

VISUAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY AN APPLICATION FOR A 50 BERTH MARINA AND CARPARK RECONFIGURATION AT KOOLEWONG CROWN LAND ABOVE AND BELOW MEAN HIGH WATER MARK OFF BRISBANE WATER DRIVE, Lot 519 DP 729020

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

ADW Johnson has been engaged by Gemsted Pty Ltd to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment for a fifty (50) berth marina and reconfiguration of the existing car park ("the Project") at 19 Brisbane Water Drive, Koolewong (see **Figure 1**).

The Project comprises the following components:

- The upgrade of the existing timber jetty from 1 metre to 1.5 metres in width, with timber decking to be removed and replaced with an ecostyle "sea grass friendly" polypropylene decking and increase the existing RL from 1.25m AHD to 1.75m AHD;
- Construction of a fifty (50) berth marina extending approximately 100m from the end of the existing jetty into Brisbane Water accommodating both sail and power vessels between 8 – 21 metres;
- The main walkway of the proposed marina will be 2.4 metres wide, with two arms, in a "reverse F" formation with the outside arm being 124.5 metres and the inner arm being approximately 80 metres;
- Upgrade and reconfiguration of the existing car park to provide eleven (11) additional car parking spaces to the thirty-three (33) existing spaces; and
- Change of use to one of the first floor offices (43.3m²) to a general amenities facility for users of the marina.



Figure 1: Aerial Photomontage of the Proposed Marina

The proposed marina will be in the form of a floating pontoon held in place by 31 piles. The pontoon will have rollers surrounding the piles to allow the marina to rise and fall with the tide.

The proposal will involve no dredging and no changes to the shoreline.

SITE AND CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

The site of the proposed marina is located towards the southern end of Murphys Bay and makes up one of the many inlets of Brisbane Water in the Gosford City Local Government Area. The site is located approximately two kilometres north of Woy Woy, 500 metres south of Koolewong and is situated on the north eastern side of Brisbane Water Drive (see **Figure 2**).



Figure 2: Locality Plan (with broader location insert)

The site is reclaimed land owned by the Department of Lands and is currently being leased by Gemsted Pty Ltd.

The site is bound by Brisbane Water to the north and east, and Brisbane Water Drive to the south - west. The site consists of an irregular shaped allotment jutting out into Brisbane Water with a total area of 2,533m² above MHW and contains a two storey building known as 'The Boathouse'. The ground floor of this building is currently used as a restaurant with the first floor containing numerous vacant offices.

An existing 33 space car park fronts Brisbane Water Drive with this being partially screened by large trees at both ends. The cumulative presence of both the existing structure and substantial vegetation creates a 100 metre virtually impenetrable barrier to views towards the water from the west (see **Figure 3**).



Figure 3: Boathouse Waterfront Restaurant and surrounding vegetation viewed from west of site

The visual character of the surrounding land is made up of a pocket of low density single dwellings on the opposite side of Brisbane Water Drive extending approximately 200 metres both north and south of the site with Brisbane Water National Park abutting this to the south-west.

The Great Northern Railway runs along the coast from Woy Woy to Tascott generally following Brisbane Water Drive, with the subject site being the only developed parcel located to the east of these. This infrastructure provides a significant buffer with a minimum distance of at least 100 metres from the subject site to the nearest dwelling to the south west.

Numerous structures mainly private jetties extend below MHWL both north and south of the subject site and range in length from 30-50 metres. There are also a number of swing moorings located to the south of the site.

VIEWS

Private Realm

Koolewong in general is set on the side of a hill which slopes downwards towards the water and allows a significant number of dwellings to gain full views of Murphys Bay and various points beyond (see **Figure 4, 5 and 6**).

As can be seen in the below photomontages, the existing Boathouse Restaurant provides somewhat of central focus point along the foreshore adding to the character of Koolewong. Given the broad views available however, there are other numerous points of interests worth protecting including the various aspects of water/land interface, the north and south points of Murphys Bay and most importantly Saratoga Point to south. It is also considered that existing views of the boats connected to swing moorings to the north of the site as well as the numerous jetties seen beyond this (as shown in figure 4) are also significant points of interest.



Figure 4: Photomontage of the marina as viewed from the residential area to the south-west of the site



Figure 5: Photomontage of the marina as viewed from the residential area to the west of the site



Figure 6: Photomontage of the marina as viewed from the residential area to the north-west of the site

Given the raised position from which these views are gained, the proposed marina is unlikely to block any of these significant characteristic icons. This is further emphasised and supported by the fact that no residents lodged submissions sighting potential impacts to views as a reason for objection.

Public Realm

The site being located between Gosford and Woy Woy along a main transport route also means it is highly visible to vehicle commuters along Brisbane Water Drive, public transport commuters using the Great Northern Railway Line and pedestrians and cyclists using the pathway which closely follows the foreshore (see **Figure 7**). The site is also highly visible from Koolewong Reserve, located to the north (see **Figure 8**).



Figure 7: Photomontage of the marina as viewed from cycleway to the north of the site

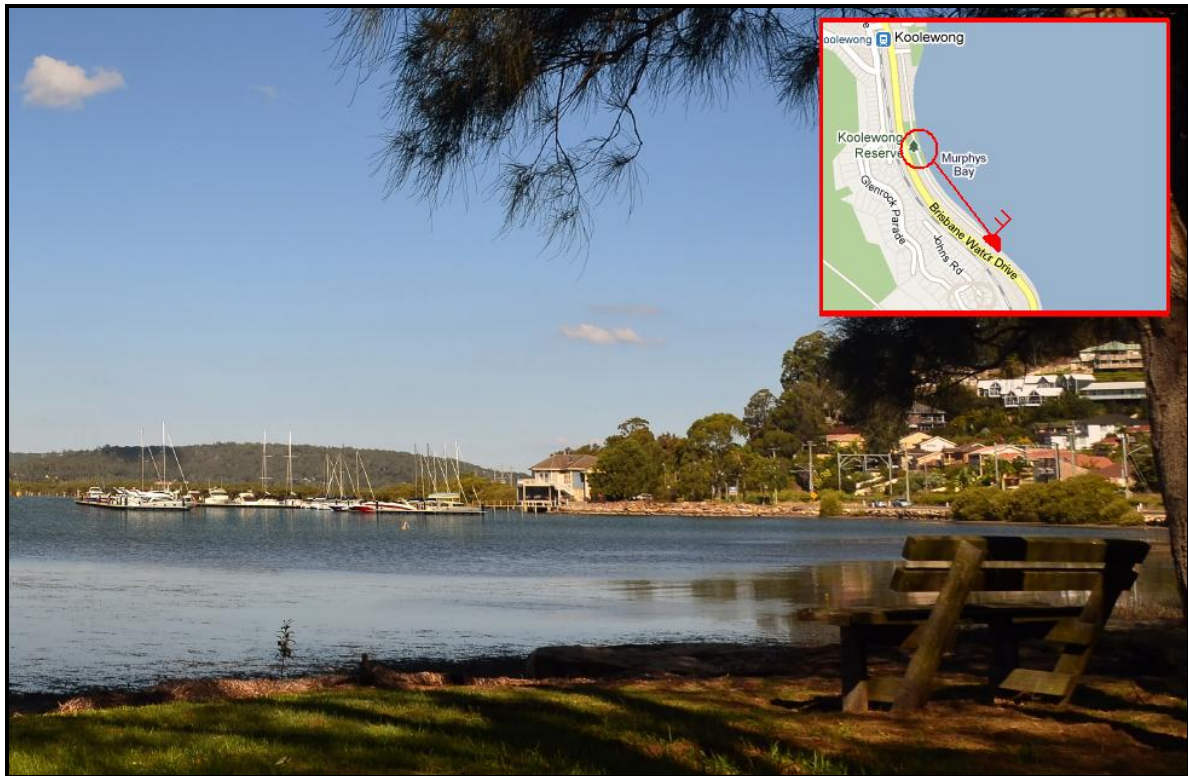


Figure 8: Photomontage of the marina as viewed from Koolewong Reserve to the north of the site

As can be seen from the above two photomontages, these public viewing locations are located significantly closer to MHWL and are subsequently affected to a greater extent by the presence of the marina. Despite this the marina still allows views of the abovementioned focal points and if anything provides further interest to the water/land interface through the sails of moored boats adding to the nautical character of the area.

CHARACTER AND SETTING

The subject site being located below MHWL means that Gosford City Council's *Development Control Plan 159 - Character* is not applicable to this development; extracts of this document have however been used within the visual assessment to illustrate that the proposed marina will not affect the character of onshore areas.

In general the following relevant desired character extracts can be applied to the area surrounding the subject site in relation to the proposed marina:

"Avoid disturbing natural landforms..."

Comment: The proposed marina does not involve the disturbance of natural landforms in that it is essentially a floating structure connected to an existing jetty. Unlike inland marinas, the proposed structure is considered to be a very low impact method of providing boat moorings.

"...ensure that new jetties are traditional white painted timber piers..."

"New jetties should be compatible with the style and visual impact of traditional timber piers."

Comment: The existing jetty will remain with decking to be replaced with a plastic seagrass friendly product. The decking however will generally not be visible given that areas located close to the site are also located at a similar height and subsequently will not have visual access to the decking. The marina in general will use colours and materials often seen in similar types of development and these have been chosen for their environmental qualities and their durability.

"Ensure that new structures do not dominate these foreshore settings or disrupt development patterns..."

Comment: The proposed marina does not present as a solid facade of development but rather a low profile structure generally presenting as approximately 31 piles. The visual dominance of this structure alone is very minor when compared to the existing development backdrop of the restaurant and dwellings further west. With the addition of moored boats, the marina is barely visible at all with boats considered to enhance the "foreshore setting" (see **Figure 9**).



Figure 9: Photo looking south across Murphy's Bay towards the subject site.

Visual Impact Statement: Proposed 50 Berth Marina and Car Park Reconfiguration

Furthermore, the proposed marina will be located between an existing oyster shed and jetty to the south and numerous swing moorings to the north (See **Figure 10** and **11**). These structures along with the proposed marina are considered to add to the Brisbane Water “working waterway” character.



Figure 10: Oyster shed and jetty



Figure 11: Existing swing moorings

The desired character statements provided within Chapter 159 are all essentially aimed towards maintaining and enhancing the area as a low density foreshore town. The proposed marina will not affect the density of Koolewong and will add to the nautical nature of the area through the provision of an additional water themed development.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

The site sits on the waterfront of Brisbane Water, well used by fishermen and boating enthusiasts, cyclists and pedestrians, public and private commuters and the general Koolewong residential population.

As discussed in detail above, the nature of the area allows for significant views of Brisbane Water to be gained from a number of prominent vantage points. Whilst the proposed marina will be obscured from view by residents directly to the west of the site, it will be visible from the north, south and east; though will not obscure the important scenic points of interest.

The proposed marina is located to the east of an existing two storey building and is screened in part by numerous large trees within the car park of the restaurant. Taking this into consideration and given there is existing substantial development below MHW, the marina will not be visually dominant when viewed from key points nominated around the area.

The proposed development is larger than existing structures below MHW however it is not out of scale when viewed against the accumulation of jetties, swing moorings and their attached water craft, oyster farms and associated sheds and the visual built form backdrop of the restaurant, dwellings and transport corridor (see **Figure 12** and **13**).



Figure 12: Aerial photomontage of the marina as viewed in relation to general area



Figure 13: Aerial photomontage of the marina as viewed in relation to general area

It must also be noted however that a marina of this nature is generally a key focal point itself and not a structure to deliberately "screen". The marina is made of materials and colours similar to those used in existing structures below MHWL and is considered to add to the nautical charm of Koolewong; as such views towards it should be enhanced and celebrated rather than obscured.

CONCLUSION

This Visual Impact Statement has demonstrated that the proposed marina is a compatible form of development within a coastal setting and adjoining an existing focal building.

The marina will not be visually obtrusive when view from numerous high profile points within the locality, will not detract from the natural beauty of Brisbane Water and will not block any significant views.

The marina will not impact on the on the scenic quality of the precinct; in fact a floating marina as opposed to one developed within the shoreline is often a desirable focal point with residents wishing to be able to access views of the moored boats.

The marina is considered to be of a scale and intensity that is consistent with the surrounding land uses within the area given the numerous moorings located both north and south. The marina will make a positive contribution to the Koolewong area and is an ideal use within the proposed location.

The proposal is consistent and complementary to existing land uses and is an improvement to the current appearance of the site.