



visual impact assessment

morisset park subdivision – morisset park

project no: 7620.5

may 2008

rev. C



date: 16/05/2008
project no: 7620.5
site: Morisset Park
location: Corner Morisset Rd, Chifley St, NSW
client: Postfox Pty. Ltd.
council: Lake Macquarie City Council
proposal: Subdivision of 72 residential lots

visual impact statement

morisset park subdivision

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1 introduction

The purpose of this visual impact statement is to determine likely visual impacts of the proposed residential subdivision and having regard to LMCC's Scenic Quality Guidelines.

Field work was undertaken during January 2008. All photomontages have been prepared using digital images taken during this period.

2 documents consulted

In preparation of the visual impact statement the following documents have been consulted:

Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2004 (LEP 2004)

Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2004 (Amendment No. 17)

Lake Macquarie City Council Scenic Quality Guidelines (LMCCSQG)

Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan No 1, 2008, Principles of Development

Lake Macquarie Life Style Strategy 2020

Ecological Report to Wildlife Corridor Issues, Morisset Park, August 2004, prepared by Michael Roderick, HSO

Proposed Plan of Subdivision, Issue D, Drawing No. 013-SUB-03.03.08, Dated 28.02.08, prepared by de Witt Consulting

Tree survey plan, Issue C, Drawing No. 013DET (ADD) 19.12.07, Dated 19.12.07, prepared by de Witt Consulting

3 site description and existing landscape character

The subject site known as Lot 9 DP 244002 and Lot 358 DP 755242 is a rectangular parcel of land located on the corner of Morisset Road and Chifley Road, Morisset Park, with Morisset Park Road to the south and Chifley Road to the east.

The site has an area of approximately 6.4 hectares.

The land adjacent to the western boundary of the site is free of development and consists of cleared open woodland and forest with open areas of pasture grasses. There is medium and low density residential development to the north and north east of the site.

The site currently accommodates one empty dwelling and one residence with a number of sheds. The exiting dwellings will be demolished with the proposal of the new subdivision.



Fig. 1
Site from Morisset Park Rd. showing existing dwelling



Fig. 2
State Conservation Area at Morisset Park Rd. opposite site

The site is located in zone 2(1) residential area of Morisset Park on the eastern edge of Lake Macquarie.

Development in Morisset Park occurs predominantly along the perimeter of the shoreline.



Fig. 3
Aerial photo montage showing existing residential development along the shoreline.



Fig.4
Macquarie Road streetscape looking east



Fig. 5
Residences along Frederick Street



Fig.6
Residences at Chifley Rd. near Lake Petite



Fig. 7
Residences at northern side of Lake Petite

4 proposed development

The proposed subdivision will contain 72 lots and one proposed lot for a detention basin.

The infrastructure of the subdivision contains two access roads from Morisset Park Road and Chifley Road forming a circuit as well as a connecting road internally.

5 LMCC's scenic quality guidelines

According to LMCC's Scenic Quality Guidelines [SQG] the site is contained within the **Bardens Bay Landscape Setting Unit** [LSU]. This unit is rated as having a moderate **(M) Scenic Quality Rating**. The LSU has a **Level 3 Viewing Level**, which is based on "minor roads and less visited places. For example, rural roads with no through routes or major destination, minor roads or horse trails."

Moderate rating units are characterised by having natural landscapes dominant with new development obvious to the viewer with hinterland landscapes being comprised of moderate landform diversity and limited outlooks.

Visual features of the area are lake views and the treed ridgeline.



The closest listed significant features are; Feature Site No 11 Bird Cage Point Morisset, No 10 Morisset Hospital Conservation Management Area, No 9 Morisset's Campsite Tree.

The area containing the site falls within a **Scenic Management Zone C - moderate.**

"Zone C is assigned to those areas of moderate to low Scenic Quality and Visual Accessibility and where the landscape values, while not making a significant contribution to the City image and attractiveness, do not detract significantly from that image or amenity.

Objectives Strategies

For Urban Areas the objectives are: "To maintain the existing desirable character and reinforce the visual landscape and townscape quality and amenity by ensuring developments do not visually dominate and do not exceed a moderate level of visual impact in the context of the setting."

Accordingly the strategies suggested are: "Development demonstrates no detrimental visual impact. Development considers and enhances the existing desirable character. Development visible from Significant Features or View Points and Ridgelines maintains a dominant tree canopy."

6 visual effect

Visual effect is the interaction between a proposal and the existing visual environment. It is often expressed as the level of visual contrast of the proposal against its setting or background in which it is viewed. This is particularly important should any proposed develop extend above the skyline unless, once again, there are particular circumstances that may influence viewer perception and/or visual impact.

Low visual effect occurs when a proposal blends in with its existing viewed landscape due to a high level of integration of one or several of the following: form, shape, pattern, line, texture or colour. It can also result from the use of effective screening often using a combination of landform and landscaping.

Moderate visual effect results where a proposal noticeably contrasts with its viewed landscape, however, there has been some degree of integration (e.g. good siting principles employed, retention of significant existing vegetation, provision of screen landscaping, careful colour selection and/or appropriately scaled development.)

High visual effect results when a proposal presents itself with high visual contrast to its viewed landscape with little or no integration and/or screening.

7 visual access & viewpoint analysis

This part of the scenic assessment considers the likely impact that the proposed development may have on the local environment. This is done by selecting particular sites, referred to as viewpoints, conducting inspections and determining what part of the development will be visible from the viewpoints.

The viewpoints, as shown, were selected on the basis of where the development would appear to be most prominent based on degree of exposure. Sites were further selected on the basis of Significant Features, Significant Viewpoints and Significant Ridgelines as nominated in the scenic quality guidelines. Generally, most consideration was given to how the proposed development would appear from surrounding residential and recreational areas of Morisset Park and surrounding.

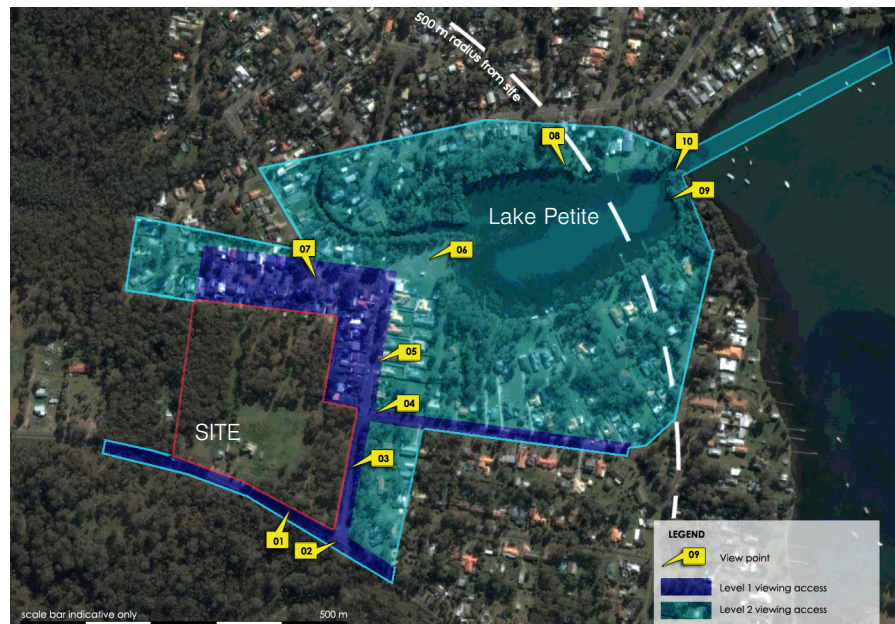


Fig. 01:
Visual catchment and view points

Level 1 viewing access = locations that have a direct view of any part of the site.
Level 2 viewing access = locations that may have a partial view of the site mainly depending upon sight lines and the potential of intervening development and/or vegetation obscuring views.

7.1 Morisset Park Road

Approaching from the west along Morisset Park Road, the subject site only becomes visible in direct vicinity. The curvature of the road from an approximately south east alignment to a more east alignment restricts any views of the subject site until the observer is almost upon it. From the east the site appears more prominent because of the turn off at Chifley Road.

The south-eastern corner of the subject site at the intersection of Morisset Park Road and Chifley Road appears as a more prominent focal point. It would be highly beneficial to maintain as many of the existing trees in this corner of the site as possible due to the high visual exposure from the eastern approach.

As the proposed lot layout shows, lots 34 to 42 will require vehicular entry points along Morisset Park Road. This will result in selective tree removal which will result in a change in visual impact travelling along Morisset Park Road. This will be mitigated by the proposed planting of a row of 12 *Lophostemon convertus* (Brushbox) trees along the Morisset Park Road frontage and the retention of the remaining existing trees along the road frontage.

In particular, the trees along the Morisset Park Road frontage adjacent to lot 1, lot 43 and lot 34 will be able to be retained as access to this lot will be off the internal road network or Chifley Road. This will assist in reducing the visual impact when travelling from the west.



Viewpoint 02:

View from Morisset Park Rd, corner Chifley Road

This corner of the site with the highest visual exposure would highly benefit from the retention of existing mature vegetation.

7.2 Chifley Road

Views into and across the site are also available from the Chifley Road boundary.



Viewpoint 03:
Chifley Rd, looking north



Viewpoint 05:
looking south. The retention of existing vegetation will be limited as the proposed lots along Chifley Road have access from the road. The visual impact along Chifley Rd. will therefore be high. Where possible existing trees of the subject site should be maintained to benefit the streetscape. Additional tree planting of native species is recommended along the boundary where not interfering with powerlines.

7.3 Frederick Street

No lots of the proposed subdivision have access from Frederick Street. Existing residences adjoining the site boundary are all facing north and will not be experience any change in views. Residents on the opposite site of the road will loose the backdrop of the thick tree canopy that has been provided by the existing vegetation. It is recommended to maintain a number of mature trees along the boundary to preserve the visual amenity of the site viewed from the north.



Viewpoint 07:

View from Frederick Street, with backdrop of existing tree canopy. The retention of some mature trees will help to preserve the visual amenity of the site.

7.4 Lake Petite

Lake Petite is located within 200m from the site and provides the residents of Morisset Park with a connection to Lake Macquarie. Views have been attempted for several points around the lake. The presence of the site's existing tree canopy has a moderate effect on the visual amenity. The loss of the majority of this canopy will therefore have a moderate visual impact.



Viewpoint 06:

View from open area towards site (Lake Petite behind)
The retention of some mature trees will help to preserve the visual amenity of the site.



Viewpoint 08:
View from side of Lake near Rhodes Pde.



Viewpoint 08 (zoom in):
View from side of Lake near Rhodes Pde. Indicative existing canopy of subject site and existing bushland to the west



Viewpoint 09:
View from entry of Lake Petite. Backdrop of site's existing tree canopy

8 lifestyle 2020 strategy

The Lifestyle 2020 Strategy provides the long term direction for the future urban and rural land use and development of the City based on principles of ecological sustainability. The relevant section of the strategy is 5.3 - A Well designed and Liveable City.

Section 5.3.1 states:

- *Protects the scenic amenity of the City, through:*
- *Avoiding development that adversely impacts on areas of high scenic significance.*

Comment: The subject site is not in an area of high scenic significance.

- *Limiting development or the intensity of development within the Green System, including forested ranges and hills, ridge lines, agricultural landscapes, semi rural/open landscapes, waterway corridors, foreshores, the Lake, coastline and promontories.*

Comment: The subject site is not within the areas identified as part of the Green System.

- *Retaining and enhancing the desirable scenic amenity of existing areas.*

Comment: The proposed subdivision will unavoidably lead to tree removal and therewith result in a shift in scenic amenity from rural/bushland to suburban/residential. Street tree planting of selected native species will seek to lessen the impact and improve the scenic amenity of the subdivision. Any tree planting undertaken by the new residents will further enhance the subdivision's scenic quality.

- *Visually separating incompatible land uses through buffering and/or screening.*

Comment: Not applicable.

- *Maintaining distinctive natural boundaries between individual areas and along the Freeway, and other major transport routes where they complement an area's identity, scenic diversity and the visual attractiveness of the City.*

Comment: The proposed subdivision is not located along a freeway or major transport route, but has specific strategies to maintain the natural boundary between the urban setting and the natural landscape to the south of Morisset Park Road acknowledging the scenic diversity and attractiveness of the setting.

- *Ensuring development and landscaping in Urban Areas and the Green System are sympathetic to their location.*

Comment: Not applicable.

- *Establishing, retaining or enhancing significant views from areas of high public use to important natural features of the City.*

Comment: Not applicable. However, the proposal respects the existing and desirable future character of the setting and of the natural features which contribute to it, which will be conserved where possible and enhanced.

- *Respecting that accessibility of views is a privilege rather than a right and aim to share this privilege.*

Comment: The development of the site will not be in conflict with the rights or privileges which attach to views. However the proposal will to some degree lessen the thick mature tree canopy which is a characteristic backdrop for the surrounding residences.



9 landscape design

The masterplan for the proposed landscape design takes existing site characteristics into consideration and uses predominantly native plant species.

Key design elements are as follows:

9.5 street trees

The street tree selection consists of native evergreen trees like *Flindersia australis* (Crow's Ash) and *Harpullia pendula* (Tulipwood) within the site, *Lophostemon convertus* (Brushbox) along Morisset Park Road and *Corymbia filicifolia* 'Summer Red' to the site's boundary at Chifley Road. Although these trees are not indigenous to the site, they have been chosen as they perform well as street trees without the potential for high public risk and/or nuisance commonly associated with the larger Eucalypts and Angophoras.

9.6 entry feature

The site's entry is located at Chifley Road and has an entry feature and signage that will be readily visible to arriving residents and visitors. Materials used for the entry feature will reflect the rural character and maintains the bushland quality that is present within the surrounding area.

Whilst all other street trees are evergreen the feature trees along the entry are deciduous, *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' (Ornamental Pear), and will highlight the entry with seasonal aspects. Although exotic, it is considered to be complementary to the other proposed street trees.

The corners of the entry feature wall sections to each side with stainless steel lettering, below which is accent planting of grasses like *Pennisetum alopecuroides* (Fountain Grass) and *Poa poiformis* 'Kingsdale' (Blue Tussock Grass).

9.7 asset protection zone

The asset protection zone to the western boundary (20m wide) consists of a 6m wide all weather fire trail at the site boundary, followed by OPZ (Outer Protection Zone) and IPZ (Inner Protection zone) to the regulations outline in the Bushfire Threat Assessment. Within the lot boundaries possible fuel needs to be cleared from the site. Existing trees should be maintained where possible and where selectively pruned to allow for a discontinuing canopy.

9.8 stormwater detention area

The stormwater detention area for the site is located at the low point at the north-eastern corner of the site.

All existing trees including two habitat trees will need to be removed from the detention area. The detention basin is constructed as a dry basin with turf and selected tree planting.

Planting to the outside of the basin consists of (*Melaleuca styphelioides*, Prickly Paperbark, and *Allocasuarin littoralis*, Black She-Oak) and larger high trunk trees of Eucalyptus haemostom (Scribbly Gum) towards the middle part which are native and well presented on the existing site.



9.9 residential lots

Existing trees on the future residential lots are encouraged to be retained where possible especially along the lot boundaries. This will be an essential part of minimising any visual impact caused by the loss of existing tree canopy.

10 impact assessment

The proposed subdivision as noted within the impact assessment is expected to have some visual impact for the surrounding residences and from Lake Petite due to the expected loss of mature canopy.

When considered in its entirety the site's vegetation makes a moderate contribution to scenic quality. The canopies of the trees occurring on the adjoining property to the west will still be visible over the roofs of the new residences.

With the unavoidable loss of canopy there will be a shift in visual quality with the proposed subdivision improving the landscape character of the existing suburban development the introduction of a better, more consistent level of housing.

Screening of the boundaries and use of native vegetation as well the retention of trees within the lot boundaries will be beneficial to minimise the visual impact for neighbouring residences.

11 conclusion

Although it is considered that the proposed development would have a moderate impact on the existing visual environment, the proposed subdivision will lead to a shift in scenic amenity from rural/bushland to suburban/residential.

By selecting native street trees landscape design will help minimise the impact for a better development and assist in retaining and improving the general appearance of the local area and enhance the visual quality of the extended suburban area.

Any tree planting undertaken by the new residents will further enhance the subdivision's scenic quality.

12 references

Lake Macquarie City Council, "Development Control Plan No 1, Principles of Development", 2008

Lake Macquarie City Council, "Lake Macquarie Local Environment Plan", 2004

Lake Macquarie City Council, "Scenic Quality Guidelines", 2004

Google Earth, Digital aerial images