



23 October 2015  
Our Ref: 9331A.2WG

planning consultants

The General Manager  
The Hills Shire Council  
PO Box 7064  
BAULKHAM HILLS BC 2153

Dear Sir/Madam

**Exhibition of Draft The Hills Corridor Strategy  
Properties in Middleton Avenue, Partridge Avenue and Ashford Avenue, Castle Hill**

DFP has been engaged by a resident group that own properties in Middleton Avenue, Partridge Avenue and Ashford Avenue. DFP has reviewed draft The Hills Corridor Strategy and the North West Rail Link Showground Road Station Structure Plan prepared by the NSW Department of Planning, dated September 2013 and make the following submissions on behalf of the resident group. Warwick Gosling has met with the residents group on 2 occasions to discuss the Corridor Strategy and relationship with other planning strategies.

This submission provides an alternate building envelope study, which demonstrates that the site can accommodate residential flat buildings ranging in heights from 8 to 5 storeys, which results in a development form that exceeds Council's proposed density of 96 dwellings per hectare. This conclusion is based upon the fact that part of the site is within 400 metres of the proposed Showground Railway Station with a maximum distance to the station being approximately 600 metres, the site being located on Middleton Road which is the main thoroughfare to the station and the current 96 dwellings per hectare density does not provide the economic incentive for properties in this locality to be redeveloped.

Given the Showground Road Station Precinct is identified by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment as a priority Precinct, DFP questions why Council has prepared density controls for land in the precinct when we are advised that the DoPE will be releasing their planning instrument for public exhibition imminently.

**Subject Site**

The subject site comprises 25 individual allotments (see **Figure 1**) and includes the following sites:

- 17-39 Middletown Avenue (12 sites);
- 3-7 Ashford Avenue (3 sites); and
- 12-28 Partridge Avenue (10 sites).

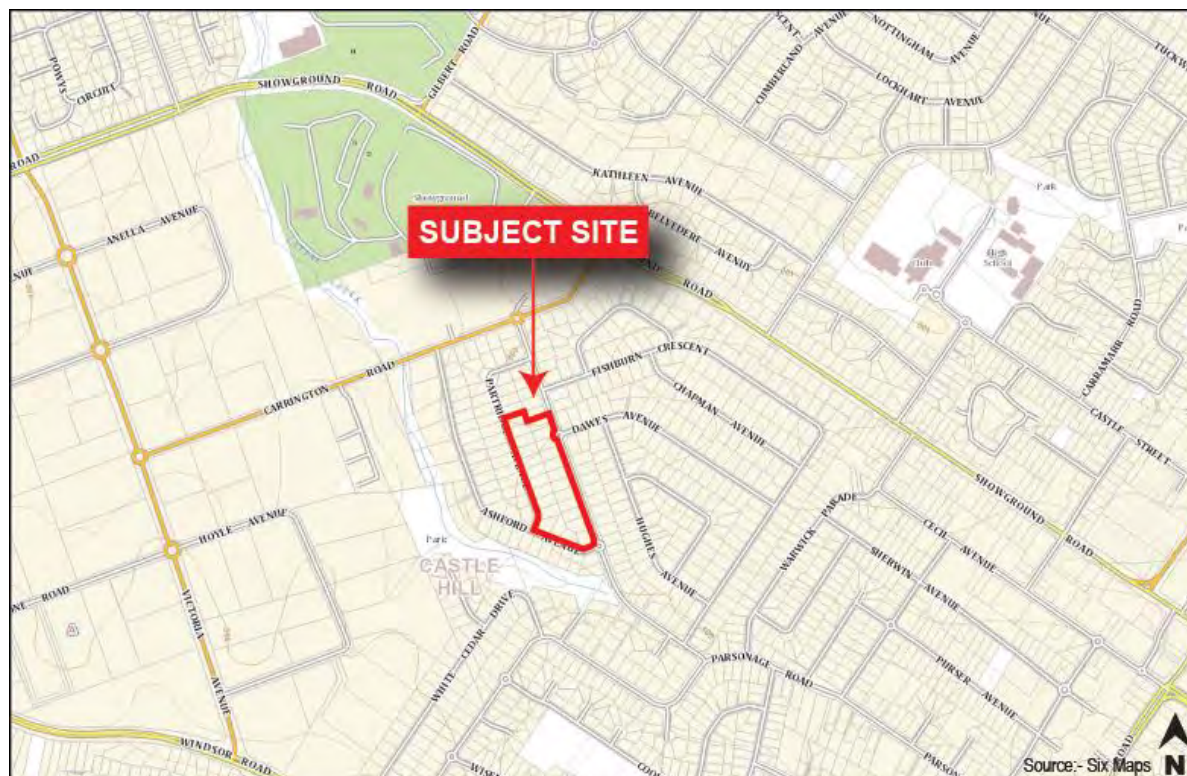


Figure 1: Locality Plan

The site is irregular in shape and has an area of approximately 2.5 hectares (see **Figure 2**). **Table 1** outlines the site's boundaries:

Table 1 Site Boundaries	
Eastern boundary to Middleton Avenue	288 metres
Southern boundary to Ashford Avenue	126 metres
Western boundary to Partridge Avenue	246 metres
Northern boundary to 15 Middleton and 10 Partridge	84 metres



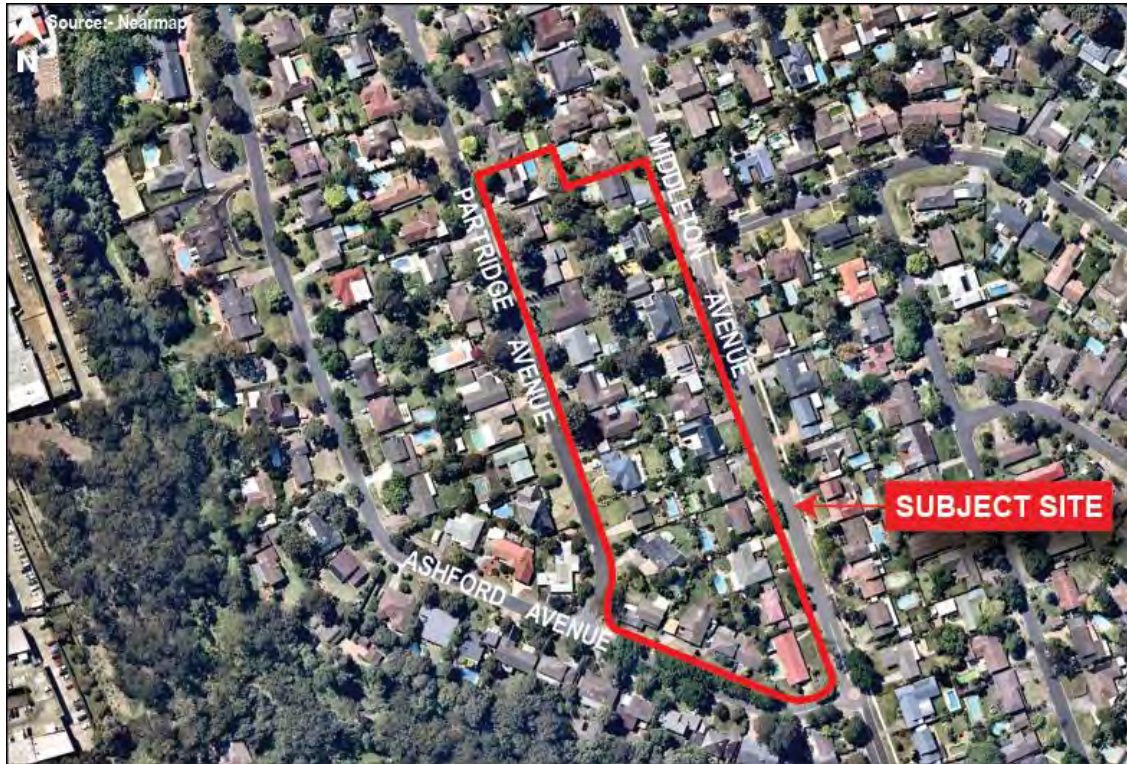


Figure 2: Aerial Photograph

Each site contains a detached dwelling which is either one or two storeys in height. Dwellings along all three streets are generally setback 9-10 metres from the boundary and include street trees along the Council nature strip. Houses are similar in style and most appear to have been built in the 1980's, with some being newer in design. **Figures 3-6** show a variety of the dwellings that are located within the site.



Figure 3: No. 7 Ashford Avenue





Figure 4: No. 24 Partridge Avenue



Figure 5: No. 18 Partridge Avenue





Figure 6: No. 19 Middleton Avenue

Significant trees are present throughout the site. The majority of these trees are native species and vary in height. Trees are generally located within the rear and front yards of many of the allotments.

### 1.1 Surrounding Development

The site is located south of the proposed Showground Railway Station, the northern end of the site is 250 metres from the station, while the southern end is 550 metres from the station.

Middleton Road makes up the eastern boundary of the site and is the main vehicular thoroughfare for the immediate locality, acting as the main connector road for north/south traffic to the proposed Showground Station. Middleton Road has a road width of 10 metres and a width when measured from boundary to boundary of 20 metres (see **Figure 7**). A footpath is provided along the eastern side of the road.



*Figure 7: Middleton Avenue, looking south*

On the opposite side of the road, to the east are more residential dwellings similar in size and scale to the dwellings in the precinct. In addition to these dwellings, towards the northern side of the site, is the entry to Dawes Avenue, a local residential street.

Making the southern boundary of the site is Ashford Avenue, this street has a road width of 8 metres and a width when measured from boundary to boundary of 15 metres (**Figure 8**). Street trees are provided at regular intervals along Ashford Avenue which create a pleasant sense of enclosure.





*Figure 8: Ashford Avenue, looking north west*

On the opposite side of Ashford Avenue are detached residential dwellings which are similar in size and scale to the dwellings within the subject site. Behind these dwellings, further south, is Cockayne Reserve, a 6.7 hectare public open space reserve. The reserve includes a creek which runs north south, and connects to other creeks further north. This creek runs through the rear of several residential sites and divides the low density residential area from the light industrial area to the west. The reserve is accessed via Middleton Avenue and is approximately 80 metres south of the subject site.

Making the western boundary of the site is Partridge Avenue, this street has a road width of 8 metres and a width when measured from boundary to boundary of 15 metres (**Figure 9**). On the opposite side of Partridge Avenue are detached dwellings which are also similar in size and scale to the dwellings within the subject site.





*Figure 9: Partridge Avenue, looking north from the Ashford Avenue/Partridge Road intersection*

Further west of the existing low density residential area, on the opposite side of the creek that runs through Cockayne Reserve is the light industrial and business development area of Castle Hill. This area consists of large warehouses, storage facilities and bulky goods premises. This area is approximately 300 metres west of the site.

Directly north of the site is 15 Middleton Avenue (see **Figure 10**), and 10 Partridge Avenue. Both allotments contain a single storey detached dwelling constructed of brick.



*Figure 10: 15 Middleton Avenue*



Further north of the site is the proposed Showground Railway Station site. The station is currently under construction and is bounded by scaffolding. Further north beyond the railway station is Castle Hill Showground. This site is regional private recreation space, however is generally open to the public. The site is used for various events throughout the year, including horse shows, community events, circuses, and large corporate events. The site includes grandstands, car parking and historic buildings (**Figure 11**).



*Figure 11: The Castle Hill Showground*

The subject site is approximately, 250 metres from the railway station, and 550 metres from Castle Hill Showground.

## **2.0 Exiting Environmental Planning Instruments**

### **2.1 The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2012**

The land that forms the subject site is currently zoned R2 Low Density pursuant to The Hills LEP (see **Figure 12**).

The subject site has a maximum height limit of 9 metres (see **Figure 13**).

No FSR Limit applies to the site

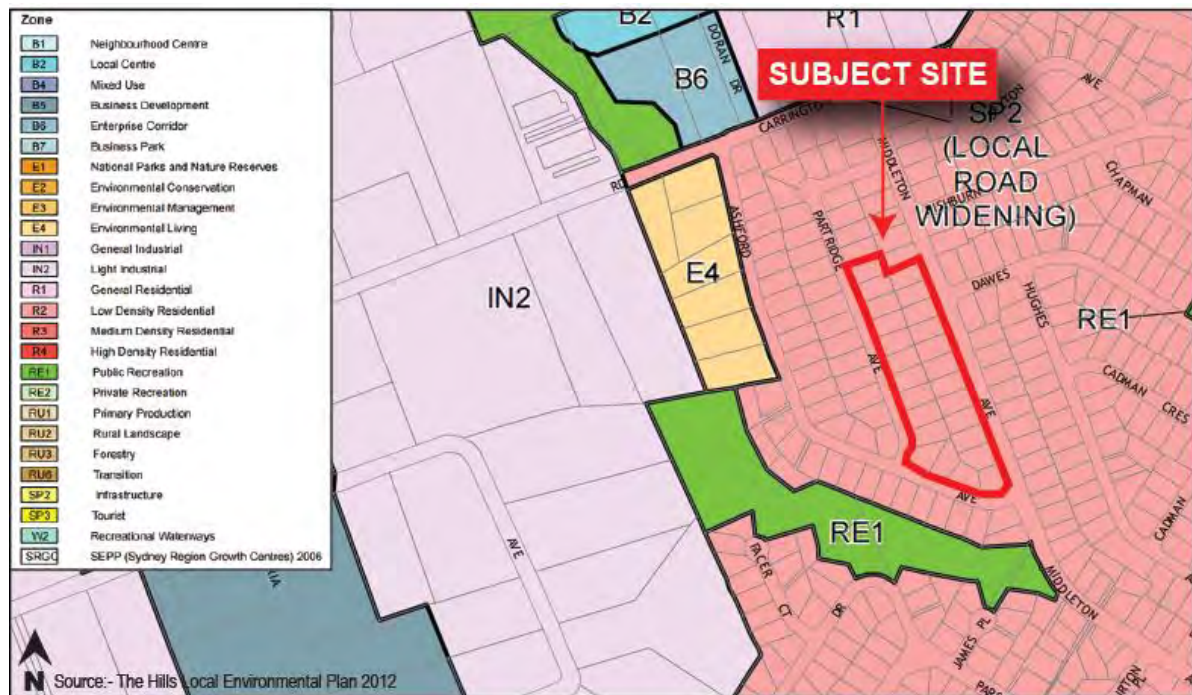


Figure 12: Zoning Map Extract (THLEP 2012)

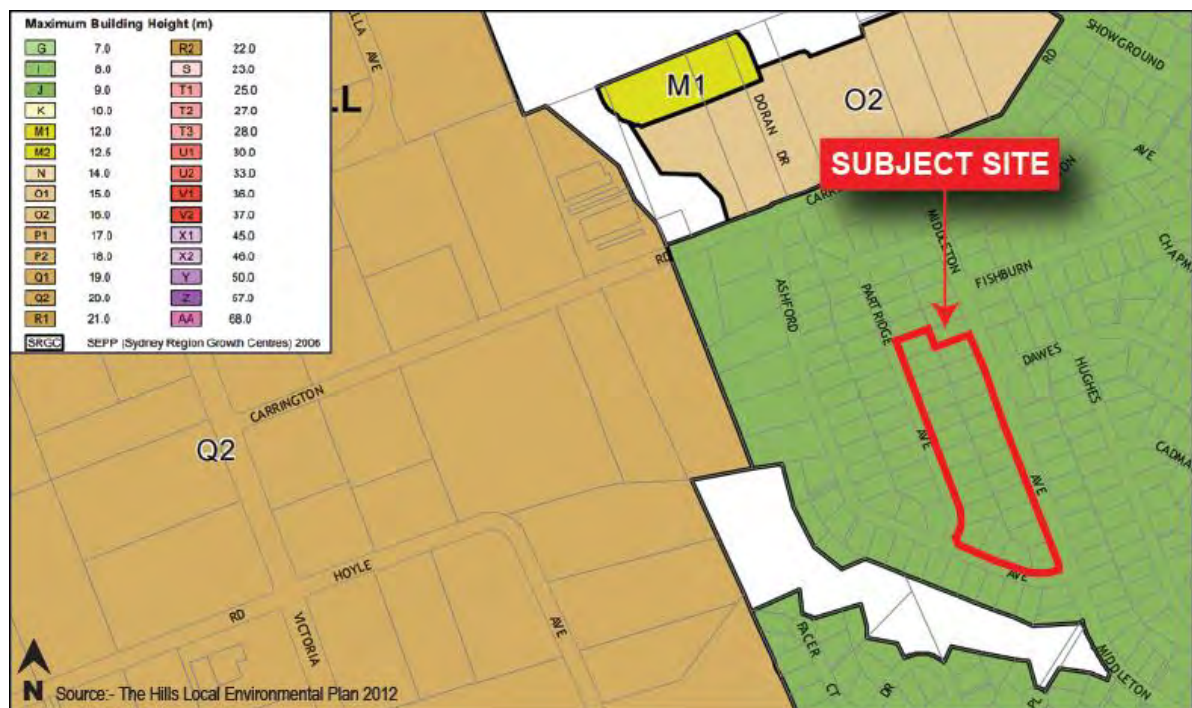


Figure 13: Building Height Map Extract (THLEP 2012)

Accordingly the current existing highest and best use of this site is residential development in the form of 2 storey dwelling houses. Notwithstanding, other development forms that may also be permissible by various State Environment Planning Policies that are not relevant to this submission.



## 2.2 North West Rail Link Showground Road Station Structure Plan

The Showground Road Structure Plan undertook an exercise of opportunities and constraints and mapping to determine what sites were appropriate for higher density residential development to reflect the precinct's proximity to the proposed Showground Railway Station.

The subject site did not contain any constraints. Given that the dwellings on the subject site reflect the highest and best use, these properties, at present, cannot be redeveloped under the existing controls to an extent that would have a significant impact on providing new housing opportunities in the locality. Accordingly, the Showground Road Station Structure Plan identified the subject site as being located in an area nominated as an "opportunity for growth".

The Structure Plan identified that all exiting residential areas south of Carrington Road would be capable of accommodating medium density residential development. The Showground Road Structure Plan identifies medium density apartment living as comprising 3-6 apartment buildings. Medium density residential was proposed for all areas located within 400 metres and 800 metres from the railway station.

## 2.3 The Draft Hills Corridor Strategy

The Hills Corridor Strategy provides recommended density controls for residential properties in the Showground Precinct.

Figure 8.3 Showground Opportunities identifies land on the south eastern side of Carrington Road, including the subject site, is appropriate for high density residential development. This opportunity mapping is then translated into density controls with land on the northern side of Fishburn Crescent being identified as 144 dwellings per hectare and land to the south east of Fishburn Crescent identified as 96 dwellings per hectare. The subject site is listed as having a residential density of 96 dwellings per hectare. Given that the subject site has a total area of 24,576m<sup>2</sup>, this would equate to 235 dwellings for the site.

Our clients have had discussions with Jones Lang Lassalle, who indicated that with a density of 96 dwellings per hectare a developer would not be in a position to purchase land in the Precinct as the land values for a dwelling house exceed the value of the land as a development site. Accordingly, they are of the opinion that the proposed density will not result in these properties being redeveloped for residential apartments.

## 3.0 Development Options

Attached to this submission at **Attachment 1** is a plan that shows the subject site in relation to the proposed Showground Station where the following opportunities and constraints are considered:

- Middleton Avenue is the main vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfare through the residential Precinct to the railway station, thereby providing direct pedestrian access to the station.
- The subject site is a consolidated parcel of land with an area of 24,576m<sup>2</sup> with 3 road frontages.
- Residential opportunities within the entire Precinct area are limited as the land to the west is employment land and land to the north is the Showground site and other recreational uses.
- Middleton Avenue has a width from property boundary to property boundary of 20 metres, whilst Partridge Avenue and Ashford Avenue have widths from property to property boundary of 15 metres.

- The majority of the site is located within the 400 metre radius of the station with the southern extremity being 550 metres from the station. The southern extremity is still within a comfortable 10 minute walk to the railway station due to its direct pedestrian access.
- The Precinct currently has housing stock of high quality thus increased residential densities will be required to provide an economic incentive for these areas to be redeveloped for apartments,
- There are 12 existing street trees along Partridge Avenue, Ashford Avenue.
- Planning for the Precinct needs to ensure that there is not a large height differential between the development at the station and other adjoining sites, especially within the 400 metre radius of the railway station.

#### 4.0 Development Scenario

DFP has prepared an envelope study to determine what an appropriate form of development on the site is, which is attached at **Attachment 2** of this submission.

The envelope study has considered the following:

- 10 metre front setbacks to Ashford Avenue, Middleton Road and Partridge Avenue consistent with The Hills Council's Development Control Plan for Residential Flat Buildings. A 10 metre front setback will ensure that large trees can be planted within the front setback ensuring that new buildings are located within a high quality landscape setting.
- Optimising opportunities to increase ground level consolidated open space area.
- To ensure that building envelopes are of a size that can accommodate the family orientated unit sizes to achieve the aspirations of Council.
- Recognise the width and direct link of Middleton Avenue to the station.
- By providing residential flat buildings ranging in height from 8 to 5 storeys, building separation distances of 18 metres are required which provide larger consolidated ground level open space areas by reducing the site coverage of the buildings.
- No building envelope is longer than 50 metres in accordance with Council's Residential Flat Building Development Control Plan.
- The maximum depth of the building platforms are 23 metres, allowing a maximum 18 metre glass to glass dimension with sufficient space for generous balconies on either side. The 23 metre building width allows residential apartments on either side of a central hallway and core.
- The building widths proposed allow significant articulation zones to maximise cross ventilation opportunities.
- The separation distances and orientation promotes solar access opportunities to comply with the Apartment Design Guide.

It is considered appropriate for 8 storey residential apartment buildings to be located along Middleton Avenue which step down to 5 storeys along Partridge Avenue which is narrower and



not on the main thoroughfare. This will provide a variety of built forms and reflects the street hierarchy.

#### 4.1 Aspirations of The Hills Council

ABS 2011 Census data indicates that The Hills LGA has a higher proportion of housing types with families consisting of at least 2 adults and 1 child compared to other areas in Greater Sydney. This is reflected in the age structure graphs provided in the Draft The Hills Corridor Strategy, which indicate that The Hills LGA has a higher proportion of 0-19 year olds and 40-59 year olds compared to Greater Sydney. Accordingly, The Hills Council is seeking to provide more family orientated apartments than would otherwise be generally produced across the Sydney metro area.

Family orientated units require significant amounts of ground level open space, larger floor plates and multiple bedrooms. In order to achieve larger consolidated ground level communal open space and appropriate apartment types, it is necessary to provide taller buildings with larger separation distances.

As can be seen in the attached envelope study at **Attachment 2**, providing a mix of 8 and 5 storey buildings on the site, results in an 18 metre wide communal open space which runs through the centre of the site which is approximately 230 metres long. This provides a consolidated open space area of 4,140m<sup>2</sup>. These types of consolidated open space areas are not achievable with residential flat buildings of 3 to 4 storeys in height.

#### 4.2 Dwelling Yield

The building platforms range generally in length from 44 metres to 37 metres. Building platforms with a length of 44 metres and above can accommodate 8 dwellings per platform, whilst the building platforms 39 metre long can accommodate 6 dwellings per floor. Based on 5 x 8 storey buildings along Middleton Avenue and 5 x 5 storey buildings along Partridge Avenue, it is anticipated that an approximately dwelling yield of 432 dwellings would be achievable.

In terms of the yields provided in The Hills Corridor Strategy, this would equate to approximately 175 dwellings per hectare.

#### 5.0 Conclusion

This submission is written by DFP Planning on behalf of the residents of Middleton Avenue, Partridge Avenue and Ashford Avenue as identified in the site plan. This submission has demonstrated that the group is motivated to sell/develop their land in 1 consolidated block which provides opportunities for taller buildings with larger separation distances being achieved. The advantage of larger separation distances is that there are significantly more opportunities for ground level communal open space in a consolidated areas which is necessary in providing opportunities for children to play and other passive and active recreational pursuits. This has been demonstrated in the building envelope plan attached at **Attachment 2** of this report.

The advice from James Lang Lassalle is that the current proposed density of 96 dwellings per hectare proposed for the site will not provide the economic incentives for redevelopment due to the high quality of residential properties currently occupying these sites. Without the economic incentive to redevelopment these properties will remain as dwelling houses in the long term.

The building envelope provided is consistent with The Hills DCP – Residential Flat Buildings in terms of setbacks and building widths, and depths are consistent with the Apartment Design Guideline.



Council has the opportunity to create a vibrant urban area within the Showground Road Precinct that provides opportunities for large consolidated communal open space, only where buildings exceed 5 storeys in height. Residential flat buildings of 3 to 4 storeys with minimum building separation distances of 12 metres result in larger site coverage and less open space opportunities.

Given that Middleton Road is the main central spine for pedestrian and vehicular access leading from the high density residential area into the railway station precinct, there is an opportunity to provide taller buildings along this thoroughfare which increases opportunities for casual surveillance of the footpaths and adds to the vitality of this space.

It is therefore recommended that Council consider this submission and amend The Hills Corridor Strategy by increasing the allowable density on the subject site to a minimum of 175 dwellings per hectare.

DFP trusts that the information contained in this submission provides Council with the information it requires to ensure that this Precinct is redeveloped to the high standard and Hills orientated development that Council is seeking. Should there be any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Warwick Gosling on 9980 6933.

Yours faithfully  
**DFP PLANNING PTY LIMITED**

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**WARWICK GOSLING**  
**DIRECTOR**

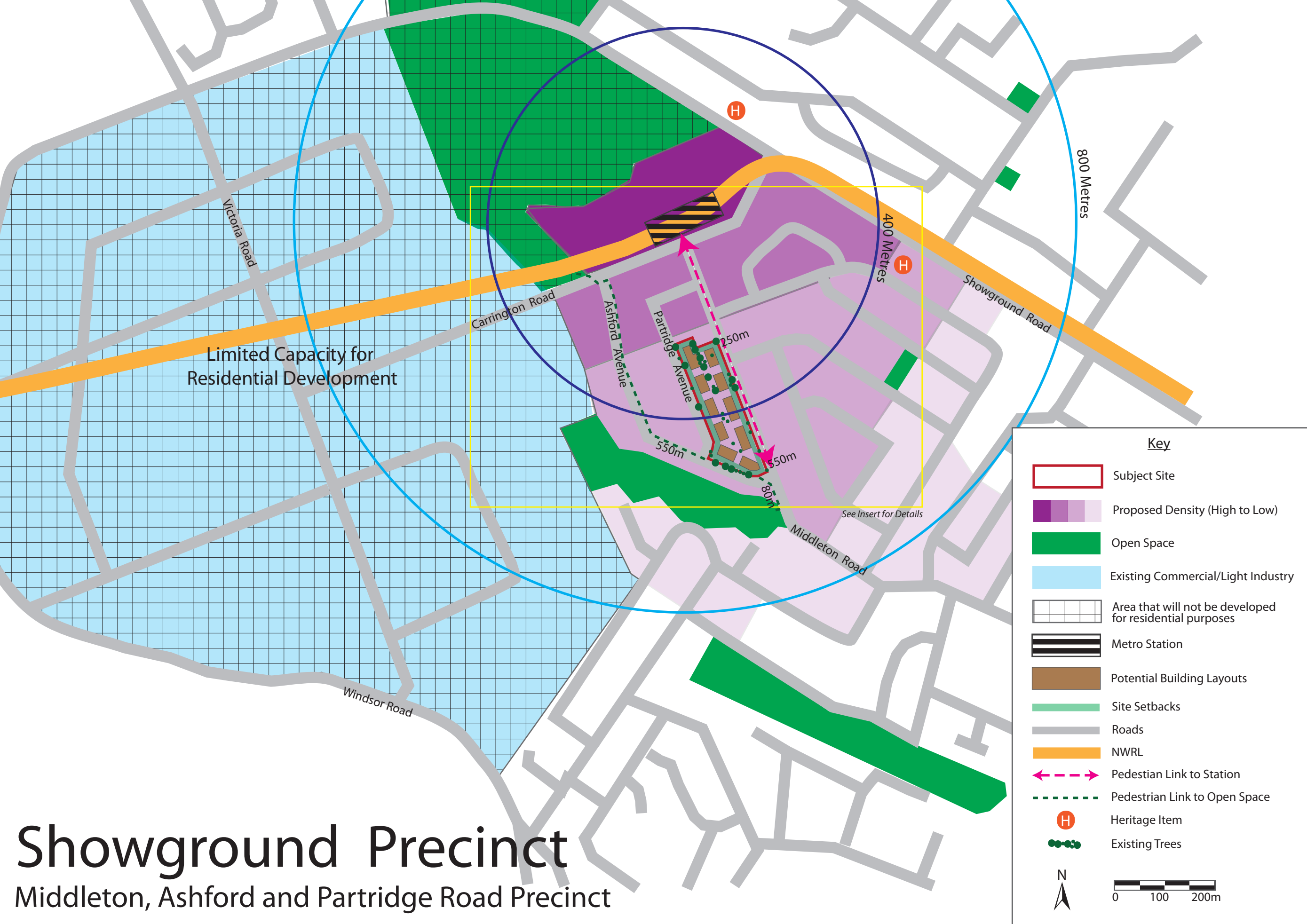
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Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Encl.    1. Opportunities and Constrains Plan  
          2. Envelope Study





# Showground Precinct

## Middleton, Ashford and Partridge Road Precinct

**Key**

- Subject Site
- Proposed Density (High to Low)
- Open Space
- Existing Commercial/Light Industry
- Area that will not be developed for residential purposes
- Metro Station
- Potential Building Layouts
- Site Setbacks
- Roads
- NWRL
- Pedestrian Link to Station
- Pedestrian Link to Open Space
- Heritage Item
- Existing Trees

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