

Proposed hotel, residential & retail development and clinical facility
for Royal Far West, Manly

May 2011

Prepared for **Royal Far West**



Visual Impact Assessment

Cover image: View from site from South Steyne

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1 Introduction

This document is the Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Architectus. The report provides an assessment of the potential visual impact of the proposed retail/residential, hotel and Royal Far West development at 19-21 South Steyne, Manly when viewed from the public domain from a variety of points within the immediate and wider context.

The Visual Impact Assessment accompanies the Environmental Assessment and responds directly to the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements, issued on 23 December 2010. This Visual Impact Assessment includes photomontages and photos of the site and proposed development from the surrounding area, which serve to illustrate the potential impact of the proposed development on the existing visual environment.

1.1 Site and location

The proposed development is located within the Manly Village Town Centre approximately 16 kilometres north-east of Central Sydney. The site is bounded by South Steyne, Wentworth Street and Victoria Parade. The Manly Village Town Centre is a constantly active, prominent tourist destination and provides a mix of residential, retail and commercial development. It is estimated that Manly attracts 6 million visitors per year. (<http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/Sustainable-Tourism.html>) **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below illustrate the site in the context of the surrounding area.

The site is in a prominent location within the town centre, positioned one street south of, and parallel to, the Corso. The Corso stretches from Manly Wharf to Manly Beach and is the retail and commercial hub of Manly. As the main pedestrian link between the beach and the ferry/bus/cab terminus, it is highly trafficked by both residents and visitors. A number of small upmarket cafes and restaurants line South Steyne on either side of the site utilising the ocean views, while hotels are dotted along the beachfront, servicing the tourism industry. Directly behind the site is the Manly Village Public School.

1.2 Local context

Manly is a town centre located on the valley flat surrounded by peaks at Fairlight, Balgowlah and Sydney Harbour National Park. The town centre has a walkable network of streets, laneways and arcades flanked by water on either side. The site sits in the middle of the retail and commercial district.

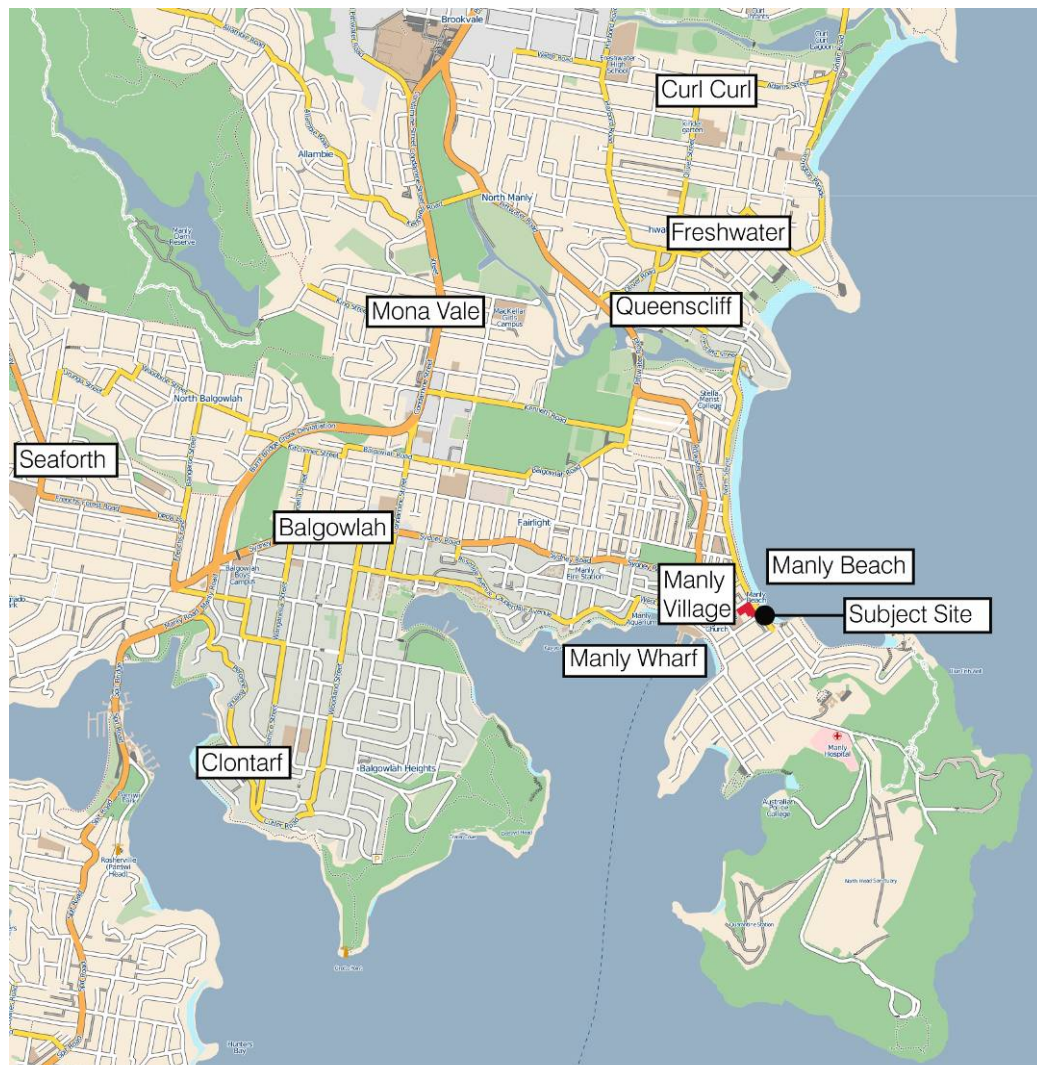


Figure 1 Local context of the subject site and Manly
Source: Nearmap <http://www.nearmap.com/>



Figure 2 Aerial view of the subject site and the surrounding area
Source: Google Earth 2007

2 Methodology

This visual impact assessment has been carried out by:

- Field research;
- Establishment of assessment criteria;
- Analysis of the existing visual environment in terms of immediate, local and regional contexts to select important viewing locations;
- Visual simulations (photomontages) of the proposed development from important vantage points in the public domain within the visual catchment;
- Description of the visual impact of the proposal from selected viewing points in terms of visibility and visual absorption capacity resulting in the visual impact for each view.

This visual impact assessment considers views from the immediate vicinity (short range – within 200m of the site), local (mid-range – 200-500m from the site) and regional (long range – greater than 500m from the site).

The views have been chosen to show a view of the development from designated viewing points at a single moment in time. All views are photographed with a 50mm lens in order to approximate the normal human field of vision. The use of a single digital photograph has also been used to ensure accurate comparison as well as ensuring the image does not reflect multiple views and bias the assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development from the key immediate, local and regional vantage points.

Accordingly, views in the immediate vicinity of the site might only show a portion of the development in the streetscape view while wider local and regional views may provide an indication of the overall building form and the impact on views of the wider Manly town centre and skyline in the context of the broader local and regional built form.

The visual stimulations are presented in **Section 6** of this report.

Preparation of the visual stimulations involved the following steps:

- Digital photographs were taken from each of the selected viewing points in the direction of the proposed mixed use development.
- Relative levels (RLs) were taken from a topographic map to ensure the accurate insertion of the 3D model into the photograph.
- A computer generated 3D model of the proposed development was prepared;
- The 3D model was inserted into the photographs from the key vantage points, illustrating the likely visual impact.

3 Description of the project

The proposal includes:

- Demolition of existing school, accommodation and clinical facility
- Construction of new retail/residential buildings along the beachfront
- Construction of a new 'Royal Far West' building incorporating admin, clinical, education and accommodation facilities.
- Construction of a new hotel building
- Retention of the existing heritage 'Drummond House,' with the addition of a children's play area replacing the non-original dining hall
- Conversion of existing heritage houses from clinical to residential uses

The proposal sits comfortably within its context both in terms of scale and of use. The retail along South Steyne will complete the missing piece in the thriving strip along the beachfront whilst the hotel behind will service the demand for tourism accommodation. As seen in Figure 4, the proposed building heights are consistent with its surrounds. The Royal Far West facility is consolidated along Wentworth Street and allows for ample separation around the existing heritage building and appropriate scale in relation to the adjacent primary school.



Figure 3 Ground floor plan

4 Existing visual environment

4.1 Land use

The Manly town centre is generally located between Raglan St and Ashburner St and bounded by Manly Cove and Manly beach with activity intensifying towards the Corso which is considered to be the main street of Manly. The town centre contains a mix of retail, commercial, residential and hotel developments, most of which are generally below six storeys.

The scattered residential buildings along the ridgeline, dense vegetation and the ridgeline itself, provide a strong backdrop for visual absorption to development in the Manly town centre.

Within the heart of the town centre there are only linear stretches of open space located along the esplanades. Other larger open space areas are Gilbert Park and Ivanhoe Park to the north and Sydney Harbour National Park to the south.

4.2 Vegetation

The Manly area and surrounds are generally densely vegetated towards the foreshore. This dense vegetation along with the undulating topography means this site has limited visibility from a significant part of the surrounding area.

The town centre is characterised by mature Norfolk Island Pines that provide significant screening to the beachfront, making the buildings beneath the tree tops almost completely recede from a distance which leaves only the taller buildings clearly perceptible.

4.3 Landform

Manly is located at the bottom of a natural bowl as the ridges fold down to meet the ocean. The surrounding suburbs of Fairlight, Balgowlah, Balgowlah heights and Queenscliff are all located on topographic high points and provide spectacular views down to the Manly Town Centre. Manly is also visible from Mackillop Park in Freshwater



Figure 4 Topographic map of the Manly area
The contours are shown on the topographic map. The thick broken black line represents the notional potential extent of view.

4.4 Existing built form

The tallest existing building on the site has a maximum height of 19 metres measured from the top of the lift overrun. The building is solid in terms of its design and materials. From the beachfront opposite, the top three levels are visible.

Looking from the beachfront, the double row of Norfolk Island Pines along the esplanade provide vegetated cover that screens much of the built form below the tree canopy. Mature pines also line both Wentworth St and Victoria Parade. Many of the buildings that surround the site contribute to the character of the suburb and have active street frontages. From these points, the monolithic nature of the clinical building facing the street does not complement the Manly town centre. From viewing points within the Manly town centre, the building fronting South Steyne does not contribute to the streetscape and is not in character with the fine urban grain of the surrounding streets, laneways and active retail areas.

In regards to scale, there is a variety of approaches and uses. The majority of the height and bulk occurs along the Corso and extends down along the foreshore to the Sebel Hotel near the Manly Surf Club. Behind that are predominantly 4 storey residential apartments and Manly Village Public School which has a maximum height of 3 storeys and a large open space between the classrooms and the Royal Far West site.



Figure 5 Existing context model

As can be seen in figure 8, there are numerous buildings within the Manly Town Centre that have significant heights ranging up to 16 storeys, many of them being hotels and holiday apartments. Directly opposite to the north of the site is an 8 storey retail and commercial building and to the south is the 9 storey Sebel Hotel.

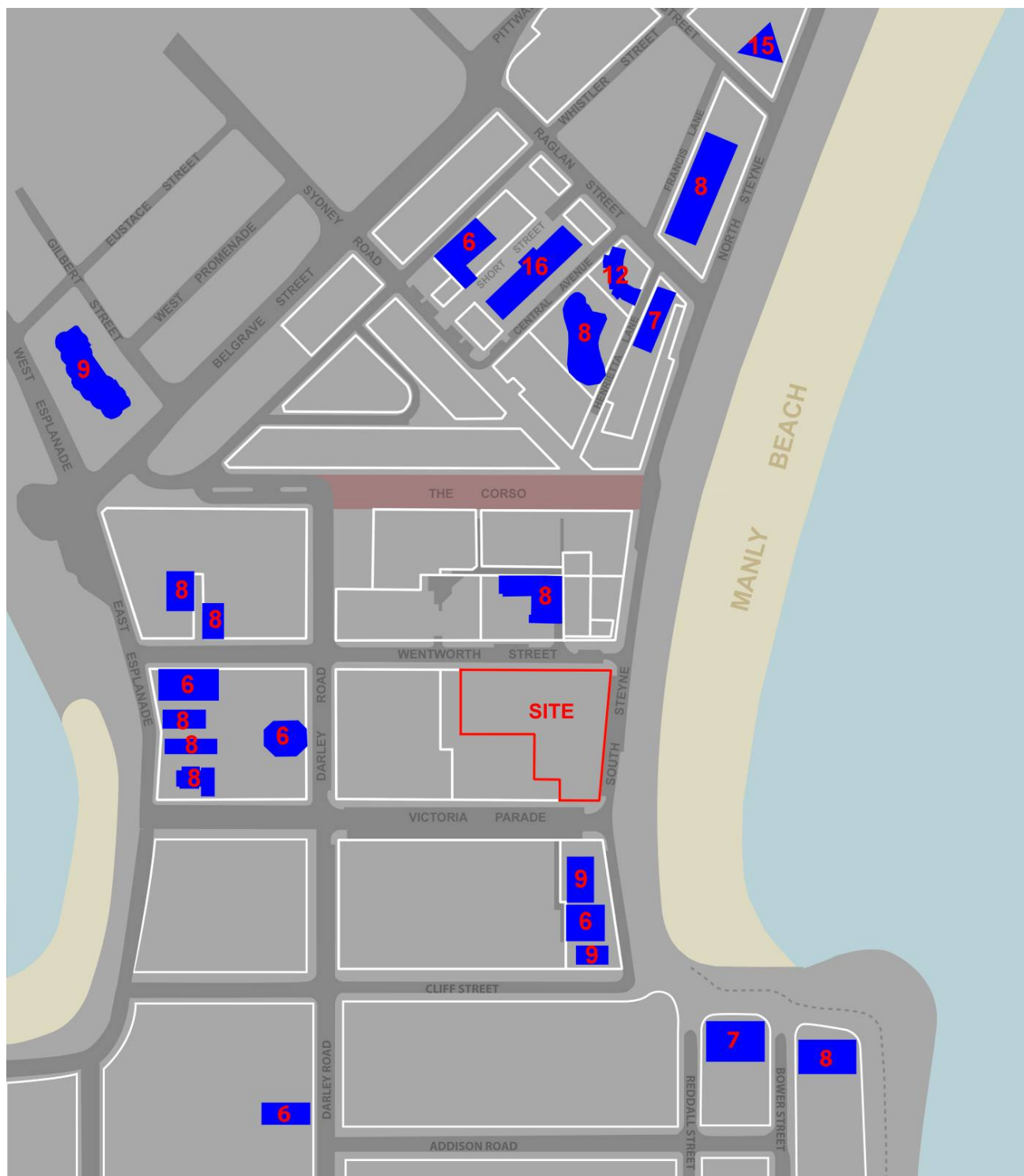


Figure 6 Plan showing surrounding buildings with significant height

The following building profile drawings along South Steyne, Wentworth Street and Victoria Parade illustrate the location of taller buildings within the vicinity of the proposal. They also serve to demonstrate, albeit in a simple and indicative manner, that the proposal sits comfortably within a collection of taller buildings present within the area.

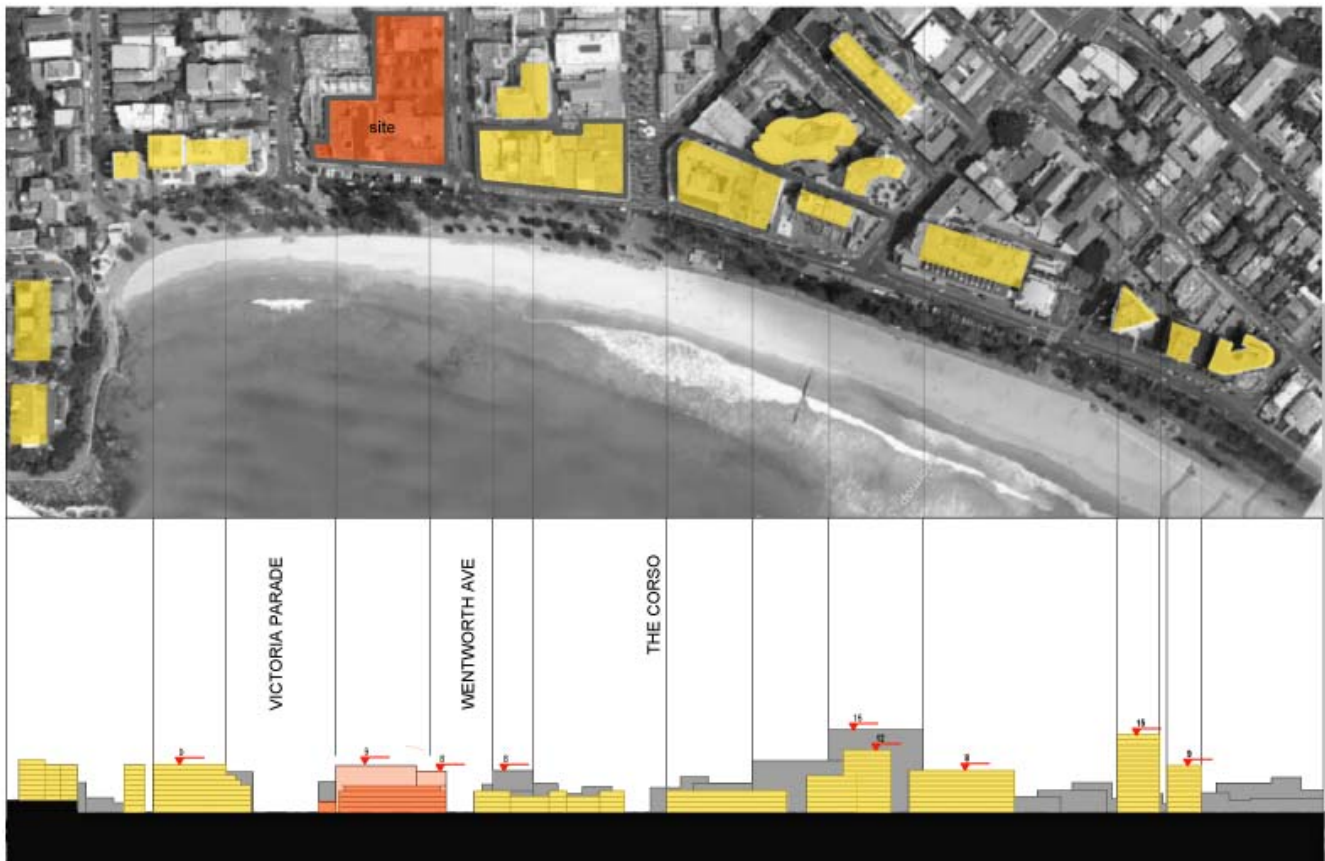


Figure 7 South Steyne Contextual Elevation

In this elevation, the site is shown in red. Foreground buildings are shown in yellow, while those in the background are shown in grey

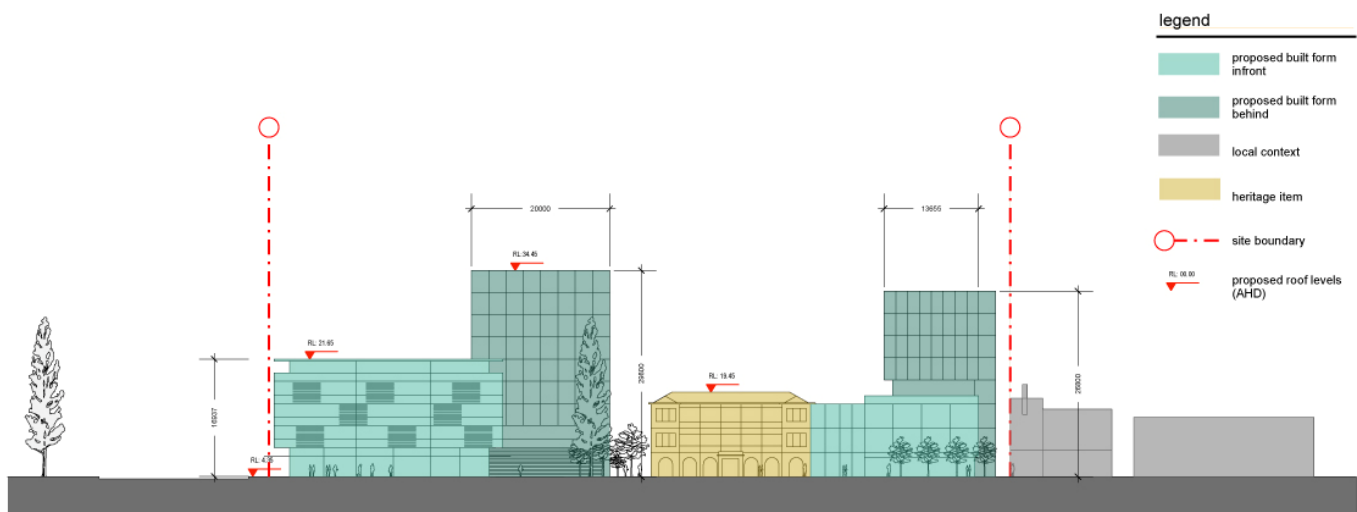


Figure 8 Wentworth Avenue Contextual Elevation
In this elevation, green buildings represent proposed new buildings on the site, yellow are retained buildings on the site. Dark grey represents existing buildings in the foreground, while light grey buildings are in the background of the elevation

5 Viewing zones

In order to establish the potential visual impacts of the proposed development, the viewing zones have been separated into three components:

- Regional views – long range (> 500m).
- Local area – mid-range (200m – 500m);
- Immediate vicinity – short range (< 200m)

These viewing zones are illustrated in **Figure 9**. As shown, the site is visible from McKillop Park, Freshwater (2km from the site), and from locations on the ridgelines and extremities of Balgowlah, Fairlight and parts of Balgowlah Heights.



Figure 9 Map of viewing zones

5.1 View selection

Within the above identified viewing zones, views are selected based on their relative importance and likelihood to be of value to the community for a variety of leisure, recreation, residential or employment activities. The typically represent locations where a relatively significant number of people are likely to congregate or pass, and potentially, experience a view of the proposal.

5.2 Regional views

Manly town centre is visible from a number of points along the Manly/Queenscliff beachfront as well as being visible from more northern beaches and lookouts such as McKillop Park. Additionally, due to its scale and iconic pine tree lined esplanade, Manly is clearly recognisable from long distances and from the Tasman Sea as shown in **Figure 10**.

The view of the proposed development within the town centre will be seen within the backdrops of other buildings with similar scales and surrounding dense built form. This will reduce the overall visual impact of the proposed development on. The landscape and existing building form visually absorbs the majority of the building on these long distance views.

The regional views comprise those greater than 500 metres from the subject site. The regional views have been selected as representative of views from various points in and around Manly, as well as from elevated vantage points such as Fairlight, Queenscliff and Freshwater. These regional views include:

- View 1 – McKillop Park, Freshwater
- View 2 – Queenscliff baths
- View 3 – Beachfront, Queenscliff Beach
- View 4 – Sydney Road
- View 5 – Balgowlah Heights
- View 6 – Fairy Bower Lookout

Figure 10 below shows the location of these regional views. Each view is also illustrated and described in the following sections.

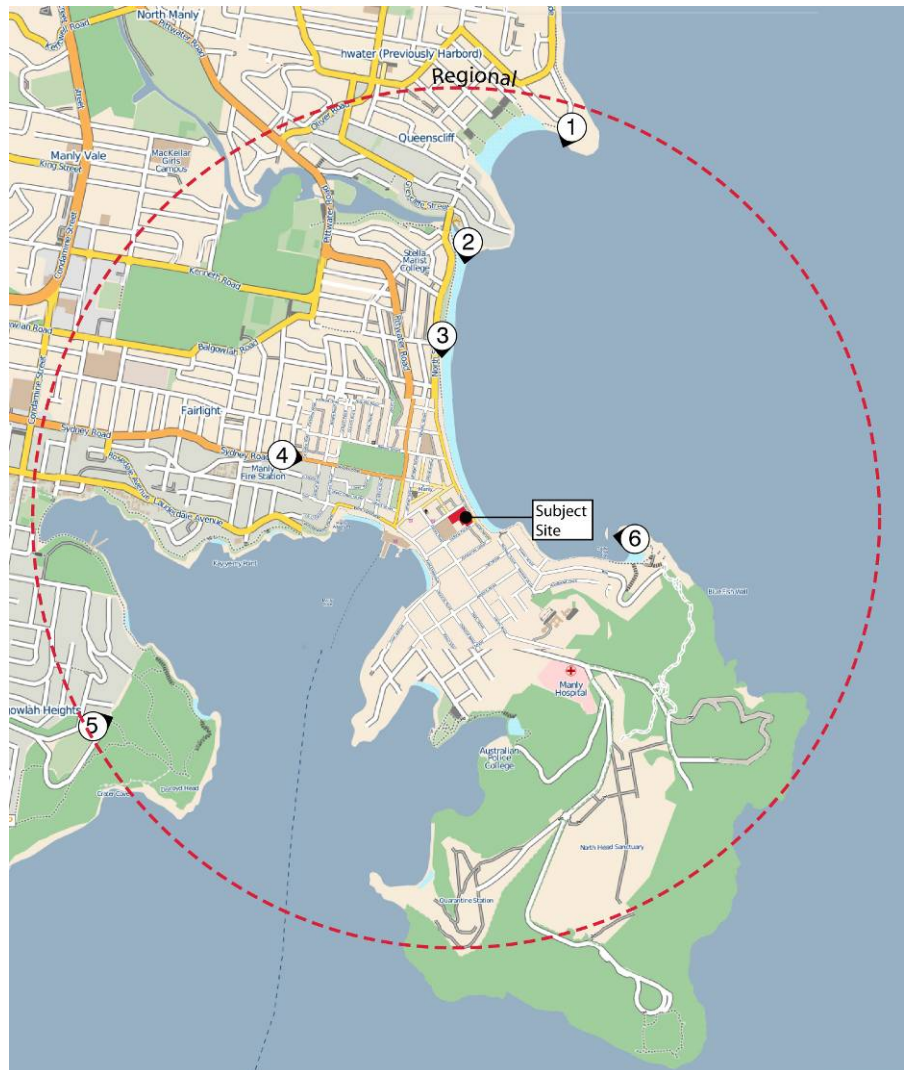


Figure 10 Regional viewing points

View 1 – McKillop Park, Freshwater

This view is taken from McKillop Park, Freshwater between Freshwater beach and South Curl Curl beach. It is an important view as it provides an oncoming view to Manly town centre and it's on a popular walking track and vantage point. For these reasons, this view is significant although it is 2km from the site.

This view is a stationary viewing point. Viewing from the ocean would be rare as the vessels would be a significant distance away from the shoreline.



Figure 11 View 1 – McKillop Park lookout, Freshwater

View 2 – Queenscliff Baths, Queenscliff

The view from Queenscliff Baths allows a full panorama of the beachfront stretching to Shelly Beach and around to The Sydney Harbour National Park at North Head Point.

This view would be highly trafficked by people on Queenscliff beach (both in the water and on the sand) as well as pool attendees and residents using the walkway from Queenscliff Rd down to the sand.



Figure 12 View 2 – Queenscliff Baths, Queenscliff

View 3 – Beachfront, Queenscliff

This view is from the sand at Queenscliff looking south towards the site. Again, the view beyond the sand is heavily screened by vegetation. Photos from both the beachfront and the walkway parallel have been included as many people use the walkway without stepping onto the sand.



Figure 13 View 3 – Beachfront, Queenscliff

View 4 – Sydney Road

Sydney Road is the main vehicular approach to Manly characterised by its steep descent into the town centre and high flow of traffic. This view, taken from Parkview Rd, shows the site in the distance nestled amongst existing buildings. Private residences in the area would also have access to comparable views.



Figure 14 View 4 – Sydney Road

View 5 – Balgowlah Heights, lookout

Part of the Sydney Harbour National Park in Balgowlah Heights, this view is a prominent lookout adjacent to the popular Tania Park and clearly shows the extent of the Manly town centre flanked by both the Tasman Sea and North Harbour. Similar views would be available to surrounding private residences.



Figure 15 View 5 – Balgowlah Heights

View 6 - Fairy Bower Lookout

The walking circuit around fairy bower is an extremely popular trail for both locals and tourists. This view is one of many vantage points along the trail that look back onto Manly town centre. Again, the row of Norfolk Island Pines screen the beachfront from rear buildings whilst also creating a strong local identity.



Figure 16 View 6 – Fairy Bower Lookout

5.3 Local views

Local views are those within between 200 metres and 500 metres of the subject site.

The Manly Town Centre is generally a visually constrained environment (with the exception of the beachfront). The topography of the local area reduces the overall visibility in the town centre, particularly from areas beyond the ridgelines to the south and south west.

The selected local views have been chosen due to their significance for visitors and residents in the local environment and because they are locations that experience a high level of pedestrian traffic. Due to a lack of viewing opportunities in the defined local area, there are only 3 identified local views. These include:

- View 7 – Queenscliff Beachfront
- View 8 – Ferry approach to Manly
- View 9 – Manly Sailing Club

The location of these views is shown in **Figure 17**.

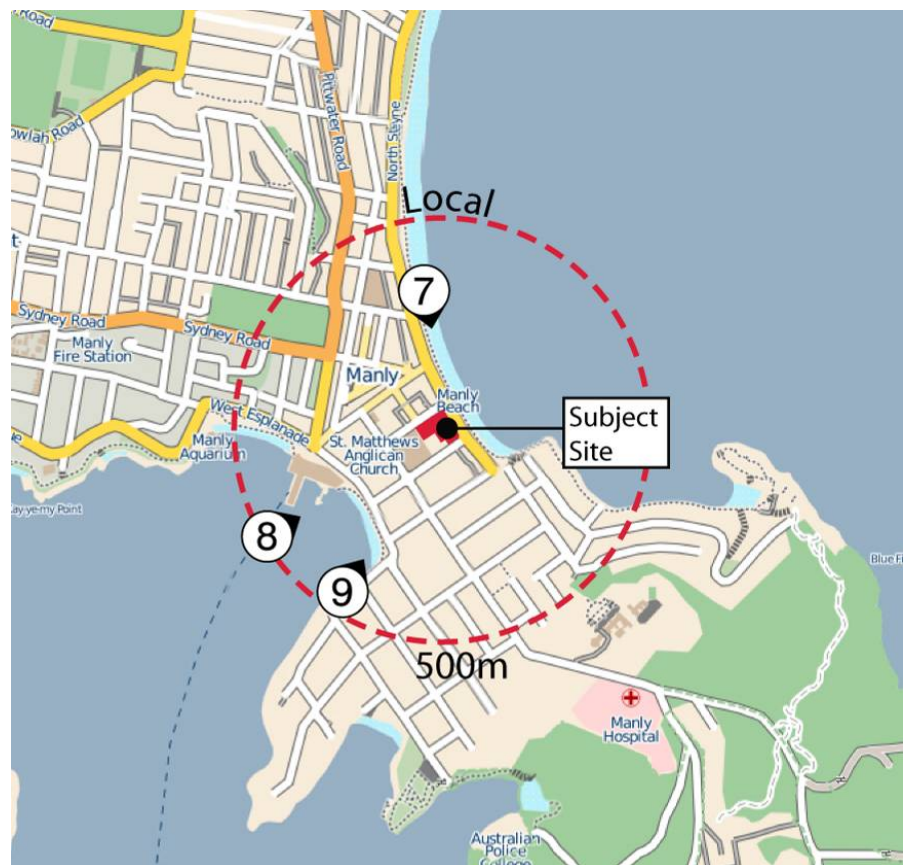


Figure 17 Local viewing points

Local views are those between 200 metres – 500 metres from the subject site.

The significance of the chosen local views is discussed below.

View 7 – Queenscliff Beachfront

This view is taken from the beach near the surf school to the north of the Manly town centre. As can be seen in the panorama, this section of the beach also provides facilities for beach volleyball. During summer, the beach is extremely populated.



Figure 18 View 7 – View towards the Corso from Queenscliff Beach

View 8 – Ferry Approach from Manly

The iconic ferry ride from Circular Quay to Manly transports thousands of commuters and tourists between Manly and the city every day. For many people, this view is the first glimpse of Manly they see. A dining precinct surrounds the wharf in the foreground with taller residential buildings and mixed use buildings along the East Esplanade behind.



Figure 19 View 8 – Ferry Approach to Manly

View 9 – Manly Sailing Club

The Manly Sailing Club is around the East Esplanade on the way to Little Manly Cove. A number of recreation vessels are moored in the cove and a restaurant sits jutting out over the water. The site can clearly be seen in the break between the Norfolk Pine trees.



Figure 20 View 9 – Manly Sailing Club

5.4 Views in the immediate vicinity

The views in the immediate vicinity of the subject site are those within the Manly town centre and Manly beachfront. This area is generally dense with one to five storey buildings, and has high site coverage. Open space in the immediate vicinity of the site is only found along the foreshore.

The Manly Town Centre is generally a visually constrained environment (with the exception of the beachfront). The flat topography of the local area combines with a dense built form to restrict visibility to immediately adjacent areas. The site is most prominent from its surrounding street frontages and the beach, with less visibility existing from more distant locations where streets and built form align to provide a visual corridor to the site.

The identified views in the immediate vicinity include:

- View 10 – Shelly Beach walk
- View 11 – View from Bower St
- View 12 – View from Reddall St
- View 13 – Manly Beach/Corso street crossing;
- View 14 – Manly Beachfront
- View 15 – South Steyne Crossing at Wentworth Street
- View 16 – Sebel Hotel, South Steyne;

- View 17 – Corner of Wentworth St and Darley Rd;
- View 18 – Darley Rd, adjacent to the School.
- View 19 – East Esplanade, at pedestrian crossing
- View 20 – Rialto Square;

Figure 21 shows the location of the selected views in the immediate vicinity (within 200 metres of the subject site).



Figure 21 Views in the immediate vicinity (>200m)

The area is all on the flat and is bounded by the Corso

These views have been selected as they represent key points within the Manly town centre that have high levels of pedestrian traffic or are a gathering point within the town centre and therefore, will potentially be impacted by the proposed development. The visual impact of the proposed development on the immediate vicinity is discussed below.

View 10 – Walk to Shelly Beach

This path is an extremely popular recreation track and is the main pedestrian and cyclist route to Shelly Beach.

This view is the first glimpse of Manly town centre and Manly beach as pedestrians walk around the headland from Shelly Beach.



Figure 22 View 10 – Walk to Shelly Beach, panoramic view

View 11 – Bower St

This view was taken from the top of the staircase that joins the Surf Club footpath with Bower St. Bower St and surrounding streets are predominantly residential and this path is a key pedestrian connection to the Manly town centre and therefore an important vista. Views from private residences in this area would gain similar, yet elevated views that are unscreened by vegetation.



Figure 23 View 11 – View from the top of the Bower St staircase, panoramic view

View 12 – Reddall St

This view is taken from the end of Reddall St and looks over the surf club and stretches all the way to the headland at Queenscliff. Again, this view would be primarily seen by local residents. Unlike Bower St, this view is uninterrupted by vegetation.

This would be viewed as a stationary view from the residential properties, but more frequently as a transient view as people head down towards the Bower St staircase on the way to the beach/Manly town centre.



View 24 – Reddall St looking over the Surf Club, panoramic view

View 13 - Manly Beach/Corso street crossing

This view by far gains the most pedestrian traffic and some vehicular traffic. This crossing marks the iconic intersection of the beach esplanade and the Corso whilst also plays host to the heart of numerous Manly Council run festivals. On the Corso side, numerous cafes and restaurants and an ice creamery stretch towards the site. The esplanade carries a constant stream of tourists, take-away diners, people exercising and beachgoers from Queenscliff around to Shelly Beach.



Figure 25 View 13 – Manly Beach/the Corso street crossing

View 14 – Manly Beachfront

This view is also integral as the beach at this point is often teeming with swimmers and sunbathers.

Dominated by rows of Norfolk Island Pines, the existing building is clearly visible underneath the tree canopy.



Figure 26 View 14 – Manly Beachfront,

View 15 –Sebel Hotel, South Steyne

This view was taken from South Steyne near the intersection of Ashburner St looking north towards the site. This stretch of road has been increasingly popular due to the Manly wine bar and gazebo under the Sebel hotel leaving the Royal Far West site as being the missing piece in the South Steyne dining stretch.



Figure 27 View 15 – Sebel Hotel, South Steyne

View 16 – South Steyne crossing at Wentworth Street

The pedestrian crossing at Wentworth Street is the major non signalised crossing linking the beachfront with the town centre and the closest crossing to the street furniture and pavilions along the boardwalk commonly used for take away dining. Beyond this crossing heading south is also the first opportunity for parking along South Steyne after the corso.



Figure 28 View 16 – South Steyne Crossing at Wentworth Street

View 17 - Corner of Darley Rd and Wentworth Street

Taken from the corner of Darley Rd and Wentworth Street, this view captures the corner of the Manly Village Public School and the back of the Royal Far West site. This view will be significantly impacted as the school site is currently so exposed.



Figure 29 View 17 – Corner of Wentworth St and Darley Rd, single frame view

View 18 –Darley Rd, adjacent to Manly Village Public School

This view is taken looking across Darley Rd onto the school grounds. Beyond the line of trees screening the school from the street, the site opens out to clearly reveal Royal Far West in the background. Manly Village Public School is one of the few places in Manly town centre that has significant open space and low lying buildings.



Figure 30 View 18 – Darley Road, adjacent to Manly Village Public School

View 19 – East Esplanade at Wentworth Street



Figure 31 – East Esplanade at Wentworth Street

View 20 – Rialto Square;

A glimpse of the existing Royal Far West building can be seen down Rialto Lane which runs perpendicular to the site from the Corso through to Wentworth Street. There is a steady stream of pedestrians that use this lane and numerous who pass the lane as they travel down the Corso. The view widens out substantially within Rialto Square, which is the location of several restaurant's and cafés, as well as public amenities and a pedestrian entrance to Council's basement car park.



Figure 32 - View from Rialto Square

6 Visual impact assessment

This section of the report assesses the visual impact of the proposed development on the selected views described in **Section 3** against the criteria described in described in the following section.

6.1 Assessment criteria

Our approach to rating the visual impact of the proposed mixed use development was based on the following two factors:

- Visibility; and
- Visual absorption capacity of the landscape/built environment.

The application of these two factors is described below.

6.1.1 Visibility

Visibility is a measure of the extent to which particular activities/ components of a proposal may be visible from surrounding areas, the relative number of viewers, the period of view, viewing distance and context of view. Rationale for this aspect of visual assessment is that if a development is not visible, the impact is nil. If the number of people who would potentially see the development is low, then the visual impact would be lower than if a large number of people had the same view. If the viewer experiences the view for a long period of time then the visual impact is greater than if the viewer only has a glimpse of the development.

For the purposes of this study, categories of visibility have been defined as:

- High (H) – where a large number of people would see the proposed buildings at close distances over a long period of time;
- Moderate (M) – where a moderate number of people would see the proposed buildings at medium distance over a moderate period of time; or a large number of people would see it over a short period of time; or a small number of people would see it over a long period of time; and
- Low (L) – where the proposal was essential not visible or of negligible visibility.

The procedure for assessing visibility involved:

- Determination of various categories and situations from which components of the proposed development could potentially be visible (e.g. person in the public domain, motorist, resident); and
- Field inspection to determine the extent of visibility.

For the purpose of this study the quantitative criteria outlined in **Table 1** have been determined and used in the visibility assessment.

Table 1 Visibility assessment criteria

Criteria	Definition
Relative number of viewers	
High	> 1,000 people per day
Moderate	100-1,000 people per day
Low	< 100 people per day
Period of view	
Long term (high)	> 120 minutes
Moderate term (moderate)	1-120 minutes
Short term (low)	< 1 minute

6.1.2 Visual absorption capacity

'Visual absorption capacity' is an estimation of the capacity of the landscape and built environment to absorb development without creating significant visual change resulting in a reduction in scenic or visual quality. This is usually dependent of vegetation cover, landform and existing built form and this is influenced by the level of visual contrast between the proposed development and the existing elements within the landscape.

Town centres such as Manly have a high number of mid-rise buildings of one (1) to five (5) storeys and high site coverage. Manly, similar to other town centres located on Sydney's foreshores, is located below several ridgelines. This gives centres such as Manly a high visual absorption capacity from some directions due to the limited availability of uninterrupted views and the visual impact of existing structures. The mature Norfolk Island Pines along the beachfront also assist in absorbing much of the visual impact of existing structures.

The degree of contrast between the various elements of the development and the existing landscape setting in which they are located results from the scale, shape, colour, texture and reflectivity of the development. For the purpose of this study, the quantitative criteria outlined in **Table 2**, has been determined and used in the assessment of visual absorption capacity.

Table 2 Visual absorption capacity criteria

Criteria	Definition
High	Existing landscape and built environment able to absorb development. Low degree of visual contrast will result.
Moderate	Existing landscape able to absorb some development. Some visual contrast will result.
Low	Existing landscape unable to absorb development. High degree of visual contrast will result.

6.1.3 Visual impact rating

Table 3 provides a matrix that compares the visibility rating with the visual absorption capacity rating to determine the overall visual impact rating.

Table 3 Visual impact rating matrix

The overall visual impact rating was determined by comparing the visibility rating and visual absorption capacity rating.

	Visibility	Low	Medium	High
Visual absorption capacity		Visual impact rating		
High		Low	Low	Moderate
Medium		Low	Moderate	High
Low		Moderate	High	High

6.2 Visual impact on regional views

The visual impact on regional views has been assessed in the order below by presenting the existing view followed by a photomontage including the proposed development in the existing view. A table detailing each view is included which evaluates the visual impact of the nominated view, provides an assessment and commentary of the impacts and compares the Preferred Project scheme with the previous Environmental Assessment scheme. The views include:

- View 1 – McKillop Park, Freshwater
- View 2 – Queenscliff baths
- View 3 – Beachfront, Queenscliff Beach
- View 4 – Sydney Road
- View 5 – Balgowlah Heights
- View 8 – Fairy Bower Lookout

View 1 – McKillop Park, Freshwater

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 33 Existing and Proposed views from McKillop Park, Freshwater

View 1 – McKillop Park, Freshwater

Viewing situation	McKillop Park, Freshwater.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	User of the Park for sightseeing etc or users of the coastal walk passing through the area
Likely period of view	moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate
Distance of view	2 km
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This long distance view contains a wide variety of elements that contribute to totally absorb the impact of the proposed building. • Visitors to the location are most likely to be utilising the coastal walk or moving between the car park and Freshwater Beach and baths. • The view takes in all of the Manly Bay from North Head to Freshwater and is characterised by the sweep of the beach and Norfolk Island Pines located on the beachfront. The proposed building is located below these trees and is all but invisible.

View 2 – Queenscliff Baths

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 34 Existing and Proposed views from Queenscliff Baths

View 2 – View from Queenscliff Baths

Viewing situation	Queenscliff Baths, at the northern end of Queenscliff Beach.
Category of view	Public View offering a significant outlook of the Manly-Queenscliff Beachfront.
Context of viewer	Users of the baths and residents accessing the beach from Queenscliff headland via the adjacent path and stairs
Likely period of view	moderate
Relative number of viewers	moderate
Distance of view	1.4 km
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view takes in all of the Manly Bay from North Head to Freshwater and is characterised by the sweep of the beach and Norfolk Island Pines located on the beachfront. The proposed building is located below these trees and is all but invisible. Experience of the view is variable and organised into peaks, with the greatest numbers during periods of good weather and on weekends and holidays.

View 3 – View from Queenscliff Beach

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 35 Existing and Proposed views from Queenscliff Beach

View 3 – View from Queenscliff Beach

Viewing situation	Queenscliff Beach around the typical patrol flagged area.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Users of the beach
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	1.2 km
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the view is likely to be secondary in relation to the main purpose of being in the location (use of the surf beach for swimming/sunbathing). • A longer and more focused view toward the proposal is likely to result while moving southward along the beachfront path. Given the angle and location of the view in this respect, the impact is likely to be less significant. • Use of the beach, and consequent experience of the view is organised into clear peak periods, with greater use on weekends and holidays and during periods of good weather. • The likely period of the view is proposed as moderate on the understanding that despite the length of stay on the beach, which can be significant, the view of the proposal is an incidental experience.

View 4 – View from Sydney Road

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 36 Existing and Proposed views from Sydney Road

View 4 – View from Sydney Road

Viewing situation	Sydney Road on the decent down to Manly Town Centre.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Experienced primarily within a vehicle travelling toward Manly on Sydney Road
Likely period of view	Low
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	1 km
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that the view is principally experienced within a vehicle, the time of view is likely to be low for the majority of the time. On some occasions, due to traffic congestion etc, the viewing period may be extended. The view is an “iconic” first view of the ocean on the descent into Manly and is dominated by the ocean and Fairy Bower Headland/North Head.

View 5 – View from Balgowlah Heights

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 37 Existing and Proposed views from Balgowlah Heights

View 5 – View from Balgowlah Heights

Viewing situation	Tania Park at Balgowlah Heights.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Limited to users of Tania Park for the time they are in a visible location
Likely period of view	Low
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	2.1 km
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tania Park is not a key activity area and has relatively little visitation compared to other identified distance views. Foreshore vegetation screens the view in many locations. Highlights of the view are Manly Cove, North Head, the Ocean and the narrow, developed isthmus of Manly Town Centre. The proposal is absorbed and all but invisible in this context.

View 6 – View from Fairy Bower Lookout

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 38 Existing and Proposed views from Fairy Bower Lookout

View 6 – View from Fairy Bower Lookout

Viewing situation	Fairy Bower Lookout
Category of view	Public View. A sightseeing location offering 3extensive views over Manly and the Northern Beaches
Context of viewer	Users of the coastal walk and visitors accessing the site exclusively for the significant outlook that is offered
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - high
Distance of view	800 metres
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation to the lookout, and consequent experience of the view is organised into clear peak periods, with greater use on weekends and holidays and during periods of good weather. • At off-peak times, the relative number of viewers is likely to be low

6.3 Visual impact on local views

The combination of flat topography, dense built form and mid-rise building heights is such that the site and proposal are not visible from the public domain throughout most of the defined local area. The oceanfront side is not affected by existing development and presents the greatest potential for views of the site. Even so, the site is significantly obscured by significant vegetation along the beachfront (Norfolk Island Pines).

The key views include:

- View 7 – North Steyne Beachfront
- View 8 – Ferry approach to Manly
- View 9 – Manly Sailing Club

View 7 – North Steyne Beachfront

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 39 Existing and Proposed views from North Steyne Beachfront

View 7 – North Steyne Beachfront

Viewing situation	North Steyne Beach in front of the surf club building.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Users of the beach
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	820 metres
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the view is likely to be secondary in relation to the main purpose of being in the location (use of the surf beach for swimming/sunbathing). • A longer and more focused view toward the proposal is likely to result while moving southward along the beachfront path. Given the angle and location of the view in this respect, the impact is likely to be less significant. • Use of the beach, and consequent experience of the view is organised into clear peak periods, with greater use on weekends and holidays and during periods of good weather. • The likely period of the view is proposed as moderate on the understanding that despite the length of stay on the beach, which can be significant, the view of the proposal is an incidental experience.

View 8 – Ferry approach to Manly

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 40 Existing and Proposed views from the ferry approach to Manly

View 8 – Ferry Approach to Manly

Viewing situation	From the Sydney Harbour Ferry as it approaches Manly Wharf.
Category of view	Public View.
Context of viewer	Available to users of the ferry service and Manly Cove for generally short periods to and from the Wharf
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	Approximately 800 metres
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the period of view is designated as moderate. The time period is likely to be the lower end of this range while moving to and from the wharf. While there are a high number of potential viewers, by virtue of the patronage of the ferry service, the actual number is likely to be lower, as large number of the users of the ferry service are not involved in sightseeing activities.

View 9 –Manly Sailing Club

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 41 Existing and Proposed views from Manly Sailing Club

View 9 – Manly Sailing Club

Viewing situation	From the Manly Sailing Club, on the existing jetty structure.
Category of view	Semi-public. Confined to users of the jetty and visitors to the Sailing Club
Context of viewer	Experienced while visiting the sailing club or incidentally following recognition of the vantage point while passing along the adjacent pedestrian path.
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Low
Distance of view	Approximately 650 metres
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar, though (visually) more restricted view is also available from the adjacent waterfront pedestrian path. This area is likely to have a moderate to high number of potential viewers • The number of viewers is likely to peak with the use of the sailing club. Depending on the use of the facility, in these times the number of viewers may increase to moderate or high.

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6.4 Visual impact on views within the immediate vicinity

Views from prominent public places across the town centre area have been selected for visual impact evaluation based on their significance in terms of they're being a major pedestrian route, gathering place or vantage point.

The key views include:

- View 10 – Shelly Beach walk
- View 11 – View from Bower St
- View 12 – View from Reddall St
- View 13 – Manly Beach/Corso street crossing;
- View 14 – Manly Beachfront
- View 15 – South Steyne Crossing at Wentworth Street
- View 16 – Sebel Hotel, South Steyne;
- View 17 – Corner of Wentworth St and Darley Rd;
- View 18 – Darley Rd, adjacent to the School.
- View 19 – East Esplanade, at pedestrian crossing
- View 20 – Rialto Square;

View 10 – Shelley Beach Walk

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 42 Existing and Proposed views from Shelley Beach Walk

View 10 – Shelley Beach Walk

Viewing situation	The Shelly Beach Walk on the corner extremity leading toward Manly.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Users of the foreshore walk between Shelley Beach and Manly and along the northern edge only.
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	280 metres
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views toward the site are available only on the northern part of the walk, between the location of the photograph and the Manly surf club. Views are available only when moving toward the site. Use of the foreshore path, and consequent experience of the view is organised into clear peak periods, with greater use on weekends and holidays and during periods of good weather.

View 11 – View from Bower Street

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 43 Existing and Proposed views from Bower Street

View 11 – View from Bower Street

Viewing situation	The staircase adjacent to the surf club at the bottom of Bower Street.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Most likely to be residents accessing Manly foreshore and promenade from areas above
Likely period of view	Low - moderate
Relative number of viewers	Low - moderate
Distance of view	250m
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views of the proposal from this point tend to be fleeting as much of the viewshed is closed in by vegetation and that the view is encountered while traversing stairs down to the foreshore.

View 12 – View from Reddall Street

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 44 Existing and Proposed views from Reddall Street

View 12 – View from Reddall Street

Viewing situation	The lower end of Reddall Street, overlooking the surf club.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Residents of Reddall Street and local residents accessing Manly foreshore and promenade from areas above
Likely period of view	Low - moderate
Relative number of viewers	Low - moderate
Distance of view	230m
Visual absorption capacity	High
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	Views of the proposal from this point tend to be fleeting as much of the viewshed is closed in by vegetation and that the view is encountered while traversing stairs down to the foreshore.

View 13 – Manly Beach/Corso pedestrian crossing

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 45 Existing and Proposed views from Manly Beach/Corso pedestrian crossing

View 13 – Manly Beach/Corso Pedestrian Crossing

Viewing situation	The eastern side of the pedestrian crossing extending from the Corso.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Experienced while crossing to/from the Corso or while present in the adjacent foreshore area
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	200 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Moderate
Visibility	Medium
Visual impact rating	Moderate
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main view and experience in the area is outwards toward the ocean, or to a lesser extent, back up the Corso. Views of the proposal are secondary in this context. While clearly visible, the proposed building sits comfortably within the context of other buildings along South Steyne. The building is of similar height and setback to other buildings between it and the Corso, and due to the visual effect of perspective, recedes to match well with the lower height of buildings further to the south.

View 14 – Manly Beachfront

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 46 Existing and Proposed views from Manly Beachfront

View 14 – Manly Beachfront

Viewing situation	Manly Beach, immediately in front of the proposal.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Users of the beach
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	60 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visibility	High
Visual impact rating	High
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the view is likely to be secondary in relation to the main purpose of being in the location (use of the surf beach for swimming/sunbathing). • Use of the beach, and consequent experience of the view is organised into clear peak periods, with greater use on weekends and holidays and during periods of good weather. • The likely period of the view is proposed as moderate on the understanding that despite the length of stay on the beach, which can be significant, the view of the proposal is often an incidental experience. • The quality of the existing RFW building is relatively poor. While visual impact of the proposal is judged as high for this particular view, redevelopment of the site within the envelope proposed is likely to result in a significant improvement to the visual quality of the locality.

View 15 – Sebel Hotel, South Steyne

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 47 Existing and Proposed views adjacent to the Sebel Hotel at South Steyne

View 16 – Sebel Hotel, South Steyne

Viewing situation	From the front of the Sebel Hotel, adjacent to the intersection of Ashburner Street and South Steyne.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Experienced by pedestrians while moving northward along South Steyne
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	130 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visibility	High
Visual impact rating	High
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main view and experience in the area is outwards toward the ocean, or to a lesser extent, back up the Corso. Views of the proposal are secondary in this context. • While clearly visible, the proposed building sits comfortably within the context of other buildings along South Steyne. The building is of similar height and setback to other buildings between it and the Corso. • The proposal is of similar height at the street frontage, with taller elements set well back, and matches relatively well with the existing site development from this viewing angle. • The quality of the existing RFW building is relatively poor. While visual impact of the proposal is judged as high for this particular view, redevelopment of the site within the envelope proposed is likely to result in a significant improvement to the visual quality of the locality, as well as an improvement to the continuity of street frontage activity along South Steyne.

View 16 – South Steyne Crossing at Wentworth Street

Existing Photo



Proposed Photo



Figure 48 Existing and Proposed views from the Sebel Hotel, South Steyne

View 16 – South Steyne Crossing at Wentworth Street

Viewing situation	From the pedestrian crossing extending from Wentworth Street to the beachfront.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Experienced by pedestrians while moving to and from the beach from Wentworth Street
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	High
Distance of view	40 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visibility	High
Visual impact rating	High
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This particular view takes in the experience of crossing or driving southward on South Steyne at Wentworth Street. A similar view is also available from adjacent areas of the foreshore. In these locations the view is more perpendicular and is also equally likely to be oriented toward the ocean or along the foreshore walk. The following comments also apply to the adjacent foreshore location. • While clearly visible, the proposed building sits comfortably within the context of other buildings along South Steyne. The building is of similar height and setback to other buildings between it and the Corso, and with the Sebel Hotel. • The quality of the existing RFW building is relatively poor. While visual impact of the proposal is judged as high for this particular view, redevelopment of the site within the envelope proposed is likely to result in a significant improvement to the visual quality of the locality, as well as an improvement to the continuity of street frontage activity along South Steyne.

View 17 – Corner of Wentworth & Darley Streets

Existing View



Proposed View



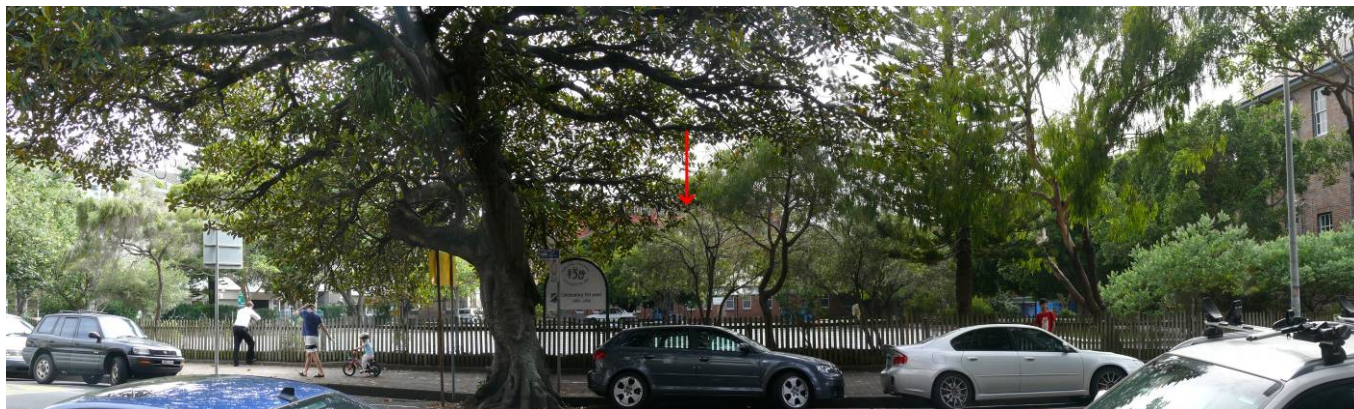
Figure 49 Existing and Proposed views from the corner of Wentworth and Darley Streets

View 17 – Corner of Wentworth & Darley Streets

Viewing situation	The north western corner of Wentworth and Darley Streets.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Available to pedestrians and vehicles in this part of the Manly Town Centre
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	200 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Moderate
Visibility	Moderate
Visual impact rating	Moderate
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people experiencing the view will be pedestrians moving along Darley Street or Wentworth Avenue, or will be in a vehicle, thereby limiting the actual exposure to the view. A café located on the same corner provides opportunity for increased exposure for its patrons. The potential view increases in significance as one move's eastward along Wentworth Street. In other directions, the view is closed down by the impact of buildings adjacent to the viewer. The selected location, at the corner of Darley and Wentworth is possibly the highest area of activity in the locale. From this viewpoint the proposal is extensively screened and will have only a limited visual impact.

View 18 – Darley Rd, opposite Manly Village Public School

Existing View



Proposed View

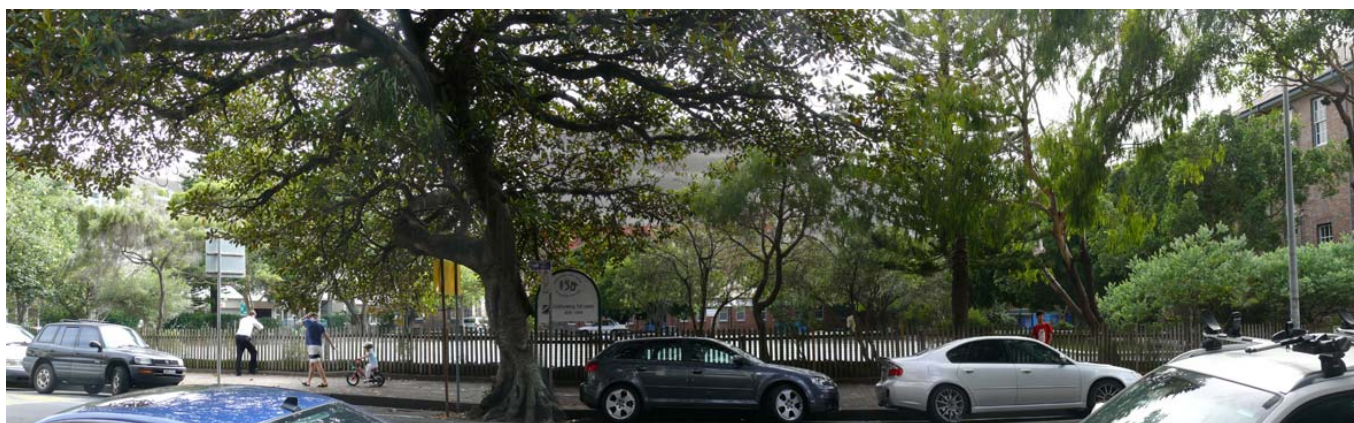


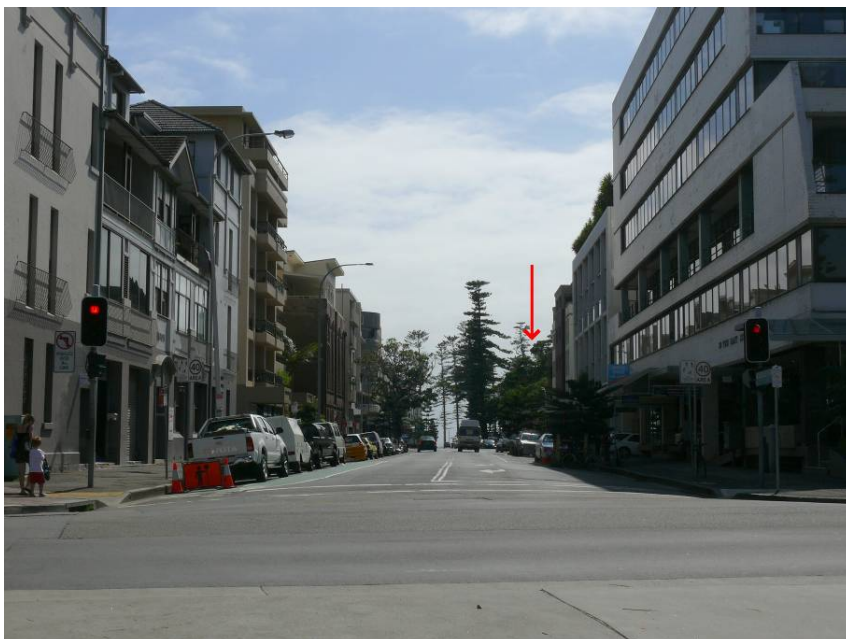
Figure 50 Existing and Proposed views from Darley Street at Manly Village Public School

View 18 – Darley Rd, opposite Manly Village Public School

Viewing situation	Darley Street, opposite Manly Village Public School.
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Pedestrians and vehicles moving along Darley Street
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	180 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Moderate
Visibility	Moderate
Visual impact rating	Moderate
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most general pedestrian traffic is likely to be on the southern side of the road as this is the side that has a continuous retail frontage. From this viewing angle, the proposal is extensively screened by vegetation within and adjacent to the School. • School drop-off periods and market days however will result in greater concentrations of pedestrian activity in the school grounds and along the northern side of Darley Street. In this location and at these times the visibility is greater and a high visual impact rating is appropriate.

View 19 – East Esplanade

Existing View



Proposed View

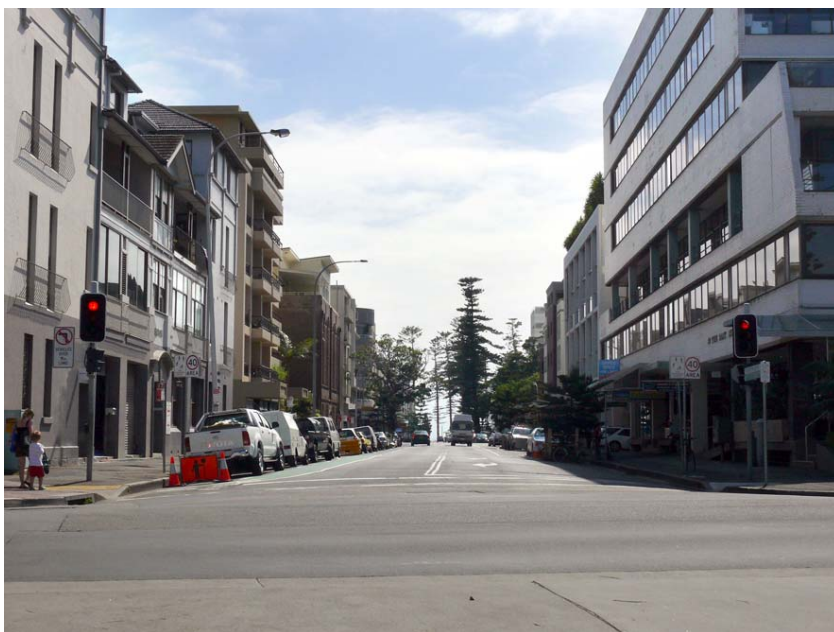


Figure 51 Existing and Proposed views from East Esplanade at the Wentworth Street pedestrian crossing

View 19– East Esplanade

Viewing situation	East Esplanade, adjacent to the pedestrian crossing at Wentworth Street
Category of view	Public View
Context of viewer	Pedestrians along the Manly Cove foreshore and utilising the pedestrian crossing at Wentworth Road. Fleeting views may also be experienced by passing vehicles
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	330 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Moderate
Visibility	Low
Visual impact rating	Low
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main view and experience in the area is toward Manly Cove, or to a lesser extent, along East Esplanade or toward the Wharf. Views of the proposal are secondary in this context. The proposal is only partially visible in the context of similar scaled buildings and street trees. The proposed building sits comfortably within the context of other buildings along South Steyne. The building is of similar height and setback to other buildings on the street and between it and East Esplanade.

View 20 – Rialto Square

Existing View



Proposed View



Figure 52 Existing and Proposed views from Rialto Square

View 17 – Rialto Square

Viewing situation	The northern entry point to Rialto Square
Category of viewer	Public View
Context of view	Users of the café's, restaurants and retail in Rialto Square as well as pedestrians accessing the Square from the Corso, via Rialto Lane
Likely period of view	Moderate
Relative number of viewers	Moderate - High
Distance of view	30-60 metres
Visual absorption capacity	Low
Visibility	High
Visual impact rating	High
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view of some of the highest elements of the proposal is directly perpendicular to the viewer and is framed by buildings either side of Rialto Square. The proposal provides enclosure of the Square and has a high visual impact. The quality of the existing RFW building is relatively poor. While visual impact of the proposal is judged as high for this particular view, redevelopment of the site within the envelope proposed is likely to result in a significant improvement to the visual quality of the locality.

7 Summary of visual assessment and conclusion

Overall, the proposed development is likely to have a low visual impact from all but the closest vantage points, where clearly, a high visual impact will result.

In locations close to the proposal, the potential high visual impact is likely to be mitigated by an overall improvement to the urban quality of the site and street frontage areas. In this respect, the existing Royal Par Fest building is of relatively poor quality and detracts from the quality of the streetscape. The creation of a new building within the envelope proposed, where appropriately managed, can have a significant beneficial impact on streetscape quality through the provision of active and interesting facades and street front activities.

From distance views, the visual impact of the proposal is extensively absorbed by the context in which it sits. This has been achieved through keeping the building heights to similar levels as surrounding properties and by ensuring the silhouette height of the beachfront Norfolk Island Pines is not penetrated or broken

In summary, the visual impact of the proposal is considered acceptable. Where visual impact is identified to be significant, such impact may be adequately ameliorated by detailed design and placement of activities and by appropriate selection of colours and materials, both of which will also contribute to improved urban quality and streetscape