VISUAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
Proposed Subdivision Matthews Road, Augusta

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1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment considers the visual impacts of a proposed subdivision at Matthews Road, Augusta, Western Australia. Only four of the 12 existing lots are seeking to subdivide at the present time but the assessment considers the possible subdivision of all twelve lots.

The proposed subdivision is shown in the Proposed Structure Plan, reproduced in Attachment 3 of this report.

The land is zoned Rural Residential in Margaret River’s Town Local Scheme No. 1. It is partly in Visual Management Zone A and Zone C under PE.6 – Visual Management.

The Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge State Planning Policy (LNRSPP) places the site within the General Character Landscape Class, the Augusta Slopes Landscape Character Unit and Rural Residential Land Use, with some of the western portion lying within a National Park Influence Area. It is not within a Travel Route Corridor.

This study is a short-form assessment based on a methodology used by the author in both long-form and short-form assessments. The difference with the short-form assessment is in the level of detail provided in the report. The objective of the assessment is to identify the landscape values; assess potential impacts; and guide development in order to minimise the visual impacts.

“Landscape” in the context of this study is taken to be more than the sum of the parts that make up a geographical place. It suggests an interaction between observers (people) and observed (the environment). Put simply “landscape is not synonymous with environment; it is the environment perceived, especially visually perceived”. (Appleton, 1980).

Landscapes can be experienced and understood in many ways. These vary between cultures, but within similar cultures there is a high level of agreement about what makes a landscape valuable. In Australia this particularly applies to scenic value. It is this agreement that allows us to make reasonably consistent and rational decisions regarding landscape change.

Landscape studies in Australia are generally based on and derive from a methodology known as the Visual Management System (VMS). The VMS originated in the 1970’s as a process for assessing and managing visual landscape values in forests managed by the US Forest Service. It has since been used by various agencies in Australia for managing both natural and cultural landscapes.

The methodology used in this study extends the VMS to include factors and influences not previously considered.

The study sets out to answer four straightforward questions:

- What is the landscape like?
- How valuable is it?
- What land use change is proposed?
- Does this change protect the landscape values?
The aim of landscape assessment is to determine how a development or change of land use will impact on the visual landscape and whether the consequent impacts result in a reduction of landscape values. Relevant policies and community attitudes guide the assessment process. Each assessment involves a different application of the standard methodology.

Visibility does not necessarily disqualify a development. Visibility, visual impact and landscape values must be considered together. If a development is invisible from sensitive viewing routes and locations it will generally, though not always, pass a visual assessment. The exception is where wilderness values and their attendant objectives are not satisfied. The methodology explicitly deals with wilderness values so that a development cannot be put “out of sight and out of mind”. If, however, it is visible, it must be determined whether the attendant visual impacts are acceptable. To do this we first must interpret the policies. Most of the policies are not simple tests against which we can put a tick or a cross. That is why the Visual Management Objectives and Standards have been developed. If an assessment is to be used constructively for public decision-making it is these Objectives and Standards that rightly form the basis for any questioning of the conclusions. Are they reasonable Objectives given the Policies; are the Standards a logical extension of those Objectives; are the levels of compliance reasonable? It is in this light that the Visual Management Study has been prepared.

The assessment considers the impacts of the subdivision on existing landscape values, specifically:

- Landscape character
- Landscape significance
- Wilderness values, and
- Views

These are the aspects of landscape most commonly cited by people when discussing, commenting on, or making submissions on, proposals that affect the landscape.
The assessment tests the visual impacts of the proposal against the above aspects of landscape and evaluates it against the specific polices and community values pertinent to the site.
Figure 2: Location Plan

VISUAL ASSESSMENT – MATTHEWS ROAD, AUGUSTA
2. RELEVANT POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

The policies, guidelines, listings and community perceptions relating to the site are outlined below.

**Local Government**
Shire of Augusta Margaret River Local Planning Scheme No. 1. The site is zoned Rural Residential.

The site falls also into Visual Management Zone A and C under the AMRSC PE.6 Visual Management Policy.¹

The Visual Quality Objective for Zone A is that,
"Developments or changes in land use should result in inevident visual alteration to the landscape. This is not to say that changes cannot occur, but rather that the development or change in land use should be of similar form, scale and pattern to the existing landscape."

The Visual Quality Objective for Zone C is that,
“Developments and changes of use may be visually dominant, however should borrow from the naturally established form, line, colour and texture to be compatible with the existing landscape.”

**State Government**
Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge State Planning Policy

Section 4.3 of the LNRSPP deals with Landscape.

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4.3 Landscape
Statement of Intent
This extraordinary landscape is part of the nation’s heritage. Its unique values will be conserved by land use strategies and development assessment processes, having particular regard for -
protection of the natural character of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge, including the coastal and marine interfaces and areas of remnant vegetation;
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¹ PE.6 is included as Attachment 1 to this report.
maintenance of the mosaic of land uses evident in existing agricultural areas, while providing for change in agricultural land uses; and recognition of the role and importance of human activity and its contribution to cultural landscape.

Policies

PS 3.1 The Landscape Classes map (Figure 3) and the Landscape Character Units map (Figure 4) form part of this LNRSPP.

PS 3.2 Development must be responsive to local values, and be compatible with the natural characteristics and traditional settlement patterns of the area.

PS 3.3 Development will have due regard for the landscape integrity and value of Ridge backdrops when viewed from the coastline, bays or Travel Route Corridors.

PS 3.4 In areas of Natural Landscape Significance, including where they are in Travel Route Corridors, the significant natural characteristics will be protected and provide adequate development setbacks. In these areas development will be screened from Travel Route Corridors except public recreation or safety facilities which may be seen in the foreground.

PS 3.5 The environmental integrity and natural landscape values of the Western Coastal and Eastern Slopes of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge as identified in Figure 4 and near-shore waters will be given high priority in land use decisions.

The Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge State Planning Policy (LNRSPP) places the site within the General Character Landscape Class, the Augusta Slopes Landscape Character Unit and Rural Residential Land Use, with some of the western portion lying within a National Park Influence Area.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Policies:

LUS 1.24 Rural Residential will be restricted to the areas shown in the Land Use Strategy Plan.

LUS 1.25 Subdivision and development design that facilitates better use of land already committed for Rural Residential development will be encouraged. Assessment of proposals will address the following criteria:

- Provision of cluster settlement;
- Provision of community-based activities and services;
- Provision for walking cycling possible future public transport;
- Opportunities for local enterprise development such as limited small scale tourism

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2 Refers to Figures in the LNRSPP
development, including accommodation, attractions and cottage industries; and
Suitability for small scale intensive agriculture.

LUS 1.28 The consolidation of existing or committed Rural Residential land use
surrounding Augusta will be permitted where there is no detrimental impact on the
Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

General Character
Areas that have not been classified as any of the special classes (Natural Landscape
Significance, Rural Landscape Significance, Travel Route Corridor) fall into General
Character. They provide the ‘backdrop’ to the significant landscapes and travel route
corridor areas. The landscape character units prevail over these areas and the character
of these units is to be maintained.

Register of the National Estate
The study area has no sites on the National Estate Register.

Western Australian Heritage Commission
The study area has no sites on the Register of the Western Australian Heritage Commission.

Community attitudes
The Margaret River region is highly valued for its scenic landscapes. Sightseeing, and natural
resource based recreation are major tourism attractions. The local community is generally
supportive of policies and practices that protect scenic values. Developments that are
perceived to be out of character with the region’s natural and rural landscapes are generally
unpopular with both the local community and the visitors to the region. Surveys of visitors
and residents regularly show that scenic quality is one of the major regional attractions.

3. LANDSCAPE VALUES
Landscape values are a measure of the importance that the community places on the
landscape at any particular place. Landscape values are a combination of the physical
environment and the public perception of that environment. The physical environment, as it
pertains to landscape is described below; public perception of the environment is expressed
though relevant policies, heritage classifications, cultural, historical and scientific
significance and community attitudes.

The physical environment can be described in terms of:

- Landscape character
- Landscape significance
- Wilderness quality
• Views

These aspects of landscape contain both opportunities and constraints. Opportunities are provided by the existing conditions and the potential to “add” value to these conditions; constraints are contained in the potential of developments to change the existing conditions in such a way that existing values are diminished or destroyed.

**Landscape character**

Landscape character is the nature or identity of the landscape. It is a combination of the natural and cultural elements and their functions. These elements and functions change from place to place and, therefore, so does the landscape character. A major purpose of landscape planning and management should be to maintain the diversity in landscape character existing between different places by protecting the unique qualities inherent in a place.

Landscape character allows the observer to distinguish one landscape from another. It bestows a distinctive sense of place and is the most influential factor in an individual’s experience and enjoyment of a landscape.

A development or the cumulative effect of developments may alter the character to such an extent that the character changes from one type to another. Careful planning, design and management are required to maintain an experience of the existing character.

The LNRSPP places the study area into Augusta Slopes Character Units.

The Leeuwin – Naturaliste Landscape Assessment Study (CALM, 1997), a supporting document to the LNRSPP, describes these units in the following terms:

**The Augusta Slopes Landscape Character Unit**

“Includes the gentle slopes between ‘the Ridge’ and Hardy Inlet, south of Kudardup and is typical of the Plateau Unit except that it relates closely to the Hardy Inlet and coast. Soils are yellow-brown, gravelly duplex, red-brown gravelly gradational and pale grey mottled. Remnant vegetation is marri and jarrah woodland and karri forest in patches. Land use is primarily grazing, contains the town of Augusta, with rural residential on its north-west side. Recreation and tourism use is high and focuses on the coast. There are good views down timbered and cleared slopes to the coast and panoramic views along the coast.”

**SITE CHARACTER**

The landscape character of the study area is rural residential with a minor representation of remnant vegetation.

**NATURAL CHARACTER:**

The site falls into the Cowaramup Flats and Cowaramup Wet Vales Landscape Units of the Cowaramup Upland Land System, mapped and described by Tille and Lantzke (1990).
“The Cowaramup Upland System, on the Margaret River Plateau, extends from Cape Naturaliste south to Augusta and covers an area of 475sqm. The Upland is 5-15km wide, but is not continuous as it is dissected in a number of places by the Wilyabrup Valleys land system and the Glenarty Hills land system”. The soils are “yellow-brown, gravelly duplex (Forest Grove) and pale grey, mottled (Mungite) soils ……The natural vegetation of jarrah/marri forest and woodland has been extensively cleared for agriculture although some patches still remain.”

The Cowaramup Flats: Flats (0-2%) gradient) and with gravelly duplex (Forest Grove) and pale grey mottled (Mungite) soil.

The Cowaramup Wet Vales: Small, broad U-shaped drainage depressions with swampy floors. Gravelly duplex (Forest Grove) soils on side slopes and poorly drained alluvial soils on valley floor. This unit can be subdivided into the (side) slopes and the (valley) floor.

The most distinctive natural landscape feature is the small creek line, with two tributaries joining, that runs through the middle of the site, draining from north to south. There are several small dams on or adjacent to this creek line.

**LAND USE CHARACTER INFLUENCE:**

The historical rural land use has resulted in approximately over 90% of the vegetation being cleared for grazing, with only scattered remnant Peppermints (*Agonis flexuosa*) remaining of the original vegetation. The road side verges on the western boundaries adjacent to Diana Road support native vegetation in good condition, the other road verges have been largely cleared, with some sections replanted in a variety of indigenous and introduced species.

The subsequent rural residential land use has resulted in new planting of both indigenous and introduced species – with the latter dominating. The buildings vary in size, form, materials and style. Some are visible from the adjacent local public residential access roads, some are screened. If they are visible, they are either glimpsed through moderately dense natural vegetation on the roadside or plainly visible with little intervening vegetation. Buildings are generally set back at least 50m from adjacent roads.

The surrounding landscape is varied. To the west is the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park with an ascending slope and dense karri forest. To the east there is some remnant vegetation while the north and south are largely cleared.

The following four photographs are representative examples of the existing landscape character.
Figure 3: View along Diana Road with National Park on left

Figure 4: Lot with perimeter and verge planting
Figure 5: Lot without perimeter planting

Figure 6: View along Greenhill Road
Landscape significance
Significance arises from outstanding landscape features within the context of the particular Character Units.

Landscape significance combines the aesthetic quality of the landscape and viewer sensitivity to give a measure of relative importance of the landscape. Significant landscapes provide the opportunity for the highest enjoyment of the region’s natural and cultural landscapes. Areas of landscape significance are the most distinctive features of an area and in themselves worthy of protection. They are the features that provide most visual reward.

Significant landscapes are the most vulnerable to change. Change in these landscapes has the most potential to impact on values.

The LNRSSP places the study area within the following classifications: General Character

This classification does not place any particular significance on the site. The only significant landscape feature is the creek line.

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River TPS 11 recognises the landscape significance of a portion of the site by classifying it as “Visual Management Zone A”3.

Wilderness quality
Wilderness4 quality considers perceptions of wilderness rather than the strict definition of wilderness. Areas of high wilderness quality represent the environment in its most natural state, provide a resource bank and may provide the backdrop and sense of remoteness for other more used areas.

Areas of high wilderness quality offer opportunities for low impact access and nature based experience. Private land of high wilderness value is not available to the public but seeing it together with similar public lands strengthens the wilderness experience.

Structures, vehicle access and sophisticated facilities detract from the potential wilderness experience.

Infrastructure such as roads and powerlines, the settlement pattern and past clearing for agriculture result in the site having a low wilderness quality.

Views
Views provide the opportunity to become acquainted with a place or landscape from a distance and put place and landscape into a broader context.

A good view taken in this context is not necessarily one with high scenic value but is one that allows a high degree of visual access.

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3 Clause PE6 affords Zone A the highest level of protection – See Attachment 2

4 Wilderness is defined by the Australian Heritage Commission as a “large area in which ecological processes continue with minimal change caused by modern development. Indigenous custodianship and customary practices have been, and in many places continue to be, significant factors in creating what non-indigenous people refer to as wilderness.”
Visual access to areas of landscape significance may be cut off by development or change of use. Visual access may be to undesirable developments and land use changes.

There are views of the study area from the surrounding roads and private properties. The study area is seen within the context of the surrounding rural land and the heavily forested slope of the adjacent National Park. There are no views into the site from significant routes or locations within the adjacent National Park. There are limited views over the study area to the landscape beyond. Because of the flat terrain there are few significant views out of the site.
4. VIEWER SENSITIVITY

Defining landscape value requires a consideration of how the physical resource is viewed. This is commonly known as “viewer sensitivity”. Viewer sensitivity is a measure of the significance of the views of the subject site. This significance depends on the type and number of viewers and the significance of the travel route or location from which the site is viewed.

Table 1 is a viewer sensitivity classification table used for determining the sensitivity level of travel routes and locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Type of Use - Existing or Formally Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-recreation use roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreation and tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 High Sensitivity</td>
<td>National &amp; State Highways. Links between cities and major towns including rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Moderate Sensitivity</td>
<td>Main link roads between towns and highways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Low Sensitivity</td>
<td>Minor link roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 Very Low Sensitivity</td>
<td>Roads receiving local non-recreational traffic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Public Sensitivity Level: Travel Route and Use Area Classification.

(Based on criteria used in the Visual Management System, Williamson and Calder, 1979)
The surrounding neighbourhood roads are level 4 sensitivity. Hillview Road is level 2, the lookout near the Golf Course is level 2, Caves Road and Bussell Highway are level 1.

**Distance and Visibility**
The next steps in determining landscape values are to:
- identify distance zones applying to the project
- determine visibility from the identified viewing locations

**Distance**
Distance refers to the distance between the observed landscape and observation points and routes. For assessment purposes, distance has been divided into six zones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Distance Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreground</td>
<td>&lt; 0.3 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Middleground</td>
<td>0.3 – 1 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleground</td>
<td>1 – 3km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant Middleground</td>
<td>3 – 6km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>6 km – 15km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant Background</td>
<td>&gt;15km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visibility**
Visibility has been tested through field observation and digitally, using ArcView software. This digital analysis establishes a Zone of Visual Influence on the basis of landform only.

Visual mapping based on landform data results in mapping that predicts visibility from viewing locations as if there were no vegetation. Existing vegetation will affect the visibility, particularly when close to the viewer.

The digital visibility mapping indicates that the site is potentially visible from several sensitive locations: Caves Road, Bussell Highway, Hillview Road and Augusta townsie. Intervening vegetation will, however, affect this. Field observation confirmed that the site is not in fact visible from any of these sensitive routes or locations – see Figure 9 for a panorama from the lookout near the Golf Course.
Figure 7: Landform and Elevation
Figure 8: Sensitivity Levels, Distance Zones and Visual Influence
5. VISUAL IMPACTS

Project description
The proposal under investigation is the subdivision of four existing lots. Each existing lot is to be sub-divided into three roughly equal-sized parts. The construction of eight new dwellings, to maximum heights of 8m, on the new lots will follow from the proposed subdivision.

The assessment, however, considers the potential impact of all 12 lots being subdivided into three equal sized lots as shown on the Proposed Structure Plan.

In addition to the new dwellings there will be ancillary buildings, for example, garages and sheds; access roads; clearing for fire management; rainwater tanks.

- House site selection
- The house sites, assessed by this study, were selected according to the following criteria:
  - Houses were located within existing clearings
  - Houses were sited to conform to setback requirements from existing and proposed boundaries
  - Houses were located in accordance with the fire management plan
  - Houses were located to allow for orderly and logical subdivision

The subdivision plan, with house site locations, was prepared by the planning consultants.

Physical impacts
The physical impacts of the development will be:

- Minor clearing of planted vegetation for access, building siteworks and construction, services installation, driveways.
- Minor clearing of vegetation and vegetation thinning for fire management.
- Earthworks for building construction and access
- Structures - houses, garages, sheds, rainwater tanks, retaining walls
- New planting to screen buildings from the adjacent roads and from adjacent lots

Visual impacts
Building will be the only activity that might be visible from outside the site. Clearing for fire management, access roads, and services will not be visible.

It is unlikely that any new building will have more than low visibility from outside the immediate lot that it is built upon once the planned screen planting is established.
Figure 9: Panorama looking east from the lookout near the Golf Course - the site is obscured by the vegetation in the centre of the panorama
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance Zone</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description of expected visual changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–300m</td>
<td>Surrounding neighbourhood roads and adjacent lots</td>
<td>New buildings and buildings activity will be visible in the short term until screen planting is established (approximately 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300m–1km</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3km</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–6km</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–15km</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary of project visibility

There will be no visual changes when viewed from any other location or travel route other than those summarised above.

**The Effect of distance**

The distance of the viewer from the object of the view affects the experience generally as follows:

- **0–300m (foreground):** Large structures are dominant unless screened from view. All detail and colour is discernible. Individual lights and illuminated elements will be clearly visible.

- **300m–1km (close middleground):** Large structures form the major element of the view. Detail and colour is less than distinct. Individual lights and illuminated elements are clearly visible.

- **1–3km (middleground):** Variables such as atmospheric conditions, speed and focus of viewer become critical to the viewing experience. Individual large structures are minor elements of the view. Detail and colour are difficult to make out. The pattern of lighting and illuminated elements will be apparent.

- **3–6km (distant middleground):** Visibility is strongly affected by atmospheric conditions, light levels and the speed and focus of the viewer. Individual complex elements are difficult to discern. Individual simple large shapes are discernible but very minor elements. Lighting is apparent through a general illumination.

- **6–15km (background):** Less than ideal viewing conditions will severely limit views. High contrast in form and/or colour is necessary to discern individual elements. Lighting will be general night “glow”.

>15km (distant background): Atmospheric conditions are critical to visibility. Individual large structures not discernible unless highly contrasting in form and colour. Lighting experienced a night “glow”.

6. IMPACT ON VALUES

Visual Aesthetic Management Objectives

Visual aesthetic management objectives are a set of objectives against which the impacts of the proposal are evaluated. These are derived from the statements and policies contained in the planning documents and on generally accepted community perceptions of the significance of landscape and scenery.

In order to derive objectives it is necessary to interpret the policies. In interpreting what level of change is consistent with the policies it is useful to think of a “spectrum of change”, from no change at one end to dominant change at the other. Areas with the highest level of protection should match with the lower end of the change spectrum.

Another way of looking at this same issue is to consider whether protection is to be absolute (i.e. no detrimental change at all) or more general in nature (i.e. some changes are permissible provided the existing values remain largely the same – for example, natural character remains dominant over largely the same area). The classification levels and objectives of the relevant policy documents suggest that the latter applies in this case - some changes are permissible provided the existing values remain largely the same.

Also relevant to the interpretation of the policies is whether there are any precedents in the area that demonstrate an appropriate level of protection, that is, have the relevant policies been applied reasonably and consistently. The existing developments in the vicinity demonstrate an appropriate level of protection.

Visual Aesthetic Standards

The visual aesthetic objectives give rise to standards that are derived from generally accepted visual landscape management principles5. Anticipated visual changes are tested against the standards.

The objectives and associated standards relate to:

- Landscape character
- Landscape significance
- Wilderness quality, and
- Views

These aspects of landscape contain both positive and negative opportunities. Positive opportunities are provided by the existing conditions and the potential to “add” value to these conditions; negative opportunities are contained in the potential of developments to

5 See Appendix A for general visual landscape management principles.
change the existing conditions in such a way that existing values are diminished or destroyed.

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
Landscape character allows the observer to distinguish one landscape from another. It bestows a distinctive sense of place and is the most influential factor in an individual's experience and enjoyment of a landscape.

A development or the cumulative effect of developments may alter the character to such an extent that the character changes from one type to another. Careful planning, design and management are required to maintain an experience of the existing character.

Management Objective
Land use changes and developments should be such that the existing landscape character is protected.

Priority for protection should be given to areas:
- that have high levels of naturalness
- that are uncommon in the local region; or
- are close to locations with high sensitivity levels (i.e. Level 1 and 2)

Standard
In natural character areas with rural residential influence, the existing character should be maintained when viewed from Level 1 and 2 routes and sites. This means that significant change should not be recognised from these routes and sites regardless of distance. As a guide to achieving this, new development should be unseen in the foreground or close middleground (0-1km) and of very low impact in greater distance zones. Exceptions to these standards include:
- changes that are evident only in the short-term
- minor changes in the context of the existing land use

It is unlikely that any additional development will have more than low visibility from any viewing location in the long term. This will not cause any change to the existing character regardless of the viewing location or distance.

The development demonstrates a high level of compliance with the standard for Landscape Character.

**LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE**
“Landscape significance” in this instance relates to views of the Ridge with its natural vegetation.
Landscape significance combines the aesthetic quality of the landscape and viewer sensitivity to give a measure of relative importance of the landscape. Significant landscapes provide the opportunity for the highest enjoyment of the region’s natural and cultural landscapes.

Significant landscapes are the most vulnerable to change. Change in these landscapes has the most potential to impact on values.

Management Objective

- Maintain and reinforce existing landscape significance.

Standards

- Within travel route corridors, i.e. within 300m from the travel route, structures should not be recognised from the adjacent travel route.

The site is not within a travel route corridor.

Structures should not be seen skylined against the Ridge when viewed from Level 1 and Level 2 Sensitivity routes and sites in any distance zone.

No structures will be skylined against the Ridge backdrop from any significant viewing location.

The development demonstrates a high level of compliance with the standards for Landscape Significance.

WILDERNESS VALUES

Wilderness quality considers perceptions of wilderness rather than the strict definition of wilderness. Areas of high wilderness quality represent the environment in its most natural state, provide a resource bank and may provide the backdrop and sense of remoteness for other more used areas.

Areas of high wilderness quality offer opportunities for low impact access and nature based experience. Private land of high wilderness value is not available to the public but seeing it together with similar public lands strengthens the wilderness experience.

Structures, vehicle access and sophisticated facilities detract from the potential wilderness experience.

Infrastructure such as roads and powerlines, past clearing and the existing houses and associated land uses result in the site having a low wilderness quality.

Management Objective

- Maintain low to moderate wilderness quality

Standard

- Retain a similar pattern of settlement to the existing when viewed from any Sensitivity Level at any distance zone – that is, isolated single dwellings with minimal infrastructure in a predominantly rural landscape.
If a new building is visible, it will not alter the pattern of settlement when viewed from any distance zone.

The development demonstrates a high level of compliance with the standard for Wilderness Quality.

**Views**
Views provide the opportunity to become acquainted with a place or landscape from a distance and put place and landscape into a broader context.

A good view taken in this context is not necessarily one with high scenic value but is one that allows a high degree of visual access.

Visual access to areas of landscape significance may be cut off by development or change of use. Visual access may be to undesirable developments and land use changes.

Management Objective
- Maintain significant views

Standards
- Views over the site should not be obstructed when viewed from Level 1 or 2 routes in the middleground (1-3km) or closer.

The development will not obstruct views over the site when viewed from Level 1 or 2 routes in the middleground (1-3km) or closer

The major ridgeline backdrop should not be broken by the structure (i.e. the structure should not be skylined) when viewed from Level 1 or 2 routes or sites in the distant middleground (3-6km) or closer.

No structure will break the skyline when viewed from Level 1 or 2 routes or sites in the middleground (1-3km) or closer.

The development demonstrates a high level of compliance with the standards for Views

**Effect on the representation of landscape values in the region**
The values of the proposed subdivision site are well represented in the region. Values will be little affected in the vicinity of the development and will remain well represented over the region.

**Effect on Recreation and Tourism Values**
The development will not adversely affect tourism in the Capes area.

**Cumulative Effect**
The impacts of the proposed development are very minor. They will not result in any cumulative effect over the broader region.
Effect on Neighbours
Neighbours on the local roads may experience a slight increase in local traffic. Apart from that there will be no effect on neighbours.

Community attitudes
The development will be in accord with community attitudes in regard to landscape values.

7. EVALUATION
Compliance with the Planning/Policy Framework
The degree of change to landscape values is very low when viewed from neighbouring local roads. There is no change when viewed from Caves Road, Bussell Highway, any trails or lookout within the National Park or any other significant public viewing location. There will be moderate visual impact on neighbours in the short term (three years) and low impact in the medium to long term.

Impacts of the proposal are tested against the relevant policies:
AMRSC Planning Scheme No. 1
AMRSC Visual Quality Objective for Zone A
"Developments or changes in land use should result in inevident visual alteration to the landscape. This is not to say that changes cannot occur, but rather that the development or change in land use should be of similar form, scale and pattern to the existing landscape."

The development complies with this policy.

AMRSC The Visual Quality Objective for Zone C
“Developments and changes of use may be visually dominant, however should borrow from the naturally established form, line, colour and texture to be compatible with the existing landscape.”

The development complies with this policy.

STATE GOVERNMENT LNRSPP
Policies
PS 3.2 Development must be responsive to local values, and be compatible with the natural characteristics and traditional settlement patterns of the area.

The development complies with this policy.

PS 3.3 Development will have due regard for the landscape integrity and value of Ridge backdrops when viewed from the coastline, bays or Travel Route Corridors.

The development complies with this policy.
Rural Residential

Policies:

LUS 1.28 The consolidation of existing or committed Rural Residential land use surrounding Augusta will be permitted where there is no detrimental impact on the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

The development complies with this policy.

8. CONCLUSION

The assessment determines that the subdivision of Lots as set out in the proposed subdivision plan, protects the recognised landscape values and complies with the relevant visual management policies. This conclusion is based on the following:

- The development will not be visible from any significant viewing locations.
- The degree of change to landscape values is very low when viewed from neighbouring local roads.
- There will be moderate visual impact on neighbours in the short term (three years) and low impact in the medium to long term.
- The visual impact of one additional dwelling satisfies Visual Management Objectives for Landscape Character, Landscape Significance, Wilderness Quality and Views.
- The visual impacts of the proposed development will not detract from the landscape values.
- The proposed development will comply with the relevant local and state government landscape protection policies.

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6 Visual Management Objectives and Standards have been derived from the relevant policies.
References
Cleary J. in Kay, R & Alder, J., 2005, Coastal Planning and Management, 2nd ed., Taylor and Francis, Oxon/New York

Definitions:
Aesthetics refers to the personal appreciation and enjoyment of beautiful things (eg. objects, places and processes). It can include functional and non-functional things and does not necessarily include visual quality.
Evaluation is the process where assessment results are examined and used to make decisions about existing or proposed developments.
Impact Assessment is a process of determining how changes to the environment will affect landscape values.
Inevident means that a thing may be visible but it is not distinctive within its context.
Landscape Assessment is the process of analysing and mapping environmental characteristics and, using known criteria, determining those that contribute most to the experience and enjoyment of people.
Landscape refers to a person’s perception of the external environment. It is a human construct.
Landscape Value is the value that people attach to a place based on their perception of that place.
Lot: The lot is the legally defined parcel of land. It has a title registered with the State Titles Office.
Natural Landscape Significance areas contain significant landscape values based on natural characteristics.
Travel Route Corridors are key areas for people to access and experience the region. They consist of a 600m wide corridor along Level 1 and 2 travel routes. It may also include areas where rural and natural significance has been identified.
Site: The site is the area under investigation. It is not necessarily the whole of the lot and does not necessarily relate to cadastral boundaries.
Values are measures of the importance people attach to things and typically stem from perception.
9. ATTACHMENT 1: AUGUSTA MARGARET RIVER SHIRE CLAUSE PE.6 – VISUAL MANAGEMENT

Authority Local Government Act (1995) section 2.7(b) for Town Planning Scheme No. 11 and Town Planning Scheme No. 16
Town Planning Scheme No. 17, clause 8.6
Town Planning Scheme No. 18, clause 8.6
Town Planning Scheme No. 19, clause 14.6
Strategic Plan Link

PE.6 VISUAL MANAGEMENT

Objective
Policy is developed to guide the discretionary decisions of Council, when choice is provided under a legislative framework. Policy is not binding on Council but may be binding on its delegates (Shire Staff) according to the terms of the instrument of delegation.

Orderly and proper planning is promoted by compliance with a legislative planning framework and is at the heart of the sustainable development of infrastructure to service the needs of a community.

The objectives of this policy are to:

• provide guidelines for development in visually sensitive areas of the Shire;
• ensure that developments or changes of land use in areas shown to be of high scenic quality, sensitivity and
visibility do not have any significant adverse impact on the visual quality of the location;

• provide for development or changes of use within areas identified and classified as moderate scenic quality, sensitivity and visibility that may be visually apparent but subordinate to established landscape patterns;

• allow for visually dominant developments or changes of use within areas of low scenic quality, sensitivity and visibility; and

• control and restrict the use of reflective building materials where there is the tangible evidence of reflectivity affecting amenity in terms of visual effect and nuisance arising from glare.

Definition
“Reflective building material” means any materials that have a high solar radiation or reflective value and includes, but is not limited to white, off white, cream, pale grey and reflective materials such as galvanised silver roof sheeting.

Policy
Visual Management Zones
Three distinct Visual Management Zones (A, B and C) have been identified and mapped for the western margins of the Shire (refer to Schedule 1 of this Policy).

The following Development Guidelines have been established for the three Visual Management Zones as follows:
A.
Visual Management Zone ‘A’
Developments or changes in land use should result in
inevident visual alteration to the landscape. Whilst
changes may occur, the development or change of
use should be of similar form, scale and pattern to
the existing landscape. In general, Council shall
apply the following guidelines in the assessment of
proposals within Visual Management Zone ‘A’:

i. Unless a lesser building height is specified
within an applicable Town Planning Scheme,
Structure Plan, Outline Development Plan or
Policy, built/structural development should be
limited to a maximum height of 8m above
natural ground level (calculated in accordance
with Council’s Building/Structure Height
Planning and Environment Policy).

Within rural areas outside of the townsites, the
required 8m height limit may be exceeded if it
can be demonstrated that additional height is
required as part of the rural activity/use of the
subject land. Any proposal to exceed the 8m
height limit (up to a maximum height of 11m)
for a bona fide rural activity/rural use of the
subject land is to be determined by Council’s
Development Control Unit, having regard to the
amenity impacts of the proposed development
in terms of potential adverse impact on the
visual quality of the subject land and location.

ii
Buildings, water tanks and other structures should
be located away from ridge-lines so as not to be
silhouetted against the skyline.

iii
Buildings on land steeper than 1 in 10 should be of split level or pier construction to minimise the amount of cut and fill.

iv Buildings and ancillary structures should be sympathetic in design, materials and colour to compliment surrounding landscape elements, and be sited away from focal points, out of viewer sight lines and where screening vegetation or landform can be utilised.

v.
Reflective building materials should not be used.
However, in instances where the proposed development is for an attached extension/addition to an existing building/structure that has been constructed utilising reflective building materials, subject to the height of the proposed addition/extension being no more than the existing roof height and the area of the addition/extension being less than the area of the existing building, the proposed addition/extension may be of similar materials to the existing structure to which the proposed addition is to be attached. Any proposed use of reflective building materials for an addition/extension attached to an existing structure is to be determined by Council’s Development Control Unit, having
regard to the amenity impacts of the
proposed development in terms of visual
effect and nuisance arising from glare.

vi. Outbuildings should form a unified group with the
main building and should be of similar form,
colour and materials.

vii.
All services inside lots should be underground.

viii.
Roads, where possible, should follow the
contours of the land. Road alignments should
be such that they do not produce visible
straight lines up or down slopes when viewed
from neighbouring land.

ix.
Clearing of existing native vegetation around
buildings should be limited to 30m for fire
management purposes, and should be an
absolute minimum necessary for the
construction of roads and the installation of
services.

x.
A minimum of 150mm of topsoil should be
stripped from earthworks areas and replaced
immediately after construction onto disturbed
areas.

xi.
Landscaping should be with materials that are
sympathetic with the surrounding natural
landscape.

xii.
Essential firebreaks should follow natural
landform, vegetation or land use patterns and
should not necessarily follow lot boundaries.

B.

Visual Management Zone ‘B’

Developments or changes of use may be visually apparent but should nevertheless be subordinate to established landscape patterns. Introduced visual elements may be apparent in the landscape but should not be visually dominant.

In general, Council shall apply the following guidelines in the assessment of proposals within Visual Management Zone ‘B’:

i.

Buildings should be sympathetic in design, materials and colour to compliment the surrounding landscape elements.

ii.

Outbuilding should form a unified group with the main building and should be of similar form, colour and materials.

iii.

Roads should be constructed to minimum design standards, with a minimum of cut and fill. Clearing for road construction and installation of services should be kept to a minimum.

C.

Visual Management Zone ‘C’

In general, Council shall apply the following guidelines in the assessment of proposals within Visual Management Zone ‘C’:
i.
Developments and changes of use may be visually dominant, however, should borrow from the naturally established form, line colour and texture to be compatible with the existing landscape.

D. Townsites
In assessing applications in townsites Council will have regard for the following:

i.
landscape plans for commercial developments are considered essential.

ii.
outbuildings should not be constructed in front of the primary building line.

iii.
development should consider key streetscape/townscape elements in design.

iv.
use of non-reflective building materials may be required.

v.
visual entries and exits to townsites should not be dominated by built form.

E. General
Where land has not been identified within a Visual Management Zone under Schedule 1 of this Policy, development shall be assessed in accordance with the development guidelines for Visual Management Zone C.

Council will also be cognisant of the policies and
recommendations of the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge Statement of Planning Policy (LNRSPP) in its assessment of development applications.

Keywords Reflective Building Materials, Visual Management Zones

Related Policies Nil

Related Procedures/ Nil

Documents

DELEGATION LEVEL Chief Executive Officer to Directorate of Sustainable Planning Staff

Adopted 30 June 2004

Last Reviewed 22nd December 2003
10. ATTACHMENT 2: LEEUWIN NATURALISTE RIDGE STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY MAPS
11. ATTACHMENT 3: PROPOSED STRUCTURE PLAN