

2 Project Context

This section provides a brief description of the visual environment within which the proposal would be located. It is a baseline description, meaning it describes the context as it exists and as it would otherwise continue to exist in the absence of the proposal.

2.1 Planning Designations

It is relevant to consider the planning designations for the site and surrounding area as this informs a determination of what development might otherwise occur should the proposal not go ahead. The impacts from the proposal must ultimately be compared to impacts from what might otherwise occur, in conjunction with a consideration against the current state of the site.

Within the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme the subject site is within COL LPP-1 Precinct of the Coolum Local Plan. The relevant performance outcomes for this designation are identified above (PO16).

The site is predominantly zoned Emerging Community Zone with the dune area east of the site zoned as Environmental Management and Conservation. The existing detached house lots that have been created to the south have been zoned as Low Density Residential. Existing parks on that site have been zoned Open Space. According to Section 6.2.17.2 of the Planning Scheme,

The purpose of the Emerging community zone code is to ensure that development is designed and coordinated to achieve safe, healthy and sustainable new urban communities which:-

- (a) are well integrated with existing communities;
- (b) deliver affordable living opportunities;
- (c) provide an appropriate mix and arrangement of activities; and
- (d) provide a best practice benchmark for ecological sustainability and the implementation of environmental enhancement and rehabilitation programs.

The Height of Buildings and Structures Overlay Code contemplates (as a Performance Outcome) a building height of 8.5 metres for most of the local area, including the subject site.

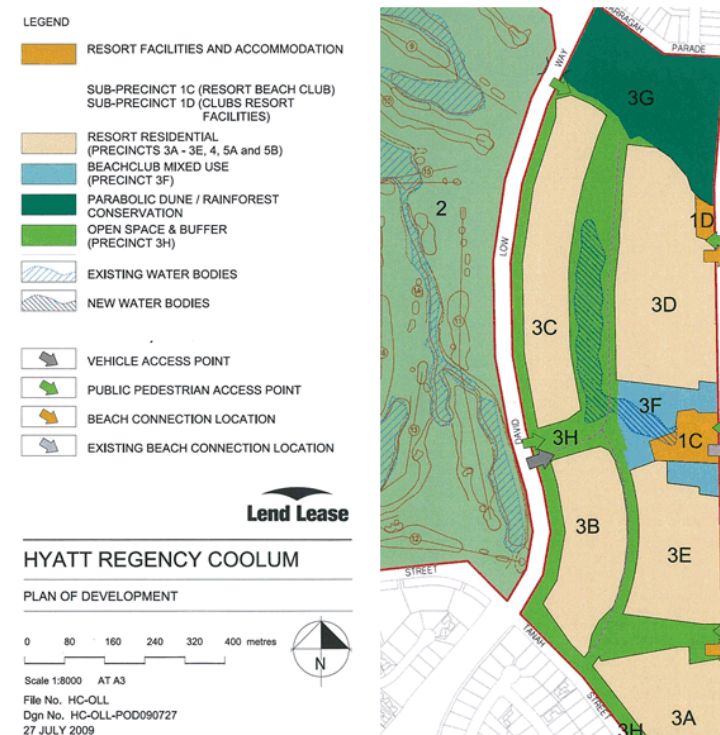
As described previously, a current approval applies to the site (dated February 2007) (refer Figure 6). The following details of the approval are relevant:

- The original Master Plan approval applies to the greater Beachside Precinct east of the David Low Way as well as the Palmer Coolum Resort to the west. The current subdivision-level approvals allow for approximately 112 detached dwellings and 174 multiple unit dwellings (286 total). If new subdivision-level approvals were to be sought under the Preliminary Approval Master Plan, a maximum of 329 dwellings would be permitted across the subject site.
- Preservation of the dune vegetation adjacent to the subject site, allowing for low impact beach accesses only.

- A general low density development form across the site, with the majority of developments being detached houses or low rise multiple unit dwellings between 1 to 3 storeys.
- A discrete precinct of multiple unit dwellings up to 4 storeys in height (plus rooftop terrace) (around 138 multiple unit dwellings), although rooftop terraces and lift overruns were allowed, with two of the rooftop terraces containing multiple private use areas.

The existing approvals on the site, suggest that, in the absence of the subject proposal, the site would be developed with low density community development that is responsive to the natural landscape and achieves a height generally between 1 to 3 storeys, with a central part at 4 storeys (plus a rooftop terrace, 16m total).

Figure 6: Plan of currently approved proposal for site (edited)



2.2 Visual Environment

The visual environment of the local area is largely defined by topography, a predominance of vegetation, and by views to the key landscape features of the coastline and ocean, dunes, headlands, and Mt Cooloom. The topography and vegetation combine to limit or frame views, effectively providing a series of short and long views through the local area and beyond, and providing glimpses to the identified landscape features.

Figures 7-9 provide aerial views to the site and local area, illustrating the visual context.

Mt Cooloom is a dominant feature and is a defining landmark for the region. Even when not visible it is a point of reference and, as a key recreational attraction, is highly valued by the local community. It is also a site of Indigenous cultural heritage significance.

The site itself is generally flat, is partly cleared, but includes a number of patches of significant vegetation. The site is defined to the north by the locally significant Yaroomba Parabolic Dune. It is similarly defined along its eastern edge by a significant dune system (which achieves a height in parts similar to a 3-4 storey building with vegetation cover that is up to 3-4 metres high) and by the beach and coastline beyond. The western part of the site is defined by a reasonably significant vegetated buffer along David Low Way. The width, and screening potential of this buffer varies, and in many parts the type of vegetation enables partial views through the understory into the site.

To the south of the site is existing residential development, primarily detached housing transitioning into more significant multi-unit developments further south. There is a resort facility adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the site.

The built form of the local area is varied, comprising detached housing, multi-unit development (particularly near to the coast line), and the resort accommodation and facilities of the Palmer Cooloom Resort. Whilst housing along ridgelines and slopes is typically visible, there remains an inherent integration of most built form into the landscaping, resulting in a predominance of vegetation over built form. This predominance of vegetation, coupled with the significance and importance of topography and key landscape features mean the natural landscape is a defining element of the local landscape character.

This is particularly true of the catchment of the subject site, which is defined by ridgelines and Point Arkwright to the north, by ridgelines and Mt Cooloom to the west, by the ocean to the east, and by the interface with development to the south. Beyond this catchment, particularly to the south, the landscape character is noticeably different with the predominance of larger, visible buildings, and the presence of the Sunshine Coast Airport being a defining feature.

David Low Way is an important route through the area and is the main access route along the coastline. Where it passes alongside the subject site the experience is one of a predominantly green and natural landscape (largely due to the reasonably intact vegetated buffer, much of which is regrowth vegetation). The exception is the roundabout near the centre of the site. At

this point clear views into the site and existing development to the south are available.

The Yaroomba Parabolic Dune serves as a clear transition point for the journey along David Low Way. Beyond this point the nature and quality of the journey changes as the traveller approaches Cooloom village.

To the south of the site, the experience along David Low Way is also quite different, as the vegetated buffer is much less intact, and as views through and over the buffer to built form become more frequent.

The views from Mt Cooloom are highly significant. As an important attraction for tourists and locals, Mt Cooloom offers highly valued vistas in all directions. Views to the site (particularly from the east sides of the mountain) are clear and direct, but it is important to note that in such views the site forms part of an expansive vista, which also takes in a range of landscapes.

The views and visual experience of the beach to the east of the site are also noteworthy in that the experience is almost wholly defined by an absence of built form (except for distant views), and an overwhelming predominance of the natural landscape.

Figure 7: Aerial view towards site from south-east



Figure 8: Aerial view towards site from north-east



Figure 9: Aerial view towards site from north



3 Project Description

3.1 General

A full description of the proposal is provided by the project proponent in a separate document. The following simply identifies key aspects of the proposal of particular relevance to an assessment of impacts on the visual environment.

This assessment considers the **Proposal** as presented by the proponent (refer Figures 11, 12, and 17). The proposal contains 17 separate tower buildings including a hotel, serviced apartments, residential apartments and retirement living/aged care buildings (including a 'Wellness Centre' at 3,000m² gross floor area). In addition, retail buildings are proposed independently of the tower buildings (3,000m² gross floor area).

The assessment also considers two alternative scenarios (Option 1 and Option 2), which both have the same number and arrangement of buildings, but lesser building heights than the Proposal. **Option 1** comprises a 6 storey hotel and serviced apartment buildings (20m height), as well as 3 and 4 storey residential buildings (11m and 14m height respectively) and retail buildings at 2 storeys (8.5m) height. **Option 2** comprises an 8 storey hotel and serviced apartment buildings (26m height), as well as 4 and 6 storey residential buildings (14m and 20m height respectively) and retail buildings at 2 storeys (8.5m) height. The scenarios are depicted in Figures 13-16 and Figures 18 and 19.

The floor plans of the hotel building measure approximately 116.7 metres x 26.5 metres, the serviced apartment building measures approximately 105.6 metres x 22.6 metres, and the remaining buildings are apartment blocks and retail buildings, measuring up to 126.5m long and 24.3 metres wide.

All options incorporate an extent of landscaping between buildings. Whilst the proponent's public documents indicate significant space for the retention of landscaping, the documents also note that vegetation within the site is not significant and is required to be removed to allow for earthworks. It is not clear how much will be removed, nor the extent to which new landscaping is proposed, except that the proponent's photomontages show extensive vegetation between buildings. It has therefore been assumed that there will be substantial removal of internal vegetation, with some new vegetation to be added around buildings.

The development would be accessed from a new access point (proposed roundabout) along David Low Way.

Figure 10: Aerial photo with proposal overlaid

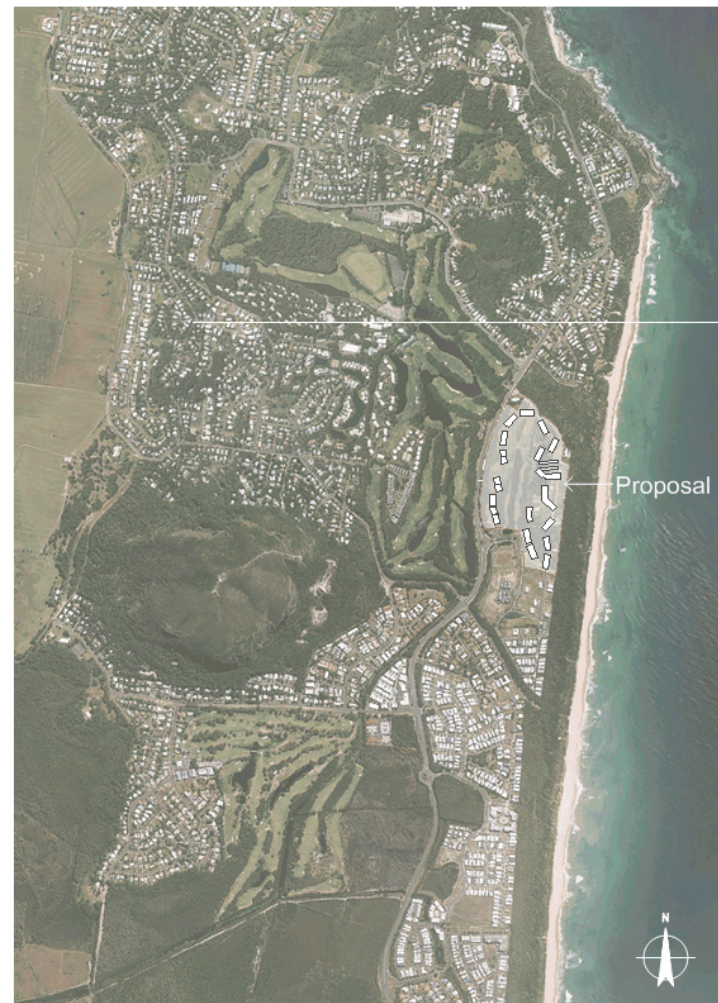


Figure 11: Plan view of Proposal



Figure 12: Section views of Proposal

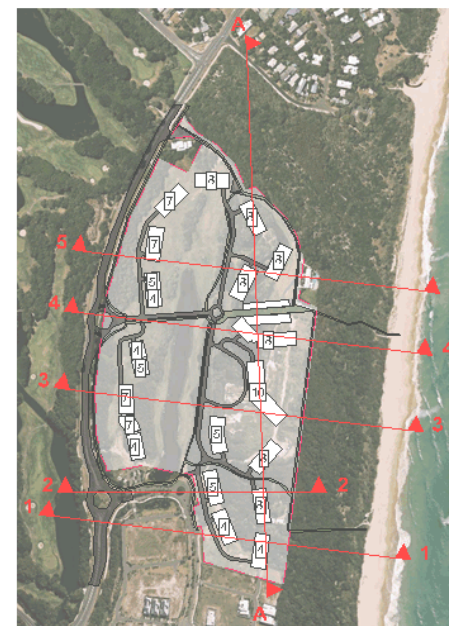
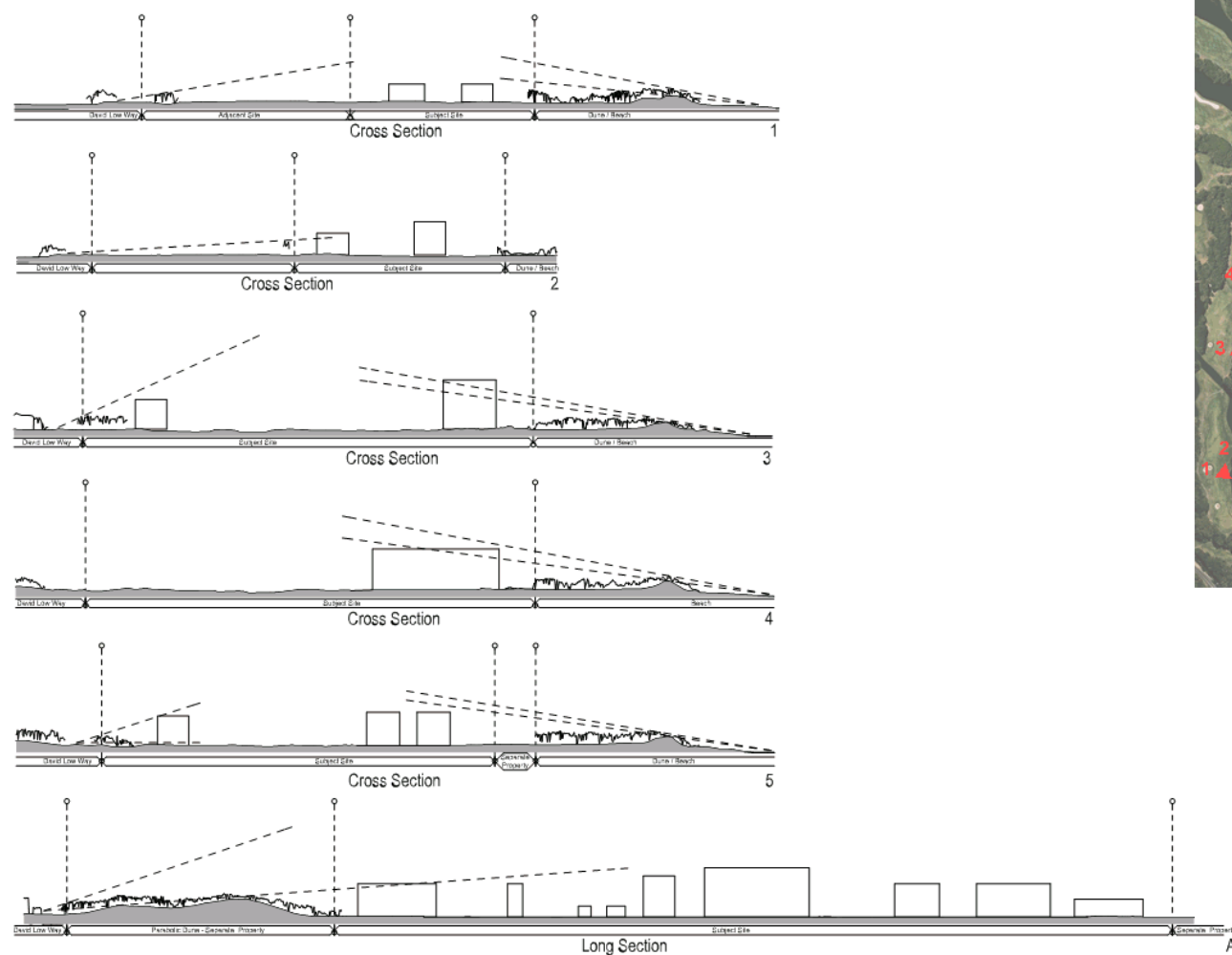


Figure 13: Plan view of Option 1 Scenario



Figure 14: Section views of Option 1 Scenario

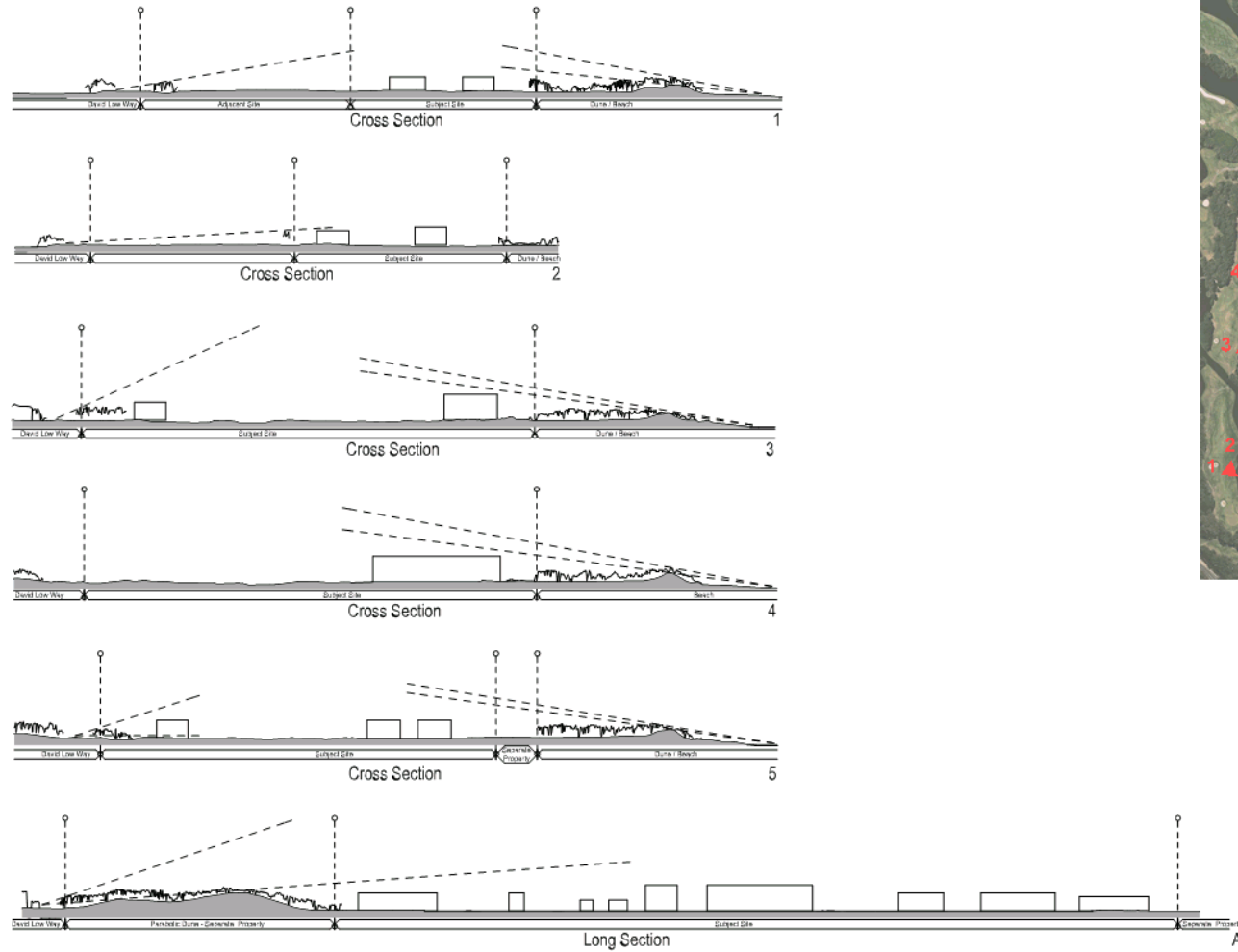


Figure 15: Plan view of Option 2 Scenario



Figure 16: Section views of Option 2 Scenario

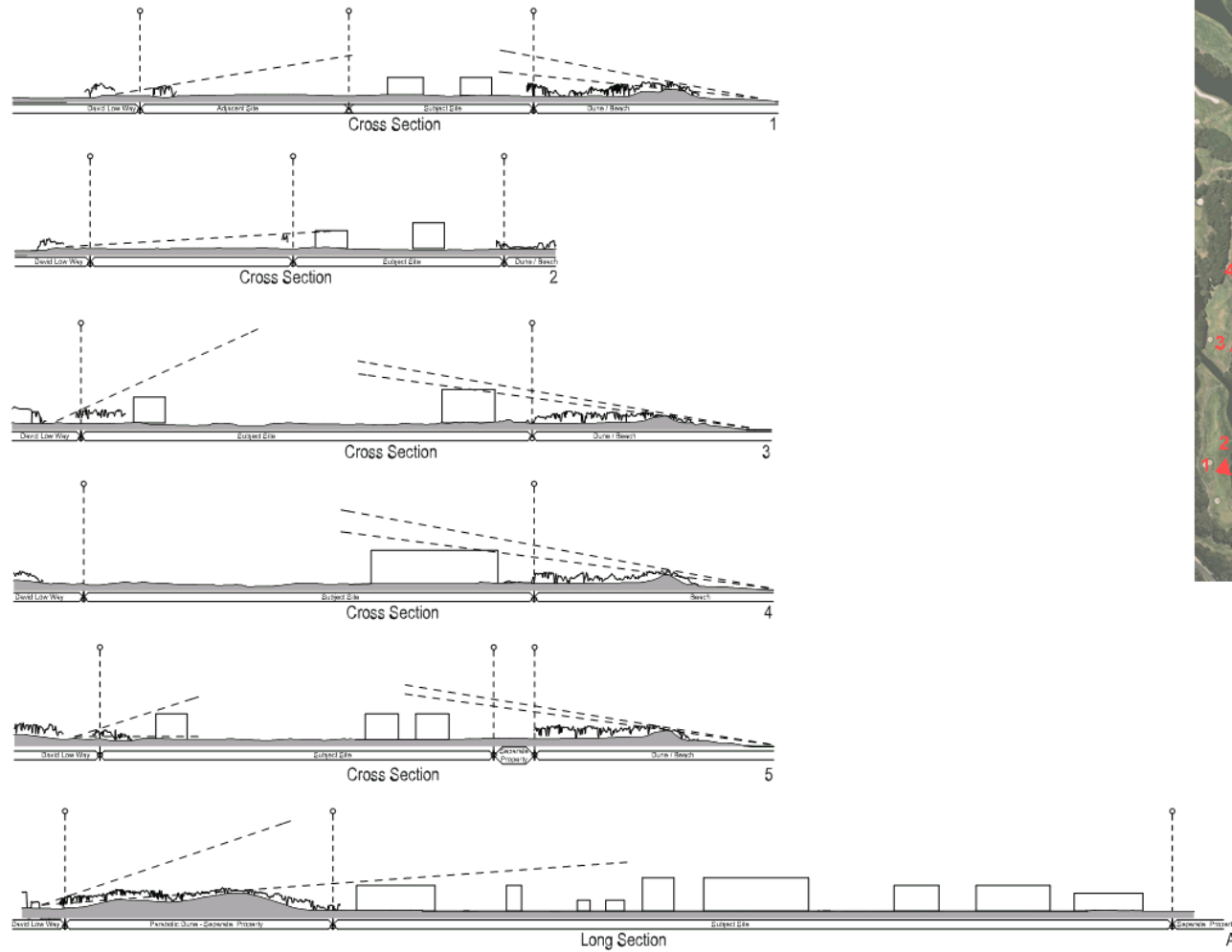


Figure 17: Aerial view of Proposal



Figure 18: Aerial view of Option 1 Scenario



Figure 19: Aerial view of Option 2 Scenario

