



# Proposed Mornington Marina Landscape Analysis

**December 2010**

**memla**  
landscape architects

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# 1. Introduction

This report is an analysis of the landscape of Mornington Harbour and an investigation into its character, its 'Sense of Place' so as to provide a foundation for a critique of the proposed boat parking facility and other associated changes advanced by Mornington Boat Haven Pty Ltd.

## 2. Existing situation

The Mornington harbour landscape in its current form is an evolutionary amalgam of natural environmental processes and significant modifications following white settlement. The landform can be compared in form to a large 'hook'. The eye comprises a headland at the northern end which grades down to a west facing crescent of sandy beach (Mothers Beach). This forms the beginning of an almost 180° 'hook' which wraps around to the south and west and is terminated by an area of reclaimed land. On this, a bleak, utilitarian car park and boat storage facility are located. A cluster of interesting buildings house the club, restaurant, and take away food kiosk provide a destination and landmark for the harbour which is tied back to Mothers beach via a pedestrian promenade. Finally a rocky peninsula and another smaller headland and pier complete the 'hook'.

The entire southern part of this arc is contained by a steep cliff (Schnapper Point) which overlooks the bay. The sedimentary rock cliffs date from the Miocene epoch (23 - 5 million years ago). These originally would have been covered with Coastal Banksia and Drooping She Oak Woodland however they are now mostly weed infested with Box Thorn being the major woody weed. The foreshore behind Mothers Beach now has some introduced exotic pine and cypress species, and some remnants of indigenous coastal vegetation. 60 floating swing boat moorings are sprinkled to the east of the pier. Three finger jetties and 2 boat ramps are the final elements of the Harbour.

Main Street Mornington, the cultural and shopping heart of the town, is aligned south east to north west and terminates in the north west above the harbour and continues down to the harbour car park.

The above description is therefore one of a bay enclosed on 3 1/2 sides with some reclamation, a pier attachment and a 'sprinkling' of swing moorings clustered in the north west quadrant. Land and water are still the dominant elements of the harbour; Natural processes created the harbour, these have been added to and extended however the harbour it is still defined by its landform and the expanse of water within.

## 3. Proposed situation

Sinclair Knight Merz have submitted a proposal for a 170 berth floating marina, 8 fore and aft moorings, 12 swing moorings, 10 public berths and 10 emergency berths for the waterscape of Mornington Harbour. Only minor works are proposed for the land itself as no further space is available unless extensive intrusive, disruptive and expensive reclamation works are undertaken (which is a major problem with this proposal as there is no additional parking area).

This marina is typical of its type consisting of floating pontoons as berths connected back to land via floating walkways. A new pier and wave screen extending out into the harbour to the east completes the development.



Mornington Harbour and its relationship to Main Street (existing).





Mothers beach and northern headland.



Rockfaced harbour wall, car park and cliff.



Club house and restaurant.



Pedestrian promenade in front of MYC.



Boat trailer park and boat storage facility of MYC (right).



View from southern headland.

*Existing photos of Mornington Harbour*

### 3.1 SKM Visual Assessment

As part of the documentation for the proposed development, a professional and thorough visual assessment was undertaken by SKM. It uses a methodology which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative assessment techniques applied to a series of defined surveyed photo locations, to compare and assess the before and after. The process is clear, logical and undertaken in a systematic way.

The photography used for the assessment is shot at a focal length of 7.8. This is referred to as 'wide angle'. It takes in more of the view but the view appears much further away than the eye sees it. The problem with this is that it creates a false representation. If these were the only images used for the assessment, it could have been affected.

One of the criteria used by SKM for the visual impact, was the logical observation that the further away something is the less impact it has. A lower impact, and therefore rating, may have been attributed to all images due to the inherent distance error. If these images were assessed at the distance the eye sees it, the impact rating could have been higher.

For comparative purposes, a series of general panoramas were taken by this author in approximately the same locations as each of the photos in the SKM document<sup>1</sup>. The immediate reaction when comparing the two is 'are these shot in the same locations'? They are. The impact is far greater due to the reduction in distance and the increase in size of the objects being assessed.

Whereas in the SKM photos the proposed marina (modelled with a large percentage of the berths not occupied) looks a long way away, in the existing eye zoom panoramas (with approximately 40 boats on moorings) the harbour looks and feels very close.

### 3.2 Compatibility and Character

The marina proposal is not compatible with the character of Mornington Harbour. It is an entirely utilitarian, engineering driven project to create a safe storage facility for boats. It totally disregards the 'Genus Loci' of Mornington harbour, introducing an intrusively large, dominant and completely alien man made element that would completely change the character of the harbour forever.

This is an extremely important concept as it goes to the heart of what makes Mornington special. This large natural 'hook' combined with the deep water (not shallow reef) is one of the closest examples the Bay has to some of the traditional, intimate 'old world' harbours of the UK and Europe. These are highly valued places at which people can come and experience a harbour atmosphere.

Boats coming and going from a wharf, views are across a harbour of moored boats, cafés and other shops as a back drop. These places are the 'piazzas' or town squares. People promenade up and down along the edge of the water and take in the ever changing view. Mornington has these elements. An interesting group of buildings; a defined edge between water and land; a pedestrian promenade; and there is no solid wall of boats to remove the water experience. We should be seeking to place a high value on this 'harbour village' and 'manipulate within the tolerances'<sup>2</sup> rather than overpower.

Placing a marina in the middle of the harbour overpowers the experience and alters the character. One of the key components of the traditional harbour would be removed; the open water of boats with the pier and wharf as the main focus. It would be replaced with a large, geometric, man made

<sup>1</sup> These are not professionally surveyed photos and are used here to for comparative purposes only.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon Cullen, Townscape Architectural Press, London. 1961

object. The marina would dominate, become the focus and block the view across the harbour.

The SKM report cites compatibility as one of the methods by which to judge the impact of the proposal i.e, increasing the size of an existing activity is more compatible to a site than introducing a completely new one. However a marina doesn't exist, swing moorings currently do. The marina would be a completely new element.

The landscape of the harbour is the natural amphitheatre and the water within. The existing swing moorings are a dynamic part of this. They move with the tide and winds and due to the required spacing, provide plenty of open water between them. What the marina proposal does would be to place a static, large block element which has no current precedent, in the middle of the harbour. The use (boating) would be the same however the form, density and static nature and character are all completely alien. The natural harbour would become a man made marina.

Not only does the proposal introduce a large, foreign element into the harbour. It also has other associated impacts in the increased industrialisation of the harbour precinct, generation of greater congestion, traffic, and the altering of the crescent of beach which as discussed, is one of the key elements which defines Mornington Harbour.

The SKM visual assessment study states that:

*There would be minor changes in the beach alignment...This would include some loss of sand from the eastern beach areas and a build up of sand to the west behind reef areas... This.. 'would be managed by relocations strategies..' Further it goes onto state.. 'Should other measures be required, an offshore reef may be constructed'.*

The above admission will change the shape of the bay. What is at present one long, continuous crescent of beach will be split in two and will need to be monitored and managed for sand movement. It will change the character of the bay.

A view that has not been considered is that from the water. Upon approaching Mornington Harbour from the north, the current views to the crescent of sand (comprising Mothers, Scouts and Shire Hall beaches) and general harbour setting could be completely blocked. The existing spacing between the moorings enabling views through the boats would be replaced with a solid wave screen and a wall of boats, locked in the one position.

The proposed 40 tonne hydraulic lift is a large and new industrial element introduced to the harbour, further altering the character.

The increase in vehicle activity associated with 200+ boats, also impacts on the character. The potential congestion and the associated frustrations it brings to the users could also change the harbour from one that can be busy but thus far manageable and generally pleasant to one that feels intense and uncomfortable.

## 4. Conclusion

The proposed marina development in Mornington Harbour is of a scale and intensity that would change the innate character of the harbour forever. The visual effects are significant. It is out of scale, context and is not visually integrated.

The marina would be clearly seen from all vantage points and is of a scale which dominates the harbour setting. The existing waterscape scattered with boats becomes a concentrated utilitarian facility for storing and launching boats. The harbour would become a marina. Views to the general harbour and beaches would be blocked.

The two headlands, at the northern end (Red Bluff) connected by a single crescent of sand would become split into two. These new beaches would require regular attention to prevent silting up. Both the water and land would be man made and managed.

With this marina proposal, Mornington harbour would become defined and dominated by one private user group rather than the community. The waterscape would be privatised and the beach would be managed. The character would be changed. It would be totally at variance with what Mornington has evolved to be, and should continue to be, which is a natural harbour for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. E. McFall', with a stylized, wavy line extending to the right.

Matthew. E. McFall. B.App.Sci Plg. M.L.Arch. Registered Landscape Architect





**1. NAME AND ADDRESS**

Matthew. E. McFall  
Landscape Architect Planner Urban Designer  
526 Hawthorn Road  
Caulfield South, Vic 3162

**2 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Bachelor of Applied Science in Planning (RMIT)  
Masters in Landscape Architecture (Melbourne University)  
Member AILA.  
Registered Landscape Architect. 1999

**P r o f e s s i o n a l   E x p e r i e n c e**

1985    Landscape Architect, Green, Dale & Wright, Landscape Architects, Melbourne 1989  
1991    Associate, Green & Dale Associates  
Senior Associate, Green & Dale Associates  
1997-2007    Principal Matthew. E. McFall landscape Architects, Planners Urban Designer  
2007- present    Director MEMLA Pty Ltd Landscape Architects

**3 AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

For more than 20 years, I have studied, designed and implemented landscape architecture in a range of projects: commercial, civic and community, infrastructure, environmental, industrial, educational, retirement, institutional, sub divisional, corporate, infrastructure, streetscapes, residential (private, medium and high density), and planning appeals.

**4 EXPERTISE TO PREPARE REPORT**

I consider that my training and experience qualifies me to prepare a landscape statement on aspects of the proposal related to: landscape design, character and visual setting.

**5 INSTRUCTIONS WHICH DEFINED SCOPE OF REPORT**

I received instructions from the MORNINGTON ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION Inc, to comment on the SKM proposal for a marina development in Mornington Harbour.

**6 FACTS, MATTERS AND ASSUMPTIONS RELIED UPON**

Inspection of the subject site and its environs,  
SKM EES report.  
Council report October 2010  
R. Coleman report (submission 234).

**7 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

Refer to item 6 above.

**8 IDENTITY OF PERSONS UNDERTAKING WORK**

The author of the report

**9 SUMMARY OF OPINIONS**

Refer to report

**10 PROVISIONAL OPINIONS**

I do not consider any of my opinions to be provisional.

**11 LIMITATIONS OF EXPERTISE AND ANY INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE ASPECTS**

I consider that the subject matter of my report falls within my area of expertise, and that the relevant issues are adequately illustrated on the landscape character and described in the report.

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have, to my knowledge, been withheld from the Tribunal.

Matthew McFall B.App.Sci. Plg. M.L.Arch

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MAM', with a stylized, wavy line extending from the end.

Registered Landscape Architect

17/12/10



SKM photomontage locations (from SKM Visual Assessment Study).







Existing panorama from position 1 (Scouts Beach Lookout) using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Existing panorama from position 1 by SKM. Notice how far away the club house is. This is a good landmark by which to ascertain the relative distance. The difference in distance to the photo taken above can be clearly seen.



Proposed panorama from position 1 by SKM.





Existing panorama from position 2 using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Existing panorama from position 2 by SKM.



Proposed panorama from position 2 by SKM.





Existing panorama from position 3 using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Existing panorama from position 3 by SKM.





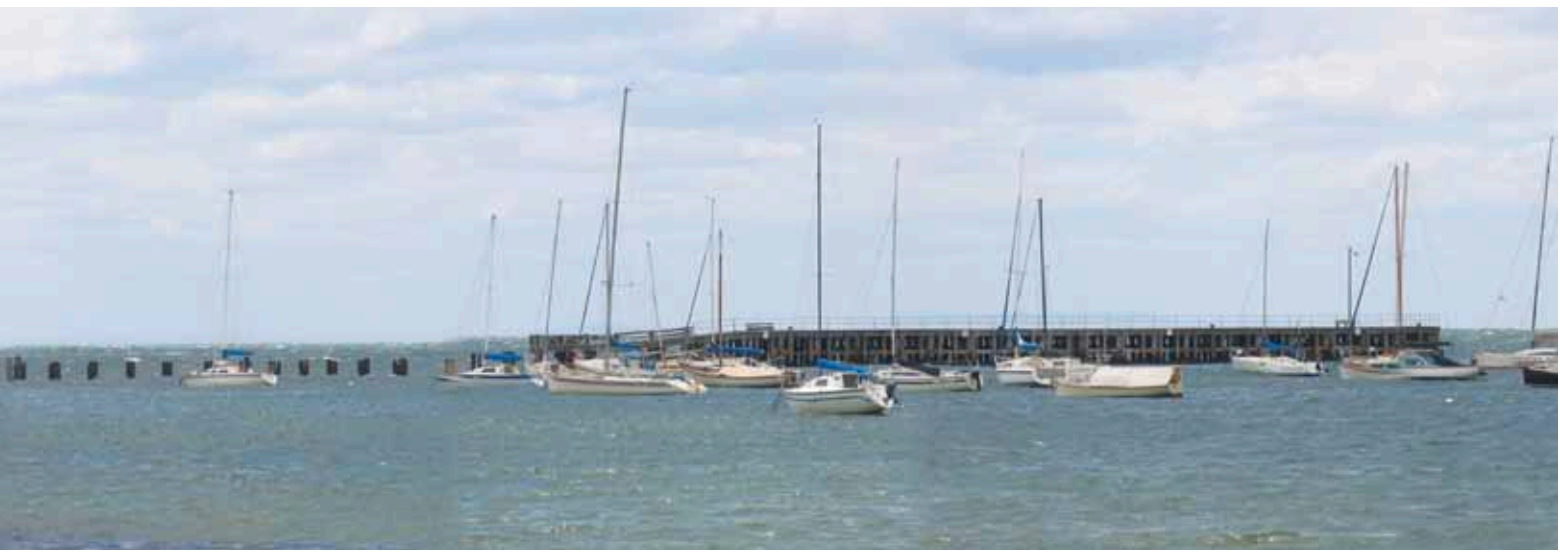
Proposed panorama from position 3 by SKM.



Existing panorama from position 4 using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Existing panorama from position 4 by SKM.



Proposed panorama from position 4 by SKM.





Existing panorama from position 6 using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Existing panorama from position 6 by SKM.



Proposed panorama from position 6 by SKM.



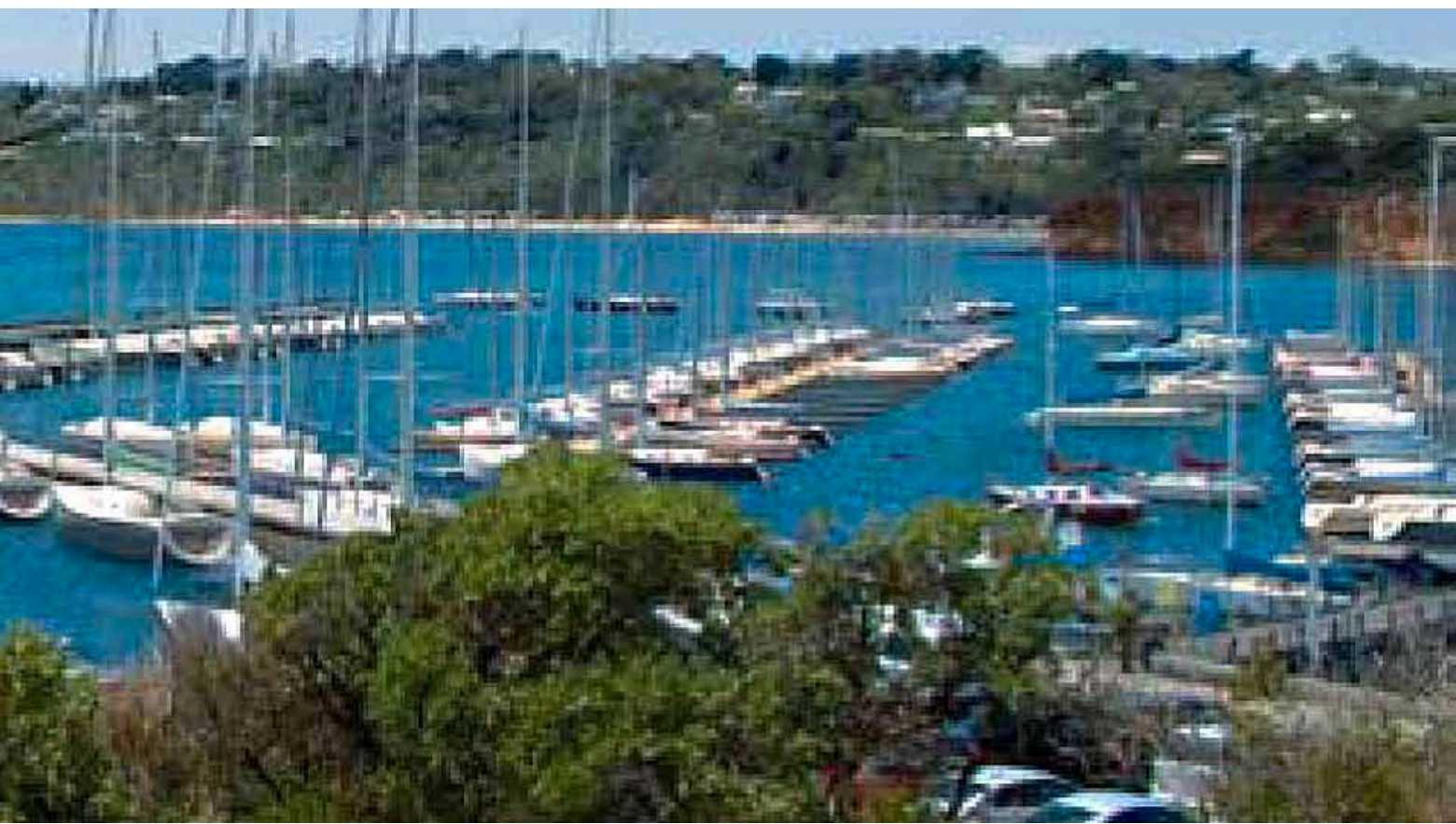


Existing panorama from position 7 using approximate zoom as the eye sees it.



Proposed panorama from position 6 by SKM digitally enlarged to approximately the same zoom distance. Though image is of poor quality (enlarged from the pdf document not the original image) the impact can be clearly seen.





the





Existing photo from position 8 by SKM. Open views between moored boats to the harbour.



SKM photo from first floor restaurant. Open views across a harbour.



Proposed photo from position 8 by SKM. A solid wave screen and wall of boats. The character has completely changed



A marina development illustrating the wall of boats effect (New Bern, USA).





Existing situation of Mornington Harbour.

Legend

- Beach
- Headland/Escarpment
- Parkland
- Boat activity zone (swing moorings)
- Roads and parking
- Piers
- Commercial Activity
- Pedestrian links





Proposed marina development.

