

3 THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

The site is located immediately north-west of the St Leonards Railway Station and Town Centre, on the high point of a ridge that is followed by the Pacific Highway.

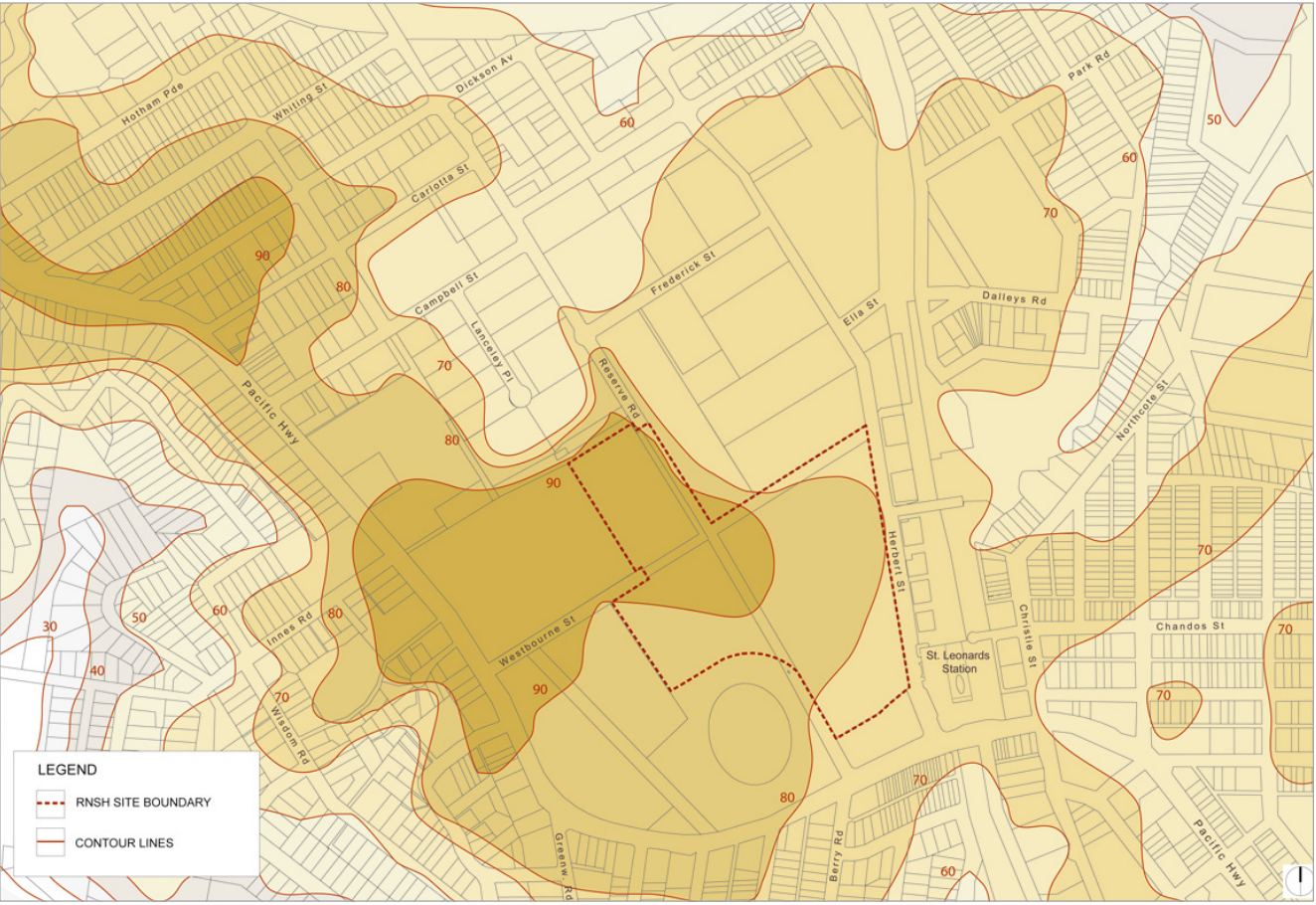


Figure 1: District Topography, prepared by Cox Richardson

It is located within the Willoughby City Council area, but is immediately adjacent to both the Lane Cove and North Sydney Council areas.

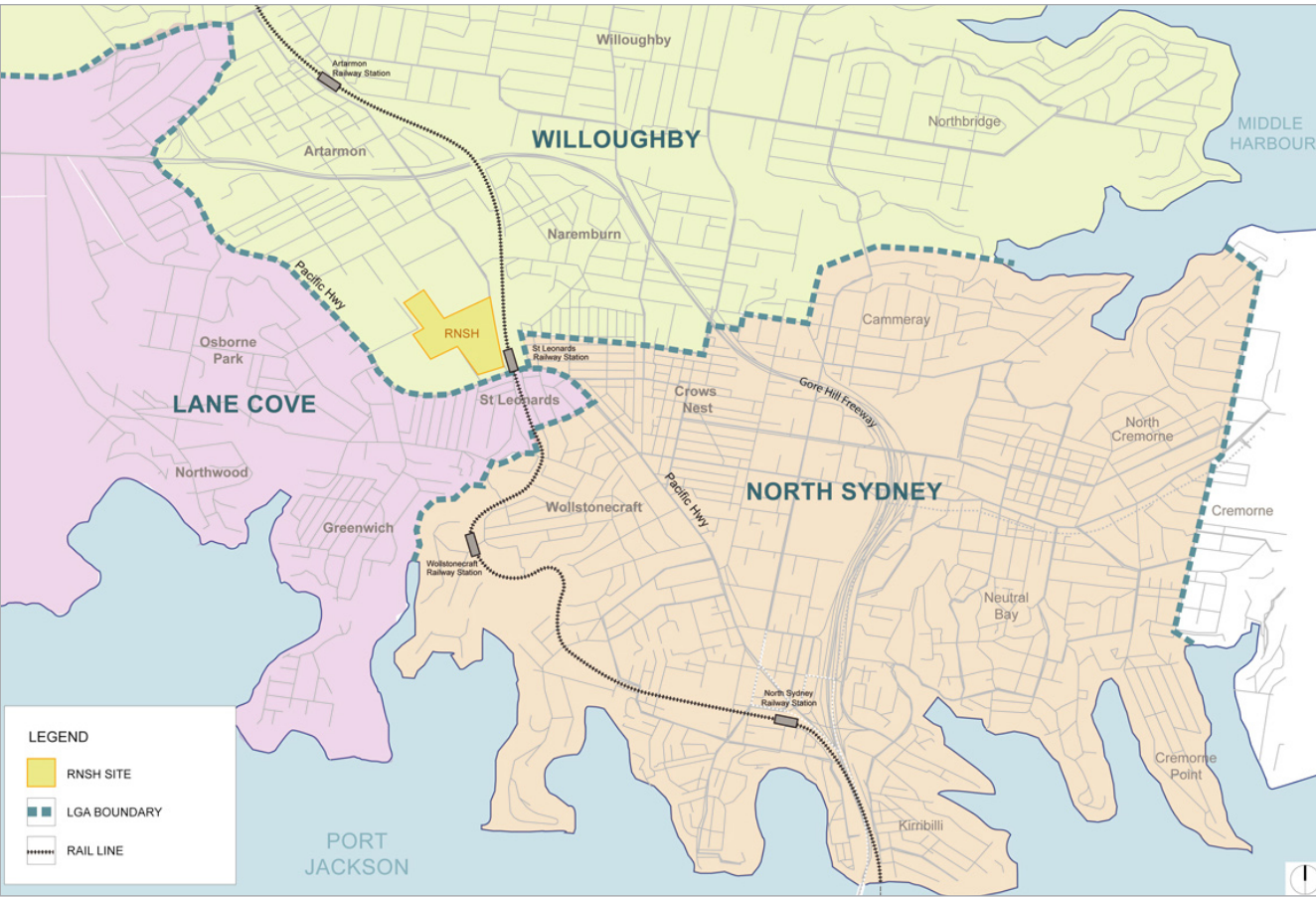


Figure 2: LGA Boundaries, prepared by Cox Richardson

It has excellent access to all forms of transport, being located at the Junction of the Pacific Highway and the North Shore Railway Line, only a short distance from the Gore Hill Freeway.



Figure 3: Road and Rail Networks, prepared by Cox Richardson

It is immediately adjacent to Gore Hill Playing Field and Cemetery, and a number of significant passive and active open spaces are located in the vicinity.



Figure 4: Green open space networks, prepared by Cox Richardson

As detailed in Section 8.2.1, the Metro Strategy and the associated Premier's Innovation Strategy both clearly support the expansion of RNS Hospital as 'magnet infrastructure' to drive innovation and economic growth through investment in research and medical knowledge, thereby reinforcing the role of St Leonards in the 'Global Corridor' as a 'specialised centre' of medical and associated employment.

Between 2001 and 2031, The Metro Strategy targets growth from 25,166 to 33,000 jobs in St Leonards, requiring the creation of an additional 7,834 jobs, with the specialist medical facilities of the RNSH expected to be a significant driver of this growth.

However, the metro Strategy also seeks to ensure that there will be an adequate supply of residential development and encourages large residential populations within and close to centres to support local businesses and generally make centres vibrant and safe. The 'Inner North' region has been targeted to grow from 129,256 to 159,000 dwellings over the next 30 years, an increase of 29,744 dwellings, 2000 - 5,000 of which are identified to be in the St Leonards Town Centre.

As detailed at Section 8.2.1, the Draft St Leonards strategy refines the broad recommendations of the Metro Strategy to reflect a place specific analysis of the St Leonards Town Centre. It recognises that the hospital currently creates around 5000 full and part-time jobs, and a significant number of related jobs in the surrounding area. To achieve the 8,000 odd new jobs and the 2,000 – 5,000 new homes that the Metro Strategy targets for the St Leonards Centre over the next 25 years, the Draft St Leonards Strategy suggests that approximately 3,250 jobs and approximately 1,500 residents would be appropriate on the hospital site.

The Draft Strategy recognises that to achieve these targets the Department of Health has been considering the current project. Based upon early versions of the current project, the Draft Strategy anticipated that the site will accommodate about 59,000m² of office space; 6,000m² of research space; 8,000m² of retail space; a 12,000m² 'medi-hotel'; 16,000m² of nurses accommodation and 67,000m² of new apartments in conjunction with redevelopment of the hospital, creation of a new public street and open space network and retention of heritage buildings and trees. It supports this quantum and mix of uses and encourages shops to serve the local resident and worker population, including convenience shops, potentially a larger supermarket, small-scale specialty shops, banks, bars, cafes and restaurants. This retail activity is encouraged to be located so as to animate key pedestrian routes.

The transport sustainability of centres is at the heart of the Metropolitan Strategy and has underpinned the focus on concentrating development in centres. Through the Metro Strategy the State Government committed itself to ensure that there are sufficient strategic sites available and infrastructure capacity to support identified growth in such centres.

3.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

The site has excellent access to the Sydney CBD. It is located within immediate proximity of St Leonards Railway Station, and lies on several major bus routes. It is within easy walking distance of transportation networks, shops, employment, open space and residential properties. It has convenient access to both the Pacific Highway and the Orbital Motorway (including the Gore Hill Freeway).

The high ridge that underlies St Leonards is reflected in built form and the skyline is an interesting and distinctive feature in the broader landscape, with the railway station marked by the highly visible 'Forum' development.

3.3 SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

RNS Hospital is surrounded by a wide variety of land uses, including St Leonards CBD and high density housing to the east; residential development to the south and east; special uses (North Sydney TAFE, Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery and former ABC site) to the west; Gore Hill Park to the immediate south west and the Artarmon industrial area to the north. The current built form provides impediments to public pedestrian and vehicular access through the site, notwithstanding that a number of strong desire lines exist across the site (e.g. from the TAFE to St Leonards Station), and along Reserve Road.



Figure 5: Local Context – Land Use & Land Ownership, prepared by Cox Richardson

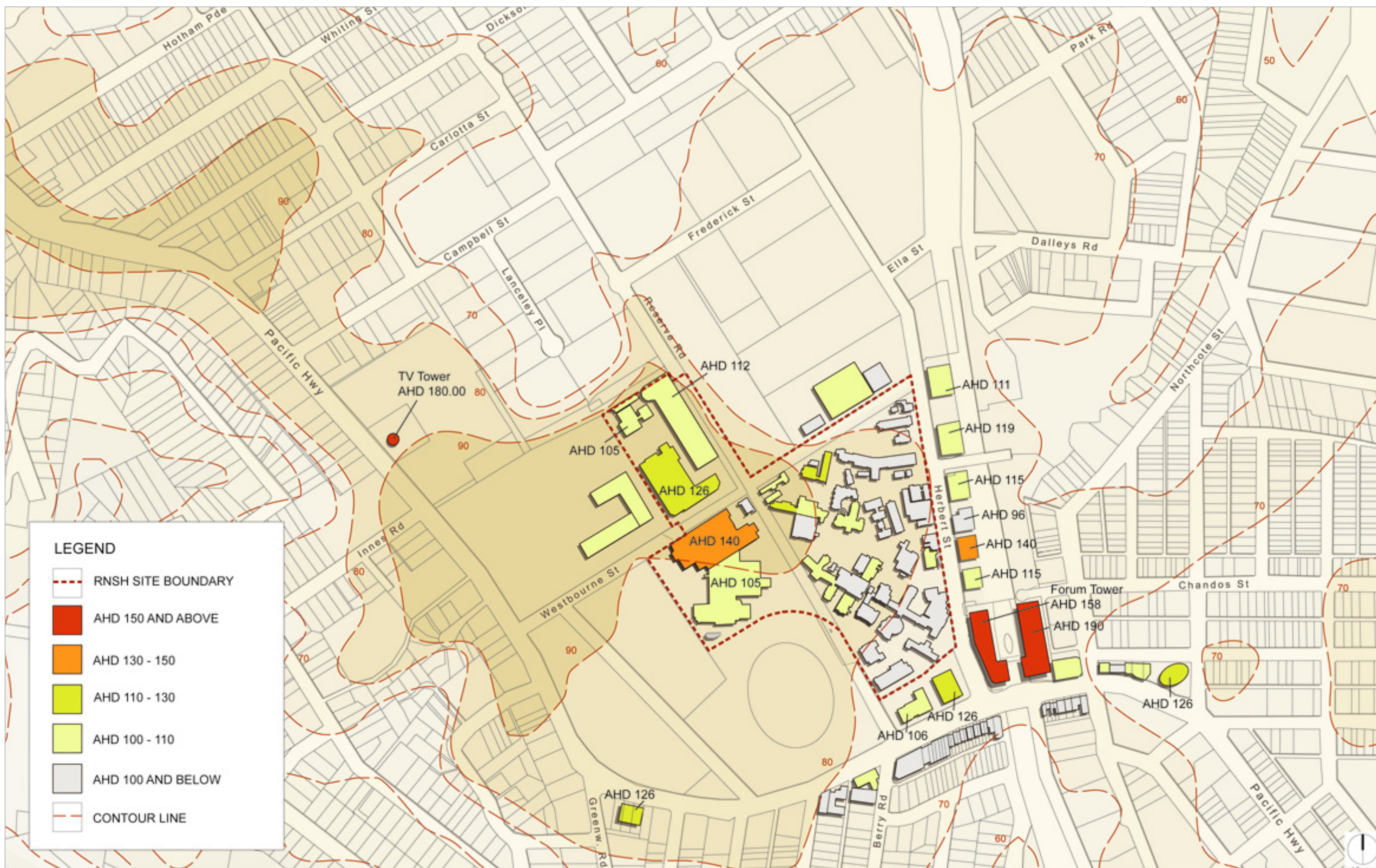




Figure 7: Local Context – Existing Buildings, prepared by Cox Richardson