

**ANGEL PLACE
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26th October 2023

Bayside Council
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To whom it may concern,

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT RESPONSE TO COUNCIL RFI REFERENCE NO. PP-2023/3/1

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF THIS LETTER

Urbis have been engaged by Outdoor Systems to provide further information regarding the visual effects and impacts associated with two (2) existing identical LED digital signs installed to either side of the pedestrian bridge over Wentworth Avenue, Pagewood (the site).

This letter responds to Bayside Council's Request for Information regarding a planning proposal for Wentworth Avenue Eastlakes Advertising Signage, dated 13 October 2023. Matters cited as requiring further investigation in relation to visual impacts are reproduced from Council's RFI below:

3. Visual Impact

The submitted Visual Impact Assessment considers the impact of the proposed signage on the surrounding area and covers the key relevant considerations. However, much of the justification within the assessment relies on the existing mature and semi mature planting along either side of Wentworth Avenue being retained. Noting that the existing landscaping may be subject to removal or extensive trimming to ensure no overhanging of the road or may be impacted by adverse weather conditions, further consideration of impacts of loss of vegetation on the visual impact is required.

2. RELEVANT BACKGROUND

Urbis previously prepared a Visual Assessment Report (VAR), dated 10 May 2023, which was submitted to Bayside Council as part of the Planning Proposal, seeking additional permitted use for the site under Schedule 1 of the BLEP 2021 to facilitate the ongoing and future use of signage that is in-situ.

The site is zoned SP2 infrastructure (Classified Road) under the Bayside Local Environmental Plan 2021 (BLEP 2021). The existing configuration includes one (1) digital sign affixed to either side of the bridge, one facing north-west and one facing south-east. Currently, signage of this type is not a permissible use within the zoning and is now the subject of the aforementioned Draft Planning Proposal.

The Planning Proposal is to facilitate ongoing use and occupation of the signage which has operated at the site for a number of years, prior to changes made to the Waverley LEP 2012 which no longer cite signage as a permissible use.

Presence of Streetscape Vegetation

The immediate visual context of the site includes the westbound (south side) and eastbound (north side) of Wentworth Avenue, and adjoining sections of Eastlakes Golf Course. The road corridor is characterised by continuous vegetation and tree canopy along both sides where existing vegetation is set back from the southern lane of the west bound carriageway by between 5 and 7.5 metres, south of a shared bike and pedestrian route.

This vegetation is unlikely to be affected by pruning or removal given its wide spatial setback from the carriageway. We note further that based on an analysis of aerial imagery no vegetation appears to overhang the shared pedestrian and bike path with the exception of 4 trees near the south end of the golf course. None of the canopy appears to overhang any part of the road carriage itself. It is logical to assume in our opinion, that no tree removal or pruning would be likely to occur on the southern side of Wentworth Avenue along the extent of the subject site.

3. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF COUNCIL'S REQUEST

We understand Council has requested consideration of Visual Impacts in the event that the existing trees are either removed, extensively trimmed, or impacted by adverse weather conditions such that they no longer provide visual blocking or screening of the road corridor and signs.

The key purpose of this advice is to understand the potential extent of additional visual effects and any resultant impacts of the signs across their visual catchments, in the unlikely event that streetscape vegetation within the Wentworth Road corridor, was removed, thinned or trimmed.

Visual impacts were determined in the previous VAR based on the assumption that existing signage would be a permissible use, and that visibility to either sign would be constrained by existing mature vegetation along both sides of the road corridor and in addition, by stands of trees that define fairways within surrounding golf course areas.

In order to determine visibility to the proposal without vegetation, we have relied on GIS modelling prepared by Urbis, to understand the localised topography, and LiDAR data to overlay the height of vegetation along the roadside and within the surround golf course areas. The data has been combined to graphically represent, landforms and vegetation including high points, open wetlands, and local knolls in relation to the roadway, pedestrian bridge, and proposed signage. Graphics have been supplemented by fieldwork observations including photography from view locations that demonstrate the existing visibility of the proposal from surrounding locations.

Prior to undertaking fieldwork, Urbis undertook a review of the Heritage Impact Statement for the site prepared by Heritage 21 dated May 2023. Urbis inspected and documented views from East Lakes Golf Course close the site, which were identified as open areas in historical aerial imagery from 1943 and 1955. These areas have been in place and open since during the early development the early development of the golf course in 1928. Given the East Lakes Golf Course is part of a State listed heritage item, these historical locations were used as a basis to understand past visibility to the road and to the approximate location of the bridge and signs. These areas are identified and mapped at Figure 1. We note that the heritage or cultural significance of these locations has not been verified.

Limitations

- View shed maps included below at figures 8 and 9 are based on topography only as per the Digital Elevation Model (DEM) as sourced from NSW Government spatial services and does not include elements such as built form, trees, elevated roads.
- The maps show areas from which any part of the upper edge/top of the signs are visible from available ground level viewing locations, at a standing height of 1.6m above natural ground level, as defined by the DEM.
- The view shed map does not relate to how much of the sign would be visible from these locations, as the extent of visibility as indicated does not distinguish between partial, minor, or heavily filtered and screened views. In reality, the world visibility to the sign (s) is much more constrained. For example, from Southern Cross Drive to the north, no views to any part of the sign are likely to be available, limited by changes in road level, the presence of intervening infrastructure, built forms and existing vegetation across the landscape and alongside the road corridor. Views to parts of the sign may be available through gaps in vegetation from moving viewing situations.
- View shed mapping without trees (Figure 9) shows the potential visual catchment without street vegetation along both sides of Wentworth Avenue and trees within adjacent golf courses, and therefore over-states the potential extent of visibility, given it relates to total tree removal.
- Viewshed mapping is a conservative representation of visibility, in that due to a number of variables the potential catchment (without vegetation) would be significantly less than what is indicated by the viewshed maps in Figures 8 and 9.
- In addition, regular pruning of tree canopy or the removal of individual trees which may overhang the north side of Wentworth Drive, is unlikely to make any significant difference to the overall screening effects of what is essentially continuous tree canopy.

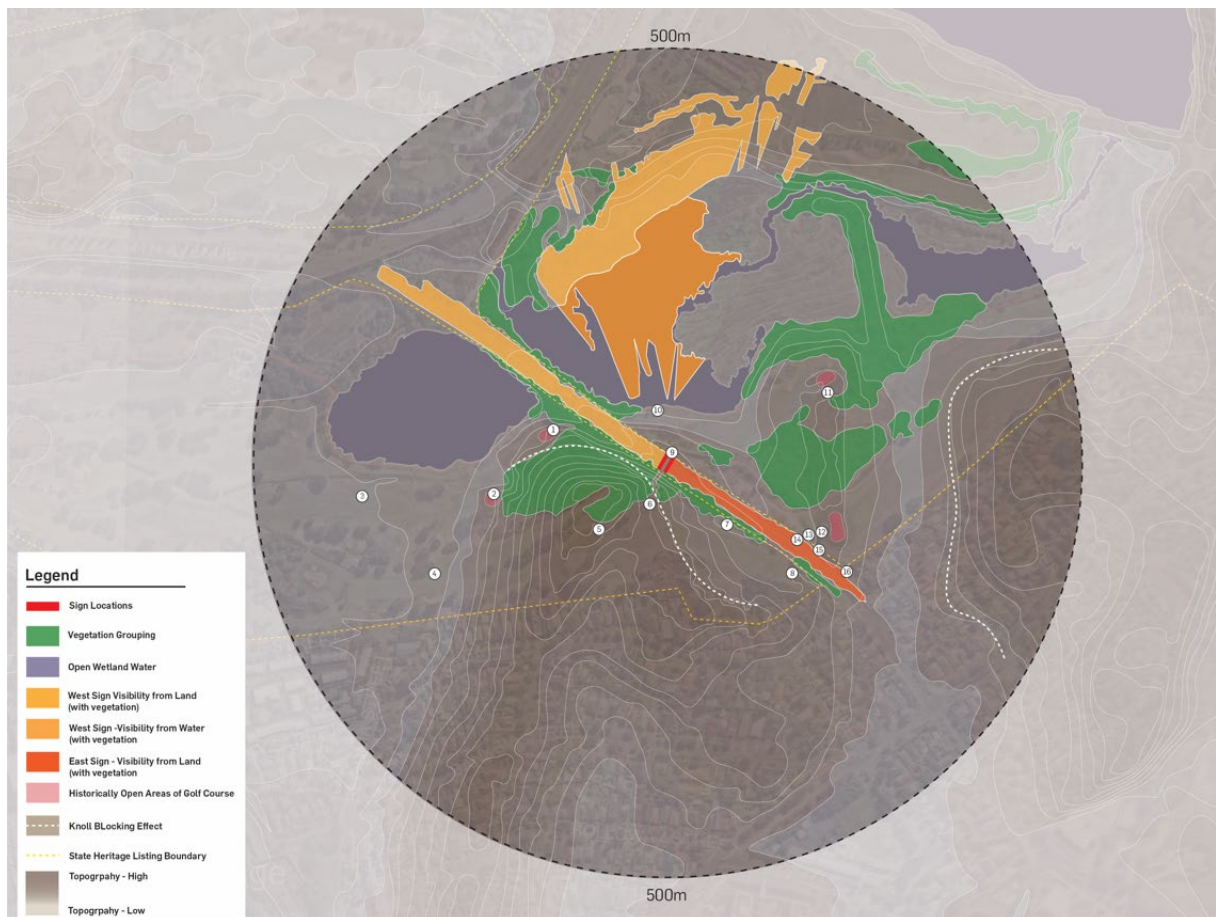


Figure 1 Existing Visibility

Graphic representation of existing visibility, including existing stands of vegetation, intervening ridgelines, and knolls etc, and view places inspected by Urbis. Note the visual catchment of the north sign (dark orange) expands across the northern water body (Mills Stream).

Source: Urbis



Figure 2 View place 8, west of sign.

Source: Urbis



Figure 3 View place 9, east of pedestrian bridge.

Source: Urbis



Figure 4 View place 10.

Source: Urbis



Figure 5 Vegetation setback, view south-west

Source: Urbis



Figure 6 Vegetation setback, view south-west from Bridge).



Figure 7 Vegetation setback, view south-west from Bridge).

4. VISUAL CATCHMENT



Figure 6 View shed mapping showing potential visibility of the proposal with vegetation.

Source: Urbis

4.1. VISIBILITY WITH VEGETATION

- The northern and southern sides of Wentworth Avenue are lined with semi-mature trees, which are set back from the carriageway and adjoin existing dense planting within the golf course. The **trees combined**, create significant blocking effects, and reduce the potential visual catchment to less than 400m of the road carriageway. It is most unlikely, in our opinion, that even with some pruning or tree removal along Wentworth Avenue, that the existing combined, vegetative screening effects would be significantly reduced to an extent that increases potential visibility to the signs.
- The visual catchment of the east facing sign is constrained to the road corridor, east of the pedestrian bridge to approximately Bay Street to the south-east.
- The visual catchment of the west facing sign is constrained to the road corridor, west of the pedestrian bridge to approximately Southern Cross Drive to the north-west.
- Visibility to the west facing sign from the land is limited only to the highest parts of the privately operated Lakes Golf Course and club building.
- Visibility to the west facing sign from the water is limited to the wetlands that adjoin Lakes Golf Course to the south, known as Mill Steam, north of Wentworth Avenue.

- There is no visibility to the site beyond the road corridor from the south and east due to blocking effects of local knolls.

4.2. VISIBILITY WITHOUT VEGETATION

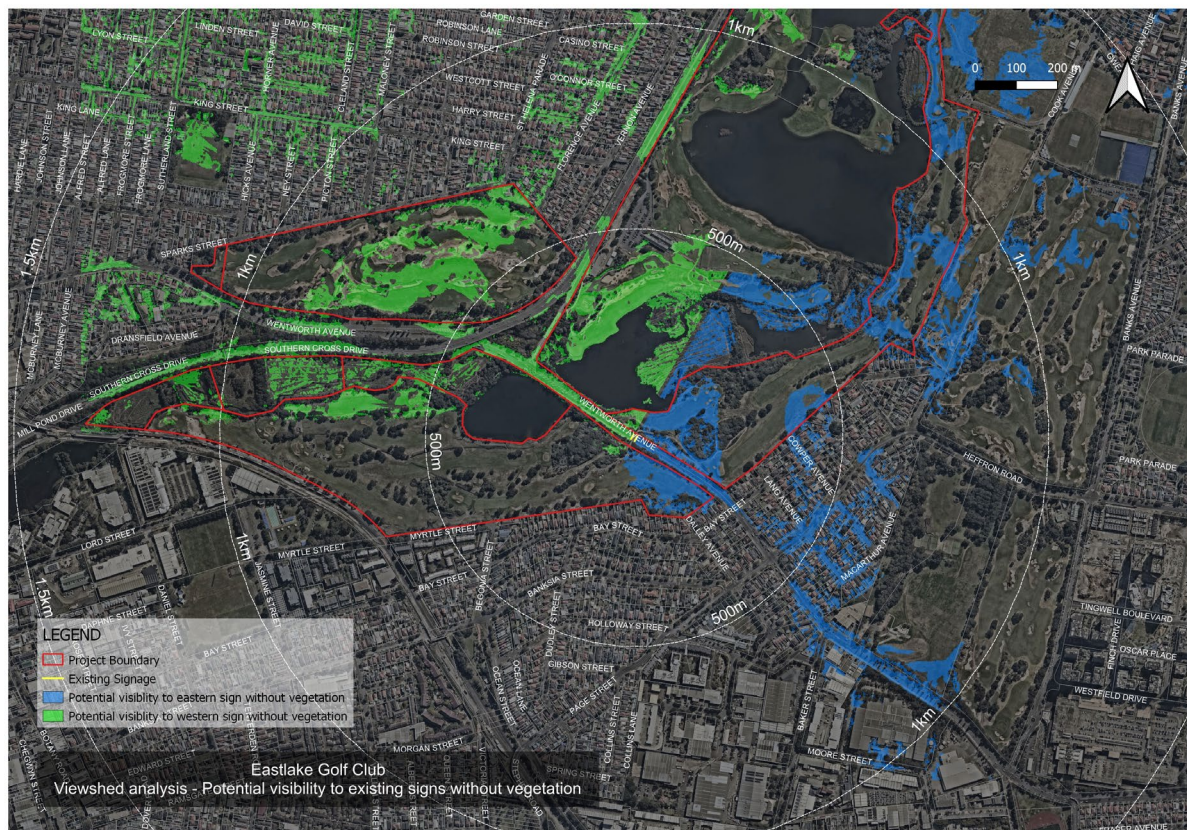


Figure 9 View shed mapping showing potential visibility of the proposal without roadside and golf course vegetation.

Source: Urbis

The removal of all existing vegetation along either side of Wentworth Avenue and within both golf courses would increase the availability of potential views to the signs. Potential visibility as shown should be considered in the context of the limitations stated above, in that visibility could mean to a minor or negligible extent of the sign and does not interpret blocking effects of intervening built form and vegetation within golf courses, which significantly contribute to blocking effects.

East Facing Sign

- The view shed map in Figure 9 is a worst-case scenario, assuming no trees exist within 500m of either sign. Visibility to the sign is predominantly from the north and north-east, within a 500m catchment.
- Visibility to the sign is available from within the road corridor, for a distance of approximately 300m, east of the pedestrian bridge to Bay Street.

- Similarly, there is visibility to the sign from a limited area of golf course for a distance of approximately 300m east along either side of the road.
- Beyond 500m, visibility to any part of the sign is limited to isolated high points within surrounding golf course areas to the north and north-east, and some residential street locations to the south-east.

West Facing Sign

- Visibility to the sign is predominantly from the north and north-west, within a 1km catchment.
- Visibility to the sign is available from within the road corridor, west of the pedestrian bridge for a distance of approximately 450m, west of the pedestrian bridge to Southern Cross Drive.
- Visibility to sign is available from the adjacent wetlands north-west and south-west of Wentworth Avenue.
- Visibility to the sign north of Wentworth Avenue extends north into surrounding golf course areas for a distance of approximately 450m.
- Beyond 500m visibility to the sign is limited to elevated viewing locations within surrounding golf course areas to the north and north-west, some isolated residential street locations, and potentially some locations moving west along Southern Cross Drive.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- Existing visibility to the signs is predominantly constrained to the road corridor and or close elevated locations within adjacent golf courses.
- Removal or significant pruning of trees within the road reserve of Wentworth Avenue will increase potential visibility across immediate areas of the Lakes and to a lesser extent East Lakes golf course.
- Assuming total tree removal, the blocking effects of topography, vegetation and built forms beyond and either side of the road corridor will continue to screen the proposal from more distant view locations within surrounding golf courses.
- Trees along the southern side of Wentworth Avenue are setback from the carriageway by up to 7.5 metres, adjacent to a cycle way and in our opinion are unlikely to be trimmed to an extent that would increase visibility. Further, given the setback, it is unlikely that trees would be removed to manage overhanging vegetation or, for example, to facilitate road widening.
- Vegetation is similarly set back along the northern side of the carriage however to a more limited extent. Given the continuous canopy it is unlikely that trimming of isolated overhanging trees would significantly increase visibility to the signs.
- Potential view impacts for golf course users are unlikely to be direct or clear (free of any screening effects) would be short term and from moving, viewing situations and as such do not attract any 'weight' in terms of significance.
- If visible in more distant locations such as the Lakes Golf Club building and surrounding areas north of Mills Stream, the proposal will be difficult to discern given the spatial separation afforded by the golf course, wetlands, intervening built form including roadways and golf course vegetation.

- The proposal does not impact on any documented views or heritage values as outlined in the Heritage Impact Statement provided by Heritage 21 or the amended HIS issued in October 2023. Based on views captured from historically open areas within East lakes Golf course, we conclude that the signs are sufficiently distanced and screened by intervening topography from the heritage item to an extent that the visual landscape and scenic quality of the items will not be adversely affected.
- This statement remains valid should some or all of the vegetation along both sides of Wentworth Avenue be removed. The screening effects of vegetation within adjoin parts East Lakes and The Lakes golf courses combined with underlying topography (local ridgelines and knolls) will further reduce future potential views creates through streetscape vegetation removal.
- In our opinion, any increased potential visibility of the signs due to the removal of vegetation would generate low visual effects and negligible or visual impact overall.
- The planning proposal in relation to continuing use of the digital signs, is supported on visual impacts grounds.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Maze-Riley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Jane Maze-Riley
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