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Maitland Private Hospital

Visual Impact Assessment

Maitland Private Hospital

Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared for
Healthe Care Surgical Pty Ltd

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For Submission

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Moir Landscape Architecture (MLA) has been commissioned by SLR Consulting on behalf of Healthe Care Surgical Pty Ltd 'the Applicant' to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed extension to Maitland Private Hospital (referred to hereafter as 'the Project'). The Project is located at 175 Chisholm Road (Lot 102 DP 1010923) 6.0 km southeast of Maitland (refer to **Figure 1**) in the suburb of Ashtonfield within the Maitland Local Government Area (LGA).

The purpose of this VIA report is to provide a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the visibility and potential visual impacts of the Project. The VIA will support the statutory approval process for the Project, to be lodged as a Development Application (DA) for assessment by Maitland City Council (MCC).

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 27th February 2023 for the Project, using key viewpoints along the New England Highway and Chisholm Road as requested by MCC (refer to **Section 2.4.1**). The report details the results of fieldwork, documents the analysis of the existing landscape character, visual setting and assesses the potential visual impacts associated from the Project. This information provided is to assist MCC in understanding the likely visual impacts and how they may be managed to ensure that the character of the immediate area and surrounding visual landscape is not diminished.

1.2 Relevant Experience

Moir Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd is a professional design practice and consultancy specialising in the areas of Landscape Architecture, Landscape Planning and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA). Our team has extensive experience in undertaking LVIA for large-scale infrastructure projects, including the renewables, industrial and commercial developments in visually sensitive areas. Our capabilities include digital terrain modelling, viewshed assessment, photomontage development, landscape character assessments and community consultation.

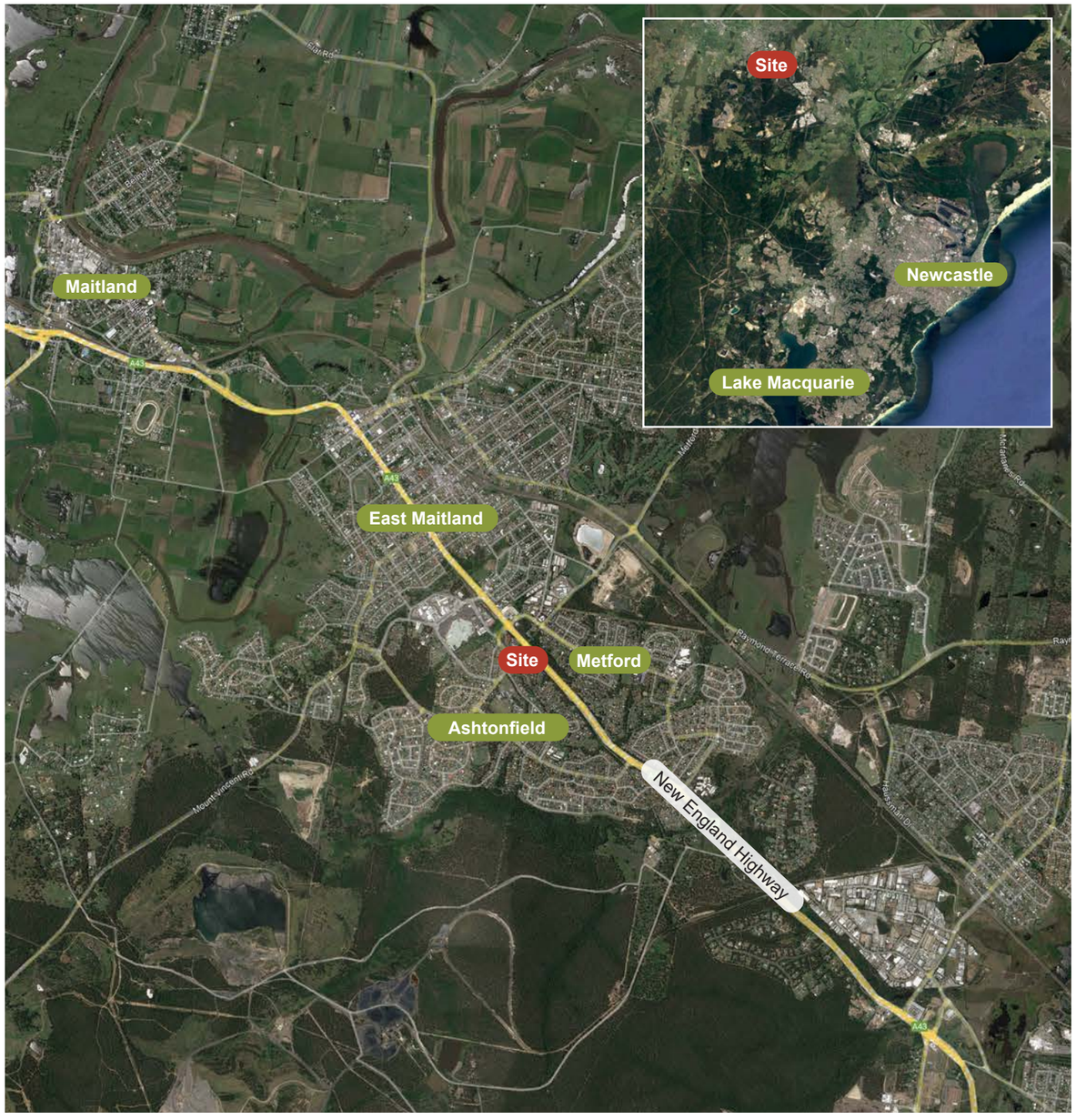


Figure 01 - Site Location *(imagery source: Google Earth, 2023)*

Not to Scale (Locality Only)

2.0 Study Method

2.1 Overview of the Study Method

The following provides an overview of the Study Method utilised for undertaking the LVIA. This methodology is based on the relevant policies, frameworks and our experience in undertaking LVIA for large infrastructure projects. The VIA was undertaken in the stages as noted below:

PROJECT OVERVIEW
Refer to Section 3.0

→

- Detailed Project Description
- Visual Aspects of the Project

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Refer to Section 4.0

→

- Overview of the existing Landscape Character and identification of key landscape features of the Site and surrounds
- Determine Scenic Quality Ratings of the existing Landscape Character

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL IMPACTS
Refer to Sections 5.0 - 6.0

→

- Assessment of the Potential Visual Impacts with the aid of computer modelling, viewpoint analysis and photomontage development.
- Viewpoint Analysis (Section 5.0)
- Photomontages (Section 6.0)

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT & MITIGATION METHODS
Refer to Sections 7.0

→

- Overview of Mitigation Methods
- Preparation of recommendations for impact mitigation (where practical) to maintain the area's visual quality

2.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape. The Landscape Character of an area is generally defined by the most dominant landscape element or unique combination of elements that occur within that landscape. It *'reflects how particular combinations of geology, landforms, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlements create a particular sense of place for different areas within the landscape'* (Landscape Institute, 2013).

The Landscape Character of the Study Area has been assessed at a regional, local and site scale. The Project 'Study Area' is defined as 500 m from the Project and has been defined to consider the visual impact from the surrounding road network in proximity to the Project.

This landscape character assessment will utilise existing topographic maps, site imagery and land use maps to assist in defining the unique features of the area.

2.2.1 Scenic Quality Rating

Once the landscape character has been assessed, the scenic quality of the area can be determined. The Scenic Quality 'Frame of Reference' has been formulated by MLA (refer to **Table 01**) utilising *'An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment'* (Natural England, 2019) to quantify the sensitivity of the landscape character. Each category of the 'Frame of Reference' has been quantified to determine a scenic quality rating of high, moderate or low. The Visual Sensitivity of a select location can be derived through the combination of 'Receptor Sensitivity' and 'Scenic Quality'.

SCENIC QUALITY RATING		
DESCRIPTION	**LOW** ← **MODERATE** → **HIGH**	
LANDFORMS	• Flat topography • Absence of landscape features • Open, broad extents of spaces	• Diversity in topographical range • Unique landscape features • Intimate spaces
WATERFORM	• Absence of water	• Presence of water • Visually prominent lakes, reservoirs, rivers streams and swamps.
VEGETATION	• Absence of vegetation • Lack of diversity • Land cleared of endemic vegetation • Low level of connection between vegetation and landscape / topography	• Abundant vegetation • High diversity • High retention of endemic vegetation • High level of connectivity between natural landscape and landforms
HUMAN INFLUENCE	• High population • High density in settlement • High presence of infrastructure • High levels of landscape modification	• Low / dispersed population • No settlement • Absence of infrastructure • Landscape in natural state
ACTIVITY	• High levels of traffic movement • Presence of freight and passenger transport networks • Presence of production or industry	• Low traffic movement • Absence of freight and passenger transport • Absence of production or industry
RARITY	• Typical landscape within a local and regional context	• Unique combination of landscape features in a local and regional context
RELATIONSHIP WITH ADJOINING LANDSCAPES	• Low visible connection with adjoining landscapes • Low variability between adjoining landscapes • Landscape features do not contribute to amenity from adjoining landscapes	• High visibility with adjoining landscapes • High variability and contrast with adjoining landscapes • Landscape features contribute significantly to amenity of adjoining landscapes

Table 01 - Scenic Quality Rating (MLA)

2.2.2 Receptor Sensitivity Rating

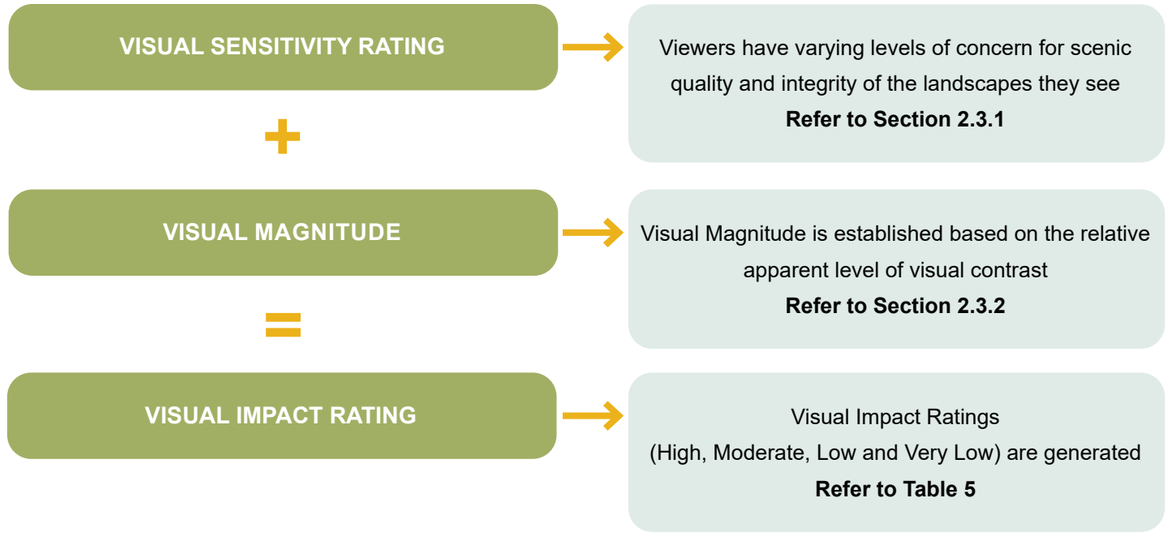
Receptor sensitivity relates to the relative importance of receptors (refer to **Table 02**) and the value that the community or visitors may place on landscapes viewed from public use areas, public travel ways and private receptors such as dwellings. The sensitivity of each viewpoint into one of three (3) sensitivity ratings (low, moderate, high). The intent is to classify the viewer sensitivity in which the Project is being viewed with reference to the technical supplement (DPE, 2022).

RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY RATING	
LOW	• Local sealed and unsealed roads • Passenger rail lines with daily daylight services • State highways, freeways and classified main roads • Walking tracks and navigable waterways • Secondary view from dwellings in rural areas (zoned RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4 and RU6), large lot residential areas (zoned R5) and in environmental or conservation areas (zoned C2, C3 and C4) • Tourist roads and scenic drives • Walking tracks and navigable waterways • Cemeteries, memorial parks
MODERATE	• Primary view from dwellings in rural areas (zoned RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4 and RU6), large lot residential areas (zoned R5) and in environmental or conservation areas (zoned C2, C3 and C4) • Tourist and visitor accommodation and places of worship (such as bed and breakfasts, motels, hotels) • Tourist uses in tourist areas (zoned SP3) • Publicly accessible green and open spaces including picnic areas, parks, public recreation areas • Town centres and central business districts
HIGH	• Dwellings in residential areas and rural villages (land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4 and RU5) • Historic rural homesteads/residences on the national, state or local heritage list

Table 02 - Receptor Sensitivity Rating *(Adapted from Technical Supplement - Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 2022)*

2.3 Visual Impact Assessment

The potential visual impact of the Project is then assessed based on the relationship between the visual sensitivity (refer to **Section 2.3.1**) and visual magnitude (refer to **Section 2.3.2**).



2.3.1 Visual 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 change (as noted in **Sections 2.2.1** & **2.2.2**). Visual Sensitivity, defined by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) *'refers to the quality of the existing view and how sensitive the view is to the proposed change. The visual sensitivity is determined by identifying the sensitivity of each viewpoint and categorising the scenic quality of the area in view'* (DPE, 2022).

For example, a significant change that is not frequently seen may result in a low visual sensitivity although its impact on a landscape may be high. Generally the following principles apply:

- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time decreases;
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the number of potential viewers decreases; and
- Visual sensitivity can also be related to viewer activity (e.g. a person viewing a Project Site whilst engaged in recreational activities will be more effected by change than someone passing a scene in a car travelling to a desired destination).

Visual Sensitivity ratings are defined as high, moderate and low based on the Scenic Quality and Receptor Sensitivity.

2.3.2 Visual Magnitude

Visual magnitude refers to the extent of change that will be experienced by receptors. Factors that are considered when assessing the magnitude of change include (AILA, 2018):

- the proportion of the view / landscape effected;
- extent of the area over which the change occurs;
- the size and scale of the change;
- the rate and duration of the change; and
- the level of contrast and compatibility.

2.3.3 Visual Impact

Visual Impact refers to the change in appearance of the landscape as a result of the Project. Visual Impact is the combined effect of visual sensitivity and visual magnitude. Various combinations of visual sensitivity and visual magnitude will result an overall visual impacts (refer to **Table 04**).

2.3.4 Visual Impact Analysis

This process involves a qualitative assessment of the conclusions of visual impact ratings for each viewpoint. The analysis takes into consideration other relevant influencing factors not easily addressed through the process of quantitative analysis.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY RATING

		SCENIC QUALITY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ZONE		
		HIGH	**MODERATE**	**LOW**
RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	**HIGH**	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE
	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
	LOW	MODERATE	LOW	LOW

Table 03 - Visual Sensitivity Rating Table
(Adapted from Technical Supplement - Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 2022)

VISUAL IMPACT RATING

		VISUAL MAGNITUDE			
		HIGH	**MODERATE**	**LOW**	**NEGLIGIBLE**
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	**HIGH**	HIGH	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE
	MODERATE	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE

Table 04 - Visual Impact Rating Table
(Adapted from Transport for NSW Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, 2020)

2.4 Guidelines and Statutory Framework

An overview of the guidelines, relevant frameworks and considerations of authorities utilised to form the methodology for this LVIA is provided in the following section.

2.4.1 Maitland City Council Pre-Lodgement Meeting Minutes

The Applicant received pre-lodgement actions from MCC on the 15th December 2022, requesting a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) *'to the consider the proposed increase in height, bulk and scale of the north-west frontage to Chisholm Road. The area of focus are views for vehicles heading south-west along the New England Highway'* to be submitted as a part of the Development Application (DA).

The intent of this VIA is to assess the visual impacts associated with to the Project with specific reference views from the surrounding road network in proximity to the Project.

3.0 Project Overview

3.1 Regional Context

The Project is located within the Maitland Region in New South Wales, 6.0 km from Maitland CBD (refer to **Figure 01**). Maitland LGA is adjoining Port Stephens LGA to the northeast, Newcastle LGA to the southeast and Cessnock LGA to the southwest. Maitland LGA encompasses a total area of approx. 392 sq km, with key urban areas within the region including East Maitland, Ashtonfield, Metford, Maitland and Rutherford.

3.2 The Site

The Site is identified as Lot 102 DP 1010923 at 175 Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield. The Site houses the existing Maitland Private Hospital (MPH), ranging between one (1) to three (3) storeys and includes medical facilities, car parking and other associated infrastructure to allow for the day-to-day functioning of the Hospital. Access into MPH is from Chisholm Road. The terrain within the Site rises from approx. 26 m in the north to 33 m in the southeast. The Project is located to the northeast of the Site, on the corner of the New England Highway and Chisholm Road.

3.3 The Project

The Project includes a new patient ward and oncology unit extension to the hospital proposed as an additional level to the existing hospital footprint, to the north east of the Site. Plans and elevations, prepared by HSPC Health Architects have been included for reference (refer to **Figure 03, 04 & 05**).

3.4 Study Area

An area forms the visual baseline assessment for the Project, where the scenic quality of the landscape character with the Study Area will be determined to understand the visual sensitivity.

Figure 02 - Project Site *(imagery source: Nearmaps, 2023)*

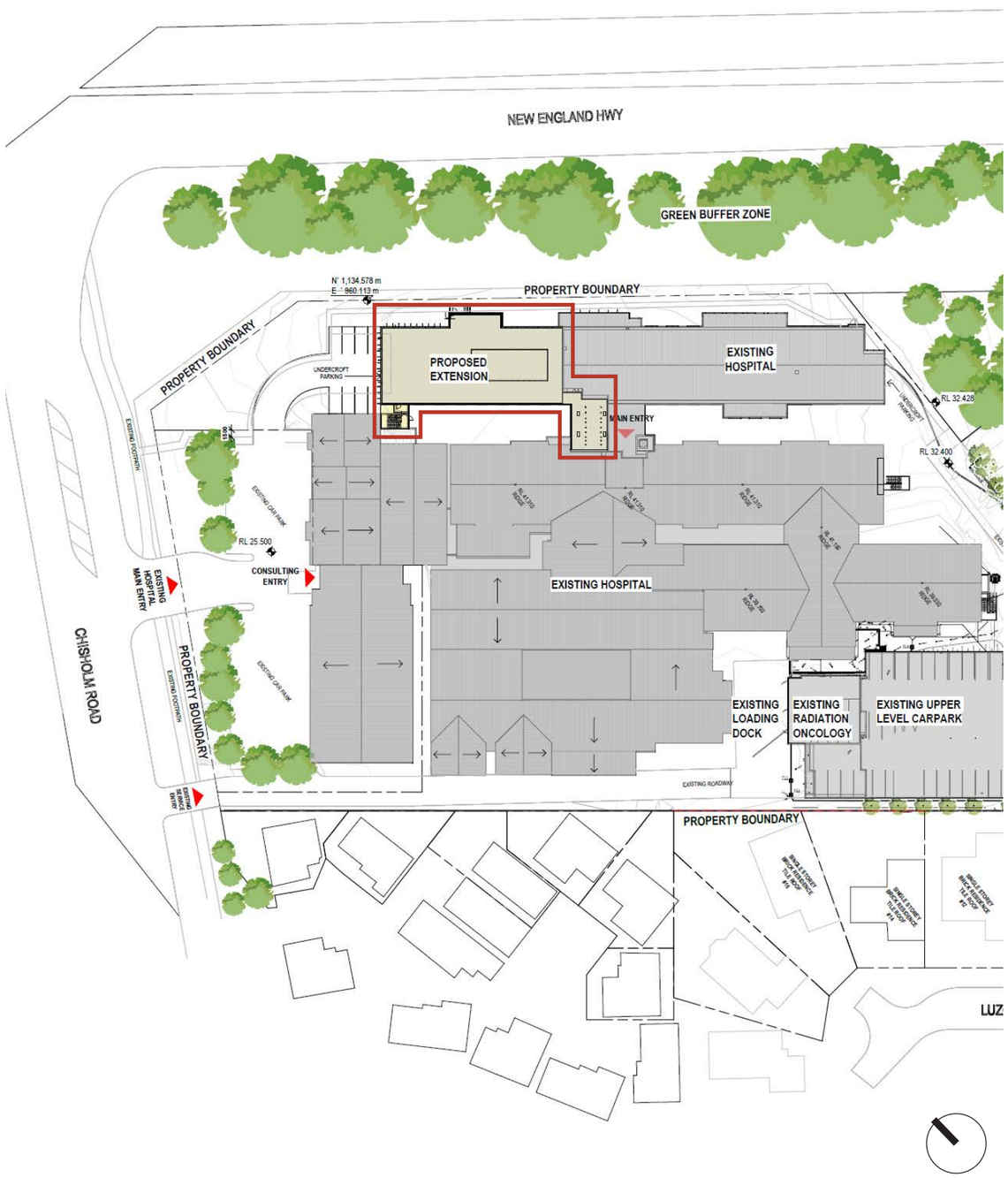


Figure 03 - Proposed Site Plan *(source: HSPC Health Architects) NTS*

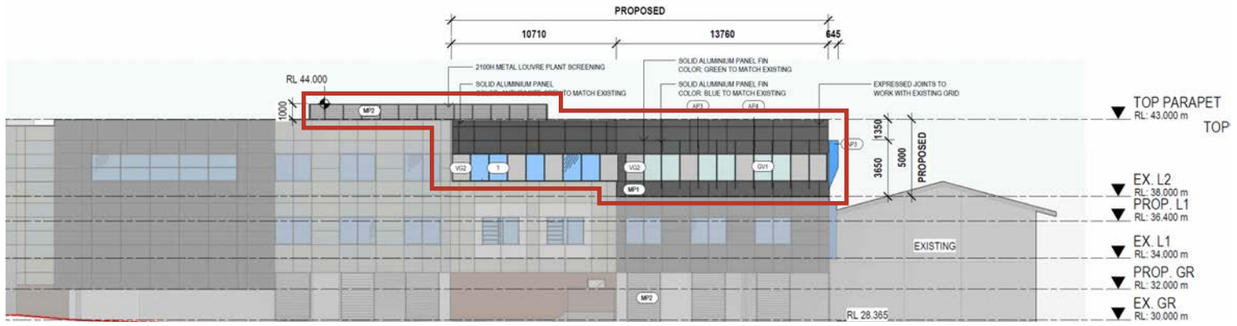


Figure 04 - North-Eastern Elevation *(source: HSPC Health Architects) NTS*

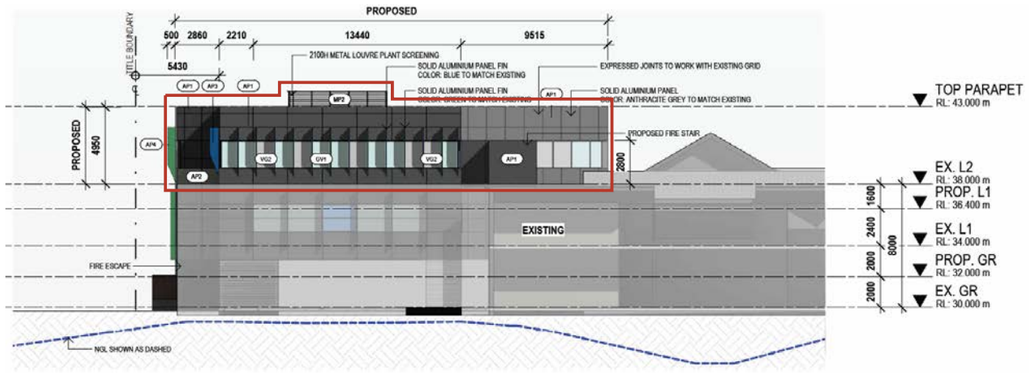


Figure 05 - Proposed Extension Plan 'the Project' *(source: HSPC Health Architects)*

4.0 Existing Landscape Character

4.1 Existing Landscape Character Analysis

The purpose of the Landscape Character analysis is to establish the existing landscape and visual conditions through descriptions, mapping and photographic representation to capture the sense of place and provide a baseline study against which the potential visual impacts of the Project can be assessed.

4.2 Key Landscape Features

4.2.1 Topographic and Hydrological Character

The terrain within the Study Area has been modified to allow for residential and commercial developments. The topography is typically classified as gently undulating, rising to the south of the Study Area. The low point of the Study Area is at Two Mile Creek to the northwest at approx. 15 m Australian Height Datum (AHD). The topography rises to approx. 40 m AHD in the southwest and approx. 46 m AHD in the southeast of the Study Area (refer to **Figure 06**). The terrain is approx. 28m AHD within the Project Area.

Two Mile Creek feeds into to the Hunter River via Four Mile Creek in the northeast of the region, a major watercourse of the Maitland Region.

4.2.2 Vegetation Character

Dense native vegetation corridors line the New England Highway, providing visual separation between the highway and adjoining residential areas (refer to **Image 01**). This is particularly evident in the informal recreational area, to the north of the Project, whereby dense remnant native vegetation adjoins the highway and creates a buffer between the Project and Metford residential dwellings to the north. Scattered vegetation, consisting of street trees are visible along Chisholm Road and surrounding individual lots including the Hunter Grammar School and Molly Morgan Motor Inn. Vegetation has been thinned at intersections to allows for site lines.

Figure 06 - Study Area *(imagery source: Nearmaps, 2023)*

4.2.3 Infrastructure

The New England Highway is a major arterial corridor connecting rural cities including Tamworth, Muswellbrook and Maitland to the major centres including Newcastle, Gosford and Sydney. The highway is a key feature within the Study Area (refer to **Image 01**). Secondary roads include Chisholm Road, Molly Morgan Drive and Chelmsford Drive.

Chisholm Road connects residents to the highway and Molly Morgan Drive and Chelmsford connects commuters to shopping facilities and commercial developments. Powerline infrastructure forms part of the character, aligning the New England Highway (refer to **Image 02**).

4.2.4 Architectural Typologies

The Study Area consists of a combination of residential, commercial developments, which includes education and health care. The general built form of the Study Area, particularly that in close proximity to the Project, includes a combination of multi-story facilities (Maitland Private Hospital) in addition to low rise residential (Ashtonfield, East Maitland & Metford) and educational facilities (Hunter Grammar School) (refer to **Image 01 & 03**).

Higher density developments associated with the surrounding commercial land uses, including Green Hills Stockland Shopping Centre, feature bulk and scale architecture typologies consistent with the MCC LEP, specifically max. 24 m as per the 'Maximum Building Map' (LEP, 2011) (refer to **Figure 07 & Image 02**).

Image 01 - (Drone Image) Views over dense vegetation towards Metford and the New England Highway (MLA, 2023)

Image 02 - (Drone Image) Views over the New England Highway towards Green Hills Stockland Centre (MLA, 2023)

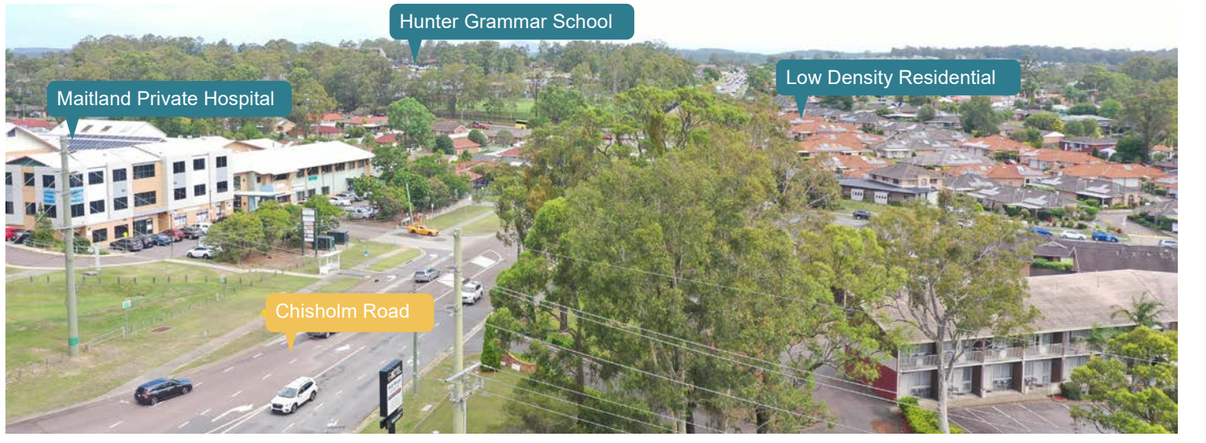


Image 03 - (Drone Image) Views over Chisholm Road towards Hunter Grammar School (MLA, 2023)

4.3 Land Zoning

The Project is located within the Maitland LGA whereby the Maitland Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2011 applies. The following provides an overview of the land zoning within the immediate surrounds of the Project Area as shown in **Figure 07**.

4.3.1 R1 General Residential

The Project and surrounding land to the south and west of the Project Area is zoned as R1 General Residential, with a maximum building height of 8.5m (DCP, 2011). There are no visual objectives outlined in the LEP.

This area consists of low density residential developments and health and education facilities. The combination of these elements forms an existing feature of the immediate surrounds to the Project.

4.3.2 SP2 Infrastructure

The New England Highway, is a major arterial road corridor connecting Maitland to other major centres including Newcastle and Sydney. The highway is a key landscape feature within the Study Area and an important element in how the landscape is experienced by the viewer. Other infrastructure zoned SP2 includes the East Maitland Fire Station south of Chelmsford Drive. There are no visual objectives outlined in the LEP.

4.3.3 RE1 Public Recreation

Areas of dense native vegetation zoned as RE1 line the New England Highway. There are no formalised recreational facilities within this area and serve as a vegetated corridor, for informal ‘goat trails’ and feature ephemeral creeklines. There are no visual objectives outlined in the LEP.

4.3.4 B3 Commercial Core

The bulk and scale of Green Hills Stockland Shopping Centre, maximum zoned building height of 24m, is viewed as a major feature within the Study Area when viewing from Ashtonfield and traversing along the New England Highway. This area provides a range of retail, commercial and recreational uses for the local and wider community. There are no visual objectives outlined in the LEP.

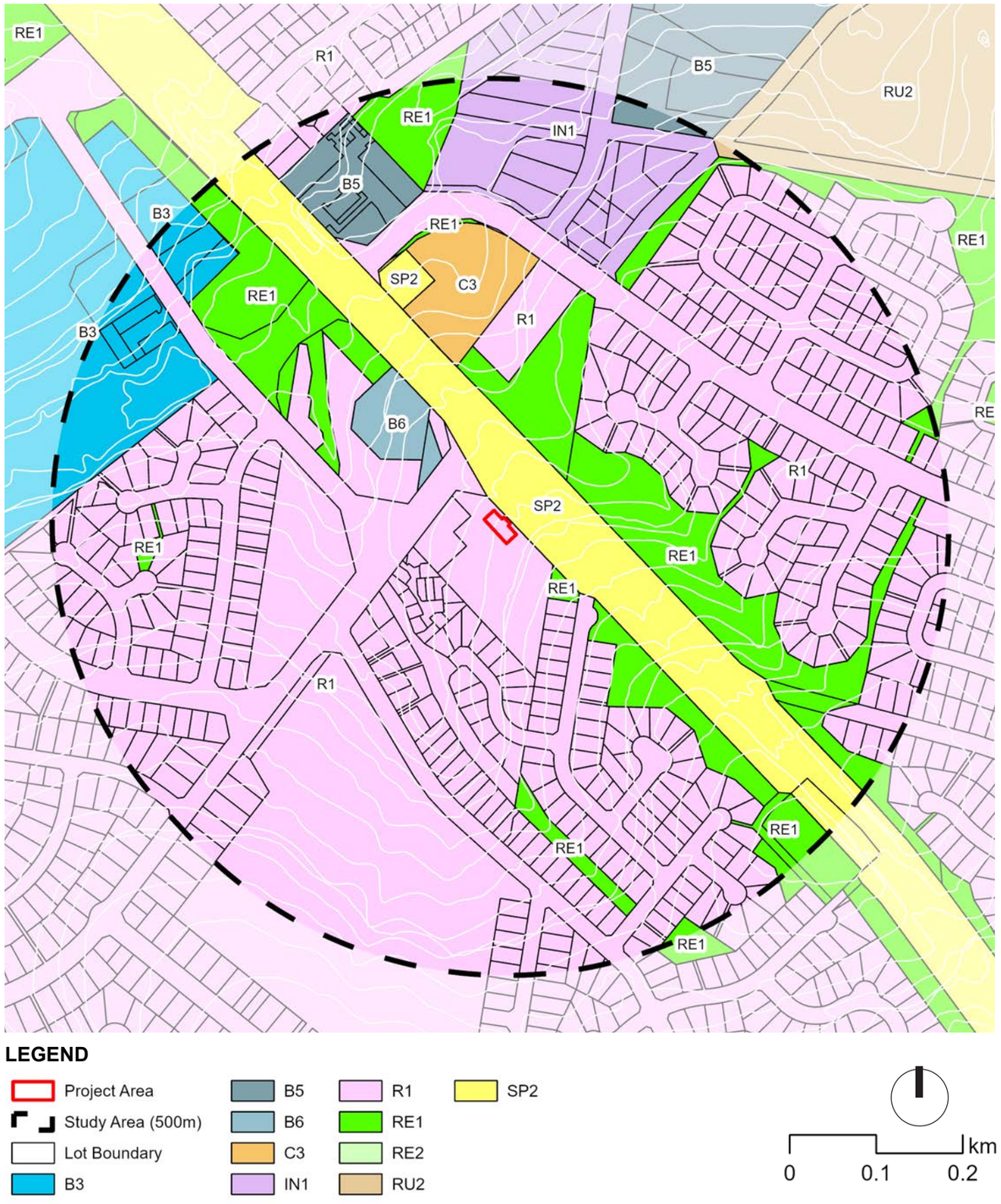


Figure 07 - Land Zoning *(source: NSW Spatial Data, 2023)*

4.3.4 Other Land Zones within the Study Area

As the Project Area is located within the urban region of Maitland, there is a mix of land zoning under the Maitland LEP forming part of the urban character. Additional land zones not listed above include:

- B5 Business Development, B6 Enterprise Corridor, IN1 General Industrial and C3 Environmental Management

IN1 and B5 consists of bulk single storey industrial buildings and commercial developments, which includes car serving facilities, bulk retailers and storage facilities. The Molly Morgan Motor Inn, opposite the Project is zoned as an enterprise corridor (B6).

4.4 Land Use

Land use within and surrounding the Project comprises of the following as shown in **Figure 08** -

- 5.4.0 Residential Infrastructure
- 5.5.0 Services (including education, commercial and industrial)
- 5.7.0 Transport

(data source: NSW Land Use Mapping, SEED, 2019)

The Study Area is a highly modified landscape and as such the key land uses identified above are heavily influenced by human intervention.

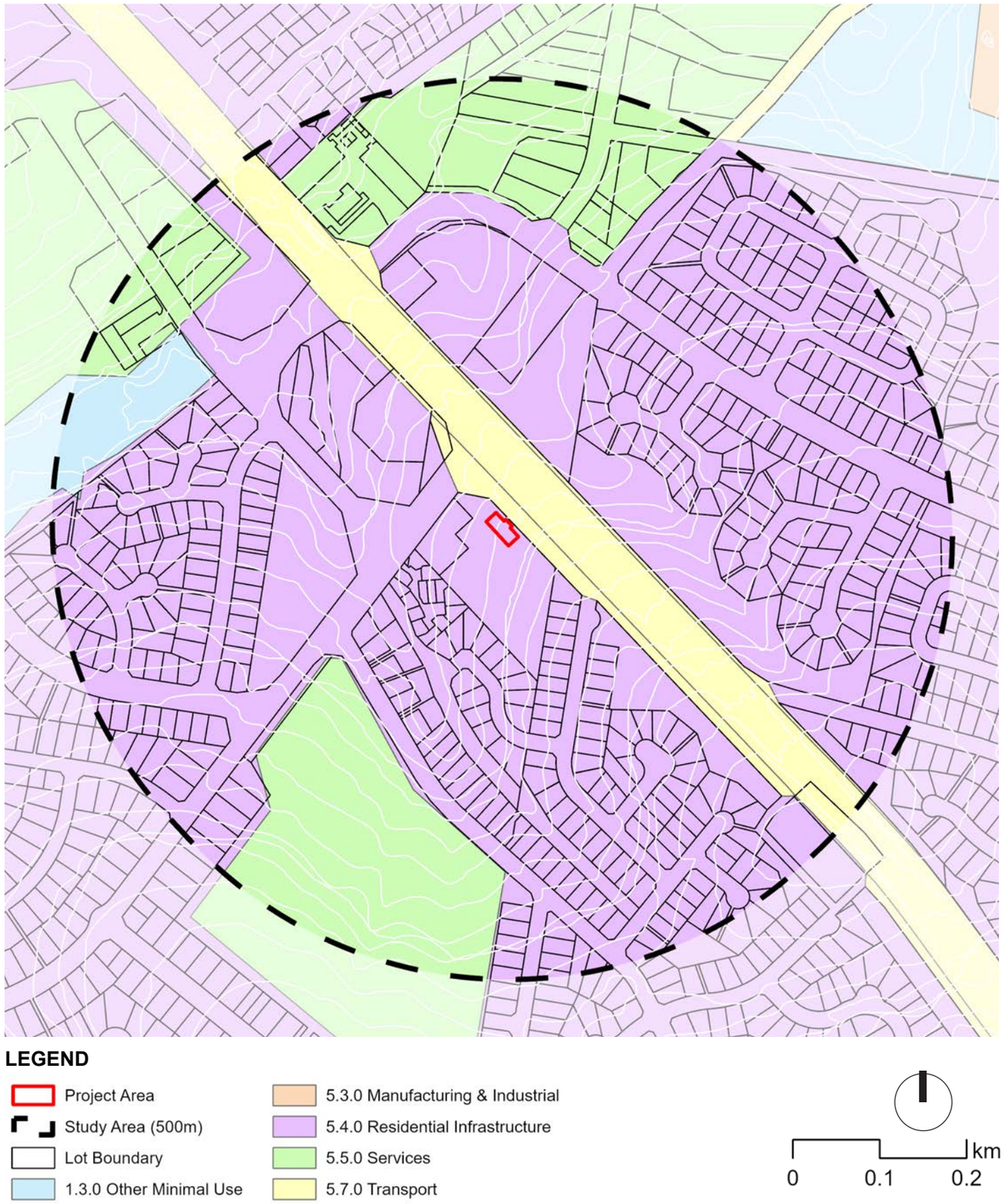


Figure 08 - Land Use *(source: NSW Spatial Data, 2023)*

4.5 Landscape Character Scenic Quality

As per the analysis, it is determined that landscape character of the Study Area is characterised as an urban precinct consisting of residential and commercial developments, transport infrastructure and public recreations areas. The scenic quality of the Study Area has been classified as low, as per the frame of reference outlined in **Section 2.2**.

Application of Scenic Quality Rating Frame of Reference								
	Landform	Waterforms	Vegetation	Human Influence	Activity	Rarity	Relationship with Adjoining Landscapes	**SCENIC QUALITY RATING**
H								**LOW**
M	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
L								

Table 05 - Scenic Quality Rating

5.0 Viewpoint Analysis

5.1 Viewpoint Analysis Methodology

The viewpoint analysis considers the likely visual impacts of the Project on the existing landscape character and visual amenity by selecting prominent sites, otherwise referred to as viewpoints.

Once the viewpoints have been selected, panoramic photographs are taken on a level tripod at a height of 150cm (to represent eye level). Photographs are taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV Full Frame digital SLR through a 50mm fixed focal lens which closely represents the central field of vision of the human eye.

The visual impact of the viewpoint are then assessed both on site and with the topographic and aerial information to ensure accuracy. For each viewpoint, the potential visual impacts are analysed through a combination of the 3D terrain modelling, topographic maps and on site analysis. Viewpoint photographs and analysis have been included in the following pages. The findings of the viewpoint analysis have been quantified and are summarised in **Table 06**.

5.2 Viewpoint Selection Process

The locations of the viewpoints have been identified in **Figure 09**. Viewings direction of the viewpoints are noted on each viewpoint sheet. The selection of the viewpoints have been informed by topographical maps, fieldwork observations and other relevant influences such as access, landscape character and the popularity of vantage points.

A total of five (5) viewpoints have been selected to represent a range of views from the New England Highway and Chisholm Road in close proximity to the Project.

Viewpoints are selected to illustrate a combination of the following:

- Areas of high landscape or scenic value
- Visual composition (eg. focused or panoramic views, simple or complex landscape pattern)
- Range of distances
- Varying aspects
- Various elevations
- Various extent of development visibility (full and partial visibility)
- Views from major routes

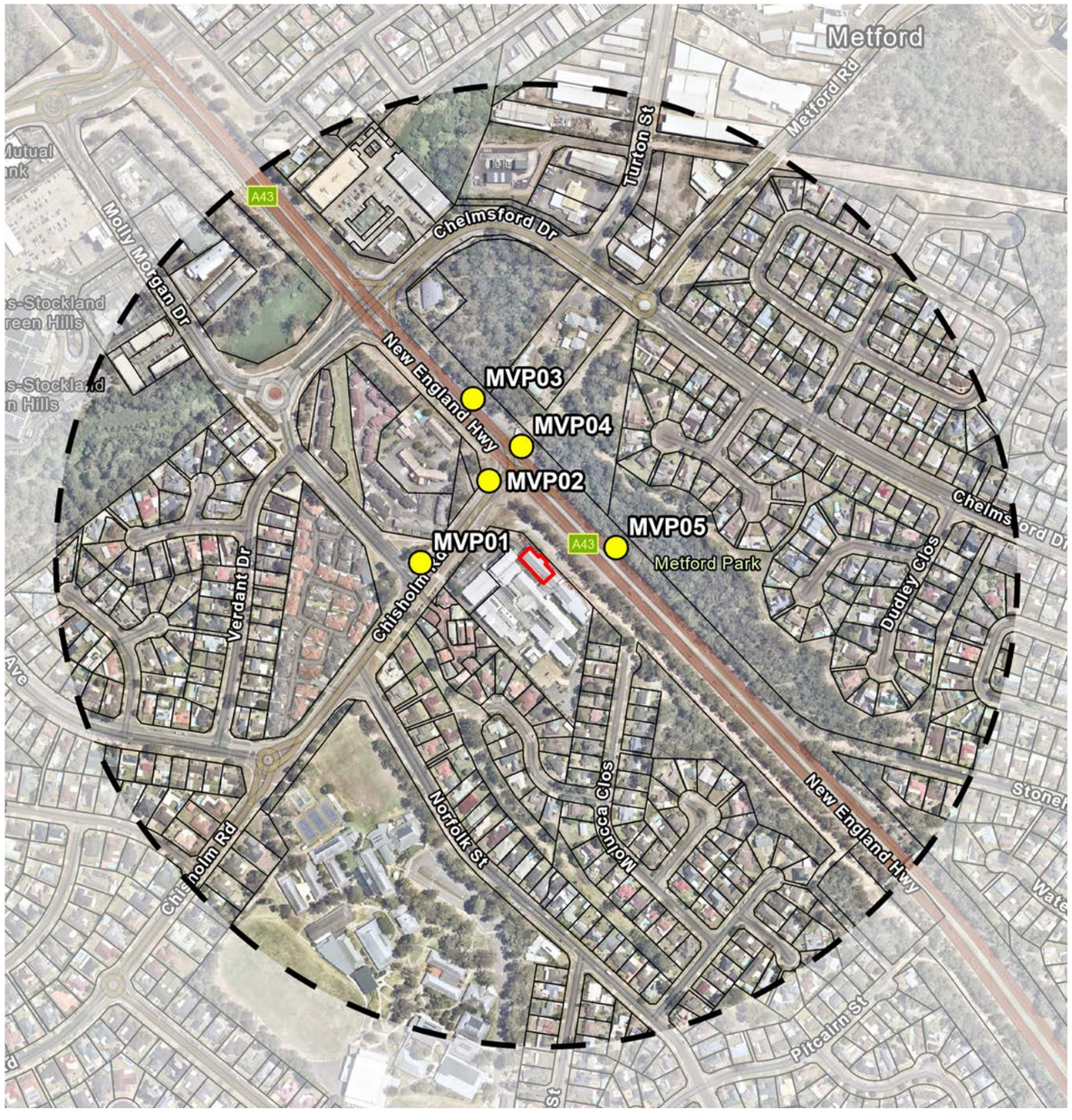


Figure 09 - Viewpoint Locations *(imagery source: Nearmaps, 2023)*

5.3 Overview of Viewpoint Analysis

As discussed in the rationale for the viewpoint selection process, these viewpoints are representative of the worst case scenario. For each viewpoint, the potential visual impact are analysed through a combination of topographic maps and on site analysis. The visual sensitivity and visual magnitude of each viewpoint have been assessed which, when combined, results in an overall visual impact for the viewpoint (refer to **Table 06**). Of the five (5) viewpoints assessed as part of this VIA:

- One (1) viewpoint has been identified as having a visual impact rating of 'MODERATE';
- Two (2) viewpoints identified as 'MODERATE-LOW'; and
- Two (2) viewpoints identified as 'LOW'.

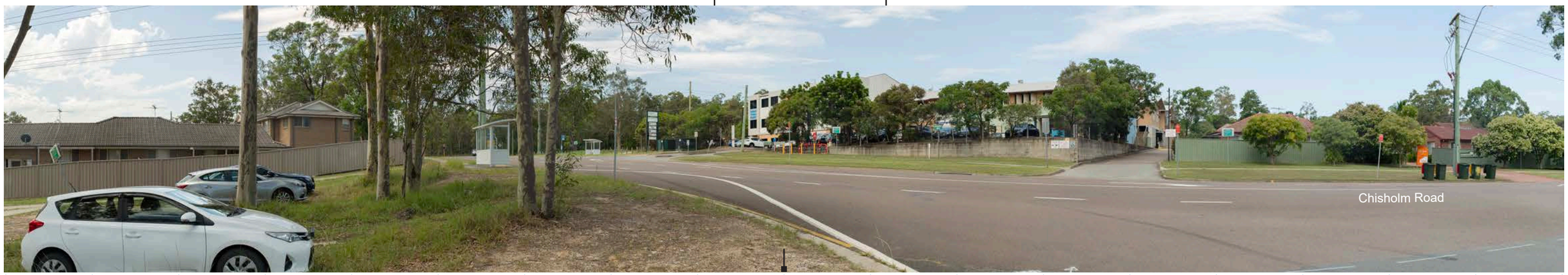
VIEWPOINT	LOCATION	SCENIC QUALITY RATING	RECEPTOR RATING	**OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY**	**VISUAL MAGNITUDE**	**POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT** (WITHOUT MITIGATION)	RECOMMENDED MITIGATION	**POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT** (WITH MITIGATION)
MVP01	Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield	LOW	HIGH	**MODERATE**	**LOW**	**MODERATE-LOW**	Not Required	**MODERATE-LOW**
MVP02	Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield	LOW	HIGH	**MODERATE**	**MODERATE**	**MODERATE**	Refer to Section 7.0	**MODERATE-LOW**
MVP03	New England Highway, East Maitland	LOW	LOW	**LOW**	**LOW**	**LOW**	Refer to Section 7.0	**LOW**
MVP04	New England Highway, Ashtonfield	LOW	LOW	**LOW**	**MODERATE**	**MODERATE-LOW**	Not Required	**LOW**
MVP05	New England Highway, Ashtonfield	LOW	LOW	**LOW**	**LOW**	**LOW**	Not Required	**LOW**

*Please note the Viewpoint Visual Impact Summary is based on the visibility assessment criteria outlined in Section 2.3 of this report.

Table 06 - Viewpoint Visual Impact Summary

MVP01 Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield

Approximate extent of Project



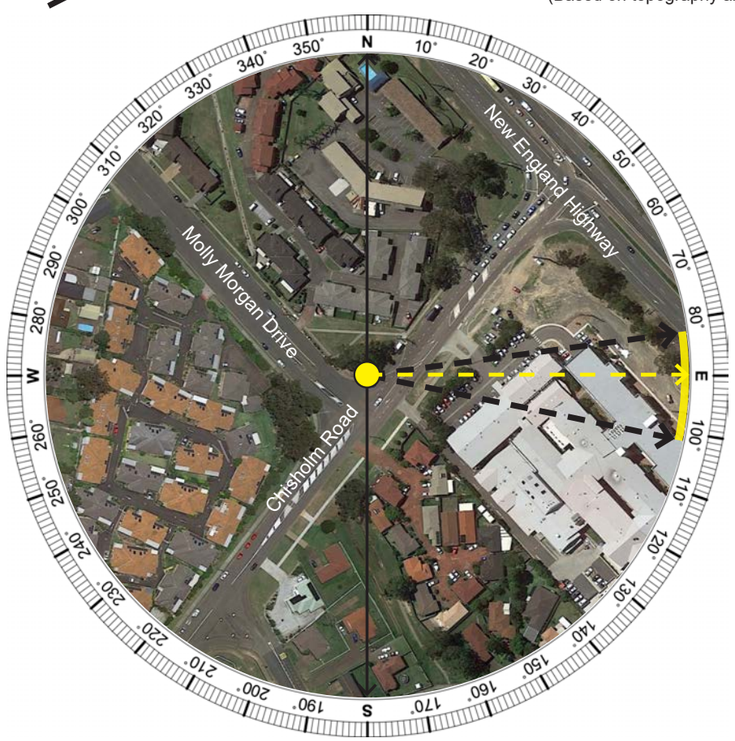
LEGEND

Viewing direction and centre of panorama

Extent of panorama

Direction of Project

Extent of visible Project
(Based on topography alone)



VIEWPOINT MVP01

Viewpoint Summary:	
Location:	Elevation:
Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield	23 m
Coordinates:	Distance to Project:
32°45'53.54"S 151°35'47.83"E	105 m
Viewing Direction:	
East	
Visual Sensitivity:	
MODERATE	
Visual Magnitude:	
LOW	
Visual Impact:	
MODERATE-LOW	

Aerial Image Source: Google Earth (01/10/2016)

Existing Landscape Character Description:

This viewpoint was taken at the corner of Chisholm Road and Molly Morgan Drive. The terrain is characterised as relatively flat to gently undulating, with the surrounding land being used for residential dwellings. Hospital infrastructure is visible to the east in the background of the view. Scattered vegetation is visible along property boundaries in the midground of this view, and dense vegetation is visible in the distance to the northeast.

The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as **MODERATE**, due to the viewpoint being in close proximity to residential developments.

Potential Visual Impact:

From this location, it is likely a small portion of the Project is likely to be visible behind the existing built form. Existing vegetation screens the existing building whereby the Project is proposed, however hospital infrastructure is an existing feature of the view. The extension is likely to be read as part of existing form of the hospital, which is in keeping with the character of the area. The character of the view will remain unchanged as a result of the Project.

The visual magnitude of change is **LOW** resulting in a **MODERATE-LOW** visual impact rating.

MVP02 Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield

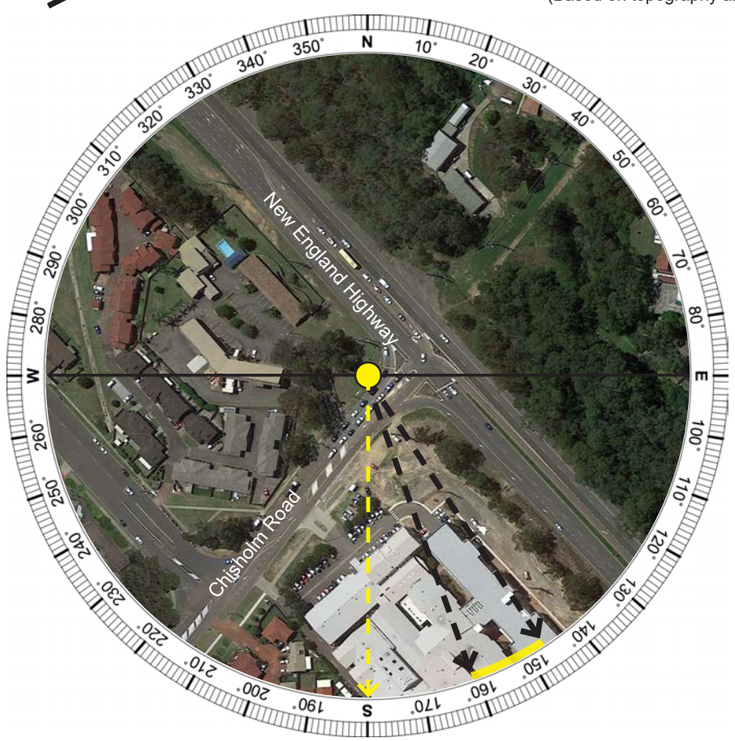
LEGEND

Viewing direction and centre of panorama

Extent of panorama

Direction of Project

Extent of visible Project
(Based on topography alone)



VIEWPOINT MVP02

Viewpoint Summary:	
Location:	Elevation:
Chisholm Road, Ashtonfield	25 m
Coordinates:	Distance to Project:
32°45'50.71"S 151°35'50.70"E	81 m
Viewing Direction:	
South	
Visual Sensitivity:	
MODERATE	
Visual Magnitude:	
MODERATE	
Visual Impact:	
MODERATE	

Aerial Image Source: Google Earth (01/10/2016)

Existing Landscape Character Description:

This viewpoint was taken at the corner of Chisholm Road near the New England Highway. The terrain is characterised as relatively flat with the surrounding land being utilised by a combination of low rise residential and medium density commercial and health infrastructure. Scattered vegetation is visible along property boundaries, and dense vegetation is visible aligning the New England Highway to the east. It is noted that vegetation has been cleared from sections of the intersection along Chisholm Road to allow for appropriate site lines. Therefore, views toward the hospital are available from the intersection in the foreground to the south of view. The New England Highway and the intersection associated with Chisholm Road is visible in the background to the east of the view.

The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as **MODERATE**, due to the viewpoint being in close proximity to residential developments.

Potential Visual Impact:

The development is likely to be a noticeable element in the landscape yet not cause significant modification to the character of the viewpoint due to the small portion over which the change is to occur and the duration it will be experienced.

From this location the introduction of the proposed works are likely to integrate into the existing landscape. The proposed development is unlikely to diminish or modify the existing character.

The extension is likely to be read as part of existing form of the hospital, which is in keeping with the character of the area.

The visual magnitude of change is **MODERATE** resulting in a **MODERATE** visual impact rating.

MVP03 New England Highway, Ashtonfield

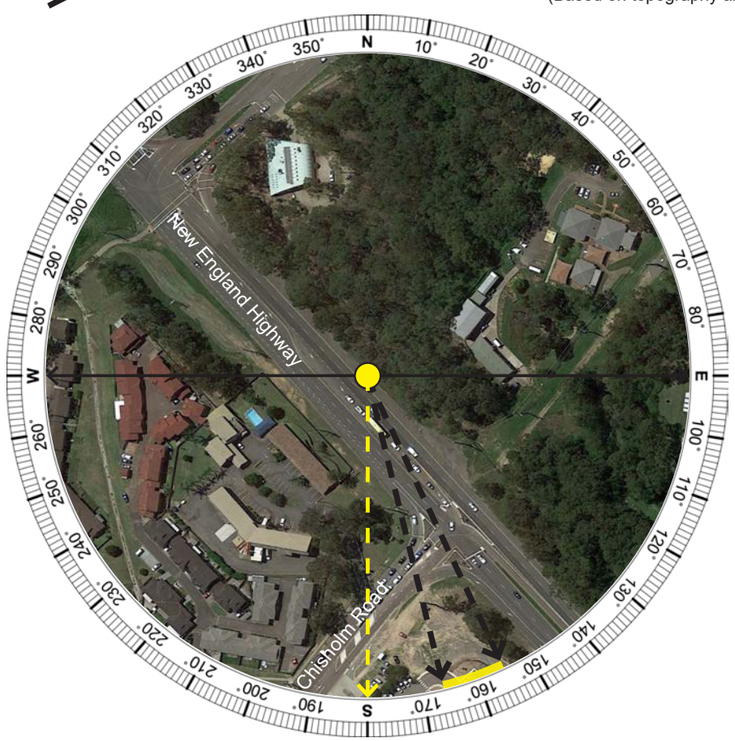
LEGEND

Viewing direction and centre of panorama

Extent of panorama

Direction of Project

Extent of visible Project
(Based on topography alone)



VIEWPOINT MVP03

Viewpoint Summary:	
Location:	Elevation:
New England Highway, Ashtonfield	22 m
Coordinates:	Distance to Project:
32°45'47.82"S 151°35'50.08"E	170 m
Viewing Direction:	
South	
Visual Sensitivity:	
LOW	
Visual Magnitude:	
LOW	
Visual Impact:	
LOW	

Aerial Image Source: Google Earth (01/10/2016)

Existing Landscape Character Description:

This viewpoint was taken along the New England Highway. The terrain is characterised as gently undulating, and rises to the southeast. The highway is a key feature of the landscape and is visible in the foreground of the view. Low-rise hotel accommodation is visible to the south of the view, with the multi story existing health facility visible in the background of the view. Dense vegetation lines the New England Highway to the southeast with generally cleared to scattered vegetation located closer on the approach to the intersection.

The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as **LOW**, due to the viewpoint location being on a highway.

Potential Visual Impact:

From this location, the northwest facade is likely to be visible from this location. Existing vegetation and buildings are likely to assist in fragmenting views toward the Project.

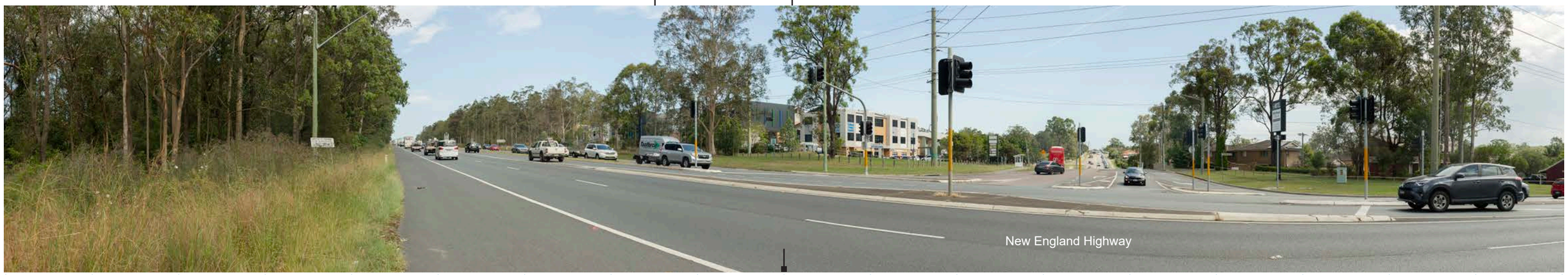
The development is likely to be a visible element in the landscape yet not cause significant modification to the character of the viewpoint due to the small portion over which the change is to occur and the duration it will be experienced.

From this location the introduction of the proposed works are likely to integrate into the existing landscape and be in keeping with that of the wider built form character. The proposed development is unlikely to diminish or modify the existing character.

The visual magnitude of change is **LOW** resulting in a **LOW** visual impact rating.

MVP04 New England Highway, Ashtonfield

Approximate extent of Project



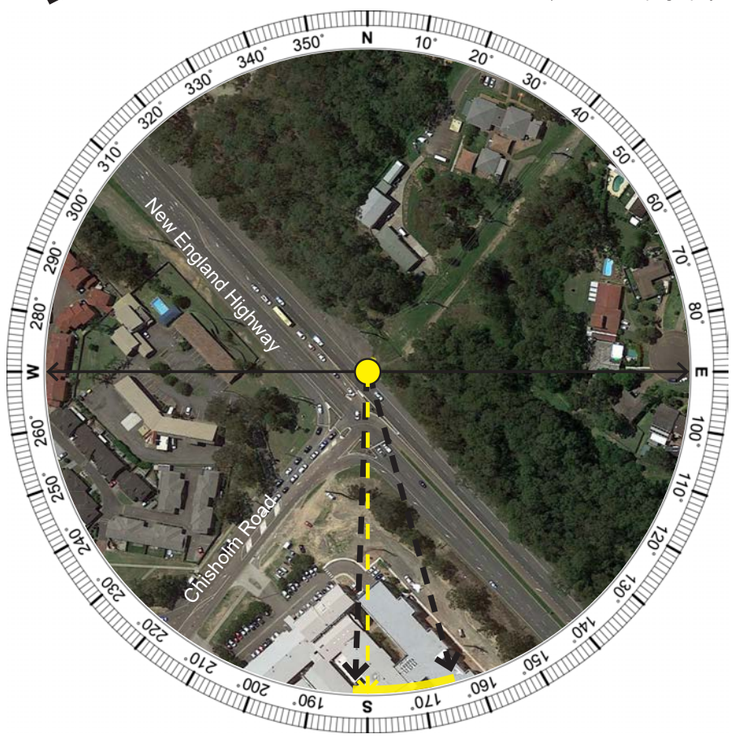
LEGEND

Viewing direction and centre of panorama

Extent of panorama

Direction of Project

Extent of visible Project
(Based on topography alone)



VIEWPOINT MVP04

Viewpoint Summary:	
Location:	Elevation:
New England Highway, Ashtonfield	24 m
Coordinates:	Distance to Project:
32°45'49.51"S 151°35'52.07"E	105 m
Viewing Direction:	
South	
Visual Sensitivity:	
LOW	
Visual Magnitude:	
MODERATE	
Visual Impact:	
MODERATE-LOW	

Aerial Image Source: Google Earth (01/10/2016)

Existing Landscape Character Description:

This viewpoint was taken along the New England Highway, at the intersection of Chisholm Road. The terrain is characterised as relatively flat, rising to the southeast. The highway is a key landscape feature and is visible in the foreground of the view. Low-rise hotel accommodation is visible to the southwest of the view, with the multi story existing health facility visible in the middleground of the view. Dense vegetation lines with New England Highway with the corner of the intersection generally cleared of vegetation to allow for appropriate site lines.

The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as **LOW**, due to the viewpoint location being on a highway.

Potential Visual Impact:

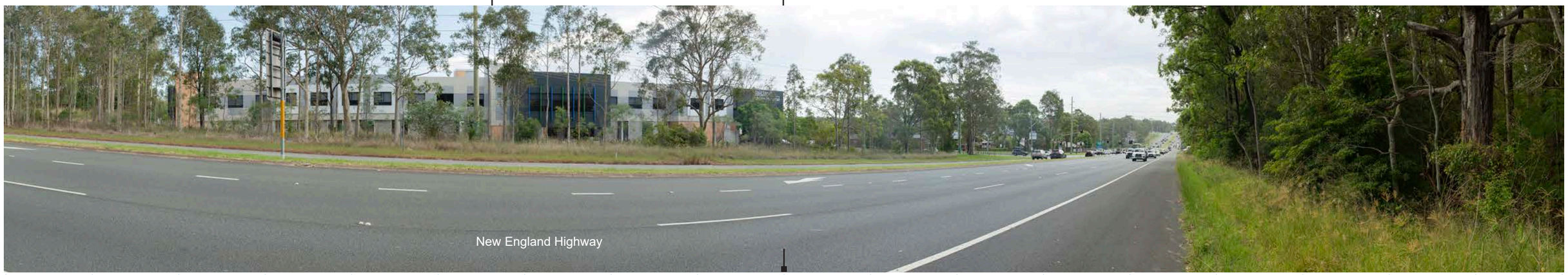
From this location, the northwest facade will likely be visible, with the majority of the Project likely filtered by scattered vegetation lining the New England Highway. Potential visual impacts are likely to be experienced by vehicular receptors stationary at the intersection of Chisholm Road towards Thornton to the southeast.

The magnitude of change from the Project is unlikely to disrupt the key features of the view nor will it become a dominant element within the landscape. Buildings of a similar bulk and scale feature along the highway and are an existing element when traveling through the area. The Project is likely to be read as part of existing form of the hospital.

The visual magnitude of change is **MODERATE** resulting in a **MODERATE-LOW** visual impact rating.

MVP05 New England Highway, Ashtonfield

Approximate extent of Project



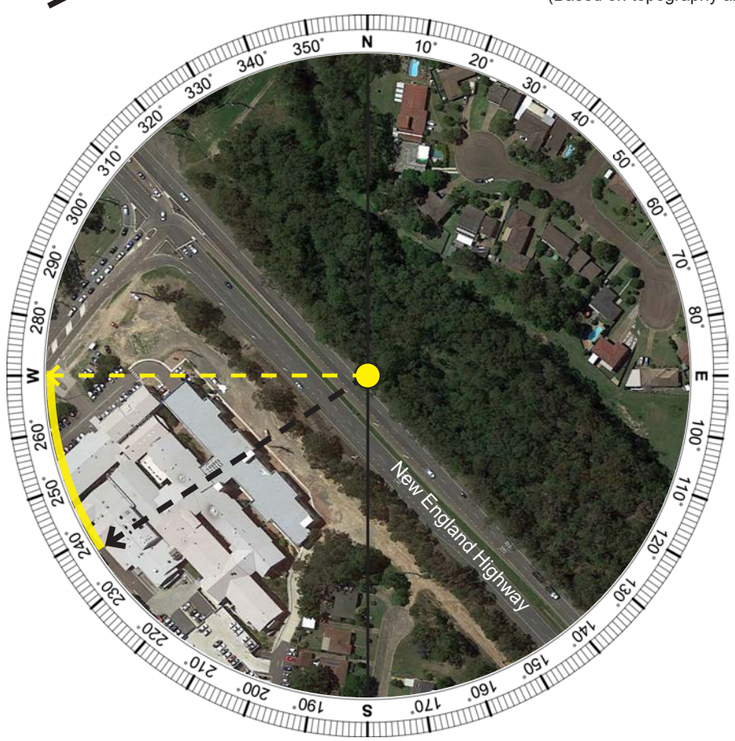
LEGEND

Viewing direction and centre of panorama

Extent of panorama

Direction of Project

Extent of visible Project
(Based on topography alone)



VIEWPOINT MVP05

Viewpoint Summary:	
Location:	Elevation:
New England Highway, Ashtonfield	31 m
Coordinates:	Distance to Project:
32°45'53.10"S 151°35'55.93"E	70 m
Viewing Direction:	
West	
Visual Sensitivity:	
LOW	
Visual Magnitude:	
LOW	
Visual Impact:	
LOW	

Aerial Image Source: Google Earth (01/10/2016)

Existing Landscape Character Description:

This viewpoint was taken along the New England Highway, looking northwest. This area consists of urban developments, including Maitland Private Hospital. The low point to the localised topography is to the northwest along the New England Highway at Two Mile Creek in the far midground of this viewpoint. Scattered to dense vegetation aligns the New England Highway.

The visual sensitivity of this viewpoint has been rated as **LOW**, due to the viewpoint location being on a highway.

Potential Visual Impact:

From this location, scattered vegetation filters views of Maitland Private Hospital from the New England Highway. Due to a combination of speed at which the Project is likely to be viewed and the small portion of view the Project is likely to occur, it is unlikely to be viewed as a dominant feature when travelling along the highway.

There are limited opportunities for view towards the Project outside vehicular transport, due to dense vegetation screening to the northeast and no pathways featuring along the New England Highway in this location. The Project is unlikely to disrupt the landscape character.

The visual magnitude of change is **LOW** resulting in a **LOW** visual impact rating.

6.0 Photomontages

6.1 Photomontage Development

A photomontage is a visualisation based on the superimposition of the Project onto a viewpoint photograph for the purpose of creating a realistic representation of proposed or potential changes to a view. (Horner, 2006). Photomontages have been utilised in this VIA to assist in the visual impact assessment of the Project.

6.1.1 Photomontage Development Process

Photomontages are representations of the Project superimposed onto a photograph of the Project Site. The process for generating these images involves computer generation of a wire frame perspective view of the Project. This process includes:

- Capturing viewpoints with a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV digital SLR through a 50mm fixed focal lens;
- Building a wireframe model of the Project;
- Matching the wireframe model to the viewpoint using rendering software; and
- Rendering the model into viewpoint to a realistic level

The photo simulations are based on photography from sensitive viewpoints that are included within **Section 5.0**. It is noted that a 50mm fixed focal lens closely represents the central field of vision of the human eye.

6.1.2 Photomontage Selection Process

Two (2) photomontages of the Project, including MVP02 (**PM01**) and MVP04 (**PM02**) within the existing context were selected as key views and represent general visibility of the Project (refer to **Figure 10**). Viewpoints selected for the preparation of photomontages are generally those determined to have the greatest potential visual magnitude change and impact in comparison to other viewpoints analysed in **Section 5.0**.

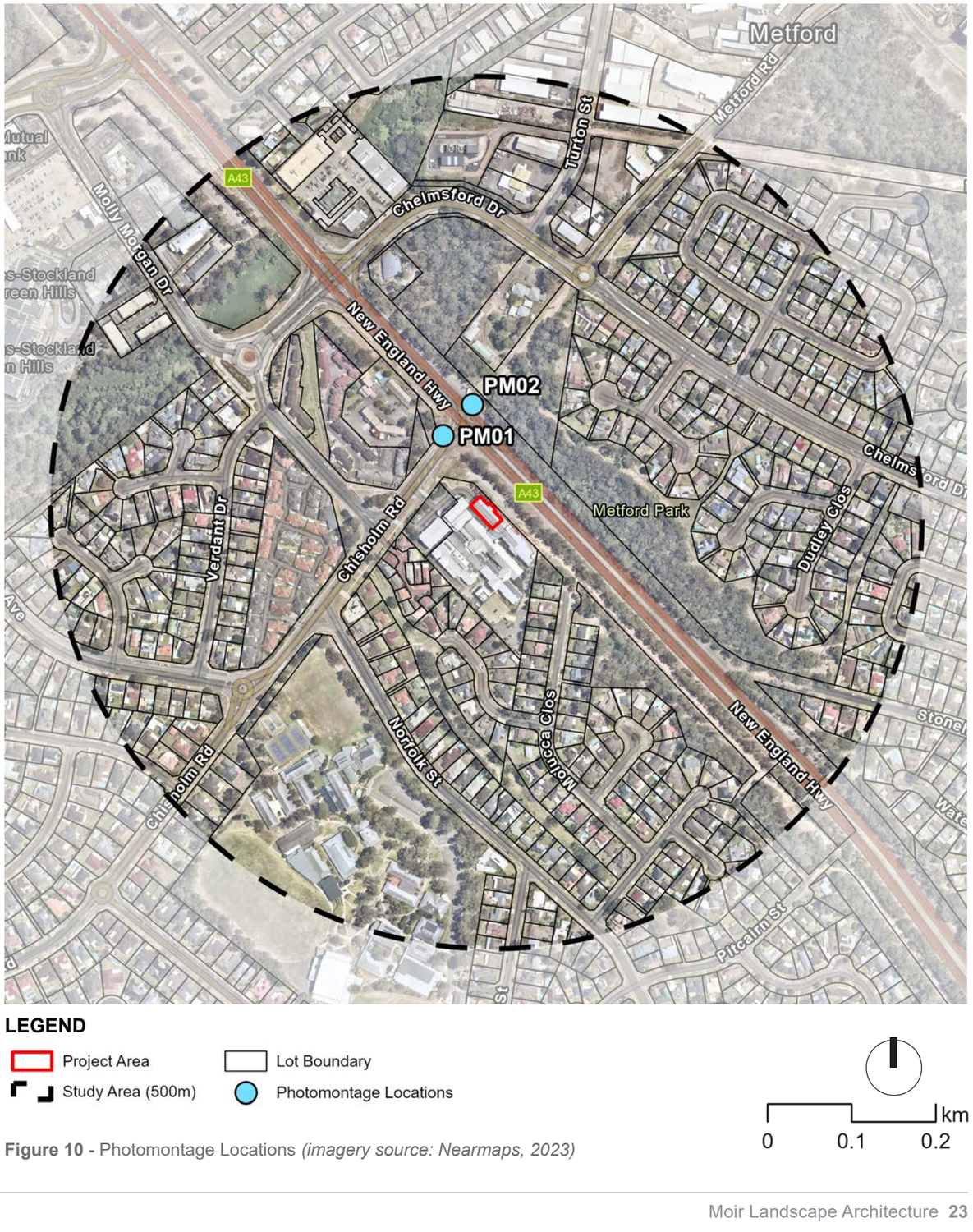


Figure 10 - Photomontage Locations *(imagery source: Nearmaps, 2023)*

PM01 Photomontage 01 - MVP02 (Public Viewpoint)

180º Existing View

180º Proposed View

Photomontage has been developed using a model supplied by the Applicant. Refer to Architect's DWGs for all components, finishes and details.

PM02 Photomontage 02 - MVP04 (Public Viewpoint)

180º Existing View

180º Proposed View

Photomontage has been developed using a model supplied by the Applicant. Refer to Architect's DWGs for all components, finishes and details.

7.0 Summary of Visual Impacts

7.1 Summary of Visual Impacts from Key Viewpoints

In addition to the photographic viewpoint assessment the following section provides an overview of the potential visual impacts surrounding the Project as per the MCC request for VIA requirements. This is by no means an exhaustive description of the visibility from every residence or locality. It is intended to provide an overall assessment of the potential visual impacts on areas potentially affected by the Project.

As shown in the photomontages, the Project is likely to be visible at the intersection of the New England Highway and Chisholm Road, where the highest level of potential visual impact is experienced.

It is to be noted that these impacts will be likely experienced predominantly by vehicular receptors travelling along the New England Highway southbound towards Thornton. Existing vegetation separating the Project and the New England Highway filters views toward the Project when traveling along the highway. Vegetation clearing at the corner of Chisholm Road and the Highway combined with the intersection being a signalised area, means that vehicles may have periods of being stationary in this location creating opportunities for views toward portions of the Project. It is noted that these opportunities are likely to be available for a short period of time and are unlikely to dominate the view.

The addition of one (1) floor to the existing facility is likely be visible, however, it will be read as part of the existing built form and scale of the existing hospital and that of the built form of the nearby commercial establishments. Therefore, the Project is unlikely, due to its form or scale, be viewed as a dominant feature within the Study Area.

7.2 Summary of Visual Impacts on Landscape Character

The Project is likely to be a visible element in the landscape along the New England Highway and Chisholm Road, however, it is unlikely to cause a significant modification to the landscape character. The magnitude of change from the Project is unlikely to disrupt the key existing landscape features and is unlikely become a dominant element within the landscape. Buildings of a similar bulk and scale feature along the highway and are an existing element when traveling through the area. Within the zoned public recreation aligning the New England Highway, there are no formalised recreational facilities identified within, and therefore the impact to the vegetation corridor is negligible.

7.3 Mitigation Measures & Recommendations

The proposed mitigation measures attempts to lessen the visual impact of the Project whilst enhancing the visual character of the surrounding environment. These recommendations seek to achieve a better visual integration of the Project and the maintain the existing visual character of the area. Recommendations includes the:

- Retention of existing vegetation between the Project Area and the New England Highway;
- Consideration of building material to minimise contrast on the existing fabric of MPH; and
- Implementation of native screen planting following construction of the Project to the corner of Chisholm Road and the New England Highway to match the existing native vegetation present along the New England Highway. This is to be developed in line with the Transport for New South Wales Road Design Guidelines.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Conclusion

With all visual impact assessments the objective is not to determine whether the Project is visible or not visible, it is to determine how the Project will impact on existing visual amenity, landscape character and scenic quality. The intent of the VIA report is to determine if there is a potential for a negative impact on these factors, and investigated if and how this impact can be mitigated to the extent that the impact is reduced to an acceptable level.

The existing landscape character defined within the Study Area consists of urban elements including residential and commercial developments, and transport infrastructure. The scenic quality of the Study Area was classified as low, as per frame of reference outlined in the methodology.

The proposed additions to the existing hospital are generally consistent with the existing bulk, scale and design vernacular of the site and the broader area. In most locations, including those viewpoints taken at close range to the Project site, the surrounding medium density developments are already a defining character element of views when traveling along the highway and sections of Chisholm Road. This character is unlikely to be modified or diminished by the proposal.

Dense vegetation corridors lining the highway are also a key characteristic of views from within the area. As the Project is unlikely to require tree removal from the site, this is likely to remain unchanged or diminished as a result of the proposed development. In addition the visual impacts of the Project on the broader context of the area are likely to be minimal. From publicly accessible areas within the broader context of the Project, a combination of vegetation and intervening structures are likely to screen or significantly fragment the views toward the Project.

In addition, it is noted that the visual impacts reduce as you move away from the proposal as it is viewed in the context of other similar developments that characterise the highway.

When implemented with the mitigation recommendations, the visual impact upon views from residences and the public domain for the Project would be Moderate - Low to Low and would be acceptable within the existing surrounding landscape character.

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