

# **SOUTHERN CROSS HOSPITAL**

## **PROPOSED NEW BUILDING**

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### **Application for Resource Consent**

### **URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

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**Prepared for the Southern Cross Hospital Ltd**

**April 2018**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The proposal involves the construction of a new building at the existing Southern Cross Hospital at 90-114 Hanson Street to provide new consulting rooms with carparking below. The development site is located within the Southern Inner Residential Area (Newtown sub-area).

This report forms part of the AEE accompanying the Resource Consent Application and assesses the urban design outcomes of the proposal against the relevant District Plan provisions. It also includes a townscape/visual impact assessment. The assessment is based on site visits and a review of the architectural plans, the Architectural Statement, the landscape plans and Landscape Design Statement. It also takes into account the urban design issues raised at the pre-application meeting.

# 2 THE PROPOSAL

The proposal involves the construction of a new three-storey hospital-related building. The new building will be located along the eastern frontage of the existing Southern Hospital site (90-114 Hanson Street) and setback about 4m from that frontage. The upper level of the building accommodates consulting rooms, the lower levels provide carparking space. Due to the sloping topography the southern end of the carpark remains below street level. The building has its long frontage facing Hanson Street and a pedestrian entrance located towards the southern end of the building.

The footprint of the proposal largely follows the outline of the existing carpark, but the southern end of the top level is setback from the carpark edge. The proposal connects to the entrance of the existing hospital through a new integrated pedestrian entrance off Hanson Street, but is otherwise separated from the existing hospital.

Vehicle entries to the carpark are in similar locations as the existing entries. The new building has a contemporary design that expresses its non-residential use. The proposal includes landscape design work around the new building to help its integration to the site and surrounding streetscape.

Further description of the proposal is provided in the Architectural Statement. The proposed landscape work is discussed in the Landscape Design Statement and illustrated on the associated Landscape Plans.

# 3 THE SITE & ITS CONTEXT

**The development site** - the development site is part of the wider hospital campus and occupies the area of the existing surface carpark fronting Hanson Street. The site has a sloping topography rising from north to south.



Currently the wider hospital site is accessed from both Hanson Street and Hall Street. The access off Hanson Street - the primary access to the site - connects to the hospital and associated carparking areas extending along the Hanson Street frontage. A secondary hospital staff carpark, located at the south/west end of the site, is accessed off Hall Street.

The existing hospital has a low horizontal bulk with broken down roof form and unremarkable external appearance and little architectural detail. The existing hospital is setback from the street frontage and occupies the majority of the site to the south/west of the existing carpark. Due to the sloping topography, its southern end is below the level of the adjacent footpath. Landscaped areas with established trees are found along the Hanson Street frontage and at the south/east corner of the site.

Currently, the street frontage is defined by existing trees, but otherwise dominated by the surface carpark that sits slightly below the street level. Existing street edge planting and the setback position of the building tend to downplay its streetscape presence. Currently, the building is undergoing renovations and repair work.



Hanson Street - views to the existing hospital from the north (left) and south (right)

**Context** - the development site is located towards the northern end of Hanson Street approximately 250m to the south of John Street intersection. The context to the north, north/east and west of the site is mixed. Immediately to the east and south the site is surrounded by the Newtown residential area. Further to east, south/east and north/east are the commercial areas focused around Adelaide Road and Riddiford Street, and including the Wellington Hospital complex that is an important regional destination.

The block immediately to the north of the site accommodates a number of multi-storey residential buildings, including the Capital City Lodge (comprised of a four storey and a two storey block) and the Council-owned Hanson Court Flats, including a large scale five-storey horizontal block facing Hanson Street further to the north and a cluster of tall blocks to the north/west.



Capitol City Lodge and Hanson Court Flats



Hanson Street context to the northeast of the site



Hanson Street - existing residential development to the east and south of the development site

The National Dance and Drama Centre and the Wellington Indoor Sports Centre - buildings with large footprints - and adjacent artificial surface sports field are located on the elevated sites sitting above the development site to the north and north/west.

To the east the site is surrounded by existing residential development comprised primarily of older one and two-storey dwellings. Due to the sloping topography, many of the buildings located immediately to the east, on the opposite/east side of the street, sit on elevated terraces, some with in-built garages.

Immediately to the south of the development site, facing Hanson Street, there is a grouping of single-storey cottages of similar age and style, built close to the street edge. These are separated from the existing hospital building site by a relatively large area of existing planting located at the south/east corner of the development site.

**Visibility** - the site has a long street frontage and is visible from along Hanson Street and surrounding properties and from the elevated areas to the west. Overall, the location of the site and surrounding topography limits visibility to primarily close-up and medium-range views (viewing distance 0-500m). A detailed assessment of the visibility of the proposal and its visual impact on the townscape and on the relevant visual audiences is included Section 5 of this report.

## 4 ASSESSMENT OF DESIGN OUTCOMES

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT REFERENCE POINTS

The relevant District Plan provisions for the urban design assessment of the proposal include:

- (a) District Plan Rules 5.4.1 and 5.4.4.A - there are no specific provisions/criteria in the District Plan (under the relevant Rules 5.4.1 and 5.4.4.A) to guide the urban design assessment of non-residential buildings in established residential areas. However, some guidance on matters that Council will have regard to are included in the explanation to Policy 4.2.7.3 which states that *... "Because non-residential activities can impact adversely on the amenity of Residential Areas, control over these has been maintained in the District Plan. The Council aims to ensure that any non-residential activity is of a scale and character that is in keeping with its surroundings as this is important to protect residential amenities"*.

The two key matters for assessment are:

- building scale and character - the scale and character of non-residential buildings and their relationship to the surrounding context; and
  - residential amenities - residential amenities include privacy, sunlight access, noise and visual amenity - the emphasis for the urban design assessment is on visual amenity (the remaining aspects of residential amenity are covered in the planning assessment).
- (b) Residential Design Guide (including Appendix 4) - technically, the proposal being located within the Southern Inner Residential Areas/Newtown is subject to the Residential Design Guide (Design Guide) and associated Appendix 4 applicable to the Newtown Sub-area. However, the primary focus of the

Design Guide is on achieving high quality new multi-unit residential development with no specific guidance on non-residential buildings within the Newtown residential area.

The proposal is for a hospital-related building on a site that has been long associated with hospital activity (but not specifically acknowledged in the District Plan as a site for hospital uses). In this regard, the Design Guide, given its focus on good quality multi-unit development, has limited application, except that some of the objectives/guidelines with regard to 'site planning' and 'character' could be helpful if interpreted in the context of a hospital-related building within a setting of mixed character. With this thought in mind, it is noted that the Design Guide for the nearby Wellington Hospital suggests that it may be most appropriate for hospital buildings *'to maintain the character resulting from design requirements for medical facilities'* and that *'this character should be developed in new buildings in a way that responds to but does not replicate the appearance of their setting'*. This provides an insight into Council's approach to design and appearance of hospital buildings relative to their context.

With the above in mind, it is considered that it would most useful to focus the assessment on the extent to which the proposal, as a medical-related building, achieves good quality urban design that is responsive to its generally diverse townscape setting, rather than strictly follow the provisions of any specific Design Guide.<sup>1</sup> The key assessment matters include:

- Site layout and massing (bulk/form/scale)
- Building form, scale and design
- Street frontages/edge treatment
- Signage
- Landscaping & CPTED
- Visual impact

The key objectives/principles for the assessment of the proposal in relation to the above matters include:

- the site planning and design of the building recognise the slightly different contextual conditions around the development site and respond to those accordingly;
- design responses focus on achieving an appropriate scale relationship to surrounding residential properties and reducing the potential visual impact of the building on those properties and on the townscape;
- the building is coherently designed and exhibits design integrity. Building form, materials and detail express the building function, address any specific functional requirements, while achieving a good quality contemporary design that integrates into the existing townscape character; and
- potential visual effects are addressed through both architectural as well as landscape design means.

## 4.2 ASSESSMENT

**Site layout and massing (bulk/form/scale)** - the proposed building is aligned with and built close to the street boundary of the site, but retains the existing row of established trees along the street edge, except for the two palm trees towards the southern end of the existing carpark.

The proposed building's setback - approximately 3m from the street edge - is similar to that of the existing dwellings to the south and to the lower building from of the City Lodge complex the north. In this sense the proposal reflects the existing pattern of frontage setbacks.

The proposed building footprint largely follows the outline of the existing carpark, but the new building (at the upper level) is setback approximately 15m from the southern edge of the carpark. This creates more than 50m separation distance between the southern end of the new building and the adjacent properties to

<sup>1</sup> It is noted that similar approach was followed by the Council when assessing the recent Application for the Wakefield Hospital Redevelopment.

the south (nos. 116-124). The retention and enhancement of the existing landscaped area to the south of the carpark will continue to act as a green buffer providing a 'soft' transition between the hospital and the adjacent residential properties. It will also improve the visual permeability and safety of the street.

The northern end of the proposal is more or less aligned with the northern edge of the existing hospital. The proposal connects to the entrance of the existing hospital through a new integrated pedestrian entrance off Hanson Street, but is otherwise separated from the existing hospital by an approximately 12-14m wide gap.

The proposed building footprint/bulk has been determined by the areas required for carparking and consulting rooms. Overall, the siting of the new building is logical in the context of the existing hospital layout and appropriately located towards the northern end of the site that is closer to the nearby commercial centre and abuts an area of larger scale buildings. The carparking entry points are largely kept in a similar location to the current ones.

The site planning of the proposal has been approached with two main objectives in mind: (a) retain the existing landscaping along the street frontage and improve/supplement that with new planting; and (b) acknowledge the existing pattern of frontage setbacks. The frontage width of the proposal is smaller than that of the existing hospital and not too dissimilar to some of the buildings to the north of the development site.

The proposal utilises the topography of the site to create the required area of carparking with the southern end of the lower carpark level remaining below the level of the street, thus reducing its direct impact on the streetscape.

**Building form, scale & design** - the proposed building is three levels, including two levels of carparking (one of those partly below street level) and upper level consulting rooms.

Height and form - the proposal has a simple linear form with horizontal scale and contemporary design. The long elevation facing Hanson Street has been modulated in response to the scale of the residential context to the east and south (see comments below).

The southern half of the primary building bulk is within the permitted 9m height limit for the area. The northern half goes above the height limit to a varying degree with the northern end of the 'consulting rooms' floor rising 2.9m above the 9m height limit at its highest point. As a result, the proposal will appear as a three-level building at its northern end (adjacent to the larger/taller buildings). The southern end of the building, which sits closer to the low-scale residential properties, will read as a two-storey structure.

The proposed plant, which rises 2.5m above the 9m height limit is designed as a simple box clad in 'textured' colour steel. To reduce its visual impact it is setback from the street frontage and located along the western/internal edge of the building adjacent to the current entrance to the existing hospital.

Scale and design appearance - the building has been designed to appear as a linear/horizontal volume 'floating' above a one/two-storey light/'green' structure accommodating the carpark. The carparking function of the lower levels creates an under-croft area with the main building volume sitting above. To mitigate its potential effects on the adjacent streetscape, it is proposed to treat the carpark walls as 'green walls' to provide screening and soften their appearance. This is reinforced, for a large part of the street frontage, by existing and new trees that provide further screening and a soft transition between the building and the street. The structural grid of the carpark structure will introduce a sense of vertical rhythm across the green wall.

The upper level of the building (consulting rooms) has a simple linear form. To lighten its visual weight and reduce the perception of bulk, the main street facade will be an extensively glazed facade. The facade treatment incorporates vertical aluminium 'fins' to modulate the facade surface. The proposed subtle facade subdivision into implied vertical modules has been achieved through the use of alternating modules of opaque and reflective glazing and further emphasised by varying the width of the fin elements. This, together with the projecting volume above the main entrance and associated canopy features, breaks down the building facade and reduces the perceived length of its street frontage. The proposed facade treatment contributes to an enhanced 3D effect, with the implied individual facade modules referencing the scale/frontage width of the surrounding residential properties (refer to A02.001-003).



The northern elevation of the top level of the building (consulting rooms) is treated in opaque glazing. The elevation is articulated via a centrally positioned approximately 3m deep recessed balcony. The proposed landscape work around the northern end of the carpark and adjacent area leading to the modified/improved entrance to the existing medical centre will aid the integration of the proposal to the site and to the existing hospital.

The treatment of the southern elevation, which is similar to that on the northern elevation, is articulated by a horizontal window of similar proportions to those of the balcony on the northern side (A02.003). The window is treated in reflective glass and further articulated by the proposed use of fins.

The west/back elevation, which has the same design language as the remaining elevations, is less detailed given its low visibility.

The proposed building has a contemporary design with well considered architectural detail that reflects its 'institutional' character. The proposed material palette includes fritted and reflective glazed facade, vertical aluminium fins and colour steel. Timber will be used for the proposed entrance canopies and other elements around the entrance. This is consistent with the contemporary design of the building and aimed at providing facade texture and detail. The proposed design, while addressing key functional requirements, conveys a sense of design integrity.

**Edge treatment** - the street edge for most of the building frontage is delineated by the green walls of the carpark and planting (existing and new). It also incorporates the main pedestrian entrance. The continuity of planting is interrupted by the required vehicle access associated with the drop-off/pick-up area. The proposed canopy features around the pedestrian and vehicle entrances help to moderate the impact of an 'open' street frontage. The existing landscape area at the south/east corner of the hospital site will be retained and improved to increase visibility, thus adding to the safety and quality of the street.

The 'activation' of the building frontage has been limited by the required area for carparking with proposed street entrance generating a certain level of activity. A truly 'active' ground level space (e.g. cafe facing the street) would have been an ideal way to mitigate the effects of the lower level carparks. This was considered by the Applicant but not incorporated in the proposal as: (a) its success was questionable given the proximity of eating places within the nearby commercial centre; and (b) it would have reduced the carparking numbers required for the efficient operation of the hospital.

The pedestrian entrance goes through the carpark mid-way between the drop-off/pick-up vehicle lanes - a location guided by the entrance to the existing hospital and the location of existing vehicle entries. To integrate the new entrance to the street and improve its amenity, the area around it incorporates paving, enclosing architectural features, some planting and seating.

At street level, the entrance is expressed architecturally through a projecting facade module and further enhanced by canopy features. A glazed fritted graphics proposed to be incorporated on the facade of the entrance module will add further design detail.

**Signage** - the proposal includes two free-standing vertical signs installed close to the street edge (within the boundaries of the Hospital site) around the two pedestrian entrances access. The type of those signs and their general location are very similar to the existing signs.

In addition, the proposal envisages 'logo' signage on the northern elevation. The envisaged signage will be well integrated into the design of the elevation and will be of scale that does not dominate the streetscape view of the building as indicated on the proposed elevation drawings and perspective views.

**Landscaping & CPTED** - the proposal incorporates well considered landscape work as illustrated on the Landscape Plans and further explained in the Landscape Design Statement. The proposed landscape work has appropriately aimed at reducing the visual effects of the carparking levels, providing a 'soft' street edge definition and aiding the integration of the building to the site and adjacent streetscape.

The improvements made to the existing landscaped area at the south/eastern end of the hospital site will improve safety and street amenity, while maintaining the existing green buffer between the hospital carpark and the residential properties to the south.

The areas around the drop off/pick up area and the pedestrian entrance will be illuminated at night. Those areas and the carpark will be overlooked by the dwellings on the opposite of the street thus providing informal surveillance.

## 5 VISUAL CATCHMENT & VIEWING AUDIENCES

**Visibility** - the proposed building is located close to the Hanson Street boundary of the site. It is a relatively long building located close to the street edge which, unlike the existing hospital, will have a strong streetscape presence. To understand the visual impact of the proposal on the local and wider townscape character a townscape/visual impact assessment has been undertaken. The need for such an assessment was also recommended by the Council's urban design advisor at the pre-application meeting.

Visual impact is closely related to the level of visibility of a building and its context and the way it will be experienced by the relevant visual audiences. Visibility is assessed by identifying the visual catchment - i.e. the locations from where the proposal will be seen. The visual catchment determines the area that will be subject to visual effects.

The broad visual catchment of the proposal was determined by studying aerial/contour maps and undertaking site visits. The topography of the wider context around the development site limits its visual catchment primarily to viewpoints located roughly 300m away from the new building in northern, southern, western and eastern directions (see attached map, next page). Due to existing natural and built elements the proposal will not be seen from every location within the visual catchment.

To understand typical viewing directions, distances and angles and determine the visual effects, a number of photographs were taken during site visits from different viewpoints within the visual catchment. From those photographs five viewpoints were selected that are considered representative of the directions and distances that would be most often experienced by the relevant viewing audiences.

Photomontages showing the new building in context from the representative viewpoints were prepared by the Applicant to illustrate the visibility of the proposal, its relationship to the surrounding townscape and its potential impact on the respective audiences (refer to Drawings A10.001 - 010 for viewpoint location and 'before' & 'after' views).



Visual catchment

**Overview/visual experience and type of visual audiences** - depending on the viewing distance and direction the building will be experienced in several different ways including:

- (c) public/transient views from north and south - the building will be experienced most often in short-to-medium range views (0-300m) from the north and south by pedestrians and motorists moving along Hanson Street and/or by patients arriving at the hospital (see photos below).



Views of the building experienced by those users will be transient with different parts of the building seen in sequence for short periods of time. Due to the undulating topography and its setback from the northern boundary, the building will be more prominent in views from the north where it will appear as a three-storey structure. Conversely, when seen from the south its impact will tend to be downplayed by the planting at its southern end, with the lower level of the carpark remaining below street level.

The respective audiences will experience the building mainly in perspective views which will reduce the perception of building length with close-up views from the street focusing the attention on the architectural detail. Hanson Street is relatively narrow and does not provide viewing locations far enough from the building edge to allow a frontal view in which the building will appear in full elevation. The impact in such views is represented by Views 1, 2 and 4 discussed below/refer to A10.001- 004 and A10.007-008).

- (d) public/transient views from the west - the rear of the building (mainly its top part) will be experienced in short-to-medium range views by users of the elevated public open spaces and adjacent streets and the Indoor Sport Centre carpark to the west (see photos below).



The views experienced by these users will be transient with the views of the building changing with movement and experienced for short periods of time. The elevated position of these viewpoints will downplay the visibility of the building and it will not be prominent in views from the west. Rather, only the building top will be seen as an element of a wider and diverse in character townscape setting (see View 5, A10.009- 010).

- (e) private/static views from the east - the front of the building will be seen in static views (as part of the surrounding area) from residential properties immediately to the east on the opposite side of Hanson Street. Ten properties will have a direct visual relationship to the new building - nos. 111 to 129 (see map below). Six of those properties (nos. 111 - 121) are single storey located at street level opposite the northern half of the building. Views of the building from those properties will be focused mainly on the lower levels of the building looking straight onto the existing street planting and the green wall of the carpark.



The remaining four properties (nos. 123 - 129) sit above street level, although no. 123 is not elevated significantly above the adjacent footpath level, while for no. 129 the views towards the new building will be largely obscured by the mature vegetation within the elevated front garden of that property. The impact of the proposal on the elevated properties is represented by View 4 (refer to A10-005-006).



113-127.Hanson Street (no 113 in the foreground).....121-129 Hanson Street (no 129 behind the planning)



125-127 Hanson Street



129-131 Hanson Street (no 129 behind the planting)

**Representative views** - as discussed earlier, views of the proposal were prepared from selected viewpoints considered to be representative of the types of visual impact experienced by the relevant audiences.

VIEW 1/from the north (viewpoint location: eastern footpath vicinity of 105 Hanson Street; viewing distance 45-50m; refer A10.001-002) - in views from the north the focus of attention will be on the north/east corner of the building. Due to the setback of the building from the northern boundary of the site, the northern/short elevation of the building will be seen almost in elevation with the long/street facade seen at an oblique angle. The building will be seen in relation to the existing taller four-storey flats at 88 Hanson Street in the foreground and compared to the current view of the existing hospital the proposal will not appear out of scale.

In terms of the overall visual experience of the northern section of Hanson Street, the proposal will continue the pattern of buildings with long street frontages defining the northern section of Hanson Street (e.g. City Lodge and Hanson Court Flats/nos. 80-82 on the western side of the street and the Countdown Supermarket on the eastern side).

In View 1 the building's horizontal form is appreciated with the proposed modulation of the front facade providing a sense of vertical scale and 3D facade relief. The green wall and street edge planting play an important role in this and subsequent views from the north in screening the carpark levels and providing a soft transition between the building and the street. In that view the entrance module will be discernible signalling the main point of entry.



The proposed 3D modelling of the northern facade, which will be clearly read in close-up views from the north, makes reference to the horizontal proportions of some of the facade elements on the adjacent building.

VIEW 2/from the south (viewpoint location: eastern footpath, vicinity of no. 131-133 Hanson Street/approximate viewing distance 25-30m; refer A10.003-004). This view is focused on the southern end of the building that will read as a two-storey structure above the under-croft carpark. Compared to the existing view, the new building will have a stronger impact on the streetscape due to its proximity to the street edge. The proposed facade articulation and detailed treatment (as described above), together with the projecting entrance which will be prominent in that view, help to moderate the perceived length and add a sense of scale. The viewpoint location emphasises the openness/visibility of the under-croft vehicle area around the entrance where functional requirements for vehicle movement limit opportunity for extensive screening along the street frontage (approximately 25m including the opening for the pedestrian entrance) and has necessitated the removal of the existing palm trees.

The green wall screens and planting appearing at the southern end of the building, together with the proposed paving area and other design elements (seating, sculptural/architectural features and signage on the adjacent footpath) around the entrance, will add a sense of detail and help to soften the impact of the open vehicle area on the streetscape in closer-up views from the south.



Compared to the existing situation, the proposed view shows that the visibility/impact of the proposal will be more pronounced however, the new view will be of a newer, good quality architecturally-designed building with integrated planting along the street edge.

VIEW 3/from the south (viewpoint location: eastern side of Hanson Street/ elevated property at no. 127 Hanson Street/ viewing distance approximately 25m; refer A10.005-006). This view illustrates the visibility of the proposal from the elevated properties directly opposite. This includes 4 properties at nos. 123- 129. However, no. 123 is just slightly above street level. That means that the visibility as per View 3 is mainly indicative of views from 3 properties. It is also noted for no. 129 the view to the new building will be largely obscured by the mature front yard vegetation.

As noted earlier, views from the properties opposite the proposed building that are located at the street level will be focused at the lower building levels where the planting and green wall will soften and reduce the impact.

The extent of the building seen in View 3 is similar to that as per the previous View 2. However, due to the elevated location of the viewpoint the viewing angle is different and reveals more of the building top while also widening the view of the carpark. The entrance module, architectural detail around the entrance and proposed landscape work as discussed per the previous View 2, will soften the impact of the new vehicle area. It is noted that the existing view is also focused on a vehicle area (the existing carpark & vehicle entrance to the existing hospital) but these are seen at a slightly lower level than the street and partly obscured by the existing palm trees.

In View 3, the length of the new building will be appreciated. The proposed facade treatment, as already discussed will help to moderate its impact. The building top and the plant room will be visible. The setback position and proposed cladding of the plant room helps to reduce its impact. In terms of height and visual impact of the building top, a comparison between the 'before' and 'after' views shows that the proposal will not obscure the green backdrop of the escarpment to the west much further than the existing building does, and the new plant room will project largely against existing background buildings.



While the new building frontage will be more prominent than the existing building, the new view will be of an architecturally-designed building of good quality supported by integrated landscape work. The highly transparent facade will allow residents to follow the movement inside the building thus adding interest and animating the facade.

VIEW 4/from the south (viewpoint location: vicinity of north/east corner of Hanson Street/Hall Street intersection; viewing distance 65-70m; refer A10.007-008). The focus of the view will be on the south/eastern end of the building. The proposal will be prominent but will not appear 'out of scale' as it will be seen against the backdrop of the larger buildings of Hanson Court Flats to the north with the landscaped area to the south remaining unchanged. The projecting entrance module breaks down the building frontage and reduces the perception of building length with the street edge planting providing a soft/green transition between the building and the street.



Retaining existing planting at the south/east corner of the hospital site will maintain the existing relationship to the adjacent cottages.

VIEW 5/from the west: (viewing location: eastern edge of Hutchinson Road; viewing distance approximately 210m, refer A10.009-010). The steeply rising topography to the west reduces the visibility of the proposed building in views from the elevated areas to the west. View 5 shows that only the top parts of the proposed building will be seen at the mid-ground in front of the existing hospital building as part of the wider townscape setting featuring the large volumes of the Wellington Hospital buildings at the background.



**Summary Visual Impact** - the visual effects of the proposal are localised within a relatively small area around the development site, allowing close-up and medium-range views from viewpoints up to 300m away.

Visual effects arising from the proposal will be greatest for the residential properties directly opposite the development site, as the proposal will change their views permanently.

Visual effects experienced by motorists, pedestrians and patients arriving at the hospital will be much lower as the proposed changes to the current situation will be experienced in transient views for short periods of time.

The proposal will change the existing situation by introducing a new building over an existing carpark area along the street frontage of the development site. While the building will be more prominent and taller than the existing hospital buildings, it will replace a view of an open carpark and existing older buildings of no special design quality with a view of a new architecturally-designed building supported by integrated and well-considered landscape work. In this sense, the proposal, in many respects, will improve the visual quality of the existing environment.

Based on the visual impact assessment, it is considered that the visual effects of the larger volume of the proposed building (relative to the existing), and the effects arising from the proposed carparking levels adjacent to the street, have been addressed/reduced to an acceptable level for all visual audiences, as well as in relation to the existing townscape character. This has been achieved via architectural as well as landscape design means.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is for a hospital-related building on a site that has been long associated with hospital activity. The development site has a residential zoning located close to the commercial areas of Adelaide Road and Riddiford Street. The context of the site is mixed, including the typical residential character of the existing Newtown residential area to the east and south of the development site and some larger-scale residential and non-residential buildings to the north and west.

The site planning, massing and design of the proposal have been guided by key District Plan requirements and constrained by the existing hospital layout in terms of available land for extension and location of vehicle and pedestrian entrances. The form and design of the new building has to address certain functional requirements (re number of carparking and floor area needed for the consulting rooms) but needs also to acknowledge the character/scale of its townscape context and maintain the amenity of the immediately surrounding residential properties. This means that the proposal as a whole has to reconcile multiple and, sometimes conflicting, objectives. Based on the assessment carried out to evaluate the overall urban design quality of the proposal, it is considered that as a whole the proposed new building provides a balanced response to those objectives through its siting, form and design of high architectural quality supported by integrated landscape work.

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