

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERY'S RESORT, CAMS WHARF

prepared for:

iris



412 King Street Newcastle NSW 2305. ABN 67129348842 0249294926

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

summary

1. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Terras Landscape Architects has undertaken a visual assessment of the project site. The criteria for the visual assessment has been detailed and viewpoint data sheets have been prepared using site photographs to allow the reader to gain a visual appreciation of the views from the identified significant viewing locations.

Additional descriptive text and information has been provided to support this investigation. This summary has been provided as a brief commentary on the proposed works and findings of the visual assessment.

- The site is located at Wild Duck Drive, Cams Wharf and sits within the Raffertys Resort development, in the Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) local government area. It is situated on the eastern side of Lake Macquarie between the suburbs of Nords Wharf and Murrays Beach.
- This report addresses the proposed upgrades to Raffertys Resort, which includes separate stages and sites spread over 3 lots. All sites form part of a Community Title Scheme. Each stage and lot are outlined below:
 - Site A: Proposed residential apartments and pool facility, located at Lot 30/DP270043. This site is currently the location of the cafe/restaurant and resort pool;
 - Site B: Replacement of the existing function centre with new function centre and new tavern. This is located on Lot 30 & 31/ DP270043;
 - Site C: Proposed new hotel, also located at Lot 31/DP270043. This site is currently vacant, with a stand of vegetation;
 - Site D: Proposed residential apartments, Lot 30/DP270043. This site is also vacant, with a stand of vegetation;
 - Site E: Proposed Multi- dwelling villa housing located at Lot 14/DP 270043. The site is currently the location of the conference rooms and cafe;
 - Site F: Existing carpark, located on Lot 30/DP270043, to be modified as part of the proposed works.
- The site is within the Scenic Management Zone of Nords Wharf (2, lake surround, limited settlement), as defined in Lake Macquarie City Council's *Landscape Settings*. This zone has a High Scenic Quality Rating.
- The local area character units associated with the area include waterways, residential, tourist attractions and commercial ventures, and natural vegetation.
- The site topography falls to the west towards Lake Macquarie, at an average grade of 8%.
- Views into the site from the east are limited due to topography, existing buildings and vegetation. Some filtered views are afforded to residential streets.
- Viewing locations have a limited visual catchment, due to the topography and reach of the bay, therefore are mainly restricted to sites within the immediate proximity to the west of the site. Views into the site are predominately afforded to users on the waterways of Lake Macquarie, within 3km of the site and the immediate shorelines to the north west and south west, within 1.5kms. Views from the shorelines further to the west are located more than 2km from the site.
- Due to the nature of the use of the lake in this area as a transport route, the viewing time experiences by users of watercraft is low. It is acknowledged that there are exceptions to this, however due to its location, the greatest visual impact will be to a small number of residences to the south west of the site, near Hendersons Point, due to the permanent nature of their viewing access, and to visitors of the local reserves and boat ramps.
- The proposed development will retain a thick vegetated backdrop, ensuring views from the east remain limited. The vegetated backdrop will also reduce the visual impact of the development from the west, with the viewer distance to the opposite shoreline meaning that the existing view of the blended vegetation shall remain.
- The visual impact rating has been assessed to be from low to high across all viewing locations. Limited viewing potential in the immediate proximity of the site reduces the impact of the proposal overall, however these locations gain a higher impact rating due the development occurring in the foreground. Viewing locations afforded to users of the lake receive a lower rating due to user viewing times being short in nature. Locations on the western shore opposite the site have a moderate rating as the development will be softened by distance, vegetation and integration with other buildings.
- It is considered that the proposal will have a high visual impact from within close proximity to the site however this impact will be generally limited to users of the lake and Cams Wharf within 750m. The proposal will have a moderate accumulative visual impact on the surrounding area. It is acknowledged that the proposal can be compared to existing precedents in the region including developments at Trinity Point Marina, Warners Bay and Toronto, and can arguably be considered appropriate to meet the growing demand for a greater variety and capacity of tourism facilities in of the area.

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

introduction

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of this report areas follows:

- To identify and describe the existing visual/landscape environment and to evaluate its current qualities including an assessment of visual quality.
- To identify viewsheds and to locate and/or identify typical viewpoints from which the impacted areas may be seen.
- To determine what the likely impacts the proposal may cause to the prevailing visual/landscape quality of the area and to make recommendations, where appropriate, to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development if required.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology applied to this study involves systematically evaluating the visual environment pertaining to the site and using value judgements based on community responses to scenery. This identifies aspects that are more objective (such as the physical setting, character and visibility of a proposal), from more subjective aspects, such as the compatibility of the proposal within the setting.

Visual data collection involves systematically evaluating the visual environment from relevant viewpoints through fieldwork to determine the actual potential for views to the site. Once a viewpoint has been identified, data is recorded both photographically and as detailed notes.

The selection of viewpoints has generally been based on locations where potential for views of the proposed development would occur. Viewpoint selection criteria include: consideration of where views can be obtained from publicly frequented locations, such as traffic corridors; prominent look-outs or locations of high scenic value; or, where members of the local community may be affected.

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance of the requirements of Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (RMS, 2013) and as such, the work has been carried out following the below steps:

- Assess the visibility of the proposal. This includes a review of the existing visual environment/landscape setting of the locality.
- Identify key existing viewpoints and their sensitivity. This requires the preparation of a viewpoint analysis using a representative number of viewpoints located within a reasonable distance of the site located within its visual catchment.
- Assess visual impacts. A brief description of the proposal is included within this section followed by an assessment of the likely impacts based on a composite of the sensitivity of the view and the magnitude of the proposal being a combination of scale, size and character having regard to the proximity of the viewer.

2.3. Terminology

The below meaning for the following terms shall apply to this report:

- The proposed development is that activity which has the potential to produce a visual impact either during the works or as a result of it.
- The subject site (referred to also as the site) is defined as the land area directly affected by the proposal within defined boundaries.
- The study area consists of the subject site plus the immediate surrounding land potentially affected by the proposal during its construction and operation phase.
- The study locality is the area of land within the regional visual catchment whereby the proposal can be readily recognised. Generally this is confined to a six-kilometre radius beyond which individual buildings are difficult to discern especially amongst other development where contrasts are low. Further, visual sensitivity generally declines significantly beyond this range due to the broad viewing range that can be had from vantage points. For this study the locality has been limited to the visual catchments that have distances less than 2.5 kilometers as views beyond this are restricted.

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

the site

3. THE SITE

3.1. Site Context

The site is located at Wild Duck Drive, Cams Wharf and sits within the Raffertys Resort development, in the Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) local government area. It is situated on the eastern side of Lake Macquarie between the suburbs of Nords Wharf and Murrays Beach.

The site is known as Lots 14, 30 and 31 in Deposited Plan 270043, Wild Duck Drive Cams Wharf. The site is part of a Community Title Scheme.

The current zoning, being SP3 Tourist, together with Clause 7.14 in the Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 - Development on certain land near Raffertys Road, Cams Wharf permits a range of uses including dwellings, tourist and visitor accommodation, and food and drink premises.

Cams Wharf lies 43km south west of Newcastle on the edge of Lake Macquarie. The area is largely defined by low density residential lakeside development surrounded by vegetated hillsides (zoned C1 National Parks and Nature Reserves).

The site is located on the lake edge in a natural valley, with views of it limited due to topography and vegetation. The main views are afforded to people accessing the lake by boat although these are restricted to within approximately 2km of the site. Views of the site from high points are not possible due to vegetation and topography.



Image 1 The site within a broader context

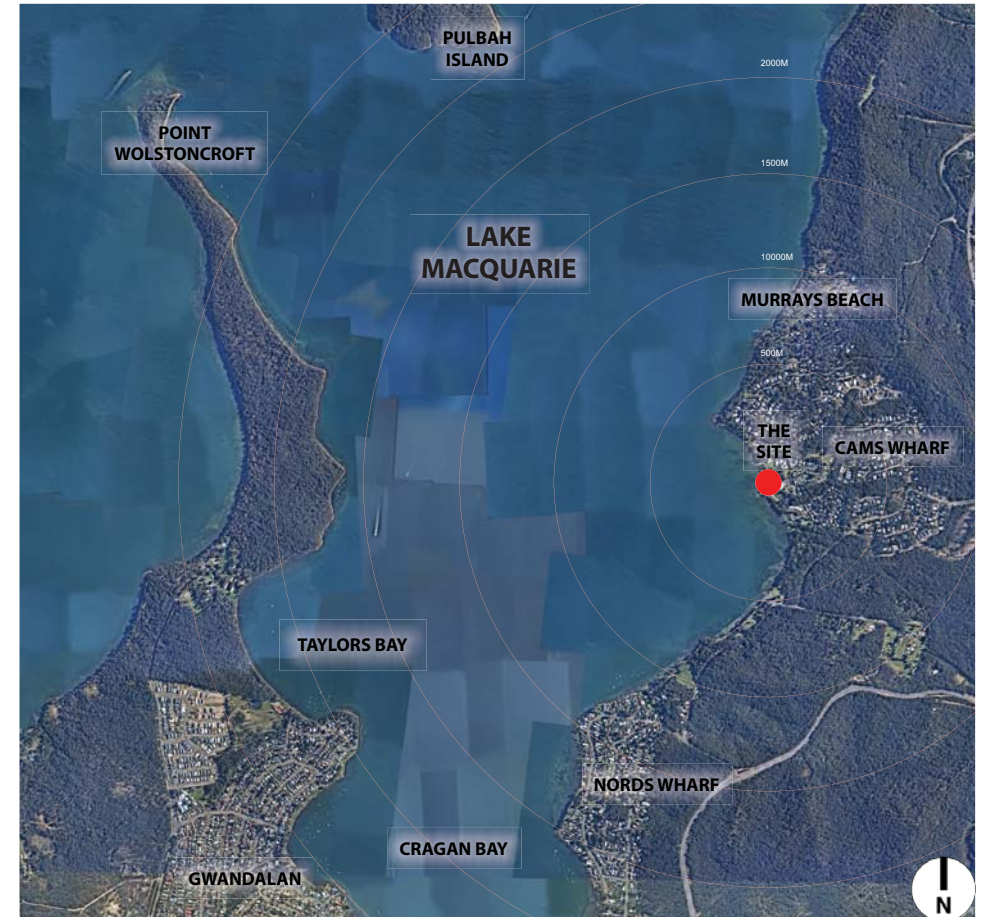


Image 2 The site and immediate surrounds

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

the site

3.2. Site Description

The subject site is well known as a popular tourist destination due to the existing Raffertys Resort, a 4.5 star self catering resort. Raffertys Resort is nestled between the bush and the lake on a quiet bay of Cams Wharf. The resort offers various styles of self-contained accommodation with four tennis courts, four resort pools, boat ramp, resort jetty and access to a number of dining options.

The site addresses Lake Macquarie to the west, with immediate views of the lake from the site, and of the site from the lake. The foreshore is accessible to the public through the resort and is a popular destination for recreation including picnics, boating, swimming, kayaking and paddleboarding. The site is surrounded by natural vegetation and there is a prominent ridgeline to the east, which forms a vegetated backdrop.

Within the site there are a number of buildings including a bar and bistro, cafe and restaurant, and JetBuzz, a popular watersports hire shop. There is a public jetty and swimming area associated with the foreshore.

Beyond the resort is the village of Cams Wharf which, features low density single dwelling houses, narrow winding streets and significant stands of vegetation.

The topography of the site is undulating and falls gently from Wild Duck Drive toward Lake Macquarie.



Image 3 The site buildings - Raffertys Resort (photo courtesy of raffertyscoastalrun.com.au)



Image 4 Aerial view of the site buildings and access roads

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF visual environment

4. VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Site Character

The site is within the Scenic Management Zone of Nords Wharf (2, lake surround, limited settlement), as defined in Lake Macquarie City Council's *Landscape Settings*. This zone has a High Scenic Quality Rating.

The existing resort features self contained accommodation buildings, narrow winding roads, low manicured gardens and stands of trees. The larger buildings are resort style, with pools, formal outdoor areas, low planting and lawn areas. The foreshore is open grass with copses of native tree and expansive views westward over the lake.

The site lies to the west of the village of Cams Wharf, to the south of the village of Murrays Beach and to the north of the village of Nords Wharf. These village areas predominately feature individual dwellings in pockets of developed areas scattered amongst areas of vegetation.

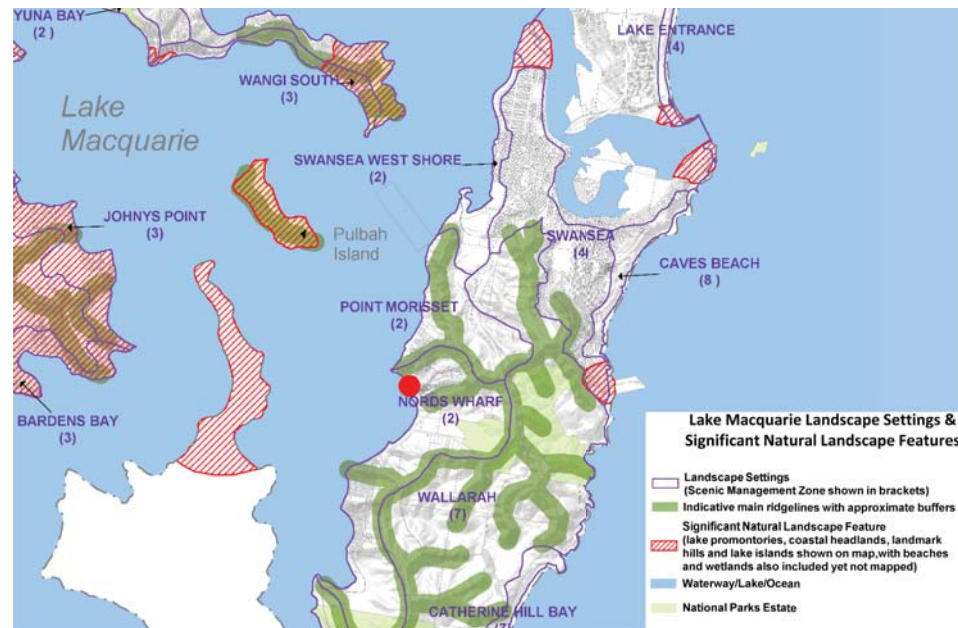


Image 11 Lake Macquarie Landscape Settings



Image 5 JetBuzz watersports building viewed from the jetty



Image 6 Foreshore picnic area with the function centre behind



Image 7 The Lakehouse Cafe & Restaurant with manicured gardens



Image 8 The foreshore swimming area & jetty



Image 9 Typical accommodation units & roads within the resort



Image 10 Cope of native vegetation

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF visual environment

4.2. Landscape Character Units

Visual character zones are single identifiable areas which can also be referred to as local landscape character units. These units result from the differing mix of dominant natural and cultural features defined by the broader visual setting. The purpose of identifying landscape character units is to provide context of the site within a broader area.

The local area character units associated with the study area include waterways, residential, tourist attractions and commercial ventures, and natural vegetation. These can further be identified in the following units:

LCU1 - The bay area of Lake Macquarie associated with the site and Raffertys Beach. Lake Macquarie is Australia's largest coast salt water lake, covering an area of 110 km². It connects to the Tasman Sea via a small channel to the north of Swansea. The lake adjoins the site forming a bay area between Cams Wharf and Point Wolstoncroft, with Pulbah Island to the north. The area is a popular destination for watersports, leisure and boating.

LCU2 - Point Wolstoncroft, which is viewed to the west from the site. Point Wolstoncroft is a narrow stretch of land forming a vegetated peninsula to the west of the site. The area is inaccessible to the general public, however is frequented by groups attending the sport and recreation centre. Views of the site are afforded from the shoreline of Point Wolstoncroft when looking east.

LCU3 - The suburb of Gwandalan, located to the west of the site. Gwandalan is located to the south of Point Wolstoncroft, and contains a number of residential, tourist and commercial buildings. The area is seeing a shift to new development in response to increased growth and demand.

LCU4 - The locality of Nords Wharf, to the south of the site. Nords Wharf is located to the south of the site, and is residential in nature, consisting of single dwellings predominately located on or addressing the lake. The waterfront is accessible to the public via a number of reserves.

LCU5 - Cams Wharf, the locality associated with the site. The area of Cams Wharf predominately contains Raffertys Resort, although it is also home to a number of private rural residential properties, a boat ramp, areas of public reserve and stands of vegetation adjoining the lake edge.

LCU6 - Vegetated hillsides zoned C1 surrounding the lake and site. The site is located to the west of the Munmorah State Conservation Area and Wallarah National Park. These areas provide significant stands of native vegetation and form the ridgeline to the east of the site.



Image 12 LCU1 - Lake Macquarie looking south west from the site



Image 13 LCU2 - Point Wolstoncroft sport and recreation centre



Image 14 LCU3 - Typical suburban fabric of Gwandalan



Image 15 LCU4 - Nords Wharf typical lakeside residential properties



Image 16 LCU5 - Cam's Wharf with Raffertys resort



Image 17 LCU6 - Vegetated ridge to the east of the site

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1. Proposed Project

Raffertys Resort has been recently purchased by Iris Capital, with a view to redevelop and reinvigorate the site, providing a distinctive village centre to be enjoyed by visitors and residences alike, and a landmark tourist facility for Lake Macquarie.

To drive and shape this vision a Concept Masterplan has been prepared to articulate the anticipated land uses and built form envisaged for the resort. The intention of the Concept Masterplan is to provide additional residential accommodation within the precinct.

The masterplan is broken into several sites and proposed works:

- Site A: Additional residential accommodation is proposed in the form of two four storey residential flat buildings containing 25 units, shared basement carpark with 40 spaces, pool with terrace area, and landscaping;
- Site B: At the heart of the village is a new Tavern and Function Centre incorporating a new pool, featuring resort facilities overlooking the lake;
- Site C: The development of a new hotel is proposed adjacent to the Tavern and function Centre. The eight storey hotel consists of approximately 141 rooms, a business centre, basement car parking (two Levels) with 118 car parking spaces, a hotel pool, and landscaped area;
- Site D: Proposed residential apartments in the form of a four storey residential flat building containing 21 units, shared basement carpark with 28 spaces, driveway and landscaping.
- Site E: Multi- dwelling villas to create a diversity of accommodation, providing alternative options to the current villas on the site.
- Site F: Existing carpark to be modified as part of the proposed works.
- Site G A temporary marquee is proposed on Lot 31, as part of the Development Application for the new tavern and Function Centre. It will provide a temporary function centre for use during construction.

Several proposed buildings significantly exceed the 8.5 metre building height limit that currently applies to the site. Consequently, a Planning Proposal is required to amend the Height of Buildings Map within Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014.

The new buildings will be a uniquely “contemporary lakeside architecture”, incorporating generous folding metal roofs, Australian hardwood timber structures, cladding and natural stone finishes. Buildings are sited to create view corridors and allow physical connections for the entire village to access and enjoy the foreshore reserve.



Image 18 Rendered image showing the proposed development. Marina illustrative only.

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

the proposal



Image 20 Site Plan, existing resort - EJE architecture



Image 19 Masterplan, proposed works - EJE architecture

viewpoint data sheets

6. VIEWPOINT DATA SHEETS

6.1. Viewpoint Analysis

This section of the VIA considers the likely impact that the proposed development may have on the local visual environment. This is achieved by selecting particular sites, referred to as Viewpoints, conducting inspections and determining how the development will appear from these locations.

Where accessible, areas within the study locality were visited to gain an appreciation of views and sight lines back to the subject site. This VIA assesses the existing visual amenity of the site and resultant visual impact of the proposed development.

Landscape assessment is concerned with changes to the physical landscape in terms of features/elements that may give rise to changes in character. Visual appraisal is concerned with the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects on visual amenity. Changes may result in adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive) effects.

The nature of landscape and visual assessment requires both objective analysis and subjective professional judgement. Accordingly, the following assessment is based on the best practice guidance listed above, information and data analysis techniques, and the assessors subjective professional judgement.

Many potential viewpoints were assessed for inclusion in this report. Due to local topography, existing vegetation and development, the greatest visual access afforded into the site will be from the lake and immediate shorelines. Given the absence of main roads and visibility from permanent structures, user numbers are restricted in nature and duration.

Photographic images were taken using a digital camera with a focal length approximating a standard 50mm lens for a conventional 35mm camera and equivalent to the human eye, so that all images represent an accurate representation that is neither zoomed in or out. A number of photo panoramas have been included to put views to the site in context with the surrounding area.

To determine the maximum height of the proposed development, a balloon was floated at 36.3m at the location of the north west corner of the proposed hotel as a reference for the viewpoints. The location has been highlighted on the viewpoint images.

Drone images have been taken from the lake to provide views akin to that afforded to users on the water. These views are indicated in yellow on the adjoining graphic.

Photomontages have been prepared at two viewpoint locations to show the proposed development within the existing viewpoint. The location of the montage views have been indicated in blue on the adjoining graphic.

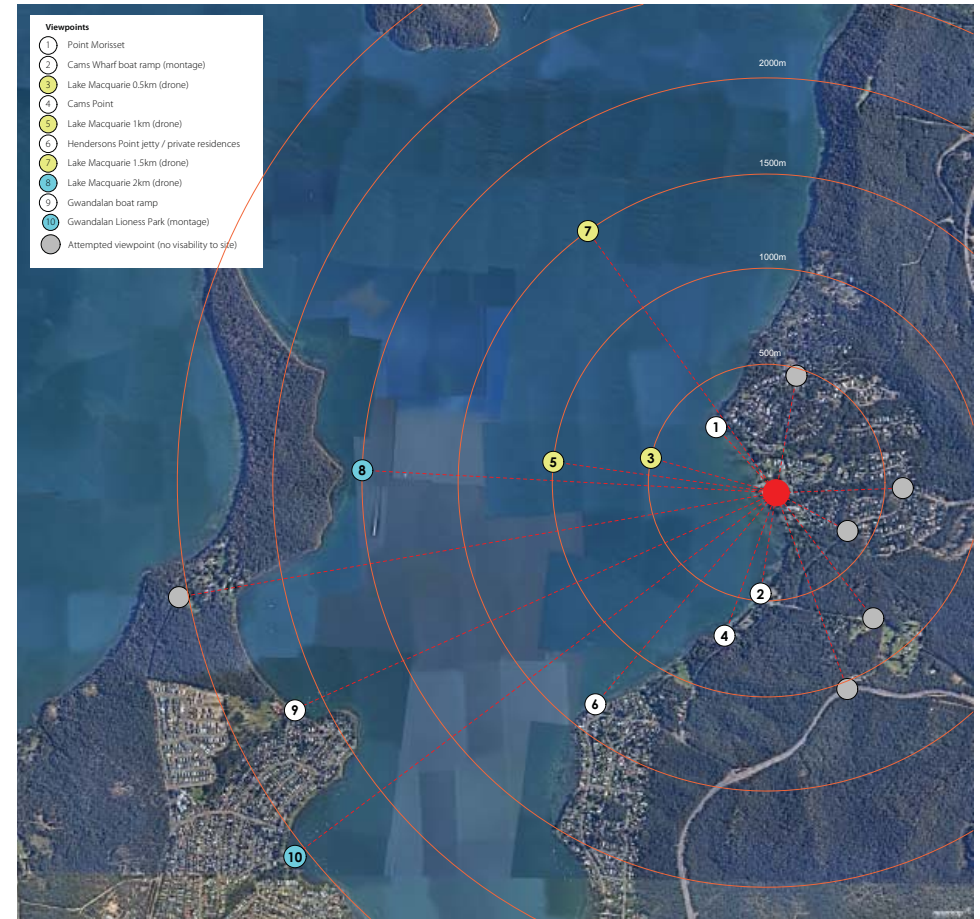


Image 21 Viewpoint locations

viewpoint data sheets

6.2. Viewsheds

The viewshed diagram explores and demonstrates the views into the site. As discussed in the viewpoint analysis, due to local topography, existing vegetation and development, the viewshed area is restricted mainly to the west of the site, and to a maximum distance of generally 2km.

The diagram shows that the most exposed views are within the immediate proximity of the site, afforded to users of the lake to the west. Views from Lake Macquarie toward the site are clear and uninterrupted, however, visibility reduces with distance.

Prominent views of the site are afforded to reserves and foreshore to the north west and south west, as well as to private residences located on the foreshore of Nords Wharf.

Further to the west, views are afforded to the foreshore of Taylors Bay, obscured in places by vegetation. Viewer access from Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Centre is limited to specific user groups, with the area being inaccessible to the public. Views of the site are clear from the waters edge however due to the distance it is difficult to discern individual buildings.

Filtered views of the site are limited to the immediate proximity to the east.

Raffertys Resort is located within a broad tourist area with frequent visitors, increasing it's visual sensitivity, however the site is located in a southern reach of Lake Macquarie, reducing its visibility from distances greater than 2km due to Point Wolstoncroft providing a visual barrier from view points further west.

View access and effect is further explained in the following section.

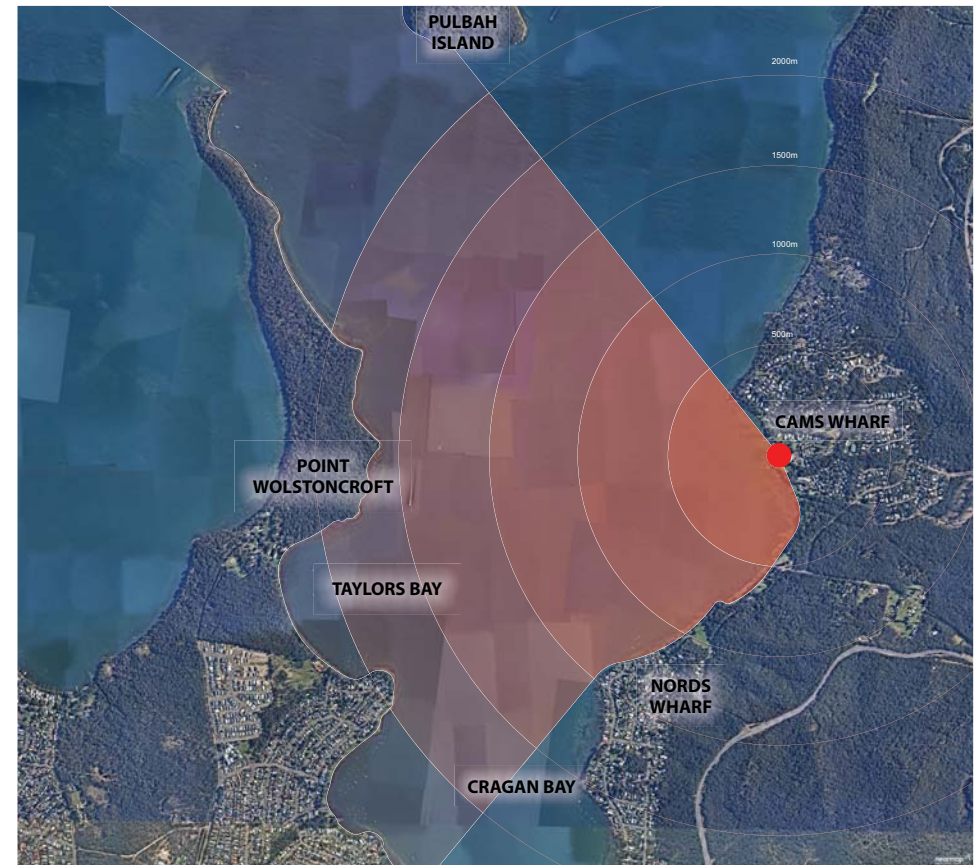


Image 22 Viewshed diagram. Close views are represented in blue, with further views shown in green.

7. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

7.1. Visual Quality

The visual quality of an area is essentially an assessment of how viewers may respond to designated scenery. Scenes of high visual quality are those that are valued by a community for the enjoyment and improved amenity that they can create. Conversely, scenes of low visual quality are of little scenic value to the community with a preference that they be changed and improved, often through the introduction of landscape treatments (e.g. screen planting).

As visual quality relates to aesthetics, its assessment tries to anticipate subjective responses. There is evidence to suggest that certain landscapes are continually preferred over others with preferences related to the presence or absence of certain elements.

The rating of visual quality of this study has been based on the following generally accepted conclusions arising from scientific research (DOP, 1988).

- Visual quality increases as relative relief and topographic ruggedness increases.
- Visual quality increases as vegetation pattern variations increase.
- Visual quality increases due to the presence of natural and/or agricultural landscapes.
- Visual quality increases owing to the presence of water forms (without becoming common) and related to water quality and associated activity.
- Visual quality increases with increases in land use compatibility.

The visual quality elements and ratings that are relevant to the study area are highlighted in the adjoining table.

VISUAL QUALITY REFERENCE TABLE			
	RATING		
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
LANDFORM / RELIEF			
CONTRAST	FLAT TERRAIN DOMINANT. RIDGELINES NOT OFTEN SEEN.	UNDULATING TERRAIN DOMINANT. LITTLE CONTRAST OR RUGGEDNESS. RIDGELINES PROMINENT IN ONLY HALF OF LESS OF LANDSCAPE UNITS.	HIGH HILLS IN FOREGROUND AND MIDDLE GROUND. PRESENCE OF CLIFFS, ROCKS AND OTHER GEOLOGICAL FEATURES. HIGH RELIEF (E.G. STEEP SLOPES RISING FROM WATER OR PLAIN). RIDGELINES PROMINENT IN MOST OF LANDSCAPE UNIT.
VEGETATION			
DIVERSITY AND CHANGING PATTERNS	ONE OR TWO VEGETATION TYPES PRESENT IN FOREGROUND. UNIFORMITY ALONG SKYLINE.	PATTERNING IN ONLY ONE OR TWO AREAS. 3 OR 4 VEGETATION TYPES IN FOREGROUND FEW EMERGENT OR FEATURE TREES	HIGH DEGREE OF PATTERNING IN VEGETATION. 4 OR MORE DISTINCT VEGETATION TYPES. EMERGENT TREES PROMINENT AND DISTINCTIVE TO REGION.
NATURALNESS			
CORRECT BALANCE	DOMINANCE OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN MANY PARTS OF A LANDSCAPE	SOME EVIDENCE OF DEVELOPMENT BUT NOT DOMINANT	ABSENCE OF DEVELOPMENT OR MINIMAL DISTURBANCE WITHIN LANDSCAPE UNIT. PRESENCE OF PARKLAND OR OTHER OPEN SPACE INCLUDING BEACH, LAKESIDE, ETC.
WATER			
PRESENCE, EXTENT AND CHARACTER	LITTLE OR NO VIEW OF WATER. WATER IN THE BACKGROUND WITHOUT PROMINENCE. PRESENCE OF POLLUTED WATER OR STAGNANT WATER.	MODERATE EXTENT OF WATER. PRESENCE OF CALM WATER. NO ISLANDS, CHANNELS, MEANDERING WATER. INTERMITTENT STREAMS, LAKES, RIVERS, ETC.	DOMINANCE OF WATER IN FOREGROUND AND MIDDLE GROUND. PRESENCE OF FLOWING WATER, TURBULENCE AND PERMANENT WATER.
DEVELOPMENT			
FORM & IDENTITY	PRESENCE OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES. PRESENCE OF LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT (E.G. MINING INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC) RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	PRESENCE OF ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. SMALL SCALE, INDUSTRIAL ETC IN MIDDLEGROUND. PRESENCE OF SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.	PRESENCE OF RURAL STRUCTURES (E.G. FARM BUILDINGS, FENCES ETC.). HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES APPARENT. ISOLATED DOMESTIC SCALE STRUCTURES.

Source: Adapted from Clouston & Brouwer, 1995

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

assessment criteria

7.2. Viewer Access

This considers the relative number and type of viewers, the viewer distance, the viewing duration and view context. The rationale is that if the number of people who would potentially see portions of the proposal is low, then the visual impact would be low, compared to when a large number of people would have the same view.

VIEWER ACCESS MATRIX													
		VIEWER DISTANCE											
		VERY SHORT (<1km)			SHORT (1-2km)			MEDIUM (2-3km)			LONG/DISTANT (>3km)		
		VIEWING DURATION											
		>10mins	10-30mins	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins	>10mins	10-30min	>30mins
VIEWER NUMBERS	VERY LOW (>49 PEOPLE PER DAY)	L	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	M/L	L	L	L
	LOW (50-149 PEOPLE PER DAY)	L	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	M	L	L	L
	MODERATE (150-199 PEOPLE PER DAY)	M	H	H	M	M	H	L	M	M	L	L	L
	HIGH (>200 PEOPLE PER DAY)	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	L	L	M

Source: Adapted from EDAW, 2000

7.3. Visual Effect

Visual effect is the interaction between a proposal and the existing visual environment. It is often expressed as the level of visual contrast of the proposal against its setting or background in which it is viewed.

This is particularly important should any proposed development extend above the skyline unless, once again, there are particular circumstances that may influence viewer perception and/or visual impact.

It should be noted that a high visual effect does not necessarily equate with a reduction in scenic quality. It is the combination of both visual sensitivity and visual effect that results in visual impact.

VISUAL EFFECT TABLE		
LEVELS	HIGH	RESULTS WHEN A PROPOSAL PRESENTS ITSELF WITH HIGH VISUAL CONTRAST TO ITS VIEWED LANDSCAPE WITH LITTLE OR NO INTEGRATION AND/OR SCREENING.
	MODERATE	RESULTS WHERE A PROPOSAL NOTICEABLY CONTRASTS WITH ITS VIEWED LANDSCAPE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN SOME DEGREE OF INTEGRATION (E.G. GOOD SITING PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED, RETENTION OF SIGNIFICANT EXISTING VEGETATION, PROVISION OF SCREEN LANDSCAPING, CAREFUL COLOUR SELECTION AND/OR APPROPRIATELY SCALED DEVELOPMENT).
	LOW	OCCURS WHEN A PROPOSAL BLENDS IN WITH ITS EXISTING VIEWED LANDSCAPE DUE TO A HIGH LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF ONE OR SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING: FORM, SHAPE, PATTERN, LINE, TEXTURE OR COLOUR. IT CAN ALSO RESULT FROM THE USE OF EFFECTIVE SCREENING OFTEN USING A COMBINATION OF LANDFORM AND LANDSCAPING.
	NEGLECTIBLE	THERE ARE NO VIEWS OF THE PROPOSAL COMPONENTS AND AS SUCH THERE IS NOT IMPACT

Source: Adapted from EDAW, 2000

7.4. Visual Sensitivity

Another aspect affecting visual assessments is visual sensitivity. This is the estimate of the significance that a change will have on a landscape and to those viewing it. For example, a significant change that is not frequently seen may result in a low visual sensitivity although its impact on a landscape may be high.

The assessment of visual sensitivity is based on a number of variables such as: the number of people affected; viewer location including distance from the source; the surrounding land use and degree of change. Variables may also include viewer position, i.e. inferior, where the viewer's station is below the horizontal axis as characterised by looking up (least preferred), neutral, where the viewer sight line is generally along the horizontal axis, and, superior, where the viewer sight line is above the horizontal axis as characterised by looking down to an object (most preferred).

Generally the following principles apply:

- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewer distance increases. This occurs as changes to the scenic environment must be assessed over a broader viewshed which is comprised of a greater number of competing elements;
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time decreases;
- Visual sensitivity can also be related to viewer activity (e.g. a person viewing an affected site while engaged in recreational activities will be more strongly affected by change than someone passing a scene in a car travelling to a desired destination);
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the number of potential viewers decreases.

Visually sensitive landscapes include:

- Main ridgelines;
- Significant natural landscape features such as coastal headlands, prominent hills, lake channel entrances, lake islands and lake promontories;
- National Parks, State Recreation Areas and other protected natural conservation areas ;
- Other areas zoned for natural values (areas zoned C2 - Environmental Conservation);
- Within 100m of the lake edge;
- Within 300m of the coastal edge;
- Heritage conservation areas and precincts.

The adjoining table outlines the visual sensitivity based on the above criteria.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY TABLE						
		DISTANCE ZONES				
		FOREGROUND 0-0.5km 0.5-1km		MIDGROUND 1-1.5km 1.5-2km		
LAND USE	RESIDENTIAL: RURAL OR URBAN	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	NATURAL AREAS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	TOURIST OR PASSIVE RECREATION	HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	MAJOR TRAVEL CORRIDORS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	TOURIST ROADS	HIGH SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	MINOR ROADS	MODERATE SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	AGRICULTURAL AREAS	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY
	INDUSTRIAL AREAS	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY	LOW SENSITIVITY

Source: Adapted from EDAA, 2000

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF

assessment criteria

7.5. Visual Impact

Visual impact is the assessment of changes in the appearance of the landscape as the result of some intervention typically man-induced, to the visual quality of an area having regard to visual sensitivity and visual effect and the other attributes that these elements embody as discussed above.

Visual impact may be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction). When visual impacts are negative, the loss of visual quality needs to be determined and when they are found to be undesirable or unacceptable, then mitigation measures need to be formulated with the aim of reducing the impact to within, at least acceptable limits.

The adjoining table illustrates how Visual Effect and Visual Sensitivity levels combine to produce varying degrees of Visual Impact. The overall project assessment summary is marked in red and is assessed as LOW. Further assessment is provided in the Visual Evaluation for selected viewpoints.

		VISUAL EFFECTS LEVELS			
		HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
VISUAL SENSITIVITY LEVELS	HIGH	HIGH IMPACT	HIGH IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	MODERATE	HIGH IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	LOW	MODERATE IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	LOW IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT
	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT	NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT

Source: Adapted from EDAW, 2000

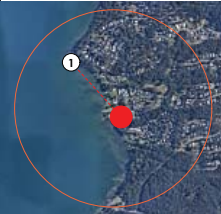
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF viewpoint 1



Image 23 Viewpoint 1, existing view. Looking south east from Point Morisset

Viewpoint 1

Location:
Point Morisset.
430m north west of the site.



This view is typical of pedestrians visiting the foreshore of Murrays Beach, at the western most point. Access to this area is by foot only, with no formal paths present. It is predicated that visitors to this area would be minimal, and for short durations. Despite the proposal being within the foreground, the overall viewer access is considered low. It is noted that the nearby footpath allows cyclists and all abilities, however the existing vegetation in this area prevents clear views of the proposed development.

Due to the topography, the viewer position is neutral. The visual effect is moderate, as it is considered that the proposed works will build on the existing structures, and be partially obscured by vegetation. The visual sensitivity is considered high due to this being an area of passive recreation, with the proposed works occurring in the foreground.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated high. Despite the low viewer access, the development will be prominent in the foreground and within a highly sensitive area.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : High		

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF viewpoint 2

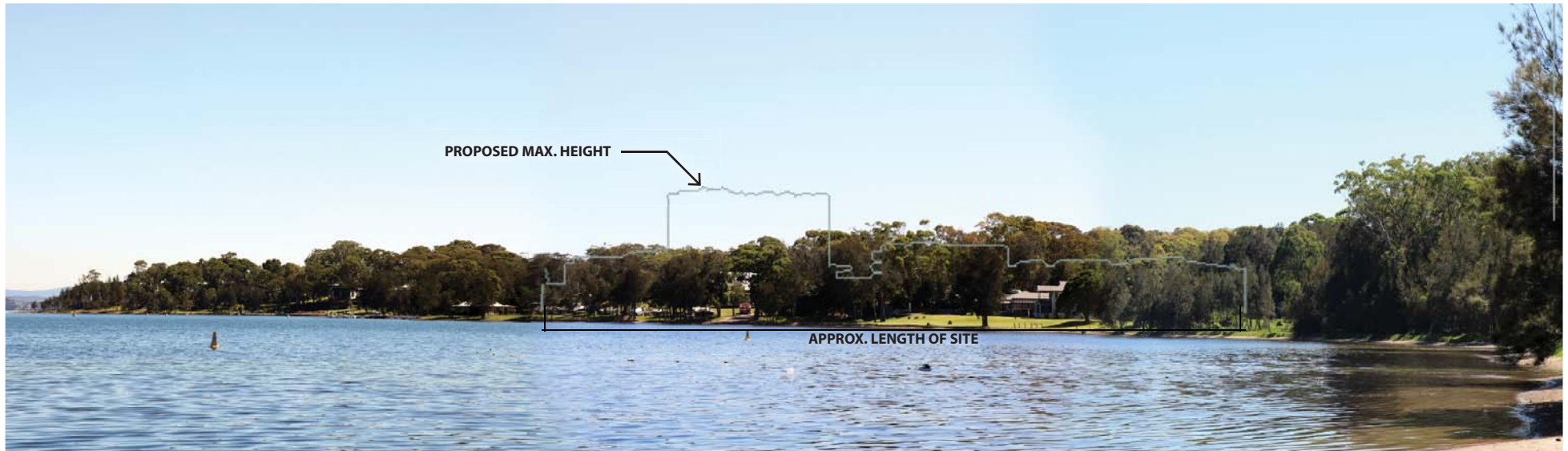
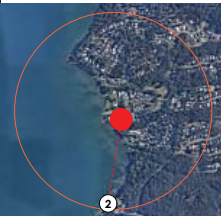


Image 24 Viewpoint 2 existing view. Looking north from Cams Wharf boat ramp.

Viewpoint 2

Location:
Cams Wharf boat ramp.
500m south of the site.



This view is typical of tourists visiting Cams Wharf Boat Ramp and to users of the lake along the shoreline. Access to this area is related to recreational activities and non permanent in nature. It is predicated that visitors to this area would be moderate to high, for short durations, and within close proximity to the site. Therefore the viewer access rating can be considered moderate to high. It is noted that the nearby reserve will be accessed by tourists also, however the existing vegetation in this area prevents clear views of the proposed development.

The viewer position is typically neutral. The visual effect is moderate, as it is considered that the proposed works will build on the existing structures, and be partially obscured by vegetation. The visual sensitivity is considered high due to this being an area of passive recreation, with the proposed works occurring in the foreground.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated high. The development will be prominent in the foreground and within a highly sensitive area.

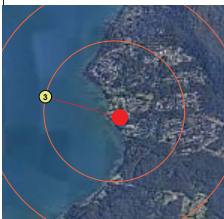
Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : High		



Image 25 Viewpoint 3, existing view. Looking east towards the site from Lake Macquarie.

Viewpoint 3

Location:
Lake Macquarie, drone view.
500m west of the site.



This view is typical of people accessing the lake. The development will be seen in the foreground and from this viewpoint the proposed hotel will sit above the vegetated ridgeline to the east.

Viewer access is low from this viewpoint due to the viewing duration and this part of the lake being used as a transit area for boats accessing either the resort or residential areas in the southern reach of the bay.

The viewer position is inferior to neutral. The visual effect is moderate, as it is considered that the proposed works will build on the existing structures, and be partially obscured by vegetation. The visual sensitivity is considered high due to the recreational nature of the lake, with the proposed works occurring in the foreground.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated high. Despite the low viewer access, the development will be prominent in the foreground, sitting above the ridge line within a highly sensitive area.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : High		

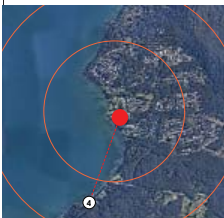
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF viewpoint 4



Image 26 Viewpoint 4, existing view. Looking north from Cams Point.

Viewpoint 4

Location:
Cams Point.
700m south of the site.



This view is typical of that afforded to visitors to shoreline at Cams Point. The development will be seen in the midground and from this viewpoint the proposed hotel will sit above the vegetated ridgeline to the east.

Viewer access is low from this viewpoint as the existing vegetation and landform limits views from the surrounding area, with visibility limited to the waters edge and within the lake.

The visual effect is moderate. Although the proposed works will build on the existing structures, and be partially obscured by vegetation, the bulk of it will be visible above the existing tree line. The existing lakeside vegetation provides some screening of the proposed development from this viewpoint, however due to the proximity to the site and the landuse associated with this viewpoint the visual sensitivity will be high.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated high. Despite the low viewer access, the development will be prominent in the foreground, sitting above the ridge line within a highly sensitive area.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : High		

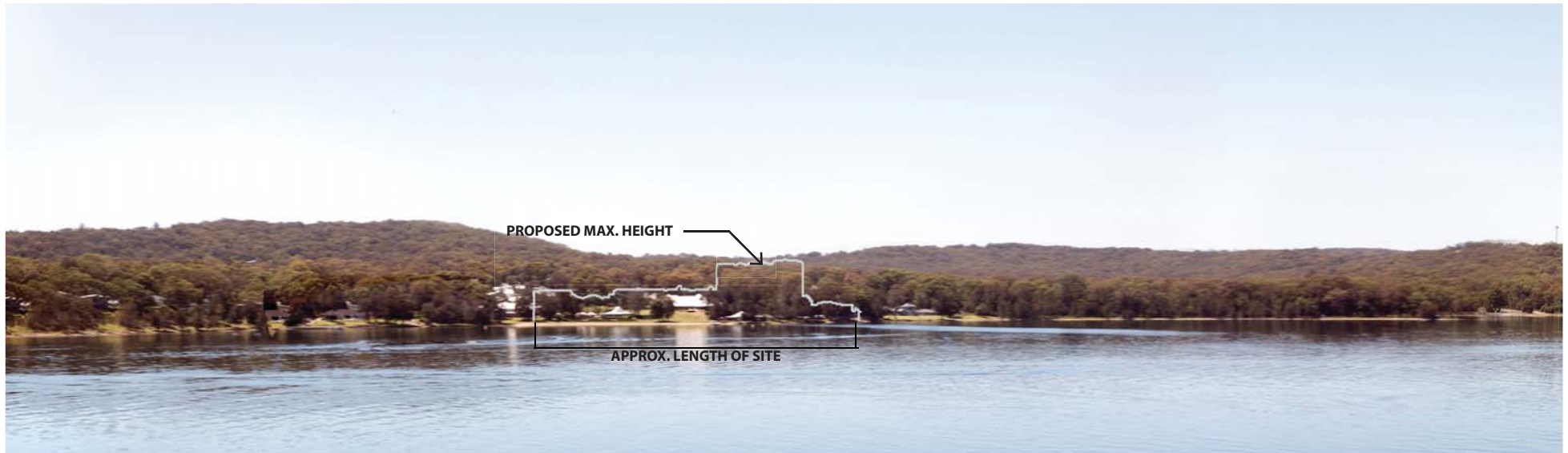
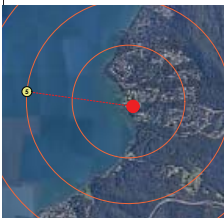


Image 27 Viewpoint 5, existing view. Looking east towards the site from Lake Macquarie.

Viewpoint 5

Location:
Lake Macquarie, drone view.
1000m west of the site.



Viewpoint 5 is located 1km to the west of the site, providing a typical view of the site that will be seen by users of the lake. The development will be seen in the midground, however, from this viewpoint the proposed hotel will sit below the vegetated ridgeline.

Viewer access is moderate from this viewpoint as the development will be clearly seen, however the distance reduces the impact. Viewer numbers will be low and temporary, as this view is typical of recreational vehicles only.

The visual effect and sensitivity is moderate. The existing lakeside vegetation provides some screening of the proposed development from this viewpoint and the distance reduces the sensitivity rating.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated moderate. Despite the low viewer access, the development will be prominent in the midground within a highly sensitive area.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Moderate		

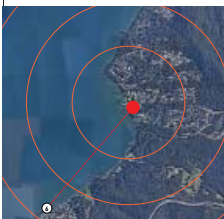
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF viewpoint 6



Image 28 Viewpoint 6, existing view. Looking north east from Hendersons Point Jetty

Viewpoint 6

Location:
Hendersons Point jetty.
1400m south west of the site



Located 1.4km to the west of the site, this viewpoint shows view of the site that will be seen by users of Hendersons Point Jetty. It can also be considered the typical available view afforded to a number of private residences to the north of Henderson Point, adjacent to the jetty. The development will be seen in the midground, however, from this viewpoint the proposed hotel will sit below the vegetated ridgeline.

Viewer access is moderate from this viewpoint as the development will be clearly seen, however the distance reduces the impact. Viewer numbers will be low and mostly isolated to visitors to the jetty, which has limited access. Residents of the affected houses will have a prolonged view, however the number of people effected is low. The visual effect is moderate. The buildings will contrast with the landscape, however retention of existing vegetation, and screening landscaping will reduce the effect. The visual sensitivity can be defined as low for the residential views and moderate for passive recreation.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated moderate.

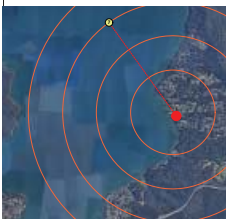
Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Moderate		



Image 29 Viewpoint 7, existing view. Looking south east towards the site from Lake Macquarie.

Viewpoint 7

Location:
Lake Macquarie, drone view.
1500m north west of the site.



As per View 3, this view is typical of people accessing the lake. The development will be seen in the midground, however from here the proposed hotel will sit below the vegetated ridgeline.

Viewer access is low from this viewpoint due to the viewing duration and this part of the lake being used as a transit area for boats accessing either the resort or residential areas in the southern reach of the bay.

The viewer position is inferior to neutral. The visual effect is moderate, as it is considered that the proposed works will build on the existing structures, and be partially obscured by vegetation. The visual sensitivity is considered moderate due to the recreational nature of the lake, with the proposed works occurring in the midground.

Based on the above assessment, the overall visual impact is rated Moderate.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Moderate		

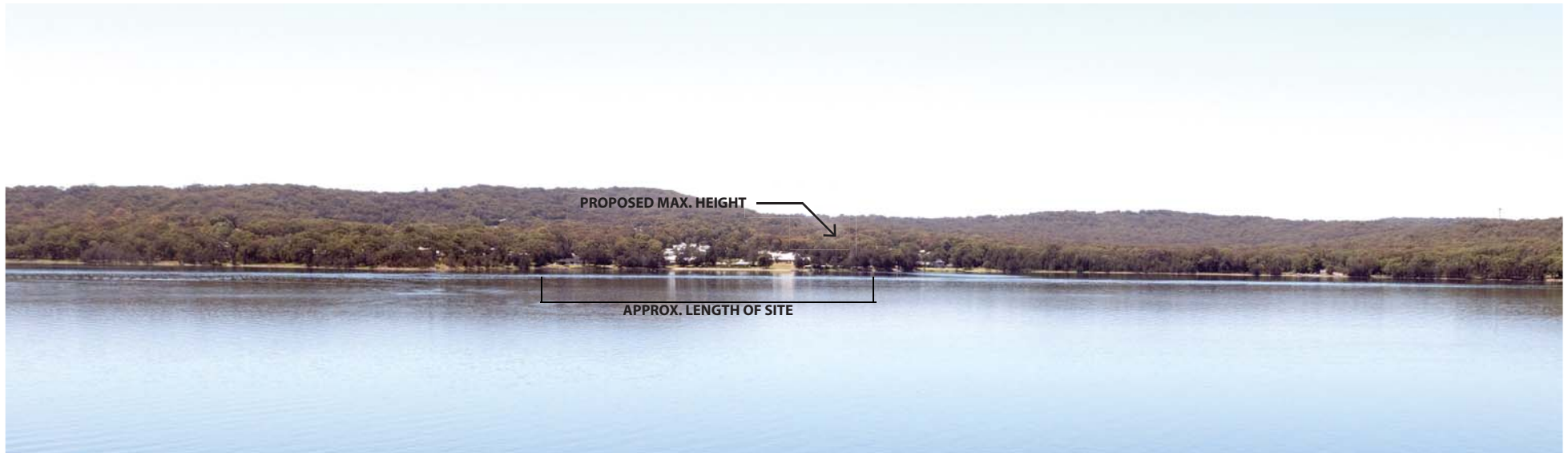
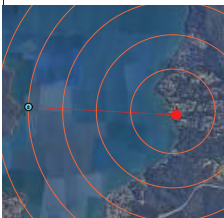


Image 30 Viewpoint 8, existing view. Looking east towards the site from Lake Macquarie.

Viewpoint 8

Location:
Lake Macquarie, drone view.
2000m west of the site.



The viewpoint demonstrates views typically afforded to visitors of the shoreline of Point Wolstoncroft and those using the area for water recreation. The development will be seen in the background, and will sit below the vegetated ridgeline.

Viewer access is considered low due to the medium (2-3km) distance and limited duration of visibility.

The viewer position is inferior to neutral. The visual effect remains moderate due to the nature of the proposed development, however the visual sensitivity is low due to the viewing distance.

From this assessment, it is considered that the overall visual impact rating is Low.

This view has been used in the preparation of a photomontage to demonstrate the visual impact, overleaf.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Low		

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF photomontage - viewpoint 8



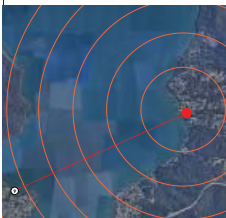
Image 31 Viewpoint 8 - Photo montage showing proposed works



Image 32 Viewpoint 9, existing view. Looking east from Gwandalan Boat Ramp.

Viewpoint 9

Location:
Gwandalan boat ramp.
2700m west of the site.



Viewpoint 9 has been taken from the Gwandalan boat ramp, and demonstrates typically views afforded to users of the ramp. It is also reflective of views from the adjoining reserve and visitors to the shoreline of Diamond Drill Point. of the shoreline of Point Wolstoncroft and those using the area for water recreation. The development will be seen in the background, and will sit below the vegetated ridgeline.

Viewer access is considered low due to the medium (2-3km) distance and duration of visibility.

The viewer position is inferior to neutral. The visual effect remains moderate due to the nature of the proposed development, however the visual sensitivity is low due to the viewing distance.

From this assessment, it is considered that the overall visual impact rating is Low.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Low		

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF viewpoint 10



Image 33 Viewpoint 10, existing view. Looking east from Lioness Park at Gwandalan

Viewpoint 10

Location:
Lioness Park, Gwandalan.
3000m south west of the site.



Viewpoint 10 represents the view from Lioness Park, Gwandalan. It is also reflective of views from the adjoining lakes pool area and jetty.

The development will be seen in the background, and will sit below the vegetated ridgeline. It will also be viewed in context with the greater landscape with the residential development of Noords Wharf visible within the visual catchment.

Viewer access is considered low due to the long (3km+) distance and duration of visibility.

The viewer position is inferior to neutral. The visual effect is moderate due to the nature of the proposed development, however the visual sensitivity is low based on the distance zone.

From this assessment, it is considered that the overall visual impact rating is Low. This view has been used in the preparation of a photomontage to demonstrate the visual impact, overleaf.

Visual Evaluation Criteria			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Viewer Position	INFERIOR	NEUTRAL	SUPERIOR
Viewer Access			
Visual Effect			
Visual Sensitivity			
Visual Impact - Significance Rating	Based on above criteria : Low		

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT - RAFFERTYS RESORT, CAMS WHARF photomontage - viewpoint 10



Image 34 Viewpoint 10 - Photo montage showing proposed works

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1. Precedents

The planning proposal to amend the maximum height limit will facilitate the development of the new hotel and apartment buildings. There are examples of high density occurring currently around the lake which include Toronto Foreshore Apartments, Waters Edge Apartments Warners Bay and the proposed Trinity Point Development.

Toronto Foreshore apartments

The development features 37 residential units on the water's edge of Lake Macquarie, including the main building with 36 four-story apartments, ground floor commercial tenancy, second building with eight three-storey apartments, external terraces, private lawn, lift & internal stairwell, basement and ground-level parking for 93 vehicles, associated landscaping.



Warners Bay – Waters Edge Apartments

The Water's edge is a residential flat building (112 residential apartments) and 1514m2 of commercial floor space on land bounded by The Esplanade, King Street and Howard Street, Warners Bay. The apartments are designed for contemporary living with a neutral colour palette.



Trinity Point

The development features six hill-shaped buildings reaching eight storeys at their peak. The Trinity Point precinct is planned to be home to a luxury 220 room hotel, restaurants, function centre, pool and 218 waterfront apartments, along with the already established Trinity Point Marina. The proposal is being described as an "iconic and environmentally driven tourism hub". The developer is committed to delivering an iconic development that will showcase the areas greatest quality – Lake Macquarie.



The proposal will require amendments to Local Environmental Plan, including a rezoning to permit the residential units and to enable the building heights of up to 36 metres

8.2. Viewpoint Discussion

Viewpoints 1 - 4 are all viewed within close proximity of the site and as such will have a high visual impact. Viewpoints 1 and 4 have limited visual access to the site due to the residential nature of the location at viewpoint 1 and the limited access to viewpoint 4 therefore for the purpose of this discussion these have been assessed however are not considered to be significant viewpoints.

Viewpoint 2 is typical of tourists visiting Cams Wharf Boat Ramp and users of the lake along the shoreline. Access to this area is related to recreational activities. The overall visual impact is rated high as the development will be prominent in the foreground and within a highly sensitive area.

Viewpoint 3 is typical of people accessing the lake. The development will be seen in the mid ground and from this viewpoint the proposed hotel will sit above the vegetated ridge line to the east. The visual sensitivity is high due to the proximity to the site and the nature of the recreational nature of the lake however the viewing duration from this viewpoint would be low due to this part of the lake being used as a transit area for boats accessing either the resort or residential areas in the southern reach of the bay.

A moderate visual impact has been assessed from viewpoints 5, 6 and 7. Viewpoint 6 is typical of residences adjoining the edge of the lake within the Nord's Wharf area and therefore has limited visual access.

Viewpoint 7 was taken in a direct viewing line from Pulbah Island due to its classification as a significant natural landscape. It is acknowledged that from Pulbah Island the visual impact would be low due to the distance to the site.

Viewpoints 5 and 7 are typical of people on watercraft within the lake and viewing duration would be limited due to the lake being a transit area for boats accessing either the resort or residential areas in the southern reach of the bay. From these locations the site is viewed in context of the broader landscape. It can be seen that the development is restricted to an already disturbed landscape. From these viewpoints the vegetated ridge to the east of the site will sit above the proposed development.

Viewpoints 8, 9 and 10 have all been assessed as having a low visual impact which is in a large part affected by the distance to the site from these viewpoints. From these locations the vegetated ridge to the east of the site will sit above the proposed development. Additionally the proposal will be seen in the context of the broader landscape which includes the residential fabric of Nord's Wharf and Cams Wharf visible along the Lakes edge.

It is noted that although the building massing line has been shown on all views to show the extents of the development much of the development will be screened from the vegetation aligning the lakefront.

Viewpoint Summary				
	ACCESS	EFFECT	SENSITIVITY	IMPACT
Viewpoint 1 - Point Morisset	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Viewpoint 2 - Cams Wharf boat ramp	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Viewpoint 3 - Cams Point Reserve	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Viewpoint 4 - Lake Macquarie 0.5km	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Viewpoint 5 - Lake Macquarie 1.0km	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Viewpoint 6 - Hendersons Point Jetty	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Viewpoint 7 - Lake Macquarie 1.5km	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Viewpoint 8 - Lake Macquarie 2km	LOW	MODERATE	LOW	LOW
Viewpoint 9 - Gwandalan Boat Ramp	LOW	MODERATE	LOW	LOW
Viewpoint 10 - Gwandalan Lioness Park	LOW	LOW-MODERATE	LOW	LOW

8.3. LMCC Scenic Management Guidelines

The Lake Macquarie Scenic Management Guidelines 2013 gives an overview of the scenic environment for the entire local government area of Lake Macquarie, and defines a methodology to assist with the preparation of visual impact assessments.

The Scenic Management Guidelines describe the methodology for preparing a VIA as follows:

- Step 1: Identify if a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is required
 - (a) Determine whether a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is specifically required.
- Step 2: Collate baseline information:
 - (b) Refer to relevant Landscape Setting Unit sheet (this has contextual information);
 - (c) Confirm if the site is identified as a visually-sensitive landscape;
 - (d) Determine if the site is identified as potentially having a high or moderate visibility and the reason;
 - (e) Determine which Scenic Management Zone applies and refer to relevant guideline;
 - (f) Confirm if there are any other relevant guidelines for proposed type of development.

Results

- Step 1:
 - (a) It has been determined that a VIA is required, in the form of this report.
- Step 2: Collate baseline information:
 - (b) **The Landscape Setting Unit [LSU] for the site is Nords Wharf** [page 80]. A summary of the LSU is found below:
 - Existing character: A low level of development has occurred and yet the natural environment remains the dominant landscape character. The shoreline is partially affected by development. Existing vegetated ridges and hillsides provide a strong visual backdrop to views from the lake and foreshore. Areas of development are limited and separated by substantial green breaks. Some areas contain significant open space providing public access to the shoreline which has a natural or semi-natural appearance.
 - Desired future character: Future development should ensure that the key natural landscape features are protected, further vegetation loss is minimised and development does not dominate. The intent is to allow development and uses consistent to those currently present, and to ensure any development is of a compatible scale. Where public reserves are located

along the foreshore any future changes should reflect the dominant natural scale and informal character.

The Scenic management guidelines that are relevant to the proposed development are outlined below:

- any further development along the lake foreshore and entrance drives should be minimised and cumulative and incremental loss of vegetation avoided;
- development should avoid substantial alteration of natural ground levels and the dominance of structures along the foreshore;
- existing ridgeline vegetation which provides a dominant backdrop to views from the lake is retained;
- the number and size of jetties and boat moorings maintains the relative naturalness of the foreshore;
- recreational reserves and activities which are characteristic of the area are preserved or improved; and
- opportunities to rehabilitate any degraded areas are identified.

(c) **The site has been identified as a visually-sensitive landscape**, due to being within 100m of the lake edge [page 18]. The visually sensitive nature of these landscapes should be taken into account when considering any proposed major visual change during the development assessment or strategic planning processes.

(d) **The site is identified as having a high visibility**, due to it being seen from the lake and/or within 300m of lake edge with lake views [page 19]. For this reason the viewpoint analysis has been carried out as part of this VIA;

(e) **The Scenic Management Zone that applies to the site is Zone 2** (lake surround, limited settlement). A summary of the zone is found below [page 80]:

- Description: West facing the lake, below the close high ridgeline between the lake and the coast. The Pacific Highway enters Lake Macquarie along this bushland ridge. The small foreshore villages of Nords Wharf and Cams Wharf are approached from the winding road

that drops from the ridge. Lake views from the foreshore reach across to Point Wolstoncroft only 1.5km away or long views north up the length of the Lake.

- Land Use: Residential and recreation including boating along the lake and fishing.
- Observation Points: Lake foreshore, jetty, Nords Wharf and Cams Wharf villages.
- Viewing Level: Level 2.
- Foreshore Landscape Character: Small bays along the indented foreshore. Natural forest backdrop and much of the foreshore is a natural landscape. Foreshore mown grass park under eucalypt trees in residential areas.
- Scenic Features: Views across Lake to Point Wolstoncroft, Pulbah Island and north up the lake.
- Detrimental Features: Minor – foreshore park and residential character.
- Landscape Appreciation: The close forested hillside rising steeply from the Lake gives a compact, predominantly natural setting, keeping the settlement small in scale, in sympathy with the narrow Lake inlet. Access to the Lake foreshore is important. Views from the Lake are into a predominantly natural foreshore around this inlet.

(f) **The site is subject to scenic management guidelines for development** [page 26]. It is determined that the site falls within the 'TOURIST ACCOMMODATION, ECO-TOURISM AND SENIORS LIVING' category. The scenic management recommendation is to use design measures that reduce visual impact:

- Any proposed development is of a scale, character and colour that is compatible with the surrounding setting;
- Ensure internal site planning includes adequate provision of trees, shade, gardens and other measures to provide a high quality amenity for users; and
- Development near the coastal edge or lake foreshore, or on ridgelines or near primary transport corridors, establishes building setbacks sufficient to allow for landscape screening of the development and filtered views consistent with the relevant Scenic Management Zone.

8.4. Conclusion and Recommendations

A review of the visual catchment of the proposed development site showed that views of the site were limited due to the site's location in a southern reach of the lake. Visibility of the site is restricted from the east due to the surrounding topography and vegetation. Views to the site from the west are limited to 2.5km due to Point Wolstoncroft, a vegetated headland which lies across the lake to the west of the site.

Viewpoints assessed to the west of the site within close proximity (750m) have the highest impact. Public viewer access is generally limited to Cams Wharf and from the lake with limited viewing potential from the lake edge due to the residential nature of the land and limited access to the lakes edge.

Viewpoints assessed beyond 1.5km have a low visual impact due to the distance to the site. From these locations the site is viewed within the context of the surrounding landscape, and will take in the residential fabric of Nords Wharf and glimpses of the residential fabric of Cams Wharf. From these locations the vegetated backdrop of the ridges to the east of the site will sit above the development and the existing vegetation on the lake edge to the west of the development will provide screening to the lower levels of the proposed development.

The development is restricted to an already disturbed site and is not viewed in isolation as a pristine landscape.

It is concluded that the proposal will have a high visual impact from within close proximity to the site however this impact will be generally limited to users of the lake and Cams Wharf within 750m. The proposal will have a moderate accumulative visual impact on the surrounding area.

Recommendations:

- Implementation of the landscaping plan prepared and submitted with the DA.
- Planting where practicable before site works and infrastructure
- Consideration might also be given to some further planting along the Lake Edge however, additional factors such as undesirable overshadowing of the public realm, together with view impacts from both the existing and future public and private domains would need to be taken into account
- Use of recessive colours and non-reflective building material.
- Retention of existing vegetation where feasible, with replacement planting undertaken as soon as practicable;
- Consideration of minor articulation of the building form with use of balconies and shadows to reduce the apparent bulk.

9. REFERENCES

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EJE Architecture DA submission

Terras Landscape Architects Concept Plan



412 King Street Newcastle NSW 2305. ABN 67129348842 0249294926