

Proposed residential development

## **Shepherds Bay, Meadowbank**



Visual impacts assessment

Report prepared for Holdmark Property Group

by Dr. Richard Lamb

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Concept Plan and Stage 1 DA Application MP09\_0216 and MP09\_0219 Former Meadowbank Employment Area, Meadowbank and Ryde**

#### **Visual Impacts Assessment**

Richard Lamb and Associates undertook an independent assessment of the potential visual impacts of the proposed development. The Report addresses the relevant DGR's for the Application, specifically Key Issue 2 (dot point 3, sub dot point 2), Key Issue 7 (visual privacy and view loss) and Plans and Documents 6, Visual and View Analysis.

The assessment began by investigating the existing visual resources of the site and the potential for enhancing them within the proposed development. The visual resources identified were the various bounding streets interfaces, foreshore access, existing view corridors, visual linkages and future potential for enhanced numbers and quality of linkages (including those identified in the Ryde DCP 2010). Recommendations were made for strategies within the concept design to increase the scope for enhancing the existing visual resources by way of identifying additional potential view corridors, visual linkages and foreshore access routes. The proposed Concept Plan and the Stage 1 DA Application incorporate these strategies.

The general principle of the layout and building height distribution is such that the proposal will present a lower height closer to the street along Constitution Road, Bowden Street, Belmore Street and Rothesay Avenue with the taller components of the buildings set further back. Significant setbacks along the streets are also proposed in accordance with the MEA Master Plan in Ryde DCP 2010. Taller buildings are proposed within the interior of the development site which are predominantly seven and eight storeys and there are two twelve storeys towers also proposed.

The separate Stage 1 Development Application proposed for the south eastern corner of the development site proposes a part five storeys with two storeys pop up set back from the frontages along Belmore Street, part seven and part eight storeys height. The building footprint on this Lot is overall C-shaped with a large area of open space in the centre.

The landmark site is proposed to have a five storey high building base and a three component tower on part of it, one of total eighteen storeys and two of total fourteen storeys along the western edge and a three storey building along the eastern edge, closer to Church Street. The towers are proposed to be so placed that the tower closest to the viewer will screen most of the views of the towers behind it in views from the north and south directions.

The proposal incorporates reasonable size and quality of public and privately accessible open spaces and appropriate solar light and orientations and high quality internal residential amenity. The central open space within Precinct C is proposed to be in the form of an elevated plaza that will provide for improved viewing opportunities.

The assessment included visual and view analysis to and from key vantage points, including the adjacent and local streets, foreshore, Parramatta River, far shore, reserves and the Ryde Bridge. Representative viewing locations were nominated for the preparation of block model photomontages



of the development seen from strategic locations. The locations were selected to represent the range of views available from the whole visual catchment and the most significance locations from which they are available. Robertson + Marks Architects have prepared the montages under our supervision (refer to Appendix C). They represent the visual exposure and the potential effect of the proposal on the present composition and character of the views. It was determined that the proposal will be within the desired and emerging character of the locality and not excessively prominent in any views. The proposed heights are compatible with the adjacent developments and the two twelve storeys buildings will not have any significantly increased visual exposure or character impacts. The Stage 1 DA Application is also considered to be appropriate within its surrounding visual context.

The proposed tower building on the landmark site will have high visual exposure in views from the west, southwest, south, southeast and east, including Parramatta River, foreshore, Rhodes foreshore, Anderson Park, the Ryde Bridge and the rail bridge. In visual terms, it is considered to be appropriate for the landmark site and is in line with the Council's policies for the site.

The potential visual effects of the proposal were analysed and it was found that the proposal will have a moderate and a positive effect on the character of the site and the surroundings. The proposal will only have positive effects on availability and quality of views to and from Parramatta River. It will not negatively affect but will enhance the existing opportunities to views of the Sydney Olympic Park and the City of Sydney. The proposal will provide for increased and improved viewing opportunities to scenic features at all scales.

The proposed development will have moderate to high compatibility with the existing, emerging and desired future character of the site and the surroundings as envisaged by the MEA Master Plan in Ryde DCP 2010. It is of similar nature to recently constructed and approved developments in the locality such as Faraday Park, Shepherds Bay and Bay One residential developments. It is responsive to the adjacent developments on Bowden Street, Belmore Street and Constitution Road, with regard to building heights. It is also responsive to the foreshore edge along Rothesay Avenue. The emerging character of the similar former industrial land is evident both in the immediate vicinity and also in Rhodes and Homebush Bay.

The proposed development is in line with the urban design principles, general development controls and precinct specific development controls with regard to views and vistas, foreshore access, visual and pedestrian linkages, street setbacks and street heights, vegetation retention and enhancement, provision of open spaces and adaptive reuse of buildings that are given in the Meadowbank Employment Area Master Plan in Ryde DCP 2010.

Subject to appropriate strategies and commitments with regard to urban design and residential amenity at the detailed design stage, the proposed development will not result in any significant potential visual and related amenity impacts, including visual privacy.



## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Report**

I have been appointed by Robertson + Marks Architects on behalf of the Applicant, Holdmark Property Group, to undertake an independent assessment of the potential visual impacts of the proposed Concept Plan and Stage 1 Project Application for a residential development at the former Meadowbank Employment Area, Meadowbank and Ryde (MP09\_0216 and MP09-0219).

The report is based on our field documentation and assessment undertaken on 14 April, 18 June and 15 July 2010. The Report also addresses the relevant DGR's for the Application, specifically Key Issue 2 (dot point 3, sub dot point 2), Key Issue 7 (visual privacy and view loss) and Plans and Documents 6, Visual and View Analysis.

### **1.2 Documents consulted**

I have perused the following documents in the preparation of this Report

1. Shepherds Bay Master Plan, prepared by Robertson + Marks Architects, dated September 2010.
2. Stage 1 Project Application (MP 09\_0219), Elevations and Sections, prepared by Robertson + Marks Architects, dated 17 November 2010.
3. Preliminary Environmental Assessment for the Concept Plan, prepared by Place Design Group, dated December 2009.
4. State Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005.
5. Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2010.
6. Ryde Development Control Plan 2010.
7. The Director General's Requirements for the Applications, dated 20 May 2010.

### **1.3 The background**

The Applicant appointed me at the pre-finalisation stage of the Concept Plan Application to provide consultancy advice to inform the Concept Plan with regard to the existing and potential pedestrian links, foreshore links, activated and internal streets, existing and potential view corridors, built form height distribution and existing view access from the external public and private domain.

The proposed Concept Plan incorporates my advice to the Applicant with regard to the above parameters and I fully support it on visual grounds. The proposed Concept Plan is responsive to the existing and desired future character of the Meadowbank Employment Area, as stipulated by the City of Ryde Council's Planning Instruments and Policies.

The proposed Concept Plan is also based on the outcome of the several consultations undertaken by the Architects and the Planner for the Project with the Department of Planning and the City of Ryde Council.



## **1.4 Visual impact assessment methodology**

The methodology for this assessment consists of three main steps as described below.

The first part is the visual character and resources analysis which describes the existing character of the site and the surrounding context and identifies the existing and potential visual resources of the development site. It then describes the features of the proposed development and how it responds to the identified visual resources of the development site.

The second part of the method consists of an objective analysis of the visual effects of the proposal. The analytical section of the report is intended to identify and document the objective visual effects which will occur as a result of construction of the proposed development and also the relative size or magnitude of those effects (what effects and how much). It starts with an analysis of the area in which the proposal would be visible (its visual catchment) and the factors which condition its visibility. An analysis is then made of the extent of visual change that would occur in the catchment as a result of the construction of the development. Change is considered in relation first to the existing, emerging and desired future character of the site itself and secondly to the existing, emerging and desired future character of the surrounding context. Finally, an analysis of the factors which either increase or decrease a viewer's sensitivity to the potential change to the site and locality is made. A relevant consideration in regard to sensitivity is the proximity of the development site to the Parramatta River, which is considered a heritage item of national significance and a number of heritage items of local significance. Specific visual effects are also considered to include potential view loss effects, interruption of predominant view lines and in general terms the likely effects on visual privacy and visual amenity of existing and future residents.

The third main component of the method comprises the visual impact assessment. It considers the appropriateness and impacts on scenic quality, landscape character and on specific views and items of significance by assessing factors such as the physical absorption capacity and the compatibility of the proposal with the existing and desired future character of the development site and the surroundings.

The assessment proceeds to address the relevant planning instruments with regard to visual issues and then presents a summary of strategies and commitments with regard to the present application and future measures for the fine grain design stage of the proposal.

A six point qualitative scale is used throughout the report with regard to explaining the relative visual effects or potential impacts of the proposal. The scale values range from negligible, through low, low-moderate, moderate, moderate-high to high, ie. moderate is the mid-range value where there is a measurable effect.

The report has the following components:

1. Visual character and resource analysis (Chapter 2 of the Report). This comprises:
  - a) Description of the existing character of the development site. (Section 2.1 of the report)
  - b) Description of the existing character of the surrounding context. This section also identifies the presence of heritage items in the visual context of the site in terms of their visibility and contribution to the relevant views and settings. (Section 2.2 of the report)
  - c) Identification of the existing and potential visual resources of the development site. (Section 2.3 of the Report)



- d) Description of the proposal and its response to the above identified visual resources. (Section 2.4 of the Report)
- 2. Visual effects analysis. (Chapter 3 of the report) This comprises:
  - a) Analysis of specific visual exposure of the site and the proposal, including the identification and indication of the viewing places and direction of existing views into the site. The viewing locations include roads, recreation areas, waterways and residences and commercial and industrial developments. (Sections 3.1 of the Report)
  - b) Analysis of the change in the intrinsic character of the site and relevant locality due to the proposed development. (Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the Report)
  - c) Analysis of visual sensitivity in terms of nature and significance of viewing locations, including heritage items and the likely expectation of the existing and future character of the views of the development site from those viewing locations. (Section 3.4 of the Report)
  - d) Analysis of specific visual effects such as visual privacy, view loss and interruption of existing important views. (Section 3.5 of the Report)
  - e) Evaluation of the overall visual effects of the proposal based on the above analysis (Section 3.6 of the Report)
- 3. Visual impacts assessment (Chapter 4 of the Report), which considers:
  - a) Physical absorption capacity. (Section 4.1 of the Report)
  - b) Compatibility with the character of the site. (Section 4.2.1 of the Report)
  - c) Compatibility with the character of the surroundings including heritage items. (Section 4.2.2 of the Report)
  - d) Address to relevant Planning Instruments (Section 4.3 of the Report).
  - e) Summary of strategies and commitments for improved address to surrounding context and residential amenity. (Section 4.4 of the Report)
  - f) Evaluation of the overall visual impacts of the proposal based on the above assessment. (Section 4.5 of the Report)
- 4. Conclusions. (Chapter 5 of the Report)





## **2.0 Visual character and resources analysis**

### **2.1 Existing visual character of the site and the surroundings**

The development site is a large parcel of land bounded by Rothesay Street to the south, Belmore Street to the east, Constitution Road to the north and Bowden Street to the west. Nancarrow Avenue runs parallel to Rothesay Avenue and Constitution Road within the interior of the development site. Hamilton Crescent West runs in a north-south direction between Constitution Road and Nancarrow Avenue. A small number of Lots within the area described are at this stage not owned by the Applicant.

The development site is located close to the northern foreshores of Shepherds Bay on the Parramatta River. The site generally slopes from north to south, towards the water. There is a minor cross falls from the north west in the Bowden Street/Constitution Road intersection vicinity and a more substantial one from the north east corner in the Belmore Street/Constitution Road intersection locality. A major drainage line runs through the north west sector to the river.

There is a high point at approximately the centre of the site in the vicinity of the intersection of Nancarrow Avenue and Hamilton Crescent West that is on natural underlying topography.

The development site is presently occupied by commercial and industrial buildings on individual Lots many of which are no longer functional and are of no particular distinction. The site has been significantly altered in regard to underlying topography by excavation to provide footplates for industrial buildings, particularly in the south east sector of the site accessed off Rothesay Avenue. The industrial building at 37 Nancarrow Avenue is listed as a heritage item of local heritage significance under Ryde LEP 105 and Ryde LEP 2010. The building is in the International/Stream Line Moderne style with some Art Deco detailing. There are no other items of heritage significance within the development site.

A storm water drain runs north-south across the western part of the development site, draining into Parramatta River.

The proposed landmark site is on a separate lot located at the corner of Parsonage Street, Well Street and Church Streets and forms part of the Concept Plan Application. It is also located close to the northern foreshores of the Parramatta River. It is presently occupied by an industrial building of about two storeys in height and associated car parking.

### **2.2 Visual character of the surrounding context**

The immediate visual character of the development site is that of residential and mixed use developments predominantly developed over former industrial sites. These include the Faraday Park development to the west, an approved but yet to be constructed residential apartment development at 146 Bowden Street, the Shepherds Bay residential precinct to the south west and 'Bay One' residential development to the immediate east.

The predominant scale of existing and approved residential buildings in the Shepherds Bay precinct, Faraday Park and Bay One is of a relatively consistent height of five to seven storeys. Adjacent to the foreshore, Shepherds Bay and Bay One have lower building heights of three to four storeys.





The building forms overall show no specific response to the topography. All these developments are constructed on land within the Meadowbank Employment Area defined in the Council's Planning Instruments. Part of the immediate visual character is industrial and commercial which appears to be in transition to residential development.

There is low density residential development in the form of detached predominantly single storey dwellings immediately to the north of the development site, on the northern side of Constitution Road.

The immediate visual context of the development site also consists of Anderson Park along the foreshore, foreshore walkway and the eastern and western ferry wharves. The site is located along the foreshore between the John Whitton Bridge (railway bridge) and the Ryde Bridge (road bridge) on Parramatta River. The Ryde Bridge is listed as an item of local heritage significance. The John Whitton Railway Bridge is listed as an item of State Heritage Significance under Ryde LEP 2010. It is also listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. The significance of the John Whitton Bridge is associated with it being one of the twelve double lattice girder bridges that have survived substantially intact in the NSW railway system.

The development site is visible from these bridges to moving viewers and pedestrians can view the site from the road bridge. The development site is visible travelling south to north on the road bridge. It can be seen from the trains travelling in both directions; however, clearer views are possible travelling south to north.

The vegetation along the edges of Anderson Park, within the Rothesay Avenue road reserve and within building sites provides a high screening effect to parts of the site when seen from the south, southeast and southwest directions.

The visual context adjacent to the foreshore on the south side of Parramatta River and opposite the development site is predominantly characterised by industrial development in Rhodes. Part of this land, immediately to the west of the John Whitton Bridge (railway bridge) has been redeveloped as large scale residential consisting of apartment buildings of up to nine storeys in height. There has also been a Joint Master Plan Application with the Department of Planning for 30+ storeys towers in the Rhodes locality, on the southern side of Parramatta River.

Map 1 shows the visual context of the site.







**Plate A**

Example of existing industrial developments on Rothesay Avenue and within the interiors of the development site.



**Plate D**

Looking east from the eastern end of Nancarrow Avenue/Hamilton Crescent West. This part of the development site is significantly excavated.



**Plate B**

Example of existing industrial developments on Rothesay Avenue and within the interiors of the development site. The building on the left is not within the development site.



**Plate E**

A connection off Belmore Street which is no through and terminates at a short distance. This access bounds the part of the development site proposed for Stage 1 Application to the north.



**Plate C**

Example of existing industrial developments on Rothesay Avenue and within the interiors of the development site. A storm water drain runs adjacent to this building, to its west. .



**Plate F**

37-53 Nancarrow Avenue. A Heritage item of local heritage significance under Ryde LEP 2010.



**Plate G**

20-36 Nancarrow Avenue. The vista down this property does not provide any view access to the water or the foreshore.



**Plate J**

The low density residential character of the north side of Constitution Road.



**Plate H**

Detail of buildings about five storeys high in Bay One residential development, as seen from near the eastern ferry wharf.



**Plate K**

Looking south from Faraday Lane towards Faraday Park development.



**Plate I**

Looking west along the foreshore walkway, west of the terminus of Rothesay Avenue, from in front of 146 Bowden Street.



**Plate L**

Looking southwest from the intersection of Constitution Road and Bowden Street.





**Plate M**

Looking northwest, towards Shepherds Bay residential development from the ramp to the eastern ferry wharf.



**Plate N**

Looking west-southwest, towards Rhodes Industrial area and John Whitton Bridge from the pontoon of the eastern ferry wharf.



**Plate O**

Looking southeast towards the Ryde Bridge from near the eastern ferry wharf. The Ryde Bridge is a heritage item of local heritage significance in the Ryde LEP 2010.



**Plate P**

Looking west straight up Parramatta River from the ramp to the eastern ferry wharf. The John Whitton Bridge is a heritage item of local and state significance.



**Plate Q**

From Parramatta River/Homebush Bay, looking towards the Rhodes waterfront residential development.



**Plate R**

From Homebush Bay, looking towards the Rhodes waterfront residential development.



**Plate S**

From Homebush Bay, looking south towards the Homebush Bay waterfront residential development.



**Plate T(iii)**

From standing on a crane adjacent to the development site near Porter Street, at a height of about 7.5 residential storeys, looking west.



**Plate T(i)**

From standing on a crane adjacent to the development site near Porter Street, at a height of about 7.5 residential storeys, looking southeast.



**Plate T(iv)**

From standing on a crane adjacent to the development site near Porter Street, at a height of about 7.5 residential storeys, looking west-northwest.



**Plate T(ii)**

From standing on a crane adjacent to the development site near Porter Street, at a height of about 7.5 residential storeys, looking south-southwest.



**Plate T(v)**

From standing on a crane adjacent to the development site near Porter Street, at a height of about 7.5 residential storeys, looking north.



## **2.3 Visual resources of the site**

The visual resources of the development site and its context are identified to be the important existing and future visual linkages between it and the external public domain and the various edges/interfaces of the development site with the surrounding land uses. These resources need to be maintained and improved with the potential development of the site.

The physical and visual relation of the development site with the immediate surrounding existing and future contexts are also considered to be important visual resources.

The heritage items in the vicinity of the development site generally add to the visual resources and variety of the visual context; however they do not constrain the potential of the development site in regard to the proposal.

### **2.3.1 Interfaces and edges**

The following are the important interfaces identified as part of the visual assessment. Refer Map 2.

- a) The northern edge along Constitution Road facing low density residential development.
- b) The southern edge along Rothesay Avenue facing Anderson Park and the foreshore.
- c) The western and eastern edges adjacent to the newly constructed residential apartment developments in Bowden and Belmore Streets respectively.
- d) The internal edges to Nancarrow Avenue and Hamilton Crescent West.

### **2.3.2 Existing view corridors and vistas**

The following are the important existing vistas and visual linkages identified as part of the visual assessment. Refer Map 3.

- a) View corridor across Belmore Street, Bowden Street and Constitution Road.
- b) View corridor across Hamilton Crescent West and Nancarrow Avenue.

Some of these corridors such as that along Constitution Road, Nancarrow Avenue and Hamilton Crescent West do not lead to any significant scenic view access. There are a number of other vistas and view corridors identified in Ryde Development Control Plan 2010. These linkages do not physically exist, as was observed during the field assessment, and there is potential for the proposed development to incorporate them to increase the viewing opportunity towards the waterway and foreshore. The potential view corridors are listed below in section 2.3.4.

### **2.3.3 Existing pedestrian linkages and foreshore access**

The following are the existing important pedestrian linkages to the foreshore within or adjacent to the development site. These existing linkages provide access to the foreshore and also a viewing experience. Refer Map 4.

- a) The foreshore walkway and pedestrian pathway along Rothesay Avenue.
- b) Pedestrian footpaths on Bowden Street and Belmore Street





There is potential for improved and increased pedestrian linkages within the development site to further activate and externalize the development site and to increase the access to the important visual resources of the context. These are described below at 2.3.5.

#### **2.3.4 Potential view corridors and vistas**

The potential view corridors and vistas, in addition to the existing, are described at Map 3. These are as follows;

- a) Extended view corridor in the existing north-south alignment of Hamilton Crescent West (identified in Ryde DCP 2010).
- b) A vista to the south, off Nancarrow Avenue, across existing industrial development at 20-36 Nancarrow Avenue (identified in Draft DCP 2008).
- c) A vista to the south, near the existing eastern terminus of Nancarrow Avenue/Hamilton Crescent West, across a narrow lane leading to an existing industrial building (identified in Ryde DCP 2010).
- d) A continuous vista off Constitution Road between Hamilton Crescent West and Bowden Street.

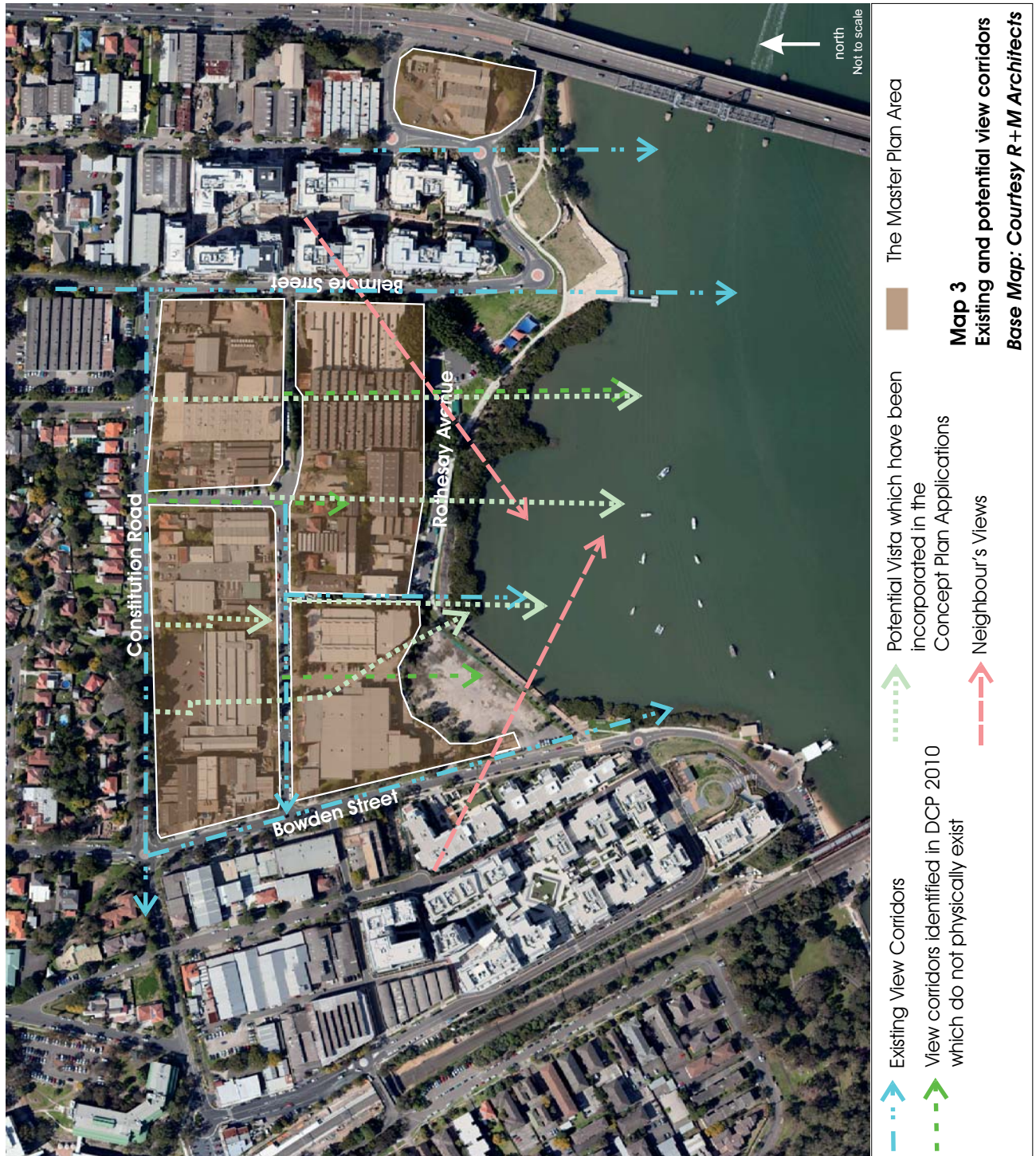
#### **2.3.5 Potential pedestrian linkages and foreshore access**

The potential pedestrian linkages and foreshore access in addition to the existing are described at Map 4. These are as follows;

- a) Pedestrian access between Nancarrow Avenue and the foreshore walkway at the present western terminus of Rothesay Avenue.
- b) Pedestrian access between Constitution Road and foreshore walkway at the present western terminus of Rothesay Avenue.
- c) Pedestrian access off Hamilton Crescent West to the foreshore.
- d) Pedestrian access off the eastern terminus of Nancarrow Avenue/Hamilton Crescent West across a narrow lane leading to an existing industrial building. (This access will run adjacent to the western boundary of the southeast corner Lots of the development site which are proposed for Stage 1 Development Application.)











Existing High Amenity Foreshore

Potential Foreshore/link and access which have now been incorporated in the Concept Plan Applications

The Master Plan Area

**Map 4**  
**Existing and potential foreshore access**  
*Base Map: Courtesy R+M Architects*



## **2.4 The proposal and its response to identified and potential visual resources**

### **2.4.1 General features of the proposal**

The Concept Plan Application is for residential development in the form of a number of residential apartment buildings to replace predominantly obsolete commercial and industrial buildings on the development site.

It also includes provision of large internal open spaces, pedestrian links, increased foreshore access, increased view corridors and visual and physical linkages to provide for a high quality internal residential amenity.

The general principle of the layout and building height distribution is such that the proposal will present a lower height closer to the street along Constitution Road, Bowden Street, Belmore Street and Rothesay Avenue with the taller components of the buildings set further back.

Five storeys high buildings with one storey pop up behind the front setback are proposed along Constitution Road and Bowden Street. Five storeys high buildings with two storeys pop up set behind the front setback are proposed along Belmore Street.

Buildings along Rothesay Avenue are a mix of three storeys, four storeys, five storeys, five storeys with one storey pop up behind the front setback and seven storeys. Significant setbacks are proposed along Rothesay Avenue to appropriately address the public open space on the southern side of the Street.

Taller buildings are proposed within the interior of the development site, which are predominantly seven and eight storeys and there are two twelve storeys towers also proposed. The building heights on the north side of Nancarrow Avenue are such that they will not overshadow the buildings on the south side of the Street.

The proposed Concept Plan Option is to have a relatively uniform height distribution with regard to the topography of the development site. That is, it will result in buildings predominantly appearing to be of similar overall heights when viewed from the main visual catchment to the south of the subject land. This is the existing character of development to the west of the site.

A residential apartment development, as a separate Stage 1 Development Application, is proposed for the south eastern corner of the development site. It proposes a part five storeys with two storeys pop up set behind the front setback above them (along Belmore Street), part seven and part eight storeys height. The building footprint on this Lot is overall C-shaped with a large area of open space in the centre.

The landmark site is proposed to have a eight storey high building podium and a three segment tower on parts of it, one of total eighteen storeys and two of total sixteen storeys along the western edge and a three storey building along the eastern edge, closer to Church Street. The towers are proposed to be so placed that the tower closest to the viewer will screen most of the views of the towers behind it in views from the north and south directions.

The proposal incorporates a significant area and quality of public and privately accessible open spaces and appropriate solar light and orientations and high quality internal residential amenity. The central open space within Precinct C is proposed to be in the form of an elevated plaza that will provide for improved viewing opportunities and public domain quality, as well as vertical and



horizontal separation of the plaza from a two way proposed foreshore road connection between Belmore and Bowden Streets. This is not our preferred solution to the interface with the river and the public domain of the foreshore but we understand that the connection was required to be included in the Master Plan by Ryde Council officers during consultations.

Adaptive reuse of some of the existing buildings and/or some of the typical building features of the existing buildings such as the roof forms are proposed to be incorporated within the new buildings to maintain a relationship with the existing use of the development site.

The development proposes setbacks that are in accordance with the setback controls indicated on Figure 9 of Part 4.2 Meadowbank Employment Area Master Plan of the DCP 2010.

The access to the development is proposed to be similar to the existing; through the bounding streets. Nancarrow Avenue is proposed to extend further east to meet Belmore Street. Rothesay Avenue is also proposed to extend further west to meet Bowden Street.

Vehicular access to the Stage 1 DA development is proposed to be through Belmore Street at lower ground floor. The development will have car parking facility at the basement level and on part of lower ground floor and ground floor.

A road and pedestrian link is proposed between Nancarrow Avenue and the present western end of the existing trafficable part of Rothesay Avenue. Further north-south stepped pedestrian links are also proposed to increase the access to the foreshore. These pedestrian links will also act as view corridors, providing view access to parts of the Parramatta River and its foreshores.

#### **2.4.2 Response of the proposed development options with regard to visual context and resources of the development site**

Below, I present an assessment of the proposed Concept Plan with regard to the existing and potential visual resources of the development site as identified above at Section 2.3.

##### **Response in regard to interfaces and edges**

The proposed Concept Plan responds appropriately to the important interfaces and edges identified at Section 2.3.1. It proposes a five storey height along Constitution Road, Bowden Street and Belmore Street.

The proposed heights will respond appropriately to the low density residential character of the northern side of Constitution Road and to the newly constructed Faraday Park and Shepherds Bay on the western side of Bowden Street. The proposed heights along the Belmore Street interface are also appropriate with regard to the Bay One residential development which is under construction both from an urban design and amenity/view sharing point of view.

The building heights proposed along Rothesay Avenue are also responsive to the foreshore and Anderson Park adjacent to the Street.

The proposed heights are similar to the heights of the existing industrial buildings on the development site along these streets.

The proposed Concept Plan is also appropriate with regard to the building height treatment along Hamilton Crescent West and Nancarrow Avenue.





### Response in regard to vistas and view corridors

The proposed Concept Plan maintains the existing vistas and view corridors as well as incorporating all the potential vistas and view corridors identified above at Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.4. It results in significantly improved view access and a high quality residential amenity with the potential quality, spaciousness and legibility of the resulting urban landscape far in excess of these features in the existing situation.

### Response in regard to pedestrian linkages and access

The proposed Concept Plan maintains the existing pedestrian linkages and access as well as incorporating all the potential linkages and accesses identified above at Sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.5. These result in improved foreshore access and high quality residential amenity. It proposes options for linkages at both the large and the small scale and a significant increase in the quantity and quality of the public domain that can become through ways and pedestrian nodes. It provides appropriate scope for legibility and a high level of permeability and active and casual surveillance of public spaces.

## 2.5 Address to the DGR's

The following table indicates the relevant DGR's and locates the parts of the report which address the individual requirements.

DGR No	Detail	Part of the report which addresses the DGR
Key Issue 2 Built form / Urban Design/Public Domain	<p><i>The EA shall also provide the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Visual and view analysis to and from the site from key vantage points, including from the water and from the opposite side of the Parramatta River. This analysis should also include a consideration of views from existing and approved buildings within the Meadowbank Employment Area and surrounding areas.</i></li> </ul>	Section 2.2, Map 5, Photographic Plates Appendix A
Key Issues 7 Environmental and Residential Amenity	<p><i>The EA must address visual privacy and view loss and demonstrate that the Concept Plan development and Stage 1 Project Application achieve a high level of environmental and residential amenity.</i></p>	Section 3.5
Appendix A Relevant EPI's and Policies to be addressed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Ryde Planning Scheme Ordinance 1979, Draft Ryde LEP 2009, Draft Meadowbank DCP 2007, City of Ryde Development Control Plan 2006, Meadowbank Employment Area Masterplan and other relevant Development Control Plans;</i></li> <li>➤ <i>SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005</i></li> </ul>	Section 4.3
Appendix B Plans and Documents to accompany the Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>6. Visual and View Analysis-visual aids such as a photomontage must be used to demonstrate visual impacts of the proposed building envelopes in particular having regard to the siting, bulk and scale relationships from key areas.</i></li> </ul>	Section 3.1





## **3.0 Visual effects analysis**

### **3.1 Visual exposure of the site and the proposed development**

A field analysis was conducted to identify the potential visual exposure of the proposed development from both the public and private domains and the general visual effects of the distribution of built form proposed. This also included an assessment from the waterway and from the southern side of Parramatta River. Observations were made on the visual exposure of the proposed development from the existing residential developments from the streets, waterways and foreshores.

From locations on roads, reserves and waterways the views of the proposed development will be mostly such that the foreground individual buildings will provide a screening effect to parts of the buildings located further in the interiors of the development site and/or behind them. It is only from some elevated viewing locations such as the road and rail bridges that the majority of the proposed buildings will be visible.

In most of the views from the south, southeast and southwest directions, parts of the development site and the proposed development will be seen in the context of the residential apartment development located immediately to the east and west. The approved but yet to be constructed residential apartment development at 146 Bowden Street will provide significant screening effect to parts of the proposed development.

The upper parts of the two twelve storeys buildings will be visible behind the relatively lower heights buildings in views mainly from the southeast, south and southwest but would not result in any significant effects on the view compositions.

The proposed tower buildings on the landmark site will have high visual exposure in views from the west, southwest, south, southeast and east, including Parramatta River, foreshore, Rhodes foreshore, Anderson Park, the Ryde Bridge and the rail bridge.

Parts of the Stage 1 DA proposal will be visible in individual views and will not be prominent or out of character in the view compositions.

#### **Roads**

Parts of the development site are visible from the bounding roads including Constitution Road, Bowden Street, Rothesay Avenue, Belmore Street, Nancarrow Avenue and Hamilton Crescent West. The visibility is restricted to the industrial and commercial buildings adjacent to the respective bounding streets and the upper parts of buildings within the interior of the development site. Parts of the proposed development will be visible from these streets with individual buildings providing a screening effect to other buildings located behind them. The upper parts of the tower buildings on the landmark site will also be visible from these streets to a varied extent.

Part of the proposed development will be visible in a focal view down Underdale Lane to the west of the development site. Parts of the proposed development will also be visible from a section of Parsonage Street and Well Street and possibly also from Porter Street across side setbacks of buildings on its western side. The proposed buildings on the landmark site will be clearly seen from these three streets.



There are partly screened views of parts of the site from the Ryde Bridge due to the presence of vegetation within Anderson Park, the development site itself and road reserves of the bounding streets. Most of the proposed development will be visible from the Ryde Bridge on Concord Road/ Church Street. The tower buildings on the landmark site will be seen in close range by the viewer in both Options. There would not be any significant visibility of the proposed development from Concord Road. Views from most of Church Street will be in the form of highly screened views of parts of the proposed development with foreground views of the tower buildings on the corner landmark site.

Most of the site is visible from the John Whitton Bridge (the railway bridge). The presence of vegetation along the foreshore, within Anderson Park, within the development site and on the road reserves provides partial screening to the views of the existing development site and will provide significant screening to the proposed buildings. Individual buildings on the edges will also provide significant screening to the buildings proposed in the interior of the development site. The upper parts of the two twelve storeys buildings will be visible. The tower buildings on the corner landmark site will be prominent.

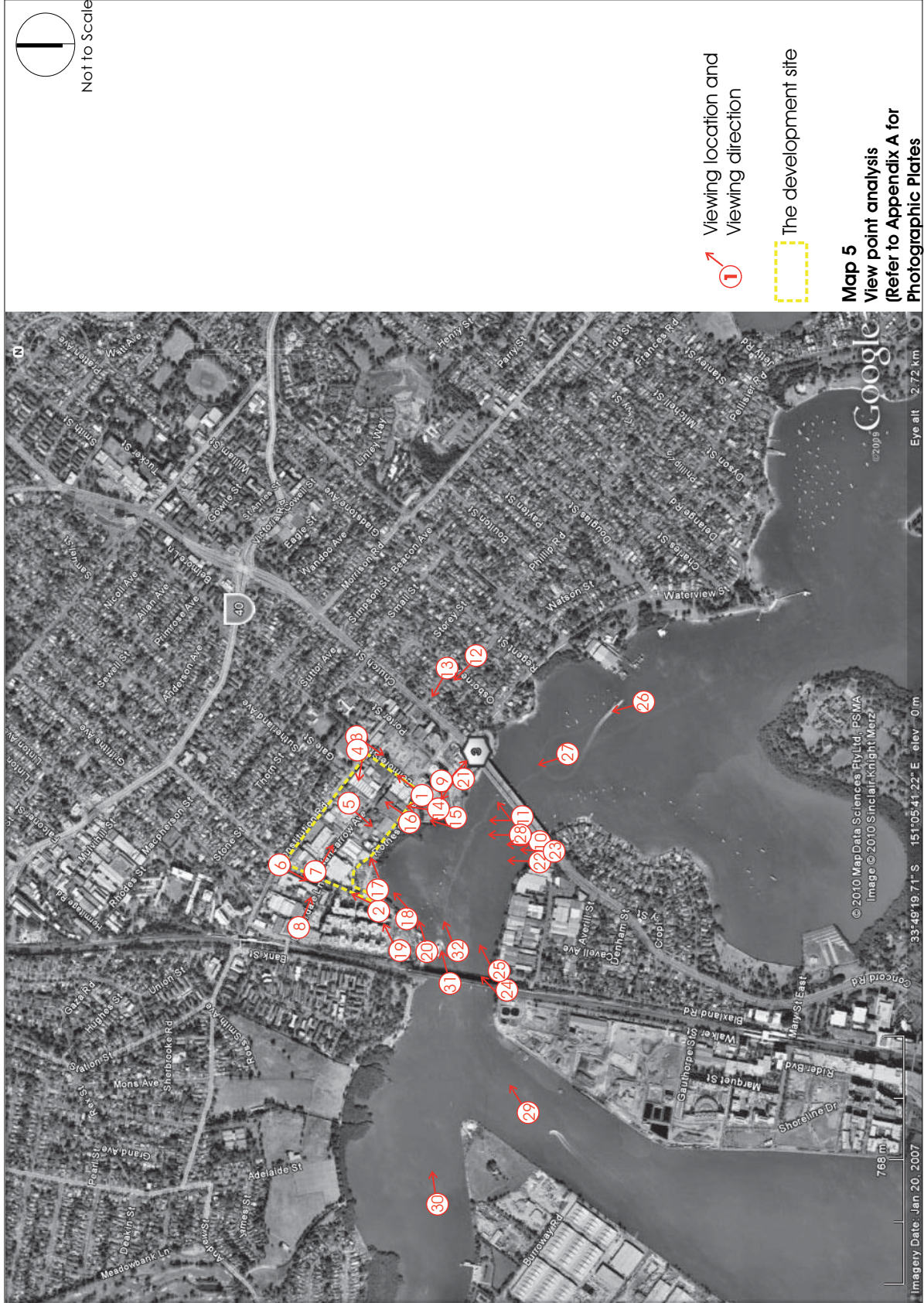
There is no significant visibility of the site from streets further west of the railway line such as Bank Street, Meadowbank Crescent, Constitution Road, Station Street or their general vicinity. The proposed development will generally not be visible from here.

There is no significant visibility of the existing development site from streets further east of Church Street such as Osbourne Street, Waterview Street and Riverside Avenue. This is due to the intervening effect of topography, vegetation and developments. Focal views of the upper parts of the proposed development will be available from some streets further east of Church Street such as Princes Street, Small Street, Riverside Avenue, Wade Street, Wade Lane and Waterview Street. Parts of the proposed development will also be visible from Regent Street and Osborne Avenue. Views of the upper parts of the tower buildings on the corner landmark site will be available from these streets and parts of the two twelve storey buildings will also be visible.

Partially screened views of parts of the development site are also visible from near the northern terminus of Blaxland Road and from near the northern ends and edges of residential streets in the new waterfront development in the Rhodes locality. Views of parts of the proposed development will be similarly visible including those of the tower buildings and the two twelve storey buildings. The upper parts of the taller buildings and the tower buildings will also be visible from Leeds Street and the northern terminus of Cavell Avenue in the Rhodes locality.

There are no significant views of the existing development site from roads further north of Constitution Road including Victoria Road due to the intervening effect of topography, vegetation and residential developments in the view. The taller buildings will be partly visible from Victoria Road in the vicinity of the intersection with Church Street.

Views from roads and the railway will be available predominantly from constantly moving positions in vehicles and parts of the proposed development will be seen in the context of the other residential apartment building development already constructed in the vicinity of the development site and elsewhere both north and south of the site.







### **Reserves and recreation areas**

There are partially screened views of the development site from parts of Anderson Park and the informal paved pedestrian area that leads to the eastern ferry wharf. It is also visible from the eastern and western ferry wharves. It is also visible from the paved pedestrian area leading to the western ferry wharf. The industrial buildings located adjacent to Rothesay Avenue mostly prevent views of the interior of the development site as well as of the industrial buildings located inside. Parts of the proposed development, including the signature buildings will be visible from Anderson Park, the pedestrian paved areas and the two ferry wharves. The built form of the development will form the predominant horizon of the view other than where screened by existing vegetation which is intended to remain.

Views of parts of the development site are also visible from the foreshore walkway between Rothesay Avenue and Bowden Street. The views are similarly partially screened and dominated by industrial buildings adjacent to Rothesay Avenue. Parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings on the corner landmark site will be visible from here, which will form the horizon where visible. The approved but yet to be constructed residential development at 146 Bowden Street will provide a high screening effect to part of the proposed development.

Parts of the development site are also visible from the open space area located at the intersection of Bowden Street and Bay Drive. Parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings on the corner landmark site will be visible from here. Future development at 146 Bowden Street will provide a high screening effect to part of the proposed development. The buildings on the centre part of the site will form part of the horizon of the view.

Parts of the development site are visible from the far shore in the vicinity of John Whitton Bridge (the railway bridge), in the vicinity of the northern terminus of Blaxland Road and the foreshores of the residential waterfront development in the Rhodes locality. Parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings will be visible in this view in the context of other residential developments of similar nature immediately to the east and the west. The buildings on the centre part of the site will form part of the horizon of the view.

Parts of the development site are also visible from the reserve land adjacent to Yarralla Sea Scouts building at the eastern terminus of Leeds Street in Rhodes locality. It is also visible from the pedestrian pathway under the Ryde Bridge. Parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings on the corner landmark site and the two twelve storey buildings will be visible. The proposed buildings will form part of the horizon of the view.

Parts of the proposed development, mainly the tower buildings will also be visible from Settlers Park adjacent to Waterview Street, to the east of Church Street.

Views from reserves and recreational areas will be available from both static and moving positions and parts of the proposed development will be seen in the context of the other residential apartment buildings development already constructed in the vicinity of the development site.

### **Waterway**

Parts of the development site will be visible from a section of the Parramatta River approximately between Kissing Point Ferry Wharf to the east and Sydney Olympic Park Wharf to the west.

The site is highly visible from Shepherds Bay. It is also visible from the northern parts of Homebush Bay. Apart from the section between the rail and road bridges, including the viewing locations



directly to the south of the development site in Shepherds Bay and Parramatta River, the views of the development site are significantly obscured due to the concave shape of the landform/foreshore adjacent to the development site. Vegetation along the foreshore, within Anderson Park and within the development site also provides partial screening to the views of the existing development site.

Views of the development site from the waterway are from the south, southeast and southwest directions and parts of the proposed development will be visible in the context of the existing residential developments of similar nature, as proposed. The tower buildings will also be visible from the waterways. In general, the built form proposed, will form the predominant view horizon when constructed. This is the case in the existing situation, with the exception of prominent trees in properties facing Rothesay Avenue which overtop adjacent buildings in close views. The trees are significant features to be protected in development of the adjacent sites.

### **Residences, industrial and commercial buildings**

Parts of the development site are visible from residences on the western side of Bowden Street, on the eastern side of Belmore Street and on the northern side of Constitution Road. Parts of the development site are visible from residences in Faraday Park development and Shepherds Bay residential development to the west and Bay One residential development to the east.

Parts of the proposed development will be visible from these residences with the upper level apartments having increased views of the buildings proposed within the interior of the development site. The tower buildings on the separate landmark site will be similarly visible from these residences with the exception of those on the north side of Constitution Road.

Parts of the development site are visible from the industrial and commercial developments located on the western side of Bowden Street in the vicinity of its intersection with Constitution Road. The views are mainly of the buildings located adjacent to Bowden Street which predominantly block views of the interior of the development site and of the other industrial buildings. Views of the proposed development from these industrial buildings will be in the form of views of the buildings located adjacent to Bowden Street with higher buildings visible further set back. These buildings will provide screening effect to the views of other buildings located further east.

Parts of the development site are visible from industrial and commercial development along the far shore of Parramatta River in the Rhodes locality. Parts of the proposed development will be visible from these industrial and commercial developments. Views of the proposed development from these industrial buildings will be in the form of views of the buildings located adjacent to Rothesay Avenue with higher buildings visible further set back. These buildings will provide a screening effect to the views of other buildings located further north. Parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings will be visible from the industrial buildings in the 'Auburn Industrial Area' on the island in Homebush Bay.

There are some views of parts of the development site possible from the recently constructed residential apartment development in Rhodes and to some extent in Homebush Bay which are located fronting the Parramatta River. There will be views of parts of the proposed development including the tower buildings from these residences. The proposed development will be seen in the context of the adjacent residential developments of Shepherds Bay and Bay One. Views of the proposed development from some residences in Homebush Bay may be eventually blocked by the future transformation of water front industrial development in Rhodes into residential development.



Parts of the proposed development, mainly the upper parts of the proposed taller buildings may also be visible from some residences and residential streets further north of Constitution Road and from the residences on Osborne Avenue, Regent Street, Wade Street, Riverside Street, Princes Street, Small Street and Waterview Street, further to the east of Church Street.

### **Photomontages**

Robertson and Marks Architects have prepared block model montages of the two proposed Concept Options for 16 representative viewing locations. I nominated the viewing locations based on the findings of my field assessment. The viewing locations were selected to represent the kind of views available from the whole visual catchment and the range of locations from which they are available. The representative viewing locations are the following;

1. Looking north along Belmore Street from near the intersection with Rothesay Avenue.
2. Looking north towards the development site from near the new ferry wharf (the eastern ferry wharf).
3. Looking north from near the western edge of Anderson Park.
4. From along the foreshore walkway (near the western edge of 146 Bowden Street) looking east-northeast.
5. Looking northeast from the upper park area in Shepherds Bay Village Plaza (northwest corner of Bay Drive & Bowden Street).
6. Looking west up Constitution Road from near the intersection of Belmore Street and Constitution Road.
7. From the western ferry wharf looking northeast.
8. Looking south from near the intersection of Bowden Street & Constitution Road.
9. From the car park associated with Anderson Park and eastern ferry looking at the landmark site.
10. From waterway under John Whitton Bridge (the rail bridge) (between 2nd & 3rd pillars).
11. From the southwest end of the support structure to the liftable part of the Ryde Bridge (the road bridge) on Church Street looking North-northwest.
12. From the terminus of Blaxland Road looking northeast.
13. From near the intersection of Nancarrow Avenue and Bowden Street, looking east along Nancarrow Avenue.
14. Bowden Street vista looking north from in front of 01-24 Bowden Street
15. Looking south from near the intersection of Belmore Street & Constitution Road
16. From the opposite foreshore along Parramatta River, adjacent to 1st Yarralla Sea Scouts building

The montages were created with my supervision and advice, using photographs taken by me. A 3-dimensional computer model of the development was created from the architectural plans



for the proposed redevelopment. The model became the base layer later to be inserted into the photographs, using the Adobe Photoshop program.

The photographs were taken as single shots with a digital SLR Camera using a focal length equivalent to 18 mm for a 35mm format camera. Wide angle photographs were taken to as far as possible get the whole of the development site into the photograph.

The photomontages represent the visual exposure of the proposed building envelopes and their siting with regard to the topography and the surrounding built and natural character.

The present application is only for the concept, massing and overall building footprints of the buildings and therefore the detailing of the individual buildings is not part of the present application. The individual buildings will be of contemporary style and detailing, providing visual interest, articulation and modulation of the facades. These potential contemporary forms and their high architectural standards will be compatible with both the existing residential and the emerging and desired future character of the locality. The Stage I DA application has been shown as rendered buildings and it is assessed that its architectural design, colours and materials are compatible within the context.

The montages also show the approved development on 146 Bowden Street site in relevant views.

A precedent analysis study has been presented by R+M Architects showing examples of a number of waterfront developments with high architectural quality and residential amenity with regard to building form, height, orientation, provision of open spaces and increased visual linkages and access to views. The fine grain design stage of the proposed development will be in line with these examples.

### **3.2 Potential change in the intrinsic character of the site**

Change in the intrinsic character of the site is a description of the extent and nature of visual changes when considered in relation to the site's present character before the intended development is constructed.

It is considered that the proposed development will have a moderate to high effect on the existing character of the site on the six point evaluation scale described above in the methodology. The character of the site will change from that of an industrial character with many non-functional and old buildings to a high quality residential apartment development with a high quantum of and quality of the public domain, and increased accessibility to views and pedestrian permeability, legibility and security. The effect will be a positive one in regard to amenity. The proposed development will result in defined open spaces, increased physical and visual linkages and view corridors and increased foreshore access.

The Stage 1 DA Application is also considered to have moderate and positive effects on the present intrinsic character of the site.

A change to the visual character of a site or the immediate surroundings can be positive, neutral or negative and does not directly lead to visual impacts. The more important question to be investigated is the compatibility of the proposed development with the visual character of the site and the surroundings, the desired future character and with the underlying zone objectives and permissibility. This has been considered at Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Report respectively.





### **3.3 Potential change in the intrinsic character of the surroundings**

Change in the intrinsic character of the surroundings is a description of the extent and nature of visual effects when considered in relation to the surroundings of the site which would be caused by the intended development being constructed.

The existing, emerging and desired future character of the locality is that of high quality residential apartment development. In my opinion, the character change of the development site will positively respond to the surrounding context and will be an improvement over the existing situation. The existing, under construction and approved residential context of the development site is predominantly located on former industrial sites, similar to the development site.

When seen from water, the existing appearance of the development site occupied by industrial buildings appears to be out of character with the emerging context in which it is seen, which consist of the residential developments of Shepherds Bay, Bay One and Faraday Park, Anderson Park and foreshore walkway and pedestrian paved areas.

I consider that the proposal will have a moderate effect on the visual character of its surrounding context. The effect is considered to be a positive one. It will provide a familiar character of high compatibility with the existing context. At the same time, it will also give distinctiveness, make a positive response to the underlying topography and produce habitable, permeable, accessible public domain and the quality of the experience of its outdoor spaces. It will be in line with the existing planning controls and policies and produce a more interesting and attractive outcome.

The Stage 1 DA Application is also considered to have moderate and positive effects on the present character of the surroundings of the site.

### **3.4 Visual sensitivity**

Sensitivity relates to the number of viewers who would be likely to see the proposed development and their likely expectations for visual quality. It is usually considered that a visual impact on a sensitive location in the public domain is considered more important than one of similar quality on a less sensitive site or seen from a private viewing place.

The visual sensitivity of the development site for the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application is assessed to be moderate-high on the scale of negligible, low, low-moderate, moderate, moderate-high and high. This is for the following reasons;

1. The development site is located in the vicinity of the foreshores of Shepherds Bay. The foreshores of Shepherds Bay including the foreshore walkway are of high view sensitivity and are accessed by a large population.
2. The development site is located in the vicinity of Anderson Park which is a high view sensitivity public domain location and is used by a large population.
3. The development site is visible from Parramatta River. The waterway is a high view sensitivity viewing location and is used by large population.
4. The development site is visible from the Ryde Bridge (the road bridge) and John Whitton Bridge (the railway bridge). These are heritage items of local significance with high view sensitivity and are used by a large population. Views of the proposed development from



here will only be in the form of a window of viewing opportunity from a constantly moving position.

5. The development site is visible from some high traffic local streets including Constitution Road, Bowden Street and Belmore Street. These are considered to have moderate view sensitivity locations and are used by a large population. Views of the proposed development from here are from a constantly moving position.
6. The development site is visible from the eastern and western ferry wharves which are considered to be moderate view sensitivity locations and are used by a small population for short durations of time.
7. The development site is visible from industrial buildings in Bowden Street and in the Rhodes locality. These are considered low viewer sensitivity locations.
8. The development site is visible from the existing and approved residential developments adjacent to it as well as some in Rhodes and Homebush Bay. These are considered to be moderate viewer sensitivity private domain viewing locations.
9. From most of these viewing locations the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application will be visible in the context of similar residential apartment developments within the Meadowbank Employment Area and will not be prominent or out of character.

### **3.5 Specific visual effects**

As part of the formulation of the urban design principles at the fine grain design stage, specific measures will be taken to create a high quality residential environment. This will include appropriate building orientations, setbacks, provision of open spaces, parks, opportunities for views outward, view corridors and access to scenic resources and the foreshore. The Stage 1 DA design appropriately incorporates such urban design principles.

#### **3.5.1 Visual privacy**

Visual privacy between neighbours within the proposed development as well as with adjacent existing and approved residential development will be maintained by commitments to appropriate setbacks, building orientations, locations of doors, windows and balconies, and landscaping.

These measures can be incorporated at the fine grain design stage. The fine grain detailing is not part of the current Concept Plan Application. The Stage 1 DA design is considered to be appropriate in this regard.

#### **3.5.2 Interruption of views and view loss effects**

The proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application is responsive to the existing view access from the public and private domains.

Lower building heights are proposed along the Rothesay Avenue frontage that will assist in maintaining views to the foreshore from residences in Bay One and Shepherds Bay.

There is no significant current view access from residences on Constitution Road, however, a continuous pedestrian link is proposed from Constitution Road to the foreshore which will also



act as a view corridor. Views through Constitution Road will also be made available through the proposed extended view corridor (and pedestrian link) along Hamilton Crescent West.

The proposed development will not have any negative effect on the existing vistas to the foreshore and Parramatta River down Bowden Street and Belmore Street. There is no significant view access to the foreshore and Parramatta River from within the interior of the development site. The proposed development however, proposes such access to views in the form of several internal physical and visual linkages and view corridors.

The proposed development will not have any significant effect on views of culturally significant or scenic items to and from the waterway. It will not negatively affect any significant views from Anderson Park. Views looking south will be maintained and further enhanced as detailed above. Existing vistas towards Sydney Olympic Park and the City of Sydney where they exist in the visual catchment will not be affected and will be further enhanced by the proposed development.

Overall, it is considered that there would not be any significant interruption to existing views from the external domain. The proposed development is likely to result in a built form that will form part of the horizon of views when seen from the south, the river or the foreshore. The view composition of part of the view comprising the site may alter, but the overall visual experience will not be negatively affected.

In most views the residential development on the site will be seen in the context of the residential developments of Bay One, Shepherds Bay and Faraday Park.

### **3.6 Overall visual effects**

Based on the analysis presented above on each factor, it is assessed that the overall visual effects of the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application will be low to moderate on the six point evaluation scale.



## **4.0 Visual impact assessment**

The criteria in 3.0 concern assessment of the extent of the visual effects of the proposal when seen from specific viewing places. The extent of the visual effects is the baseline assessment against which to judge the visual impacts.

Whether or not a visual effect is an impact of potential significance cannot be equated directly to the extent of the visual effect. For example, a high visual effect can be quite acceptable, whereas a small one can be unacceptable. In the present case, in a site in transition between low scenic quality as industrial development and the desired result of transformation to high density residential development, high levels of visual effects and changes will be acceptable. As a result, it is necessary to give an explicit weighting to the assessed levels of effects to arrive at an assessment of the impact.

This method therefore does not equate visual effects directly to visual impacts. The approach is to assess visual effects as in 3.0 above to arrive at an overall level of visual effect of the proposal and then to assess the significance of the level of impact, if any, by giving differential weighting criteria to impact criteria. By this means, the relative importance of impacts are distinguished from the size of the effect. We consider that two weighting criteria are appropriate to the overall assessment of visual impacts, Physical Absorption Capacity and Visual Compatibility. Each of these addresses the primary question of the acceptability of the visual effects and changes caused by the proposal.

### **4.1 Physical absorption capacity**

Physical Absorption Capacity (PAC) means the extent to which the existing visual environment can reduce or eliminate the perception of the visibility of the proposed development.

PAC includes the ability of existing and future elements of the landscape to physically hide, screen or disguise the proposal. It also includes the extent to which the colours, material and finishes of buildings allows them to blend with or reduce contrast with others of the same or closely similar kinds to the extent that they cannot be easily distinguished as new features of the environment.

The factors that will provide PAC for the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application are;

1. The vegetation within Anderson Park, road reserves and within the development site provides significant screening effects and softening of the appearance to parts of the development site. Provided that there are commitments to retaining and enhancing this vegetation, this will provide long term screening to parts of the proposed development when seen from the most critical south, southeast and southwest directions.
2. The shape of the landform of Shepherds Bay also obscures views of the development site in some oblique views from the southeast and southwest directions and this will hold true for the proposed development as well.
3. The intervening topography, residential developments and vegetation provide screening effects to parts of the development site in views from east and west directions.



4. The materials, colours, finishes and façade treatments of the proposed development will be of high quality and will be in line with the existing and approved residential developments in the surrounding context.

The subject site has a high intrinsic physical absorption capacity for the proposed development including the Stage 1 DA Application. The individual buildings will provide high screening to the buildings behind them in most individual views, in particular those from the south and the river, which provides the most significant visual catchment with regard to scenic features.

The tower component of the building on the corner landmark site will not benefit from any significant physical absorption capacity of its surrounding environment and will be prominently visible from the majority of the visual catchment.

## **4.2 Compatibility of the proposed development**

Compatibility is different from change. While change is objective, the measure of visual compatibility is intended to evaluate the extent to which the change conforms with or acceptably fits into the future visual context of the site and its surroundings. Compatibility also means that the development responds appropriately to the desired future character if this has been determined by strategic planning instruments or policies and guidelines.

### **4.2.1 Compatibility with the character of the site**

Compatibility with the existing character of the site is a measure of how the proposed development responds to the natural and built features such as vegetation, topography, scenic features and existing developments within the site as well as its potential impact on the visibility of those features from external viewing locations. It is also an assessment of how the proposed development takes into consideration the future retention, management and conservation of such natural features. In assessing this, it is also taken into consideration whether the proposed development is a permissible use of the site.

The proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application has moderate to high compatibility with the character of the site. It is responsive of and proposes retention of the natural and scenic features of the site such as the existing significant vegetation, view corridors and foreshore access. It does not require any significant land form alteration in terms of its existing topography. It proposes increased and improved visual and pedestrian linkages, view corridors, foreshore access and internal significant open spaces.

### **4.2.2 Compatibility with the character of the surroundings**

Visual compatibility of the proposed development with the surrounding built and natural character is an assessment considered over its total visual catchment. It is not a measure of whether the proposal can be seen or distinguished from its surroundings. The relevant parameters are whether the proposal can be constructed and utilised without the intrinsic scenic character of the locality being unacceptably changed. It assumes that there is a moderate to high visibility of the proposal to some viewing places. It further assumes that novel elements which presently do not exist in the immediate context can be perceived as visually compatible with that context provided that they do not result in the loss of, or excessive modification of, the visual character of the locality.



The visual compatibility of the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application with regard to the existing, emerging and desired future character of the site was judged to be high. The reasons for this judgment are;

1. The proposed development is of similar nature to recently constructed and approved developments in the locality such as Faraday Park, Shepherds Bay and Bay One residential developments.
2. The proposed development is responsive to the adjacent developments on Bowden Street, Belmore Street and Constitution Road, with regard to building heights.
3. It is responsive to the foreshore edge along Rothesay Avenue.
4. The proposed development is in line with the desired future character of the locality as stipulated by Council's Planning Instruments and the evidence of emerging character for similarly located land both in the immediate vicinity and also in Rhodes and Homebush Bay.
5. Subject to appropriate commitments the proposed development will not result in any significant potential visual and related amenity impacts, including visual privacy.
6. The proposed development provides excellent view access to existing adjacent development and the public domain.
7. The proposed building profiles and heights are similar to the recently constructed waterfront developments along the Parramatta River to include those within Meadowbank, Rhodes, Homebush Bay and Breakfast Point.
8. I have been informed by the Applicant, that Ryde Council has encouraged the concept of a tower building on the landmark site, as proposed, and that there have been Applications for tower style buildings/developments in the Rhodes waterfront locality as well.

#### **4.3 Address to relevant planning instruments with regard to potential visual impacts**

Below I have addressed the Planning Instruments in as far as they are relevant to the potential visual impacts of the proposed development. Subsequent to the issue of the Director General's requirements, the Draft LEP and DCP have been made effective on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Hence, I have addressed Ryde LEP 2010 and Ryde DCP 2010 below.

##### **4.3.1 Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2010**

The development site is zoned B4 Mixed Use under the LEP 2010. The objectives of the zone relevant to potential visual impacts are;

*To provide a mixture of compatible land uses*

*To create safe and attractive environments for pedestrians*

*To recognise topography, landscape setting and unique location in design and land-use*

Comment: Based on the above assessment presented at Sections 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0, I consider that the proposed development is responsive to these objectives.



#### 4.3 Height of buildings

(1) *The objectives of this clause are as follows:*

- (a) *to maintain desired character and proportions of a street within areas,*
- (b) *to minimise overshadowing and ensure a desired level of solar access to all properties,*
- (c) *to enable the built form in denser areas to create spatial systems that relate to human scale and topography,*
- (d) *to enable focal points to be created that relate to infrastructure such as train stations or large vehicular intersections,*
- (e) *to reinforce important road frontages in specific centres.*

(2) *The height of a building on any land is not to exceed the maximum height shown for the land on the Height of Buildings Map.*

Comment: The proposed development positively responds to these objectives. Parts of the proposed development exceed the maximum building height shown on the Height of Buildings Map, however; it is in line with the recently constructed, under construction and approved residential developments within the Meadowbank Employment Area and to the recently developed other waterfront developments such as in Rhodes, Homebush Bay and Breakfast Point.

#### 4.3.2 Ryde Development Control Plan 2010

Part 4.2 Meadowbank Employment Area (MEA) is relevant to the development site. The proposed development is responsive to the Master Plan objectives given at Section 1.5 and the SEPP 56 Guiding Principles given at Section 1.6 of Part 4.2 of the DCP 2010.

Some of the salient features of the future character of the MEA is described as;

***Built-form will be sympathetic towards and respond to Meadowbank's location on the Parramatta River and to the topography in general. Therefore, buildings will not dominate either the northern ridgeline or the foreshore.***

***Built height at the foreshore will be limited to four storeys, regardless of usage. Uses and development will be compatible with, and complement, public uses of the Parramatta River and its foreshores. Existing built structures, particularly those of the industrial past of Meadowbank should be considered, where possible, for adaptive reuse. To encourage adaptive reuse, Council will consider, where appropriate, varying the development mix by up to 10%, or the addition of another storey.***

***Meadowbank will be an urban place that recognises and reinforces its relationship to the Parramatta River. A significant characteristic will be the extent of public open space, stretching across the eastern and western extremes of Shepherds Bay. Access from the north to the foreshore will be encouraged. Views to and from the river and foreshore will be protected. The public domain – both the street network and other open spaces – will be clearly defined, link to existing networks and be extensively landscaped. Private***





***development will be encouraged to provide public open space and add to the existing landscape setting.***

Comment: The proposed development has taken these guidelines into consideration and appropriately responds to the future character envisaged by the MEA Master Plan. The salient features of the proposed development are discussed at Section 2.4 as well as 3.5.2. Adaptive reuse of some of the existing buildings and/or some of the typical building features of the existing buildings such the roof forms are proposed to be incorporated within the new buildings to maintain a relationship with the existing use of the development site and to associate and recognise the industrial history of the area.

**Relevant Urban design Principles given at Section 2.3 are**

- *Protect the existing treed ridgeline from being obscured by development;*
- *Protect the existing scale of the built environment;*
- *Respect the existing street pattern;*
- *Respect the bulk, height, rhythm and scale of the existing neighbourhood and topography;*
- *Maintain and create views to significant points of interest, especially water vistas;*
- *Provide open space and pedestrian links to the foreshore;*

Comment: The proposed development satisfies these Urban Design Principles, in as far as it is possible, with a Concept Plan Application which does not include fine grain design of the individual buildings. The description of the proposed development at Section 2.4 details the response of it to the existing character and existing and potential visual resources of the development site and its context.

**The development site is partly within Precinct 3 Bay Commercial/Industrial and partly within Precinct 4 Foreshore Activity.**

*Precinct 3 – Bay Commercial / Industrial: While development is likely to be mostly in-fill, quality architecture is encouraged to create an environment compatible with high tech uses. Views to the south across the Parramatta River will be protected and optimised. Retail uses will not be permitted*

*Precinct 4 - Foreshore Activity: located on the foreshore, an area of mixed higher density residential and commercial/retail development. It is envisaged that this precinct will have a lively urban character with some retail and other active uses at ground level. Community service uses could be appropriate. Adaptive reuse should be considered and recognition given to former industrial uses. Development incentives of a 10% variation in land use or an additional storey may be considered appropriate for the adaptive reuse of buildings. Development of the site bounded by Belmore, Well and Porter Streets should be in keeping with its location and island nature. The presence of large mature trees will continue to be a characteristic of the locality.*

Comment: The proposed development is line with the above description of the precincts.



## **Section 4 General Development Controls**

### **Views and vistas**

#### *Objectives*

*Reinforce and protect views to the Parramatta River and beyond and enhance permeability through the area - north-south and east-west.*

*Maintain and enhance view corridors, view sheds and panoramas both into and out of the MEA.*

*Maintain views through sites from pedestrian and cycle links to the Parramatta River*

*Protect views from the water of the northern treed ridgeline of Meadowbank.*

*Facilitate views by reflecting topographical changes in building heights.*

#### *Controls*

*a) Provide a five (5) to ten (10) metre setback along Bowden Street and Belmore Street from the north at Constitution Road towards the south at the junction of the Parramatta River. Refer to Figure 9.*

*b) Ensure new buildings take into account in their design and orientation the existing views on the subject site and adjoining sites. New developments should be orientated to take advantage of water views and vistas.*

*c) Ensure that new development does not compromise views of the northern ridgeline of Meadowbank.*

*d) Development applications will be required to include a views study in accordance with the above strategy.*

Comment: The proposed development is in line with the above objectives and controls. The setbacks required by the MEA Master Plan along all the streets have been proposed. The existing views are retained and provision for additional views is made with the help of visual linkages, pedestrian accesses and view corridors. Views from the water of the northern treed ridgeline of Meadowbank/Ryde will not be affected by the proposed development. This Report addresses Control d).

## **Section 5 Precinct Specific Development Controls**

### **5.3 Precinct 3: Bay Commercial/Industrial**

#### *Principles*

- *Views to the south across the Parramatta River shall be protected and optimised*
- *Setbacks will ensure attractive tree planting and large buildings are to be set in landscaped surroundings.*
- *The access road on Rothesay Avenue may require an additional setback and/or dedication of land to accommodate the footpath etc.*

#### *Controls*

#### *Views and Vistas*



- a) *Views from the highest point in this precinct to the south-west and Sydney Olympic Park should be maximised.*
- b) *Maintain views to and from the J-Tec building. The impact of development on the heritage significance of the J-Tec building must be considered.*

Comment: The proposed development is specifically organised in line with these Principles and Controls.

## **Section 5 Precinct Specific Development Controls**

### **5.3 Precinct 3: Bay Commercial/Industrial**

#### *Principles*

- *Adaptive reuse of existing buildings should be considered and recognition given to former industrial uses.*
- *Development of the site bounded by Belomoe, Well and Porter Street should be in keeping with its location and island nature.*
- *The presence of large mature trees shall continue to be a characteristic of the locale.*
- *Views down Belmore Street to the river are to be protected.*

#### *Controls*

##### *Views and Vistas*

- b) *New development in this precinct-a highly visible location, one of the lowest in Meadowbank and near the waterfront-is to respond to and consider views from the Parramatta River.*

Comment: The proposed development is in line with these Principles and Controls.

## **MEA Master Plan Maps**

The proposed development is in line with the setback controls, retention of existing trees and the proposed street plantings and the retention of existing and proposed views shown on various Maps of the Master Plan document.

### **4.3.3 SREP Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005**

The General Aims of the REP (Clause 2) are relevant and the proposal is assessed to not be inconsistent with those aims with regard to the potential visual impacts.

The foreshore of the site is zoned W2 Environmental Protection under SREP Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005. The development site is not within the land to which the waterways zone of the REP applies.

#### ***Clause 26 of the SREP applies.***

##### *26 Maintenance, protection and enhancement of views*

*The matters to be taken into consideration in relation to the maintenance, protection and enhancement of views are as follows:*



*(a) development should maintain, protect and enhance views (including night views) to and from Sydney Harbour,*

*(b) development should minimise any adverse impacts on views and vistas to and from public places, landmarks and heritage items,*

*(c) the cumulative impact of development on views should be minimised.*

Comment: The proposed development does not have any significant negative effect on views to Sydney Harbour. Compared to the existing situation, it will provide enhanced views from streets and residential buildings and new opportunities for views and vistas, including night views to the Harbour. It will provide new publicly available views from specifically designed public domain locations which will provide public access to and enjoyment of the views. It will form part of the visual horizon of the view when seen from the Parramatta River and from the south, southeast and southwest directions, however, it will not result in the loss of view of any significant scenic items.

The important views and vistas, many of which are potential and not existing views that are identified by the local Planning Instruments will be retained and enhanced by the proposed development. It does not cause any significant view loss effect on views to and from landmarks and heritage items.

The cumulative impacts of the development on views are not significant.

#### **4.4 Strategies and commitments**

Below, is a summary of measures already undertaken and which will be undertaken at the finer grain design stage in terms of improved urban design and visual and residential amenity.

The proposed development incorporates;

1. Adequate setbacks and lower building heights along primary roads to include Rothesay Avenue, Belmore Street, Bowden Street and Constitution Road.
2. Significant internal open spaces, street plantings, pockets of vegetation and retention of existing significant vegetation.
3. It retains existing visual linkages and proposes new visual and pedestrian linkages.
4. It retains existing view corridors, incorporates all the view corridors identified in DCP 2010 and proposes additional ones.
5. It proposes increased foreshore access.
6. It proposes adaptive re-use of some of the industrial buildings and adoption of roof forms similar to industrial buildings.
7. The layout and building heights are responsive to views both looking north and looking south.

The fine grain design stage of the development will include the following general urban design measures;

1. Appropriate building orientations for sunlight, visual privacy and increased residential amenity



2. Appropriate locations of doors, windows and balconies and landscaping for visual privacy
3. High quality architectural design with horizontal and vertical building articulation and modulation, façade treatments and roof forms.
4. Appropriate use of materials and colours.

#### **4.5 Overall visual impacts of the proposal**

Overall, I am of the opinion that the proposed development is acceptable and does not result in any unreasonable visual or related amenity impacts. The potential overall visual impacts of the proposal are rated as low-moderate in the scale of negligible, low, low-moderate, moderate, moderate-high and high.



## **5.0 Conclusion**

Based on the above assessment, I conclude that with regard to the potential visual impacts, the proposed development, including the Stage 1 DA Application is acceptable and it does not result in any significant negative visual effects and impacts on its visual catchment. The proposed development will cause a positive change to the existing character of the site and the surroundings and will be compatible with the existing, emerging and desired future character of the site and the surroundings as envisaged by the MEA Master Plan in DCP 2010. It appropriately responds to the character adjacent to the bounding streets by providing adequate setbacks and lower building heights as required by the MEA Master Plan.

The proposed development maintains and improves visual linkages, foreshore access, view corridors and vistas. It positively reinforces the maintenance of the existing views looking south towards the foreshore and the Parramatta River from both the public domain and residences and has no negative effect on views looking north. The proposed development positively enhances and promotes views to Sydney Olympic Park and the City in excess of those required by the relevant planning instruments. It incorporates these and increased foreshore access into the public domain design.

The proposed development will result in improved view access from the development, larger and better quality public open spaces, higher pedestrian physical and visual permeability, legibility and residential amenity, with potentially greater casual surveillance and security.

The tower building on the corner landmark site will be prominently seen from the visual catchment mainly from locations to the south, southeast, southwest, east and west. It is considered to be appropriate for the landmark site. The heights proposed within the Concept Plan respond to the recently constructed residential developments in the MEA area and other waterfront developments such as in Rhodes, Homebush Bay and Breakfast Point.

Overall, I support the Concept Plan and the Stage 1 DA Application on visual impact grounds and consider them to be worthy of approval with regard to their merits.