

Urban Design Referral Response

Application Number:	DA2021/0212
Date:	30/06/2021
To:	Lashta Haidari
Land to be developed (Address):	Lot 101 DP 1209504 , 5 Skyline Place FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086

Officer comments

The applicant has provided further drawings and reports to demonstrate how the resolution in the design of the development to address comments provided from the Northern Beaches Council Design and Sustainability Advisory Panel (DSAP) addresses the concerns of the Council urban design officer and DSAP. The following comments are provided in response to reference to the DSAP Report on the development and the initial comments from Council (provided as a response under the following comments).

Proposed Development

The development application consists of construction of a mixed-use development comprising 3 separate buildings with heights proposed from 3 - 12 storeys with a maximum height of 30-35 metres and a proposed FSR of approximately 3:1. The proposed development includes 941m² of commercial floorspace and 133 apartments comprising seniors living and affordable apartments; a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedrooms. Approximately 3,200m² (42% site of area) of landscaped open space is provided as well as basement parking.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004

The application is lodged pursuant to State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 (SEPP (HSPD)) considering part of the development is for 'Seniors Housing'.

The subject site is zoned B7 Business Park under Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011 (WLEP 2011). Development for the purposes of seniors housing is permitted with consent pursuant to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for seniors or people with a Disability) 2004 (SEPP HSPD) by virtue of 'hospitals' being permitted in the B7 Business Park zone.

Issues are raised with the development's consistency with the Aims of the Policy, namely;

- Clause 2c in relation to design and compatibility,
- Clause 33 (a) in that the bulk, scale and height of the proposal is not found to be compatible with the existing and desired future character, nor the quality and identity of the locality, and
- Clause 50 (standards that can not be used to refuse development) Height, Density and Scale.

As a state wide policy the SEPP HSPD provisions cannot anticipate the conditions where it might be applied. Reflected in the height and density provisions; 8m and 0.5:1 respectively as that which cannot be used as the basis for refusal, the development exploits this weakness in the policy (SEPP HSPD) to the extent the proposed development could not be seen be reasonably compatible with with low density residential zones.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal.

Site Analysis - Built Form Context

The site locality is ringed by major transport corridors, is surrounded by a variety of built form uses including warehouses, multi storey commercial and business parks typified by commercial and office uses and further out, residential zones. The site itself sits within the middle of the block and as such does not benefit from broader vistas to the greater landscape conditions of the locality.

The proposed development is of a perimeter block form with a generous central landscaped open space, with buildings articulated as two diagonally opposed tower forms (11 and 12 storey or 39 metres) complemented by lower rise (6 storey or 10 metres) blocks and a three storey communal building with facilities.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal. The site analysis in the form of view corridor analysis from various locations around the site has been provided on page 13 of the Amended Design Report (15.06.2021). The analysis provided show photographs of views to and from the site that reference the location of the Northern Beaches Hospital as the height precedence. They do not provide any further information to support the application.

Bulk and Scale

The scale and massing across the site is uncharacteristic of the locality; the proposed residential building is significantly higher than surrounding development, by up to 6 storeys. Given there is no FSR control applicable to the site, the combined impacts of the intensity and the proposed scale of development across the site cannot be supported on merit.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal. The DSAP noted that options analysis could provide further option studies with more rigorous analysis and design exploration rather than just alternate options of the same massing yield across the site. This has not been adequately addressed. Further to this, page 29 of the Amended Design Report (15.06.2021) shows the proposed massing of the development through Visual Impact Analysis demonstrating the intensity of the development as viewed from various locations. The bulk and scale is significant and cannot be supported.

Open Space and Public Domain

The proposal sets a central open space piazza within a perimeter block form comprising two long linear blocks with a north south axis on the east and west boundaries. Each of these blocks is comprised of a six storey element and an 11/12 storey element.

The central landscaped piazza is designed with access pathways and varying levels of planting detail. Given the scale, intensity and length of these buildings, the streetwall effect created by the length of the block is somewhat monolithic. Breaking down the scale of the block form and mass further to create an open to the sky through site link mid block is recommended for both the east and west linear blocks. Whilst it is noted there is a through building link at ground level the broader view aspects from a pedestrian scale will be dominated by the scale and height of the proposed development. A less intense proposal across the site is highly recommended to address the human scale in this distinct and unique urban context.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal, however the engagement of a professional landscape architect to address the ground plan and public domain design has been provided and demonstrates further considered landscape response to internal amenity and communal spaces.

Wayfinding and Access

Similarly, further refinement of a clear wayfinding strategy from public street to internal street is recommended. The potential opportunity to introduce an internal street network that includes a shared zone would benefit access for the residents. The current proposal does not include this in the whole of site strategy and as such may be a missed opportunity to achieve a finer grain public domain strategy. The public domain and open space requires further detailed planning and options analysis to achieve a higher level of public domain amenity.

Additionally, it is noted there is a 20 metre break between the development and the buildings on the adjoining lot. Whilst this assists to relieve the impact of the development somewhat it is driven predominantly by the requirement for extensive driveway access to the underground car parks of both sites. This has the effect of lessening the gesture of open space and building separation.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal, however a simplified and more legible wayfinding strategy has been somewhat addressed in the scheme through the addition of the landscape plans.

Circulation

It is noted that the two linear blocks share a central vertical circulation core. Whilst there are efficiencies to this strategy it remains that as a Seniors development a more fine grain approach to building identity and individual address is appropriate for this type and scale of development. The current plan sets the lobbies/ circulation cores deep within the plan of each of the long linear blocks. Articulated as a small rebate in the facade this is less identifiable than providing a clear street address and entry sequence for the blocks. The location of lift lobbies should be clearly identifiable from central courtyards, streets or shared zones. Additionally, circulation cores and lobbies should have access to natural daylighting and cross ventilation. As a minimum, the two linear blocks should be scaled down to four smaller blocks with individual address and circulation core to each.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal. However, an additional lift is added and some corridor lengths shortened.

Amenity - solar and cross ventilation

Aspects of the proposal's planning regime requires further demonstration that principles of solar access and cross ventilation can be achieved. Double loaded corridors with single aspect apartments off a central corridor will find it difficult to achieve these principles. The south western corner accommodating the accessible housing does not demonstrate a high level of amenity with apartments in the least optimal zone of the site, particularly those facing directly west. For people with disabilities the location of these apartments present as the least desirable zone on the lot and could be viewed as discriminatory.

Principally, the dominant courtyard/perimeter block typology demonstrates various opportunities to bring majority of aspects back to the central piazza for all residents. This specifically goes to the comments regarding double loaded corridors vs double aspect apartments.

RESPONSE: The development is substantially the same as previous iterations of the proposal. Floor plate depths generally remain the same with double loaded corridors making it difficult to cross ventilate through apartments. Any breeze through fenestrations have a circuitous route to find exhaust and thus does not represent optimum outcomes for internal amenity.

Additionally it is noted in the Sustainability Report Amended version that Ventilation will be achieved through ventilation systems and outdoor air ducted through the development (pg. 17). It is recommended the DSAP Sustainability expert be afforded the review of the Sustainability Report provided by the applicant to ensure that what is proposed as recommended by the Sustainability Consultant to the applicant meets the experts recommendations.

The proposal is therefore unsupported.

Note: Should you have any concerns with the referral comments above, please discuss these with the Responsible Officer.

Recommended Heritage Advisor Conditions:

Nil.