



16 APRIL, 2025

# VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## MULTI-DWELLING HOUSING

## FLEET STREET, SALAMANDER BAY

PREPARED BY PERCEPTION PLANNING ON BEHALF OF WANDA BEACH ESTATE PTY LTD

REV 1.4

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## PERCEPTION PLANNING



## VERSION HISTORY

- 01/10/2024 - **REVISION 1.0** - FIRST DRAFT
- 02/10/2024 - **REVISION 1.1** - GRAPHICAL CHANGES
- 16/10/2024 - **REVISION 1.2** - MINOR REVIEW CHANGES
- 21/10/2024 - **REVISION 1.3** - ADDRESS REF. CHANGES
- 16/04/2025 - **REVISION 1.4** - PLAN REVISION UPDATE

## PERCEPTION PLANNING

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## DOCUMENTS

The documents to which I have had regard in support of each opinion expressed in this report are:

### 1. Architectural Plans

Prepared by EJE dated 04 April 2025 (Project No.: 14076, Revision N).

# INTRODUCTION

Perception Planning Pty Ltd has been engaged by Wanda Beach Estate to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the construction of a multi-dwelling development at 8 Fleet St Salamander Bay, 11 – 20 & 25 Inlet Close, Salamander Bay, 18 – 24, 26 – 42 Ridgeview Drive, Salamander Bay and 1 – 10 Anchor Cove, Salamander Bay (Lot 2 DP791551 & Lots 1-20, 25-50 DP285191) ('the site').

The purpose of this Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is to assist Port Stephens Council in their assessment and determination of the proposed development and to assist the community in understanding the development and associated impacts relating to scale, height, density and bulk from prominent vistas within the locality.

This VIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice principles, applicable aspects of the Development Assessment Framework and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act) 1979 (s4.15). In the absence of national or state level guidelines for VIA preparation, an approach has been developed in accordance with the following best practice guidelines:

1. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013)
2. Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Landscape Institute Guidance Note, March 2019)
3. NSW Government, 2019, 'Local Character and Place Guideline'.

Changes in views and visual amenity are a consideration within the planning process under s4.15 of the EP&A Act. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely acknowledged that no-one has a 'right to a view'. This includes situations where a residential property's outlook and/or visual amenity is judged to be 'significantly' affected by a proposed development. Visibility is a product of both how easily a site is seen and the number of viewers that see it. Visibility also relates to visual sensitivity and how the viewer is impacted by the development.

The objectives and methodology of this VIA are as follows:

- ◆ To provide a description of the site, existing development and the surrounding locality,
- ◆ To provide a description and nature of the proposed development,
- ◆ To identify and provide a discussion on the prominent vistas towards the proposed development, and
- ◆ To provide an assessment of the impact of the development on the visual amenity of the surrounding locality.

For the purposes of the assessment, two key criteria; 'sensitivity to change' and 'magnitude of change' have been used to identify and assess the level of potential visual impact, as follows:

## Criteria 1: Sensitivity

Sensitivity includes both the 'susceptibility' of the viewer or receptor, and the 'value' of the landscape in which the viewer experiences change. These two concepts are co-dependent in determining the sensitivity of a landscape and the extent to which it can accept change of a particular type and scale without adverse effects on its character. Generally, the key factors for consideration is based on the number of people affected, land use and the distance of the viewer from the proposal (EDAW, 2000). In this case, sensitivity can be reasonably assumed in advance. Those living within view of the site are usually regarded as the highest sensitivity group, as it is recognised that in considering the likely effects on visual amenity experienced by residents that 'residents at home, especially using rooms normally occupied in walking or daylight hours, are likely to experience views for longer than those briefly passing through an area' (GLVIA3 para 6.36).

The subject site is located within a visually significant area of the LGA and forms part of the locally significant residential coastal landscape character along Fleet Street which is situated within Salamander Bay. Thus, it is a requirement that a visual analysis be prepared and submitted outlining the impact of the proposed development within its visual landscape.

This VIA seeks to respond to Council's requirements.

## Criteria 2: Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change at any particular residential or rural-residential property depends on the nature, scale and duration of the particular change that is expected to occur and is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on interpretation of the following parameters:

- a. Distance of the property from the development
- b. Extent of the development in the view
- c. Angle of view in relation to orientation of the property
- d. Proportion of the view occupied by the development
- e. Local context in which the development is seen
- f. Extent of other built development visible, in particular vertical elements

02

## THE DEVELOPMENT AND SITE

The proposed development comprises the construction of multi-dwelling housing and community title subdivision (including part change of use element), including:

1. Construction of multi-dwelling housing and community title subdivision (including part change of use element), including:
  - a. Construction of 30 new townhouses (mix of two & three storeys, and three storeys with basement), comprising:
    - ◆ 28 x 3 bdr units (an alternative floor plan is provided for typology 2, which includes 5 x 4 bdr units, depending on market demands. This is to be considered as an option for DA assessment, however, does not contribute to addition unit counts).
    - ◆ 2 x 2 bdr Units
2. Conversion of all existing units (36) to dwellings. 25 do no not require any development works. 11 require minor alterations including interior renovations and addition of awning and deck to each.
3. Construction of internal road network (Angel Close) to connect to existing.
4. Conversion of existing tennis court to landscaped area.
5. Construction of four x new double garages (G3), two x new double garages and 1 x new double carport within (G2) for use by caravans etc adjoining Fleet Street.
6. Stormwater Infrastructure & Landscaping works.
7. Community Title Subdivision of proposed dwellings into the existing Scheme.

The site is located at 8 Fleet St Salamander Bay, 11 – 20 & 25 Inlet Close, Salamander Bay, 18 – 24, 26 – 42 Ridgeview Drive, Salamander Bay and 1 – 10 Anchor Cove, Salamander Bay (Lot 2 DP791551 & Lots 1-20, 25-50 DP285191). The site currently maintains direct vehicular and pedestrian access from Fleet Street which will be maintained as part of the development. The site is zoned R2 – Low Density Residential and adjoins residentially zoned land to the north, south and east and connects to Stoney Ridge Reserve to the west of the site.

03

## ADDITIONAL VIEW ANALYSIS

To inform additional assessment, montages have been created from key viewpoints as shown in the map overleaf:





**PERCEPTION  
PLANNING**



**VIEWPOINT 01**

72.227°W

**VIEWPOINT 02**

26.906°W

**VIEWPOINT 03**

71.512°E

**VIEWPOINT 04**

106.682°W

**VIEWPOINT 05**

53.186°E

**VIEWPOINT 06**

177.740°W



**VIEWPOINT 01**

72.227°W

ORIGINAL

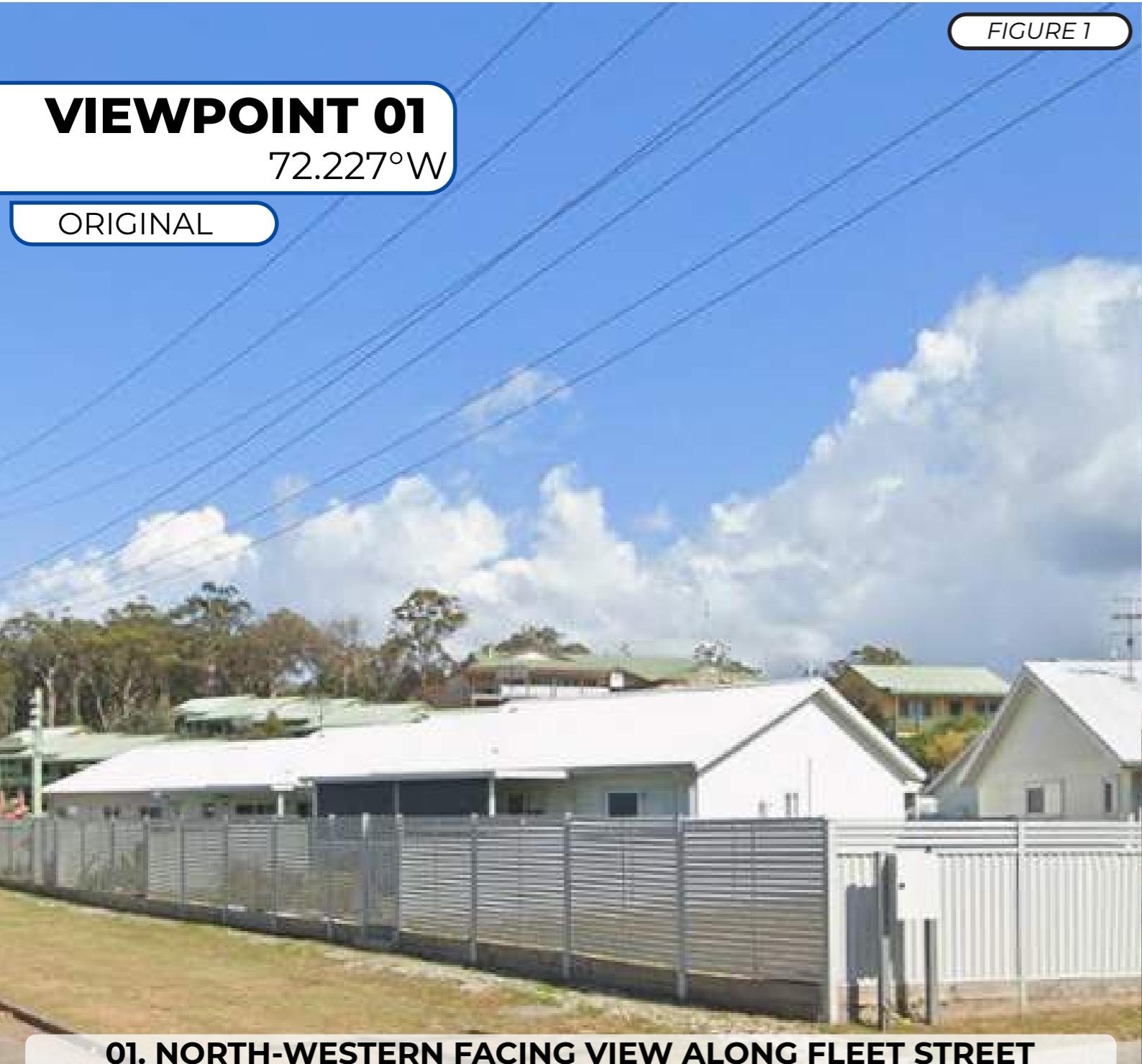


FIGURE 1

**01. NORTH-WESTERN FACING VIEW ALONG FLEET STREET**

When viewing the Site from eastern most corner of the development in a north-westerly direction, it is evident that the proposed development will result in a minor increase to built form and height internally to the site. As evidenced in **FIGURES 1** and **2**, the visual impact of the development when viewed from Fleet Street is negligible, given the additional building height is proposed to the rear of the site with the existing built form along Fleet Street to be maintained. Due to the slope of the site, there are existing cabins visible from the road reserve to the rear of the site (**FIGURE 1**). These built forms will be modernized as a result of the proposed development with an increase to building height proposed. The magnitude of this change is considered to align with existing redevelopment and modernization of sites as demonstrated within the surrounding locality and particularly along Soldiers Point Road.

FIGURE 2



PROPOSED

It is noted that an exceedance to the maximum built height control of 9m does occur on site however is associated with the central portion of the site which does not present a significant change from the Fleet Street road reserve. The proposed structures at the rear of the site, demonstrated in **FIGURE 2**, are compliant with the prescribed 9m maximum height of building control in accordance with Clause 4.3 of the PSLEP 2013. The Site slopes downward from the northern boundary to the southern side adjoining Fleet Street therefore resulting in a tiered visual impact of the proposed development.

**VIEWPOINT 02**

26.906°W

ORIGINAL

**02. VIEW FROM ENTRANCE**

When viewing the Site from the entrance connecting from Fleet Street, the development retains the existing road networks available to the site, as evidenced in **FIGURE 3** and **4**. The proposed development alters the built form most noticeably within the central portion of the site, as such minimizing the sensitivity impact for adjoining neighbours. This is resultant from minor alterations to the cabins adjoining Fleet Street proposed that will revitalise the built form without resulting in substantial visual impact. When viewing the site from the entrance to Fleet Street, the extent of change is most visually noticeable to the central portion of the site where two storey and three storey dwellings are proposed. The proposed development will update and modernize the existing cabins on site to provide diverse housing opportunities within the site.

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4



PROPOSED

**VIEWPOINTS 03-06****PROPOSED****FIGURE 5****FIGURE 6****PROPOSED**

71.512°E

106.682°W

**PROPOSED****FIGURE 7****FIGURE 8****PROPOSED**

53.186°E

177.740°W

### 03. VARIED VIEWS WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

The following viewpoints demonstrate various aspects from within the development site. **FIGURE 5** demonstrates the proposed alterations to the existing cabins to the front portion of the site. The magnitude of change resulting from these alterations are minor in nature and anticipated to improve the contemporary nature of development through a revised colour and materials schedule.

**FIGURE 6** and **7** demonstrate the proposed two storey developments that dominate the central portion of the site. The bulk and scale have been carefully taken into consideration in terms of the existing topography of the land to reduce massing, bulk, scale and height impact. It is noted that a minor height exceedance to the maximum height of building control of 9m occurs as a result of the natural topography of the site. This occurs most predominately along the southern side of proposed Angel Close with the maximum exceedance being 1.6m. When viewing the development along these corridors, the built form aligns in scale and colours/materials therefore the visual impact of the height exceedance is negligible.

The built form within the development site demonstrates three different dwelling typologies, with **FIGURE 8** presenting a small amount of three storey dwellings to the western boundary of the development site. Due to the natural topography of the site, these dwellings are suitable with only a minor exceedance relating to height of building control. These proposed three storey dwellings are largely shielded from public viewpoints due to the setback into the subject site therefore is not anticipated to contribute to the sensitivity of visual impact. Additionally, the land adjoining the site to the west (8 Fleet Street; Lot 2 in DP791551) is held in private ownership by the proponent of the proposal. The proposed development from this location is well integrated into the surrounds and does not result in a dominating structure to the skyline or existing streetscape.



## VIEWPOINT 07

PROPOSED

FIGURE 9



## VIEWPOINT 08

PROPOSED

FIGURE 10



## VIEWPOINT 09

PROPOSED

FIGURE 11



## 04. VARIED VIEWS FROM THE WATER

The adjacent viewpoints (**FIGURES 9-11**) relate to how the proposed development could be seen from the water. The sensitivity change on these vistas is high, as the proposed development is located in a visually significant area of the LGA, located adjacent to a ridgeline. The proceeding discussion will discuss the magnitude of the proposed visual change.

**FIGURE 9** demonstrates how the proposed development is obscured behind existing vegetation. This also means that the proposed development is below the ridgeline, which reduces its overall impact on vistas from the water. Limited assessment of this viewpoint is required, given the level of screening provided by the existing vegetation. The magnitude of change from this viewpoint is considered to be negligible.

**FIGURE 10** is a viewpoint where the proposed development is above established residential development and vegetation in the foreground, due to the rise in topography of the site, but is below the ridgeline to the rear of the site. The massing of the development from this angle is not dissimilar to existing development in the surrounding area, and the materials and colours chosen for the proposed development will ensure that it will not be a visually obtrusive element in the vista from the water. Further, the pitch of the roofs has been made shallower, which will further reduce the overall bulk and scale of the proposed development, further minimising the visual impacts of the proposed development from this viewpoint. As noted previously, while the sensitivity to visual change is high, the magnitude of visual change along this viewpoint is considered to be low, given the treatments to the overall materials and colours.

**FIGURE 11** is a viewpoint with a similar overall visual impact as **FIGURE 10**. In this viewpoint the proposed development sits between vegetation in the background and foreground, demonstrating that the proposed development is below the ridgeline. The far end of the figure (which is to the south) shows a dwelling house, of a similar material and colour to the proposed development, is located at a similar longitudinal place in the vista presented by **FIGURE 11**. In a similar way to **FIGURE 8**, the viewpoint presented by **FIGURE 11** does not have a magnitude in visual change higher than low, due to similar development, the location below the ridgeline, and the appropriate materials and colours that help the development to 'fit in' to the landscape.

As demonstrated above, from the additional viewpoints provided from **FIGURES 9-11**, the magnitude of visual change is low overall. Amendments to the design, including a shallower roof pitch, and a reduction in the total amount of units on the site, all combine to produce a visual outcome that will not significantly adversely affect the visual appeal or significance of the vistas presented.

## 04

# CONCLUSION

When considering the effect of the proposed development from the provided viewpoints, the level of impact is determined by a combination of:

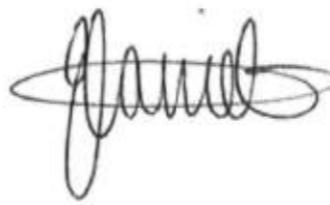
- ◆ The number of people with a view towards the development from any one location;
- ◆ The distance between a person and components of the development; and
- ◆ Duration of time that a person may view the development.

This VIA has found that the proposed development would have a low to medium visual effect on the existing visual catchment surrounding the subject site. Visibility of the development is most prominent from the adjoining Fleet Street; however, visibility quickly decreases when stepping away from the site due to the existing development adjoining the site to the east and mature vegetation/bushland to the west. There are a number of dwellings to the east which have undergone renovation or new construction activity to present modern facades along Soldiers Point Road, therefore it is anticipated that the proposed development aligns with the ongoing revitalisation of the R2 zoned area and is not out of character for the locality.

The existing landscape character of the subject site is predominantly suburban residential. The site's natural topography has informed the overall layout of the development with two storey development presented along the central spine of the development area with three storey dwellings provided to the western boundary to minimise the visual and height impact. It is noted that the proposal includes several dwellings that exceed the prescribed Clause 4.3 - maximum height of building being 9m. These dwellings are set well into site with the exceedance resulting from the topography of the site and extensive construction requirements to reduce the dwellings below the 9m height control. The dwellings will maintain a consistent pattern of development along these areas of height exceedance to minimise visual disparity along these corridors.

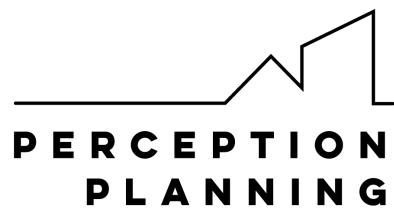
The greatest visual impact occurs fronting the development within Fleet Street; which is resultant of the site naturally rising topography from the front southern boundary into the site therefore resulting in a tiered view of the development. The neighbouring site to the south is identified as an Over 50s Lifestyle Community. It is noted these neighbouring dwellings do not gain access from Fleet Street and as such, the rear of the lifestyle dwellings faces the development site. The existing cabin style dwelling will be retained within the front portion of the subject site therefore it is not anticipated to result in disproportionate view impacts for these neighbouring dwellings due to the magnitude of change being minimal from their outlook. Additionally, it is not anticipated that any unreasonable overshadowing will occur as a result of the proposed development to the neighbouring dwellings.

It is maintained that the proposed development is consistent with and complimentary to the established scale and character of the area with minimal visual impact on the surrounding visual landscape. The development does not propose an envelope or scale that is incompatible with the high-quality natural setting, particularly noting that the height and scale sit within the confines of the established vegetation to the west and existing scale of residential development that surrounds the site. Precinct character is established by the proposed built form, materials and colours. The development contributes to the ongoing use and nature of the site without adversely affecting the character of the existing streets and associated development. The proposed development includes visually compatible elements within the streetscape and results in a positive impact to the subject site and locality.



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