



## Urban Design review: 28 Fisher Rd – 9 Francis St. Dee Why

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In support of DA proposal for community centre and affordable housing

August 2022

## Introduction

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At the request of The George Group as the applicant, this submission has been prepared in support of the urban design approach related to this DA proposal at 28 Fisher Road and 9 Francis Street, Dee Why for New Life. This mixed-use development includes a 51-room boarding house and manager's unit with associated amenities, ground level retail and church-based community facilities in a contemporary architectural expression and landscape setting that will provide much needed amenities and provide positive street activation for this precinct.

Comments are based on inspection of the site context and review of the following:

- DA plans by The George Group (July 2022)
- SEE by The Planning Hub (August 2022)
- Landscape plans by Paul Scrivener Landscape
- Warringah LEP and DCP 2011
- SEPP Housing 2021
- Northern Beaches Affordable Housing Policy (Version 3 – August 2018)
- D+SAP report dated 24 June 2021 for DA2020/1167

Based on the key assessment issues raised in the D+SAP review, this amended scheme is focused on the capacity for the proposal to resolve concerns about the differing aspects of desired future character for the two sites, and to satisfy built form and urban design objectives in NBC Planning Controls and the SEPP Housing 2021.

## Overview

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This is a site of 1391.2 sq.m (Lot 28 and 43 On DP 7413) within a part Mixed Use B4 and Residential R3 zone and is assessed with due consideration for the constraints that location and topography impose on it. It is understood that the Warringah LEP and DCP 2011 and SEPP Housing 2021 clearly intend such sites can be considered suitable for affordable accommodation subject to satisfying the intention of relevant controls.

The D+SAP review establishes support for the development will be contingent on substantial redesign together with reduction of gross floor area, and this report clarifies how the revised DA approach incorporates rationalisation and design resolution to provide the basis for what is now considered to be a well-founded and compliant scheme.

In response to issues raised, the proposed redevelopment is reduced in overall built form, while including replacement of the existing Baptist Church Hall as a multi purpose space to enable the continuation of community events, and a café to provide an active street frontage scale along Fisher Road. Design revision allows scope for configuration of the façade in a way that is complementary to the proposed mixed-use complex within the differing streetscapes of Fisher Road and Francis Street.

From Fisher Road the main entry to a 5-6 storey building is via an entry to a common space and café leading to the central church/conference space and communal courtyard beyond opening to a landscaped garden setting that separates the built form. The foyer will provide secure access to common facilities and upper levels of accommodation with 41 rooms that are focused on care and ability compromised residents and will have shared access to a variety of amenities including a roof top communal terrace.

The 3 storey Francis Street building provides for discrete side access to more independent resident accommodation of 10 units with associated reception and communal spaces, and an integrated driveway and ramp for service access to basement parking of 34 car spaces, 19 motorcycle spaces, bicycle storage and a loading bay. A private manager's suite is located on a lower mid-level basement, with access to adjacent communal space opening onto a landscaped north facing terrace and adjacent hydrotherapy pool to be shared with all residents.

The proposed development will be close to short term public parking, well served by public transport, and is in close proximity to a range of retail and community amenities that allow good alternative access by foot or bicycle for residents and visitors.

It is considered that the proposed DA submission is well configured and designed to create a high-quality insertion within this emerging precinct on the perimeter of the Dee Why Town Centre. The concept presents a potentially positive contribution to the much-needed affordable housing sector to cater for the lower income demographic, NDIS residents and key workers in the community, and will be complementary to the intended urban design character and public domain of this precinct.

In response to the NBC D+SAP comments and recommendations of 24 June 2021, this report summarises the subsequent design adjustments in numerical order.

### **Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character**

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With adjustments to the bulk and configuration of the built form, there have been significant alterations to the building articulation and façade expression that respond to issues as follows:

1. Through reduced FSR applied to each site, the GFA is now distributed in a manner that is responsive to the context while being expressed in a cohesive character related to both street frontages, and to neighbouring sites either side.
2. Application of the bonus provision for SEPP Housing 2021 has been undertaken with further design input to ensure outcomes in urban design quality and amenity are not compromised, and to minimise impacts on adjoining neighbours.
3. Reduction in GFA and distribution in accordance with the proposed D+SAP methodology has enabled a design that is compliant as recommended.
4. This revised design should not require a Cl. 4.6 variation.
5. As above.
6. Efforts have been made to minimise the driveway impact from Francis Street and provide a more street sensitive and cohesive landscape treatment integrated with the pedestrian entry that creates activation through a communal 'bump space' while being respectful of the neighbours.

### **Scale, built form and articulation**

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Through the revised design and split of built form together with setback compliances, the proposed development is now compliant, and able to address recommendations as follows:

7. The Francis Street building has been configured to provide an articulated form that is reduced in scale and allows winter sunlight to be maintained to the townhouses to the south.
8. There is now a 3 storey building on the west facing elevation to Francis Street with level floors, and this steps down further back to a lower floor and basement below.

## **Access, vehicular movement and car parking**

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The traffic report establishes that parking and servicing complies with DCP requirements, but reduction in the driveway width has not been possible.

9. Forecourt treatment has been undertaken to minimise the visual impacts of the driveway with landscaping and pedestrian entry 'bump space' to improve the streetscape qualities and activation. Landscaping adjacent to the driveway and on a pergola over the pedestrian entry from Francis Street will further improve the visual appearance.

## **Landscape**

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Substantial revision with landscape consultant input has addressed issues raised with a much-improved design for deep soil planting, communal open spaces and planters where considered appropriate.

10. Landscape areas have capacity to meet the 40% canopy cover target.
11. External landscape areas have been provided that enable access for sharing where appropriate
12. Detailed landscape documentation is provided in accordance the issues raised
13. A planting species schedule has been refined to include endemic tree selection and remove palms.
14. Greening of facades is integrated where the plants can be adequately maintained.

## **Amenity**

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Redesign had involved extensive changes to address amenity concerns as follows:

- a. All resident rooms are located at or above ground level.
  - b. Common corridors along the southern side of the Francis Street building have windows screened to avoid any privacy impacts to neighbours.
  - c. Windows have been revised to enable adequate access to light and ventilation, and unit layouts configured to avoid privacy impacts from outdoor communal areas.
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15. It is understood that fire safety issues have been adequately dealt with by expert consultants.

## **Façade treatment/Aesthetics**

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A range of amended façade treatments have been incorporated into the proposal to significantly improve the overall architectural character in a manner that gives uplift to the aesthetics in a cohesive, well-ordered expression. Particular issues are addressed as follows:

16. Windows have been amended and coordinated to provide appropriate sizing and operation according to internal needs, amenity and privacy.
17. Subject to orientation sun-shading hoods and screens have been included, and these will also assist in improving elevation modulation and aesthetic.
18. Where appropriate there is integration of patterned panel screening to provide further façade articulation and interest, and where appropriate allow for sun control.

## Sustainability

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A range of ESD measures are incorporated into the proposal that are outlined in various consultant reports and the Section J compliance.

In the interest of achieving a responsible, low-energy design the proposal also includes solar p/v arrays on the roofs, ceiling fans to units and communal areas to assist natural ventilation, and integration of tree canopy and planters to minimise heat impacts.

## LEP Assessment

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Warringah LEP 2011 Cl. 3.2 Local Planning Policy and Controls identifies several key objectives for this B4 Mixed Use Zone in the Pittwater Road Precinct of the Dee Why Town Centre:

- *To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.*
- *To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.*
- *To reinforce the role of Dee Why as the major centre in the sub-region by the treatment of public spaces, the scale and intensity of development, the focus of civic activity and the arrangement of land uses.*
- *To promote building design that creates active building fronts, contributes to the life of streets and public spaces and creates environments that are appropriate to human scale as well as being comfortable, interesting and safe.*
- *To promote a land use pattern that is characterised by shops, restaurants and business premises on the ground floor and housing and offices on the upper floors of buildings.*
- *To encourage site amalgamations to facilitate new development and to facilitate the provision of car parking below ground.*

While there are circumstances that have created difficulties in achieving site amalgamation, the proposal does have scope to meet the intentions of the other objectives for this precinct.

The combination of ground level retail/community and management space, together with residential accommodation on the upper levels would be a suitable mix of uses in this B4 – R3 zone, and the site is well located to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.

The active frontage will help sustain street life along the Fisher Road frontage, adding to the vibrancy and variety of uses that are helping to promote Dee Why as a major regional centre. Incorporation of affordable rental housing in this location should also be seen as further positive action in this direction and reinforcement of the hybrid use pattern that is characteristic of this precinct.

## DCP Assessment

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The Warringah DCP 2011 sets a number of objectives for how development on land in the B4 Mixed Use Zone should be assessed with consideration of the intended outcomes for the Dee Why Town Centre.

The overall built form has been well conceived as segmented forms and recessive elements set back the required distance from the Fisher Road kerb and is distinguished by façade expression that differentiates it from the immediate buildings while being complementary to perceived desired future character for the area. With the new building set back and modulated with adjustable facade elements responsive to solar, ventilation and privacy needs, a contemporary appearance will be achieved that is respectful of current and projected future neighbours.



Site location and context (The George Group)

While there is no encroachment on the height plane, the top floor is recessed on all elevations. Integration of a range of landscape features for the communal roof terrace will provide residents with quality views towards the coast, and there will also be scope for further landscaping and a communal garden at that level.

Planting to the internal courtyard and side setbacks join the ground level open space with the pedestrian access in an integrated landscape setting. The Francis Street side entry for residents has been well located to suit access and service needs, with provision for social bump space while maintaining appropriate separation from neighbouring properties.

Internal access is well resolved to eliminate any institutional feel by allowing circulation spaces to be part of the common areas but with discrete room entries and will also create potential 'bump' spaces to encourage social interaction. Potential is also created to allow for food related retail to open into the internal courtyard that will further enhance scope for community interaction.

## Conclusion

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This project can be an exemplary benchmark for showing how introduction of affordable or key worker rental accommodation in conjunction with church related common facilities can be introduced in a way to foster positive social and community benefits. Affordable housing such as this can provide significant social and community benefits by improving residential accommodation choice while being complementary to the desired character of this evolving mixed-use precinct in the Dee Why Town Centre.

In urban design terms I therefore support this development proposal and maintain that it can satisfy the intentions of the Warringah LEP 2011, DCP 2011 and Housing SEPP 2021 in a manner that can address any perceived adverse environmental effects and can make a positive contribution to meeting *the growing and changing needs of the community and particularly key workers* as identified in NBC Policy for Affordable Housing.

END

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