

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Statement of Visual Impact for
Proposed Change of Use

Date: 19 August 2021

Reference: 20-0064

Address and property description:


Lot 40 DP 1230679 Gerringong

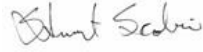
Prepared By:
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For:
THL Rural Pty Ltd



REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
A	26 February 2021	Draft for Client Review
B	2 March 2021	Final Draft for Review
C	3 March 2021	Final Issue
D	19 August 2021	Rev D Issue

Prepared By:	Stuart Scobie	Signed:
Position:	Director / Senior Landscape Architect	
Date:	19 August 2021	

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Terms & Definitions
(Source: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects – June 2018)



Off-street parking for car spaces including an accessible space is proposed.

The proposal includes conceptual landscape screening to mitigate the visual impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape from both the Princes Highway, Sims Road, Gerrington Township and adjacent farmland.

The concept masterplan also allows for collection of rainwater from the proposed new buildings and reuse of the water on site with surplus roof and surface stormwater flows being directed to a retention pond on the North-east boundary.

1.3 Methodology

The Visual Impact Assessment of this change of use proposal is based on the following 4 methodology processes;

1. Site assessment and analysis of existing conditions including history, views, visual catchments and landscape values.
2. Background review and understanding of the proposed land change of use with an analysis of a possible concept masterplan.
3. Contextual analysis of the site in relation to its community connection and history.
4. Analysis and evaluation of existing landscape character values and the proposal's impact on those values including the magnitude of change

The visual impact from a road corridor is assessed considering static (generally long term) and mobile (generally short term) receptors. The impact varies based on the type of receptor.

- Static receptors are people with views from their dwellings or places of work.
- Mobile receptors include commuters, shoppers, pedestrians.

This assessment was based on a site visit on 24 February 2021 which allowed evaluation of the site from varying receptor viewpoints and also from within the site outward to identify potential impacted receptors. A desktop analysis was also undertaken as part of the site assessment.

2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Landscape Context

The context is a typical south coast lush rural landscape with open pastures toward the North and West juxtaposed with a major highway and commercial/residential community to the East and South. The site itself is generally degraded from its previous history as a road construction depot and is notable for the number and size of electricity poles and wires that cross through it. The site is largely devoid of vegetation beyond grass and contains some remnant gravel hardstand areas and a perimeter rural fence.

The adjoining rural properties generally rise to the West above the site allowing open views from several residences and a winery toward the site with the highway and township beyond framing the backdrop of these views. The site is also visible from the Northern and Southern approaches of the Princes Highway where traffic speed may influence mobile receptor views.

2.2 Built Form Character

The built form character within the visual catchment of the site is rural residential to the North and West with dispersed farmhouses and more residential style hobby farm dwellings and sheds. The East is typically a combination of commercial sheds and residential homes with the bulk earthwork and concrete strips of the Princes Highway and south coast railway line in between the township and the site.

2.3 Network Context

The site is bounded by Sims Road and the Princes Highway to the East and is in close proximity to a major highway interchange and entry road to Gerrington township. The only other roads in the vicinity

are minor access lanes leading to rural properties. Willowvale Road is 0.5km to the south west and Belinda Road entry to Gerringong is 0.1km to the south.

2.4 Land Use

The property is currently vacant and being maintained by the land owner. As noted in Section 1.1 Background a number of utility services cross the site from North to South.

2.5 History

Most recently, this site was approved for a single dwelling house which has not been constructed. Prior to this, the site was used by the Roads and Maritime Service as a depot and site office for the upgrading of the Princes Highway. This has resulted in a filled, compacted and generally degraded area that is visually and physically contrasting to its agricultural neighbouring fields to the north and west. Before this activity, historical aerial photography from 1984 suggests that this area of land was used for agricultural purposes either in connection with an adjacent property or as its own property.



Figure 2. 1984 Aerial Photo



Figure 3. 2018 Aerial Photo



Figure 4. 2020 Aerial Photo



3. VISUAL IMPACT

The visual impact is assessed in accordance with the *RMS Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment 2018* and the *Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Guidance Note for Landscape and Visual Assessment 2018*.

Our understanding of the landscape character impact of this immediate area is arrived at through the lens of the totality of its natural, built and cultural character and sense of place. We measure this impact by assessing its sensitivity and the magnitude of change which is expressed as per the rating table below.

Sensitivity	Magnitude			
	High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	High	High	High-Moderate	Moderate
	Moderate	High-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-low
	Low	Moderate	Moderate-low	Low
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Figure 5. Visual impacts rating table (RMS Guideline for Landscape Character & Visual Impact Assessment 2018)

We have identified 3 unique landscape zones within the visual catchment of this site.

1. Princes Highway zone

This zone is defined by its visual strength in the landscape as a major engineering feature that dwarfs built forms and divides the rural farmlands zone from the Gerringong urban zone through its linear nature. This zone is also characterised by power lines adjacent to Sims Road. This zone is identified as the major location of mobile receptors for the study site with visibility from both northern and southern approaches.

2. Rural farmlands zone

This zone is defined by its rural character and active farming land-use as well as its smaller scale rural residential and hobby farming activities. This zone is also characterised by the proliferation of high voltage power lines traversing the landscape immediately within the vicinity of the site. This zone is primarily identified as having static receptors from farm dwellings located to the North and West as well as the winery to the South.

3. Gerringong urban zone

This zone is defined by its residential and commercial building density and equal visual value as a dominant landscape character within the visual catchment of the study site to the rural farmlands zone. This zone is primarily identified as having static receptors from residential and commercial structures located to the east of the study site.

3.1 Princes Highway Zone



Figure 6. Before (Southern approach)



Figure 7. After (Photomontage 1)



Figure 8. Before (Northern approach)



Figure 9. After (Photomontage 4)

3.1.1 Assessment of Proposal

Sensitivity Level: Moderate

The intersection of the study site with Princes Highway zone makes it visible to northern and southern travellers on the Highway albeit for a brief period as they pass the site at a likely speed of 100km/hr.

Magnitude of Impact: Low

The proposal will have limited impact on the character and identity of the immediate area as the proposed screen planting will mitigate the visual impact on a driver's experience as they pass the site. In addition, the adjacent commercial area, high voltage powerlines and the engineering nature of the highway itself create a sense of an altered landscape in which commercial sheds will not be out of place.

Landscape Character Impact: Moderate - Low



The proposal will have a moderate - low impact on the overall sense of place from the viewpoint of highway travellers. The proposed change of use of this site will reduce the overall impression of uninterrupted farmland to the West of the highway in both northerly and southerly directions however the previous site use by the RMS will have exposed both static and mobile receptors to a similar visual outcome. This is somewhat downplayed by the proposed screen planting which will improve the visual quality of the study site from its current degraded state which is considered a positive impact.

Mitigation measures:

The use of articulated screen planting and aquatic/marginal species will reduce the visual impact of any proposed structures to an acceptable level.

The use of colour palettes and materials that reflect the rural architecture of the adjacent farmlands zone will also assist in relating any new structures to their surroundings.

3.2 Rural Farmlands Zone



Figure 10. Before (Sims Road)



Figure 11. After (Photomontage 3)

3.2.1 Assessment of Proposal

Sensitivity Level: Moderate

The study site is located in the foreground of some 6 rural properties and a winery with the Princes Highway, high voltage transmission lines and Gerringong commercial and residential development in the background. The study site is visible from the rural farmlands zone and any changes will have a similar visual impact on those residents inline with their previous visual experience of an RMS depot. This visual impact, it is acknowledged will be mitigated by the measures outlined below.

Magnitude of Impact: Moderate

The proposal will have a moderate impact on the character and identity of the immediate area as the proposed screen planting will mitigate the visual impact to the rural residents. The closest property is already well screened with significant hedge planting between it and the study site. In addition, the adjacent commercial area, high voltage power lines and the engineering nature of the highway itself create a sense of an altered landscape in the background which the proposed development will blend with visually.

Landscape Character Impact: Moderate

The proposal will have a moderate impact on the overall sense of place from the viewpoint of the rural farmland zone. The proposed change of use of this site will visually blend with its background of highway, powerlines and township and be further masked by significant screen planting to the western boundary.

Mitigation measures:

The use of articulated screen planting and aquatic/marginal species will reduce the visual impact of any proposed structures to an acceptable level.

The use of colour palettes and materials that reflect the rural architecture of the adjacent farmlands zone will also assist in relating any new structures to their surroundings.

3.3 Gerringong Urban Zone



Figure 12. Before (Sims Road)



Figure 13. After (Photomontage 2)

3.3.1 Assessment of Proposal

Sensitivity Level: Low

The study site is located behind the Princes Highway when viewed from the Gerringong urban zone. The highway interface masks the study site to some degree as the imposing visual character of the Princes Highway dominates the foreground views from the urban zone with the rural farmland zone forming a backdrop scene.

Magnitude of Impact: Low

The proposal will have a low impact on the character and identity of the immediate area as the proposed screen planting will mitigate the visual impact to the urban residents. The adjacent commercial area and the engineering nature of the highway itself along with the high voltage power lines create a sense of an altered landscape in the foreground which the proposed development will blend with visually.

Landscape Character Impact: Low

The proposal will have a low impact on the overall sense of place from the viewpoint of the Gerringong urban zone. The proposed change of use of this site will visually blend with its foreground of highway, powerlines and township and be further masked by significant screen planting to the eastern boundary.

Mitigation measures:

The use of articulated screen planting and aquatic/marginal species will reduce the visual impact of any proposed structures to an acceptable level.

The use of colour palettes and materials that reflect the rural architecture of the adjacent farmlands zone will also assist in relating any new structures to their surroundings.



4. CONCLUSION

The visual impact of the proposed land use change of the site and consideration of a possible concept master plan has been assessed following a site inspection of the property and its visual catchment with subsequent desktop analysis. RMS and AILA guidelines have been considered and applied in the assessment methodology as previously outlined.

Taking into account the static or mobile receptors as defined in the introduction to this assessment it is noted that:

Static receptors (people with views of the proposal from their dwellings and places of work) are limited to those living, working and visiting adjacent properties and those within the Gerringong urban area.

Mobile receptors, commuters and tourists using the Princes Highway who will be travelling at a likely 100 km/hour will be generally screened from the proposed development by the proposed boundary planting treatment.

The assessment has determined that there will be a range of likely impacts arising from this land use change on the Princes Highway, Rural Farmlands and Gerringong Urban Zones. These impacts will be of a similar nature and scale as previously experienced in this location with the operation of a site depot for roadworks by the RMS.

It is recognised that the likely impact on both static and mobile receptors in all zones will be significantly mitigated by a combination of the proposed screen planting and other more dominant visual elements within the landscape. In addition, the land use change process would be well served by applying building design principles into any consent that reflect the rural architectural character of the immediate surrounds through limited building form and material and colour palette selections.

The visual impact of the proposed land use change is considered acceptable. On this basis, it is concluded that the proposed concept masterplan is appropriate in the context and will be unlikely to have undue visual impact on the landscape character zones identified.

The Planning Proposal prepared by Allen, Price & Scarratts confirms that the proposed development has sound planning justification. Having regard to the need for industrial growth in this area, I consider the proposal to be satisfactory in terms of the visual impact.

APPENDIX A

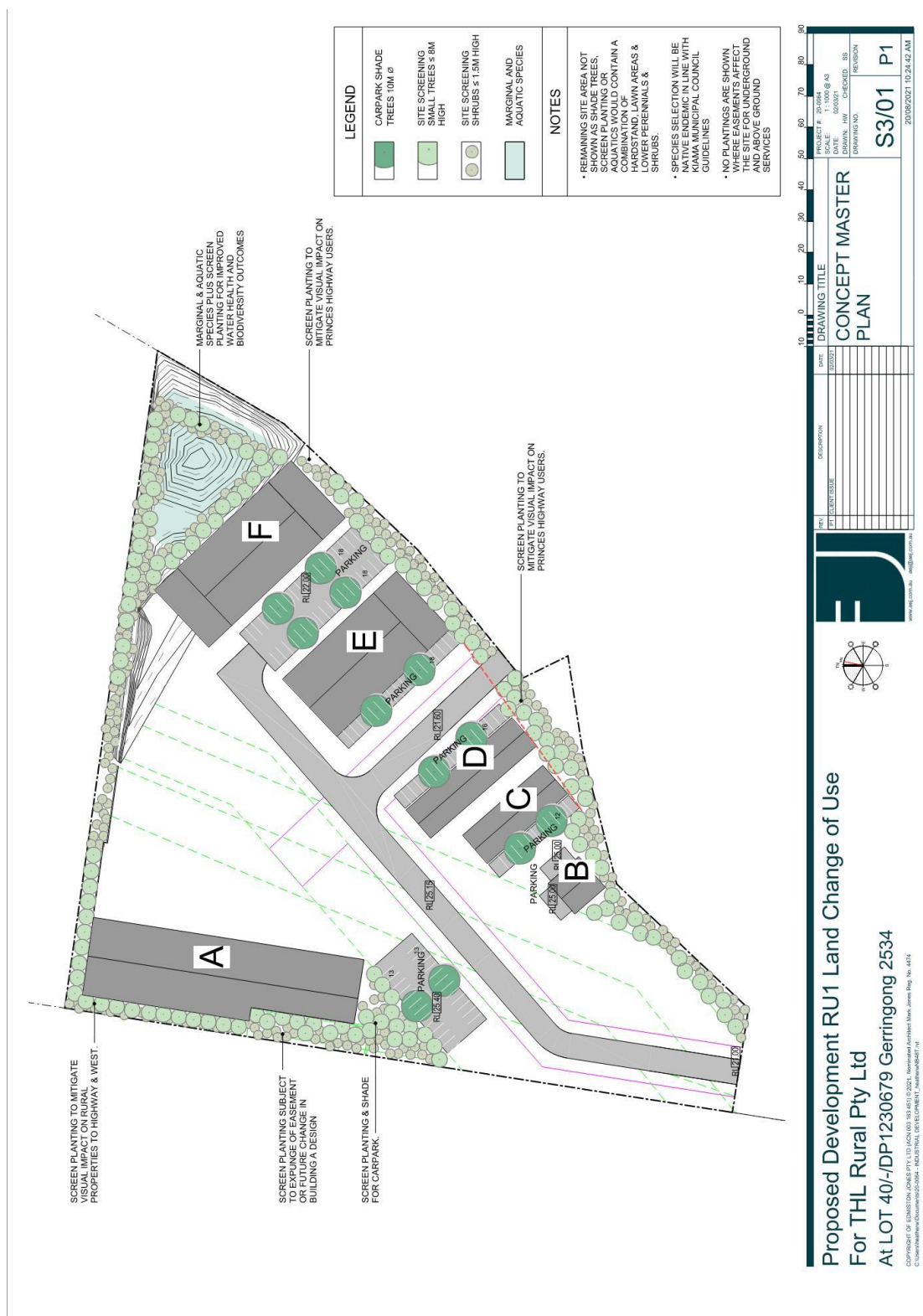


Figure 14. Concept Master Plan



Figure 15. Context Plan with Viewpoints



APPENDIX B

Terms & Definitions
(Source: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects – June 2018)

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Amenity

The pleasantness of a place as conveyed by desirable attributes including views, noise, odour etc.

Artist's impression

An indicative visual representation illustrating the appearance of a proposal. Typically used to communicate a concept when photomontages are not available and / or when accuracy cannot be assured.

Character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, and often conveys a distinctive 'sense of place'. This term does not imply a level of value or importance.

Effect

The landscape or visual outcome of a proposed change. It may be the combined result of sensitivity together with the magnitude of the change.

Impact

The categorisation of effects. Legislative context should be considered in defining 'impacts' and their significance.

Landscape

Landscape is an all-encompassing term that refers to areas of the earth's surface at various scales. It includes those landscapes that are: urban, peri-urban, rural, and natural; combining bio-physical elements

Magnitude of change

The extent of change that will be experienced by receptors. This change may be adverse or beneficial. Factors that could be considered in assessing magnitude are: the proportion of the view / landscape affected; extent of the area over which the change occurs; the size and scale of the change; the rate and duration of the change; the level of contrast and compatibility.

Mitigation

Measures to avoid, reduce and manage identified potential adverse impacts.

Offset

Measures to compensate for potential adverse impacts that cannot be otherwise mitigated.

Photomontages

A visual representation of a proposal from a particular receptor viewpoint, on a photographic base. The methodology for the preparation of any photomontage and its accuracy should be defined.

Receptor

A place, route, viewer audience or interest group which may receive an effect and require assessment.

Scenic amenity

A measure of the relative contribution of each place to the collective appreciation of the landscape. The term scenic amenity has a specific meaning and application in GIS mapping (a combination of visual exposure

Sensitivity

Capacity of a landscape or view to accommodate change without losing valued attributes. Includes the value placed on a landscape or view by the community through planning scheme protection, and the type and number receivers.

Values

Any aspect of landscape or views that people consider to be important. Landscape and visual values may be reflected in local, state or federal planning regulations, other published documents or be established through community consultation and engagement, or as professionally assessed.

View

Any sight, prospect or field of vision as seen from a place, and may be wide or narrow, partial or full, pleasant or unattractive, distinctive or nondescript, and may include background, mid ground and/or foreground elements or features.

Viewpoint

The specific location of a view, typically used for assessment purposes.

Viewshed

Areas visible from a particular location (may be modelled or field-validated).



with the cultural overlay of human use and values.

and scenic preference) and has been incorporated into several local planning schemes across Queensland.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Visibility Analysis Map (VAM)

A map illustrating areas of land with views to a particular feature. This may be modelled or field validated, and assumptions must be stated. A digitally modelled analysis is usually based on a digital terrain model, and may also incorporate the screening effect of vegetation and built form. Other terms, such as Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), Potential Visibility Zone, Visual Envelope, may be used, but should be defined.

Visual absorption capacity

The potential for the physical attributes (landform, vegetation and built form) of a scene to absorb a particular change.

Visual amenity

The attractiveness of a scene or view.

Visual catchment

Areas visible from a combination of locations within a defined setting (may be modelled or field validated)

Visual representation

Graphic representation of a proposal in context showing its likely appearance and scale.