

FIGURE 1: REGIONAL CONTEXT

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Local Context

Pindimar is a relatively isolated suburb located within Great Lakes Council on the northern edge of Port Stephens. Pindimar is located to the east of Myall Lakes National Park and to the west of Pindimar Bay. Clarke Street forms the main vehicular access to the suburb running in a generally south direction as a continuation of Pindimar Road.

Site description

The subject site (180 Clarke Street, Pindimar) is legally described as Lot 2, DP 1014683. The Site is located to the east of an established residential area. Currently the Site is well vegetated with localised clearings for tracks and trails.

Surrounding Landuse

South Pindimar village is located to the east of the proposal and consists of a combination of older style one and two storey and modern dwellings. Residential development associated with Pindimar is surrounded by dense vegetation. A densely vegetated ridgeline associated with Myall Lakes National Park and Fame Mountain is located to the west of the Site, forming a dominant visual feature within the landscape when viewed from the south. Port Stephens bounds the Site to the south. Soilders Point, Salamander Bay and Corlette are the main suburbs on the southern side of Port Stephens.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

The application is for the development of a land-based farm for the production of approximately 60 tonnes per year of live Blacklip Abalone (*Haliotis rubra*) for human consumption. The proposal consists of a total of 3 large sheds, 2 large ponds and associated infrastructure. Included in the proposal are 3 navigational buoys to the south of the Site and a timber boardwalk crossing Pig Station Creek at the end of Cambage Road (refer to Architects). Localised clearing is proposed, associated with the building footprint.

3.0 VISUAL ANALYSIS

The objectives of the Analysis are as follows:

1. To identify and describe the existing visual/landscape environment and to evaluate its current qualities.
2. To determine the visibility of the study area from the general surrounds including major roads and surrounding residential areas.
3. To provide general mitigation measures for consideration in the site planning and design development of the proposal.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

1. The undertaking of a viewpoint analysis to identify sites likely to be affected by development within the study area.
2. A photographic survey using a digital camera. Some viewpoints are included simply to provide a general idea to the character of the different areas surrounding the site.
3. A preliminary assessment of those areas most likely affected.
4. Preparation of photomontages from key viewpoints to illustrate the potential visual impact as a worst case scenario.

5.0 FINDINGS

The visual analysis illustrates that views towards the site are limited. The greatest visual impact is likely to result from the proposed navigation buoys and timber boardwalk, however these impacts would be low or negligible. From a regional context, the proposal would generally be concealed by existing vegetation. It is unlikely the proposed development would be noticeable from surrounding viewpoints due to a combination of distance, topography and vegetation.

The view analysis found that:

1. The study area is largely screened from the west due to the vegetated ridgeline associated with Myall Lakes National Park and Fame Mountain.
2. The proposed development is not likely to be visible from established residential areas within Pindimar due to existing vegetation.
3. Due to distance, it is unlikely the proposal would be visible from areas on the southern side of Port Stephens including Soldiers Point, Corlette, Salamander Bay and Nelson Bay.
4. It is likely that due to distance, existing vegetation and the siting of the proposed buildings, the visual impact from Port Stephens water would be negligible. It is likely the proposed navigational buoys would be visible from the waterway however these would form only a minor element in the overall visual landscape and is in keeping with the landscape character of the area. Therefore the potential visual impact is low.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Overall the proposed development would have a minimal visual impact on the existing surrounding environment in terms of landscape and scenic values. The proposed development is permissible in this zone and due to the extent of existing vegetation surrounding the proposal, it is likely the proposal would be unnoticeable from most viewpoints. The height of the development will not exceed the ridgeline or tree line and there will be minimal loss of tree canopy.

To ensure the proposal has a minimal visual impact, the design should consider some or all of the following mitigation strategies. The recommendations provided seek to achieve a better visual integration of the proposal and the landscape character at both local and regional scales.

These include but are not limited to:

- Retention of significant existing vegetation will assist in screening the proposal from the north, east and south.
- Re vegetation of disturbed areas where practical.
- Appropriate colour selection and the use of non reflective materials.



VIEWPOINT 01: SOILDERS POINT

This photograph was taken from Soilders Point in excess of 2.5km from the Site. The photograph was taken looking in a generally north east direction towards the Site. Views from this location are expansive across Port Stephens, with Boondaba Island and Myall Lakes National Park forming the dominant visual element in the foreground. It is unlikely the proposal would be visible from this viewpoint due to distance and dense vegetation to the south west of the site. Existing residences associated with Pindimar are just visible in the distance. It is likely the proposed buoys associated with the development would be visible from this location on a clear day, however the potential visual impact would be negligible from this viewpoint due to distance and the dominance of existing landscape features.



VIEWPOINT 02: GEORGE RESERVE

This photograph was taken from Georges Reserve off Soilders Point Road, approximately 3.6km from the proposal. The photograph was taken looking in a generally north east direction towards the Site. Views from this location are expansive across Port Stephens, with the ridgeline associated with Fame Mountain visible in the distance. It is unlikely the proposal would be visible from this viewpoint due to distance from the proposal and the vegetation proposed for retention surrounding the proposal.



VIEWPOINT 03: SALAMANDER BAY

This photograph was taken from Cook Street at the north eastern most point of Salamander Bay off Soldiers Point Road. The viewpoint is in excess of 4.4km from the proposal. The photograph was taken looking in a generally north direction towards the Site. Views from this location are expansive across Port Stephens, with the ridgeline associated with Fame Mountain and vegetation associated with Myall Lakes National Park and Pindimar visible in the distance. The densely vegetated Corlette Point is visible in the middle ground of the photograph to the east. It is unlikely the proposal would be visible from this viewpoint due to distance from the proposal and the vegetation proposed for retention surrounding the proposal.



VIEWPOINT 04: CORLETTE POINT

This photograph was taken from Anchorage Point off Corlette Point Road. The viewpoint is located approximately 4.2km south of the Site and the photograph was taken looking in a generally north direction towards the Site. Views from this location are expansive across Port Stephens, with vegetation associated with Myall Lakes National Park and Pindimar forming a backdrop to the waterway. It is unlikely the proposal would be visible from this viewpoint due to distance from the proposal and the vegetation proposed for retention surrounding the proposal.

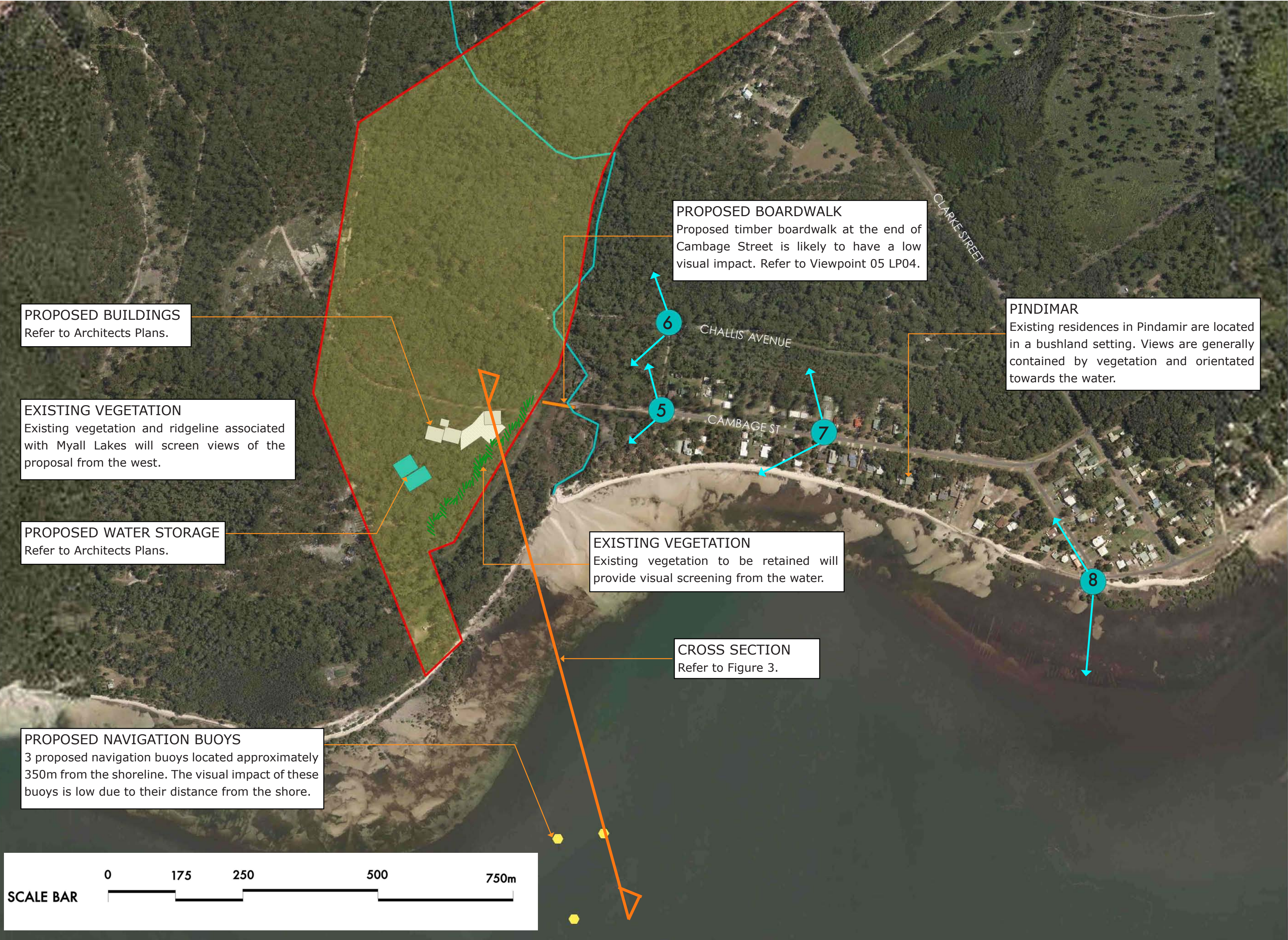


FIGURE 2: LOCAL CONTEXT

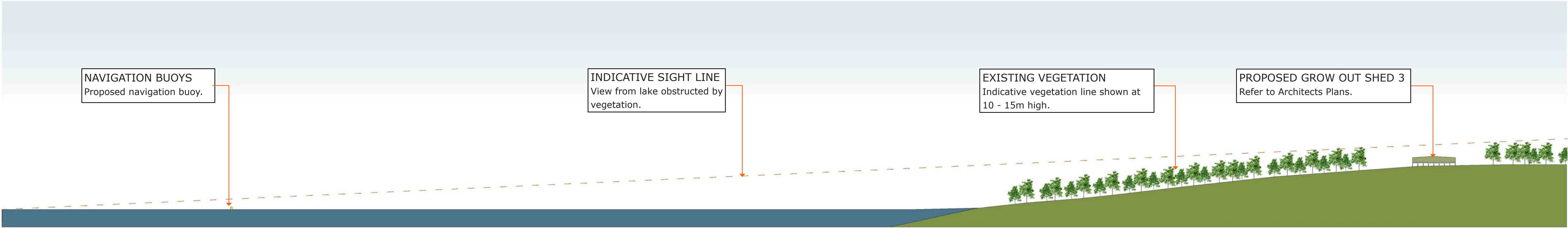


FIGURE 3: CROSS SECTION



VIEWPOINT 05: CAMBAGE STREET

View from Cambage Street looking in a west direction approximately 50m from the proposed foot bridge access. The existing character of this area is residential houses with pockets of retained vegetation. Views from this location are terminated at the end of Cambage Street by dense vegetation and the vegetated ridgeline associated with Fame Mountain. Its unlikely the proposed timber foot bridge would be visible from this viewpoint due to the dense vegetation at the end of the street and the dominance of the vegetated ridge in the background, it is likely the visual impact from this location would be negligible.



VIEWPOINT 06: CHALLIS AVE

View from Challis Avenue looking towards the proposal in a generally west direction. Access to the Site is proposed to be via an entry off Challis Avenue. There would be no changes to the existing landscape in this location and therefore there will be no visual impact resulting from the proposal in this location.



VIEWPOINT 07: CAMBAGE STREET

View from Cambage Street looking in a west direction approximately 500m from the proposed foot bridge access. The existing character of this area is residential houses with pockets of retained vegetation. Views from this location are terminated at the end of Cambage Street by Dense vegetation and the vegetated ridgeline associated with Fame Mountain. The proposed foot bridge is unlikely to be visible from this viewpoint due to the dense vegetation at the end of the street and the dominance of the vegetated ridge in the background, it is likely the visual impact from this location would be negligible.



VIEWPOINT 08: CUNNINGHAM STREET

View from the corner of Cunningham and Curlew Street looking in a west direction approximately 1.2km from the proposal. The existing visual landscape is characterised by residential houses along the foreshore associated with Cunningham Street and Cambage Street. Views to the west are vast towards distant ridgelines associated with Myall Lakes National Park and Fame Mountain in the middleground. Views towards the proposal from this viewpoint are generally screened by Mangroves in the foreground. It is likely that in addition to the Mangroves in the foreground, existing bushland vegetation surrounding the proposal would also screen views from this location. It is likely the proposed buoys would be visible from this location, however in the existing context these would form only a minor element in the overall visual landscape and the resulting visual impact is likely to be low.