

COBBITTY ROAD

VISUAL CHARACTER ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR MIRVAC
AUGUST 2022
FINAL

URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT:

Associate Director: Jane Maze-Riley

Senior Consultant: Nicholas Sisam

Project Code: P0039619

Report Ref: 01 RPT_Visual Assessment Report

Version: 01

Report Status: Final

Date: August 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

DEFINITIONS RELATING TO ADJACENT VISUAL LANDSCAPE

VISUAL CURTILAGE

Visual curtilage is a term used to refer to associated landscapes that are visible within a geographical area or extent of a landholding, heritage item, subject site or road corridor. The visual curtilage of a road corridor or site includes the associated visible landscapes to either side, which in this case are gently undulating pastoral landscapes, rural in-nature characterised by intermittent dwellings and structures of low height and scale and fingers of vegetation often associated with riparian corridors or areas.

VISUAL CHARACTER

Visual character is a term which refers to predominant visual features that are present in the landscape.

SCENIC QUALITY

Scenic quality relates to the likely expectations of viewers regarding scenic beauty, attractiveness or preferences relating to the visual setting or composition of a view.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The distinctive, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical elements within a landscape, which when combined, give a setting its sense of place and make one landscape different from another. Multiple physical elements include terrain, vegetation, bodies of water, cultural modifications and atmospheric conditions.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Urbis has been engaged by Mirvac Pty Ltd to assess the existing visual character of Cobbitty Road, Cobbitty in the Camden LGA which directly adjoins Mirvac owned land. The proposed subdivision on the site has significant frontage to Cobbitty Road and therefore both Council and the landowners have requested that the development provide appropriate visual mitigation that limits the impact of the subdivision on Cobbitty Road and its landscape character.

The purpose of the report is to provide Mirvac with objective baseline data regarding the predominant visual character and scenic quality of the road corridor. In particular the analysis identifies sections of the road corridor where the existing visual character changes or has emerged recently.

The purpose of this baseline analysis is to inform all stakeholders as to visual uniqueness and importance of the road corridor and to identify potential visual impacts and mitigation measures which may be appropriate in relation to development adjacent to it.

This study is limited to an analysis of the visual character of the road corridor and its associated visual curtilage and does not conflate visual character or scenic quality with cultural heritage values.

In our opinion this is not required in relation to the potential visual effects of the proposed development.

SUBJECT SITE AND PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

The site, legally known as 2005/DP1162239 is located at 421 The Northern Road, Cobbitty and is approximately 79.77ha and forms part of the Oran Park Growth Area, which has been rezoned under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006* (Growth Centres SEPP) for future urban development. It is broadly expected that land will accommodate a maximum of 953 residential dwellings, a neighbourhood centre and associated infrastructure including open space.

SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The semi-rural suburb of Cobbitty is located approximately 60km south west of Sydney CBD and is within the South West Priority Growth Area for Sydney. Cobbitty is predominately rural in character.

The surrounding visual landscape is characterised by a mixture of rural landscape, established settlements and urban areas. The rural areas are characterised by pastoral landscapes, farming practices, remnant vegetation and woodland with limited building development that is generally spatially separated from one another.

Established settlement areas (such as Cobbitty Village) are largely comprised of vernacular buildings and layout patterns, with residential dwellings along a central main street ranging in construction periods and generally limited to one to two storeys. The buildings are detached from one another as a result of being on large lot residential parcels of land and are set back from road with front gardens, often allowing for clear views of built form.

More recent urban development is present to the east of the site such as Harrington Park and Oran Park. These areas are characterised by newly established residential suburbs, town centres, infrastructure and employment zones. Built form is clearly visible within these areas, with residential set backs often being limited and with minimal vegetation to the front boundary.

Parts of the visual character adjoining the Cobbitty Road corridor are relevant to this study as they form part of the visual curtilage of the road and add to the overall visual experience for users of the road.

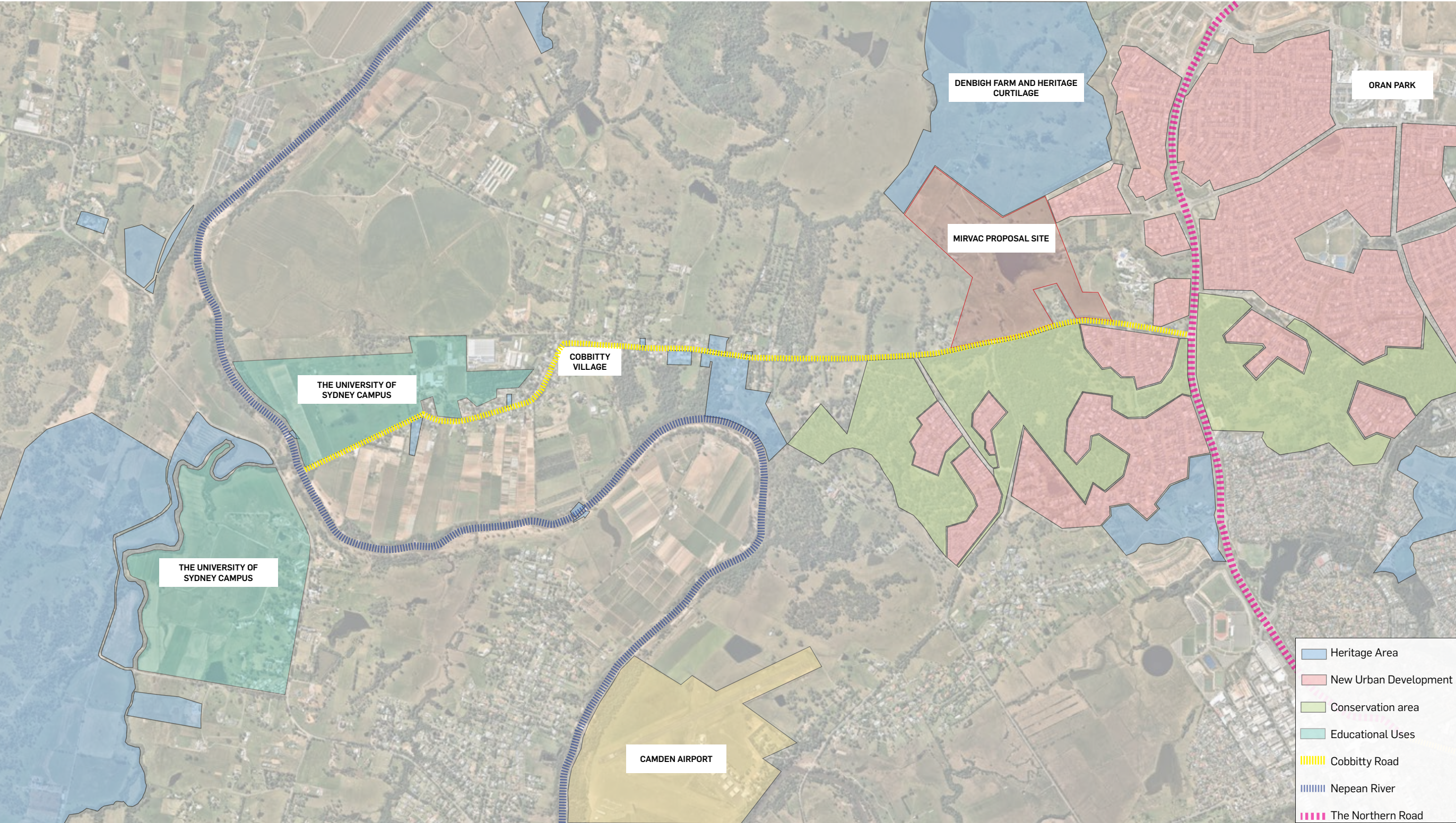


FIGURE 1 SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

2.0 COBBITTY ROAD CHARACTER ANALYSIS



FIGURE 2 VIEW SOUTH WEST FROM INTERSECTION OF KITTY LANE AND HOOK STREET



FIGURE 3 RURAL STREETSCAPE AND LARGE LOT PARCEL



FIGURE 4 VIEW NORTH WEST OVER RURAL LAND TOWARDS NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



FIGURE 5 HARRINGTON GROVE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

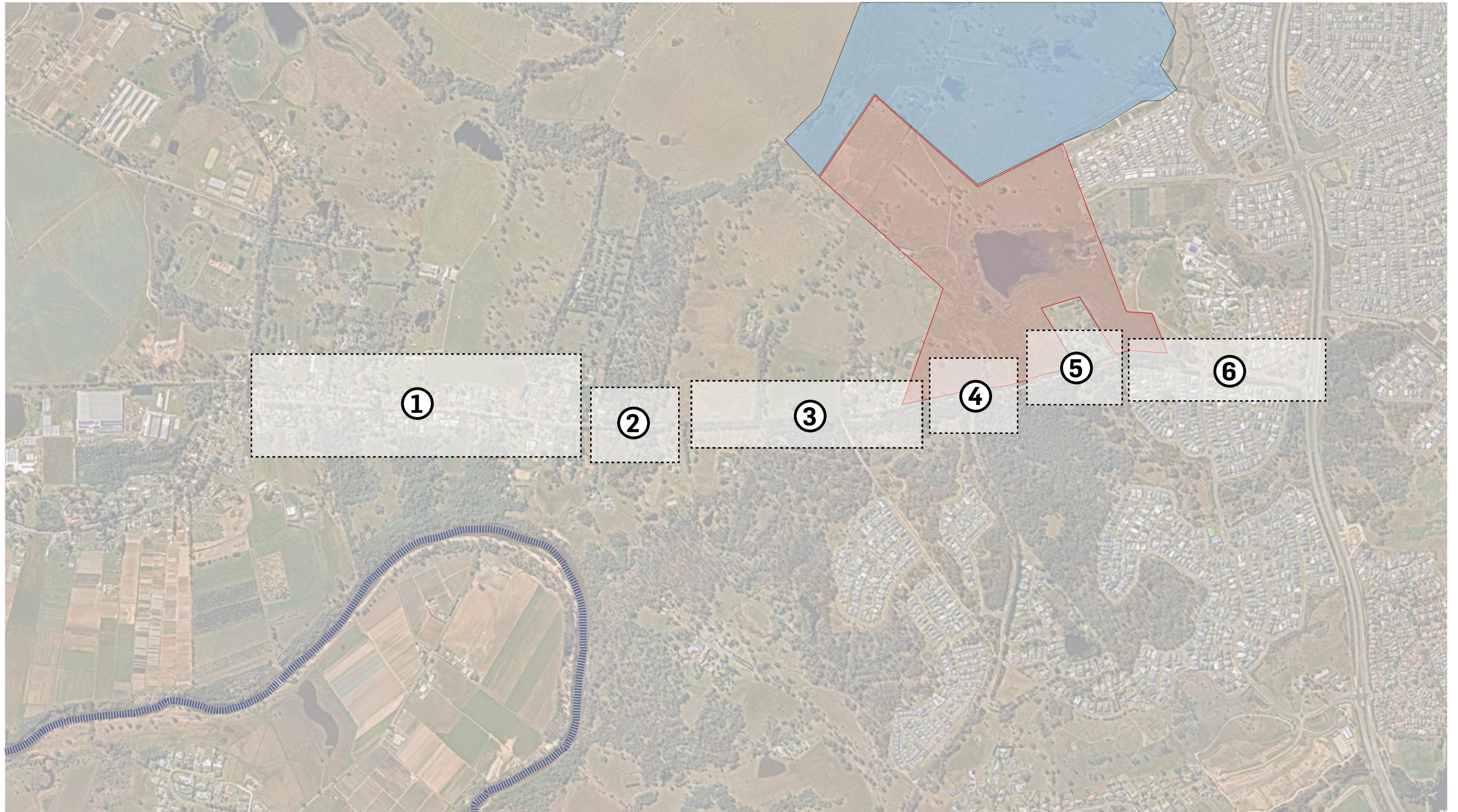


FIGURE 6 COBBITTY ROAD ZONES AND EXTERNAL VISIBILITY



FIGURE 7 ZONE 1 AERIAL AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 8 COBBITTY VILLAGE (ZONE 1) LOCATION



FIGURE 9 LOCAL HERITAGE LISTED COBBITTY GENERAL STORE

1. COBBITTY VILLAGE STREETScape

The predominant visual character of the Cobbitty Village streetscape is one of typical large lot residential living. Residential dwellings fronting Cobbitty Road are a mixture of architectural styles and construction dates typically ranging from mid 20th century to present, and are largely single storey brick or rendered exteriors with gabled and hipped roofs. The dwellings are typically setback from Cobbitty Road between 8 to 13 metres with front gardens comprised of a mixture of styles and planting types from open lawns, hedges, shrubs and specimen tree planting.

The dwelling setbacks, generally open front gardens and limited street tree planting creates a relatively open view when travelling along the road, and allows for a high degree of visual accessibility of built form to either side of the road, as well as infrastructure elements such as overhead power lines. Long distance views are generally not available apart from the road corridor itself, however exceptions such as from Teen Ranch south towards Camden exist.



FIGURE 10 ZONE 2 AERIAL AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 11 VILLAGE TRANSITION (ZONE 2) LOCATION



FIGURE 12 VIEW EAST FROM OPPOSITE 365 COBBITTY ROAD

2. VILLAGE TRANSITION

A gentle decrease in elevation marks a transition zone between the large lot residential dwellings along the road to the west to more open primary production land.

The setbacks of the dwellings in this zone from the road and each other are generally larger than that to the west, and vegetation begins to become more visually significant to either side of the road corridor compared to the Zone 1 (Cobbitty Village). While views of dwellings on the northern side of Cobbitty Road are still present, views to the southern side become more fleeting as a result of the greater setbacks and denser vegetation.

The view east from this transition zone compared to the west is framed by mature vegetation. Intermittent lateral views are available between vegetation, as are areas of open sky



FIGURE 13 ZONE 3 AERIAL AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 14 ENCLOSED ROADWAY (ZONE 3) LOCATION



FIGURE 15 VIEW EAST FROM 415 COBBITTY ROAD

3. ENCLOSED ROADWAY

Views are highly framed within this area as a result of the mature vegetation to the north and south of the road. As a result of the height, canopy spread and maturity of the trees to either side, the view is also highly enclosed, with canopy cover extending over the roadway.

Highly filtered peripheral views through the vegetation adjacent to either side of the road are possible, and create a partial sense of what is beyond, particularly to the northern side where cleared rural land is present to the north. Views to the southern side of the road are more limited due to the density of vegetation, creating a more dense impression with limited views southwards.

While the framing of vegetation to either side of the road is generally consistent throughout this section of Cobbitty Road, isolated views north and south are present, typically as a result of driveways, however these views are fleeting.



FIGURE 16 ZONE 4 AERIAL AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 17 ZONE 4 LOCATION



FIGURE 18 VIEW NORTH FROM MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD

4. TOPOGRAPHICAL CHANGE & JUVENILE VEGETATION

Cobbitty Road becomes elevated above the adjacent landform to the north, with vehicles travelling along the road being able to perceive the level difference. The highly framed and enclosed view to the west is also replaced by one that is far more open as a result of the more juvenile planting to the northern side of the road.

While less mature planting is located to the north, partial peripheral views are all but lost as a result of the level difference meaning the carriageway is level with the fuller mid and upper portions of adjacent canopy as opposed to more sparse lower sections of vegetation. A fleeting long distance view is possible from the culvert over Cobbitty Creek to the east.

This area represents one of the few public access roads that allow direct southern access to Cobbitty Road with potential frontal views north.

The visual character of this zone is newly formed and emerging as a result of the establishment of growing screen planting.



FIGURE 19 ZONE 5 AERIAL AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 20 HARRINGTON GROVE APPROACH (ZONE 5) LOCATION



FIGURE 21 VIEW SOUTH WEST FROM DENBIGH FARM ENTRANCE

5. HARRINGTON GROVE APPROACH

A gentle increase in elevation from west to east marks the approach towards Harrington Grove and Macarthur Anglican School. Vegetation to the northern side of the carriageway is generally juvenile until reaching the driveway leading to Denbigh Farm, where a fleeting long distance view over open rural land towards vegetated slopes in the distance is possible for road users.

A short section of dense vegetation that borders 581 Cobbitty Road to the northern side of the carriageway fully blocks any views north into property, while vegetation to the southern side begins to thin out.



KEY INSIGHTS

- Visual character of the area is urbanised, with smaller residential lots and urban elements in contrast to rural nature of the rest of Cobbitty Road.
- Long distant view across the site possible when travelling west.

FIGURE 22 ZONE 6 AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION



FIGURE 23 NEW URBAN AREA (ZONE 6) LOCATION



FIGURE 24 VIEW NORTH WEST FROM COBBITTY ROAD

6. NEW URBAN AREA

Peripheral and filtered views to either side of the road become more available, particularly to the south of the carriageway where views of detached dwellings within Harrington Grove are possible. A fleeting long distance view to the north west is possible when travelling west along Cobbitty Road, although this is tightly constrained due to surrounding mature vegetation.

The eastern entrance to Cobbitty Road marks a distinct change in streetscape in comparison to the rest of the road. Short and medium distance views are possible due to the decrease in surrounding vegetation, particularly to the north surrounding Macarthur Anglican School. Low shrub planting and street lighting to either side of the road as well as a public footpath to the northern side replace the more naturalistic and rural vegetated streetscape that characterises the road to the west.

3.0 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

- The east and west of Cobbitty Road (zones 1 & 6) differ greatly from one another and bookend the segment of road that is adjacent to the proposal site.
- Cobbitty Village is a typical rural town defined by large residential lots with dwellings set back from the road to allow for front gardens and generally clear views of built form from the road.
- The east of Cobbitty Road is visually distinct from the other zones identified due to the scale, height and age of development which includes residential subdivision and Macarthur Anglican College.
- Views to either side of Cobbitty Road (north and south) are generally highly filtered or obstructed due to vegetation with zones 3, 4 and 5 having the highest levels of vegetation.
- Limited views north and south through the vegetation are further compounded through a combination of travelling at speed in a vehicle and being peripheral views.
- The visual curtilage of Cobbitty Road is limited to intermittent and filtered views through vegetation for a viewer from moving viewing situations, where views are predominantly constrained to the road corridor by the presence of understorey vegetation and canopy trees located within the road reserve.
- Lack of public footpaths results in limited viewing time when travelling along Cobbitty Road in a vehicle and decreases the ability to perceive and contemplate views through the existing vegetation that would be possible if walking.
- Views to the heritage item Denbigh Farm are not possible when driving along Cobbitty Road as a result of vegetation, distance and travelling speed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain existing planting within the Cobbitty Road corridor adjacent to proposal where possible.
- Where peripheral views into the site are possible due to sparse vegetation recommend targeted additional planting to boundary planting (to be assessed during design development).
- Increase boundary planting to filter views at select locations if built form views is deemed to be overly intrusive on visual character of Cobbitty Road. Only to be further explored upon more detailed design layouts and analysis to ascertain necessity.
- Provide screening planting to south eastern corner to conceal north west views into site past Macarthur Anglican College roundabout.
- Proposed Cobbitty Road / Macquarie Grove Road Roundabout entrance should consist of planting to match existing in the area to maintain visual character. Roundabout treatment similar to the College entrance would be inappropriate given highly manicured nature.
- Proposed Cobbitty Road / Macquarie Grove Road entrance provides only direct views north into site. As such entrance planting should be explored to filter views northwards as should suitable median planting.



FIGURE 25 RECOMMENDED VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

4.0 VISUAL MITIGATION MEASURES

APPROXIMATE VEGETATIVE HEIGHTS AND MASSING ENVELOPE



FIGURE 26 VEGETATIVE HEIGHTS AND MASSING ENVELOPES (EASTERN END OF COBBITTY ROAD)

APPROXIMATE VEGETATIVE HEIGHTS AND MASSING ENVELOPE



FIGURE 27 VEGETATIVE HEIGHTS AND MASSING ENVELOPES (COBBITTY ROAD & MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD INTERSECTION LOOKING EAST)

PLANNING HEIGHT AND MASSING ENVELOPES

E4 - ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING

Height **9.5m**
Setback **15m**

Individual dwellings within the Environmental Living lots would be detached and wide spatial separation and would not present to Cobbitty Road as a solid extent of built-form.

VEGETATION HEIGHTS

Planting heights have been shown at the site boundary (with the height extruded from the survey line).

KEY INSIGHTS

- Corridor views along Cobbitty Road (as opposed to direct views towards the site) are the primary views available
- Oblique angle of view increases screening effect of vegetation
- Road reserve planting generally consists of the most mature vegetation along the road and contributes highly to screening of the site and road character
- Density of road reserve planting allows for reduction of buffer planting within the site while maintaining road character

WESTERN ROAD RESERVE PLANTING AND PLANTING BUFFER (2018 - 2022)



FIGURE 28 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING (SEPTEMBER 2018)

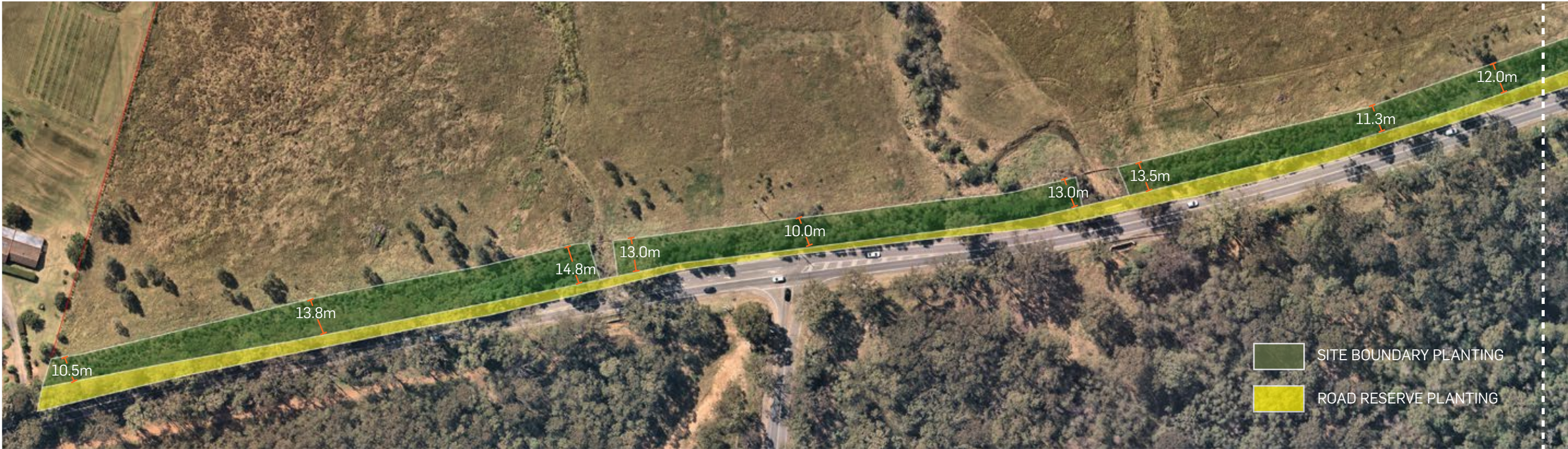


FIGURE 29 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING (MARCH 2022)

EASTERN ROAD RESERVE PLANTING AND PLANTING BUFFER (2018 - 2022)



FIGURE 30 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING (SEPTEMBER 2018)



FIGURE 31 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING (MARCH 2022)



FIGURE 32 DECEMBER 2009 STREET VIEW (COBBITTY ROAD & MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD INTERSECTION)



FIGURE 33 MARCH 2013 STREET VIEW (COBBITTY ROAD & MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD INTERSECTION)



FIGURE 34 NOVEMBER 2018 STREET VIEW (COBBITTY ROAD & MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD INTERSECTION)



FIGURE 35 DECEMBER 2020 STREET VIEW (COBBITTY ROAD & MACQUARIE GROVE ROAD INTERSECTION)

VISUAL MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain approximate 7m of boundary planting from road reserve northern boundary (level of removed planting will vary - see Figures 36-37).
- Where peripheral views into the site are possible due to sparse vegetation, additional planting within 7m boundary planting (subject to further detailed landscape design) is recommended.
- LiDAR data, aerial photographs and street view photographs indicate relatively rapid growth of vegetation in the plating buffer which indicates fast growth of additional tree planting and could be quickly established if required to augment existing screening.
- Increase boundary planting widths to filter views at select locations if built form is deemed to be overly intrusive on visual character of Cobbitty Road.
- Include tree planting to southern boundary of proposed residential Environmental Living lots to provide further canopy filtering beyond road reserve and boundary planting (endemic species to be used).
- South-eastern corner provides highest visual access across the site and therefore existing planting should be maintained where possible and supplemented to filter views (subject to detailed design).

KEY INSIGHTS

- **The visual character of Cobbitty Road varies depending on location and corresponding density of road reserve and boundary planting.**
- **The vegetative level and screening of the site has varied historically, often allowing for greater visibility of the site than is currently available, for example at the intersection of Cobbitty Road and Macquarie Grove Road (see Figures 39 - 42).**
- **Planting in vegetative buffer demonstrates fast growth rates.**
- **Isolated and intermittent views into adjacent rural lands and residential subdivisions occurs along each section of visual character of Cobbitty Road. It is not an unexpected experience especially in relation to eastern sections as the visual character transitions from enclosed heavily treed sections to juvenile and more open areas characterised by sporadic mature trees and residential development.**
- **Road reserve planting contributes more significantly than buffer planting to the visual character of Cobbitty Road.**

VEGETATIVE BUFFER

Indicative extent of retained 7m buffer planting from road reserve boundary and indicative level of planting removed.



FIGURE 36 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING - MARCH 2022 (SOURCE: NEARMAPS)



FIGURE 37 PLANTING WIDTH ON SITE AND ROAD RESERVE PLANTING - MARCH 2022 (SOURCE: NEARMAPS)