

INTRODUCTION

**EXTRACT FROM
BYRON BAY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDY — BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL DEC. 1981.**

A consideration of the scenic and landscape attributes of an area has been an important, though in the past poorly appreciated, aspect of planning.

In a major tourist/retirement area, such as the Byron Bay-Suffolk Park-Ewingsdale area, it is an all-important step to take to ensure that those features of the landscape that make the area such an attractive place for residents, tourists and investors are maintained and not degraded.

A simple appreciation is necessary of the relationship between development and landscape protection/preservation. It is neither feasible nor realistic to hopefully achieve one without taking into account the needs of the other. For example, one cannot have an attractive part of the landscape cleared for development or the overall attractiveness of that particular locality is seriously impaired. This is not to say that no development should be considered in such areas, rather that such development should be sensitive to and compatible with the landscape of a particular locality.

This section identifies what are the important landscape elements in the Study Area, the degree to which these landscape elements may be appreciated (i.e. who can see it, how many people), and the recommended planning controls to apply to each landscape unit type.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

In asking who can appreciate a landscape resource the "who" factor would include not only persons residing permanently in the Study Area and nearby, but also visitors to the area as well. In other words many people, outside of the individual owners of each landscape resource, have a claim to the scenic resources of an area.

This assessment aims to produce planning policies and management guidelines which will resolve any possible conflicts in the claims made on the scenic resources of an area.

In the visual assessment of a rural area a graded scale of levels of scenic importance are suggested:-

- 1 . Landscapes possessing regional prominence.

3. Landscapes of local significance
4. Landscapes having topographic enclosure
5. Landscapes of Terrain interest
6. Disturbed landscapes
7. Beach and dune landscapes.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The identified landscape units within the rural areas of the Study Area, the location of such units, is discussed below:-

Regional Prominent Landscapes: Defined here are those prominent lands considered to be an integral part of the regional landscape. "Regional" means those lands important to the landscape of the region and capable of being viewed from major regional transport routes. In this instance those prominent lands or landscapes seen from the Pacific Highway are considered to be in this category.

Lands of regional prominence here comprise the north and west side of Cape Byron, escarpment lands within view of the highway, forested hills off Grays Lane, Tyagarah and picturesque stand of Weeping Figs at Ewingsdale.

Lands of regional prominence are easily seen areas viewed by comparatively large numbers of people. AADT figures for the Pacific Highway at Bangalow a town on the near-outer fringe of the Study Area, show that around 1½ million vehicles travel annually along the Highway - assuming 2-3 persons per car this means that lands of regional prominence in the Study Area are potentially seen by over 3 million people (of course some of these would comprise night time travellers unable to fully appreciate the views).

Such lands are the most sensitive to the introduction of visually obtrusive uses and activities ranging in nature from quarries to clearing of vegetated areas to the construction of prominent dwelling-houses on ridge-lines. Significant stands of timber, in particular, are one landscape element in lands of regional prominence most sensitive to

1. Prime Areas;
2. Secondary Areas;
3. Background Areas; and
4. Disturbed Lands

1. Prime Areas: Comprises the key landscape elements possessing attributes such as high scenic value or uniqueness or being scenic lands most vulnerable to change. Within this class the following landscape units are included:-

- * Landscapes of Regional prominence
- * Prominent forested lands, and escarpment lands
- * Beaches and Dunes,
and headlands of sub-regional prominence.

The management program for these area will involve strict identification of suitable building sites, colour and reflectivity of buildings, types of uses and activities compatible with these landscape areas and the infrastructure requirements of these areas (for the latter, the consideration of location of easements is sometimes essential). These controls are set out in more detail below:-

- * Building sites: The built form of new development is to be in sympathy with the landscape. In order to protect visually significant ridgelines and skylines from obtrusive uses or activities the requirement that no building shall project more than one floor above the ridge or sky-line shall apply. This requirement is modified by the control that building on or near hill crests or skylines are to be no higher than the height of predominant tree cover adjacent to the subject land. Controls to ensure that with subsequent development the tree cover is protected shall be implemented.

- * Colour and reflectivity of buildings: In order that buildings in this landscape class do not detract from the overall visual amenity of the site involved strict controls over colour and reflectivity of buildings is recommended. This control would not prohibit the enlargement of existing buildings or works or

reinstate the previous natural vegetation. By revegetating such areas the natural visual status of a site may be some 6 to 9 months after replanting.

For the above measures to be effectively carried out Council would ensure that it is the user who pays for such works and not the community. In the above works suggested the active assistance of the Soil Conservation Service is required.

SUMMARY

The study here identified various types of rural landscapes in the Byron Bay-Suffolk Park-Ewingsdale area based on degree of prominence, the number and type of person likely to view that landscape type, and the visual attributes of that landscape.

On the basis of this analysis a number of landscape units were identified as possessing such high landscape values that protection through the implementation of suitable planning control measures was seen as being desirable. Less stringent controls were recommended for other landscape categories.

In all, the planning controls recommended would do much to protect these visual attributes of the rural landscape that make these areas such attractive areas to view.

It is sensible to exploit good views out of a site but these should not be provided at the expense of unsightly views in.



The householder can enjoy this view, but :-

