

**VISUAL ANALYSIS**

**PROPOSED HOTEL PROJECT**

**CLUB SAPPHIRE SITE**  
**MAIN STREET, MERIMBULA**  
**(Lot 121 DP 1250503)**



**Garret Barry Planning Services Pty Ltd**

and



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## Summary

This is a visual analysis to accompany a conceptual development application and planning proposal to Bega Valley Shire relating to the development of a hotel at the Club Sapphire site, Main St Merimbula.

Please see the statement of environmental effects document and plans for a detailed description of the proposal. There are several sites within Lot 121 that could accommodate the proposed hotel.

The conclusion of the visual analysis is that any adverse impact of the additional 2-3 storeys height above the existing height controls is minimal from almost all viewing aspects with a low to moderate impact for a small cluster of dwellings in lower Berrambool.

In the context of Merimbula's role as the main urban tourism centre of the Shire, many of the visual impacts of the proposal are considered positive.

## 1 Analysis

In the set of plans accompanying this application are three sheets presenting a building impact analysis. Sheet 41 is an index plan to site where the various view photographs were taken. Sheets 42 and 43 contain a range of view points over the hotel site with the proposed hotel building superimposed.

The following comment is provided.

### More distant views

**Image 1** is a typical view from properties on the ridgeline to the west of the site as you enter Merimbula. The proposed building mostly blends into the constructed urban background.

**Image 2** is a typical view from the Mirador Estate which comprises the ridgeline to the north of the proposal. The impact is similar to Image 1.

**Image 3** is a typical view from the higher properties at the ridgeline to the north-west of the site as you enter Merimbula on Sapphire Coast Drive. Again, the impact is similar to Image 1 and 2 but perhaps the building is a little more prominent in view. It has little impact on the houses in this area with respect to a reduction in the overall view panorama.

**Image 5** is a typical view from Fishpen. The impact is insignificant and, in fact, we needed to colour the building red to identify it.

**Image 6** is a typical view of the development from the east on Long Point. Again, the impact is minimal and the building blends into the urban background.

**Image 7** is a typical view from the south and, again, low impact.

## Visual presentation close to hotel site

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**Images 8,10, 11 and 13** are typical of much of the closer residential development where there is no view of the site or a minor presentation as part of a fully built up vista. There are very few residential developments close to the site

**Image 9** is from the intersection of Reid and Monaro streets and while prominent and clearly a height character change, none the less has little visual adverse impact.

**Image 12** is part of the positive vistas of the proposal. This could be a semi-public area used and maintained by the Club for conference breakouts and similar gatherings. This corner is currently unattractive and has considerable potential to be improved as one of the benefits of this proposal and become a public asset to the town.

**Images 14 and 18** are the views as you drive into Main Street from the Sapphire Coast Drive intersection. The hotel tower is moderately prominent but not out of keeping with the urban form in this section of Main Street. Again 14 displays the types of street improvements that might be generated by the project

**Image 16** is looking west on main Street from the Market Street intersection. The hotel is not out of character in this urban / commercial setting.

**Image 17** is from the roundabout on Merimbula Drive- one of the traffic focus points of the town. The hotel tower presents above the urban background as a building taller than the general form but the impact is not unreasonable in the urban context of this view.

## Most significant impact

**Image 4** is of what we consider to be the most impacted section of Merimbula - the cluster of dwellings at Berrambool, mostly fronting Sapphire Coast Drive that are lower on the ridge and as you descend into Merimbula gradually get to a point where the high value coastal views give way to outlook that is mostly urban. A few homes in this location currently retain a small glimpse of the coastal scene. The hotel tower section will intrude in that view but given the distance, the impact is on only a small section of the overall view. Image 4 is estimated to be close to the maximum impact.

If the general height controls had not been reviewed to 16 metres in the vicinity of the hotel, then the impact is quite significant and potentially somewhat out of character. But when the bulk of a building possible under the current 16 metre height is superimposed as in figure 1 below, the alternative of the more slender tower form is possibly of less impact.

The recent reviews of height controls in Merimbula have now set a pattern where the skyline from various vantage points will eventually have buildings of greater bulk. In this new context and vision for merimbula the hotel tower is taller but more slender and of specific interest.



**Figure 1** In this image, the hotel tower is prominent and obscures perhaps 30% of a moderate water view. But the red outline is of a bulky building to the current 16 metre height and it is probably more a decision of taste which has more impact.

**Image 15** simulates the near street level view for the proposal from the east on main Street- opposite the Woolworths frontage. The height at this close vantage is significant and a change of character. But little impact on the coastal or other quality scenic vantages of the town. This section is quite commercial in nature already. It is debatable that the alternative of a lower but much more bulky 4 storey building would be a visual or character improvement over the proposal. The upper 5 floors have been set back from the street which softens the impact as well as allowing a feature deck area for patrons.

## Drone simulation

A drone was utilised and set to hover at the roof level of the building from which the images in Figures 2 to 5 below were taken.

While these images give some appreciation of the quality views from the higher aspects of the proposed hotel, they are also useful for analysis of residential development with a view of the structure. The conclusion is that there is little residential development with a view of the building in the immediate foreground or even mid-ground.

Most residential views of the development will be from a distance and as such the bulk and scale is mitigated and, in the relatively few cases where the tower section may appear in a quality view, the impact is small given the breadth of such view and small scale of the hotel at such distance.

The drone was also used to set photos at various room levels to simulate the view a person standing at that floor window would see. Figures 6 to 11 present that analysis.

## Further assessment from “iconic” Merimbula view locations

Merimbula has a number of view points which qualify as iconic views of the town. Figure 14 on the last page of this report inserts the proposal into some of these more iconic views.

The building is very small scale in all these overviews of Merimbula. It does present as a taller building compared to the rest of the town but is well below the major natural ridgeline backdrop of the town and sits within the urban fabric and built form

The impact is not significant.

## 2 Conclusions

It is reasonable to conclude:

- Overall visual impacts are minor. A visitor to the town would not be impacted by the height, bulk or scale until in close proximity and even then, the impact is possibly less compared to that of a lower, more bulky building in compliance with the existing 16 metre control.
- The vast bulk of existing residences with some view of the hotel would have very minor impacts on their amenity - often no greater than can be eventually anticipated under the current height controls.
- A few residences in lower sections of Berrambool and to the immediate west of the development do experience some impacts of bulk and scale and in a few cases a moderate impact on an existing, limited, coastal view. But in most of these cases, containing the building to 16 metres and increasing the bulk will have similar impacts.
- At pedestrian level in Main Street and near the intersection on Sapphire Coast Drive, the height, bulk and scale does generate a change from a feeling of low rise to one of medium rise development. There are bulk advantages in the tower version as the appearance is

less squat and the visual impact more varied. Conversely, there is some height impact of the additional 2-3 floors over that of a 16 metre high building.

- Those people for whom a lower style of development is critical for their vision of Merimbula, may be impacted. But most visitors would probably not really notice the difference in the two options (higher or bulkier) and many people would probably find the slim, higher structure more architecturally appealing than the more bulky, rectangular appearance of a hotel compressed into the 16 metre height.





Figure 2: This is the 90 degree image from the rooftop level looking north. It gives an appreciation of the hotel views but also allows some appreciation of the development that would have some view of the hotel. Note how almost all development in the fore and middle ground is not residential.



Figure 3: This is the 90 degree image looking east at rooftop level. Similar comment to Figure 2.





Figure 4: This is the 90 degree image looking south-east from rooftop level. Some close tourist accommodation but again, little residential development in the fore or middle ground.





Figure 5: This is the 90 degree image at rooftop level looking south-west. This depicts much of the closer residential which is still only mid-ground.



**Drone simulation of building occupant views**

The height of the camera equates with a standing person of eye level 1.6 above floor level- ie a middle height adult.

The drone is slightly offset from the building footprint.

**1. Views from level 2**

Notes: this would be the lowest level with hotel rooms. You will note the views are somewhat commercial / industrial for 4 star



**Figure 6 wide angle zoom east to west centred south**



**Figure 7 wide angle zoom west to east centred north**

2. Views from level 4

Notes: level 4 is a full floor above what is permissible under current height controls

At this level the views become probably what would be readily acceptable for 4 plus star



Figure 8 same direction as figure 1 but 2 storeys higher. The view is now more what would be expected in 4 plus star.



Figure 9 Same direction as Figure 2 but 2 floors up



**3. Views from level 6**

Notes: this would be the top floor rooms. Views are excellent.



Figure 10 Same direction as figures 1 and 3 but at 6<sup>th</sup> floor



Figure 11 Same direction as figures 2 and 4 but at 6<sup>th</sup> floor



#### 4. Comment on hotel orientation

The proposed hotel is oblong with the long sides containing the room windows and looking south or north. The east and west walls are blank. There is not a lot that can be done about orientation given the site aspects and the need to fit into the current building

The photos in figures 1-6 are the view looking straight forward from the rooms.

The north aspect is not as attractive as the south. Also the most spectacular views are east to south east which will only be captured close to the windows (see figures below). A more square building with rooms on all sides may capture more views but would likely greatly increase cost.



Figure 12 south east view from lowest hotel rooms



Figure 13 South east view from 6th level hotel rooms

Overall the images clearly demonstrate a hotel limited the 16 metres permissible under the current height controls, will struggle to have many rooms with a quality view. This in turn will lower amenity and make more difficult the prospects of a 4 plus star accreditation. Without such accreditation, it is unlikely the hotel will be economically viable.

Next page Figure 14



