

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

LOT 3, LAKEWOOD DRIVE MERIMBULA



SEPTEMBER 2022
PRELIMINARY
PREPARED FOR JUSTICE FOX PROPERTY GROUP PTY LTD

GREEN SPACE PLANNING Co.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Green Space Planning has been commissioned by the Justice Fox Property Group Pty Ltd. to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed Seniors Living Development (the Proposal) on Lot 3, Lakewood Drive, Merimbula (the Site).

1.2 THE PROPOSAL

Is is proposed to develop the Site for the purposes of Seniors Living housing and associated infrastructure.

1.3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides a qualitative and quantitative assessment of visibility and potential visual impacts of the proposal on the surrounding environment.

The process undertaken in developing this report included desk-top research and field analysis work (August 2022) to identify key viewpoints and locations with potential views towards the site. An analysis of the landscape character and visual setting has been assessed, with a further appraisal of potential visual impacts and identification of landscape treatments which will assist in the mitigation of any visual impact of the proposed development.

1.4 EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

The information in this report is provided to assist in understanding the likely visual impact of the proposal and what impact may occur and how this may be positively managed, to ensure the immediate area and its broader surroundings are not overly modified or diminished.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The structure of the Report is outlined below:

- Section 1 - introduces the report;
- Section 2 - describes the study methodology;
- Section 3 - describes the context and landscape setting of the Site;
- Section 4 - describes the components of the Proposal;
- Section 5 - describes key viewpoint analysis;
- Section 6 - assesses the potential visual impacts of the Proposal;
- Section 7 - describes the recommended mitigation measures, and
- Section 8 - summaries the assessment findings.

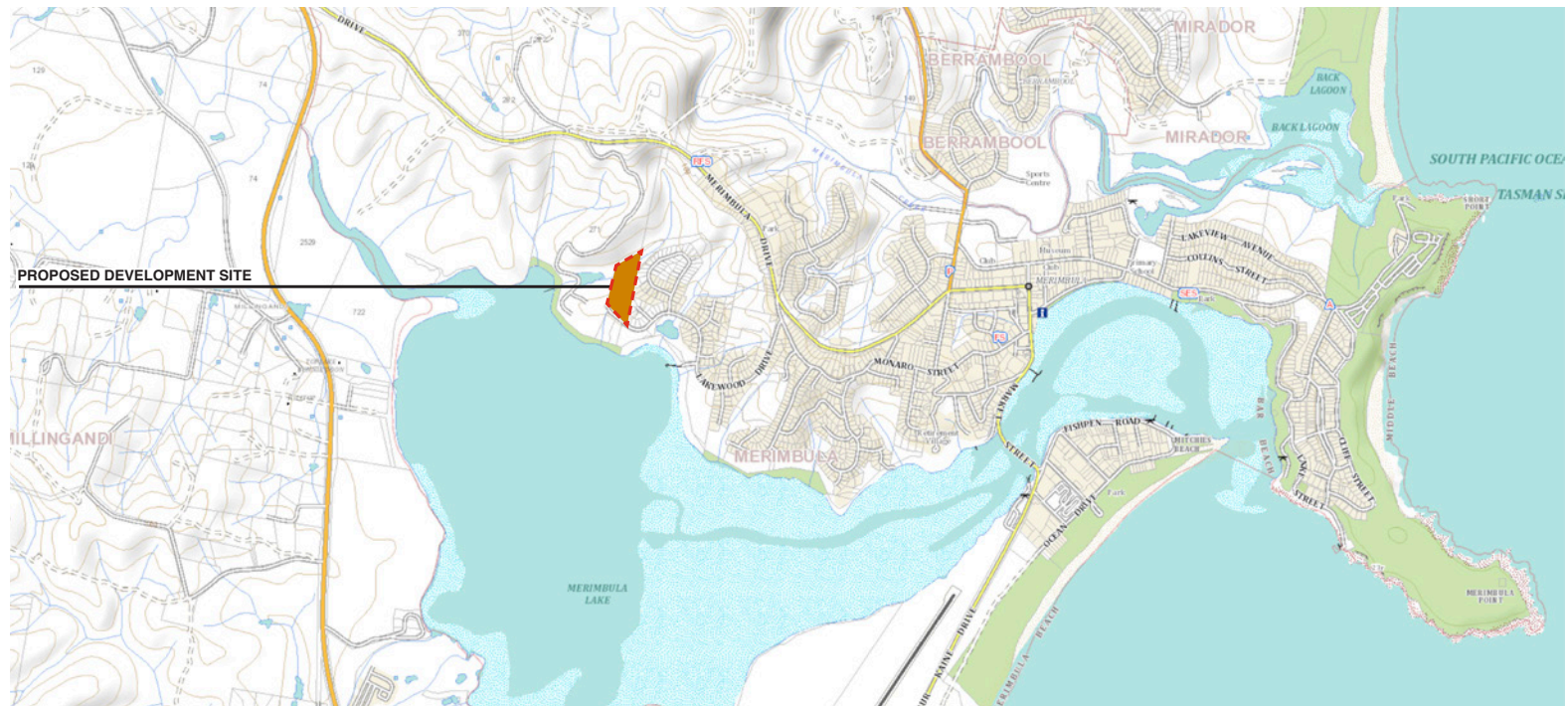


FIGURE 1: Site Location

2. METHODOLOGY

The objective of a VIA is to identify and determine the value, significance and sensitivity of the landscape and the visual effect of the Proposal on people's views day to day. As there are no specific legislative requirements for the methodology of VIA for the state of New South Wales, guidance for the methodology has been sourced from:

- The Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).
- Guidance Note EIA-N04 Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, NSW State Government, Roads and Maritime Services (2013).

The method to measure impact is based on the combination of the sensitivity of the existing area or view to change and the effect (scale, contrast, quality, distance) of the proposal on that area or view. Assessment methodology was taken in stages as follows:

- An assessment of the existing conditions of the study area was undertaken. This provides a baseline assessment for visual impacts;
- Detailed viewpoint assessment. Through a combination of desktop study and fieldwork, key viewpoints are selected to represent the range of views within the study area. The viewpoints selected can be inferred for other proximate viewpoints with similar views and levels of sensitivity.
- Evaluate the impact based on the determination of two factors: sensitivity to change and magnitude of change ('visual modification').

2.1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The potential visual impact of a Proposal is assessed on the relationship between the visual sensitivity and level of visual modification.



2.2 VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Visual sensitivity is a measure of how critically a change to the existing landscape would be regarded based on the use of the area from where it is viewed (Brush and Shafer, 1975). There are differing sensitivity levels based on the different activities undertaken within a particular landscape setting. The assessment is therefore based on the number of people affected, land use, and the distance of the viewer from the Proposal (EDAW, 2000).

Determining the visual sensitivity is dependent on a range of characteristics. The primary characteristics are:

- Land Use - visual sensitivity and the character of the setting. This considers the expectation of a viewer of a particular visual experience;
- Distance - visual sensitivity decreases as the viewer's distance from the Proposal increases;
- Viewing time - visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time decreases;
- Viewer Activity - visual sensitivity can also be related to the activity the viewer is undertaking. E.g. a viewer passing by a scene in a car is likely to be less affected than someone engaged in a recreational activity.

Sensitivity ratings are defined as high, moderate, low or negligible and are shown in Table 1.

2.3 VISUAL MODIFICATION

Visual effect describes any significant changes to the landscape and visual amenity that is likely to occur as a result of the Proposal from a particular viewpoint, including:

- the prominence of the Proposal and its individual components with regard to scale, form, colour and texture in contrast with the surrounding landscape;
- the compatibility of the development within the context of the particular landscape setting and the ability for that landscape setting to absorb change.

Visual effect is not easily predicted objectively, and interpretation and professional judgement is applied.

The assessment of visual effect was based on the Proposal concept master plan. It includes consideration of the proposed landscape master plan and considers that the level of amelioration would improve over time as vegetation matures.

Visual modification ratings are defined as high, moderate, low or negligible and are shown in Table 1.

2.4 VISUAL IMPACT

Visual impact is the combined effect of visual sensitivity and visual effect. The matrix below (URBIS, 2009) illustrates the various combinations of visual sensitivity and visual effect which can result in high, moderate or low overall visual impacts.

TABLE 1: Visual Impact Matrix

			SCALE OF VISUAL MODIFICATION			
			HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
			The proposal is highly visible and intrusive in regard to the size, scale and geographical extent, and would disrupt views currently experienced from sensitive land use areas and/or strongly contrasts with the existing landscape setting which has limited capacity for change.	The proposal partially intrudes in regard to the size, scale and geographical extent or somewhat obstructs current views from sensitive land use areas and/or a noticeable compositional change to the existing landscape setting in which there is moderate capacity for change.	The proposal is barely perceptible resulting in minor deterioration to the view currently experienced from sensitive land use areas; and/or results in a small change to the existing landscape setting in which change is possible without harm.	There is minimal compositional contrast and a high level of integration of form, line, shape, pattern, colour, or texture values between the proposal and the environment in which it sits. In this situation, the proposal may be noticeable, but does not markedly contrast with the existing landscape setting.
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	HIGH	INDICATOR People with a proprietary interest and prolonged viewing opportunities such as those in dwellings or visitors to attractive and/or well-used recreational facilities. Views from a regionally important location whose interest is specifically focussed on the landscape e.g. from lookouts or areas within National Parks.	HIGH IMPACT	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE
	MODERATE	People with an interest in their environment e.g. visitors to environmental areas, bush walkers and horse riders etc...those travelling with an interest in their surroundings.	HIGH-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	LOW	People with a passing interest in their surroundings e.g. those travelling along local roads between townships, or people whose interest is not specifically focussed on the wider landscape e.g. service providers or commuters.	MODERATE	MODERATE-LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
	NEGLIGIBLE	People with no specific interest in their surroundings or those with occasional and transient views travelling at speed along highways or from a place of work where attention may not be focussed on surrounding views.	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE

3. SITE CONTEXT AND APPRAISAL

3.1 THE SITE

The subject land, referred to as 'the Site', is located on Lakewood Drive, Merimbula and occupies the lot know as Lot 602 in DP 1277714. The site is located on a 2.9 hectare (approximately) parcel of land, on the northern side of Lakewood Drive (at the cul-de-sac) with views overlooking Lake Merimbula to the south.

The site is currently vacant and has been largely cleared of vegetation, except for the northern portion of the site which contains dense bushland.

Topographically the site is highest (approx. 32 AHD) towards the south-east of the site and falls moderately to the centre, where it then falls relatively steeply down toward the rear northern boundary (approx. 8 AHD).

The site is zoned C2 (Environmental Conservation), R3 (Medium Density Residential) and C3 (Environmental Management).

3.1 SITE CONTEXT

Situated within the local government area of Bega Valley Shire Council, the site is located approximately 2 kilometres west of the main town centre of Merimbula and approximately 28 kilometres north of Eden.

In relation to land use immediately surrounding the site:

LOT	FEATURES
North	Bushland Land Zoning: C3 Environmental Management Land Zoning: C2 Environmental Conservation Land Zoning: C4 Environmental Living
South	Residential Land Zoning: R3 Medium Density Residential
East	Vacant Land Zoning: C2 Environmental Conservation Land Zoning: R3 Medium Density Residential
West	Holiday Accommodation (Robyn's Nest Guest House) Land Zoning: C2 Environmental Conservation Land Zoning: R3 Medium Density Residential Land Zoning: C3 Environmental Management



IMAGE 1: LOOKING EAST TOWARD THE RESIDENTIAL BOUNDARY AND GLIMPSES OF THE LAKE TO THE SOUTH-EAST.



IMAGE 2: LOOKING SOUTH TOWARD VIEWS OF THE LAKE FROM THE FRONT OF THE SITE. THE LAND FALLS AWAY DOWN TO THE FORESHORE WHICH IS DENSELY VEGETATED.



IMAGE 3: LOOKING NORTH-WEST TOWARD THE ENTRANCE TO THE SITE. DENSE BUSHLAND PROVIDES THE DOMINANT BACKDROP.



IMAGE 4: LOOKING NORTH TOWARD THE BUSHLAND TO THE REAR OF THE SITE. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE LAND SLOPES FAIRLY STEEPLY FROM THE FRONT OF THE SITE.

3.3 EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape character is the combined effect and relationship of many natural elements including topography, vegetation, waterbodies and other natural features with built infrastructure and land use.

WATERBODIES

Merimbula is a coastal resort town located on the New South Wales Sapphire Coast. Merimbula Lake is a vast and an outstanding feature of the town. The site is located within close proximity of the lake (approx. 180m) and affords expansive views of the lake. Residential housing situated within the same catchment would also value views looking to the south out to the lake.

A tributary of Merimbula Creek runs along the northern portion of the Site.

VEGETATION

A large portion of the land surrounding the site is densely vegetated and encircles the site around the foreshore of Merimbula Lake and up into the higher elevated areas above the site.

TOPOGRAPHY

The topography surrounding the site has rolling to steep hills, with elevations up to elevations of 100 Australian Height Datum (AHD) (refer to Figure 2 - Topography and Elevation). Merimbula Drive to the north and east of the site, runs along the top ridgeline. Land to the south of the site falls away down to the foreshore of Lake Merimbula.

BUILT FORM

The site is accessed via Lakewood Drive, which connects to Merimbula Drive providing a connection into the main town centre of Merimbula.

Resort accommodation sits low to the west and consists of scattered dwellings within tree planting. Residential housing extends from the site's eastern boundary and spreads up into the higher ground to the north and east. Settlement around the lake is established and widespread along the foreshore.

Merimbula also has an airport, which is approximately 2.5km from the site.



FIGURE 2: REGIONAL CONTEXT (SOURCE SIXMAPS)



FIGURE 3: TOPOGRAPHY (SOURCE MECONE)

3.3 EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



IMAGE 5: MERIMBULA TOWN CENTRE



IMAGE 6: BOAT HOUSE AND JETTY ON LAKE MERIMBULA. VIEWS TO THE MOUNTAIN RANGES BEYOND.



IMAGE 7: LAKE MERIMBULA WITH VIEWS ACROSS TO THE MOUNTAIN RANGES



IMAGE 8: RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT ON THE FORESHORE OF LAKE MERIMBULA



IMAGE 9: VIEW LOOKING FROM THE SITE UP TO THE RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT TO THE EAST.



IMAGE 10: DENSE BUSHLAND AROUND THE FORESHORE OF THE LAKE, WITH VEGETATED ROLLING HILLS IN THE BACKGROUND.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The proposed development will facilitate a Seniors Community Living residential development which features:

- Independent living units within four-storey apartment blocks
- Bowling club and green
- Pool and pool house
- Multi-use spaces

The ridgeline of the main building is RL43.9. The height of the building closest to the western boundary being lower with the roof terrace area at RL40.4. The bulk of the development runs along the front boundary and through the centre of the site. The location of the pool and bowling green on the eastern side allows for a greater setback from the adjoining boundary to the existing residential housing to the west and provides an opportunity for a landscape buffer.

Materials

External building facades are mix of white painted concrete, PGH Burlesque 'Majestic Grey' masonry, glass balustrading, timber and vertical cladding in a coastal colour palette. The use of these materials provides a neutrally coloured appearance to the development. In addition it is proposed to create a large feature green wall to the southern facade of the building. No dominant bright colours are proposed with the building form which could potentially draw attention to the development from visual receptors. It is expected that once the landscape has become established any dominance of the materiality will become less apparent over time.

Site access & parking

Access for all vehicles will be entering from Lakewood Drive. A large portion of the car parking will be on the ground level of Building 2. An additional car park is proposed toward the rear of the site. Internal fire truck access has been allowed for around buildings as required.

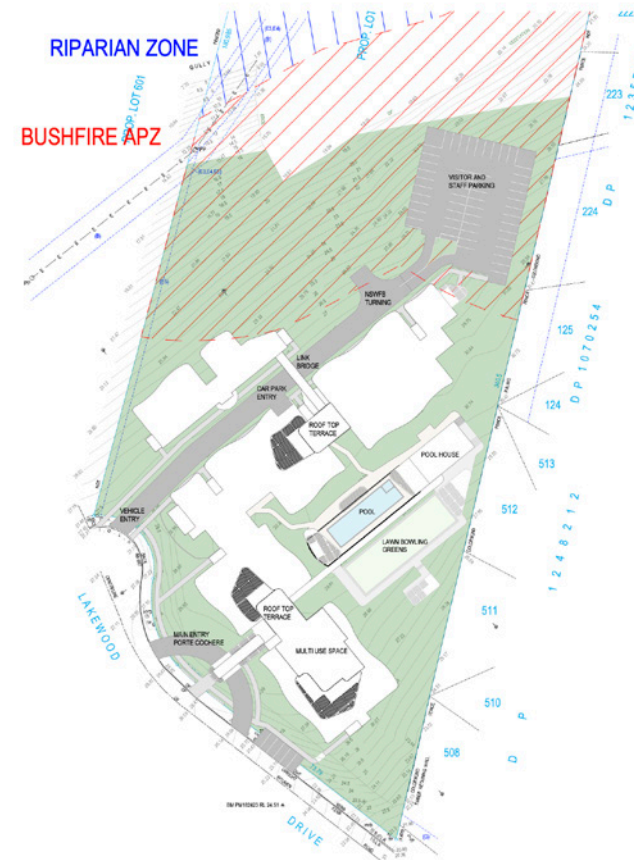


FIGURE 4: SITE PLAN (SOURCE ELK ARCHITECTS)



FIGURE 5: PROPOSED ELEVATION (SOURCE ELK ARCHITECTS)

5. VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

5.1 VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSAL

An analysis of the broader and local context of the area surrounding the Site was undertaken to determine the extent of the area from which the Site would be potentially visible from a person standing on the ground. Consideration of topography and existing vegetation from a desk-top study determined potential viewpoints and these were then confirmed in the field from publicly accessible viewpoints, such as roads, public reserves and footpaths.

A total of 11 viewpoints have been nominated for assessment (refer Figure 6). A greater number of sites were visited, including Merimbula Airport, Merimbula Town Centre and across the lake to the Pembula Merimbula Golf Course to determine whether there would be potentially sensitive views to the site from these areas which are typically more populated. A combination of long range distance, topography and vegetation determined that the impact would be nil or negligible.

Given the nature of the land form and the dense vegetation which surrounds the site; the viewpoints which have been assessed focus on sites within a local range. Access to private properties was not available. The selection of viewpoints have been determined to represent a range of locations to illustrate a combination of:

- a range of distances from the Site;
- areas of high scenic value;
- varying extent of visibility of the Proposal;

The symbols and numbering identified on Figure 6 indicate the locations from viewpoints close to nearby sensitive residential receptors and significant vantage points within the surrounding public domain. The most visual sensitive receptors are those properties along the eastern residential boundary and the retreat accommodation to the west.

5.2 VISUAL IMPACT

The viewpoint assessment provides a description and analysis of the existing visual landscape. A rating was given for the level of modification and sensitivity, which when combined, provide a determination of the degree of overall visual impact for each viewing location.



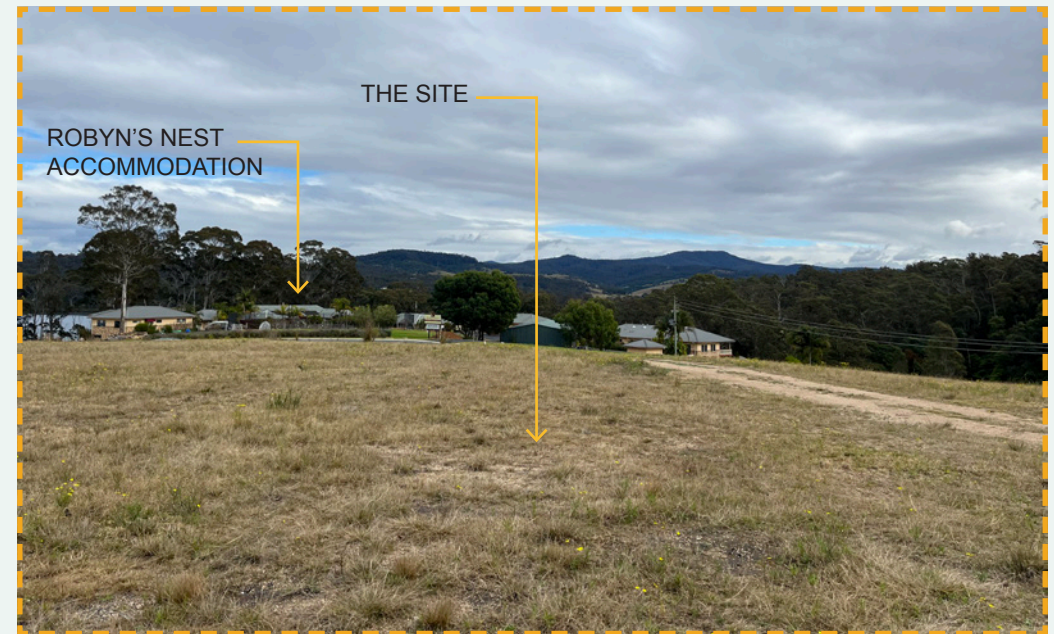
FIGURE 6: VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS (SOURCE SIX MAPS)

VIEW 01 - RESIDENTIAL BOUNDARY

Distance to site	Boundary
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	West
Elevation	24 - 32 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph is representational to illustrate the proximity of the residential properties which adjoin the site. The photo was taken within the site, as access into the private properties was not possible. Across the site, Robyn's Nest retreat accommodation, can be viewed with views beyond to the bushland and mountain ranges.
Anticipated change to view	Being within a short range of the site, the proposal would result in a major change to the pre-development view across the site looking west. Residences on the higher elevation, which already enjoy views out to Merimbula Lake will not have these obstructed by the development.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered moderate . Whilst the residential housing along the adjoining boundary are in close proximity to the development, the introduction of new building elements is not uncharacteristic within this settlement zone. Views (for housing which it currently applies) to the broader lake will not be obscured by the proposal. It is anticipated that any impact will be reduced in 5-10 years due to the landscaping buffer proposed for the setback and along the adjoining boundary.
Significance of impact	High - Moderate



VIEW 01: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 02 - ROBYN'S NEST BOUNDARY

Distance to site	Boundary
Land Use	Retreat Accommodation
Viewing direction	West
Elevation	28 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken at the corner of the site and the entry to Robyn's Nest retreat accommodation. Across the site, the existing residential dwellings can be seen with views beyond up to the bushland and mountain ranges.
Anticipated change to view	Being within a short range of the site, the proposal would result in a major change to the pre-development view across the site looking north-east. The accommodation housing is orientated south towards the lake. Visibility of the proposal therefore would likely be upon entering and exiting the accommodation. The proposal will alter views to the north-east, however it will not obstruct any views out to the lake.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be those visiting with an interest in their surroundings (e.g. lake) with prolonged viewing opportunities.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered moderate . Whilst the retreat accommodation is in close proximity to the development, the introduction of new building elements is not uncharacteristic within this settlement zone. Views to the lake and beyond will not be obscured by the proposal. Screen planting along this boundary will be constrained by the Asset Protection Zone in place which incorporates this side of the lot. However some tree planting will be possible and it is anticipated that any impact will be reduced in 5-10 years once this is established.
Significance of impact	High - Moderate

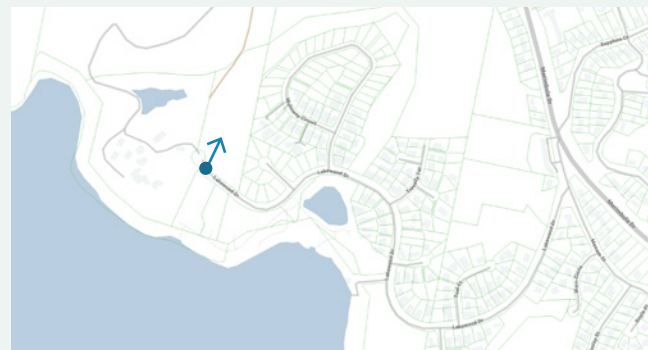


VIEW 02: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 03 - LAKEWOOD DRIVE

Distance to site	15M (approximately)
Land Use	Vacant
Viewing direction	North-East
Elevation	26 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken on the southern side of Lakewood Drive, on the grass verge. At this location the land slopes up from the street level to the top of the Site. The vacant lot sits in the foreground, with residences visible in the centre and a backdrop of dense vegetation which rises up to the ridgeline.
Anticipated change to view	Being within a short range of the site, the proposal would result in a noticeable change in the form of the building frontage and associated infrastructure appearing in what is now vacant open space. The built form will obstruct views to the bushland backdrop. The primary view however, is behind the viewer looking outward to Merimbula Lake.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered low as the key sensitive receivers would be road users who would have short term, transient views. Pedestrian activity would be very low.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered moderate as the development, viewed from this receptor, will form a new and recognizable element. It is anticipated that it will be reduced in 5-10 years due to significant landscaping proposed for the setback and along the road verge.
Significance of impact	Moderate-Low



VIEW 03: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 04 - ROBIN CLOSE

Distance to site	40m (approximately)
Location	Residential
Viewing direction	North-West
Elevation	20 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken within the cul-de-sac of Robin Close looking through a currently vacant lot, towards the site. At this viewing location the receptor sits lower than the highest point of the project site. Residential housing backing onto the site sit elevated up from the street level. The rear yards of these houses line the site's eastern boundary.
Anticipated change to view	It is likely that the proposal may be visible, however the current design set back of the building would mean a partial, if any alteration to the pre-development view. The potential for a new dwelling to be built on the existing vacant lot of land would also contribute to blocking any views of the development. The proposal will not obscure any views from this viewing location to Merimbula Lake.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered low as the development, viewed from this receptor, will form a minor alteration within the landscape. The building setback and allowance for a vegetation buffer within the proposal, along the eastern boundary, will assist in obscuring the proposal.
Significance of impact	Moderate

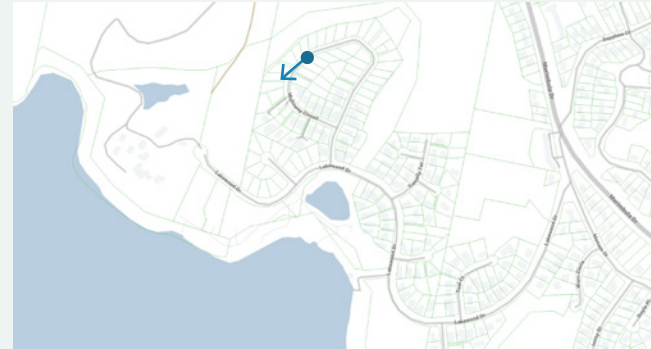


VIEW 04: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 05 - MULLAWAY CIRCUIT

Distance to site	145M (approximately)
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	South-west
Elevation	28 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken on the western side of Mullaway Circuit from the footpath. The northern portion of the site is visible at short to medium distance views.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be partially visible. The dense bushland along the site's riparian zone prevents views to the entire site. The final building height will present as a taller form however, the additional mass will not project above the skyline, ensuring the composition of the background view toward the ranges behind are retained.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered moderate as whilst the proposal will not substantially change the scale and quality of the view, it will partially alter the pre-development view. It is anticipated however that views to the proposal will be reduced in 5-10 years due to the vegetation buffer to be planted along the eastern boundary.
Significance of impact	High-Moderate

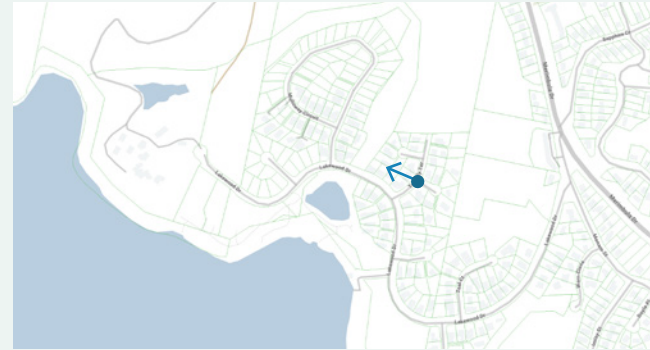


VIEW 05: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 06 - SNAPPER COURT AND TREVALLY TERRACE

Distance to site	390M (approximately)
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	North-West
Elevation	32 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken on the northern corner of Snapper Court and Trevally Terrace. From this viewing location the site is visible at medium distance views. In the foreground existing residential housing is visible and in the background the mountain ranges.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be visible from this location and will reduce views to the mountain ranges and horizon in the background. The proposal will not obscure any views out to Merimbula Lake. The scale of the proposal will present as a taller form, however the existing residential housing in the foreground will assist in absorbing the new built form into the landscape.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered moderate as whilst the proposal will not substantially change the scale and quality of the view, it will partially alter the pre-development view. It is anticipated however that views to the proposal will be reduced in 5-10 years due to the vegetation buffer to be planted along the eastern boundary.
Significance of impact	Moderate

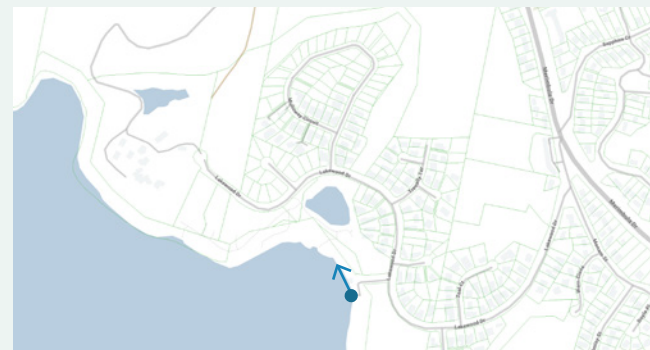


VIEW 06: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 07 - SNAPPER COURT AND TREVALLY TERRACE

Distance to site	390M (approximately)
Land Use	Foreshore / Park
Viewing direction	North-West
Elevation	2 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken on the southern side of Merimbula Lake boat house and jetty. The project would be located to the north-west from this location.
Anticipated change to view	A combination of the topography of the headland together with the densely vegetated foreshore would prevent views across to the site. There would be no visible change in the existing view.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered moderate as the key sensitive receivers would be visitors to the lake and bush walkers with an interest in their surroundings.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered negligible as the proposal will not change the existing view.
Significance of impact	Negligible

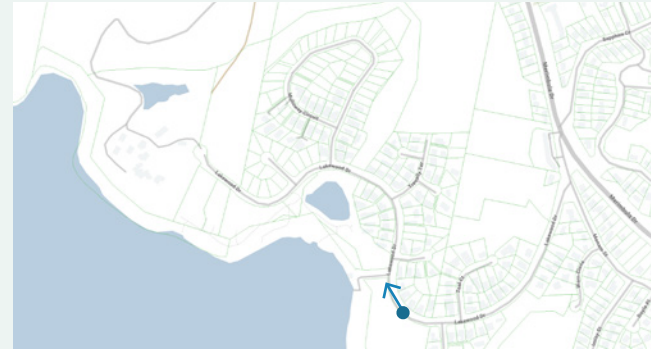


VIEW 07: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 08 - LAKEWOOD DRIVE

Distance to site	500M (approximately)
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	North-West
Elevation	22 AHD
Visual Description	This photograph was taken on Lakewood Drive. From this viewing location the site is visible at medium distance views.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be partially visible from this location. The proposal will not obscure any views out to Merimbula Lake. The scale of the proposal will present as a taller form, however bushland in the foreground and surrounding residential housing will assist in absorbing the new built form into the landscape.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered low as the development, viewed from this receptor, will form a minor alteration within the landscape. The building setback and allowance for a vegetation buffer within the proposal, along the eastern boundary, will assist in obscuring the proposal. It is anticipated however that views to the proposal will be reduced in 5-10 years due to the vegetation buffer to be planted along the eastern boundary.
Significance of impact	Moderate



VIEW 08: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 09 - TEAL CIRCUIT

Distance to site	600M (approximately)
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	West
Elevation	38 AHD
Visual Description	The view location taken in this photograph is elevated above the subject site. From this viewing location the site is visible at medium distance views. The characteristic elements of the landscape in this photo are existing residential dwellings in the foreground, bushland through the centre and mountain ranges in the background.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be partially visible from this location. The scale of the proposal will present as a taller form, however bushland in the foreground and surrounding residential housing will assist in absorbing the new built form into the landscape.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The development will, from this distance, form a minor alteration to the pre-development view and it is not expected to greatly alter the overall landscape composition. It will not obscure views to the lake. The scale of visual modification is considered low . The building setback and allowance for a vegetation buffer within the proposal, along the eastern boundary, will assist in obscuring the proposal. It is anticipated however that views to the proposal will be reduced in 5-10 years due to the vegetation buffer to be planted along the eastern boundary.
Significance of impact	Moderate



VIEW 09: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 10 - LAKEWOOD DRIVE

Distance to site	750M (approximately)
Land Use	Residential
Viewing direction	West
Elevation	78 AHD
Visual Description	The view location taken in this photograph is elevated above the subject site. The characteristic elements of the landscape in this photo is bushland in the foreground, existing residential dwellings in the centre and bushland and mountain ranges in the background.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be not be visible from this location. The topography and dense bushland between this viewing location obscure any views to the site.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered high as the key sensitive receivers would be residents with prolonged viewing opportunities. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered negligible as the proposal will not change the existing view.
Significance of impact	Negligible

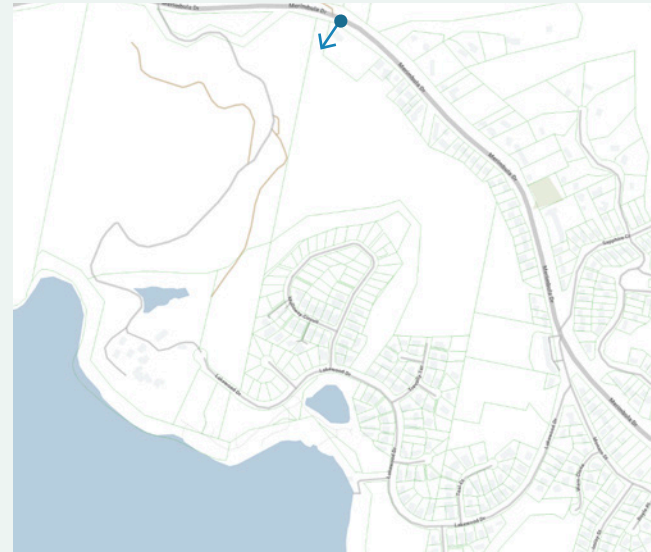


VIEW 10: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



VIEW 11 - MERIMBULA RFS

Distance to site	700M (approximately)
Land Use	Merimbula RFS
Viewing direction	West
Elevation	78 AHD
Visual Description	The view location taken in this photograph is elevated above the subject site. The photograph has been taken to the west of the RFS building. The characteristic elements of the landscape in this photo is bushland in the foreground, Merimbula Lake in the centre and mountain ranges in the background.
Anticipated change to view	The proposal will be not be visible from this location. The topography and dense bushland between this viewing location obscure any views to the site.
Sensitivity to change	The sensitivity to change is considered moderate given the expansive views out across to Pembula from this location, however the key sensitive receivers would be people whose interest is not specifically focussed on the wider landscape. Road users would have short term, transient views.
Visual Modification	The scale of visual modification is considered negligible as the proposal will not change the existing view.
Significance of impact	Negligible



VIEW 11: VIEWPOINT LOCATION



5.3 OVERVIEW OF VIEWPOINT ASSESSMENT

The viewpoint assessment provides a range of views selected to represent the worst case scenario. Analysis of each viewpoint was done both as a desk-top study and also in the field analysis.

A rating was given for the level of modification and sensitivity, which when combined, provide a determination of the degree of overall visual impact for each viewing location.

Of the 11 viewpoints assessed as a part of this study, the proposal would be able to be seen from 8 viewpoints.

Of these 8 viewpoints, three (3) of these have been assessed as having high-moderate visual impact, four (4) of these have been assessed as having moderate visual impact and one (1) viewpoint has been rated as having a moderate low visual impact.

Generally the viewpoints rated as having a high-moderate visual impact were taken within very close proximity to the site.

The proposal will not substantially obscure any significant views to Merimbula Lake and the foreshore.

VIEWPOINT	VISUAL SENSITIVITY	VISUAL EFFECT	POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT
VIEW 01	HIGH	MOD	HIGH-MOD
VIEW 02	HIGH	MOD	HIGH-MOD
VIEW 03	LOW	MOD	MOD-LOW
VIEW 04	HIGH	LOW	MOD
VIEW 05	HIGH	MOD	HIGH-MOD
VIEW 06	HIGH	MOD	MOD
VIEW 07	MOD	NEG	NEG
VIEW 08	HIGH	LOW	MOD
VIEW 09	HIGH	LOW	MOD
VIEW 10	HIGH	NEG	NEG
VIEW 11	MOD	NEG	NEG

6. AMELIORATION STRATEGIES

The proposed mitigation measures attempt to lessen the visual impact of the proposed development whilst enhancing the visual character of the surrounding environment. These design principles have been incorporated into the landscape design and seek to achieve a better visual integration of the proposal and to maintain the existing visual character.

Key recommendations for mitigating this potential impact include:

- Ensure retention of existing riparian vegetation buffer to the north of the site.
- Retain and protect existing vegetation where possible during construction.
- Proposed three (3) metre wide screen planting along the eastern boundaries;
- Screen planting to comprise medium to large trees and shrubs which are staggered in an informal pattern to simulate the vegetation pattern of surrounding bushland;
- Tree planting where possible along the western boundary, within the Asset Protection Zone, to assist in visual screening, whilst in accordance with Bushfire principles;
- Consideration of construction materials to minimise visual contrast for surrounding residents.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, however the adoption of these recommendations can assist in considerably ensuring the Proposal contributes positively to the visual quality and character of the residential settlement within which it is proposed.

7. CONCLUSION

The Site is a currently vacant irregular shaped lot (approximately 2.9 hectares), located in the coastal town of Merimbula, within the Bega Valley Shire Council.

The Site is located on Lakewood Drive between a new residential subdivision and retreat holiday accommodation. Land to the north of the site is densely vegetated. A riparian vegetation buffer exists to the north of the site which is contiguous with the adjoining bushland. This vegetation is proposed to be retained and protected. The remainder of the site has been previously cleared.

Topographically the Site is highest (approx. 32 AHD) towards the south-east of the site and falls moderately to the centre, where it then falls relatively steeply down toward the rear northern boundary (approx. 8 AHD).

The Site is located in close proximity (approximately 150m) to the foreshore of Merimbula Lake and affords expansive views to the lake from the southern portion of the site. Locally, views of the lake and beyond to the mountain ranges are highly valued. These views and vistas from the public domain and residential dwellings has been a key consideration of the assessment.

A visual appraisal of the Site has demonstrated that views to the site are limited, due to the nature of the land form, with its rolling and steep hills, together with the dense vegetation which surrounds the site. Distant views from across the lake and to the east of Lakewood Drive are constrained by the topography and vegetation.

Summary

The Site has a limited degree of visual exposure, with the main visual receptors being those living within the western settlement of Merimbula and visitors to the area. Proposed between lots which already have built elements, the proposal would not be uncharacteristic with the existing landscape and is likely to be viewed as a continuation of the existing residential development through this band.

With the implementation of landscape measures, the Proposal would be able to be integrated into the Site and would result in a limited reduction to the landscape and visual amenity of the surrounding area, particularly for the residential dwellings adjoining the site.

Accordingly, it is concluded that developing the Site

- can be accommodated into the landscape without significant adverse impacts on the landscape quality of zone R3 Medium Density Residential;
- the landscape setting is capable of absorbing the proposal provided the landscape measures are implemented; and
- the Proposal will not detract from key vistas and views towards Merimbula Lake and the landscape character of the area.