



Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 23 March 2023

Item 2 - DA2023/0172 - 1, 5, 5a & 7 Gladys Avenue FRENCHS FOREST

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The Panel understands that due to the requirement of *WLEP 2011 Clause 8.3 Minimum Site Areas*, approval of the proposal would result in 3 Gladys Avenue being unable to be developed in a compliant manner for the purposes envisaged by the *WDCP 2011 Part G9 – Frenchs Forest Town Centre, cl. 5.2 Precinct 05 Frenchs Forest Road West Neighbourhood* and *Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy*.

This project was previously reviewed in October 2022. A number of recommendations have been addressed in part and the architect provided a “*Schedule of architectural amendments*” in the Design Report submitted in February 2023.

The Panel is of the view that the amendments made do not result in the proposed development exhibiting design excellence in accordance with the matters set out in *WLEP 2011 Clause 8.5*.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

Any development does not respond to the *WDCP2011 Desired Future Character Statement (G9(2))* and in particular “*Frenchs Forest is an urban forest, with green streets and new open space, making a feature of the forest that has always shaped the site’s story.*” Every native tree on the site is designated for removal. No attempt has been made to follow the Panel recommendation to “*identify where endemic and significant trees are located and then plan the building footprints so that these trees are substantially retained*”.

The current proposal relies on the removal of endemic tree species and all native trees in 3 Gladys Avenue.

The Panel notes that the approval of this development would not preclude development of this site but would preclude the possibility of providing residential flat buildings and medium density dwellings on this site which align with the strategic objectives of the precinct.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that any proposal does not impact the viability of significant and endemic tree species adjacent to the site
2. Identify where endemic and native significant trees are located and then plan the building footprints so that these trees are substantially retained to deliver the objectives of *WDCP 2011 D 1 Landscaped Open Space and Bushland Setting*
3. Consider providing two endemic landscaped areas in the street frontage based around mapping of existing endemic plants. The first would be in the current location of the driveway so as to ensure retention of endemic/native trees T7-T9 and T14-T15. The second would be designed to ensure the retention of T35 and T24s.
4. Deliver a masterplan for the proposed development that would be resilient by planning for a future amalgamation with No. 3 Gladys Avenue.



Scale, built form and articulation

Modified townhouse typologies with dual aspect living spaces are supported.

WDCP 2011 5.2.5 (1) requires development to address the street frontages. Currently the development on No1 and No7 present as gable ends and a single dwelling without a direct entry from the street. To activate the street the number of dwellings facing the street in these locations should be maximised. The development on No.5 and 5A does this providing individual street entries.

The designation of boundaries as 'side' or 'rear' on this site is ambiguous. In the first instance site analysis should identify the nature of the boundary in adjoining sites and setbacks should reflect that boundary condition. Setbacks to side and rear boundaries in higher density areas (R3 Medium Density Residential zoning) in principle need to be higher than in lower density zonings.

The variation of built form across the site with pitched roof forms and flat roof forms and roof terraces is supported subject to solar analysis of impacts to adjoining private open space and living areas being undertaken.

The connections of two mews forms via an enclosed tunnel is not supported.

Recommendations

5. Subject to retention of significant endemic trees, setbacks to side and rear boundaries are to be 6m to habitable rooms but can be reduced to 4.5m at the ground floor, but only where:
 - a. dual aspect living spaces are provided, and
 - b. private open space is available on both aspects, and
 - c. a larger principal open space is provided away from the sensitive boundary.
6. Undertake solar overshadowing analysis of adjoining properties to test the additional impact of reduced setbacks. Identify principal useable areas and living room windows.
7. Development shall be located to front or address the street WDCP 2011 5.2.5 (1). Maximise the number of dwellings with a direct front entry from the street.
8. Connect each mews with a fully open to the sky landscaped pedestrian pathway a minimum 6m width.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

Refer ***Scale, built form and articulation*** for pedestrian access and street address.

Refer ***Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character*** for the location of driveways impacting the realisation of the Frenchs Forest 'green streets' objectives.

Recommendation

9. The recommendation from the pre-lodgement meeting remains valid. Where townhouses are proposed that do not have street frontage the lane network needs to be of a scale and configuration that will provide the equivalent of a publicly accessible un gated 'new street' address. Typically, this would require a minimum 6m wide landscaped pedestrian street (boundary to built form) with good sightlines and overlooked for neighbourhood safety. Generous landscaping should be provided along pathways adjacent to boundaries. Pathways should be minimum 1.5m wide. Each townhouse should have a private entry garden to access the internal streets.

Landscape

Tabula rasa concept in regard to significant trees on the site is not supported. A more nuanced approach that respond to the area is required. The proponent should consider the extensive site trees as an important asset (over 64 trees based on the Arborists report) rather than a hindrance for development and work with the sites inherent assets that build upon the characters unique character.



Recommendation

10. The current Landscape Plan indicates no endemic trees in the proposed schedule, this is unacceptable based on the requirements of the WDCP.

Amenity

Ground floor toilets opening to dining areas require reconfiguration so they don't open to a habitable space.

Where side and rear boundary setbacks are to be reduced from 6m clear amenity impacts in terms of privacy and overshadowing need to be justified by design as equal to or better than a building with 6m setbacks.

Recommendations

11. Identify by analysis the existing solar and privacy impacts to the existing house on No.3 Gladys Avenue
12. A room containing a toilet should be separated from habitable living spaces by opening onto a hallway or have the doorway screened from kitchen, living or dining spaces
13. Habitable windows above the ground floor are required to be setback 6m from side boundaries to ensure the development does not rely on borrowed amenity from future higher density development
14. Where habitable windows are within 6m of a boundary or 12m from another window or open space on the site provide appropriate privacy screening

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

Generally, facades to the street frontages should be designed to address the street and deliver a fine grain streetscape as per the WDCP 2011 5.2.5 objectives.

All windows and private open spaces facing north and west require consideration of shading.

Recommendations

15. Provide appropriate shading devices to all openings between north-east to south-west.

Sustainability

Refer **Landscape** for tree canopy retention.

Dual aspect to all the dwellings, and PV to each apartment is supported.

The shading design is not adequate. It is likely that the NatHERS results are overestimated – assuming that the occupants will operate the shading appropriately every day. In reality, it is likely that the operable shading will be left open in summer with A/C running, or could also be left closed in winter, keeping the dwellings cold.

Fixed external shading is a better sustainability outcome, particularly as most of the dwellings face north, but will also be beneficial for the east/west orientations as well, with the operable shading at the edge of the fixed overhang.

A 7-star rating may be possible if the heating load is reduced by providing a mechanism to close off the stairwell internally.

Recommendations

16. Install EV charging distribution boards in accordance with *NCC J9D4 Facilities for electric vehicle charging equipment* and in addition consider bi-directional (2-way) infrastructure for charging of EV battery for powering the building
17. Heat pump hot water would be a more efficient and sustainable outcome than electric instantaneous
18. Increase the amount of PV to each apartment



19. Include fixed external shading to the north, east and west orientations with the operable shading included at the edge of the fixed overhang
20. Close off the stairwell internally to stop heat escaping up the stairwell in winter.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form.

Additionally, it is the Panel's view that the proposal does not achieve design excellence for the reasons stated above. The Panel notes that the recommendations made would require extensive changes to the current design that would effectively constitute a redesign rather than modification.



- whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved,
- (b) whether the form and external appearance of the development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,
 - (c) whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,
 - (d) how the development addresses the following matters—
 - (i) the suitability of the land for development,
 - (ii) existing and proposed uses and use mix,
 - (iii) heritage issues and streetscape constraints,
 - (iv) the relationship of the development with other existing or proposed development on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,
 - (v) bulk, massing and modulation of buildings,
 - (vi) street frontage heights,
 - (vii) environmental impacts including overshadowing, wind and reflectivity,
 - (viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,
 - (ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements,
 - (x) the impact on, and proposed improvements to, the public domain,
 - (xi) the quality and integration of landscape design.
 - (4) Development consent must not be granted to development in relation to a building that is, or will, be higher than 12 metres or 3 storeys, or both, unless—
 - (a) a design review panel has reviewed the development, and
 - (b) the consent authority considers the findings of the panel.

Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011

Zone R3 Medium Density Residential

1 Objectives of zone

- To provide for the housing needs of the community within a medium density residential environment.
- To provide a variety of housing types within a medium density residential environment.
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- To ensure that medium density residential environments are characterised by landscaped settings that are in harmony with the natural environment of Warringah.
- To ensure that medium density residential environments are of a high visual quality in their presentation to public streets and spaces.