



Assessment of Potential Visual Impact

Oatley Station Upgrade Project

April 2014

Prepared by:

RPS AUSTRALIA EAST PTY LTD

135 Abbott Street
PO Box 1949
Cairns QLD 4870

T: +61 7 4031 1336
F: +61 7 4031 2942
E: simon.mahar@rpsgroup.com.au

Client Manager: Simon Mahar
Report Number: 119934
Version / Date: February 2014

Prepared for:

TFNSW

IMPORTANT NOTE

Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this report, its attachments or appendices may be reproduced by any process without the written consent of RPS Australia East Pty Ltd. All enquiries should be directed to RPS Australia East Pty Ltd.

We have prepared this report for the sole purposes of TfNSW ("**Client**") for the specific purpose of only for which it is supplied ("**Purpose**"). This report is strictly limited to the purpose and the facts and matters stated in it and does not apply directly or indirectly and will not be used for any other application, purpose, use or matter.

In preparing this report we have made certain assumptions. We have assumed that all information and documents provided to us by the Client or as a result of a specific request or enquiry were complete, accurate and up-to-date. Where we have obtained information from a government register or database, we have assumed that the information is accurate. Where an assumption has been made, we have not made any independent investigations with respect to the matters the subject of that assumption. We are not aware of any reason why any of the assumptions are incorrect.

This report is presented without the assumption of a duty of care to any other person (other than the Client) ("**Third Party**"). The report may not contain sufficient information for the purposes of a Third Party or for other uses. Without the prior written consent of RPS Australia East Pty Ltd:

- (a) this report may not be relied on by a Third Party; and
- (b) RPS Australia East Pty Ltd will not be liable to a Third Party for any loss, damage, liability or claim arising out of or incidental to a Third Party publishing, using or relying on the facts, content, opinions or subject matter contained in this report.

If a Third Party uses or relies on the facts, content, opinions or subject matter contained in this report with or without the consent of RPS Australia East Pty Ltd, RPS Australia East Pty Ltd disclaims all risk and the Third Party assumes all risk and releases and indemnifies and agrees to keep indemnified RPS Australia East Pty Ltd from any loss, damage, claim or liability arising directly or indirectly from the use of or reliance on this report.

In this note, a reference to loss and damage includes past and prospective economic loss, loss of profits, damage to property, injury to any person (including death) costs and expenses incurred in taking measures to prevent, mitigate or rectify any harm, loss of opportunity, legal costs, compensation, interest and any other direct, indirect, consequential or financial or other loss.

Document Status

Version	Purpose of Document	Orig	Review	Review Date
2	Revised Draft	SM	NJ	17/12/2013
3	Revised Draft	SM	NJ	24/01/2014
4	Final Draft	SM	NJ	19/02/2014
5	Final Draft	SM	NJ	06/03/2014
6	Final	SM	NJ	31/03/2014
7	Final	Sm	NJ	4/4/2014

Approval for Issue

Name	Signature	Date
Nick Johnson		31/3/2013

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Planning Context	2
1.2	Methodology	2
2.0	DEFINITIONS	5
3.0	DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING VISUAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	6
3.1	Local Visual Landscape Character	6
3.2	Site Visual Landscape Character	11
4.0	VISUAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER GUIDELINES	14
5.0	THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	15
6.0	VIEWPOINT IDENTIFICATION	16
7.0	VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	20
8.0	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION	31
8.1	Construction	31
8.2	Operation.....	31
9.0	REFERENCES	33

Tables

Table 1 Definitions.....	5
Table 2 Assessment of Visual Prominence.....	20
Table 3 Assessment of Visual Exposure.....	21
Table 4 Rating of Importance of Impact.....	22
Table 5 Viewpoint Analysis.....	22

Figures

Figure 1 : River Road Underpass.....	1
Figure 2 : Site locality Plan.....	4
Figure 3 : Typical Street east of site.....	6
Figure 4 : Typical Street west of site.....	7
Figure 5 : Moore Reserve.....	7
Figure 6 : Foreshore at Oatley Bay.....	8
Figure 7 : Oatley Pleasure Grounds.....	8
Figure 8 : Oatley Memorial Park.....	9
Figure 9 : Oatley Village Centre.....	9
Figure 10 : Local Landscape Character Plan.....	10
Figure 11 : Oatley Avenue.....	11
Figure 12 : Douglas Cross Gardens.....	12
Figure 13 : Open space to the west of the site, with tall vegetation lining the rail line.....	13
Figure 14 : Artist impression of the proposal as viewed from Mulga St and Oatley Parade.....	15
Figure 15 : Site Viewpoint Plan.....	16
Figure 16 : Viewpoint 1.....	17
Figure 17 : Viewpoint 2&4.....	17
Figure 18 : Viewpoint 3.....	17
Figure 19 : Viewpoint 5 & 8.....	18
Figure 20 : Viewpoint 6 & 9.....	18
Figure 21 : Viewpoint 7.....	18
Figure 22 : Local Viewpoint Plan.....	19
Figure 23 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 1.....	25
Figure 24 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from the vicinity of viewpoint 3.....	26
Figure 25 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 6.....	27
Figure 26 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 7.....	28
Figure 27 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 8.....	29

Appendices

Appendix 1: Local Viewpoints

Appendix 2: Proposal Elevations

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the visual impact of the installation of infrastructure designed to improve accessibility and safety for Oatley Station (the Station). Transport for NSW is the proponent for the Transport Access Program, a government initiative to provide a better experience for public transport customers by delivering accessible, modern, secure and integrated transport infrastructure where it is needed.

The Station is located at the junction between Kogarah City Council and Hurstville City Council, flanked by Oatley Parade, River Road and Mulga Road. Both Councils hold a policy document recording the Station's heritage significance, particular importance is placed on the arched underpass on River road (Figure 1). Pedestrian access to the station is currently via this underpass, while parking is provided off street in Oatley Parade and on street in River and Mulga Roads. Refer to Figure 2 for a locality plan of the site.

The existing access to platforms and station facilities is via a narrow footpath to the River Road underpass via Mulga Road and Oatley Parade. The access does not cater for the disabled, ageing and parents with prams. The proposed new structures will seek to improve these conditions while also provide improved integration with the Oatley precinct and consequently enhanced legibility for users.



Figure 1 : River Road Underpass

Oatley is primarily a suburban village, servicing the needs of the local community and surrounding district in terms of business, and educational facilities and services. The built form in the area has limited modern structures and the proposed development requires specific parameters in terms of height and scale to achieve its function.

This report describes the existing landscape character within the local context of the project, identifies and assesses the existing local visual context, rates the importance of key view sheds, the impacts of the proposed development on the visual landscape, and identifies the extent to which mitigation of impacts is required. The report has been prepared as part of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the proposal.

1.1 Planning Context

The precinct is located within two local government areas: Hurstville and Kogarah, and therefore zoning is controlled by two separate planning instruments. Hurstville Council has a draft local environmental plan (LEP) which will apply zoning to land within the precinct. The vicinity of the proposal is zoned for residential purposes. The draft Hurstville LEP and the Kogarah LEP 1998 both zone surrounding land as predominately low density residential, however the Kogarah LEP 1998 does include medium density development near the station.

Neither Oatley nor Oatley West are identified as centres in the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 (NSW Government 2010) and therefore are not considered to be where new growth is to occur. The subregional strategies which were developed in line with a previous metropolitan strategy, does identify Oatley and Oatley West as regional centres in the hierarchy of Sydney. Updated subregional strategies have not been developed in line with the Metropolitan Plan 2036.

No major developments have been identified as occurring or potentially occurring in the vicinity of Oatley Station, with residential densities remaining low and no major commercial or industrial development. Hurstville Council (as owners of the former bowling club site) have plans to provide an aged care facility on their site for either 140 beds and serviced units or 25 independent living units.

Kogarah Council has developed the Oatley Village Centre Improvement Plan. This plan outlines the potential streetscapes work which would be undertaken to facilitate a better pedestrian and traffic interface thereby increasing the amenity and quality of the overall streetscape and the village centre. The adjacent Memorial Park was considered to be a vital component to the plan and was also included in the scope of works. An aspect of the plan which is of considerable relevance to the upgrade of the station is the long term option of the plan to provide a new link to the station between the petrol station and commercial building on Oatley Parade. These plans include a long term vision for an aerial bridge to the station and across the rail corridor. These plans were prepared independent of TfNSW's plans for the station.

The assessment undertaken and presented in this report facilitates consideration of the proposed project with respect to these planning policies.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology for this study has been adapted from *Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia* document produced by the Western Australian Planning Commission (2007), along with input from various other sources including the *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Note Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact assessment EIA-NO4* produced by the NSW Government. The methodology consists of a number of steps intended to establish the existing Landscape Visual Character of the site and an evaluation of the visual impact of the proposal. The following steps will form the basis of the report;

- A description of the visual landscape character;
- The development of guidelines for managing the visual landscape character;

- A description of the proposal;
- The identification of key view sheds ;
- An evaluation of the way the visual landscape is viewed, experienced and valued; and
- The identification and description of likely changes to visual landscape character and views



Oatley Railway Station Upgrade, Oatley - Sydney
Study Area Plan

RPS

PRELIMINARY FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Scale 1:4000@A1 | Date Month 2010 | Project No 20000_00

Figure 2 : Site locality Plan

2.0 Definitions

Table 1 Definitions.

Term	Definition
Visual impact assessment	Is a combination of the consideration of visual prominence and visual exposure.
Visual Prominence	Is determined by the size, height and colour of proposed infrastructure elements and the degree to which the landscape within which they sit can assist in reducing their visual prominence (e.g. screening vegetation, landform, etc.).
Visual Exposure	Is determined by the number and frequency of people who will see the proposed infrastructure elements from identified viewing points.
Cumulative Impact	Is the additional change in the visual and landscape values of a space that is likely to be experienced sequentially as one moves through it and that is reasonably foreseeable to occur in the future.
Visual Landscape Character	Refers to the appearance of the basic landscape elements; landform, vegetation, water bodies and human land use that make an area identifiable or unique.
View Shed	Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area, feature or proposal
Visual Receiver	Person and/or viewer group that will experience an impact

3.0 Description of Existing Visual Landscape Character

'Landscape character in the public realm is difficult to define. It is a combination of perceptions, values and feelings carried around by communities of diverse people' (Mongard, 2002). It results from the way that different parts of our environment, both natural and cultural interact and are perceived by us. This is not just about visual perception, but how we hear, smell and feel our surroundings and the feelings, memories and associations they evoke (Countryside Agency, 2002). However, as the community engagement program for the project had not yet commenced at the time of preparing this report, the approach taken has been to define the landscape character based on the visual qualities that identify the area i.e. the Visual Landscape Character. These qualities often contribute to lifestyle quality for a place and its people.

In order to gain a full understanding of the site's visual character, it was first necessary to undertake a broad analysis of the visual character of the local area. The study area was divided into character units for the purpose of evaluation and to assist with developing guidelines to manage and plan for each character unit and their relationship with the site. The study then focussed on determining individual site features that contributed to the overall character of the area.

3.1 Local Visual Landscape Character

The landform of the area is generally sloping with gentle ridges to the east and west of the site, before sloping away to the banks of the Georges River. The site and surrounding area can be described as a typical suburban area with residential dwellings the dominant land use. This includes mainly single detached dwellings with some low level multi unit residential development. Generally the streetscapes to the east of the site included a mix of dwelling types with patchy landscape urban plantings of trees and shrubs. To the west of the site the land use was generally single detached dwellings with generous nature strips dominated by mature trees.



Figure 3 : Typical Street east of site



Figure 4 : Typical Street west of site

Oatley Bay is to the east and at the head of the bay is Moore Reserve, which is a large area of open space that includes wetlands as well as passive open space facilities. There is also a substantial amount of remnant native vegetation in Moore Reserve, which provides a more scenic quality at the head of the Bay.



Figure 5 : Moore Reserve

The Bay is characterised by larger dwellings, many of which are close to the water's edge. Little foreshore vegetation remains at the waterline although fringing mangroves remain at the head of the bay. The ridgeline canopy is generally intact but the foreshore is dominated by built form.



Figure 6 : Foreshore at Oatley Bay

The Georges River lies to the south of the site with the foreshore dwellings only broken by the greenery of Oatley Pleasure Grounds and Oatley Point Reserve.



Figure 7 : Oatley Pleasure Grounds

Immediately to the east of the site a large linear park runs north-south and provides a separation from the railway line and the residential area to the east. The park is a valuable leftover space from the original railway corridor which was later rebuilt to the west in its current form. The park is heavily vegetated with a variety of mature tree species and provides valuable shaded passive recreation spaces along with a large playground space. Oatley Parade borders the park to the west and the park rises steeply to Oatley Avenue to the east. The park is divided by Fredrick St which is home to a village style commercial centre with a striking town clock as its centrepiece.



Figure 8 : Oatley Memorial Park



Figure 9 : Oatley Village Centre

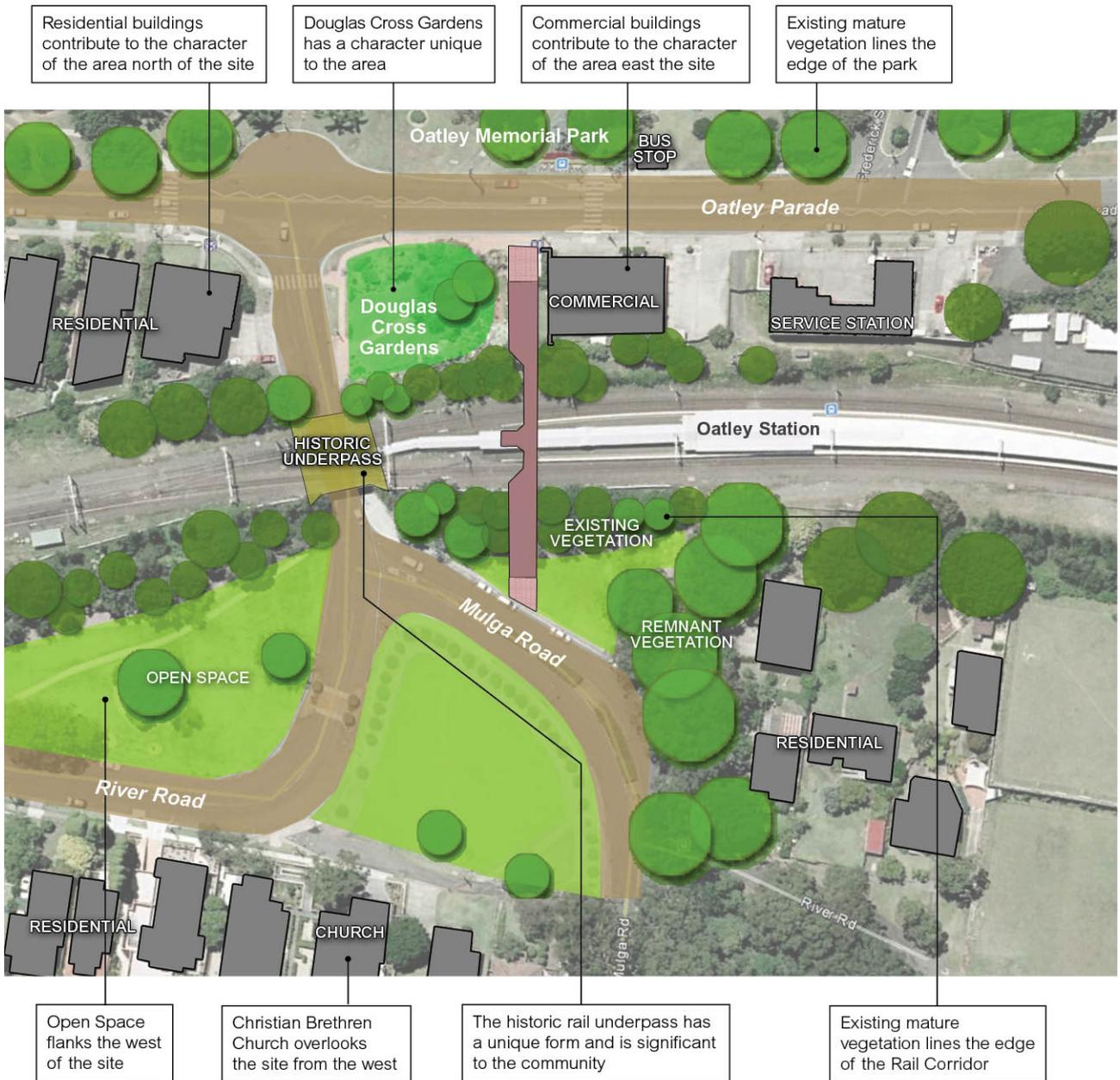


Figure 10 : Local Landscape Character Plan

3.2 Site Visual Landscape Character

At the site scale the visual landscape character to the east is framed by the large trees that are scattered through Oatley Memorial Park. This edge plays an important role in many respects for the local community. It provides amenity for passive recreation and helps define the streetscape, particularly in Oatley Avenue where its scale balances with the built form. More pertinent for this study is the fact that it provides a visual barrier to the site from the east.



Figure 11 : Oatley Avenue

The scale and continuity of vegetation defines the streetscape and restricts visual access to the west

To the west of Oatley Memorial Park, Oatley Parade flanks the site and is intersected by River Road. This junction forms a hub for pedestrian movement and is embellished by a small cottage style garden park, named Douglas Cross Gardens. This manicured landscape space is unique to the area and is well used, not just for passive recreation but also for special events. The combination of tree species used, combined with the form of the nearby arched underpass provides a unique visual contrast that gives this space a distinctive quality.

To the north and south along Oatley Parade there are residential dwellings and commercial premises respectively. The railway line is elevated from view and is fringed by mature vegetation on a steep embankment, with only the regular sound of passing trains giving its presence away. River Road passes beneath the historic arched underpass before leading to the north.

To the west of the site River Road and Mulga Road meet and are enclosed by open space. From here the elevation of the railway line is more exaggerated and the tall trees that line its fringe are balanced by the

large open green spaces. Mulga Road leads to the west with its southern boundary initially lined by large remnant vegetation before being fully enclosed with vegetation on both sides of the road.



Figure 12 : Douglas Cross Gardens



Figure 13 : Open space to the west of the site, with tall vegetation lining the rail line

4.0 Visual Landscape Character Guidelines

Generally these guidelines aim to secure development and change that is in keeping with the Oatley townscape and in particular the site's visual character. The factors that need to be given particular attention include;

- Ensure the scale of the new built form is appropriate and in keeping with the existing built form where possible and that the mass of the new structure does not diminish the importance of the nearby Douglas Cross Gardens;
- Minimise the visual impact the development will have on sensitive viewpoints (section 6 & 7);
- Retain significant views to and from the existing platform buildings and other items/areas of heritage significance at the site;
- The new design should improve and enhance existing legibility for road users/pedestrians/cyclists. The new built form should not obscure/disguise/overshadow existing legibility and way finding of the area;
- The material and colour palette should reflect the existing urban design character and palette;
- Any urban design features should reflect and be sympathetic to the existing historic arched underpass;
- Minimise reflectivity of new materials in relation to road users. Ensure reflectivity will not impede the ability of adjacent road users or shine into nearby private properties. Consider reflectivity angles throughout the daytime and at differing times of the year;
- Consider shadow effect of the new built form in locating and designing built structure. Consideration should be given to the proximity of the built form to Douglas Cross Gardens and the tolerance or otherwise of users having shadows cast across them;
- Design lighting so not to negatively impact adjacent land uses. For instance no light spill into adjacent residential properties to the north of the site along Oatley Parade;
- Maximise the retention of existing visual screening opportunities, such as the retention of the existing mature vegetation that lines the railway track and working with existing landform. Ensure the mature vegetation in Douglas Cross Gardens is retained and protected during construction;
- Minimise the construction footprint of the new development and disturbance to the area. Site storage and facilities during construction should be concentrated to the open space to the west of the site and disturbance of Douglas Cross Park should be avoided;;
- Visually screen the new development as appropriate with new planting. Consider the potential to reflect a similar treatment to Douglas Cross Park on the western side of the site;
- Maximise ease of ongoing maintenance and graffiti removal in the design and finish selection;and
- Consider the refurbishment of the historic arch underpass as part of the project upgrade, by removing graffiti etc.

5.0 The Development Proposal

The main aim of proposal is to develop a preferred integrated solution for the accessibility of Oatley Station and its wider precinct. The Oatley Station Precinct encompasses the railway station, associated interchange facilities and passenger access between facilities. The elements include;

- Station platform
- Station Platform Building
- Pedestrian and cycle access paths
- Pedestrian access footbridge
- Pedestrian linkages to the adjacent streets and commuter carpark, bus stops and shelters, taxi stands, kiss and ride locations and bicycle facilities.

The objective of the Oatley Station Precinct Accessibility Upgrade is to ensure the most appropriate solution is taken forward for funding consideration as part of the NSW Government's Transport Access Program (TAP).

Specifically, the objectives of this project are to:

- Improve customer experience (specifically weather protection, better interchange facilities and cosmetic appearance)
- Improve accessibility in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT)
- Improve mode access facilities and integration with surrounding precinct
- Where possible, increase station capacity to address identified congestion issues (if any) and to accommodate patronage growth to 2036 (+15%)
- Upgrade the station and interchange facilities and equipment to current standard
- Improve amenity for RailCorp staff and customers
- Review of facilities due for renewal
- Minimise the cost of ownership and maintenance
- Minimise construction impacts to customers and station operations.
- Maintain and respect the qualities of the historic station buildings, landscape and associated structures of heritage significance



Figure 14 : Artist impression of the proposal as viewed from Mulga St and Oatley Parade

6.0 Viewpoint Identification

An initial desk study was undertaken to identify all possible viewing points from which the proposed infrastructure may be visible. A detailed field survey and assessment was then conducted over one day in November 2013 to 'ground truth' the desk top survey.

A photographic survey of each of the potential viewing locations was undertaken during the field survey. The viewpoints were tested on a local scale and a site scale. Most of the viewpoints at the local scale proved to have no visibility of the site. Figure 22 provides a plan of the viewing point locations at the local scale and Appendix 1 reveals the photographic view from each point. During the 'ground truth' process it was revealed that most views of the site were apparent at the local scale.

Viewpoint 1 (Figure 15) represents the view shed for pedestrians moving toward the site through the open space west of the railway line. From the west viewpoints 2 and 4 would predominantly be experienced by drivers moving in an easterly direction along Mulga and River Roads. Viewpoint 3 represents the view shed of pedestrians moving in an easterly direction, residential properties lining River Road and gatherings of parishioners at the Christian Brethren Church on River Road. Viewpoint 5 and 8 represent the views to the site from the edge of Oatley Memorial Park. Viewpoint 6 and 9 represent the view for both pedestrians and vehicles moving along Oatley Road, while viewpoint 7 reveals the view shed for users of the Douglas Cross Gardens.



Figure 15 : Site Viewpoint Plan



Figure 16 : Viewpoint 1



Figure 17 : Viewpoint 2&4



Figure 18 : Viewpoint 3



Figure 19 : Viewpoint 5 & 8



Figure 20 : Viewpoint 6 & 9

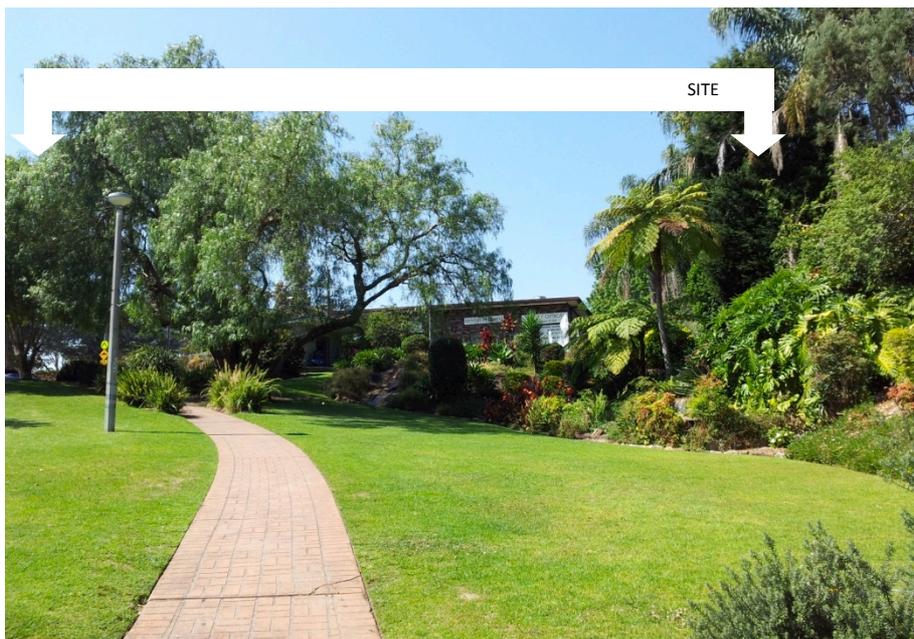


Figure 21 : Viewpoint 7