

**PEREGRINE FARMSTALL
PRT 19 OF FARM 316, CALEDON
CELLULAR MAST**

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

For consideration in the Basic Assessment

For

EnviroAfrica

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Second Amended Final Report

8 March 2019

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Report history:

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Amended Final Report Ref GRA-316-01.01	11/02/2019	Remove 35m height alternative
Second Amended Final Report Ref GRA-316-01.02	08/03/2019	Include cumulative Impact

Report to be cited: Visual Impact Assessment for Cellular Mast at Peregrine, Grabouw, 2019

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- A Protected Areas,TWK SDF
- B Scenic Routes and Tourism, TWK SDF

Relevant Qualifications & Experience of the Author

Ms Sarien Lategan holds an Honours Degree in Geography as well as a Masters Degree in Town and Regional Planning from the University of Stellenbosch. She has 7 years experience as Town planner at a local government, 3 years with South African National Parks as planner and project manager of various GEF and World Bank managed, tourist facilities in the Table Mountain National Park and since 2004 as private practitioner involved in inter alia Site Analysis and Visual Impact assessments for various types of developments ranging from housing, tourism to infrastructure developments.

Ms Lategan is registered as a professional Town and Regional Planner as well as Environmental Assessment Practitioner.

Declaration of Independence

I, Sarah C. Lategan, declare that I am an independent consultant to EnviroAfrica and, has no business, financial, personal or other interest in the proposed project or application in respect of which I was appointed, other than fair remuneration for work performed in connection with the application. There are furthermore no circumstances which compromise my objectivity in executing the task appointed for.



SC Lategan

11-02-2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sarien Lategan was appointed to undertake the visual impact assessment of a 25m high lattice tower, to accommodate cell antennae, on portion 19 of farm 316, Caledon, as input to the Basic Assessment in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act no. 107 of 1998), as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017, undertaken by EnviroAfrica. The site is at the back of the Peregrine Farmstall next to the N2 at Grabouw.

The aim of the assessment is to identify view receptors and assess the impact of the development on these receptors as well as the impact on the sense of place of the environment.

The site is located in a predominantly high intensive agricultural area dominated by fruit orchards and production plantations. A prominent feature in the landscape is the N2 which passes the site with two secondary road intersections in close proximity. The on-site tourist facility hosts a range of activities and is a popular stop for travellers. The site and surrounding area thus accommodates a high level of activity.

The topography is characterised by hills and valleys, which provide a high level of visual absorption. The site is surrounded by orchards and avenues of large trees up to approximately 20-25m in height. It is therefore significantly screened from the surrounding landscape. The rear of the property however is abutting an orchard with lower trees and this side is thus the most exposed front of the site.

Due to the topography and landscape elements, the area displays a high absorption level. The assessment of the potential receptors indicated that the overall impact is low to moderate and well within acceptable levels of change.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

1 BACKGROUND

Sarien Lategan was appointed to undertake the visual impact assessment of a 25m high lattice tower to accommodate cell antennae, on portion 19 of 316, Caledon, as input to the Basic Assessment in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act no. 107 of 1998), as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017, undertaken by EnviroAfrica. The site is at the back of the Peregrine Farmstall next to the N2 at Grabouw.



Figure 1: Locality

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The applicant intends to construct a 25m high lattice tower to accommodate cell antennae, on a portion 19 of farm 316, Caledon, located at the Peregrine Farmstall at Grabouw.

The objective of the Visual Impact assessment is to determine the significance of any visual impact. This assessment will indicate whether from a visual perspective the development constitute and acceptable level of change and if so what potential mitigation measures can reduce any visual impact.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

To determine the potential extent of the VIA required the following broad criteria are considered.

Table 1: Requirements for visual assessment

Areas with protection status, e.g. nature reserves	None (Refer Ann A)
Areas with proclaimed heritage sites or scenic routes	None (Refer Ann B).The Overberg District SDF however proposes the investigation into The Valley as a scenic route. This route will link with the Viljoenshoop (Highlands) Road.
Areas with intact wilderness qualities, or pristine ecosystems	None
Areas with intact or outstanding rural or townscape qualities	None
Areas with a recognized special character or sense of place	Potentially
Areas with sites of cultural or religious significance	No
Areas of important tourism or recreation value	Yes. Peregrine Farmstall and related activities on-site
Areas with important vistas or scenic corridors	Potentially.
Areas with visually prominent ridgelines or skylines.	Yes

Table 2: Nature of intended development

High-intensity type projects including large-scale infrastructure	Medium scale
A change in land use from the prevailing use	Yes
A use that is in conflict with an adopted plan or vision for the area	None known
A significant change to the fabric and character of the area	Unlikely
A significant change to the townscape or streetscape	Potentially
Possible visual intrusion in the landscape	Potentially
Obstruction of views of others in the area	Potentially

From the above, it is clear that the receiving environment holds certain visual elements which may be impacted upon by development of the site.

It is thus clear that the potential exists that development of the site may have a visual impact. In order to assist authorities thus to make an informed decision, the input of a specialist is required to assist in the project design and assess the visual impact of the preferred project proposal.

The term visual and aesthetic is defined to cover the broad range of visual, scenic, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the landscape. The terms of reference for the specialist are to:

- Provide the visual context of the site with regard to the broader landscape context and site-specific characteristics.
- Provide input in compiling layout/design alternatives.
- To describe the affected environment and set the visual baseline for assessment
- Identify the legal, policy and planning context
- Identifying visual receptors
- Predicting and assessing impacts
- Recommending management and monitoring actions

3 Methodology and principles

3.1 Methodology

Table 4: Summary of methodology

Task undertaken	Purpose	Resources used
A screening of the site and environment	To obtain an understanding of the site and area characteristics and potential visual elements	Photographs Site visits
Identify visual receptors	To assess the visual impact from specific viewpoints	Photographs, profiles
Contextualize the site within the visual resources	To present an easy to understand context of the site within the visual resource baseline	Specialist: S Lategan Graphic presentation Superimposed photo's
Propose possible mitigation measures	To present practical guidelines to reduce any potential negative impacts.	Specialist: S. Lategan

Throughout the evaluation the following fundamental criteria applied:

- Awareness that "visual" implies the full range of visual, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual aspects of the environment that contribute to the area's sense of place.
- Consideration of both the natural and cultural (urban) landscape, and their inter-connectivity.
- The identification of all scenic resources, protected areas and sites of special interest, as well as their relative importance in the region.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

- Understanding of the landscape processes, including geological, vegetation and settlements patterns which give the landscape its particular character or scenic attributes.
- The inclusion of both quantitative criteria, such as visibility and qualitative criteria, such as aesthetic value or sense of place.
- The incorporation of visual input as an integral part of the project planning and design process, so that the findings and recommended mitigation measures can inform the final design and quality of the project.
- To test the value of visual/aesthetic resources through public involvement.

3.1.1 Principles

The following principles to apply throughout the project:

- The need to maintain the integrity of the landscape within a changing land use process
- To preserve the special character or 'sense of place' of the area
- To minimize visual intrusion or obstruction of views
- To recognize the regional or local idiom of the landscape.

3.1.2 Fatal flaw statement

A potentially fatal flaw is defined as an impact that could have a "no-go" implication for the project. A "no-go" situation could arise if the proposed project were to lead to (Oberholzer, 2005):

1. Non-compliance with Acts, Ordinance, By-laws and adopted policies relating to visual pollution, scenic routes, special areas or proclaimed heritage sites.
2. Non-compliance with conditions of existing Records of Decision.
3. Impacts that may be evaluated to be of high significance and that are considered by the majority of stakeholders and decision-makers to be unacceptable.

The screening of the site and initial project intentions did not reveal any of the above issues which may result in a fatal flaw.

3.1.3 Gaps, limitations and assumptions

The assessment is based on the information provided by the developer.

3.1.4 Assessment explained

The assessment of visual impact is done on two levels namely the absorption rate of the receiving environment and the individual view receptors. The absorption rate of the receiving environment is determined by various elements e.g. topography, land use etc and the assessment will focus on the acceptable level of change of the area.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

Visual receptors are assessed individually based on the sensitivity of the receptor, exposure to the development and intrusion rate.

The following framework is used in order to assess view receptors:

Criteria	High	Moderate	Low
Exposure	Dominant, clearly visible	Recognizable to the viewer	Not particularly noticeable to the viewer
Sensitivity	Residential, nature reserves, scenic routes	Sporting, recreational, places of work	Industrial, mining, degraded areas
Intrusion/Obstructive	A noticeable change, discordant with surroundings	Partially fits but clearly visible	Minimal change or blends with surroundings

A sensitive receptor with low exposure and/or low intrusion rate can be regarded as a low significance rating. A receptor of low sensitivity but with high exposure can be of high significance if the intrusion rate is also high but is reduced if the intrusion rate is medium or low.

The overall significance, therefore, depends not only on the sensitivity of the receptor but also on the exposure and intrusion rate and thus a combination of the criteria.

3.2 Legal Framework, Guidelines and policies

3.2.1 National Environmental Management Act, 107, 1998 and relevant Guidelines:

An assessment in terms of any activity that requires an EIA or Basic Assessment may be subjected to a specialist visual assessment in order to determine the significance of the potential impacts to result from a proposed activity.

3.2.2 Western Cape PSDF

No specific references on this scale of development

3.2.3 Theewaterskloof Municipal SDF

The Theewaterskloof Municipal SDF¹ set the broadscale guidelines for assessing development proposals within the municipal area. These include heritage, tourism, agriculture and landscape policies.

The Draft Heritage Report² set as policy in par. 4.4.5 that a Visual Impact Assessment should inform decisions on all telecommunication masts.

No provision in the above documentation limits the construction of a cellular mast at the proposed location.

¹ Theewaterskloof Draft SDF, 2012

² De Gois, S. & Van Zyl, A. 2009. Theewaterskloof Spatial Development Framework: Heritage: Policies, Draft 4

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

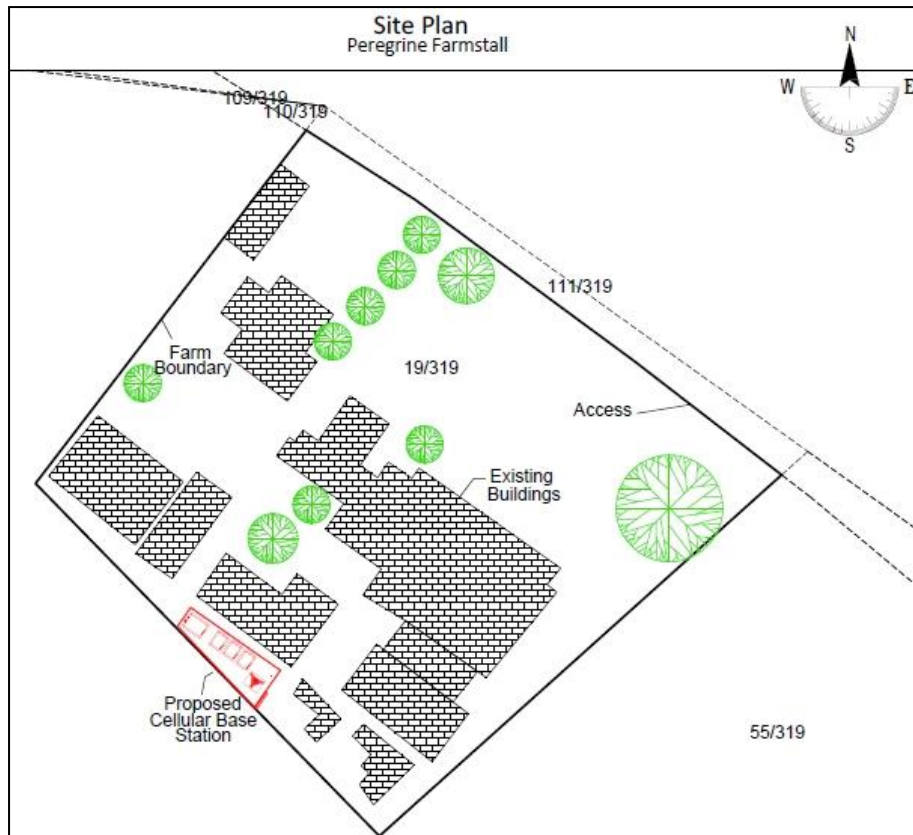


Figure 2: Site Layout

The mast and supporting infrastructure will be positioned on the southwestern boundary of the site, behind the buildings.

The mast consists of a triangular shape lattice structure. The mast will accommodate the necessary navigation lights. The intention is to keep the mast in steel/grey colour. Four equipment containers will be positioned along the boundary. The infrastructure footprint will be fenced in with a 2,4m high steel balustrade fence.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

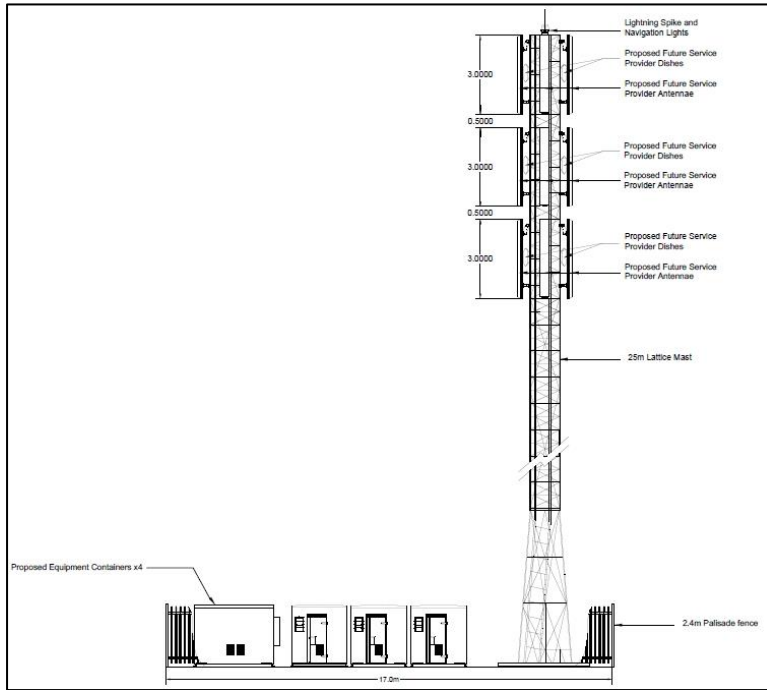


Figure 3: Mast side view

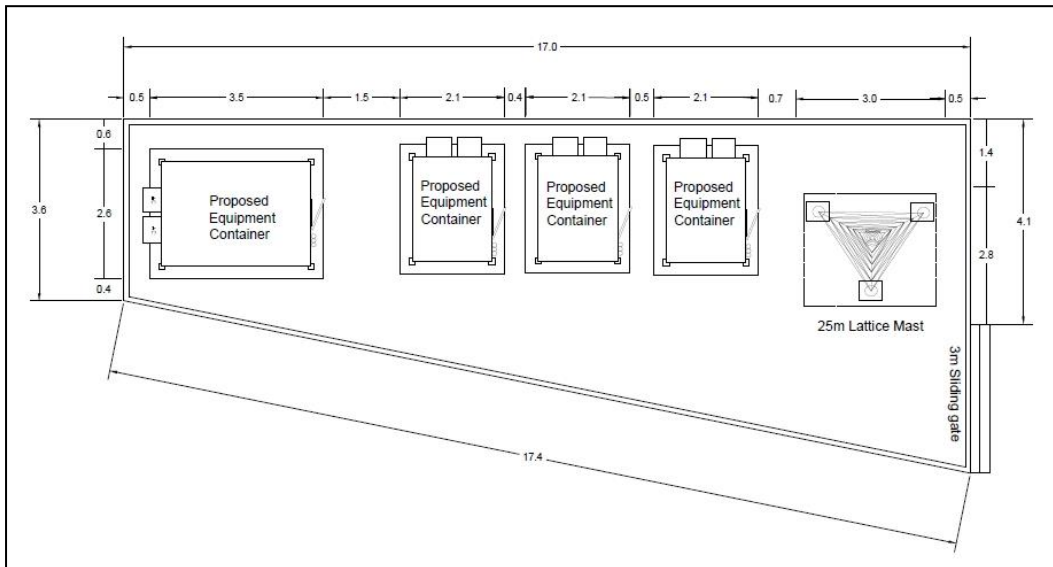


Figure 4: Site components

4.1.1 Operational elements

Only occasional maintenance is required. The site is serviced with a light delivery vehicle and potentially climbers to access equipment on the mast.

4.2 Construction elements

For the construction of the mast, typically LDV or small trucks and cranes may be required.

Construction process entails:

- clearing and levelling of the site,
- construction of mast
- fitting of antenna and equipment
- Fencing and security infrastructure
- Construction of support facilities such as a container, etc

5 RECEIVING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Description

Understanding the potential impact of a proposed development, an understanding of the receiving environment is important. In this regard, the main elements of the receiving environment relate to the character of the current surrounding land use and the absorption capacity of the area. The character of the area entails the sense of place created by the current land use and the scale and type of infrastructure or physical elements within the immediate area. The absorption capacity relates to the density of physical elements and topographical variations of the landscape, which will determine the catchment area. The human eye will observe the horizon on a perfectly flat surface at a distance of 30km. This is however significantly reduced by landscape elements which obstruct the view.

5.1.1 Catchment area

The site is situated in a tourism precinct within a high intensity agricultural and production landscape.³ The catchment area consists of hillsides, large trees, a national road and a range of infrastructure.

The catchment area is significantly restricted by the above elements. Views from surrounding hills should thus be assessed since a viewer can be elevated above the site. Figure 5 illustrates this potential catchment area based on the topography. The catchment is significantly restricted to the north, by large trees and only the entrance access road provide a break in this barrier. The catchment towards the south is however less restricted and thus provide a larger catchment. The real catchment area based on site visits reveals that the catchment area is reduced to the N2 to

³ Production landscape in this context refers to a landscape where a range of activities occur which are predominantly related to agriculture, but not limited thereto. It includes medium to large scale infrastructure such as packing sheds, power lines, windmills, fences, etc.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

the north, to about 500m to the south-east, 500m from the south and to the site boundary to the west.

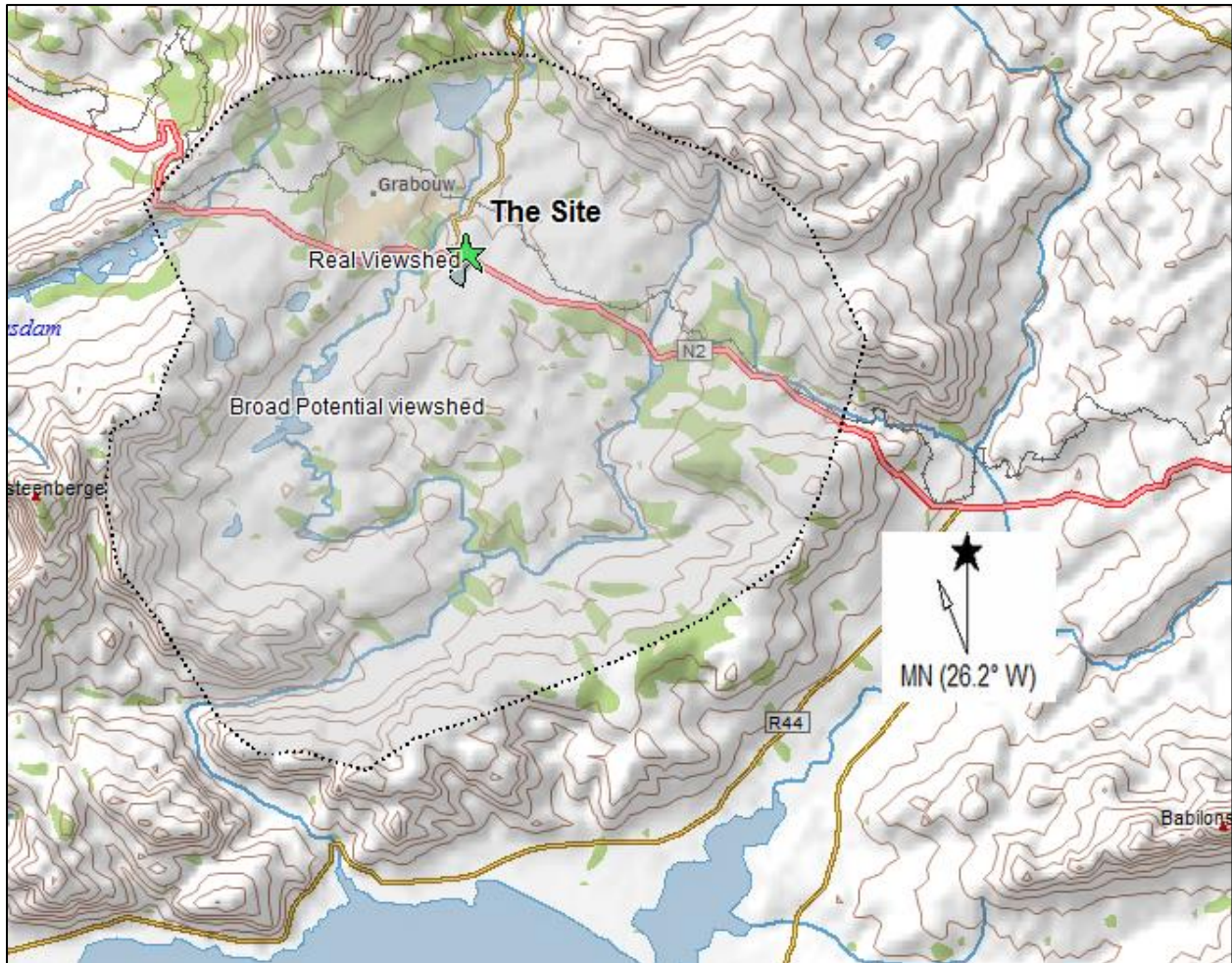


Figure 5: View catchment Area



Tree avenues and forest pockets of significant height (up to 40m) surround the site and thus create a secluded view catchment pocket. This reduces the view catchment to –
 To the north, the N2
 To the SE, the treeline adjacent the Viljoenshoop Rd
 To the south the trees abutting the farm dam of Beaulieu farm
 To the west a tree line.

Figure 6: Actual view catchment based on landscape elements

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

5.1.2 Sense of Place:

The site is situated in a predominantly agricultural area characterised by high intensive farming with associated infrastructure. The site itself is used for tourism facilities creating a tourist node at a busy intersection between regional roads and the N2. The site can thus be clearly classified as a production landscape. In such a landscape a mix of agriculture, rural, scenic, tourism, roads and support infrastructure co-exist.

The landscape can be regarded on a scale from high density and activity urban development through production, agricultural and rural landscape towards a wilderness landscape. An assessment of the site and surrounds clearly demonstrates that the site is located well in such production landscape.



Figure 7: Production landscape

6 VISUAL RECEPTORS

Visual receptors are those positions from where the development site is potentially visible. Based on the character of the locality of the receptor its sensitivity can be rated. Generally, residential areas and tourism-related destinations and routes are sensitive to visual intrusions as they relate to the well-being of residents and the tourism quality of the area.

6.1 Potential Receptors

The following potential visual receptors have been identified:

- N2, Caledon approach
- Grabouw town approach and intersection
- Peregrine front area
- Peregrine recreation area
- N2, Somerset West approach
- Viljoenshoop approach and intersection
- Farms to the south

6.2 Assessment of Receptors

6.2.1 N2, Caledon approach

The site is only visible from about 300m distance as the Viljoenshoop intersection is approached. Further east the site remains hidden by large trees. When the mast comes into view, the driver's attention is most probably on the upcoming intersection. The mast is clearly visible, however, given the number of elements in the surrounds, it is not disturbing in such a way that it would distract the driver. The duration of view is short as the driver quickly pass the site and the mast will disappear from view. The equipment containers are completely screened by the buildings.



Figure 8: N2 Caledon approach



Photo 1: N2 Caledon approach, not mitigated



Photo 2: N2 Caledon approach – mitigated grey colour

Figure 9: N2 Caledon approach assessed

Criteria	High	Moderate	Low
Exposure	dominant, clearly visible	recognizable to the viewer	not particularly noticeable to the viewer
Sensitivity	residential, nature reserves, scenic routes	sporting, recreational, places of work, national road	industrial, mining, degraded areas
Intrusion/Obstructive	noticeable change, discordant with surroundings	Partially fits but clearly visible	minimal change or blends with surroundings
Duration			short

The overall visual significance is low to moderate without mitigation.

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

6.2.2 Grabouw town approach and intersection

Approaching the site from Grabouw, the site is totally screened by large trees. The site becomes only visible when the intersection is reached. At this point, a driver's attention is most probably on this very busy intersection. Due to the number of elements in the area, the mast will be visible but not be obtrusive, detracting from a drivers attention. The mast is also largely screened by a large tree. The equipment containers is completely screened by the buildings.

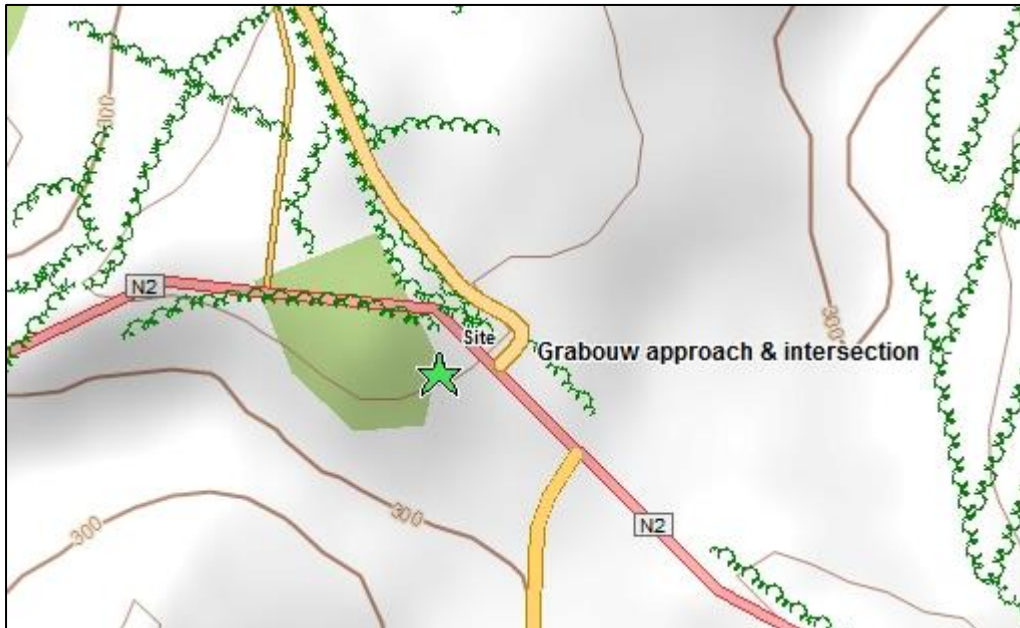


Figure 10: Grabouw approach



Photo 3: Grabouw Approach (25m) –mitigated grey

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

Table 3: Grabouw approach assessed

Criteria	High	Moderate	Low
Exposure	dominant, clearly visible	recognizable to the viewer	not particularly noticeable to the viewer
Sensitivity	residential, nature reserves, scenic routes	sporting, recreational, places of work, national road	industrial, mining, degraded areas
Intrusion/Obstructive	noticeable change, discordant with surroundings	Partially fits but clearly visible	minimal change or blends with surroundings
Duration			short

The duration is fleeting as the driver's attention is not distracted by the mast as it simply gets absorbed by all the other elements in the landscape. The overall visual significance is low to moderate without mitigation.

6.2.3 Peregrine front area

When a visitor turns into the Peregrine site, the attention is on finding parking and choosing which activity to visit. The mast will be quite visible but the equipment containers are screened by the buildings



Photo 4: Peregrine front area – mitigated grey

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

As the visitor approach the main entrance of the farmstall the mast is quite imposing above the building. This may detract from the experience. However, the exposure is of short duration. The visitor is also surrounded by trees and buildings and the obtrusive level may not be experienced as detracting from the experience.

Table 4: Peregrine Front area assessed

Criteria	High	Moderate	Low
Exposure	dominant, clearly visible	recognizable to the viewer	not particularly noticeable to the viewer
Sensitivity	residential, nature reserves, scenic routes	sporting, recreational, places of work, national road	industrial, mining, degraded areas
Intrusion/Obstructive	noticeable change, discordant with surroundings	Partially fits but clearly visible	minimal change or blends with surroundings
Duration			short

The visual significance is rated as high to moderate. No mitigation measures are however available for the specific mast.

6.2.4 Peregrine recreational area

To the side and rear of the main farmstall are a courtyard type of play and recreational area with small stalls. This area has a view to the rear of the buildings.



Photo 5: Peregrine recreational area

Table 5: Peregrine recreational area assessed

Criteria	High	Moderate	Low
Exposure	dominant, clearly visible	recognizable to the viewer	not particularly noticeable to the viewer
Sensitivity	residential, nature reserves, scenic routes	sporting, recreational, places of work, national road	industrial, mining, degraded areas
Intrusion/Obstructive	noticeable change, discordant with surroundings	Partially fits but clearly visible	minimal change or blends with surroundings
Duration	Constant		short

The mast is imposing on the play area. The impact is thus of moderate to high significance. Exposure is also constant while time is spent at the recreational area. Possible mitigation measures which may reduce the impact are –

- a. Change colour slightly to a blue shade since the area will most probably be used in good weather.
- b. Tree planting to create a pocket which will draw the attention of the visitor into the recreational area and thus the mast will only be observed above eye level.

6.2.5 N2, Somerset West approach

When approaching on the N2 from Somerset West, the hilly landscape and landscape elements screens the site until the traveller reaches the entrance to Peregrine. The site is also not visible from the Grabouw lodge and shopping centre on the R321 entrance to Grabouw.

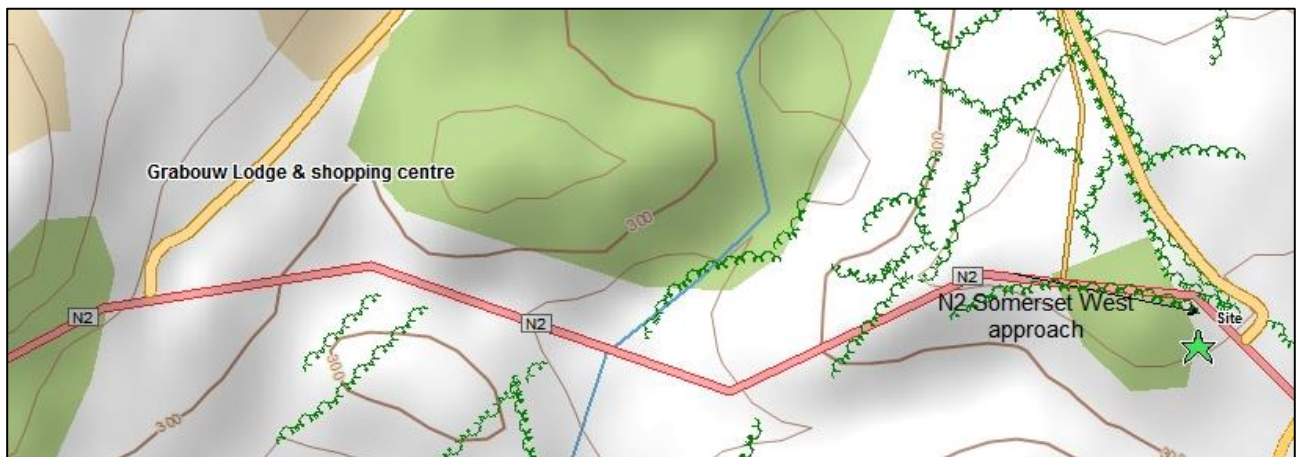
**Figure 11: N2 Somerset West Approach**



Photo 6: View from Grabouw lodge

6.2.6 Viljoenshoop road approach and intersection

When approaching the site from the Viljoenshoop Road, the site only becomes visible about 500m from the intersection with the N2. The mast is visible for a short moment and as the traveller approach the intersection, an avenue of trees screen the mast.



Figure 12: Viljoenshoop approach

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast



Photo 7: Viljoenshoop approach (not mitigated)

The impact is insignificant from the Viljoenshoop Road approach. (If mitigated with grey colour, the mast not visible on image.)

6.2.7 Farms to the south

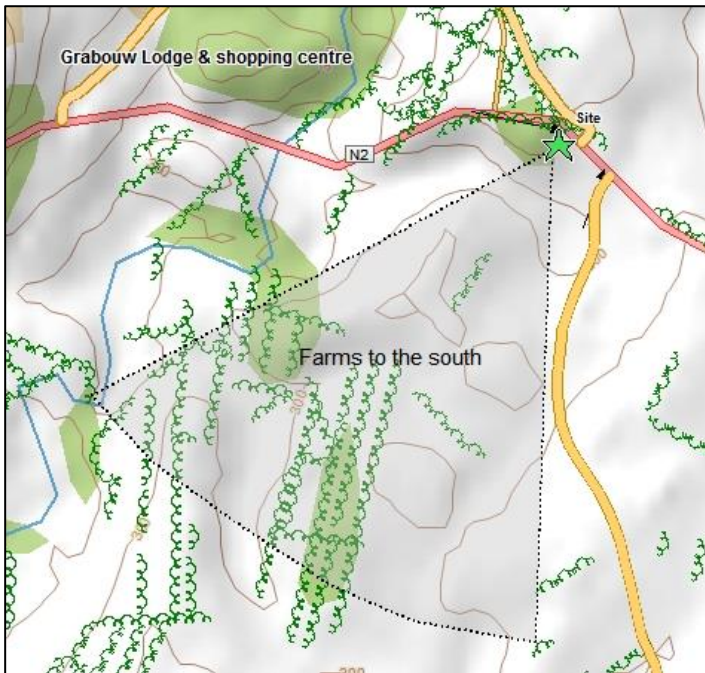


Photo 8: Farms to the south

The area to the south of the site consists of high intensive fruit farms and farmsteads. Due to the topography of the area and the landscape elements, being mainly fruit orchards, the view towards the site is largely screened off. No receptors in this area have a clear and direct view towards the site and thus has no significant impact on the farms.

7 CUMULATIVE IMPACT

The Department of Environment and Tourism issued an guideline document in terms of which cumulative impacts should be assessed.⁴ This guideline document identifies types and characteristics of different cumulative effects as summarised in the table below.

Table 6: Types and characteristics of cumulative effects

TYPE	CHARACTERISTIC	IDENTIFY POTENTIAL IMPACT
Time Crowding	Frequent and repetitive effects.	Activity remains at same pace, frequency and intensity over time. No time crowding impacts.
Time Lags	Delayed effects.	No time lag impacts.
Space Crowding	High spatial density of effects.	Smaller antenna are present on site. According to information provided, an application for another cell tower of similar size has been submitted at a site approximately 4km away. The landscape character (refer par 5.1) is such that it has a high absorption potential and therefore crowding is only relevant when masts are in close proximity of approximately 500m apart. Space crowding impact thus insignificant
Cross-boundary	Effects occur away from the source.	No impact
Fragmentation	Change in landscape pattern.	No impact.
Compounding Effects	Effects arising from multiple sources or pathways.	No compounding impacts.
Indirect Effects	Secondary effects.	No impact
Triggers and Thresholds	Fundamental changes in system functioning and structure.	No fundamental changes to urban or ecological systems or structures

⁴ DEAT (2004) Cumulative Effects Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 7, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), Pretoria

VIA: Peregrine cellular mast

The cumulative impact of this cell mast within the existing landscape in conjunction with existing masts as well as potential masks, are low.

8 CONSTRUCTION

During construction, various types of vehicles and equipment will be transported to the site and work on the site. This will impact on the general experience of viewers. This impact is however temporary and not uncommon during construction of infrastructure. Communities have fairly high tolerance levels for such activities if it contributes to the infrastructure of the area.

Rating: Low

9 FINDINGS

The proposed cellular mast appears to have an overall low to moderate visual impact without mitigation. The impact is overall within acceptable levels of change.

The most significant impact is the direct on-site impact, however this is also within acceptable levels given the high site activity levels. With mitigation, it is argued that the on-site impacts can be slightly reduced, however this need not necessarily be a condition of approval.

10 MITIGATION MEASURES

The assumption was made that the lattice mast will be of natural steel colour and not painted. The colour should be within the range of blue- grey to natural steel colour.

Some tree planting on the perimeter of the play area can reduce the obtrusiveness of the mast.