

Memorandum

TO: Melissa Shipman, Planner

FROM: Luke McKinlay, Landscape Architect

DATE: 16th November 2018

SUBJECT: LUC-2018-219, 261 Tomahawk Road, Ocean Grove. Comment from Landscape Architect

This memorandum is in response to your request for comment on an application to establish a wedding venue/conference centre at 261 Tomahawk Road, Ocean Grove. The site is zoned **Rural** under the Operative District Plan (ODP) and is located within the **Peninsula Coast Outstanding Landscape Area**.

A request for further information was made in May 2018, after it was determined that there was insufficient information within the initial application to allow a potentially affected person and/or the decision-maker to gain a clear and concise understanding of the nature and potential extent of effects of the development on landscape and visual amenity.

Specific matters identified as requiring further information included the following:

- Assessment of the effects on the proposal against the relevant provisions of the Landscape Section of the ODP (Objectives 14.2.1-14.2.4 and associated policies and the Peninsula Coast Outstanding Landscape Area Section 14.5.1(a));
- Consideration of the effects of the initially proposed guest parking area, which included space for approximately 115 spaces. It was requested that assessment of this feature should consider whether the proposed extent of parking is appropriate in this rural landscape and whether there were alternative locations/configurations, which would accommodate the estimated "30-40 vehicles" that were stated as being likely to attend events;
- Greater detail and assessment of the proposed extent and location of external lighting;
- Consideration of the visual effects of coaches and guest vehicles on residents of properties adjacent to the entrance to the site on Tomahawk Road.

In response to this request, and those of other council officers, additional information was provided and several changes were made to the application, most notably, the proposed guest carpark was reduced in size from 115 spaces to 40. Its proposed location is clearly identified on an amended site plan, dated 20/06/2018. In addition, the initially proposed pole-mounted lighting within the guest car parking area has been substituted with low level bollard lighting.

Proposed Development

The applicants are seeking consent to use the property as a venue for weddings and functions.

It is proposed that an existing woolshed building and associated outdoor areas will accommodate the events. In addition, areas for carparking and coach parking will be provided and are detailed on the attached plans.

The applicants propose to upgrade the existing woolshed so that it can accommodate a maximum of 150 people. It is noted that no new buildings will be constructed as part of this development. While a new lean-to structure will replace an existing lean-to, it appears to be designed in a sympathetic manner to the existing woolshed.

Coach parking will be provided on an area of relatively flat land adjacent to the access track and stock yards. Mobility parking will be provided adjacent to the woolshed building, while the main car park will be provided in a paddock to the north of the buildings. This car park, which

will have a gravel surface, has capacity for approximately 40 vehicles and will be accessed via an existing farm track.

The applicant is proposing a maximum of 8 events per calendar month, with hours of operation spanning 10am to 12 midnight. All guests are to be off-site by 1am the following day.

A lighting plan is attached to the application that illustrates the type and extent of lighting proposed. The application states that the effects of this proposal have been assessed by Active Electrical Ltd in accordance with Australian Standard 4282-1997 and that their assessment confirms that adverse effects will be *less than minor*.

Comments

It is important to consider whether the application will have potential adverse effects on general rural amenity values and the following relevant features and characteristics of The Peninsula Coast Outstanding Landscape Area, which are identified in the ODP as important to protect:

- *The general visual dominance of the natural landscape elements over human landscape elements (e.g. buildings or shelter plantings) giving the area a sense of maturity and harmony.*
- *An apparently remote, isolated rural character.*
- *The integrity, extent, coherence and natural character of the landform, streams and remaining areas of indigenous vegetation.*
- *The minimal influence of any large-scale structures or exotic plantings to diminish the impact of the natural landscape forms and features.*
- *The dramatic coastal landforms and views.*
- *The presence and quality of human-made features which are relics of the past, eg old lime kilns, stone walls. (15.5.1(a)(iii)).*

Relevant principal threats to visual quality are identified as *inappropriate siting, design, scale, density and finish of structures such that they become visually dominant from public viewpoints.*

In general, it is considered that due to the minor nature of modifications to existing buildings and the reduced extent of carparking associated with the amended proposal, effects of the physical elements of the development on the important features and characteristics of this landscape can be kept at relatively low levels. There is some concern, however, that vehicle movements along the lagoon edge will have some adverse effects on the natural character values of this regionally significant wetland.

It is noted that the Peninsula Coast Outstanding Landscape Area covers a large area, which includes a spectrum of landscape types. It is considered that this site, while highly scenic, does not have the same degree of isolation and remoteness as some peninsula locations on the eastern coastline. This site occupies a rural fringe location in relatively close proximity to residential suburbs, when compared with other Peninsula locations. Nevertheless, it does display high natural character values associated with the predominance of natural landscape features over human made features (identified in Objective 6.2.2 on the plan, as one of the key rural landscape element):

Objective 6.2.2 Maintain and enhance the amenity values associated with the character of the rural area.

Some key elements of rural character include:

- (a) *the predominance of natural features over human made features,*
- (b) *the high ratio of open space relative to the built environment,*
- (c) *significant areas of vegetation in pasture, crops, forestry and indigenous vegetation,*
- (d) *presence of large numbers of farmed animals,*
- (e) *noises, smells and effects associated with the use of rural land for a wide range of agricultural, horticultural and forestry purposes,*
- (f) *low population densities relative to urban areas,*
- (g) *generally narrow unsealed roads,*

(h) *absence of urban infrastructure.*

In general, the proposal will largely maintain the high ratio of open space relative to the built environment. Currently, existing rural character is heavily influenced by the predominant pastoral landcover, established *Macrocarpa* shelter vegetation, and the visually recessive nature of the existing buildings, such as the homestead and woolshed. The proposal will not introduce any new buildings, but rather involves a sympathetic addition to the existing woolshed, which is in a visually recessive location, due to screening provided by either landform or mature shelterbelt vegetation.

Views towards the site are available from a range of surrounding locations, including the western extent of Ocean Grove, and the eastern extent of the hill suburbs of Andersons Bay and Shiel Hill. As seen in figures 5 & 6, views of the proposed guest parking area are likely to be at least partially visible from these locations. To avoid adverse effects associated with this feature of the development contrasting with existing pastoral views it is recommended that some additional shelterbelt planting is undertaken along the western boundary of the parking area (refer Appendix 2).

It is also recommended that this carpark has a gravel surface, so that from the limited range of location from where it will be visible, prior to the *Macrocarpa* planting establishing, it will be largely in-keeping with the surrounding rural context, and will not appear notably different from a large farm vehicle parking area, when not occupied by guest vehicles.

A paper road traverses the site in a northwest-southeast orientation, north of the existing woolshed and homestead. It appears from aerial photography that some of the trees within the shelterbelt that aligns with this road may actually be located within this unformed legal road. Whilst these trees will only provide limited screening of the proposed guest parking area, they provide a backdrop to the woolshed and homestead building and contribute to the existing context of built development being subservient to the surrounding natural character of the site. Existing landscape character is largely related to the combination of broad expanses of pastoral land, remnant native vegetation with the gullies and at the lagoon edge and the clusters and lines of shelter planting. The retention of existing large-scale vegetation on this site is, therefore, considered an important means of retaining existing landscape character values.

To ensure the ongoing contribution of these trees and the clusters of *Macrocarpa* planting to the east of the woolshed and homestead, in terms of both visual screening and their contribution to the natural character of this site it is recommended that all existing mature trees on site are retained. Where it is determined that trees are within the unformed legal road to the north east of the building on site, it is recommended that additional *Macrocarpa* planting is undertaken immediately to the northeast of the paper road, given that it is not possible to impose conditions for the retention of trees within an unformed legal road.

Following an initial review of the proposal, the extent and type of proposed lighting has been modified so that all lighting is now either low level or building-mounted down lighting. It is considered that if this lighting meets all the relevant district Plan requirements (*Rule 21.5.4 Performance Standard: Glare and Lighting*) adverse effects associated with light overspill and glare can be reduced to acceptable levels. It is also noted that the retention of existing mature trees on this site will help to reduce potential light spill effects.

The Tomahawk Lagoon forms an important part of the landscape context of the site. Parts of the relatively natural margins of this regionally significant wetland border the access road to the site. While any effects of traffic movements generated by this activity on the ecological values of the site are beyond the scope of these comments, there are likely to be some adverse effects on existing natural character values of the lagoon associated with intermittent periods of vehicle movements generated by 30-40 vehicles.

While it is noted that the access road is relatively distant from the nearest residential locations (approximately 500m), the existing low-key and largely natural character of the lagoon edge is likely to be noticeably intruded upon by the proposed commercial level of vehicle use, if the venue is used at the maximum frequency proposed (8 times per month). Management of these potential adverse effects is likely best addressed by either limiting the number of vehicles permitted to access the site or reducing the allowable frequency of events.

Lastly, traffic movements may also have some minor adverse effects on the amenity of occupants of residential properties on Tomahawk Road, bordering the legal road access to the site. These visual effects are related to both the movement of vehicles, which are likely to arrive and depart the site in clusters, and effects associated with vehicle lights. These potential effects are largely related to the potentially distracting effect of vehicle movements and lights intruding in what is otherwise a low-key residential area. These relatively minor adverse effects can likely be managed by either limiting the number of vehicles permitted to access the site or the maximum allowable frequency of events per month.

Recommended Conditions

- All existing Macrocarpa shelter planting is to remain. The Macrocarpa shelterbelt trees between the existing farm dwelling (identified as Item 2 in the legend of the site plan, dated 20/06/2018) and the proposed 40 space car park (identified as Item 6 in the legend of the site plan, dated 20/06/2018), which are not within the unformed local road are to be retained. Additional Macrocarpa tree planting shall occur within the applicant's property adjacent to where trees are located within the unformed legal road.
- Removal of any of these trees can only occur if it is confirmed by a qualified tree risk assessor that the trees pose a health and safety risk. An accompanying arborists risk assessment report must be submitted to the DCC planning manager, prior to the proposed removal of any of these trees. Replacement planting with the same species must occur if approval is granted to remove any tree from this shelterbelt.
- Additional Macrocarpa shelterbelt planting shall take place along the western boundary of the proposed carpark to the corner of the paddock, as shown in the marked-up plan attached as Appendix 2. This planting shall take place in the first planting season following granting of consent.
- The carpark area will not exceed the extent illustrated in the attached site plan, dated 20/06/2018. The aisle widths and manoeuvring widths shall be the minimum required by the transport department.
- External lighting shall be in accordance with amended proposal supplied by the applicant, meet all the relevant district Plan requirements and consist of low-level bollard and building mounted down lighting only. No pole-mounted lighting shall be permitted.

Luke McKinlay
Landscape Architect

APPENDIX 1: SITE PHOTOS

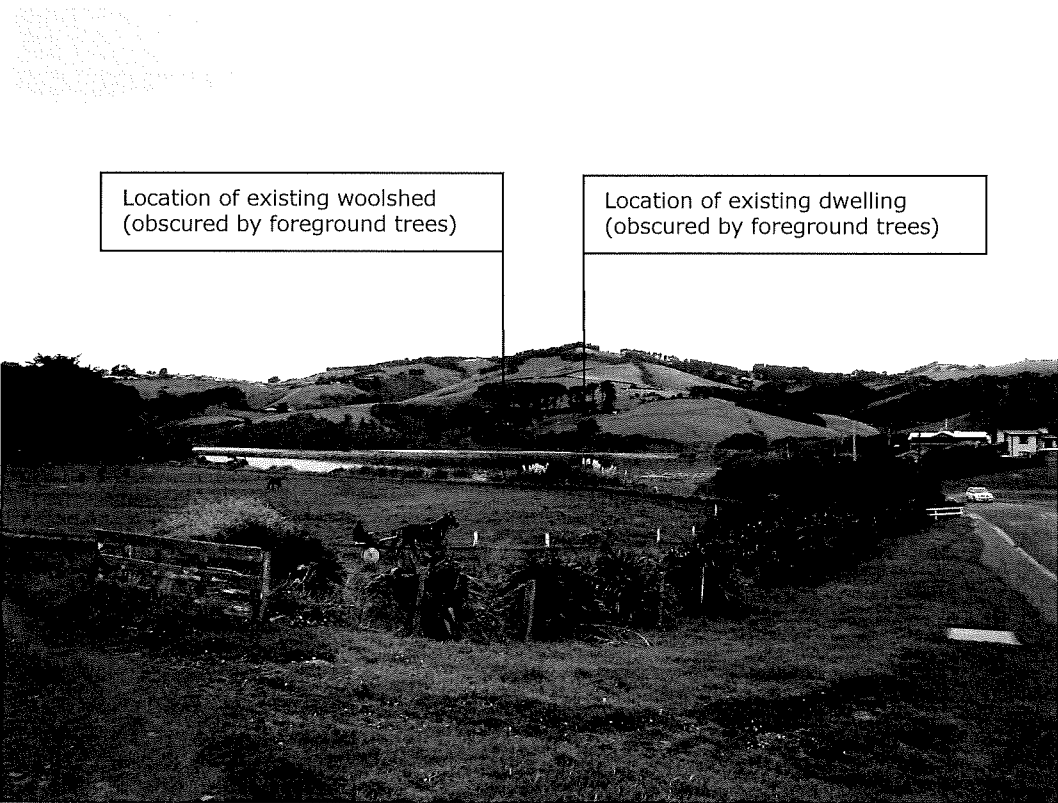


Figure 1: View towards site from street frontage of 177 Tomahawk Road



Figure 2: View towards the northeast from immediately south of the existing Woolshed



Figure 3: View from near proposed entry to guest parking area

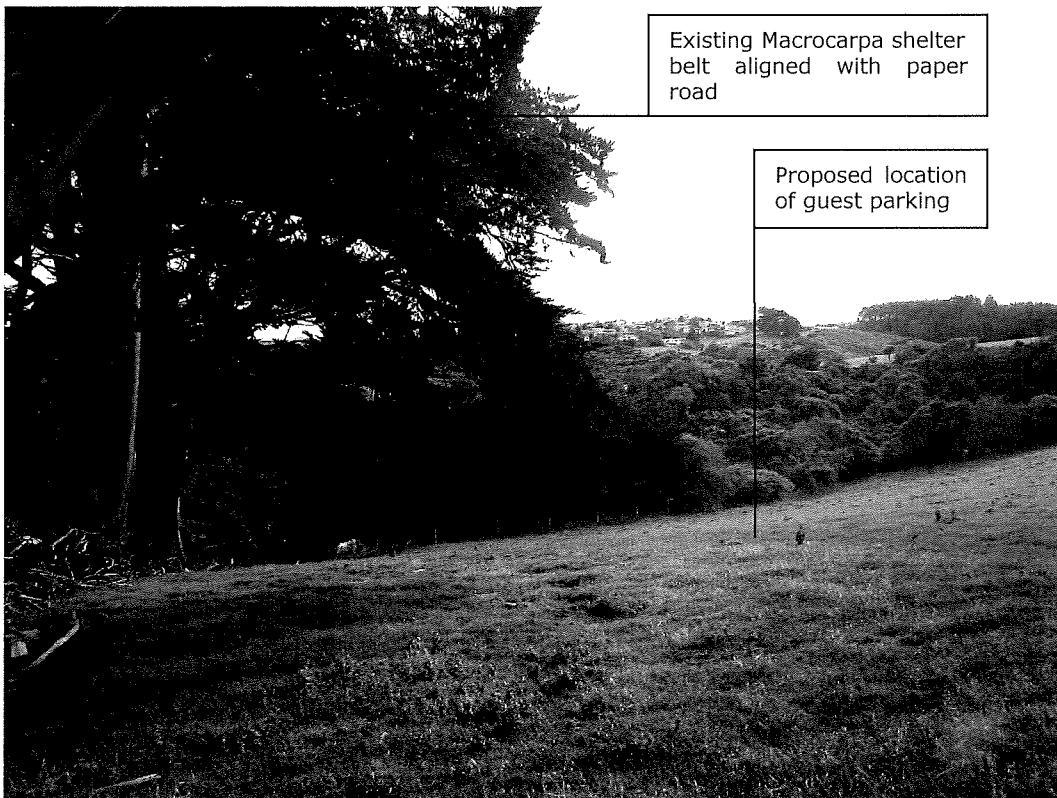


Figure 4: View from southeast of proposed guest parking



Figure 5: View from northwest of the site (near 60 Puketai Street)



Figure 6: View residential area to the southwest of the site (near 54 Gloucester Street)

