



BERG 'n SEE – SANDPIPER: VISUAL IMPACT REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Berg 'n See – Sandpiper Retirement Centre forms part of the greater Sandpiper Nature Reserve and Beach Estate. The existing Architectural Design Manual of the Estate already sets certain benchmarks which will be incorporated into the Berg 'n See architectural language.

The development also falls within the Urban Edge as defined by the Knysna/Sedgefield Spatial Development Framework. This framework already allows for developments of this nature to take place and encourages maximizing the use of currently available land and services within the Urban Edge.

SITE

The property lies in a valley between Leervis Road and a high dune on the seaward side. This area has already been disturbed with the building of the internal road as well as the installation of services.

BRIEF

The brief was to design a complex consisting of a combination of studios apartments and 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments, as well as parking and some garages. A main service building would include facilities such as a reception, nurses station, staff facilities, laundry, kitchen and dining/restaurant facilities. An indoor pool and gym forms part of the recreational/therapeutic facilities provided.

It was also important to consider a setting where the residents could enjoy nature and safely walk around the facility. Pathways and landscaping therefore form a very important part of the design.

LAYOUT AND ORIENTATION

The east/west axis of the property results in a good northern orientation but with limited possibilities of views.

It was clear from the outset that the single storey buildings (studio apartments and main building), had to be on the northern side closest to Leervis Road and the existing entrance. This has the advantage of reducing the scale of the buildings and limiting the visual impact for passing pedestrians and motorists.

The larger 3-storey apartment buildings are set back south of the internal link road and will therefore overlook the studios and main building. These buildings are also set back close to the southern dune – looking at the buildings from Leervis Road, the dune then forms a natural backdrop, thereby minimizing the impact of the buildings.

All the residential units face north to maximize comfort and minimize the need for heating or cooling (as required in SANS 10400XA).

The existing internal service road and parking area are incorporated into the design, again to minimize disturbance, but also to make full use of what has already been provided.

ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

The architectural language takes its cues from the Sandpiper Design Manual. The following aspects are included:

1. Fragmenting and articulating the building facades and roofs into smaller elements to avoid large monolithic blocks.
2. Stepping back the buildings from street level (with single storey buildings at street level and 3 storey buildings further back).
3. Use of natural stone to plinths as well as in feature panels.
4. Natural "earthy" colours such as the PLASCON Marroca range. The colours will be chosen to blend in with the natural vegetation.
5. Matt light grey roofs to minimize reflection and helps to avoid a dark outline against the skyline.
6. Window frames will be charcoal grey so as not to be too prominent.
7. Roof overhangs and "eyebrow" canopies will be provided where possible to help eliminate any glare from windows.
8. Exposed timber columns, beams and pergolas will be brought in as additional natural elements. Pergolas are also used to add additional layers of interest to the buildings. This may include slatted timber screens to provide additional privacy.
9. Retaining walls will be built either from natural stone, stone gabions or a sandy coloured retaining block. Where possible planting will be used to soften these features.
10. Natural indigenous vegetation will be provided (again as specified in the Sandpiper Design Guidelines). This will not be only to comply but to provide a stimulating and attractive environment for the owners, tenants and even passers-by.

11. Area lighting will be either low level bollards or downward directed pole light fittings to minimize light pollution.
12. Walkway and patio lighting will be under the roof overhangs, thereby again minimizing discomfort.

IMPACT

There is no doubt that any building or group of buildings will have a visual impact. Our aim is to minimize the negative elements of such an impact while enhancing the positive aspects (through scale, fragmentation, colour etc.).

All the above-mentioned elements taken together, will contribute to a development that will sit "comfortably" in the setting. It is our contention that this development will make a positive contribution to both the built and natural environments.

The proposed development, although part of the Sandpiper Nature Reserve and Beach Estate, does not impact on the views of any of the other residential properties (neither inside or further east towards Myoli Beach or Cola Beach). It does abut directly onto erf 5000 but even in this case, there are no obstruction of views.

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