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Visual Impact Statement

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Chase Property Investments Pty Ltd
Figtrees on the Manning
Taree NSW



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Introduction

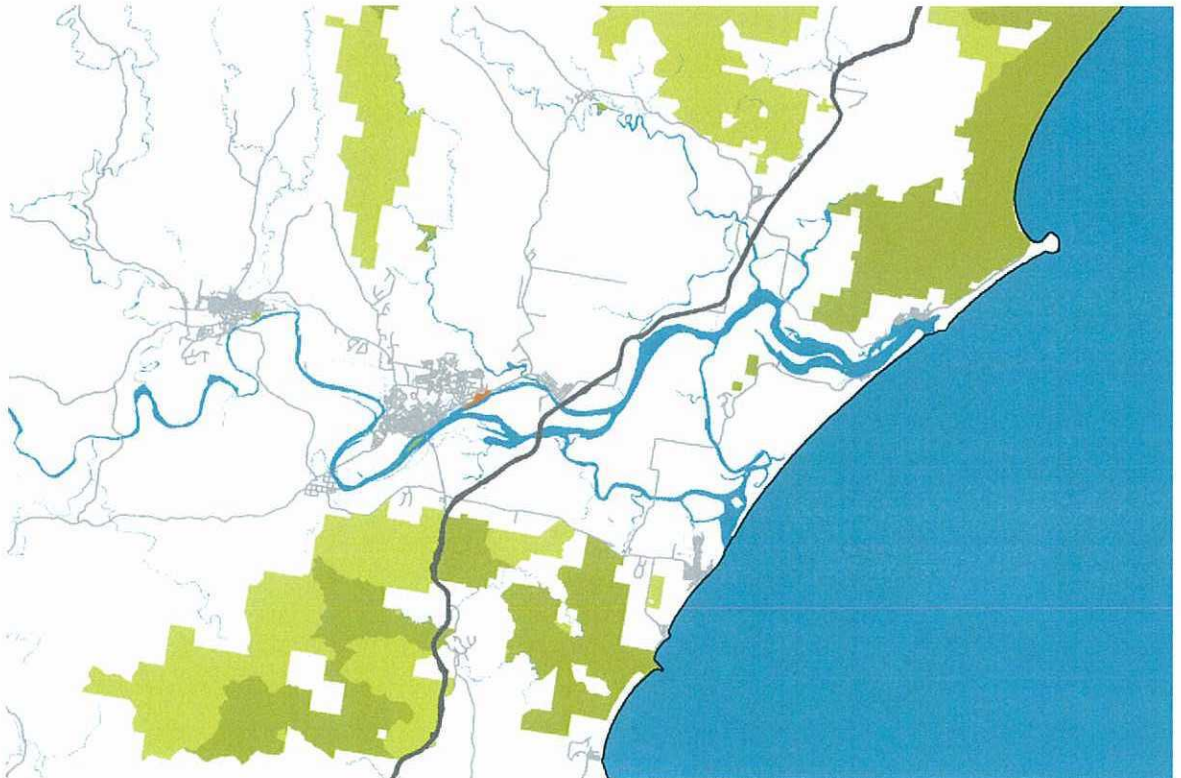
The following represents a Visual Impact Statement for a proposed Masterplan namely 'Figtrees on the Manning' and has been prepared by Suters Architects for Chase Property Investments Pty Ltd to include within the Part 3A application documentation.

The assessment has been prepared in conjunction with the Masterplan / Local Area Plan (LAP) documentation and subsequently should be read in conjunction with that report. In its own right the LAP has been set up to be a 'visual' document and has for the most part addressed many of the visual impacts of the proposed development.

The production of the LAP document is the culmination of 18 months of rigorous research, design and documentation. A full photographic study has been undertaken including a significant number of aeriels. Understanding the local regional context has been paramount and forms much of the urban design approach and ultimately the framework for a robust urban masterplan with negligible visual impacts.

At the forefront of our approach has been liaison with Council and the referencing to existing planning guidelines. Council planners have played an integral role in the production and review of the masterplan and now that it is complete fully endorse the project.

The masterplan process has been well supported by the community and after numerous community consultations, including one on site, no negative responses have been received regarding visual impacts or any other matters.



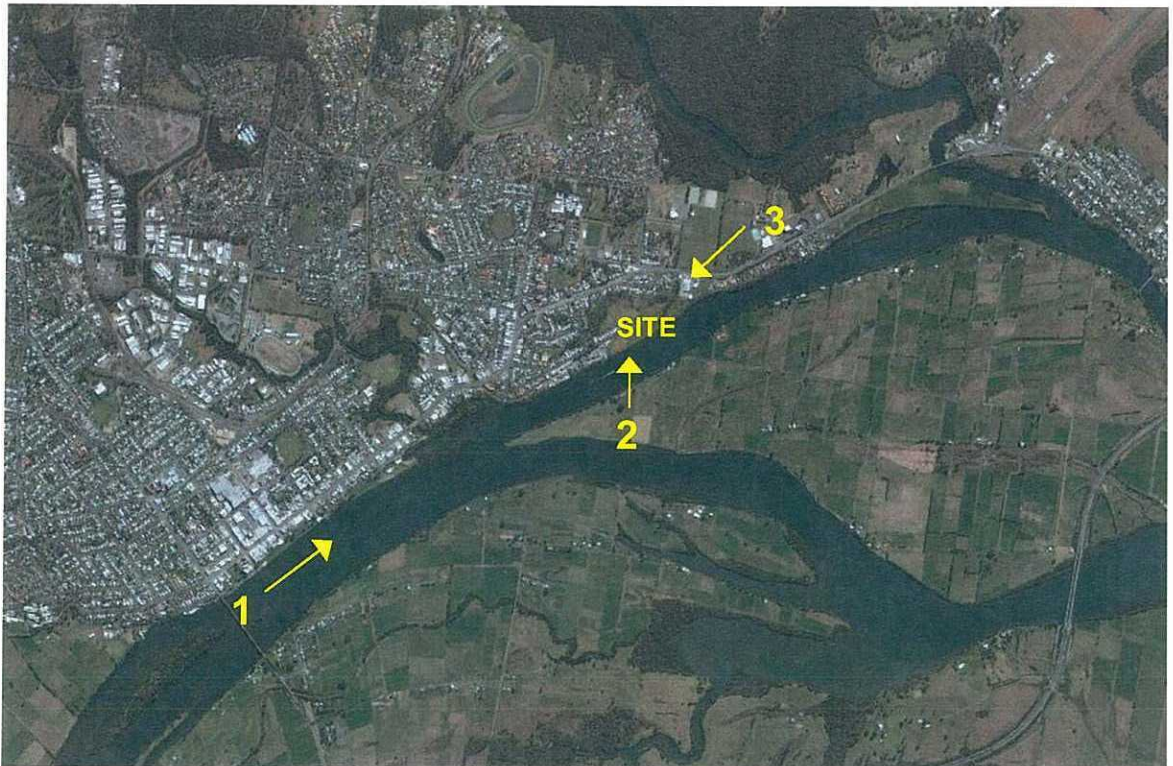
Locality plan of Taree within Local Government area context (site in orange).

2 Site Context

The project site is located between the Manning River (North Arm) and Pitt Street in Chatham, Taree. The site is bordered to the north by Pitt Street, existing residential development and Chatham Avenue and to the south by the Manning River. The Botanical Gardens are located beyond Browns Creek to the west.

Satellite urban areas occur at Cundletown to the east, Taree South and Purfleet to the south, Tinonee to the southwest and parts of Wingham to the west. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of low and medium density residential, commercial, light industrial uses and rural agricultural lands. Located to the east of the site is the Taree Entertainment Centre and Taree Airport with the CBD of Taree approximately 2km to the southwest.

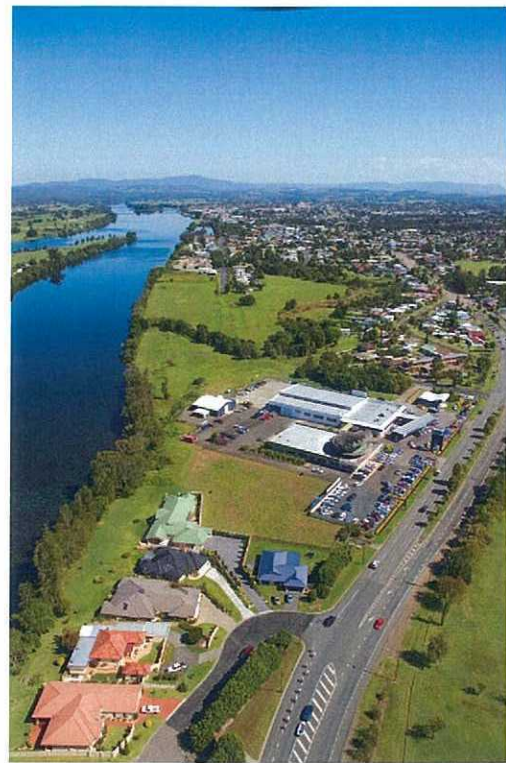
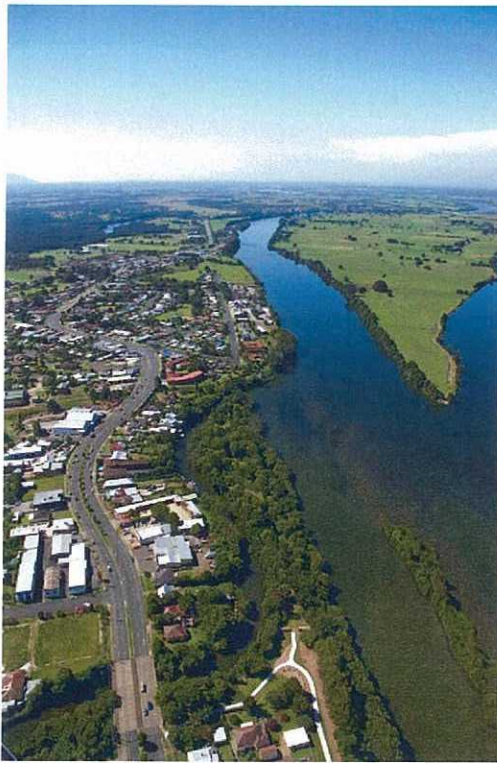
Taree is a regional city with most buildings having low heights and modest scales. Larger buildings are typically found in the main street but are otherwise dispersed and found on larger sites or adjoining infrastructure corridors. The biggest buildings usually relate to past or continuing rural industry.



Aerial view highlighting distant views to the site. 1. The bridge. 2. Across the river (South bank). 3. The entertainment precinct. All of these locations have limited views to the site. No significant visual impact is experienced from these locations.

New development on the Figtrees on the Manning site will complement the regional city of Taree. It should allow height and scale consistent with main street development of Taree and those of the local rural industry while introducing a variety of bulk and scale across the site to both the streetscape and waterfront.

A detailed contextual analysis has been included within the LAP which explores the macro and micro context. This shows that limited views are available through the existing sites built form and vegetation. It is important to not that the scale of the existing buildings is quite large but does not adversely impact on the context.



Aerial images of the site and surrounding context.



Images of existing buildings on site and context of surrounding streets highlighting significant built form and vegetation.

3 Description of Proposal

The Figtrees on the Manning development presents a unique opportunity within Greater Taree for a high quality mixed-use development of regional significance. It proposes to maintain the existing qualities of the area, including both the natural elements and built structures, endeavouring to create a vibrant and diverse community that is rich with the social, economic and environmental experiences of a fully realised urban tapestry. It will offer a community that celebrates past, current and future contexts and one that contributes robustly and positively to the development of Taree and the Waterfront Precinct along the Manning River.

The Masterplan is comprised of five precincts that each offers a different but complementary use which demonstrates the diversity of development potential for Figtrees on the Manning.

The first precinct forms the gateway to the site utilising the existing spotted gum reserve, rail corridor and modestly sized residential buildings to create a place which is inviting and encourages people to enter and explore the site.

The second precinct is proposed as a business hub comprised of high quality mixed use development that breaks out onto public domain areas and the waterfront.

The unique character of the third precinct is based on reusing the magnificent existing heritage buildings and opening up the waterfront for people to live, work, play and interact together.

The aim for the fourth precinct is to create a residential village within scenic existing landscape elements of the creek and the river.

The fifth precinct will gain its unique character with the creation of a commercial marina – the working waterfront.



Masterplan of proposed development

4 Visual Impact of Development

The visual impacts of the development have been examined at length within the masterplan / LAP.

As a general response there are limited opportunities to see onto the site (as it stands) from long vistas. Across the river (south) is unpopulated rural farmland. From the bridge (west) there are partial oblique views of the western most tip of the development lot. From the parkland (north east) is public playing fields and the entertainment centre. Visual connections from both the bridge and the entertainment centre are considered vital and enhance the notion of connectivity between these bookend facilities. The site surrounds are typically flat meaning no visual connection to raised hills / built form etc.

From closer quarters there are some minor vistas along streets to the site and river beyond. These views have been recognised and enhanced by the proposed development by providing direct visual links to the river.

Below is a summary that reviews all of the key elements of the development which have particular reference to visual impact. The assessment provided within each element satisfies key urban design principles and the Council's DCP.

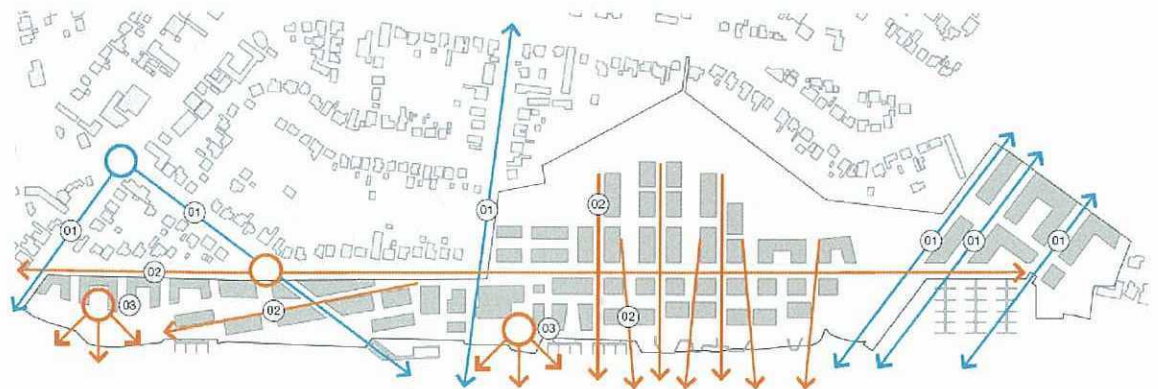


Diagram outlining key view corridors.

Design Character:

As outlined in the DCP, the design of development should aim to ensure a sympathetic blend of old and new. This is intended to be achieved by designing in keeping with the street's established building scale and form, established landscaping, siting and setbacks and materials and finishes without being overly imitative.

The following images depict the design quality intended for each of the five character precincts and subsequently the visual impacts that would be experienced in each case.



The Gateway Residential Precinct includes built form is of modest scale with predominantly three storeys which steps down to the adjoining residences and opens towards the river and public spaces. Facades will be articulated to provide variation in built form with landscaping along the street and within publically accessible open space between buildings providing further articulation.



The Figtree Commercial Precinct provides for a mixture of uses accommodated in buildings ranging from three to four storeys in height. The height and bulk of built form in this precinct is a direct response to the existing built form. It is important that this street frontage is visually recognisable as a gateway to the site.



The Dairy Heritage Precinct is a heritage enclave with a mixture of new and existing buildings. Bulk and scale of built form does not exceed the existing heritage building fabric and sufficient curtilage is provided to allow unobstructed views to and from the heritage buildings.



The Riverpark Village Precinct is a residential village. The built form is predominantly two to three storeys with some loft spaces towards the northern fringe to take advantage of the fantastic views. Some larger built form is proscribed along the creek frontage where it is well protected from surrounding built context and buffered by natural landscape.



The Marina Commercial Precinct is a commercial/mixed use centre with a dual frontage to the main road. Cutting into the riverside to create a protected marina environment provides a significant commercial opportunity. A built form of up to four storeys would be encouraged in the commercial centre with the potential for an iconic gateway landmark. It is important that this street frontage is visually recognisable as a gateway to the site. The marina is well setback from the existing foreshore line limiting visual and physical impacts on the river.

Scale and Form:

Further to the preceding analysis of character precincts, the composition and proportion of building facades will form a pattern or rhythm, which will give the streetscape a distinctive character. The older buildings earmarked for adaptive reuse will have their own unique identity, reflecting the construction technology and social history of the day. Modern structures will provide juxtaposition to the existing fabric with ESD and use expected to drive elements of the final aesthetic composition of buildings.

The height of the proposed development has taken into account the height of existing structures on the site. The highest parts of the development are located on the part of the site that is least visually obtrusive; well protected by native vegetation, well set back from adjoining residential development and away from the river frontage. The proposed development is generally 2 storeys directly adjacent to the waterfront and is well integrated with the natural and artificial landscape.

The five character precincts will promote variation of use and subsequently variation in architectural outcomes which will enhance the visual amenity of the waterfront precinct.

Carparking:

Is provided within basement, under podium and on street. As part of the streetscape strategy road reserves are generous and carparking is fully integrated with the landscaping, circulation paths and public open space. Subsequently carparking has limited visual impacts.

Landscaping:

Significant detail has been placed into the landscaping proposal as a key contributor to the visual amenity of the proposed development. The landscape design provided for the site by McGregor Partners encompasses expression of remnant cultural heritage of the site through retention of most existing trees, reuse of heritage buildings and refurbishment of the precinct into a series of spaces guided by the existing and future built context. The design has embraced 'urban ecology' principles where the site design components are integral to the social, environmental and ecological systems.

Public domain / open space

The provision of landscaping in parks and open space areas, particularly trees, greatly enhances the aesthetic appearance and useability of the open space where landscaping is appropriately designed and located. The public open spaces provide visual and physical connectivity to, from and within the site and can best be explained by the diagram below:

Heritage

Adaptive reuse of existing buildings add to the visual interest of the site and reduce the overall impacts; what already exists remains. This is most evident in the Dairy Heritage Precinct which is located centrally and significantly enhances the visual amenity of the proposal. The majority of this part of the site is flat or with slight falls. Particular attention has been given to approach views and internal views of existing landmarks.

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Conclusion

Fundamental to our approach is to ensure that the intent of the proposed development is to protect and maintain the scenic values of the long waterfront site whether being viewed from land or water, within, from and to the site.

The thorough process and contextually significant response provides Taree with a new and unique urban area which will provide new lifestyle opportunities for residents and workers and above all connect the community with the waterfront.

The proposed development will have a limited impact on regional views with only minor portions of the development within view from the wider context. The impacts on views in the immediate context are mitigated by articulation in built form, landscape treatments and provision of specific character precincts. The proposed development does not adversely impact on the river frontage or the limited number of properties that look to the site across the river. The form, height and proportions of larger built form 3-5 storeys respond to the existing built form on the site and signify the status of the site as a sensitive urban development in a regional context.

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