)

The guidelines describe the assessment as a way to define the day to day visual effects of a project on people's views.

#### Photomontage

3D model of the proposal and supporting technical documentation enabled the vantage points to be realistically documented as 'existing' and 'proposed' photomontages. The accuracy of the photomontages is based on the following process and information:

- Plotting the vantage points using accurate survey details of the site and proposal;
- Digitally linking the coordinate data into Google Earth (GE);
- Creating a 3D Sketchup model of the terrain;
- Digitally linking the massing model of the proposed built form to GE for broader context understanding and to match the model view to the photo position and view angle;

• Photo- editing the hybrid photo/ model views to reflect landscaping, intended built form, and lighting.

#### Assumption

The following assumption has been made:

• Photomontages are generated from photos taken at camera level of approximately 1.7m above natural ground level.

#### **Detailed methodology**

The determination of the impacts is based on the following criteria:

**Sensitivity** is defined as "The sensitivity of a landscape character zone or view and its capacity to absorb change."

In the case of visual impact this also relates to the type and number of viewers, availability of alternative views and distance of the development from viewers. The more sensitive vistas are likely to be seen by people engaged in outdoor recreation, travellers along scenic routes and occupiers of residences. Less sensitive views are likely to be seen by people engaged in activities that do not involve appreciation of views, travellers and workers who are less likely to notice views.

**Magnitude** is defined as "The measurement of the scale, form and character of a development proposal

when compared to the existing condition".

In the case of visual assessment the level of magnitude generally decreases as the distance from the development to various viewpoint locations increases.

EIA No4 Guidelines, 2013, RMS

#### Effects on key viewpoints

The combined assessment of the sensitivity and magnitude provides the rating for the visual impact as per the matrix on the following page.

For the purposes of this assessment the criteria listed in Table 4-2 and Table 4-3 have been specifically defined for sensitivity and magnitude of change for the visual impact to viewpoints (note these are a general guide only for this project).

			MAGNITUDE						
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible		
-	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact		
	High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High		Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact		
	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact		
2	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact		
5	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact		
	Negligible	Negligible impact							

SENSITIVITY

Table 4-1 : Impact Level (Matrix of Sensitivity & Magnitude)

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Scenic or public views with a high visual value High number of users in close proximity Users involved in passive recreational activities The site has a high visual prominence
Moderate	Public views with a moderate visual value Moderate number of users in close or moderate proximity The site is visually prominent Residence views in close proximity
Low	Public views with a little visual value A low number of users Users are mostly passers-by or involved in active recreation/ sport The site is not visually prominent
Negligible	Public views with none or limited visual value A limited number of users not in close proximity Receptors are mostly in motor vehicles The site is not visually prominent

Magnitude	Criteria
High	The proposal forms a dominant and immediately apparent part of the scene It contrasts in scale and character It is detrimental to the quality of the scene
Moderate	The proposal forms a visible new element within the overall scene, yet one that is relatively compatible with the surrounding character and view's composition It is possibly reducing the quality of the scene
Low	The proposal constitutes only a minor component of the wider view, that is compatible with the surrounding character and view's composition
Negligible	The proposal constitutes only a minor component of the wider view, which might be missed by the casual observer or receptor. Awareness of the proposal would not have an effect on the overall quality of the scene.

Table 4-2 : Sensitivity Ranking Criteria

Table 4-3 : Magnitude Ranking Criteria

# **5. VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

#### 5.1 Viewpoint 1 - King Street (The Entrance of Golf Club)

View 1 is from King Street opposite the main entrance to the Merewether Golf Club.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand visual impacts of proposed built forms from the existing public street where there is no immediate structure or vegetation to block the proposal. King Street is the only public street offering views to the proposal.



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56′21.5″S 151°43′59.3″E





Existing View 1

Proposed View 1

The view from King Street is considered to have a LOW sensitivity due to:

- An entry road with low number of users;
- Receptors are road users in motor vehicles and/ or pedestrians that are passing through therefore have short term views;
- Public view does not have a high visual value;
- The site is in the distance and not visually prominent.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered LOW, due to:

- Proposal is in the distance and partly screened by existing structures;
- Proposal constitutes only a minor component of the view;
- New design, additional buildings and materials do not change the view's composition;
- No effect on the overall quality of the scene.

#### Assessment of impact

The visual impact for this view is assessed as LOW as it will have low expression in comparison to the existing landscape.



Existing View 1



New built form

Proposed View 1

			MAGNITUDE					
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible	
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact	
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact	
TIVI	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact	
ENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact	
SE	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low Impact	Negligible impact	
	Negligible	Negligible impact						

Table 5-1 : Visual Impact Level

RobertsDay planning. design. place

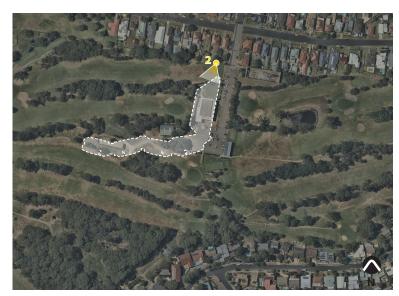
#### 5.2 Viewpoint 2 - 49 Ella Street Site Boundary

View 2 is from 49 Ella Street rear boundary located north of Merewether Golf Course.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand the visual impact of proposed built forms on existing low density residential buildings along northern boundary.

In general, the dense vegetation with mature trees along northern boundary blocks any potential views to the proposal in most parts. However, RobertsDay has identified two gaps in the existing vegetation which has formed the selection of viewpoints 2 and 3.

Although Viewpoint 2 is captured slightly outside of 49 Ella Street site boundary, it is representative of the private view from the residential building's backyard.



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56'22.0"S 151°43'57.8"E





Existing View 2

Proposed View 2

The sensitivity of view from 49 Ella Street site boundary factors:

- Users engaged in active recreation including sports are less sensitive to visual change of their surroundings;
- There is an existing building structure in the view;
- The view does not have a high visual value.

However, the sensitivity of the viewpoint increases as it is also representative of views from the existing residential building. In general, occupiers of the residential buildings adjacent to the proposal will view changes to the visual setting of their residence more critically. Therefore, the sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered MODERATE.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered LOW, due to:

- The proposed built forms are consistent with the existing building in terms of massing and scale, and do not change the view's composition;
- There is minimal additional visual obstruction;
- No effect on the overall quality of the scene.

#### Assessment of impact

The moderate sensitivity combined with a low magnitude will result in a MODERATE-LOW visual impact.



Existing View 2

New built form



Proposed View 2

			MAGNITUDE					
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible	
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact	
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact		Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact	
TIVI	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Negligible impact	
SENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact	
S	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact	
	Negligible	Negligible impact						

Table 5-2 : Visual Impact Level

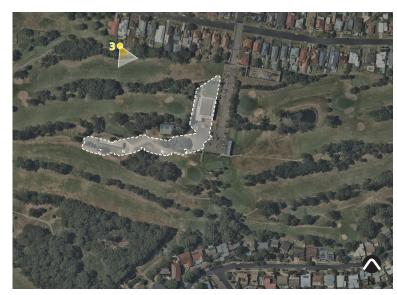
#### 5.3 Viewpoint 3 - 69 Ella Street Site Boundary

View 3 is from 69 Ella Street rear boundary located north of Merewether Golf Course.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand the visual impact of proposed built forms on existing low density residential buildings along northern boundary.

In general, the dense vegetation with mature trees along northern boundary blocks any potential view to the proposal in most parts. However, RobertsDay has identified two gaps in the existing vegetation which has formed the selection of viewpoints 2 and 3.

Although Viewpoint 3 is captured slightly outside of 69 Ella Street site boundary, it is representative of the private view from the residential building's backyard.



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56′21.0″S 151°43′51.9″E





Existing View 3

Proposed View 3

The sensitivity of view from 69 Ella Street site boundary factors:

- Users engaged in active recreation including sports are less sensitive to visual change of their surroundings;
- There is an existing building structure in the view;
- The view does not have a high visual value;
- The site is not in close proximity.

However, the sensitivity of the viewpoint increases as it is also representative of view from the existing residential building. In general, occupiers of the residential buildings adjacent to the proposal will view changes to the visual setting of their residence more critically. Therefore, the sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered MODERATE.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered **NEGLIGIBLE**, due to:

- Proposal is in the distance and almost completely screened by existing mature trees and dense vegetation;
- No change in the view.

#### Assessment of impact

The visual impact for this view is assessed as NEGLIGIBLE, as it will not be visible from this viewpoint.



Existing View 3

Proposed View 3

	MAGNITUDE						
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact			Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
TIVI	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible Impact
SENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
SI	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
	Negligible	Negligible impact					

Table 5-3 : Visual Impact Level

New built form screened by existing vegetation

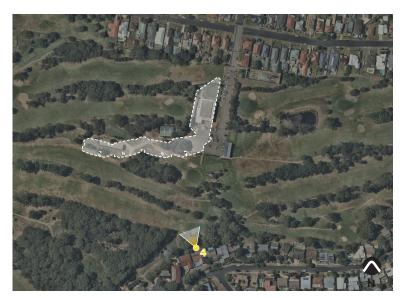
#### 5.4 Viewpoint 4 - Backyard of 126A Henry Street

View 4 is from backyard of 126A Henry Street located south of Merewether Golf Course.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand the visual impact of proposed built forms on existing low density residential buildings along southern boundary.

In general, residential buildings in southern boundary will experience nil or minimal visual impact as a result of the proposal due to:

- Proposal is in the distance (approximately 160m away from residential buildings)
- Residential buildings are located approximately 25m above the proposal
- There is existing dense vegetation with mature trees along southern boundary



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56′31.6″S 151°43′55.9″E



Existing View 4



Proposed View 4

The sensitivity of view from backyard of 126A Henry Street factors:

- Occupiers of the residential buildings adjacent to the proposal will view changes to the visual setting of their residence more critically;
- There is no existing building structure in the view.

However, the sensitivity of the viewpoint decreases as the proposal is not in close proximity. Therefore, the sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered MODERATE.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered NEGLIGIBLE, due to:

- Proposal is in the distance and almost completely screened by existing mature trees and dense vegetation;
- No change in the view.

#### Assessment of impact

The visual impact for this view is assessed as NEGLIGIBLE, as it will not be visible from this viewpoint.



Existing View 4

Proposed View 4

	MAGNITUDE							
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible	
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact	
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High		Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact	
ITIVI	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible Impact	
SENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact	
N	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact	
	Negligible	Negligible impact						

Table 5-4 : Visual Impact Level

New built form screened by existing vegetation



#### 5.5 Viewpoint 5 - Backyard of 116 Henry Street

View 5 is from backyard of 116 Henry Street located south of Merewether Golf Course.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand the visual impact of proposed built forms on existing low density residential buildings along southern boundary.



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56'31.0"S 151°44'00.0"E



Existing View 5

Proposed View 5

The sensitivity of view from backyard of 116 Henry Street factors:

- Occupiers of the residential buildings adjacent to the proposal will view changes to the visual setting of their residence more critically;
- There is no existing building structure in the view.

However, the sensitivity of the viewpoint decreases as the proposal is not in close proximity. Therefore, the sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered MODERATE.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered NEGLIGIBLE, due to:

- Proposal is in the distance and largely screened by existing mature trees and dense vegetation;
- The proposed built form visible from the viewpoint is similar to the existing club building in terms of massing and scale.

#### Assessment of impact

The visual impact for this view is assessed as **NEGLIGIBLE**, as it will not be visible from this viewpoint.



Existing View 5

Proposed View 5

		MAGNITUDE						
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate		Low	Negligible	
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact	
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High		Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact	
TIVIT	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible Impact	
SENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact	
S	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact	
	Negligible	Negligible impact						

Table 5-5 : Visual Impact Level

RobertsDay

New built form

#### 5.6 Viewpoint 6 - Backyard of 118 Henry Street

View 6 is from backyard of 118 Henry Street located south of Merewether Golf Course.

The aim of assessing the view is to understand the visual impact of proposed built forms on existing low density residential buildings along southern boundary.



Google Earth Coordinate: 32°56′31.0″S 151°44′00.0″E





Existing View 6

Proposed View 6

The sensitivity of view from backyard of 118 Henry Street factors:

- Occupiers of the residential buildings adjacent to the proposal will view changes to the visual setting of their residence more critically;
- There is no existing building structure in the view.

However, the sensitivity of the viewpoint decreases as the proposal is not in close proximity. Therefore, the sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered MODERATE.

#### Magnitude

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered NEGLIGIBLE, due to:

- Proposal is located in lower level and completely screened by existing mature trees and dense vegetation;
- No change in the view.

#### Assessment of impact

The visual impact for this view is assessed as NEGLIGIBLE, as it will not be visible from this viewpoint.



Existing View 6

New built form in distance and screened by existing vegetation



Proposed View 6

		MAGNITUDE					
		High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
	High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
≿	High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High		Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
TIVI	Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible Impact
ENSI	Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
SEI	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
	Negligible	Negligible impact					

Table 5-6 : Visual Impact Level

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Table 6.1 summarises the likely visual impact level of the proposal to surrounding viewpoints.

Overall, the visual impacts assessed from multiple viewpoints surrounding the site result in impacts considered to be in the LOW and NEGLIGIBLE ranges.

The proposal is also consistent with strategic planning environment of Adamstown which will accommodate many more high and medium density developments and significantly transform the existing character.

Viewpoints	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Change	Impact Level
Viewpoint 1 King Street	Low	Low	Low
Viewpoint 2 49 Ella Street site boundary	Moderate	Low	Moderate- Low
Viewpoint 3 69 Ella Street site boundary	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible
Viewpoint 4 Backyard of 126A Henry Street	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible
Viewpoint 5 Backyard of 116 Henry Street	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible
Viewpoint 6 Backyard of 118 Henry Street	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible

Table 6-1 : Summary of Visual Impacts on Key Viewpoints

