CITY OF BURNSIDE

VISUAL ASSESSMENT AND REPORT

Alexandra Avenue, Rose Park
Prescott Terrace, Rose Park

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Expert witness qualifications and experience

Stuart Heseltine, Principal, Hemisphere Design (Aust) Pty Ltd

I am a Landscape Architect and Urban Designer with over 24 years international and local experience. I hold a BA (Hons) and Diploma in Landscape Architecture obtained at Thames Polytechnic, UK. I also hold qualifications in Town and Country Planning. I have been a chartered member of the Institute of Landscape Architects and a member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. A copy of my Curriculum Vitae is attached.

Visual assessment exercises underpin the practice of Landscape Architecture. Central to this exercise is a qualitative assessment of the separate elements which make up the ‘sense of place’ and define the character of a specific location. I am recognised by my professional peers for my particular skills in capturing and defining the ‘sense of place’ and producing outcomes which respond to the inherent landscape characteristics. These skills have been commended by the Environment Resources and Development Court and are keenly sought by private concerns and local councils to assist them in their preparation and consideration of Development Applications.

Projects for which the visual assessment exercise has been an integral component of the successful outcome include:

- Cranbourne Regional Growth Area, as part of an Environmental Impact Statement – landscape character assessment of the site and contextual landscape, Westernport Highway, Cranbourne West, VIC
- Adelaide Desalination Plant – as part of an Environmental Impact Statement an assessment was conducted to determine likely visual impact of proposed buildings, infrastructure and land use activities;
- Flinders Ports – an assessment of the likely visual impact of significant infrastructure works on a number of existing jetties and harbours in metropolitan and regional South Australia;
- Advised on likely visual impact of removal of significant trees in the City of Charles Sturt, City of Adelaide, City of Burnside, City of Norwood, Payneham, St Peters, City of West Torrens and the City of Unley.
1.2 Instructions

I was asked to undertake a landscape amenity assessment of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ of trees in Alexandra Avenue and Prescott Terrace, Rose Park, as part of the War Memorial Tree Conservation Plan being prepared by the City of Burnside.

1.3 Related documentation and literature

A number of documents have been considered in my preparation of this report. These include:

(I) Jones, D. Alexandra Avenue & Prescott Terrace, Rose Park, Cultural Landscape Study, July 2009

(II) Draper, J. Tree Evaluation / Assessment, 30 November 2009

As per the documentation reviewed, only 7 No. of trees of 197 No. trees are considered to be a ‘significant tree’ under State Legislation. These trees have not been considered and assessed as individual specimens against the Principles of Development Control which apply to significant trees.

1.4 Inspection of trees and locality

I undertook a visual assessment on Monday 18th of January 2010, between 2pm and 5pm, and again on Monday 1st February between 10am and 11.30am.

A location plan which defines the approximate zone of visual influence of the trees (Visual Analysis drawings HD/K026/AD01/A Sheets 1&2) and supporting photographs have been appended for consideration.

On inspection, only a small number of trees were in full leaf; the majority of trees displayed only partial, and in some instances no leaf in the canopy.
2 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

2.1 Landscape context

Alexandra Avenue runs in an east-west direction off Fullarton Road, Adelaide through Rose Park and Toorak Gardens. The ‘ceremonial avenue’ is contained within Alexandra Avenue, from Fullarton Road to the intersection with Prescott Terrace.

The Prescott Terrace ‘ceremonial avenue’, commences at Alexandra Avenue, Rose Park, and runs north to the intersection with Kensington Road, Norwood.

The topography of the Alexander Avenue locality and wider neighbourhood rises gently to the east, whilst along Prescott Avenue it falls from south to north where it meets Kensington Road.

The Alexandra Avenue ‘study area’ is a residential neighbourhood of primarily single storey federation dwellings and more contemporary villas with well kept gardens and boundary fences. The footpaths and verges which flank the road pavement and central median are lined with mature Oak trees planted at regular centres. Replacement planting has occurred in some locations and occasional plantings of other non native species (including the quirky addition of a collection of Pencil Pines) are apparent. The regimentally planted Oaks with fuller leaved canopies foil the immediate roofscape, retaining views within the immediate streetscape only occasionally offering glimpsed views to the horizon beyond. This ‘enveloping’ visual enclosure draws the eye of the observer inwards, along the length of the planted central median.

The central median is defined by two avenues of Elms which run parallel with, and behind, the kerb edge. Between the kerb and the avenue runs a row of pedestrian streetlights which make a complementary visual contribution, reinforcing the human scale ambiance of the streetscene. The avenue of Elms delineate a central reservation within the median, allowing human occupancy and facilitating passive recreational activity.

The attractiveness of this streetscene is marred only by the presence of large stobie poles supporting 66kv powerlines running in an east-west direction and occasional north-south connections which cross the central median and avenue. The absence of a large number of ‘long stay’ parked cars (deterred by strict time limits) and generally slower speeds of vehicles travelling in single lane, alternate directions, ensures the streetscene remains visually cohesive, creating the appearance of a pedestrian prioritised space.
The selection of both Elms as the ceremonial tree, and Oaks as the feature street tree along the verges, is contextually and locally appropriate, as the wider neighbourhood is planted with a wide variety of both exotic and non-native trees. In conjunction with the built form vernacular, the Elms and Oaks underpin the balanced and proportioned streetscape appearance. A series of streetscape sections are appended which demonstrate this proportioned appearance (Appendix C Existing Site Sections HD/K026/AD03).

The Prescott Terrace ‘ceremonial avenue’ and ‘study area’ runs along generally flat land in a north-south direction from Alexandra Avenue before falling away sharply to terminate with the signalised intersection on Kensington Road.

The locality comprises of both single storey residential dwellings of an age similar to properties in Alexandra Avenue and more recent two storey dwellings including flats and apartments which are more concentrated at the northern end of the terrace near the Kensington Road intersection.

A busier thoroughfare and wider street than Alexandra Avenue, it carries more through traffic and cyclists on a designated bike lane. The streetscene again comprises of a grassed median of a ‘ceremonial avenue’ of Elms and verges of Oak trees. In common with Alexandra Avenue, the Elms have been regularly planted as a ‘ceremonial avenue’ on either side of the median, creating a central reservation space which houses military memorabilia, but offers less of an invitation for passive recreational use, partly due to a lack of seating and also the perceived business of the surroundings.

Whilst not a visual or physical extension, and notably shorter and wider than Alexandra Avenue, it is an obvious commemorative and processional extension of the Alexandra Avenue ‘ceremonial avenue’.

A number of infrastructure elements within the streetscene detract from and diminish the visual appeal of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ and verge planting, notably the street light extensions which protrude from the stobie poles over each carriageway, and overhead powerlines which cross at right angles to the median. A distinguished visual axis, which when looking north to a World War One relic cannon offers extended views over suburban Norwood to the tree lined horizon, is compromised by the ill considered placement of pedestrian light columns in the centre of the median. A much busier thoroughfare, it lacks Alexander Avenue’s pedestrian priority feel and quality.
2.2 Subject trees in their setting

‘Ceremonial avenues’ are typified by regimented linear plantings of trees at regular spaces, generally of a similar species and planted at one point in time; for example, as demonstrated here, shortly after the ending of World War One. Their defining ‘sense of place’ quality is that, at maturity, they create a cohesive and holistic visual experience of grandeur and status.

The ‘ceremonial avenue’ of trees and verge plantings along Alexandra Avenue define three visually, yet subtly, distinct precincts which are marked by the intersections of Victoria Terrace and Webb Street, which run north-south off Alexandra Avenue. Each precinct is marked by commemorative structures and features which punctuate the visual axis at eye level. These punctuations define a point of arrival and departure on the journey through each precinct. Both plans and streetscape sections are appended which identify the precincts and visual features of the study area (Appendix A Visual Analysis HD/K026/AD01/A Sheet 1 and Appendix C Existing Site Sections HD/K026/AD03).

The western precinct runs from Fullarton Road to Victoria Terrace. The entrance to the precinct off Fullarton Road is announced with two and three storey commercial buildings which front Fullarton Road and flank the immediate entrance. The fuller canopies of the verge side Oaks mask the obtrusive ‘immediacy’ of the blank facades, directing the eye of the observer to and over the Victoria Park where the skyline is distinguished by the imposing temporary grandstand being erected over the racecourse and the mature boundary plantings of majestic Eucalypts beyond.

The precinct is an attractive ordered space and a popular lunchtime venue for local office workers. The ambiance of the streetscene is underpinned by the presence of the mature avenue of Elms which create an ‘airy’ quality complemented by the darker, shadier aspects created by the Oaks along both verges.

The ‘ceremonial avenue’ continues along the ‘central precinct’ running from Victoria Avenue to Webb Street. The visual axis east is less pronounced, punctuated by a stone gazebo which interrupts the visual ‘rhythm and flow’ of the observer. Whilst the grandeur of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ is less apparent, the Elms and verge plantings of Oaks still evoke a sense of procession.

The canopy of the verge-side Oaks, where foliage survives, creates a denser overhead enclosure than in the western precinct, and a compartmentalised ‘room’ emerges with a more subdued contemplative character.
The north-south visual axis along Webb Street is subtly and sensitively integrated with the ‘ceremonial avenue’ at the intersection of both carriageways. Recent plantings of ‘ceremonial avenue’ Elms open up the intersection, amplifying the visual cross connection. The Jacarandas along Webb Street are a satisfying and welcomed contrast to the avenue of Elms.

A stone carv marks this intersection. The intersection defines entry into the eastern precinct, and once again the eye of the observer is drawn along the ‘ceremonial avenue’ to a commemorative statue of a fallen soldier which terminates the view, closing the vista.

The back drop to the statue of a planted roundabout and variegated garden hedge displays an appealing and colourful array of foliage which is diminished only by the movement of vehicles across the roundabout. The character and ambiance of this precinct is similar to the western precinct; open and ‘airier’, in contrast to the more enclosed contemplative character of the central precinct.

Whilst the ‘ceremonial avenue’ is terminated at the intersection and continues north along Prescott Terrace, the verge plantings of Oak trees continue in an eastern direction along Alexandra Avenue, framing views to the Adelaide hills face.

The gesture of grandeur created by the ‘ceremonial avenue’ and verge plantings along Alexandra Avenue is gradually being eroded and diminished by the declining health of most of the trees and the continual loss of canopy. The overwhelming display of decaying, dying and dead branches evokes a sense of impending and inevitable disintegration of the unique visual qualities of this most significant landscape experience.

The Prescott Terrace ‘study area’ is a notably shorter processional experience, comprising of a single character ‘precinct’ over ground which falls to the north. Where the visual impact and vista effect of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ is being diminished along Alexandra Avenue by the declining health of the trees and loss of vegetated canopy, the processional and ‘ceremonial’ experience along the wider Prescott Terrace has almost been extinguished, as the extent of decline and denudation appears far greater. Trees appear as either single specimens in obvious poor condition or, at best, as an intermittent ‘collection’ of ad hoc groups, with protruding dead branches, which extend over the grassed median appearing as sad, withered, skeletal patchworks of featureless forms.

Where the occasional healthier tree persists, it is lost amongst the overwhelming general sense of decline and impending death. Whilst replacement planting of individual specimens has occurred, it has failed to arrest the visual decline of what would have once been a notable landscape
feature. The avenue no longer has the ability to capture and hold the attention in the journey along Prescott Terrace and the observer’s eye is drawn across and over the visually harsh roofscapes to the horizon beyond. The spatial hierarchy has been extinguished and ‘zone of visual’ influence distilled as the eye of the observer ‘wanders’ over the skyline. The surviving trees offer little amenity or visual appeal. Both plans and streetscape sections are appended for consideration (Appendix A Visual Analysis HD/K026/AD01/A Sheets 1&2 and Appendix C Existing Site Sections HD/K026/AD03).

The poor state of health of the avenue is exacerbated by the flourishing appeal of the juvenile plane trees planted as a visual extension of the avenue to the north of Kensington Road in Norwood.

The future success of maintaining a grand gesture and ceremonial procession will be determined by the way in which replacement trees can be successfully established as a ‘collective’ whole rather than as random individual tree species.
3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

3.1 Introduction

In considering the significance of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ and verge plantings along both Alexandra Avenue and Prescott Terrace, I make reference to the Principles of Development Control contained in the City of Burnside Development Plan which pertain to Significant Trees.

3.2 Principles of Development Control

With regard to specific objectives and principles of the Burnside (City) Development Plan (13 December 2007)

Principles of development control.
Significant Trees.
44. Where a significant tree:
(a) makes an important contribution to the character or amenity of the local area; or …
(f) forms a notable visual element to the landscape of the local area;
development should preserve these attributes.

It is my opinion that, as a collective mass, neither the ‘ceremonial avenue’ nor associated verge plantings along Alexandra Avenue or Prescott Terrace currently satisfy these principles.

The regimented procession along each streetscape is being compromised visually and aesthetically by the continued deterioration in health and condition of most of the trees and considerable loss of canopy foliage. Whilst there are individual specimens and ‘pockets’ of grouped trees in both locations which create presence and add ‘incident’, individually or collectively the trees could not be described as notable visual elements of the landscape or local area.

A ‘ceremonial avenue’ should be a regimented, uniform, cohesive, holistic visual experience; it cannot be represented by individual trees that may be of note. In order to achieve the desired amenity and character of the ‘ceremonial avenue’, replacement of all avenue specimens en mass must be implemented. Ad hoc planting of individual specimens will continue the fragmentation of the avenue vista.
Both ‘ceremonial avenues’ and verges make a contribution to the character and amenity of the local area; however, this contribution has, through the decline in condition of most of the trees diminished, and it is my opinion could no longer be considered important.

STUART HESELTINE  
Principal, Hemisphere Design (Aust) Pty Ltd

4 February 2010
View north along avenue of maturing plane trees.

- View north.
- Avenue of maturing plane trees.

- No central vista.
- Defined zone of visual influence.

- Landscape lacks human scale quality.
- Ceremonial Avenue; visual appeal and canopy have been extinguished.

- Kensington Road
- Eliza Lane
- Blandade Lane
- Madder Lane
- Newn Avenue
- Wilson Avenue

Map Scale 1:3,126
Photo (1) View of Alexandra Avenue - the central precinct appears darker and subdued and heavy canopies of Oaks along verge and gazebo create a more enclosed ‘room’

Photo (2) View of Alexandra Avenue - the majority of trees have little foliage and their denuded canopies compromise the visual effect of the ‘ceremonial avenue’

Photo (3) View of Alexandra Avenue looking east - a proportioned streetscape underpinned by the presence of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ of Elms and verge of Oaks

Photo (4) View from Prescott Terrace - north over Kensington Road, to healthy maturing planes on median

Photos (4) & (5) Views of Prescott Terrace - the sense of grandeur and procession has been eroded by the poor quality and appearance of the ‘ceremonial avenue’ of Elms and verge planting of Oaks.
SECTION 1 - ALEXANDRA AVENUE FACING EAST
Location: Close Street - A typical section of west and east 'precinct'

A well proportioned and balanced streetscape where the form and height of the verge of Oak trees and ceremonial avenue of Elms compliment the built form, a 'human scale' landscape.

A number of Elms retain little or sparse foliage only

Ceremonial Avenue

Vista to monument

Private residential property

Private residential property

The eye of the observer is contained within the visual emenation and drawn along the east west axis, the 'Ceremonial Avenue'.

SECTION 2 - ALEXANDRA AVENUE FACING EAST
Location: Victoria Terrace - A typical section through central 'precinct'

Elms of varying quality

Rotunda 'opens' vista

The heavily denuded canopies fail to hold the eye of the observer. Irruption is lost as the space leaks out to the roadside and horizon beyond.

Ceremonial Avenue

Sense of grandeur and procession has been eroded by poor quality and appearance of the 'Ceremonial avenue' of Elms and verge planted Oake.

SECTION 3 - PRESCOTT TERRACE FACING NORTH

Ceremonial Avenue

Views north over falling ground to the visually pleasing and appealing matching avenue of planes.

Private residential property
STUART HESELTINE  
Principal, Hemisphere Design

Skilled in all aspects of landscape architecture, urban design and cultural planning. Extensive experience in site assessment, visual and spatial analysis, land use design and management. Specialising in the management of complex, multidisciplinary projects and in particular in the planning design and implementation of major streetscapes, residential subdivision, highway and parkland projects. Comprehensive working knowledge of a variety of building and landscape contracts.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Landscape and urban design, masterplanning, management and rehabilitation

- Bakewell Underpass, design construct; urban form and identity, Mile End, SA.
- Port Road Urban Stormwater Management, urban design, Woodville, SA.
- The Adelaide Showground New Exhibition Centre, Waville, SA.
- Halmon Avenue and Owen Street Concept Plan, Goodwood, SA.
- Burra Creek Planning Study, SA.
- Magill Road Streetscape Concept Plan, SA
- Northcote Identity Development, City of Darebin, VIC.
- Salisbury Town Square, SA
- Grey Street and Commercial Road, Port Noarlunga, SA.
- Mawson Lakes Interchange design construct proposal, Mawson Lakes, SA.
- Port River Expressway design construct proposal, Port Adelaide, SA.
- Port River Expressway Stage 4, SA.
- South Road (Port Road – Torrens Road) Urban Concepts, SA.
- Southern Expressway Stage 1, Adelaide, SA.
- Southern Expressway Stage 2, Adelaide, SA.
- West Lakes Boulevard and the new entrance to Football Park, Adelaide, SA.
- Adelaide Parklands Management Strategy, Adelaide, SA.
- Altona District, West Melbourne, VIC.
- Baffin's Wetland Restoration, Portsmouth, UK.
- Beach Road, ‘Coast Park’, Christies Beach, SA.
- Cheltenham Racecourse, Cheltenham, SA.
- Horseshoe Bay Landscape Design Proposals, Port Elliot, SA.
- Howitt Street, Ballarat, VIC.
- Jimmy Melrose Park, South Esplanade, Glenelg, SA.
- Kensington Gardens Regional Playspace, Burnside, SA.
- Lake Butler Masterplan, Robe, SA.
- Lynton Landscape Management Plan, Environmental Assessment, Visual Analysis, Mitcham, SA.
- Park 12 Playspace design, South Terrace, Adelaide, SA.
- Park 15 Playdesign, Wakefield Street, Adelaide, SA.
- Phoenix Mall, Ballarat, VIC.
- Pooraka Triangle, Pooraka, SA.
- Adelaide Better Roads Strategy: Hampstead Road and Hackney Road streetscape improvements, Adelaide, SA.
- ‘Unley Urban Identity Corridors’, Unley, SA.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Diploma in Landscape Architecture (University of Greenwich, UK)
- B.A. (commendation) in Landscape Architecture (University of Greenwich, UK)
- Certificate in Organisational Management and Leadership (University of South Australia)
- Higher National Certificate in Town Planning (University of Wales)
- Ordinary National Certificate in Town Planning (with Distinction) (University of Wales)

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

- 2005 — Principal, Hemisphere Design (Aust) Pty Ltd
- 2000 — 2005 Principal, HEMISPHEREdesign
- 1999 — 2000 Principal Landscape Consultant, PPK Environment & Infrastructure Pty Ltd, Adelaide, SA
- 1996 — 1999 Senior Landscape Architect, Hassell, Adelaide, SA
- 1992 — 1996 Landscape Architect, Portsmouth City Council, Portsmouth, UK
- 1985 — 1989 Police Constable, Sussex Police, UK
- 1978 — 1982 Planning Technician, Islwyn Borough Council, Gwent, UK
- Leader Street (inc. Leah Street) Upgrade, Unley, SA.
- Portsmouth 'Play 2000', Portsmouth, UK.
- Portsmouth Parklands and Open Space Management Strategy, Portsmouth, UK.
- Renmark Township, Renmark, SA.
- Ridge Park Masterplan, Unley, SA.
- SA Manufacturing Park Landscape Masterplan, Cheltenham, SA.
- SA Manufacturing Park Visual Assessment and report on tree removals, Cheltenham, SA.
- Semaphore Living Neighbourhood Urban Design Framework, Semaphore, SA.
- Somerton Esplanade, 'Coast Park', Somerton, SA.
- South Esplanade Precinct and Broadway Kiosk, Glenelg, SA.
- Verdun Townscape Concept Plan, Verdun, SA.
- West Beach 'Coast Park', Glenelg, SA.

**Visual analysis and assessment**

- Visual Impact Assessment, Adelaide Desalination Project, Port Stanvac, SA.
- Visual Impact Assessment, Brown Hill Creek Detention Dams, City of Mitcham, SA.
- Environmental Impact Assessment, Visual Assessment, Finders Ports, SA.
- Environmental Impact Assessment, Visual Assessment, Portsmouth FC, New Stadium Facility, Portsmouth, UK.
- Expert Witness Advice – Visual assessment of significant trees – City of Burnside, SA.
- SA Manufacturing Park Visual Assessment and report on tree removals, Cheltenham, SA.
- Lynton Landscape Management Plan, Environmental Assessment, Visual Analysis, Mitcham, SA.

**Cultural planning, facilitation and design**

- Christies Beach Foreshore Access and Open Space Study, Christies Beach, SA.
- Christies Beach Kaurna Contextual Framework, Christies Beach, SA.
- Christies Beach Surf Life Saving Club: Kaurna ‘Place-making’, design development, Christies Beach, SA.
- North Glenelg ‘Coast Park’ Kaurna Landscape and Cultural Masterplan, North Glenelg, SA.
- Port Willunga Kaurna Contextual Framework and concept design proposals, Port Willunga, SA.
- Port Adelaide Enfield ‘Kaurna Cultural Heritage Survey’, Port Adelaide Enfield, SA.

**Subdivision design**

- ‘Paringa View’ and ‘The Point’, Huntfield Heights, SA.
- Blackwood Park, Blackwood, SA.
- ‘Coventry Gardens’ residential development, Marion, SA.
- Hawksbury Park, Salisbury North, Salisbury, SA.
- Langmeil Estate, Tanunda, SA.
- Playford Village development, Elizabeth, SA.
- ‘Westwood’ Residential Estate, Ferryden Park, SA.