

# North Byron Beach Resort Central Facilities Architectural Statement of Environmental Effects

North Byron Beach Resort Central Facilities – Bringing together a Beachside Community An Exemplar of Community Place making as Response to Local Culture and Ecology

The North Byron Beach Resort will be sensitively developed and served by a deep and profound love and respect of this unique and special site. In the past, beach holiday experiences in Australia were more simple than the louder and more exotic offerings at our coastal resorts today. However in the early part of the 21st Century there is a new search for meaning in our lives. There is an emerging and strong desire to reconnect with nature in an authentic way, a way that reminds us we are human, flesh and blood, sensual and soulful. Places where our soul can play, that touch us and remind us of our essential humanity. Such places are rare. The North Byron Beach Resort (NBBR) can be one of those places.

The NBBR is about place-making, rather than building making, it will be an exemplar place in form, expression and character for an enhancing and life affirming beach holiday experience in the sub-tropics. We are conscious of the nature of the climate on this site and for the Byron Bay region; we are also conscious of the particularly strong landscape context in which North Byron Beach Resort will sit. Backdropped by spectacular forest covered mountains, lushly vegetated rolling hills and set within the rich ecology of dunal beach wallum and littoral rainforest and; we are conscious of creating both a resort community and a place of retreat, a community which is focused on relaxation and rejuvenation, being in touch with nature and reconnecting with self. A connection to the landscape, a way of placemaking, and a sense of community is imbued with environmental, social and cultural symbolism; and we are conscious that those places, buildings and communities which have a genuine sense of place are more often constructed from natural materials, particularly stone, raw concrete, timber and other organic materials and that in character and form they resonate with the landscape and seem a part of it, unlike and very different to the sensibility, forms and materials found in urban and developed parts of the world.

### Place-making; Community, Harmony and Solitude

We have sought to make North Byron Beach Resort a place which is authentic to its very special and unique natural landscape and responsive to the new consciousness of our age. Our design concepts are sensitively considered and located in a manner where a sense of the environment and landscape and the life it supports is embedded in the experience of the place. Further, we have developed a design within the constraints, site planning and character of the earlier materplan and design, which is responsive and empathetic to the idea of community, in this instance a community of people who share enlightened values, by using traditional place making strategies in arranging the buildings and other spaces around naturally occurring forms, such as mounds, clumps of trees and water bodies, and constructed outdoor places of retreat, such as semi enclosed decks or loggia. This approach will feel almost natural and organic, offers a discreet awareness and visibility of each other, allows privacy or interaction and allows a quiet and respectful culture particular to North Byron and the desire for a heightened sense of nature. We propose that the original dunal and wallum landscape will be re-established in a manageable and bush fire preventative manner, that the site be rehabilitated. This serves to not only allow the original ecology to again develop in a manner which is far more inviting and exotic than any artificial landscape with the commensurate increases in native fauna occupation, but also, minimises future maintenance and irrigation demands.

### Landscape and Form - A Byron Dunal Architecture

Traditional architecture which might give precedent to informal gathering places and shared community

spaces of this nature is derived principally from the timber and brick and sometimes stone, neo-Georgian tradition of Australian settlements. They are street based and have an organic pattern based on formal societal relationships inappropriate in every sense to a place created for relaxation and pleasure with a character of informality. In this instance we have sought to find an authentic manner of expression, forms, materials and a way of making places which might come from the distinctive natural experience and cultural character of the area and Byron Bay itself. This has led us to evolve a distinctive and recognisable architecture, complimentary to the beach shack tradition and the design of the accommodation. Indigenous communities can also give us some clues as to how we might consider making such places. Whilst locally such precedents are limited and of a much smaller scale, nonetheless observation of their patterns show that they are influenced by informal groupings, organic in arrangement, with a form of hierarchy of form and interaction, recognised in their relationship of elements to each other, e.g.; the larger forms are the more important, in the best place for community access and similarly with principal gathering spaces. Water plays an important role both organisationally and as a focus; a shared experience for all parts. Similarly, forms are arranged in response to gathering rituals, arrival, greeting, celebration, eating, drinking, meetings- small and large, connections-visual and physical, retreat, differing levels of privacy. All are an important in ensuring that the place/s shared by the community offer an opportunity for engagement with ease of legibility and informality. This gives a sense of hospitality for all, a place for all, a sense of welcome where formalities normally associated with everyday life can be put aside, where strangers can quickly find a place of shared community and by their positive presence and engagement in the varying activities contribute also to the important sense of security and safety. Such places are also informed and influenced in their arrangements by a response to climate and views, protection from strong winds, protection from the heat and glare of low western sun, views to the dominant physical elements of the landscape, a welcome of early morning eastern sun, an embrace of existing major trees. All of these principles have been respected and have determined our design proposal.

And what of the particular cultural character of Byron Bay? Our endeavour to ensure a place which is not your typical or expected resort experience, where hard, cold finishes or an architecture imported or derived from pseudo urban or other exotic places dominate, has encouraged us to deeply observe those attributes which might be made manifest in the physical experience here. However, it is almost an intangible thing and even too much to ask that an architecture symbolise something beyond itself. Yet, we believe that there are some principles, nuanced and subtle that might indeed be a part of how we think about making buildings and places here. These include a culture of ecological sensitivity, natural materials, simple informal character, a lack of pretention, a value of the crafted over the mass produced, support for the artisanal, small is beautiful, the ad hoc, the reuse of things, open and inviting, soft transitions between inside and outside, lush plating in close proximity to buildings, a preference for the organic over the formal geometric - we might almost call this a slow architecture, one integrated with landscape, which is obviously not urban and not suburban and on sight seems to almost be a part of the landscape. Are such forms just made up? Do we invent something artificial? Where do we look for inspiration or precedent? We observed that the dominant form, that which has evolved naturally by the action of wind on the ground, the force of the ocean and which exists at the edge of the country, where sea meets land is the sand dune. Our studies show that they are a universal element in wilderness, but shaped in manners specific to their place. Our informal and organic planning based on those principals previously discussed is integrated within and around by a lush landscape of endemic species and as with the sand dunes and derived from and referenced to their sensuous shape, rising out of this landscape are soft and sinuous roof forms, deliberately kept low with soft flowing edges and ridges undulating gently as if formed by wind. The gathering of these forms, in this manner with natural materials and colours, earthy and connected with a crafted sensibility will engender a very particular character at once distinctive and identifiably North Beach at Byron Bay.

## Location, Connectivity and A Slow Architecture

The Central Facilities are located to the North-West corner of the larger site. In this location ti advantaged by a number of key attributes; a visible and easily accessible address to Bayshore which protects the privacy of guests and users; easy access to and from the public pathway beach allowing convenient access for the public to a kiosk; good proximity and views to the bear dunal landscape; easy and convenient access to event spaces to the North with a landscaped car-park along the edge integrated for easy access which provides a buffer to guest spaces, and; North-East aspect .affording privacy and excellent solar access and aspect for all spaces. The community facilities are generally arranged in an organic spiral form from a smaller building hous Spa and Pool Plant to the South- East, to a the principal building which houses the back of hou administration areas leading onto a generously proportioned and highly visible Porte Cochere. and Reception informally connected to a bar, Restaurant and a discreetly located central Kitchservice yard accessed separately off Bayshore Drive. Along the Western edge in turn the kitch immediate access to Conference Facilities and associated support areas. Finally, as this inform stepped grouping swings around loosely to the North another smaller form houses a Multi-P Room, able to be used for a range of recreational, conference and function activities with sup facilities and culminating at the principle North East corner with a more informal Café whiserves the public Kiosk. This staccato spiral arrangement of spaces, all with openable glass doo to landscaping and courtyards, is focussed around, with views to and forms a large spacious space around which all circulation is arranged allowing flexible access and movement in and arou complex. A lagoon type pool with an infinity edge to the North East, meanders through a lush lan and offers a diversity of landscape and poolside experiences from a sunken fire pit below water private sheltered bale's, small beaches, sheltered coves, sunlounge areas, and a children's play are principle has been the ability to allow guests and public users of the Bar, Restaurant, Conferer Spa areas to either Incidentally or purposefully engage in this casual sense of community. The m metal roof forms are a simple pitched gable in section with changing pitches, height of ridge line undulating wide overhang to reflect the scale, hierarchy and preferred access to views of the di uses. External materials are limited to a mixture of light earthy coloured rendered masonry and fibre cement walls, timber and dark coloured aluminium framed glazing which is extensive and pavers. Much of the exterior fabric is designed to open widely onto sheltered terraces, cou and verandahs and to enable maximum natural ventilation and natural light. Internal materials similarly natural, with the extensive use of timber, stone and considered use of cane, rattan, leath natural fabrics.

#### A Dominant Landscape Character

Inherent in all of our thinking, and notwithstanding the density of the Central Facilities, is the key c which underpins all design and planning for the North Byron Beach Resort which is that the do experience should be of the landscape. The architecture of the Central Facilities is not inter an object or series of objects standing alone and proud in the landscape. Their very nature avoids high walls, where all roofs overhang deeply, where glass doors fold away and where the lan spaces and use of water extensively disrupts and intrudes, dissipates and obscures the archite intentional. The focus is outward, to the North East, The planning is permeable for ease of acce: many places, the materials are intended to reinforce this idea, and this idea that the landscape in views beyond is what more than anything else will make this place distinctly Byron.

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