

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
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Prepared for



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) relates to the proposed development at 59-63 Abbotts Road & 290-308 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek. It will comprise of an industrial estate containing seven buildings. The estate will contain one main access roads, streetscape planting, buffer planting to eastern boundary and a bio-retention basin. Each individual building will include an office space, hard stand areas, car parking and landscaping.

A request for a Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) was submitted by the client in August 2020 to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). The SEARs were received in September 2020. This report aims to satisfy the following requirements of the SEARs:

Urban Design and Visual Impact –

- a visual impact assessment (including photomontage and perspectives) of the development layout and design, including staging, site coverage, setbacks, open space, landscaping, height, bulk, scale, colour, building materials and finishes, façade design, retaining walls, signage and lighting, particularly in terms of potential impacts on:

- nearby public and private receivers
- significant vantage points in the broader public domain
- Aldington Road
- Abbotts Road

This assessment seeks to satisfy the above requirement..

1.2 This Report and Author

Geoscapes Pty Ltd has been commissioned by ESR to produce a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the above mentioned development. This VIA has been written by Ben Gluszkowski (Geoscapes Director and Registered Landscape Architect) who has over 17 years' experience in the field of Landscape Architecture. He has previously been involved in high profile LVIA's on developments within the UK, including the M1 & M62 motorway road widening, several wind farms and energy from waste facilities (EFW).

Within Australia, Ben has completed several LVIA's and VIA's for some of the largest industrial developments in Sydney. These were either submitted as part of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for State Significant Development (SSD) to the DPIE, or to local council for DA. Clients have included Snackbrands Australia, Jaycar, Frasers, Altis, DCI, ESR, Charter Hall and Airtrunk.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF ASSESSMENT

2.1 Guidelines

LVIA or VIA does not follow prescribed methods or criteria. This assessment is based on the principles established and broad approaches recommended in the following documents:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) – Third Edition (LI/IEMA 2013)
- The Landscape Institute Advice Note 01 (2011) Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual assessment.

In accordance with GLVIA3 the assessment methodology is tailored to the specific requirements of the Proposed Development, its specific landscape

context and its likely significant effects. The methodology used for this assessment reflects the principal ways in which the Proposed Development is considered likely to interact with existing landscape and visual conditions as a result of:

- The permanent introduction of an industrial estate into the existing landscape/townscape and visual context.

Landscape assessment is concerned with changes to the physical landscape in terms of features/elements that may give rise to changes in character. Visual appraisal is concerned with the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects on visual amenity. Changes may result in adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive) effects.

The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques, uses subjective professional judgement and quantifiable factors wherever possible, and is based on clearly defined terms (refer to glossary).

As stated in paragraph 1.20 of the GLVIA:

“The guidance concentrates on principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not follow a detailed 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances.”

This VIA written by Geoscapes is considered to use a methodology and approach that is appropriate to this type of industrial development.

2.2 Computer Generated Visualisations - Photomontages

It is possible that any receptor with a view towards the development, could potentially receive visual impacts with a resulting high, moderate or low impact. However, it is not feasible or practical to prepare a photomontage for each and every residential dwelling, public open space, cycleway, footpath or road within the project view-shed. Instead a selection of locations have been selected where applicable.

Photography for the photomontages was undertaken by Geoscapes using a Canon 60D (DSLR) camera. A 50 mm focal length prime lens was attached to the Canon.

Photomontages have been prepared to create “simulated” views of the proposed development. Although these do not claim to exactly replicate what would be seen by the human eye, they provide a useful “tool” in analysing potential visual impacts from receptor locations.

Those viewpoints selected for photomontages, have been presented in this report as before and after images on the same sheet for ease of comparison. The computer-generated images include a representation of landscape mitigation both immediately following installation (which have been described as year 0) and at a mature age of approximately 15-20 years. It is important to note that the year 15 images are simulations of how proposed landscaping may appear at a selected viewpoint. The final appearance of landscape mitigation will be based on many factors including growth rates, maintenance and environmental conditions. Additional A1 sized viewpoint sheets (figures 'a') have also been included for selected viewpoints in close proximity to the development, by using a larger paper size a wider angle of view can be displayed.

The assessment undertaken at year 15 assumes that such mitigation has had the opportunity to establish, mature and become effective. For the purposes of most VIA, year 15 effects are also taken to be the 'residual effects' of the development. Residual effects are those which are likely to remain on completion of the development and are to be given the greatest weight in planning terms. Any visual impacts determined from viewpoint locations (which have been assessed in Section 8.0 of this report), are based on the year 15 residual effects. In certain photomontages there may be little or no difference between Year 0 or Year 15 images, this may be due to the development being partially obscured, that there is no proposed landscaping on a particular side of a development or that landscaping would be behind existing vegetation in the foreground.

The horizontal field of view (FOV) within the photomontages shown in separate A1 'a' figures, exceeds the parameters of normal human vision. While the human eye FOV is understood to be approximately 160°, the actual amount of detail in focus is much less and deteriorates towards the outer

extents of the FOV. The 'Cone of Visual Attention' of the human eye is thought to be 55° however, in reality the eyes, head and body can all move and, under normal conditions, the human brain would 'see' a broad area of landscape within a panoramic view. Each of the photomontage panoramas within this report has a horizontal viewing angle of approximately 67°, viewing angles of extended 'a' figures are approximately vary from 200 - 230°. A single photographic image from a 50mm lens has a horizontal viewing angle of 39.6°. Whilst a photomontage can provide an image that illustrates a photo-realistic representation of a development in relation to its proposed location and scale relative to the surrounding landscape, it must be acknowledged that large scale objects in the landscape can appear smaller in photomontages than in real life. This is partly due to the fact that a flat image does not allow the viewer to perceive any information relating to depth or distance. An extract taken from the Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 states that:

'it is also important to recognise that two-dimensional photographic images and photomontages alone cannot capture or reflect the complexity underlying the visual experience and should therefore be considered an approximate of the three-dimensional visual experiences that an observer would receive in the field'.

2.3 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

People's (visual receptors) overall visual sensitivity has been assessed by combining consideration of their visual susceptibility with the value or importance that they are likely to attribute (or not) to their available views.

Factors which influence professional judgement when assessing the degree to which a particular view can accommodate change arising from a particular development, without detrimental effects would typically include:

- Judgements of value attached to views take into account recognition of the value attached to particular views e.g. heritage assets or through planning designations; and
- Judgements of susceptibility of visual receptors to change is mainly a function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

Assessment of the sensitivity of visual receptors may be modified (either up or down) by consideration of whether any particular value or importance is likely to be attributed by people to their available views. For example, travelers on a highway may be considered likely to be more sensitive due to its scenic context or residents of a particular property may be considered likely to be less sensitive due to its degraded visual setting.

Typically, sensitivity of visual receptors may be judged to be very high, high, medium, low or very low. Definitions of these indicative categories as appropriate to this assessment are set out in the table opposite.

Table: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Category	Definition
Very High	Designed view to or from a heritage / protected asset. Key protected viewpoint e.g. interpretive signs. References in literature and art/or guidebooks and tourist maps. Protected view recognised in planning policy designation [LEP, DCP, DoPE]. Views from the main living space of residential properties, state public rights of way e.g. bush trails and state designated landscape feature with public access. Visitors to heritage assets of state importance.
High	View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of high scenic value from an individual private dwelling or garden. It may also be inferred that the view is likely to have value e.g. to local residents. Views from the secondary living space of residential properties and recreational receptors where there is some appreciation of the landscape e.g. golf and fishing. Local public rights of way and access land. Road and rail routes promoted in tourist guides for their scenic value.
Medium	View is not promoted or recorded in any published sources and may be typical of the views experienced from a given receptor. People engaged in outdoor sport where an appreciation of the landscape has little or no importance e.g. football and soccer. Road users on main routes (Motorway/Freeway/Highway) and passengers on trains.
Low	View of clearly lesser value than similar views experienced from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible. Road users on minor roads. People at their place of work or views from commercial buildings where views of the surrounding landscape may have some importance.
Very Low	View affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued. People at their place of work or other locations where the views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.

For the visual receptors identified, the factors above are examined and the findings judged in accordance with the indicative categories below in the table to determine the magnitude of change.

Table: Visual Receptor Magnitude of Change Criteria

Category	Definition
Very High	There would be a substantial change to the baseline, with the proposed development creating a new focus and having a defining influence on the view. Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
High	The proposed development will be clearly noticeable and the view would be fundamentally altered by its presence. Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a noticeable horizontal and or/vertical extent.
Medium	The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor. Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Low	The proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component. Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Very Low	The proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline situation. Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

In some cases, there may be no magnitude of change and the baseline view will be unaffected by the development (e.g development would be fully screened existing woodland). In this case a category of 'no change' will be used.

2.4 Significance of the Visual Impact

For each receptor type, the sensitivity of the location is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect on any particular receptor. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in the table below:

Receptor for Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change					
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
	Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
	High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor Negligible	Negligible
	Very Low	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/None

In all cases, where overall effects are predicted to be moderate or higher (shaded grey), this will result in a prediction of a significant effect in impact terms. All other effects will be not significant. If a view from a receptor is judged to be 'no change' in the category of Magnitude of Change, then the significance of impact will automatically be none.

In certain cases, where additional factors may arise, a further degree of professional judgement may be applied when determining whether the overall change in the view or effect upon landscape receptor will be significant or not and, where this occurs, it is explained in the assessment.

Visual effects are more subjective as people's perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, Geoscapes will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the significance of effects and will assume, unless otherwise stated, that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario. The significance of visual impacts are assessed against the ESR Kemps Creek development in isolation only.

Ratings of **visual receptor sensitivity** and **magnitude of change** which determine the significance of the visual impact, are judged against the **current baseline situation** as can be seen in the baseline images within section 8.0. They do not take into account any potential future development to adjoining lands or change of use to the receptor lands. A consideration of any future development and rezoning has been given at the end of each viewpoint assessment. Refer to sections 4.0 and 8.0.

2.5 Site Visit and Analysis of Zone of Visibility

A site visit was conducted on the 25th of November and 7th of December 2020 by Geoscapes. The consultant team carried out a site inspection to verify the results of a desktop study and to evaluate the existing visual character of the area. Analysis from inside the site boundary was undertaken to approximate the Zone of Visibility. Photographs taken at eye level from the site would be limiting and only allow a partial judgement on which properties/locations in the immediate vicinity may see the development from ground level to the top of the warehouse ridgeline. This is due to the presence of existing buildings and vegetation and therefore, it is not possible to gain a complete understanding of visibility without the additional use of drone photography.

A drone was used to take panoramic photographs looking north, south, east and west, at five separate locations within the site boundary. For four of the locations, a height was flown by the drone to generally represent the approximate maximum RL of the warehouse (14.6m APL), refer to figures 3 to 18. The flight was performed on the 11th November 2020 by Pixel Media Productions. These photographs allow a judgement to be made on which receptors in the wider context, will be able to see the top of the warehouse. Not all residential properties/public spaces able to see the development

are highlighted on figures 3 to 18, as due to the resolution of the imagery, it was sometimes difficult to ascertain an exact property address or locations at greater distances from the drone camera. In other cases some properties are simply obscured by existing vegetation. However, the properties or publicly accessible locations that have been shown, will provide an indication of receptors within the surrounding context, that the development will be most visible to. It is important to note that it is simply unfeasible to photograph every single possible view corridor to and from the site.

As with any VIA, due to the number of receptors that may have views of the development, it is not possible to provide analysis for every single possible visual receiver. It may also not be deemed relevant to provide visual impact assessment for a particular receptor due to other overriding factors such as planning designations or specific land zoning (refer to section 3.0 for details on viewpoint selection).

2.6 Photographic Recording

From desktop study, site visits and photography, locations were identified that would potentially be subject to visual impacts from the proposal.

Viewpoints were selected and photographs were taken by Geoscapes Landscape Architects using a Canon 60D DSLR Camera and a 50mm lens. Photographs were stitched together using an automated software process, however, no perspective fixing was used. GPS recordings were taken and locations mapped using topographical survey data. This information was later used to create the photomontages.

In Figures 3 to 22 drone photography has also been stitched together to increase the field of view. As the drone uses a wide-angle lens, in some images there is quite distinct distortion where two images join in the foreground. However, as these images are used only for analysis and identifying potential visual receptors, this does not affect the validity of their use within this report.

2.7 Visualisation of the Development

Morphmedia were engaged to develop a digital three-dimensional computer model using Autodesk 3Ds Max. The model included all aspects of the proposed development combined with the landscape design and mitigation proposed by Geoscapes.

Views were generated from the model that matched the camera positions of photographs taken from selected viewpoints. These were then combined with the photographs to create simulated views of the proposal.

Photomontages are intended to be printed at A3 or 'a' figures at A1 and are to be held at a comfortable distance by the viewer, this is generally accepted by current guidelines to be anywhere from 300mm to 500mm away from the eyes and held in a flat projection.

3.0 JUSTIFICATION OF VIEWPOINTS SELECTED

3.1 Receptor Selections and Reasoning

The visual impacts generated by the proposal development have been assessed based on the criteria described in Section 2.4. The following list of visual receptors have been selected:

- Junction of Abbots Road & Mamre Road, Kemps Creek (VP1)
- Junction of Abbots Road & Aldington Road, Kemps Creek (VP2)
- 284 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek (VP3)
- Aldington Road, Kemps Creek (VP4)
- 30 Bellevue Ave, Mount Vernon (VP5)
- 247 Capitol Hill Drive, Mount Vernon (VP6)
- 52A Mount Vernon Road, Mount Vernon (VP7)
- Mamre Road, Kemps Creek (VP8)

In total 8 viewpoint locations have been selected for photomontage and visual impact assessment, refer to Figure 2 for viewpoint locations.

As identified in the site 14.6m APL drone photography in figures 3 to 18, it is clear that there are a number of other residential properties in the surrounding vicinity that would experience views of the proposed development. A sample of these would include the following:

- 269 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek - 60m north west of the site boundary
- 282 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek - 20m north of the site boundary (Heritage Property)
- 272-280 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek - 90m north of the site boundary
- 30-38 Mount Vernon Road, Mount Vernon - 0.15km south of the site boundary
- 62A Mount Vernon Road, Mount Vernon - 250m east of the site boundary
- 1016-1028 Mamre Road, Kemps Creek - 20m west of the site boundary
- 949 Mamre Road, Kemps Creek - 0.9km west of the site boundary
- 930 Mamre Road, Kemps Creek - 1km northwest of the site boundary
- 930A Mamre Road, Kemps Creek - 0.8km northwest of the site boundary
- 930B Mamre Road, Kemps Creek - 0.7km northwest of the site boundary

(Note: all of the above distances are taken from the residential dwelling at the address to the closest development site boundary)

Attempts were made to take a viewpoint photograph directly from the heritage property at 282 Aldington Road and from 1016-1029 Mamre Road. Both of these properties are located close to the development site boundary. However, access was denied by the respective landowners. However, access was granted at 284 Aldington Road located next to the heritage property, therefore a partial judgement of the potential visual impact received at the heritage property can be deduced (see section 8.0 VP3 for details). It should also be noted that the outward facing view from the heritage farm house is north/northwest, the ESR development does not directly hinder this aspect.

Access was also attempted at 272 Aldington Road, but was not possible at the time of the visit.

Though the locations listed above have not been assessed for individual visual impact assessment, those listed in red are located within the Mamre Road Precinct. This has recently been rezoned to industrial use following an amendment to the SEPP WSEA. Some properties have already been earmarked for purchase due to the likely approval of planned large scale industrial development.

As a result of the rezoning of the Mamre Road Precinct, most if not all the receptors listed in red are highly likely to no longer exist at a future point in

time. Should the lots within IN1 zoned land be acquired in the short to medium term and the properties removed, any longer term visual impacts would no longer be of any relevance. Refer to section 5.0 for further details.

In the short term, the properties listed in red will experience varying degrees of visual impact generated by the proposed development. Properties identified directly adjacent to Mamre Road are located at a distance of approximately 1km and therefore, short term visual impacts may be of less significance than properties still within the IN1 zoning, but in very close proximity to the ESR development boundary. These will receive a larger degree of visual impact, but the length of time these properties will exist will depend on the progress and sale of land for industrial development.

Following the recent rezoning of the Mamre Road precinct, the rating of future sensitivity for these properties in close proximity to the development, can also be judged to now be much lower than previous to the rezoning.

During the public exhibition of the Mamre Road Draft Structure Plan in November and December 2019, it was clear that local residents were extremely supportive of the rezoning from the many public submission received by the DPIE post exhibition.

It can therefore, be assumed that the owners of residential properties within the Mamre Road precinct will be expecting new industrial development to occur in the immediate future. As a result, the visual amenity, character and pattern of the landscape will shift from a predominately rural one, to one regularly influenced by industrial development.

Viewpoints were selected along Aldington Road, Abbots Road and Mamre Road due to the fact that the road will remain regardless of the rezoning. The development will be visible to passing motorists at the locations selected.

Outside of the Mamre Road Precinct to the immediate east, lies the suburb of Mount Vernon which is considered to have the most sensitive visual receivers due to a number of residential properties which overlook the development and out over the landscape. Access was granted at two properties in close proximity to the development along Mount Vernon Road. Views at nearby adjacent properties are expected to experience similar views and therefore VP6 & VP7 have been selected to be representational of the expected visual impacts that maybe received at those locations.

Analysis of drone photography suggests that only very small view corridors may exist further east within Mount Vernon (refer to VP5). VP5 is at a distance of 1.1km from the site boundary.

It should also be noted that the proposed development does include a landscape masterplan, this is intended to populate the site with native vegetation along all four of the site boundaries. In particular a 30m building setback is included on the eastern boundary in line with planning requirements to provide a 15m landscape zone. Following maturity this will provide some screening and visual relief of the built form, particularly to the sensitive receivers within Mount Vernon.

The suburbs of Orchard hills were considered to be too far from the development to experience any adverse visual impacts. Natural topography and rising landforms to the north and east and south, which is noted on site photography in Figures 3 to 22, also creates a visual barrier for some lower lying properties behind these areas. As a result the development would not be seen or only partially be seen.

A view of the development may be possible from areas on the perimeter of the Blue Mountains. However, this is approximately 12km from the development site. The visual impact from the Blue Mountains is assessed to be negligible/none.

Refer to section 8.0 for a detailed visual impact assessment from the receptors.

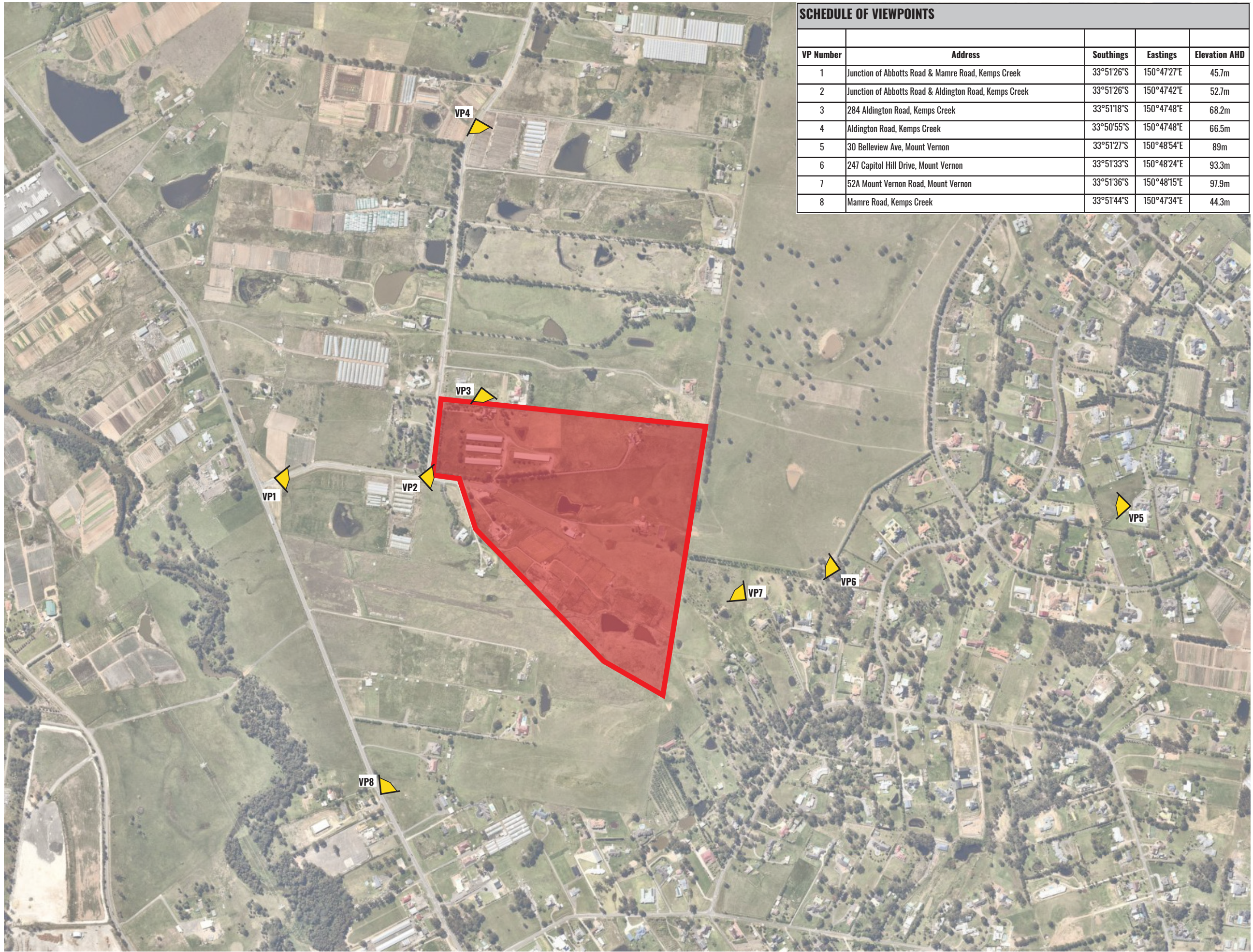


Legend

— Site Boundary

- ① Drone Position 1 -
14m APL
33°51'22.3"S
150°47'48.8"E
- ② Drone Position 2 -
14m APL
33°51'25.9"S
150°48'06.8"E
- ③ Drone Position 3 -
14m APL
33°51'36.7"S
150°48'04.7"E
- ④ Drone Position 4 -
14m APL
33°51'30.2"S
150°47'52.1"E
- ⑤ Drone Position 5 -
120m APL
33°51'27.4"S
150°47'57.5"E

Figure 1: Drone Panoramic Photograph Positions



SCHEDULE OF VIEWPOINTS				
VP Number	Address	Southings	Eastings	Elevation AHD
1	Junction of Abbotts Road & Mamre Road, Kemps Creek	33°51'26"S	150°47'27"E	45.7m
2	Junction of Abbotts Road & Aldington Road, Kemps Creek	33°51'26"S	150°47'42"E	52.7m
3	284 Aldington Road, Kemps Creek	33°51'18"S	150°47'48"E	68.2m
4	Aldington Road, Kemps Creek	33°50'55"S	150°47'48"E	66.5m
5	30 Belleview Ave, Mount Vernon	33°51'27"S	150°48'54"E	89m
6	247 Capitol Hill Drive, Mount Vernon	33°51'33"S	150°48'24"E	93.3m
7	52A Mount Vernon Road, Mount Vernon	33°51'36"S	150°48'15"E	97.9m
8	Mamre Road, Kemps Creek	33°51'44"S	150°47'34"E	44.3m

 SITE BOUNDARY

 VIEWPOINT LOCATION & PHOTOMONTAGE

VP

Figure 2: Viewpoint Locations



Figure 3: Drone at Position 1 - 14.6m APL - Looking North



Figure 4: Drone at Position 1 - 14.6m APL - Looking East



Figure 5: Drone at Position 1 - 14.6m APL - Looking South



Figure 6: Drone at Position 1 - 14.6m APL - Looking West



Figure 7: Drone at Position 2 - 14.6m APL - Looking North



Figure 8: Drone at Position 2 - 14.6m APL - Looking East