EDMONDSON PARK TOWN CENTRE NORTH - MASTER PLAN

VISUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

AUGUST 2018
DRAFT

RD greatplaces

LANDCOM

RobertsDay
planning·design·place

Title:	Edmondson Park Town Centre North Master Plan Design Quality and Visual Assessment Report
Prepared for:	Landcom
Reference:	URG EDM
Date:	AUGUST 2018 (DRAFT)
Prepared by:	Dinis Candeias- Ayeh Haji
Approved by:	Angela Koepp

Roberts Day
Level Four, 17 Randle Street Surry Hills NSW 2010
T: +612 8202 8000 www.robertsday.com.au
ABN 53 667 373 703 ACN 008 892 135

CONTENTS

“Visual impact assessment helps define the day to day visual effects of a project on people's views.”

- The EIA No.4 Guidelines, 2013, RMS

INTRODUCTION

RobertsDay (RD) was engaged by Landcom to provide strategic planning and urban design advice for Edmondson Park Town Centre North (the Site) to inform the proposed modification to the Edmondson Park South Concept Plan (MP10_0118). The Site has an area of 32 hectares with the anticipated development comprising a school, a mix of detached dwellings on narrow lots, terraced houses, integrated dwellings and apartments. It is largely owned by Landcom, with a smaller parcel attributed to the Office of Strategic Lands (OSL parcel).

The Visual Assessment Report focuses on the potential impact that future development may have on the visual landscape, and assesses the visual impact from the surrounding and adjacent publicly accessible areas.

The key vantage points have been determined through a site visit and focus on what are considered the most prevalent views of the precinct, noting at the time of writing this report public access within the site is limited.

The VA outlines the proposed built form outcomes and intent established during the planning and design stages and tests the Edmondson Park Town Centre North proposal as per the **RMS Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Note: Guidelines for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2013).**

BACKGROUND

The current visual assessment is informed by the **Edmondson Park South Concept Plan EA Visual Assessment, September 2010.**

The visual impact of the proposed development was determined by evaluating its visual effect in the context of the visual sensitivity of the surrounding land use areas from which the proposed development is visible.

The report provides an outline of the existing visual character of the Edmondson Park South landscape and the anticipated changes following development. The Comparison is provided in both a 'compliant' scenario based on current planning controls and a 'proposed' scenario based on the proposed modification.

A range of visual impacts are determined which are typical of greenfield development for new housing.

Each assessment was accompanied by a series of recommendations to mitigate the impact of development, including:

- influencing the built form and landscape treatments to preserve view lines and view corridors;
- providing landscape setbacks in rural lots to allow establishment of canopy trees on private land;
- influencing, where possible, materials selection, colour and quality in low and medium density residential development areas;
- preparing integrated master plan designs for open space and community lands comprising schools and other community facilities to allow preservation of existing trees where possible and to ensure provision of adequate additional canopy landscaping; and
- providing for the protection, augmentation and effective long term management of existing significant site vegetation.

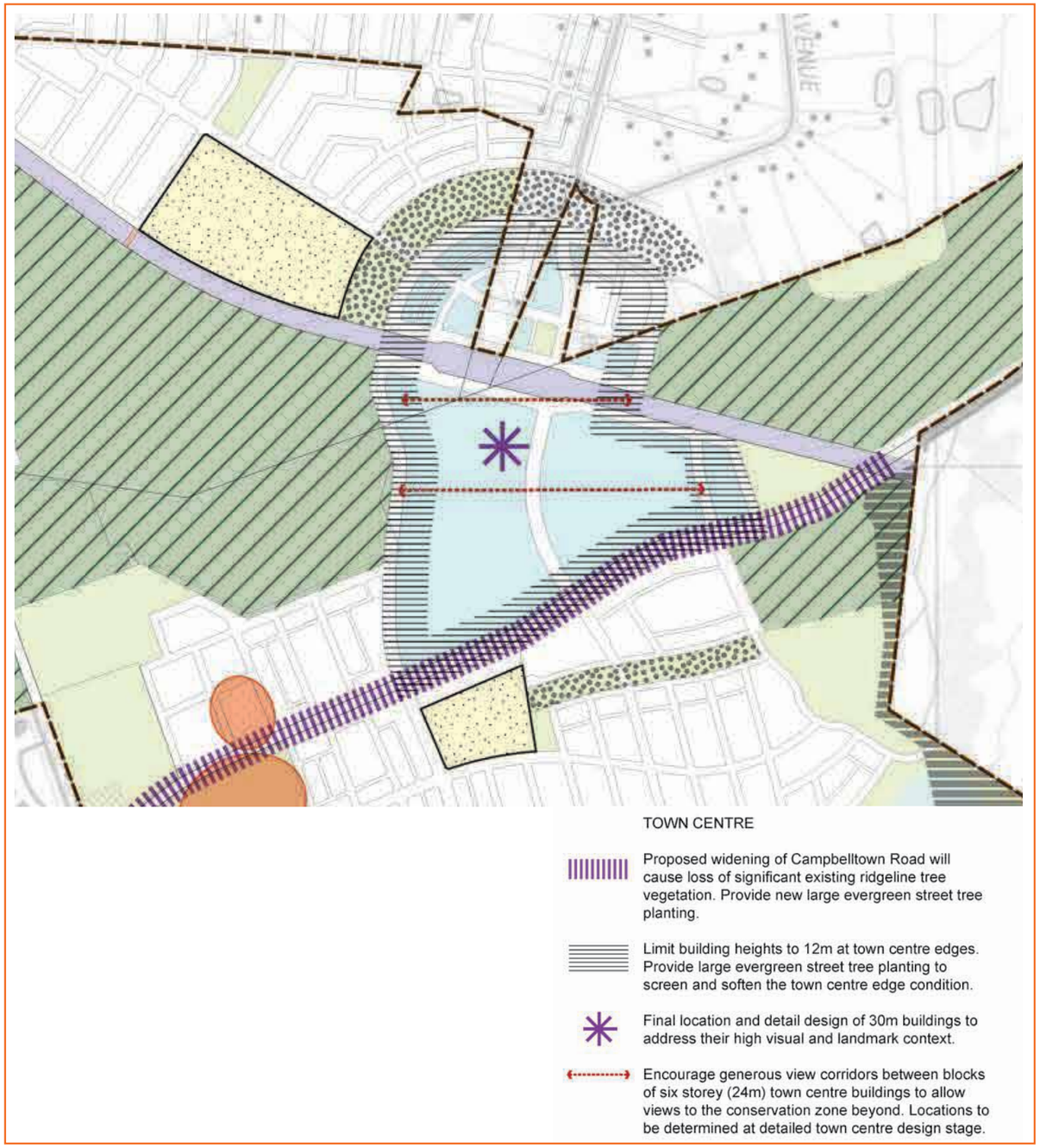
BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND (cont.)

The Edmondson Park South Concept Plan EA Visual Assessment, September 2010 provides a number of landscape strategy recommendations to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development. Some of those recommendations affect the town centre area. It should be acknowledged that the physical and strategic growth context of Edmondson Park has changed significantly since 2010. The Urban Design Report provides the rationale for a rebalanced density with a focus on density next to the Station. Therefore, this Visual Assessment analyses the ability for the proposal to meet the intent of the below objectives whilst the specific heights have been varied in some cases to achieve an appropriate density and diversity balance.

Objective: Minimise the visual impact of the new town centre development when viewed from distant vantage points.

- *The proposed location of the town centre will cause loss of significant trees in elevated locations. Provide new large evergreen street tree planting to screen and soften the town centre edge condition and to provide green connections through the town centre zone.*
- *Limit building heights to 12m (3-5 storeys - below mature tree heights) at the town centre edges.*
- *Carefully consider the final location and detailed design of any 30m (10 storey) buildings to address their high visual and landmark context.*
- *Provide generous view corridors between town centre blocks (24m, 6 storey) buildings to allow views through to the conservation zones to the east and west of the town centre. Final locations for the view corridors to be determined at detailed town centre design stage.*



Source: Edmondson Park South_Concept Plan Application EA_Visual Assessment

VISUAL ASSESSMENT- METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to inform the existing environmental values of the area surrounding the site and the identification of the visual catchment is detailed below.

1. SITE VISIT AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Roberts Day inspected a number of locations to understand the scenic qualities and visual prominence of the site and cross reference these locations with aerial photography to identify areas from which the proposed Edmondson Park Town Centre North development could potentially be seen;

Identification of the visual catchment, defined as the potentially affected areas and vantage points which are accessible to the public including surrounding and adjoining public spaces, suburbs and site access points;

Site verification of a publicly accessible visual catchment with photographic documentation to provide a representation of typical views from identified areas to the site. The vantage points were chosen due to the significant use and exposure of the areas, as well as, the need to understand and document any potential changes to the view and/ or experience of these sites;

The vantage points were chosen because they provide assessment from at least one, if not more, of the following view categories from:

- Distance/vantage point consistent with 2010 Visual Assessment;
- Publicly accessible areas and public recreation spaces;
- Key public transport nodes with high pedestrian affluence; and
- Topographically prominent locations;

The photos labelled 'existing' were captured during a site visit performed on Monday 19th February 2018.

2. PHOTOMONTAGE

Finalisation of the Edmondson Park Town Centre North Concept Master Plan and supporting technical documentation enabled the vantage points to be realistically documented as photomontages. The accuracy of the photomontages is based on the following process and information:

- Plotting the vantage points using survey accurate details of the site and Master Plan proposal;
- Digitally linking the coordinate data into Google Earth (GE);
- Creating a 3D Sketchup model of the terrain;
- Building an indicative Sketchup massing model of the proposed built form consistent with the development intent, including street trees;
- Merging and matching the 3d massing model with a two dimensional photograph to the best of our ability based on the contextual cues;
- Photo- editing the photo/ model views to reflect landscaping, intended built form, and lighting.

The rationale for the vantage points is discussed over the following pages and located on the corresponding maps.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT- METHODOLOGY

3. VISUAL IMPACTS ASSESSMENT

A qualitative assessment of the visual impacts and changes to landscape has been undertaken with reference on the **RMS Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Note: Guidelines for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2013).**

The determination of the impacts is based on the following criteria:

Sensitivity is defined as "The sensitivity of a landscape character zone or view and its capacity to absorb change." In the case of visual impact this also relates to the type and number of viewers.

Magnitude is defined as "The measurement of the scale, form and character of a development proposal when compared to the existing condition". In the case of visual assessment this also relates to how far the proposal is from the viewer.

EIA No4 Guidelines, 2013, RMS

The combined assessment of the sensitivity and magnitude provides the rating for the visual impact as per the table below Comments and justification is provided for each visual assessment and a summary of the outcomes is provided upon completion of the impact assessments.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the report are based on the relationship between the visual impact assessment method, as per the **RMS Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Note: Guidelines for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2013),** and how the design outcome reflects upon the original Edmondson Park South Concept Plan Visual Assessment (2010).

5. ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions have been made:

- Photomontages are generated from photos taken at camera level of approximately 1.7m above natural ground level;
- Existing topography is to be generally maintained within the development and selected vantage points;
- Levels are conceptual and subject to detailed design;
- Street trees planted along the verge of visible roads, achieving equivalent to 3 to 4 storeys;
- Proposed development south of the train station as approved for Edmondson Park South Concept Plan Modification 4 (MP10_0118 MOD4);
- School building depicted in view 3 at 20m setback from each road and a height of 7m (2 storeys).

SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE: High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact

The Visual Impacts assessment table correlating magnitude and sensitivity.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT- METHODOLOGY

RobertsDay acknowledges that although the Site is currently vacant, there is an approved Concept Plan and existing planning controls in place for the Edmondson Park Town Centre North which allow the entire site to be built with apartment buildings.

Since the proposal is only seeking to modify the existing planning controls of the approved Concept Plan and State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005 (Precincts SEPP), the balance of the report compares the vantage points as 'compliant' and 'proposed' photomontages.

The 'compliant' photomontage is the building envelope compliant with Edmondson Park South Concept Plan 2010 (MP10_0118) as well as Precincts SEPP Development Controls and is what could be built under current planning controls. The 'proposed' photomontage depicts the proposal.

The main aim of the Visual Assessment Report is to study the visual impacts of the proposed modifications to the existing planning controls on key view points.

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS ✓

EXISTING

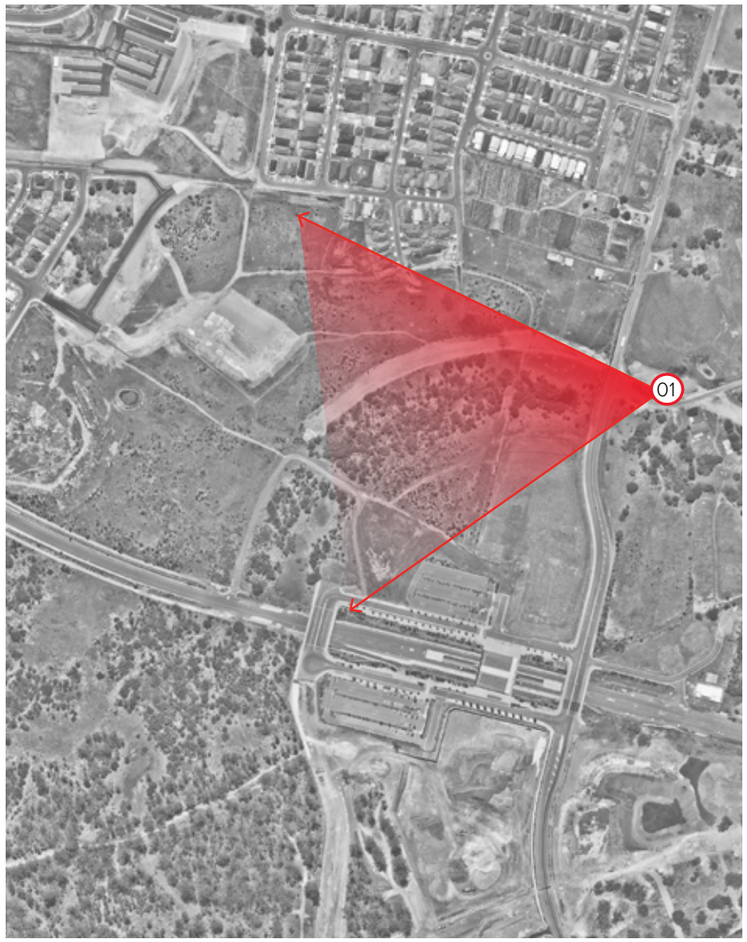
PROPOSED PLANNING CONTROLS

COMPLIANT

PROPOSED

SELECTION OF VIEW POINTS

SIGNIFICANT VIEWS / VISUAL CATCHMENT



VIEW 1 - From Croatia Avenue

Google Earth Coordinates: 33°57’58.77”S, 150°51’39.98”E

Site level (RL): 48.5m

Distance to site: approx. 90m

Focal Length (35mm equivalent): 33mm

VIEW 2 - From Croatia Avenue to Soldiers Parade

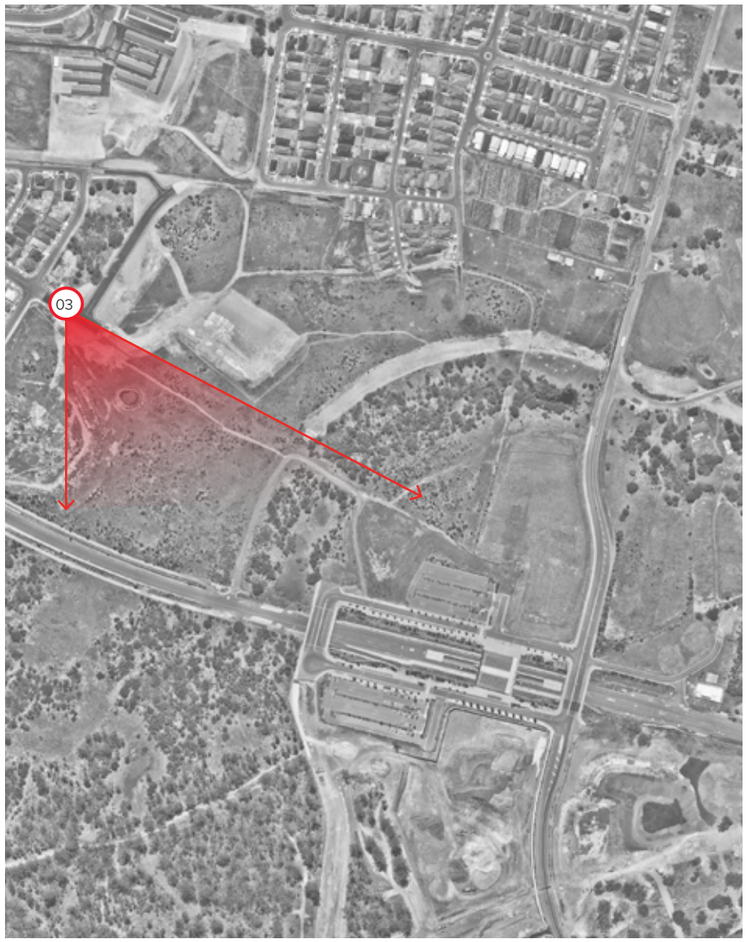
Google Earth Coordinates: 33°57’57.74”S, 150°51’36.69”E

Site level (RL): 49.5m

Distance to site: approx. 100m

Focal Length (35mm equivalent): 33mm

SIGNIFICANT VIEWS / VISUAL CATCHMENT



VIEW 3 - Along Buchan Avenue

Google Earth Coordinates: 33°57’54.76”S, 150°51’11.71”E

Site level (RL): 66m

Distance to site: approx. 40m

Focal Length (35mm equivalent): 33mm

VIEW 4 - From Station Street North

Google Earth Coordinates: 33°58’06.02”S, 150°51’24.04”E

Site level (RL): 63m

Distance to site: approx. 10m

Focal Length (35mm equivalent): 33mm

Aerial Imagery date: 21st January 2018

Source: Nearmap

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 1 - From Croatia Avenue

EXISTING

COMPLIANT

Street trees along main accessways

Max. building height 24m

PROPOSED

Street trees along main accessways

Max. building height 50m

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 1 - From Croatia Avenue

The aim of assessing the view from Croatia Avenue is:

- To understand the visual impact of proposed built form viewed from the adjacent suburbs to the East;
- To assess to what degree the existing trees at Maxwells Creek mitigate views of the future development; and
- To test the extent to which the change of built elements may alter the existing character.

The view from Croatia Avenue is considered to have MODERATE TO LOW sensitivity due to:

- Croatia Avenue is currently being realigned and upgraded. The upgrade includes widening a section of Croatia Avenue, providing a four-lane road from Camden Valley Way with tree planting, shared paths and street lighting;
- The approved Concept Plan and Precincts SEPP, as shown in the compliant photomontage, allows for the development of apartment buildings up to 24m in this area.

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered MODERATE TO LOW, due to:

- Proposal would increase the height of medium rise buildings seen in the background, however, is compatible with the landscape character of the compliant scheme;
- Proposal is not reducing the quality of the scene.

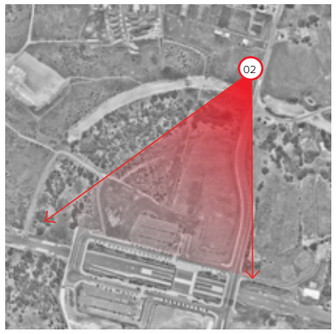
The visual impact for this view is assessed as MODERATE-LOW.

MAGNITUDE

SENSITIVITY	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 2 - From Croatia Avenue to Soldiers Parade



EXISTING

COMPLIANT

- Street trees along main accessways
- Max. building height 24m

PROPOSED

- Street trees along main accessways
- Max. building height 50m (with a 67m landmark)

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 2 - From Croatia Avenue to Soldiers Parade

The aim of assessing the view from Soldiers Parade is:

- To understand the visual impact of proposed built form viewed from the adjacent suburbs to the North;
- To assess to what degree the existing trees at Maxwells Creek mitigate views of the future development; and
- To test the extent to which the change of built elements may alter the existing character.

The view from Croatia Avenue is considered to have a MODERATE TO LOW sensitivity due to:

- Croatia Avenue is currently being realigned and upgraded. The upgrade includes widening a section of Croatia Avenue, providing a four-lane road from Camden Valley Way with tree planting, shared paths and street lighting;
- The approved Concept Plan and Precincts SEPP, as shown in the compliant photomontage, allows for the development of apartment buildings up to 24m in this area.

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered HIGH TO MODERATE, due to:

- Proposal would increase the height of medium rise buildings, however, is compatible with the surrounding character and view's composition;
- Proposal is not reducing the quality of the scene.

The visual impact for this view is assessed as MODERATE.

Note: Soldiers Parade provides a north-south visual corridor through the site.

MAGNITUDE

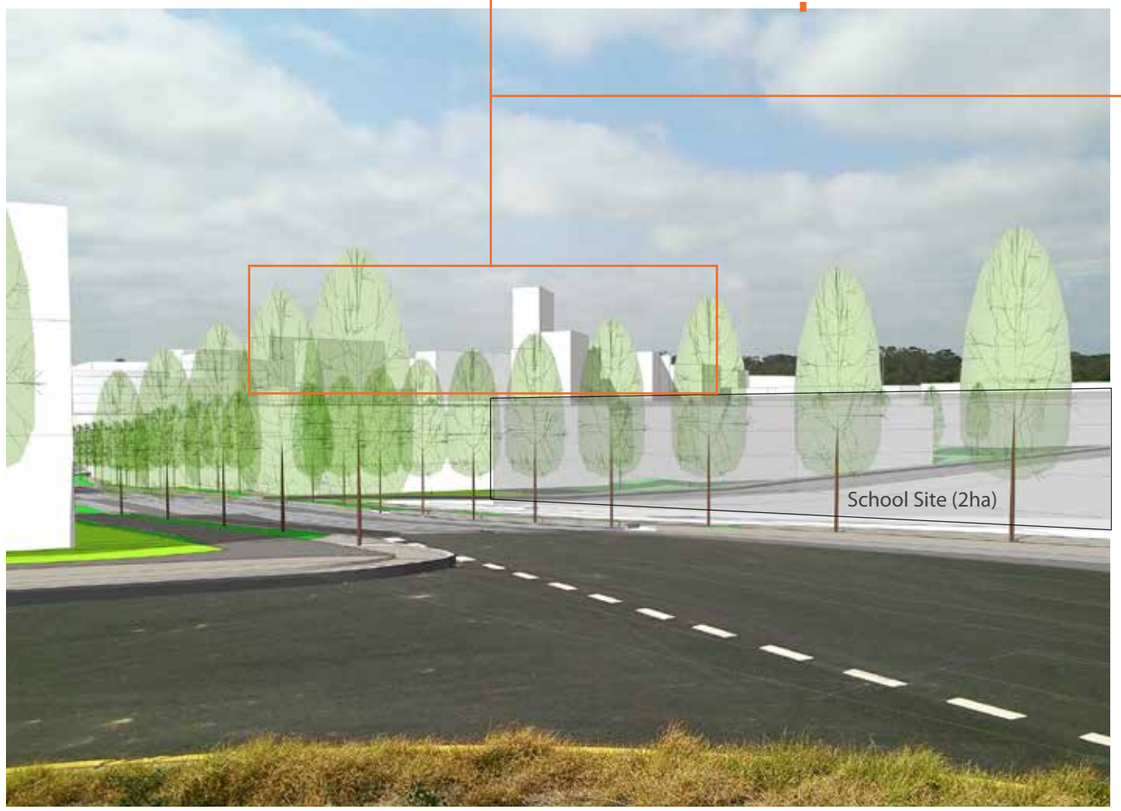
SENSITIVITY	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 3 - Along Buchan Avenue

EXISTING

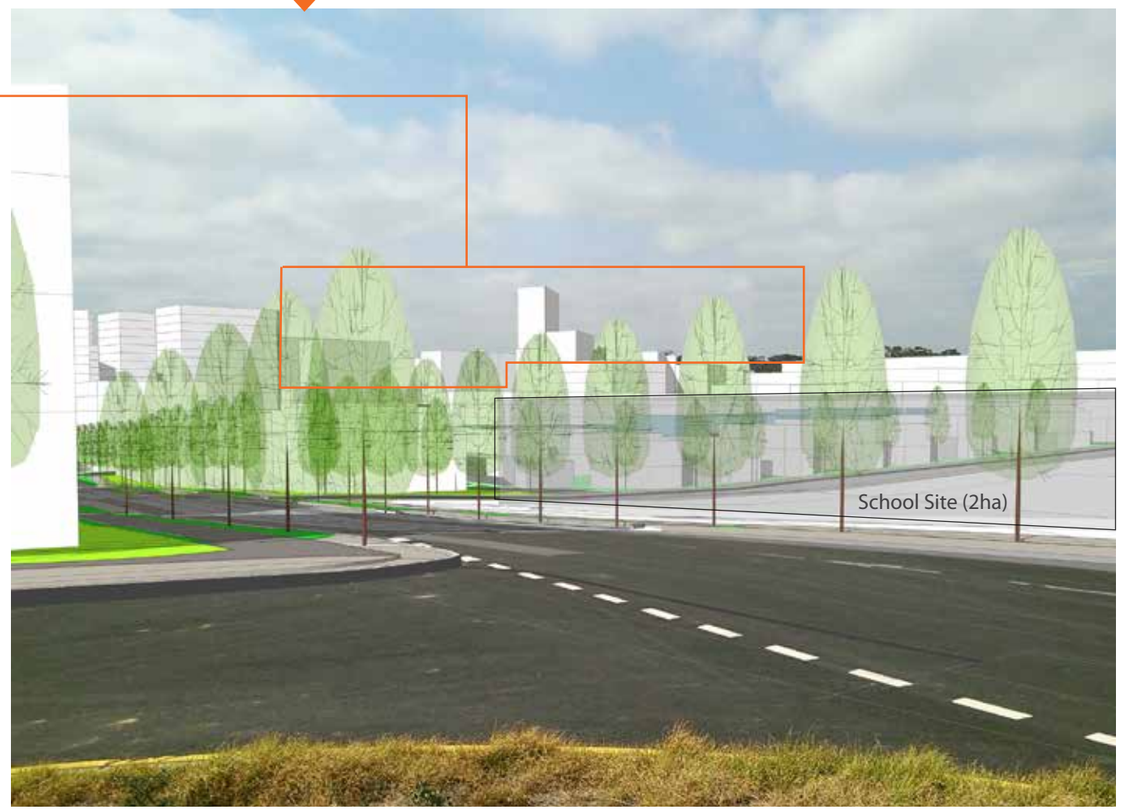
Edmondson Park Town Centre South as per MP10_0118 Mod.4 and Mod.6 approval



COMPLIANT

Street trees along main accessways

Max. building height 15m (24m in background)



PROPOSED

Street trees along main accessways

Max. building height 21m (28m and 50m in background)

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 3 - Along Buchan Avenue

The aim of assessing the view along Buchan Avenue is:

- To understand the visual impact of proposed built form viewed from the adjacent suburbs to the Northwest;
- To assess to what degree the proposed built form integrates with the existing landscape features to the south;
- To assess the visual impact of development of semi-detached housing adjacent to a possible 2ha school site.
- To test the extent to which the change of built elements may alter the existing character.

The view along Buchan Avenue is considered to have a MODERATE TO LOW sensitivity due to:

- The location is currently at the edge of current suburban development, ending in a fence;
- Landcom has brought forward the delivery of the extension of Buchan Avenue and has submitted a development application to Liverpool Council. Construction of Buchan Avenue will provide direct access to the train station from areas already developed to the north of the station;
- The MP10_0118 Mod.4 and Mod.6 approval allows for the development of Frasers Town Centre as depicted;
- The approved Concept Plan and Precincts SEPP, as shown in the compliant photomontage, allows for the development of apartment buildings up to 15m in this area.

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered LOW, due to:

- Minimal change in the built form massing and scale.

The visual impact for this view is assessed as MODERATE-LOW.

MAGNITUDE

SENSITIVITY	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-Low	Negligible impact
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 4 - From Station Street North

EXISTING

COMPLIANT

- Street trees along main accessways
- Max. building height 21m

PROPOSED

- Street trees along main accessways
- Max. building height 28m

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

VIEW 4 - From Station Street North

The aim of assessing the view from Station Street North is:

- To understand the visual impact of proposed built form viewed from a prominent existing public area;
- To assess to what degree the proposed built form integrates with the existing landscape features along Maxwells Creek;
- To test the extent to which the change of built elements may alter the existing character.

The view from Station Street North is considered to have MODERATE TO LOW sensitivity due to:

- The location is currently accessible by the general public accessing the train station;
- The location is adjacent to Maxwells Creek Riparian corridor, and associated with valuable vegetation and natural habitat.

The magnitude of the proposal in this view is considered LOW, due to:

- Proposal occurs mainly either side of Maxwells Creek Corridor, minimising the impacts on existing vegetation;
- Minimal change in the built form massing and scale.

The visual impact for this view is assessed as MODERATE-LOW.

MAGNITUDE

SENSITIVITY	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
High	High impact	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Negligible impact
High to Moderate	High Impact	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible impact
Moderate	Moderate High	Moderate High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Negligible impact
Moderate to Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-Low	Negligible impact
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low	Moderate-low	Low impact	Negligible impact
Negligible	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact	Negligible impact

KEY FINDINGS

The following conclusions also respond to the objectives stated on the original Edmondson Park South Concept Plan EA Visual Assessment, September 2010, mentioned in the background section of this chapter.

The current visual assessment demonstrates the role of Maxwell's Creek retained vegetation in 'softening' the visual impacts of the bulk of apartment buildings, as seen on views 1, 2 and 4. It is anticipated the construction of Buchan Avenue, Soldiers Parade and the future residential roads, lined with street trees, will provide further transition and tree cover between the buildings, upon maturing of such trees. Further public realm and landscape strategies are addressed within the Urban Design Report and Design Guidelines.

The proposed mid to high density apartments are located in the town centre with the proposed landmark building along Buchan Avenue. It is anticipated the retained mature trees at Maxwells Creek will provide a landscape setting for the development from the onset, as seen in views 1 and 4. As outlined in the Urban Design Report, communal open spaces are oriented towards the street to contribute to the leafy character associated with Maxwells Creek. Street tree planting along Maxwell's Creek street interface will be much more naturalistic as the character of Edmondson Park transitions from urban to parkland. The naturalistic cluster planting will also mimic a natural backdrop when viewed from the Station Precinct. Bernera Road will be planted as intentionally formal, structural and reflective of the native vegetation within Maxwells Creek without obstructing views into the corridor.

Furthermore, it is anticipated the proposed town centre buildings and the landmark building (spot height 67m) will provide a Station Gateway and also a built form transition between the approved building heights for the tallest buildings within Frasers development and the adjacent single residential areas, as seen in view 3.

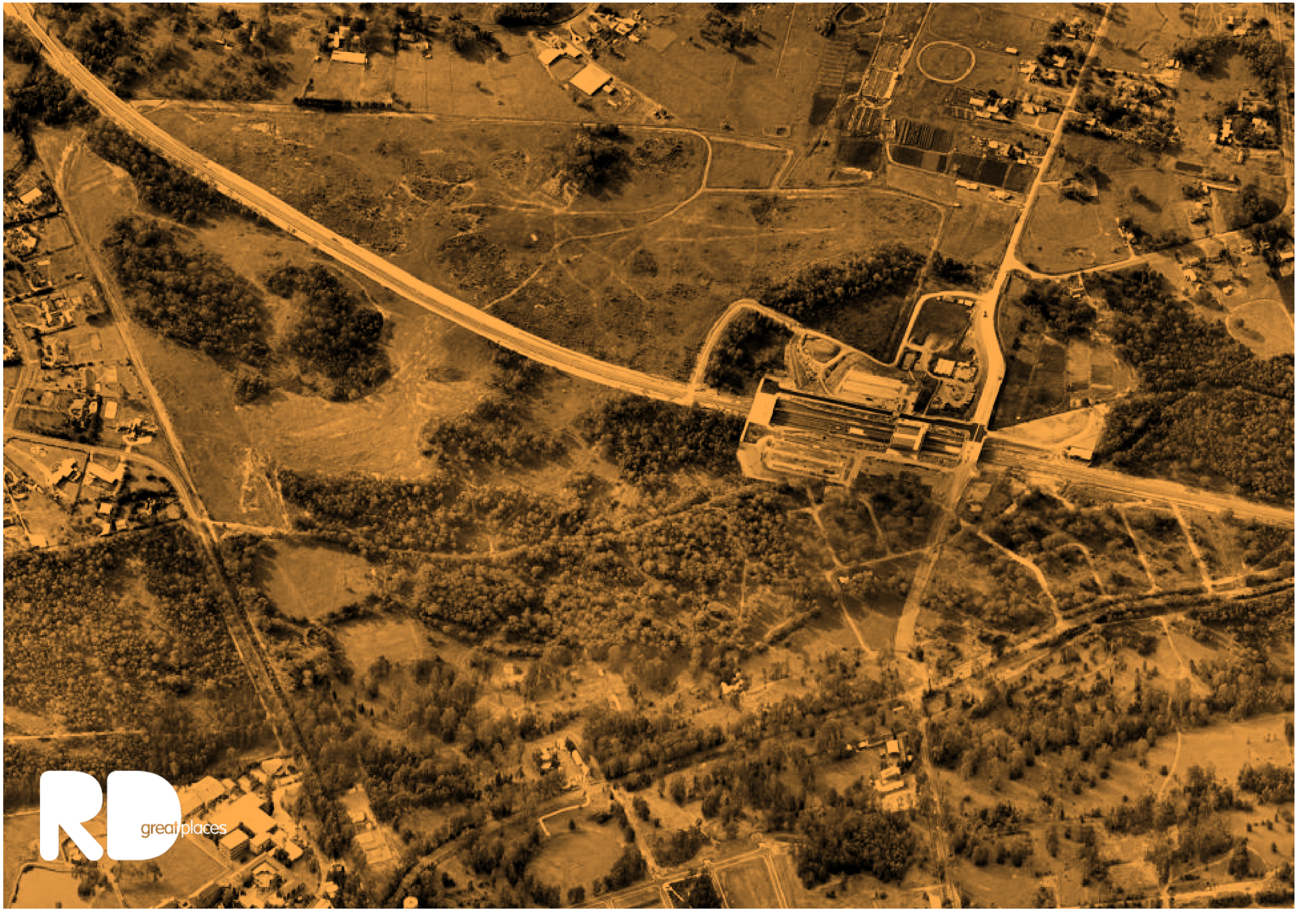
The illustrations within this document reflect the proposed modification to prohibit residential flat buildings within the majority of the town centre edge as well as retaining a 12m height limit within this area.

The combined height and floorspace controls that are proposed are intended to generate a high- low block typology whereby a taller element is strategically located at one corner to minimise view and solar obstruction and is supported by a lower perimeter structure. The 67m landmark building is the result of design testing to identify a gateway site that would have the least impact on streetscape and neighbouring amenity.

View corridors are maintained along the main avenues, as illustrated in view 1 in the case of Soldiers Parade. Maxwells Creek will provide a natural visual break in the built form, as illustrated in views 2, 3 and 4.

This report illustrates the visual impact of the proposed development in the Town Centre North Site in comparison to the approved Concept Plan under the existing planning controls. Our findings revealed that the proposal results in visual impacts considered to be in the moderate to low ranges. In some cases, the visual transition from greenfield to town centre is less prevalent due to the proximity with established vegetation at Maxwells Creek. It also argues the visual sensitivity is generally moderate to low, given the expected transition from a largely rural, sparse and generic landscape setting, to an urbanised setting.

Furthermore, the approval of Frasers Town Centre to the south of the train station, provides a backdrop for the current proposal, where our maximum landmark building mirrors the 67m maximum height of Frasers Town Centre, providing a gateway to the Edmondson Park Town Centre.


great places