

**PROPOSED LAUDERDALE
QUAY DEVELOPMENT**

Draft Integrated Impact Statement

**Resource Planning and
Development Commission**

Hearing: 17 June – 10 July 2009

**RESPONSE PROOF
OF EVIDENCE**

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Visual Assessment

On behalf of Save Ralphs Bay Inc

10 June 2009

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10 June 2009

LAUDERDALE QUAY DRAFT IIS – SUBMISSION TO RPDC **Response Proof to Statement by Shaun Walsh of PLACE Design Group Pty Ltd.** For Save Ralphs Bay Inc.

The referenced comments below respond specifically to the points made by Shaun Walsh in his Response Statement dated 27 May 2009.

(4.1) Re Clarence City Council

(4.1.2) Land Use Framework, Urban Design and Landscaping – Overall Design of the Development Pg.3

Para 3: Lauderdale already has a well-developed sense of place, focussed around the general landscape, the Canal, Roaches Beach, and the shops on the highway. These all provide many opportunities for resident interaction, and the community is very successful.

Para 4: The proposed marina basin will not provide a community focus for the people of Lauderdale as much as for the inhabitants of the proposed development. The Quay is separated from the community in a number of ways, not least by the busy highway. It is also away from the natural focus of community in Lauderdale.

Para 9: The Landscape Concept Plan shows detail pictures of coastal vegetation on sand, unlike the rocky shores in the Quay proposal. P.19, 21 show a few detail shots in highly urbanised Sullivans Cove, but neither the settings or the details of piled ropes and wharf bollards have any resemblance to the situation at Lauderdale. Most of the other images are clearly un-Tasmanian in character and climate.

The plant species shown on p.28, 29 are also a strange assortment of largely non-Tasmanian species, some weedy in Tasmania, some from very different microclimates than the ones on the proposed Quay, and some of quite inappropriate size and vigour. Some would be appropriate, but do not appear to be the ones illustrated in most of the Landscape sketches.

Para 10: Contrary to Walsh's assertion, the development does not interface directly with the fabric of Lauderdale or mesh with it, but is designed as a separate entity. Because of the highway traffic, accessibility will not be easy on foot, and to have to drive from Lauderdale to the Quay will be quite at odds with the local culture.

Para 11: Some people may "want to visit the marina basin", but it seems unlikely there will be much interest in the windswept western and southern foreshore, which are anyway already completely accessible to the public.

(4.1.3, 4, 5, 6, 7) Land Use Framework, Urban Design and Landscaping – Movement etc ... Pg.4-7 No comment

(4.1.8-10) Visual Impacts – Analysis of the Context and Landscape Values Pg.7 No comment

(4.1.11) Visual Impacts – General Argument of View Absorption

The 'very low-lying nature of much of the land in and around Ralphs Bay', does make the proposed development visually vulnerable because the proposed 2-storey buildings will be of completely different scale and texture to what currently exists in Ralphs Bay. Walsh's para 4 says that 'the most vulnerable view is C10', but C2-4 and 9 (from Haynes Pt, Mill Pt and South Arm Rd) appear to be equally or more visually sensitive. In fact the most sensitive in my opinion are views C5-7 from South Arm Rd, because of their proximity to the viewing public at only 30 or 40m away. Support Walsh's assertion that 'computer modelling will show the highest impact to be from the close range views'.

Some of the reasons for the dramatic difference in appearance will be as follows:

- Colour: existing water views have light ethereal hues, reflective, with lots of blues and whites, but as the bay is filled these will become darker with the less-reflective soil and vegetation textures of the new land, and more earthy colours of the buildings.
- Shape of the shoreline: existing view is of soft natural concave curve of the bay with natural sandy shoreline, but will become a high rocky artificial edge, convex in shape, and obliterating the natural graded sandy edge.
- Texture: existing texture of the natural bay is fine grained and soft, with bushland and rippled water, but will become much coarser textured rock armoured shorelines rising up from the water, with blocky-shaped buildings of a much coarser grain, and less subtle colour blend.
- Height: diagram Section 3 of Cardno drawing 232402-05 shows that the new surface level of the constructed islands will be 1m higher than the existing level of South Arm Road at that point without any buildings. By inserting a two-storey house into the section, it can be seen that a person standing on the road would have their view completely blocked by the proposed development.
- Complexity: the existing natural views display variety of land form, subtle colour, texture, scale and distance, but the proposed views will be obviously artificial, with a majority of man-made structures and very limited subtleties of colour texture or scale.

Picture C5 is particularly revealing about the dramatic visual difference between the existing natural setting and the proposed appearance from the most important and populous viewing location, which is for cars on South Arm Road. Apart from the complete transformation from natural to artificial appearance, even the tree species pictured will be completely foreign to the natural local setting.

(4.1.12) Visual Impacts – General Argument of View Absorption

In answer to the question about natural form and intactness of the bay, Walsh rightly discounts the impact from distant vantage points, but agrees that the view is 'compromised by the development at the close range'. Para 3.

(4.1.13) Visual Impacts – Visual Impacts of Construction Activities

Walsh explains that visual mitigation measures for the construction period of the estimated 7 years have not been undertaken.

He says (para 3) 'impacts are expected only on the close range views', and offers mitigation with 'hessian fencing', 'temporary landscaping', and progressive planting as areas become available.

While I see nothing wrong in these suggestions, the time lag of up to 7 years does seem problematic, and would itself constitute a major visual negative. During such a long period there is bound to be extensive weed growth, which will then need eradication before starting over with the official replanting. Times may be even longer if the replacement plantings fail, which is quite possible in the dry Lauderdale weather setting. At what point will the Walker Corp be disengaging themselves from this investment project, and what guarantees will be in place for the trees?

(4.1.14) Visual Impacts – Pipes Under the Bridge

No comment

(4.2) Re State Government Agencies – Detailed Comments p.10

(4.2.4) DEPHA – Environment Division – Visual Assessment Issue referring to DIIS Section 5.3.2 p.11 Questions the quantitative analysis methodology for landscape values.

Para 2, Walsh refers to p.60 of the Cardno 'Visual Assessment Report' (Appendix K3). It claims that the visual assessment ratings on p.60 are adapted from the 'Guidelines for Visual Assessment and Management of Coastal Landscapes' by the State Pollution Control Commission NSW 1981, which they may be, but p.60 says they are from the document "Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia".

In fact the methodology for the study is set out at p.4, and the table summarising assessments of all the Ralphs Bay views is on p.54. Although the methodology has been outlined, it appears to be rather different from that in the reproduced table on p.60, which appears to have a numerical basis.

In any case, neither the summary table nor the individual assessment pages give any real insight as to how the ratings were derived, being simply stated at the end of a descriptive analysis.

The essential background analysis work appears to be very scanty. For example, 'Site Description' (p.6) is brief, with no reference to the view quality. 'Description of the Development' is also brief, but attributes qualities in an unusual way, such as describing as 'a natural edge', a completely artificial foreshore made from rocks, metres of fill and introduced vegetation, in a low energy sandy shore setting.

The 'Landscape Values' assessment (p.7) seems to focus more on the coastal modifications than the natural visual character of the Derwent estuary. The 'Scenic Quality' is captured in just 3 lines and a list of tourist routes. Except for one paragraph, 'Ralphs Bay Landscape Character' seems to have been largely reduced to a description of urban features, with little reference to the visual qualities that contribute to the place. Against this scant benchmark, the visual values of all 20 of the range of assessed sites have been measured. A descriptive system has been used, but it is not made clear how value assessments have been derived.

It appears that the 'Visual and Urban Design Assessment' (Appendix K3) may not actually address the essential component of the WA landscape planning method on 'landscape character'. There also appears to be nothing about the layout and design of the canal estate with reference to the design inherent characteristics of the bay landscape (i.e. sweeping concave form, the sloping headlands, and the targeted background of mountains behind). Descriptive statements from nowhere such as "The scenic quality is average (p.35)", really contribute very little to an assessment of 'View quality'.

Also there does not appear to be any measurable assessment of the relative viewing sensitivity of the site, and exposure to public viewing. This is the other part of the WA method (as well as the VMS used in Tasmanian forestry). So without any reference to size of the viewing audience, numbers of vehicles, length of viewing time, or the factors in the WA table on p.60, the statement (p.41) on 'Viewer Sensitivity' of South Arm Road is simply, "As a local main road, South Arm Road is of local significance." A sentence about it 'following the bay' and 'offering good views' then raises its importance to 'medium'.

For these reasons, the Cardno Appendix K3 appears to be quite inadequate as a visual analysis, and test of the visual impact of the proposed development on the visual qualities of Ralphs Bay.

(4.2.8) Agencies' Summary Comments - Planning / Social (para 9) p.13

Para 6. Despite Walsh's argument that "the methodology of the visual assessment is based on scenic quality ratings ... that represent the visual attitudes of a majority of the community ... in Australia and America", it appears there has been no attempt at actual sampling of local opinions in relation to any visual matters, or in relation to any of the

particular views that will be effected by the proposed development. This is a deficiency in the method, and therefore leads to an inevitable deficiency in the study findings.

(4.3) Professor Robert Morris-Nunn p.14
No comment.

Patricia Barwick
10 June 2009