
5.3 EAST EDGE SCENIC PROTECTION LANDS UNIT 3

MERCEDES ROAD (E-LU3)



(Previous page)

E-LU3 has retained a strong rural character:

Figure 5.3.1. Mercedes Road looking east over intersection with Bensley Road

Figure 5.3.2. Eastern end of Mercedes Road near the Parkway Reservation looking to north-west

Figure 5.3.3. Poultry farm at south-eastern corner of intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads (taken from east)

Figure 5.3.4. This late 19th Century sandstone cottage is located at the focal point of the Unit and includes its original setting.

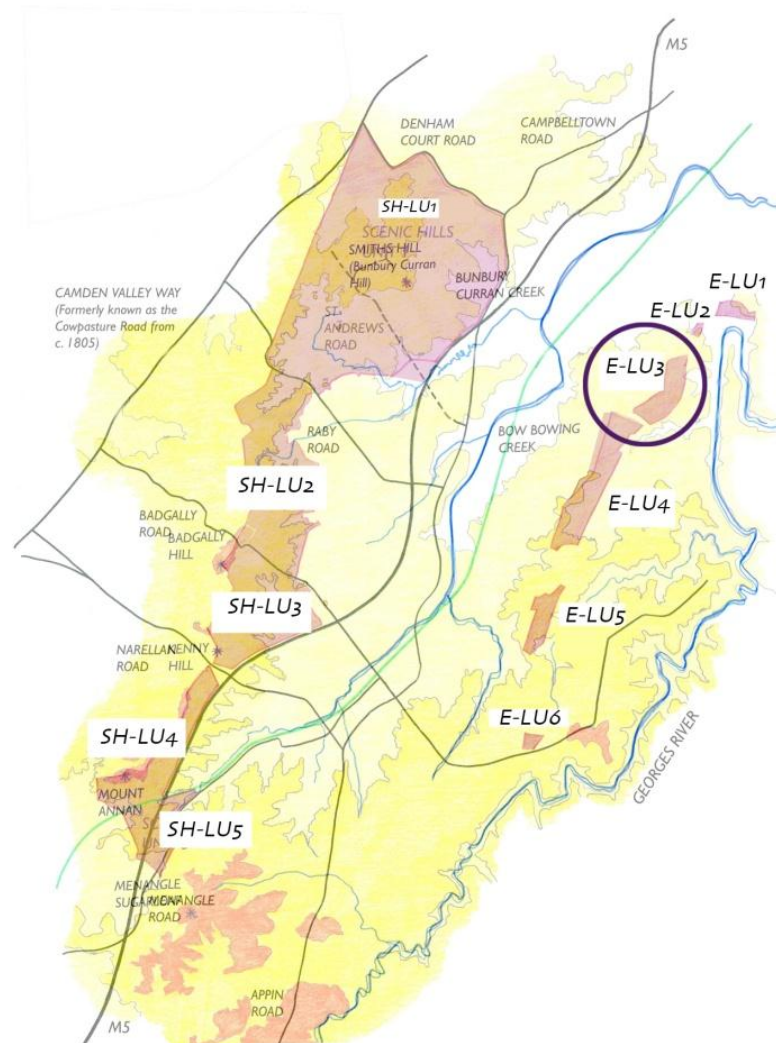


Figure 5.3.5. Location of East Edge Scenic Protection Lands Visual Landscape Unit 3.



Figure 5.3.6. The prevailing character of the area is semi-rural with a natural bushland edge. The tall woodland and bushland trees provide a backdrop to the landscape. The southern-most portion of the area demonstrates a high quality bushland-edge character, with low density residential development nestled under the tree canopy.

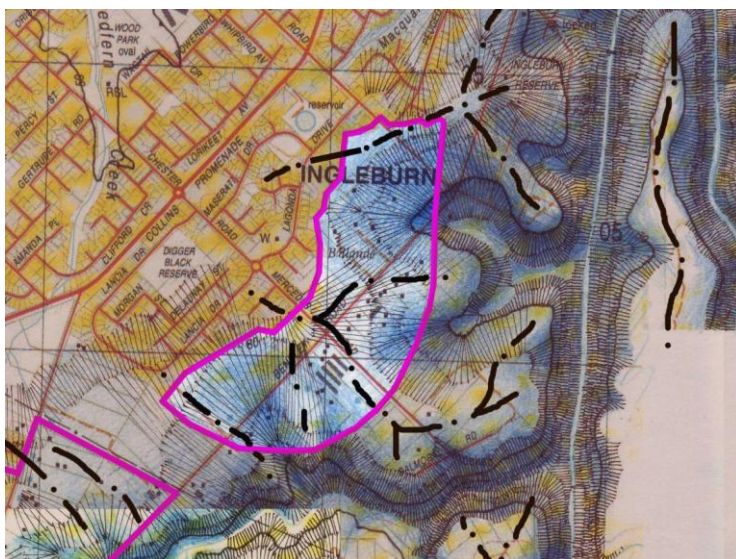


Figure 5.3.7. E-LU3 is located to the south-east of Ingleburn. The Unit describes an arc between the residential areas to the north-west and the Georges River Nature Reserve to the east and south.

5.3.1 CONTEXT

Landscape Unit 3 in the East Edge Scenic Protection Area (E-LU3) is a predominantly cleared area with stands of significant vegetation, particularly at its southern end. The Unit is centred around the intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads, being situated below the line of the main ridge when viewed from the Scenic Hills. The western edge of the Unit is bordered by the residential subdivision of Ingleburn and the eastern edge by the sweeping curve of the reservation for the proposed Georges River Parkway. A major electricity transmission corridor separates the Unit from E-LU4 to the south.

The scenic values of the Landscape Unit 3 are derived from the interlacing of its non-urban and bushland areas. Largely cleared areas are bordered by towering bushland and contrast with the more vegetated areas. The north-western area and the properties near the south-western corner of Mercedes and Bensley Roads demonstrate an open Cumberland Plain Woodland character with houses scattered beneath. Much of the middle sector of the Landscape Unit is substantially cleared and includes traditional non-urban uses such as the poultry farm, low-impact grazing and other small rural activities. The visual quality of this middle sector is enhanced also by the setting of the modest late 19th Century stone cottage on its undeveloped lot that reads as a traditional small-settler farm holding. This property is the only listed heritage item in the Unit, and the protection of the quality and integrity of the structures (including the stone outhouse) and its setting should be a priority.

The southern half of the Landscape Unit demonstrates a high visual quality. The bushland extends from the adjoining properties over the roadway and establishes an attractive canopy-like visual character. Similar qualities are found also at the northern end of the precinct near Oxford Road.

Other development such as the recent medium-density development on the eastern edge near Mercedes Road is less sympathetic to the Unit's visual qualities and is inconsistent with its value as a rural landscape.

The Unit is within William Redfern's Campbellfield Estate – most is within the 1821 grant of 1480 acres, with the northernmost part (adjoining Oxford Road) within a slightly earlier (1816) 800 acre grant made to Redfern. Nothing is known of the use of the land during that time, including whether this area was planted for wheat. The central portion (including the land adjacent to what is now Mercedes Road) was subdivided into village lots in 1885, intended to be known as 'Caledonia'; with the remainder of the area divided into lots of approximately 13 acres (west of Bensley Road) and between 30 and 100 acres between Bensley Road and Myrtle Creek.

The aerial photographs taken in 1956 reveal that the Unit was significantly less developed than at present, with approximately ten farms evident. Where not cleared for agriculture the vegetation to the east of Bensley Road appears to be predominantly low with emergent canopy trees; and to the west of Bensley Road the vegetated areas appear to be remnant (or possibly regenerated) open Cumberland Plain Woodland (see Figures 5.3.10 and 5.3.11).



Figure 5.3.8. Extract from an early subdivision plan showing that the 1880s subdivision of the Campbellfield Estate originally intended to create a small village to be known as 'Caledonia' between Collins Promenade and Bensley Road, centred on the street now known as Mercedes Road (NSW Department of Lands: Parish Map Preservation Project image. Minto Parish. Dated c1930s).



Figure 5.3.9. The small lots in the central part of the Unit were created by the major subdivision of the Campbellfield Estate in the late 19th Century. These were originally intended to form a small village to be known as Caledonia, but the lots were purchased in groups and developed as slightly larger holdings. Only the sandstone cottage to the north of the intersection survives as physical evidence of this earlier layer, but the nominal lots (shown in light yellow) remain under today's properties (dark yellow). The group of five dwellings on the southern side of Mercedes Road read as urban 'lifestyle living' properties, but contribute strongly to the Unit's scenic qualities due to the retention of many mature trees on each lot with frontage to Bensley Road and the generally modest scale, form and use of materials in the group.



Figure 5.3.10 and Figure 5.3.11. Aerial photography taken in 1956 (above) and 2009 (below) reveals the changing pattern of clearing and development in E-LU3 over the last 50 years. (NSW Department of Lands aerial photography 1956 and Spatial Information Exchange Viewer (2009 image))

The local road network within the Unit is functional, with Mercedes and Oxford Roads providing links to the main valley of the Campbelltown LGA in the west and Bensley Road linking to the north and south. The linear quality and gentle undulations of Bensley Road in particular provide opportunities for good quality streetscape views directed by the tall remnant bushland lining the roadsides. A simple but good quality view is directed by the carriageway of Mercedes Road towards the bush that marks the edge of the Parkway reservation to the east. The quality of this view is likely to be compromised when the Parkway is constructed, although if designed sensitively it could still read as bushland located slightly further away (on the other side of the road). It is not known if this will be an access point to the Parkway, but if this is the case the character of the area will change significantly from the increased traffic flow and demands for urban type uses as the area becomes a major through-route to the main valley.

Paved carriageways in the Unit are narrow and soft-edged with extensive mature trees on the verges, enhancing the natural/undeveloped character of the Unit.

The environmental qualities of the southern end of the landscape unit are generally good and include some high-quality bushland areas. Although the area near Mercedes Road demonstrates a somewhat higher density, most of the properties have retained a high proportion of natural vegetation and the houses read as being nestled under the canopy and as visually neutral elements in the landscape, particularly when viewed as a streetscape. Once south of this group of smaller lots the visual character of the Unit is dominated by mature woodland of a high quality and most houses are visually recessive or well hidden from the casual viewer by vegetation.

The middle area of the precinct includes some properties that demonstrate the characteristics of standard suburban development including several examples of over scaled houses. The scenic quality of this part of the Unit is however enhanced by the sandstone cottage (a local heritage item) in its traditional semi-rural setting overlooking the surrounding paddocks.

North of Mercedes Road, the character of the area broadens into a landscape more usually associated with the urban-rural edge with a series of long, relatively narrow lots dominated by suburban-style dwellings. The properties are substantially cleared but those to the east of Bensley Road back onto the bushland of the road reservation at the rear which gives the streetscape of this group a good quality rural-residential character. They become more vegetated towards the northern end of the landscape unit, with houses nestled under the eucalypt canopy and having a more minor impact on its aesthetic values. The quality of the bushland has been degraded by the extensive clearing of understorey vegetation and the planting of grasses with significant evidence of weed infestation in places.

The character of the landscape on the western side of Bensley Road north of Mercedes Road is of a generally good quality, with areas of cleared grazing land contrasting with pockets of more densely planted areas around the dwelling houses, each of which is situated towards the western end of its lot (furthest from the road). One of the properties in this group has a young Bunya Pine tree planted in a traditional location close to the house. This will mature to become a 'marker tree' in the wider network of views across the Campbelltown valley. Moving along Bensley Road to the north, a small group of properties are found that demonstrate the ameliorating impacts of nestling houses or other buildings under a canopy of mature trees. The dwellings are set well back from the street and the

quality of the intervening landscape dominates the view from the street, allowing the natural qualities of the landscape to dominate over the built. A potentially reversible negative element is introduced by the visually prominent fences and 'statement' entry gates to several properties which contrast strongly with the traditional and visually sympathetic examples at the southernmost end of the Unit.

The construction of the Parkway will have a significant impact on the eastern half of this landscape unit, with the relocation of most of the mature tree backdrop that currently terminates views over the properties on the eastern side of Bensley Road.



Figure 5.3.12. Looking west along Oxford Road from near Bensley Road. Oxford Road lies at the northernmost end of E-LU3. Views to the urban area to its west are limited by the ridge (which is close to the western boundary of the Unit).



Figure 5.3.13. The landscape of Oxford Road is semi-cleared bushland with stands of remnant trees (looking to Bensley Road with the Parkway reservation in the background).



Figure 5.3.14. A small area to the north of Oxford Road is also within the Unit. It is mostly cleared without productive uses other than two dwellings.



Figure 5.3.15. The landscape to the south of Oxford Road has retained a high proportion of taller trees with regrowth. The understorey is cleared.



Figure 5.3.16. The landscape to the south of Oxford Road near the ridge opens to a cleared area.



Figure 5.3.17. Many lots within this Unit are used for grazing and the keeping of livestock.



Figure 5.3.18 and Figure 5.3.19. Bensley Road looking to the south (left) and to the north (right). The landscape of Bensley Road is rural in character, with tall trees lining the roadsides and contributing to its scenic values.



Figure 5.3.20. The bushland near where the Parkway reservation crosses Bensley Road is suffering from a significant weed invasion.



Figure 5.3.21. The landscape of much of the northern end of Bensley Road is dominated by the verticality of the trees lining the roadside. Many trees have also been retained on private properties and have created a private, good quality streetscape. Most dwellings are hidden by the vegetation.



Figure 5.3.22. The use of a constructed fence rather than the traditional strung-wire introduces a formal element into an otherwise informal streetscape.



Figure 5.3.23. Although the lots on the eastern side of Bensley Road closer to Mercedes Road are of similar size to those further north the impact that development has had on the visual qualities of the landscape is stark. This group of dwellings are sited close to the road and most have semi-structured gardens with few tall native trees visible. This small part of the Unit 'reads' as primarily residential in character, in contrast to most of the Unit which has retained a strongly rural character. Location of the dwellings close to the road has however allowed the views across the eastern part of the group (from Mercedes Road) to be good-quality rural in character.



Figure 5.3.24. Although this group is characterised by smaller than usual setbacks for a rural area; this good quality and visually enticing 'keyhole' views framed by old trees has been retained and contributes to the streetscape.



Figure 5.3.25. View over the rear of the houses in Figures 5.3.23 and 5.3.24. The concentration of built form close to Bensley Road has allowed the rear of these properties to retain a high quality rural character.



Figure 5.3.26 and Figure 5.3.27 (below). The northern side of Bensley Road is significantly more rural in character and the undulating topography adds to the interest of the views over this area. The dwellings and outbuildings are well hidden under the mature trees that form the skyline.



Figure 5.3.28. Note the emergent Bunya Pine in a traditional location near the house on this property. This tree will become a prominent marker of the Unit in the future.



Figure 5.3.29. Looking north over the western side of Bensley Road. The views are good quality and rural in character.

Figure 5.3.30. Dwellings toward the north of Bensley Road near Oxford Road mostly have a low impact on the scenic qualities of E-LU3 because they are set well back from the roadside and are nestled under the canopy of tall native trees. The landscape reads as good quality rural-residential.



Figure 5.3.31. The well-formed mature trees on the land at the south-western corner of the intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads are a feature of this important location at the centre of E-LU3.





Figure 5.3.32 and Figure 5.3.33. The sandstone cottage and matching outbuilding (also built of stone) were built in the mid-late 19th Century, most probably soon after the subdivision of 'Caledonia' and the property is now a locally listed heritage item.



Figure 5.3.34. The land on the north-western corner of Mercedes and Bensley Roads is also highly significant to E-LU3's cultural landscape. It is part of the original historic curtilage of the early sandstone cottage.



Figure 5.3.35. The curtilage of the heritage-listed cottage 28 Mercedes Road was originally subdivided as long, narrow lots (shown light yellow) which were intended to form part of the proposed village to be known as 'Caledonia'. They were sold in one group and developed as a small farm. This configuration was once typical of the pattern of development on the outskirts of small towns throughout NSW but which is now increasingly rare.

(NSW Department of Lands SIX viewer 2009)



Figure 5.3.36. The large and well-formed tree to the east of the poultry farm is a prominent element in the landscape of the Unit.



Figure 5.3.37 to Figure 5.3.40 (below). The landscape of the north-western part of the Unit is aesthetically pleasing although manicured in quality. The properties are park-like with tall native and exotic trees in an extensive grassed setting which is particularly eye-catching after rain. The houses are situated well back from the road and are largely hidden from casual view.



Figure 5.3.41 and Figure 5.3.42. Formal entrance gates make a prominent 'statement' about the property but are visually intrusive elements in the context of this rural-bushland landscape.



Figure 5.3.43 and Figure 5.3.44. The verges in E-LU3 are soft, without kerbing, guttering, footpaths or formal edges. Many are planted with drifts of surviving original and regenerating eucalypts.



Figure 5.3.45. Looking east along Mercedes Road toward the Parkway reservation.



Figure 5.3.46 and Figure 5.3.47 (below). The visual quality of the landscape in the vicinity of Mercedes Road east of the poultry farm is very good, with extensive cleared areas set against a backdrop of bushland. If the Parkway is built most of the trees visible in these photographs will be removed.





Figure 5.3.48 to Figure 5.3.54 (below). The character of the southern area of Bensley Road is more heavily vegetated with areas of high ecological and aesthetic value. Evidence of human activity is mostly well hidden by the vegetation.



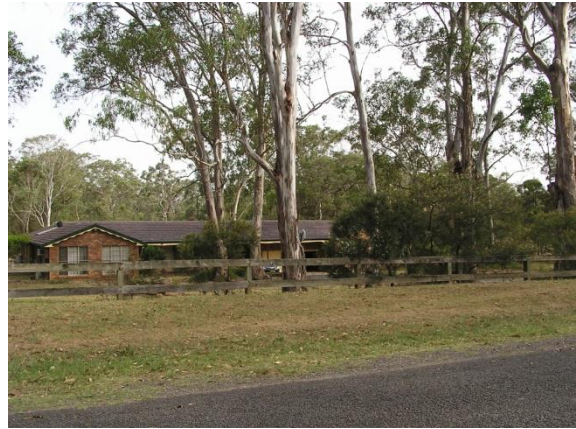


Figure 5.3.55. The poultry farm is one of the few surviving active agricultural industries in the northern part of the Campbelltown LGA.



Figure 5.3.56. The houses on the southern side of Mercedes Road near the urban areas are suburban in form, although most are set on large lots and demonstrate the characteristics of post-War migration and small-lot farming activity.

5.3.2 SIGNIFICANT VIEWS AND VISTAS

The configuration of the topography, street patterns and vegetation has meant that there is little opportunity for notable views toward E-LU3. The Unit is encountered as a sudden clearing in the bushland or contrast to the suburban landscape, depending on the direction of approach. Similarly, when leaving the area no significant views are available to other landscape features such as the Scenic Hills.

The quality of the internal views in E-LU3 are good however. They are defined largely by the scale and density of surrounding bushland and the Cumberland Plain Woodland vegetation which surrounds much of the Unit and creates an enclosed and intimate character within it (see Figure 5.3.57 overleaf).

Internal views from the edges of the Unit are directed along Mercedes and Bensley Roads towards the focal point at their intersection where a group of trees, including some individual specimens of a high visual quality, provide a focus to the Unit. Its aesthetic quality is further enhanced by the small sandstone cottage and its traditional small-farm setting to the north-west of the intersection. The internal views throughout the area are of a good quality, extending over clearings and paddocks to the houses which are mostly set well back from the roadside.

Other significant visual elements are derived from the streetscape qualities in the Unit, and in particular the contribution made by the soft edges and blurred transitions between the public and private domains formed by the many mature forest trees retained along the roadsides.

The recent planting of a Bunya Pine in the garden of one of the properties at the western edge of the Unit and close to the ridgeline will provide a clear marker to the location of the Unit in future years. Although it is not associated with a Colonial property, this tree will become an important local landmark in the future which will be visible from many places in the Campbelltown LGA.



Figure 5.3.57 Some significant views and vistas into, within and out of E-LU3. Internal views are of good quality, being directed along the roadways and over cleared areas to the bushland beyond. Views into the Unit are limited by the topography and road layout. Views outward from the Unit are mostly modest, with good views toward the trees of the Parkway reservation. Views into the area are very limited due to the topography and lack of access points.

5.3.3 SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE QUALITIES AND VALUES - E-LU3

The prevailing character of E-LU3 is that of a semi-rural bushland landscape. Houses are generally modest in scale and form. Setbacks from the street vary and many properties have oriented the house to take advantage of the scenic qualities of the local environment. The qualities include:

- Mature bushland edge character with rural activity in clearings – including both mature Cumberland Plain Woodland/Shale-Sandstone Transitional Forest vegetation with many old-growth trees.
- The areas of mature and regenerating bushland/Woodland possess high ecological values as well as contributing significantly to visual landscape quality of the Unit.
- Dwellings nestled under the trees at a low density – particularly towards the northern and southern extremities of the Unit.
- Cleared areas towards the centre of the Unit used for the low-impact grazing of livestock with some more intensive agricultural activity such as the poultry farm.
- The late 19th Century sandstone cottage on the northern side of Mercedes Road contributes to the scenic landscape values through its conservation of the fabric of the cottage and outbuildings, the continuity of rural land-use, including its setting on a 'paper subdivision'.
- Emergent Bunya Pine tree (*aracaria bidwilli*) on property near the main ridgeline which will become a landmark planting when mature.
- The backdrop of tall forest trees provides strong termination to the views to the eastern side of the Unit.
- The intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads forms a strong focal point to the Unit and is enhanced by the historic cottage, the mature trees and the surviving rural activity.
- Good quality serial views are found when travelling along Bensley Road (in either direction) due to the undulating topography hiding and then revealing elements. This is enhanced by the traditional rural qualities of the roadside planting and soft edges to the carriageway, creating a 'country' quality in strong contrast to the urban areas immediately to the west.

These areas of high and medium ecological value correspond with the areas of highest bush landscape visual quality within the Unit. Other parts of the Unit however also demonstrate good visual qualities, both bushland and rural. These include the areas of trees with good shape and density but cleared understorey.

The interface of grassed and treed areas is an important element throughout the Unit. Views across the open paddock areas terminate at the backdrop of mature woodland, with houses or other built elements playing only a minor role in the landscape.

Another notable element within the Unit is the natural character of the roadside planting, which consists of local species growing in an apparently natural distribution in the manner of a traditional rural road. These trees, together with the soft edges to the paved roads, are vulnerable to increases in urban density and subsequent demands for 'suburbanisation' of the landscape – such as more formal plantings and kerbing/guttering and the removal of trees for safety due to higher traffic flows. This should be avoided through the use of alternative devices such as tensioned steel cable barriers etc.

5.3.5 EXISTING STATUTORY PLANNING CONTROLS AND THE QUALITIES OF THE VISUAL AND SCENIC LANDSCAPE OF E-LU3 - EXISTING ZONINGS AND THE QUALITIES OF E-LU3'S VISUAL LANDSCAPE

The land within the Unit is zoned 7(d4) Environmental Protection (2 hectares minimum) under the Campbelltown (Urban Area) LEP 2002. The range of permissible uses under this zone was discussed in more detail in Section 3. The land uses within the area at present include grazing, active agriculture, some horticulture and residential activity.

The more active uses are located towards the centre of the Unit, with lower-impact rural uses and dwellings set under the canopy of eucalypts towards the northern and southern extremities.

The landscape qualities reflect these land uses, with the southern (south of Mercedes Road) area in particular possessing good quality bushland edge characteristics, with rural and low key residential land uses nestled under the canopy of mature trees. The stone cottage and its outbuildings located to the north-west of the intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads is a locally significant heritage item, its relationship with its paddock setting allowing ready understanding and interpretation of the traditional small settler's lot.

The poultry farm located at the south-eastern corner of Mercedes and Bensley Roads is one of the few remaining commercial agricultural activities in this part of the Campbelltown LGA. It is also historically consistent with the poultry farms established nearby as part of the Soldier Settlement Scheme following the First World War. Poultry farms of this type are however intensive agricultural uses and have associated impacts on the amenity of the nearby areas. The intentions of the owners and operators of this establishment are not known, but facilitating increases in residential density in close proximity to this type of land use is likely to lead to conflict between the existing land uses and any new residents.

The impact of the residential development on the visual landscape qualities of the Unit demonstrates a strong correlation between the amount of mature Woodland species retained on site, the degree and character of any clearing of these trees, the size, form and materials used in the buildings and the form and character of ancillary development such as fences, driveways and outbuildings. Properties that have retained a high proportion of

Woodland vegetation and with modestly scaled and designed dwellings and transparent fences have negligible impact on the visual qualities of the area. Properties that have largely been cleared without evidence of rural activity are of a form more usually found in suburbia and those with 'statement' fences and entrances are generally less sympathetic in their impact on the visual and scenic qualities of the area.

It is interesting to note however that dwellings that could otherwise potentially be considered intrusive in this Unit can read as a more neutral element when supported by active rural uses or where set against a visually strong and prominent backdrop of bushland/woodland vegetation.

5.3.6 EXISTING LOT SIZES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE VISUAL QUALITIES OF E-LU3

The land within the Unit is zoned 7(d4) Environmental Protection under the Campbelltown (Urban Area) LEP 2002. Under the provisions of this zone the minimum lot size for the erection of a dwelling is 2 hectares. Figure 5.3.59 shows the distribution of lot sizes within E-LU3; and Figure 5.3.60 shows the location of those properties that have been developed in some way (including the erection of a dwelling).

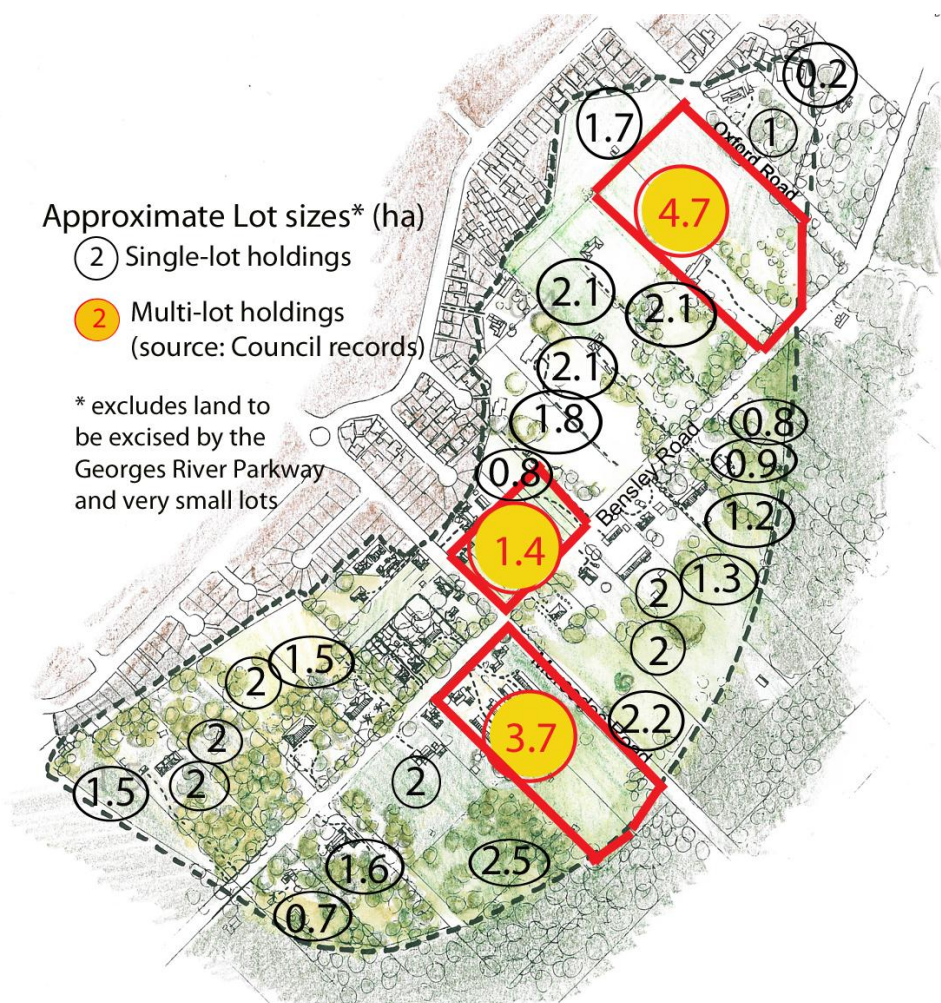


Figure 5.3.59. Areas of existing land parcels within E-LU3 (in hectares). Note that some properties have been made up of groups of narrow lots from the 1885 subdivision of the Campbellfield Estate into the proposed village of 'Caledonia' and have retained their original legal titles - although now aggregated into the parcels seen in the landscape today.

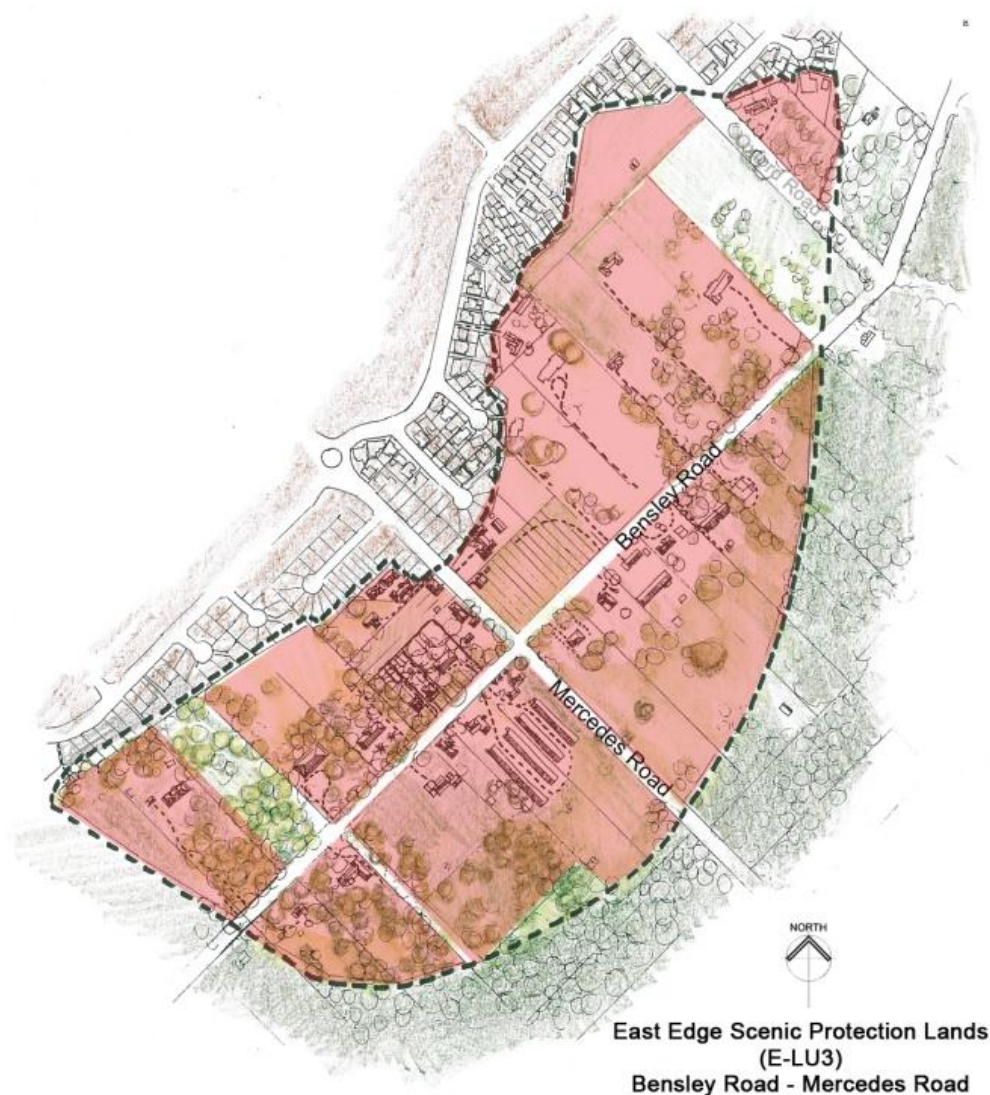


Figure 5.3.60. E-LU3 showing size of existing parcels and currently developed lots (shaded).

Lot sizes within E-LU3 range from 0.2 hectare to 3.24 hectares, with approximately half being 2 hectares or greater. Almost one quarter of the total area of the Unit is however occupied by lots smaller than 1.5 hectares – most of these being remnants of the ‘Caledonia’ township subdivision of the original Campbellfield Estate in 1885 which have been aggregated into larger holdings over the years. Note that these aggregated ‘as built’ holdings have been used for the analysis in this Study rather than the original lot sizes.

Although most lots are smaller than 2ha, the majority have been developed to or beyond the maximum capacity permitted under the LEP, with all except three parcels (including part-parcels within the parkway reservation) now containing a dwelling. The majority of dwellings are modest mid-late 20th Century vernacular styles, although some of the more recently built demonstrate little evidence of associated agricultural activity and are better described as ‘lifestyle living’. Some of the latter have settled into the landscape successfully and are not intrusive in views within or towards the area, but others are visually imposing and/or use materials which do not contribute positively to the natural and traditional rural character of the landscape of this Unit.

5.3.7 EFFICACY OF EXISTING STATUTORY CONTROLS IN PROTECTING THE VISUAL AND SCENIC QUALITIES OF E-LU3'S LANDSCAPE

The existing zoning (and Council's implementation policies) has been generally successful in retaining the essential characteristics of the rural edge character of this Unit, even though the densities in places are significantly higher than the nominated maximum. The Unit in most places has retained its predominantly rural/bushland edge characteristics, including the continued visual domination by the natural attributes of the landscape such as the canopies and stands of mature trees and the extensive undeveloped grassed/paddock areas over the built elements.

5.3.8 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF LAND USES ON THE IDENTIFIED VISUAL QUALITIES OF E-LU3

The existing land uses in E-LU3 are generally acceptable in terms of their impact on the small-scale rural and bushland edge character of the Unit. Continuation of the grazing and low-impact residential occupation at the existing density will have little adverse impact on these qualities, although it is recommended that design guidelines be prepared to help ensure sympathetic siting, scale, form, materials and ancillary structures of any new structure. The poultry farms are prominent land uses due to their form, agricultural character and location adjacent to the main intersection. They are consistent with the rural focus of the zone, but have the potential to be the focus of complaints about noise and odour from nearby more residential properties.

5.3.9 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF INCREASED DENSITIES ON THE IDENTIFIED VISUAL QUALITIES OF E-LU3

The potential impacts of allowing increased dwelling densities in E-LU3 include:

- Loss of spatial qualities and change in the essential character of the whole of the area to semi-urban or even potentially suburban.
- Increased proportion of the area developed - necessitating clearing of mature trees and landscape elements for building footprints, driveways and other ancillary structures – plus the need to ensure bush fire asset protection separation to new dwellings.
- Loss of significant vegetation – individual trees and habitats – including linking habitats.
- Loss/obstruction of viewlines to significant elements in the landscape.
- Regularity of streetscape through introduction of new dwellings close to the road alignment.
- Increase of traffic volumes likely to lead to demand for urbanisation of the roadsides – kerbing, guttering, footpaths and the like.

The extent of these impacts, and whether they can be ameliorated or prevented through other planning initiatives such as detailed design and layout, were then analysed to determine whether an increase in density could be accommodated without adverse impact on the visual and environmental qualities of the area.

The 'as built' density is approximately 1.5 hectares per dwelling when averaged across the Unit, but this varies between the sub-precincts. For example, the cluster of five small lots forming the southern corner of the 1880s proposed village subdivision (now near the south-western western corner of Bensley and Mercedes Roads) occupies approximately 2 hectares and reads as a semi-urban group, whereas most of the other lots in this quadrant comply with the provisions of the LEP, being larger than 2 hectares. The impact of this group on the visual quality of the Unit has been minimised by the retention of many mature trees, particularly on the properties with frontage to Bensley Road, which allows the houses to blend successfully into the bushland setting and not intrude on streetscape views as being of significantly higher density.

The findings of the Natural Values Assessment noted the extensive areas of 'high' and 'moderate' environmental value within the Unit and recommend that these areas not be subject to any further development. No increase in density should be considered in these areas due to ecological and visual constraints. When the associated requirement for buffer vegetation, as well as cleared area to provide the bush fire asset protection zone for new development, is also reserved from the area available for development it can be seen that a significant proportion of the area effectively has no potential to accommodate an increase in density, whether this is for residential or other land uses (other than low-impact agriculture). The areas affected by these ecological constraints are also of high visual/scenic quality for their bushland aesthetic; and would be difficult to develop without resulting in significant visual impact on the landscape.

There is some potential however for a modest increase in development potential in parts of the precinct providing that the tall bushland character continues to dominate the Unit's landscape. In order to prevent adverse impacts on the area's ecological and aesthetic qualities this must be achieved through the use of a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to any development, including adhering to the design model described in Appendix 1. This will ensure that the traditional relationship between vegetated and cleared areas is maintained and will help to minimise the impact of any new dwellings or ancillary development on the identified values of the area.

Two options were considered: a minimum lot size to allow an effective density of one hectare per dwelling and/or 4000m² per dwelling.

It should be noted that details of existing land ownership were not investigated as part of this Study. It should be noted that the date any lot was created and its pattern of ownership will affect its development potential under the existing LEP. Each existing lot was assessed as an individual parcel, and the potential for amalgamation of holdings and aggregation of development potential was not assumed. If lots are amalgamated higher yields can result. The land areas used in these calculations have however been adjusted where necessary to reflect the estimated size of the lot after the proposed Parkway is constructed.

LIKELY IMPACT OF REDUCING THE MINIMUM LOT SIZE TO 4000M²

The Unit (not including the areas of high conservation value) could theoretically accommodate approximately 30-40 additional lots (and dwellings)³⁷ if the minimum size was to be reduced to 4000m².

Lots of 4000m² are popular with those seeking to build large houses. The relatively flat landscape of the Unit plus the expanses of existing paddock with little natural screening would mean that the Unit would then 'read' as a suburban landscape, with houses, outbuildings, driveways and fences becoming the most prominent element in the views over and towards the area. This would result in the existing visual and environmental qualities of the Unit being lost.

Requirements for building footprints, outbuildings and paved areas, together with the need for bushfire asset protection zones around each house would also result in most of the mature trees and associated ecosystems within and surrounding the Unit being lost. The amount of urban run-off to the Georges River Catchment would also increase significantly, together with the potential for pollutants and fertilisers to reach the natural bushland and waterways to the east.

This density of development is not appropriate in this location.

LIKELY IMPACT OF REDUCING THE MINIMUM LOT SIZE TO ONE HECTARE

There is some scope for the reduction of the minimum lot size to one hectare without significant adverse impact providing that strict urban design criteria are followed, including the bushland edge model described in Appendix 1.

The many small lots in this precinct mean that relatively few lots have any appreciable development potential without significant amalgamations. For example, only three additional dwellings could be built.

If lots were to be amalgamated up to 15 additional dwellings may be possible (depending on ownership patterns and potential amalgamations of land). This is approximately double the existing density in the affected part of the Unit.

Such an increase would require that any new dwelling in the 'bushland' area be nestled under the existing tree cover; and development in the more open, paddock areas be developed using the bushland edge model, with significant visual screening provided by planting.

Given the relatively low number of potential lots and the configuration of the existing landscape, including the irregular location of houses on the existing lots, winding driveways and the many mature trees it is recommended that the shared-driveway variation to the EESPL Development Model be used in order to retain as many of these trees as possible in both the public (roadside verge) and private domains by allowing new development to share the existing physical driveways that wind through the trees to the houses at the rear of the lots. The legally required access handle for a battle-axe block should be created but left undeveloped. It is important that new driveway crossovers are minimised in this way, since these significantly affect the ability of a streetscape to read as rural; and are also likely to

³⁷This calculation is based on raw land areas and includes amalgamating parcels to maximise potential. The actual yield will be less than this when the constraints of individual sites are considered in detail.

lead to demands to remove significant roadside vegetation to improve sightlines from driveways when entering the road. This amendment should be achievable since the new dwelling (with subsequent need for vehicular access) will be created from the same property as the existing driveway.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF AN APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT DENSITY IN E-LU3

The potential for any increase in residential density in E-LU3 should be limited for the reasons identified in this section, including:

- The Unit contains areas of high conservation value old-growth Cumberland Plain Woodland and Shale/Sandstone Transitional Forest species and habitat. The ecological viability of these should not be threatened by increased densities of both dwellings and ancillary development, including development in the vicinity that may affect ecological viability.
- The Unit also contains areas of medium conservation value old-growth Cumberland Plain Woodland and Shale/Sandstone Transitional Forest species and habitat which the Natural Values Assessment Report by Conacher Travers recommends not be subject to any intensified development.
- The location and shape of these areas of significant vegetation, together with the need for both associated habitat links and cleared buffers to prevent the spread of bushfire to housing development means that little land within the southern part of the Unit is unaffected by these environmental constraints (other than the areas already developed at a density higher than that permitted in the LEP or used for intensive agriculture).
- The need to ensure adequate bushfire asset protection zones for new development at a density of less than one dwelling per hectare would necessitate the loss of significant and mature vegetation and compromise the visual and scenic qualities of the area and is not appropriate in E-LU3.

The rural and bushland character of the Unit provides a well-defined visual and physical edge to the suburban area of Ingleburn. This edge should be retained.

There is some potential however for a modest increase in development potential in parts of the precinct providing that a bushland visual quality is retained, or in those parts of the Unit where the landscape is currently open and rural in character as described below.

The open woodland areas also contribute to the visual qualities of the Unit and should be protected from clearing and development, although there is some potential to 'build under' the canopy in the areas of lower ecological significance using the Model.

The need to ensure adequate bushfire asset protection zones for new development at a density greater than one dwelling per hectare would necessitate the loss of significant and mature vegetation and compromise the visual and scenic qualities of the Unit and is not appropriate in E-LU3.

5.3.10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES OF E-LU3

The following recommendations are made to ensure the conservation of the visual and environmental significance of E-LU3's cultural landscape. They should be read in conjunction with the recommendations for the whole landscape described in section 5.0.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR E-LU3

- The setting of the sandstone cottage and its original curtilage should be protected from the impacts of unsympathetic development within the area through the inclusion of appropriate development controls and planning policies.
- The Unit also contains many individually notable tree specimens that contribute to the quality of local views and in places also perform a softening or screening role in the enjoyment of the views towards and within the area. These trees should be protected through the statutory planning process.
- Retain the stand of trees near the intersection of Mercedes and Bensley Roads. This group contributes to the setting of the sandstone cottage and together they provide a strong focus for the Landscape Unit.
- The introduction of increased residential densities in close proximity to a potentially high-impact land use such as a poultry farm should be avoided.
- Encourage retention of the emergent Bunya Pine.

RECOMMENDED URBAN EDGE – E-LU3

- The existing boundary of E-LU3 is generally appropriate with the exception of the area bounding Mercedes Road at the western edge adjacent to the suburban area of Ingleburn. Although nominally within the Unit this area has been subject to extensive development in recent years, including the construction of large and visually imposing houses and medium-density housing which contribute little to the identified visual qualities of the Unit. These properties no longer share the non-urban landscape qualities of the Unit.
- It is recommended that the boundary be amended to excise these properties and the edge to the urban development adjacent to E-LU3 be as shown on Figure 5.3.61.



Figure 5.3.61 and 5.3.62 (detail). Recommended urban edge - E-LU3 (with detail of edge at western end of Mercedes Road).

RECOMMENDED ZONINGS AND LOT SIZES FOR E-LU3

The recommended zoning for E-LU3 is E4 Environmental Living. This will allow controlled residential development but continue the emphasis on protecting the environmental qualities through requiring that any assessment of new development considers its impacts on the natural and aesthetic values of the Unit. It will also empower Council to refuse unsympathetic development whilst allowing development that will not have an adverse impact on the important environmental values of the Landscape Unit.

The historic, functional and visual curtilage of the sandstone cottage at 26 Mercedes Road (a local heritage item) should be conserved and protected from unsympathetic change to the property or its vicinity.

The creation of a planted edge to the proposed Parkway will provide a buffer and help to ameliorate the impacts of what will be likely to be high levels of traffic flow on the adjoining properties. This should be planted (by owners and/or Council) as a matter of urgency.

The maximum increase in density that could be accommodated without unacceptable impact on the visual and environmental values of the Unit is one dwelling per hectare within the areas shown in Figure 5.3.63 below, and only if subject to full compliance with the Model in Appendix 1. This means that the development potential and distribution of dwellings will not be even throughout the Unit, but will respond to the environmental values of the property being developed. It should be noted that in some case no further subdivision or additional dwellings will be possible.

If the model is not used the minimum lot size should remain 2ha.

Increased densities or intensity of land use in the remainder of the Unit would have an adverse impact on the visual and environmental qualities and values of the Unit and Campbelltown's cultural landscape and should not be supported.



Figure 5.3.63. Increased densities or intensity of land use in the remainder of the Unit would have an adverse impact on the visual and environmental qualities and values of the Unit and Campbelltown's cultural landscape and should not be supported.

(Note that this sketch is indicative only and is subject to confirmation of boundary through on-site survey).

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Allowing development at a density of one dwelling/hectare should not be considered unless each of the following criteria can be satisfied:

- the Model described in Appendix 1 is applied (using shared physical driveways to minimise both the loss of trees and the impact of new development on the streetscape);
- all existing mature trees and vegetation are retained and any development 'fits around' the existing trees;

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- all areas of high conservation value on any lot are excluded from the calculated and built development areas;
 - a buffer of at least 20 metres is retained between the high and medium conservation value Woodland/forested areas and any built structure;
 - any new development is modest in its scale, form and siting to ensure that it is a visually recessive element in the landscape; and
 - any fencing is 'transparent' in design so that it does not intrude upon the views over the area.

