

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

2.5 Draft Visual and Landscape Analysis of the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

Reporting Officer

Manager Environmental Planning

Attachments

1. Executive Summary of the Visual Study (Distributed under separate cover)
2. Map showing Landscape Units in the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands (Distributed under separate cover)

Purpose

To advise Council of the findings and recommendations of the draft "Visual and Landscape Analysis of the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands" (the Visual Study), and to seek Council's endorsement of the Visual Study as an important contributory element to the preparation of the new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) for the Campbelltown Local Government Area (LGA).

History

A number of strategic town planning studies are being undertaken to inform the preparation of the new comprehensive LEP for the Campbelltown LGA, with one of these studies being the Visual Study. The draft Visual Study was completed in 2010, however, it has recently been updated to reflect significant changes to both the planning legislation and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's (DPI's) policy requirements for the content of local environmental plans.

On the evening of 30 August 2011, Councillors were provided with a detailed briefing on the history and purpose of the Scenic Hills and the possible future zones, land uses and lot sizes for land within this area.

Report

The Scenic Hills and Current Planning Controls

There is currently no single definition of Campbelltown's Scenic Hills that is universally accepted. However, the area is commonly referred to as the land to which Campbelltown Local Environmental Plan - District 8 (D8) - Central Hills Lands (LEP D8) applies, and to some land on the western edge of the area to which Campbelltown (Urban Area) Local Environmental Plan 2002 (LEP 2002) applies. This is the definition of the Scenic Hills that was used as the basis for the Visual Study.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

Most of the land in the Scenic Hills is currently zoned 7(d1) Environmental Protection (Scenic) under LEP D8, and has a minimum allotment size (for subdivision) of 100 hectares. However, the majority of the lots within this zone are smaller than the prescribed minimum lot size, as the 100 hectare minimum was deliberately imposed, somewhat retrospectively, to protect the landscape setting of the Scenic Hills by preventing further subdivision and subsequent development over and above which has already occurred. LEP D8 also contains specific controls relating to an "escarpment preservation area" that has been identified within the Scenic Hills. Some of the land within the Scenic Hills is zoned 6(c) Open Space (Regional). There is also land zoned for a wide variety of special uses including part of the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan, water supply, proposed local roads, road widening and for railway purposes.

A small proportion of the land in the Scenic Hills (as it has been defined for the purposes of the Visual Study) is within the area covered by Campbelltown (Urban Area) LEP 2002. This has occurred as LEP 2002 was based on the boundaries of the older planning instruments that it originally replaced. It was never the intention that all of the land zoned under LEP 2002 should necessarily be zoned for urban development. Most of the land in the Scenic Hills that is subject to LEP 2002 is zoned 7(d1) Environmental Protection - 100 hectare minimum, with smaller portions zoned either 7(d4) Environmental Protection - 2 hectare minimum, 7(d6) Environmental Protection - 0.4 hectare minimum, 1(d) Rural Future Urban, 2(b) Residential, 6(a) Local Open Space and 5(a) Special Uses.

The Scenic Hills also contains heritage items and related cultural landscapes that are worthy of conservation. These heritage items include Varroville (house and its historic curtilage), Blairmount (house), Glenlee (house and surrounding farmlands), Sugarloaf Farm and part of the Upper Canal. Part of St Gregory's College and its setting on the ridgeline of Badgally Hill have also been identified as having heritage significance. Any future development within the vicinity of these items will need to be carefully considered.

Recent Development Proposals and Issues Affecting the Scenic Hills

Recent Council decisions regarding development concepts and proposals for land within the Scenic Hills have reinforced the importance that Council attaches to this non-urban landscape. In particular, three resolutions of Council relating to proposed major developments in the Scenic Hills are important to note.

On 13 November 2007, Council considered a report on a concept proposal for a business park near Varroville in the Scenic Hills. After considering the report on the proposal, Council resolved, in part:

- "2. That Council confirms in the strongest possible terms its support for the high value that the Community of Campbelltown and South West Sydney places on the Scenic Hills as an iconic landscape with distinctive scenic, heritage and environmental qualities.
 3. That Council unequivocally commits to continue to maintain and preserve the Scenic Hills for future generations to enjoy.
 4. That Council declares that it has no intention to amend current overall planning controls that would allow land uses and development with [sic] the Scenic Hills, not currently permitted by LEP District 8 (Central Hills Lands)."
-

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

In 2009, Council received The Grange Hills Concept Masterplan, which proposed a residential seniors living development on the Macarthur Grange Golf and Country Club site located on the southern side of Raby Road. A report on this proposal was presented to Council on 12 April 2009, and after considering the matter, it was resolved:

1. "That Council not support The Grange Hills Concept Masterplan.
2. That Council reiterate Council's commitment to maintain and preserve the Scenic Hills.
3. That Council inform the applicant of this decision."

In 2010, both Council and the local community were strongly opposed to the development of a Truck Stop facility at Varroville proposed by the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). The proposed development was to be located partly within the Scenic Hills and in the vicinity of the State heritage listed property known as 'Varroville'. In July 2010, Council resolved not to provide approval for extended private water infrastructure to service the proposed Truck Stop. This proposal has since been abandoned by the RTA.

Council's commitment to protecting the Scenic Hills was evident when it considered the above matters. In addition, Council is currently opposed to the Northern Expansion of the Camden Gas Project and to the location of gas wells on sites throughout the Scenic Hills.

Despite Campbelltown City Council's commitment to protecting the Scenic Hills, that part of the Scenic Hills that is located within the Camden Local Government Area has been largely consumed by urban development. This is largely a result of State Government's identification of growth centres and urban release areas on the plateau lands of the Scenic Hills landscape. East Leppington (largely located within Campbelltown's Scenic Hills) is also part of the South West Growth Centre and will eventually become urbanised.

The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands area is zoned under Campbelltown (Urban Area) Local Environmental Plan 2002. The majority of the land is zoned 7(d4) Environmental Protection - two hectare minimum. Some of the land is zoned 7(d6) Environmental Protection - 0.4 hectare minimum. There are also some small pockets of land used for special purposes such as reservoirs and public purposes. This land is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Campbelltown Urban Area, and is separated from an extensive regional open space network (that runs along the Georges River) by a reservation for an arterial road that has not yet been built. The reservation is known as the Georges River Parkway Road Reservation. The land also contains some remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland and Shale Sandstone Transition Forest vegetation; both endangered ecological communities.

The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands also contain heritage items that should be conserved and any future development within the vicinity of these items will need to be carefully considered. These items include Stone Cottage, Eagleview House, and part of The Jug. It should also be noted that Keira-ville is located in close proximity to the eastern boundary of this area.

Recent Proposals Affecting the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

There have been numerous representations to Council in the past about the possibility of rezoning the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands to allow for further subdivision. Some proposals have advocated full scale urban development.

On 10 May 2004, Council notified the (then) Department of Planning (DoP), of its intention to prepare an LEP to rezone the subject land, and sought the DoP's requirements in relation to the LES.

In a letter dated February 2006, the DoP advised that:

"...the Department would not support a Local Environmental Plan based on a Local Environmental Study that was limited to investigating only one option – that of reducing the subdivision standard to one hectare, unless this was found to be the only one that satisfactorily addressed all issues."

Council subsequently advised the affected land owners of the DoP's response. The land owners raised concerns about the cost of a full LES, which would be significantly higher than that of an LES to only investigate the one hectare option.

On 26 October 2006, senior representatives from Council and the DoP met with the Minister for Planning to discuss the possibility of limiting the scope of the LES to investigate the 1 hectare only option. The Minister confirmed the Department's position, that any LES for the land would need to consider a range of options (including urban). Council was also invited to work collaboratively with the DoP to refine the scope of the LES but on the basis of a range of options being considered.

At its meeting on 21 November 2006, Council considered a report on the matter and resolved:

1. "That Council refund the landowners (who made contributions towards the preparation of the Natural Conservation Assessment Study of the Edge Scenic Protection Lands) to the amount of the remaining funds held by Council.
 2. That Council not proceed with the Draft LEP amendment seeking the proposed rezoning of the Edge Scenic Protection Lands.
 3. That Council investigate the alignment of the urban zoned boundary as it affects the western edge of the Edge Scenic Protection Lands, as part of the Comprehensive LEP, noting that the extent of any potential options for zoning alterations will be minor.
 4. That the development of the Campbelltown Comprehensive LEP include consideration of urbanising suitable portions of the Edge Scenic Protection Areas for ecologically sustainable developments west of the western edge of Bensley Road forming the boundary between potentially urbanised land and the environmental protection zone.
 5. That Council inform interested parties of the decision."
-

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

Following the meeting, a Rescission Motion was lodged. At the following Council meeting on 12 December 2006, the Rescission Motion was carried and a further amendment was moved via a Notice of Motion:

"That a decision in this matter be deferred and that in accordance with the usual practice for the LEP this matter be the subject of a workshop by Councillors where all land uses in the Campbelltown area be considered and report back to Council."

On 30 January 2007, a presentation was made to Councillors about the Preliminary Findings of the Draft Campbelltown Local Planning Strategy. The Edge Scenic Protection Lands were discussed as part of this presentation. The Visual Study is the mechanism through which further detailed analyses of the Edge Lands is being undertaken to inform the preparation of the new comprehensive LEP.

The Visual Study

The draft Visual Study investigates land in both the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands. These two landscapes define the main valley of the developed area of the Campbelltown LGA and have been protected from development since the earliest days of formal town planning in New South Wales, resulting in high quality visual and ecological environments. The boundaries of the Study Area were defined as follows:

- The Scenic Hills includes all of the undulating land beyond the existing urban edge, most of which is located to the west of the Hume Highway (Freeway) from Denham Court Road in the north of the LGA to Mount Sugarloaf in the south. Beyond this, the landscape flattens notably and is not part of the Scenic Hills. It should be noted also that the Scenic Hills originally extended to the valley floor, but the scenic values of these lower slopes have diminished over time due to urban (eastern) development.
- The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands are located on the eastern side of the main valley and follow its primary ridgeline. The areas studied within this general area were identified by Council and extend between the urban (eastern) edge and the alignment of the proposed Georges River Parkway Road.

The aims of the Visual Study were to:

- Identify and acknowledge the important visual, aesthetic, landscape and cultural values of the Scenic Hills
 - Determine higher areas where no urban or visually intrusive forms of development should occur in the Scenic Hills
 - Identify whether or not there are some lower lying areas within the Scenic Hills that could accommodate future development that is non-urban in nature
 - Identify areas within the Edge Scenic Protection Lands that could be developed, those that could be developed subject to certain restrictions, and those that should not be developed due to visual and landscape reasons
 - Determine a definite boundary for urban growth between the existing urban area and the land known as the Scenic Hills and the Edge Scenic Protection Lands, and map this boundary so that the boundary can be translated easily into Council's new LEP
-

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

- Recommend appropriate zones (in accordance with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's Standard LEP Template zones), land uses, subdivision standards and other development and environmental controls that will assist Campbelltown City Council and the community in protecting the important values of the Scenic Hills and the Edge Scenic Protection Lands, and encourage the sustainable management of these areas.

The draft Visual Study was prepared for Council by Paul Davies Pty Ltd – Architects and Heritage Consultants, in association with Geoffrey Britton – Environmental Design Consultant. It is a comprehensive document, comprising over 500 pages and containing numerous illustrative photographs, maps and diagrams. A copy of the Visual Study is available for inspection from the Director Planning and Environment.

The draft Visual Study is based on extensive fieldwork and analysis of the historical and existing mapping and data for land within the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands. It also includes a detailed review of the early history of the two landscapes and the role that planning and environmental controls have played in the development and protection of these landscapes.

The Scenic Hills and East Edge Scenic Protection Lands were analysed as cultural landscapes to identify the topographical, historical and cultural context of each, major scenic and environmental qualities and the trends in major development pressures in the two landscapes. The two primary landscape areas were then divided into smaller Landscape Units (five in the Scenic Hills and six in the East Edge Lands) reflecting their location and unique cultural landscape values and each of these was then analysed in detail with a focus on the role of the existing patterns of development on the identified scenic values.

The Landscape Units within the Scenic Hills Landscape are:

- SH – LU1 – Denham Court Road to Raby Road
- SH – LU2 – Raby Road to Badgally Road
- SH – LU3 – Badgally Road to Narellan Road
- SH – LU4 – Mount Annan (Botanic Garden)
- SH – LU5 – Menangle Road to Mount Sugarloaf

The Landscape Units within the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands Landscape are:

- E – LU1 – Evelyn Street to Oakley Road
- E – LU2 – Oldsmobile Place
- E – LU3 – Mercedes Road
- E – LU4 – Eagleview Road
- E – LU5 – Hansens Road and Junction Road
- E – LU6 – Acacia Avenue

A series of recommendations were then made for the two primary landscapes and each Landscape Unit within them. These recommendations include:

- the identification of areas where there is minimal or no potential for increases in densities of development without harm to the visual and environmental qualities of the landscapes
 - the identification of areas that may have the potential for an increase in density without compromising the identified qualities of the landscapes
-

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

- the identification of a boundary for any future urban development in order to protect the visual and landscape qualities of the landscapes and
- recommendations for zoning and land use controls for each Landscape Unit, having regard to the findings of the Visual Study and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's Standard Instrument Order (LEP Template).

This report briefly discusses the overall findings of the Visual Study in relation to determining a boundary for urban growth, and the general planning directions that are recommended for land in the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands. Separate reports detailing the findings and recommendations for the various Landscape Units will be presented to Council for its consideration at a later date.

Historical Context of the Visual Study

The draft Visual Study found that from the earliest days of land grants in the Campbelltown area, the scenic landscape and views were a major determinant of the location of prominent houses and the early town centre. Early houses on large rural-agricultural estates were sited to take advantage of the substantial views, and Bunya or Hoop Pines were planted near the houses to signify their location from a distance.

The early plan for Campbelltown, developed by Governor Macquarie in 1820, was for a town nestled in the valley. The grid style subdivision pattern itself was not aligned north-south, but was oriented to allow high quality vistas of many of the main natural landmarks such as prominent points in the Scenic Hills to the west, and to terminate views from the main streets and public spaces (such as Mawson Park and St Peter's Church). The town grid and many of the original houses from the early development of the Campbelltown LGA have survived the layer of major development in the post World War II years and the marker trees (the Bunya and Hoop Pines) rise above the more recent development, allowing the relationship between the elements in the Colonial Period layer of the landscape to still be appreciated today.

From its inception as a new "satellite city" following the introduction of the "County of Cumberland Planning Scheme" in 1945, Campbelltown was envisaged and designed to be a compact urban settlement nestled between the Scenic Hills to the west and the bushland on the eastern plateau leading towards the Georges River further to the east. A high priority was placed on the permanent preservation of the scenic and environmental qualities of its setting and both the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands have been largely protected by environmental protection zones and planning controls since this time.

In 1960, the Cumberland County Council commissioned a report on the establishment of a new satellite city for Sydney. The report, entitled "Campbelltown: A New City in the County of Cumberland", stated that the outward growth of the new proposed City of Campbelltown should be controlled:

"A method should be devised of exercising control over the expansion of the satellite so that compact and not scattered development is assured, and so that the new city does not become another happy hunting ground for subdividers interested only in land speculation. ...And it is interesting to note that from the earliest days of the settlement of Australia, there was a traditional assumption that a town should have un-built-on land nearby. Governor Phillip founded Sydney with these principles in mind. ...the founders of the towns in the new colony were particularly conscious of the amenity value of accessible open spaces."

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

The 1960 report also includes a photograph looking across the hills from Campbelltown Road. The caption below the photograph states:

"These pleasant hills will remain as a permanent rural barrier between Sydney and Campbelltown."

General Conclusions of the Visual Study

The general conclusions of the Visual Study are summarised below:

"Both the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands have remained strongly defined and aesthetically unique landscapes which continue to define the setting of the Campbelltown LGA and contribute greatly to the 'sense of place' that is created by a unique environment. Their high level of visibility from countless locations throughout the LGA has meant that they are likely to be valued highly by the wider community.

All local government areas experience continual pressure for development, and the landscapes of the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands are no exception, with a succession of applications and requests for a range of development proposals being submitted to Campbelltown City Council and the State Government to develop the landscapes for residential and commercial activities. Council continues to recognise the importance and unique qualities of the landscapes and almost all applications for major development have been refused. These decisions have done much to ensure that the setting of the Campbelltown area has not been compromised.

One of the most notable characteristics of the landscapes found during the fieldwork for this Study was the richness and spatial complexity of the landscapes, particularly those in the Scenic Hills. In most Units a tangible sense of depth and spatial volumes dominate the landscape. It is a multi-dimensional place which is experienced from innumerable perspectives and containing multiple layers of meaning and cultural value. The landscape qualities cannot be appreciated and analysed from a single geographic position. The planning process needs to continue to recognise this and protect both the overt and hidden aspects of the landscape with equal vigour."

Despite the success of past and present planning controls in preserving land to the east and west of Campbelltown's existing urban area, there has been constant pressure from some land owners to have their land rezoned and redeveloped for urban purposes. As noted in the concluding comments in the draft Visual Study, there have been regular approaches made to Council staff in recent years for rezoning and urban development in both the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands. Many of the concept plans, rezoning applications and development applications for land in the Scenic Hills have been presented to Council and Council has resolved to refuse them in light of the impact that they would have on the landscape and other implications such as traffic generation. As mentioned earlier in this report, the most recent rezoning and subdivision proposal for the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands, was supported by Council but not by the NSW Government. There have also been numerous less formal approaches to Council staff for proposals in both areas, and applicants have been advised that rezoning and redevelopment opportunities are unlikely to be supported.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

The New Comprehensive LEP

Council is now required to prepare a new comprehensive local environmental plan for the Campbelltown Local Government Area that adopts a suite of standard zones set by the NSW State Government. This means that the existing zones cannot be kept; the most appropriate standard zones must be applied instead. The draft Visual Study includes an analysis of these standard zones and identifies the most appropriate one(s) for each Landscape Unit. Most of the recommended standard zones are environmental in their focus, including E3 - Environmental Management (identified as being appropriate for most of the land in the Scenic Hills) and E4 - Environmental Living (identified as being appropriate for most of the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands). Dwellings, rural land uses, and some other non-urban land uses are permissible in both zones. The main difference between these two zones is the degree of emphasis on protecting the environmental qualities of the land to which the zones apply. The E3 zone has a greater emphasis on environmental (or scenic) protection, while the E4 zone is more suited to environmentally sensitive areas where rural-residential development (with an environmental focus) is considered appropriate.

Any development in the E3 or E4 zone is required to consider the likely impact on scenic and environmental qualities of the landscape, and Council can support these zones by amending the Sustainable City Development Control Plan (SCDCP) to augment the LEP. The SCDCP could address issues such as scale, form, siting and materials to be used in any new development in the environmental zones. The controls could apply to houses, out-buildings, fences and any other buildings or structures that have the potential to be built on land within these zones.

The identification of appropriate zones is only part of the planning process, and the draft Visual Study also investigated the most appropriate lot sizes for each part of the landscape that will allow the important scenic and environmental qualities to be protected. It should be noted that the DPI endorses the use of minimum lot sizes substantially larger than those prevailing in an area at present as a planning tool to prevent further subdivision of an environmentally sensitive area, providing that this approach is consistent with the objectives of the LEP and the zones applicable in the area.

Several different minimum lot sizes were investigated for each Landscape Unit. The draft Visual Study found that the existing minimum lot sizes should be retained in the Scenic Hills with the exception of the land in the vicinity of the proposed major release area of Menangle Park. Such an approach would comply with the DPI's requirements that existing environmentally sensitive areas continue to be protected through the provisions of a new LEP.

In the case of the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands, the use of the E4 - Environmental Living zone will allow low-impact rural-residential development. In some places in the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands, a further increase in the density of development may also be possible providing that the detailed subdivision design and subsequent siting of buildings will not compromise the bushland qualities of the landscape, especially when other issues such as bushfire protection for any dwellings is addressed. This possible development scenario will need to be justified in detail to the DPI during the preparation of the LEP.

General Findings and Recommendations for the Scenic Hills

The Scenic Hills (or Central Hills) were specifically identified in "The New Cities of Campbelltown, Camden, Appin - Structure Plan", published by the then State Planning Authority in 1973, as "a significant landscape element". Most of the land was shown as a Scenic Protection Area. The Structure Plan also identified part of the Scenic Hills as steep land and unstable land. It recommended that the land should remain primarily for non-urban land uses to protect the landscape setting of the City of Campbelltown.

The zones that currently apply to the Scenic Hills are non-urban in their land-use focus, with low-impact rural activities such as grazing being encouraged. This is a result of both the historical development patterns of the area and its environmental qualities and cultural landscape values.

In the Scenic Hills, many of the lots are less than the minimum 100 hectare lot size specified by the zone. The research undertaken in preparing the draft Visual Study has established that a larger minimum lot size than the existing was deliberately applied over this area to prevent further land speculation and pressure for further subdivision and to conserve the landscape integrity. Concessions were granted to allow owners of existing holdings to erect a dwelling, most of which have now been built. The current zone, minimum lot size and planning controls have been found to be relatively successful in protecting the character of the Scenic Hills to date.

The detailed analysis of this landscape that was carried out as part of the Visual Study found that:

- the existing boundary between the existing urban and non-urban areas is generally correct
- no further encroachment of urban development into the Scenic Hills is considered appropriate
- most of the land that is currently zoned scenic protection should maintain a similar zoning in the future
- the existing 100 hectare minimum subdivision standard should be maintained
- some additional non-urban land uses could be considered appropriate in the Scenic Hills
- design controls should be introduced to minimise the visual impact of any future development within the Scenic Hills.

The Visual Study also identified a "model" for the design of the interface between urban and scenic landscapes in any future development on the existing urban edge.

General Findings and Recommendations for the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands are located on the eastern edge of the existing Campbelltown urban area. Land in this area has been zoned for environmental protection purposes for over 30 years.

The zones that currently apply to the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands are non-urban in their focus, with low-impact small scale rural activities and rural-residential development in an environmental setting, being encouraged.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

In the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands, the minimum lot sizes that are prescribed are two hectares (for land zoned 7(d4)) and 0.4 hectares (for land zoned 7(d6)). Some of the existing allotments are already smaller than the minimum lot size. Almost all existing lots have a dwelling built upon them.

The detailed analysis of this landscape that was carried out as part of the Visual Study found that:

- the existing boundary between the existing urban and non-urban areas is generally correct, with some minor adjustments being considered appropriate
- the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands should be seen as a larger lot environmental transition between the urban area of Campbelltown and the proposed Georges River Parkway Road which, when developed, will provide a clear and definite eastern edge
- most of the land that is currently zoned scenic protection should maintain a similar zoning in the future
- some of the land that currently has a two hectare minimum subdivision standard could be suitable for more intensive development (providing that strict development controls are used to preserve the landscape and environmental qualities of the land)
- if the recommended design controls for development are not complied with, the two hectare minimum subdivision standard should otherwise be retained in the areas where it currently applies
- the land to which the existing 0.4 hectare subdivision standard applies should generally retain this minimum lot size
- due to existing vegetation and other natural constraints, not all land in this area will be capable of achieving subdivision
- any subdivision within this area should be subject to a site specific masterplanning process to ensure an optimal lot and appropriate planning outcomes are achieved.

The Visual Study includes "model" design controls for development that will allow for a potential increase in density whilst minimising the likelihood for harm to the landscape and environmental qualities of the area. It is based on the principle of protecting sensitive vegetation and 'clustering' dwellings in less sensitive areas, with access provided by a common driveway.

Officer's Evaluation

The Visual Study is a comprehensive, well researched document, based on extensive fieldwork and analysis of existing data as well as the historical and existing mapping and data for land within the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands.

The Visual Study recognises Council's on-going commitment to protecting the Scenic Hills from inappropriate development, and its commitment to valuing the natural environment, biodiversity and habitat protection. It also recognises Council's previous decision to investigate a reduced subdivision standard (lot size) in parts of the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands. The Study's recommendations regarding future zoning, land uses and minimum lot sizes for both the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands reflect this commitment.

It recognises that definitive boundaries within the Campbelltown LGA need to be established, beyond which only rural, agricultural, other low-impact non-urban uses (and in some cases limited rural-residential development), should be permitted, and makes recommendations about where these boundaries should be located.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

The existing boundary between urban development in the Campbelltown LGA and the Scenic Hills is generally consistent with the Scenic Protection Area and the Semi-Rural Residential Area identified under the "Three Cities Structure Plan", which was developed in 1973. This boundary generally correlates with major topographic features within the Scenic Hills landscape. Minimal change to the existing boundary is advocated except in areas where land has already been zoned for urban development and development has not yet taken place.

If the urban areas that adjoin the Scenic Hills were to be developed now rather than having been developed during the 1980s and 1990s, best practice would be to redesign the subdivision pattern to create a perimeter road on the rural urban interface, with the houses at the furthestmost edge of the urban area designed to face out towards the hills rather than to turn their backs on the scenic setting. This would be a more sensitive edge treatment and also allow people travelling on the separating road to fully appreciate the visual complexity of the hill landscape. Unfortunately, the ability to do this in the short to medium term has been lost. Allowing further encroachment of urban development into the Scenic Hills to create a more strongly defined urban edge, with development addressing the scenic landscape, is generally not considered appropriate as this will further erode the visual backdrop to the City of Campbelltown and reduce the physical and visual separation between Camden and Campbelltown. However, in the unlikely long term scenario that broad-scale redevelopment of existing residential land on the urban edge occurs, these areas should be redesigned to better complement the adjoining landscape.

Maintaining the existing boundary between urban development in the Camden and Campbelltown LGAs will become increasingly important with the proposed extension of Badgally Road to bring vehicular traffic from the Camden LGA (including that from the South West Growth Centre), into the centre of Campbelltown. The area will form a new and important entrance into Campbelltown and the spatial transition between the adjoining local government areas will be experienced by large numbers of travellers.

A boundary of urban growth is also required on the eastern side of the urban area, and creating a transition between full urban development and the proposed Georges River Parkway Road is considered appropriate, particularly given the existing vegetation in this area.

While establishing and maintaining the boundaries, environmental protection zones, and relatively large minimum lot sizes may not reflect the wishes of individual land owners with expectations of their land being rezoned for urban purposes, it is considered necessary to take these steps in order to retain Campbelltown's unique setting as a City nestled within a scenic, non-urban landscape, and to maintain a physical and visual separation between the Campbelltown LGA and the surrounding LGAs.

Council needs to consider the longer-term implications of a scenario of continuing to allow urban growth to expand outwards and the type of environment that it wishes to retain. Many of the existing landowners in these areas purchased or inherited their land with a restrictive environmental protection or scenic protection zoning already in place. In most cases, these zonings were applied to reflect the important scenic and environmental qualities of the land. Some landowners, particularly long-term land owners with substantial holdings in the Scenic Hills, have already gained some benefit from the earlier residential rezoning and subdivision that created the suburbs of Raby, Kearns, Eschol Park, Eaglevale and Blairmount.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

Whilst the ideal scenario advocated by the Visual Study would be to restrict any further development to encroach into the Scenic Hills, the Visual Study does acknowledge that some land in the area has already been zoned for residential development and some land has been identified in the past as having the potential to become urban. A small amount of land at the edge of Kearns and in Blairmount has already been zoned for residential development, but it has not yet been developed. There is also some land at Blairmount that has been identified as future urban land and has been zoned "1(d) Rural Future Urban" under LEP 2002. The land that is already zoned "2(b) Residential" is highly likely to be developed for housing when the land owners are ready to move forward with their plans for this land. The key consideration here will be to ensure that new development is designed sensitively to respect its setting. The "1(d) Rural Future Urban" cannot be used in the new comprehensive LEP, and therefore the future of this land at Blairmount needs to be resolved now. Future planning considerations for this land, that have regard to the existing status of the land and to achieving an optimum planning outcome, are currently being examined and will be the subject of a separate report to Council at a future date.

The recent encroachment of urban development towards Campbelltown's Scenic Hills from the western side should not necessarily be considered as a justification for the remainder of the hill landscape to also be rezoned for urban development. In fact, as the cities of Camden and Campbelltown continue to evolve, it is now even more important to uphold the principle of retaining a significant physical and visual buffer between the two cities. This principle was established in 1960 by the Cumberland County Council in its report "Campbelltown – A New City in the County of Cumberland", which initiated the creation of Campbelltown as a new satellite city, reinforced in "The New Cities of Campbelltown, Camden and Appin – Structure Plan, 1973", and it is critical to maintaining Campbelltown's unique "sense of place".

Another important factor (highlighted in the draft Visual Study) is the need to maintain a compact urban form within the Campbelltown LGA. This will not only help to protect the scenic and environmental qualities of the Campbelltown LGA, but by focussing development in and around existing urban centres and public transport infrastructure (and in particular around the Campbelltown-Macarthur Central Business District), it will assist Council in achieving its goal of developing Campbelltown into a Regional City for the South-West Subregion. In the "South-West Subregion Draft Subregional Strategy" (prepared by the then NSW Department of Planning in December 2007, and yet to be finalised), the DPI already recognises that Campbelltown has the potential to become a Regional City in the future. This opportunity, and the advantages that it could bring to the Campbelltown LGA, could be lost if the Campbelltown-Macarthur CBD is not made the focus of future commercial, employment, entertainment and higher-density residential growth (as advocated in the Structure Plan for the Campbelltown-Macarthur CBD that was endorsed by Council in 2009).

Conclusion

Council is encouraged to ensure that consideration is given to the physical and environmental outcomes that will arise from its strategic planning decisions that will take effect via the comprehensive LEP. The decisions that are made now about future planning controls for the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands will have significant implications for the physical layout and setting of the City of Campbelltown.

It is considered appropriate for Council to adopt the draft Visual Study as a final document, for consideration as part of the preparation of the comprehensive LEP.

2.5 Draft Visual And Landscape Analysis Of The Scenic Hills And The East Edge Scenic Protection Lands

However, it needs to be noted that the draft Visual Study is only one of a series of detailed background studies that have been undertaken to inform future strategic and statutory planning controls for the Campbelltown LGA. Therefore, once other studies are completed, there will be a need for synthesis and integration of the findings and recommendations of all of the studies. This process may identify that not all of the recommendations of each of the studies will be able to be utilised as there may be conflicting objectives that need to be reconciled.

The findings and recommendations of all of the background studies that are being prepared to inform the preparation of the new comprehensive LEP for the Campbelltown LGA will be considered and evaluated during the LEP preparation process.

Officer's Recommendation

1. That Council receive and note the Visual and Landscape Analysis of the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands (the Visual Study).
2. That Council endorse the Visual Study as an important contributory element to help inform the preparation of the new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan for the Campbelltown Local Government Area.

Committee's Recommendation: (Bourke/Kolkman)

1. That Council receive and note the Visual and Landscape Analysis of the Scenic Hills and the East Edge Scenic Protection Lands (the Visual Study).
2. That Council endorse the Visual Study as an important contributory element to help inform the preparation of the new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan for the Campbelltown Local Government Area.
3. That in regard to proposals for the Edge Scenic Protection Lands, Council receive a further briefing which relates the vegetation of these lands to both Councils Biodiversity Study and the existing fauna dispersal corridors.

CARRIED

Having declared an interest in regard to Item 2.5, Councillor Rule left the Chamber and did not take part in debate nor vote on this item.

Council Meeting 18 October 2011 (Kolkman/Oates)

That the Committee's Recommendation be adopted.

Council Resolution Minute Number 218

That the Committee's Recommendation be adopted.

At the conclusion of the discussion regarding Item 2.5, Councillor Rule returned to the Chamber for the remainder of the meeting.
