

**Four Towns  
Planning**

*Planning and property consultant*

**WRITTEN REQUEST PURSUANT TO  
CLAUSE 4.6 OF WARRINGAH LOCAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2011**

**VARIATION OF A DEVELOPMENT  
STANDARD REGARDING HEIGHT OF  
BUILDINGS AS DETAILED IN CLAUSE  
4.3 OF THE WARRINGAH  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2011**

**Alterations and Additions to Existing  
Dwelling House, Swimming Pool and  
Associated Works**

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**This report has been prepared to support a Development Application under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.**

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**Report prepared for:**

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**21 May 2024**

***Disclaimer***

*This report has been prepared with due care and thoroughness by Four Towns Pty Ltd. The statements and opinions are given in good faith and in confidence that they are accurate and not misleading. In preparing this document, Four Towns Pty Ltd has relied upon information and documents provided by the Client or prepared by other Consultants. Four Towns Pty Ltd does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions in any of the material provided by other parties.*

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**Introduction**

This written request under Clause 4.3 of the Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011 (**WLEP 2011**) accompanies a Development Application seeking consent for additions and alterations to an existing dwelling house at 16 Lincoln Avenue, Collaroy.

The written request is made pursuant to Clause 4.6 WLEP 2011 and requests a variation to height of buildings as detailed under Clause 4.3 of Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011. Clause 4.3 of WLEP 2011 notes:

*(2) The height of a building on any land is not to exceed the maximum height shown for the land on the Height of Buildings Map.*

The site has a maximum building height provision of 8.5m. The proposal will result in a maximum height of 9.174m. It is noted that the breach is the result of the sloping nature of the site and the existing man-made changes, including the lower ground floor garage.

The proposed addition is reasonable within the context of the site and surrounding development and will not result in excessive bulk and scale. It is submitted that there is more than enough justification and precedence within the area to support the breach.

In this regard, it is requested Council support a variation with respect to compliance with the maximum height of buildings as described in Clause 4.3 of the WLEP 2011. The nature and extent of the contravention is as follows:

<b>Requirement</b>	8.5m
<b>Proposed</b>	9.174m
<b>Is the planning control in question a development standard?</b>	Yes
<b>Is the non-compliance with to the clause requirement a numerical/or performance based variation?</b>	Numerical
<b>If numerical enter a % variation to requirement</b>	7.9%

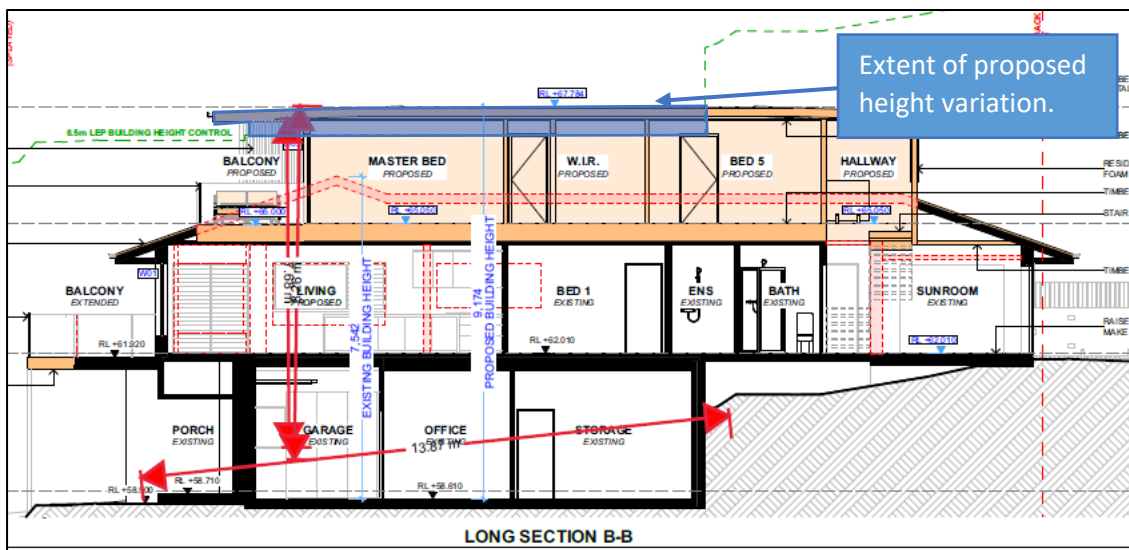


Figure 1: Extract from architectural plans shows the extent of the proposed variation.

## Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011 (WLEP 11)

### 2.1 Clause 2.2 and the Land Use Table

Clause 2.2 and the Land Zoning Map provide that the subject site is zoned R2 – Low Density Residential (the R2 zone) and the Land Use Table in Part 2 of WLEP 2011 specifies the following objectives for the R2 zone:

- ***To provide for the housing needs of the community within a low density residential environment***

Comment: The proposed additions and alterations to the existing dwelling will improve the quality and functionality of the existing dwelling house on the site and ensure high quality dwelling which contributes to the ongoing provision of housing in the Collaroy area.

- ***To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.***

Comment: The proposed additions to the dwelling will enhance the existing residential accommodation within the site and does not propose any other alternate land use.

- ***To ensure that low density residential environments are characterised by landscaped settings that are in harmony with the natural environment of Warringah.***

Comment: The proposal will maintain the established landscaped settings within Lincoln Avenue and will be visually pleasing when viewed from surrounding areas. The proposal will not involve the removal of any significant vegetation and maintains landscaped area within the front setback.

### 2.3 Clause 4.6 – Exceptions to Development Standards

Clause 4.6(1) WLEP 2011 provides:

(1) *The objectives of this clause are as follows:*

- (a) *to provide an appropriate degree of flexibility in applying certain development standards to particular development,*
- (b) *to achieve better outcomes for and from development by allowing flexibility in particular circumstances.*

The latest authority in relation to the operation of clause 4.6 is the decision of Chief Justice Preston in *Initial Action Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council* [2018] NSWLEC 118 (“*Initial Action*”). *Initial Action* involved an appeal pursuant to s56A of the Land & Environment Court Act 1979 against the decision of a Commissioner.

At [90] of *Initial Action* the Court held that:

*“In any event, cl 4.6 does not give substantive effect to the objectives of the clause in cl 4.6(1)(a) or (b). There is no provision that requires compliance with the objectives of the clause. In particular, neither cl 4.6(3) nor (4) expressly or impliedly requires that development that contravenes a development standard “achieve better outcomes for and from development”. If objective (b) was the*

*source of the Commissioner's test that non-compliant development should achieve a better environmental planning outcome for the site relative to a compliant development, the Commissioner was mistaken. Clause 4.6 does not impose that test."*

The legal consequence of the decision in *Initial Action* is that clause 4.6(1) is not an operational provision and that the remaining clauses of clause 4.6 constitute the operational provisions.

Clause 4.6(2) of WLEP 2011 provides:

*(2) Development consent may, subject to this clause, be granted for development even though the development would contravene a development standard imposed by this or any other environmental planning instrument. However, this clause does not apply to a development standard that is expressly excluded from the operation of this clause.*

Clause 4.3 is not excluded from the operation of clause 4.6 by clause 4.6(8) or any other clause of the WLEP 2011.

Clause 4.6(3) Of WLEP provides:

*(3) Development consent must not be granted for development that contravenes a development standard unless the consent authority has considered a written request from the applicant that seeks to justify the contravention of the development standard by demonstrating:*

- (a) that compliance with the development standard is unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances of the case, and*
- (b) that there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard.*

The proposed development does not comply with the prescribed height of buildings for residential accommodation in Zone R2, as prescribed under Clause 4.3 of the WLEP 2011, however strict compliance is unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances of this case and there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard. The relevant arguments are set out later in this written request.

### **3. Relevant Caselaw**

The grounds of objection are based upon the various tests of the recent judgements in the *NSW Land and Environment Court Case Wehbe v Pittwater Council (2007) 156 LGERA 446; [2007] NSWLEC 827, Initial Action Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council [2018] NSWLEC 118, Baron Corporation Pty Limited v Council of the City of Sydney [2019] NSWLEC 61, and RebelMH Neutral Bay Pty Limited v North Sydney Council [2019] NSWCA 130.*

The relevant steps identified in *Initial Action* (and the case law referred to in *Initial Action*) can be summarised as follows:

1. Is Clause 4.3 of WLEP 2011 a development standard?
2. Is the consent authority satisfied that this written request adequately addresses the matters required by clause 4.6(3) by demonstrating that:
  - (a) compliance is unreasonable or unnecessary; and

(b) there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard?

#### **4. Request for Variation**

##### **4.1 Is Clause 4.3 of WLEP 2011 a development standard?**

(a) The definition of “development standard” in clause 1.4 of the EP&A Act includes:

*“(c) the character, location, siting, bulk, scale, shape, size, height, density, design or external appearance of a building or work”*

*“(d) the cubic content or floor space of a building”*

(b) Clause 4.3 relates to the height of a building. Accordingly, Clause 4.3 is a development standard.

##### **4.2 Is compliance with Clause 4.3 unreasonable or unnecessary?**

This request relies upon the First method identified by Preston CJ in *Wehbe*. The first way in *Wehbe* is to establish that the objectives of the standard are achieved.

In determining a merit-based assessment of the landscaped area for the proposed development, due consideration has been given to the above objectives and the planning principles set by the Land and Environment Court of NSW, Planning Principle – floor space ratio (*Salanitro-Chafei V Ashfield Council* (2005) NSWLEC 366) and *Project Venture Developments v Pittwater Council* (2005) NSW LEC 91).

It is acknowledged that the purpose of Clause 4.6 is to provide an appropriate degree of flexibility in applying certain development standards. In this regard, site topography should be considered when assessing the proposed height of buildings for the site. Given the proposed application is relatively minor and consistent with the built form character of the area, Council’s assessment should be focused on this numerical allowance as opposed to the variation to the specific standard.

By providing flexibility the subject proposal is capable of achieving a better development and design outcome which adequately caters for enhanced housing options for the residential needs within the Northern Beaches LGA, in particular the Collaroy precinct.

#### **The First Method**

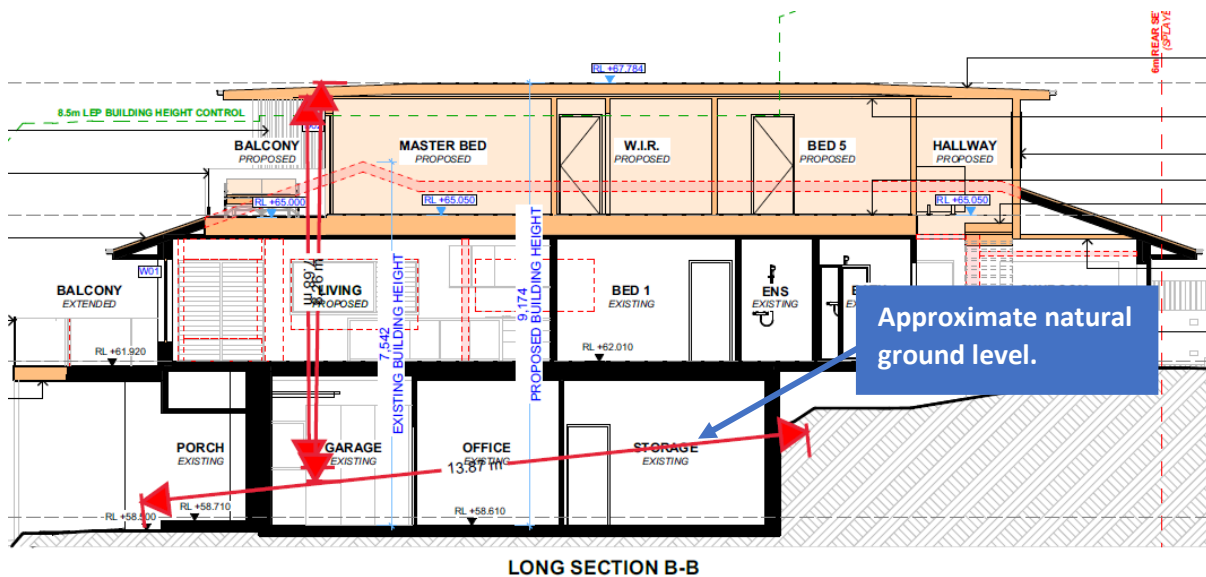
The proposal is consistent with the objectives of Clause 4.3, as outlined below:

*(a) to ensure that buildings are compatible with the height and scale of surrounding and nearby development,*

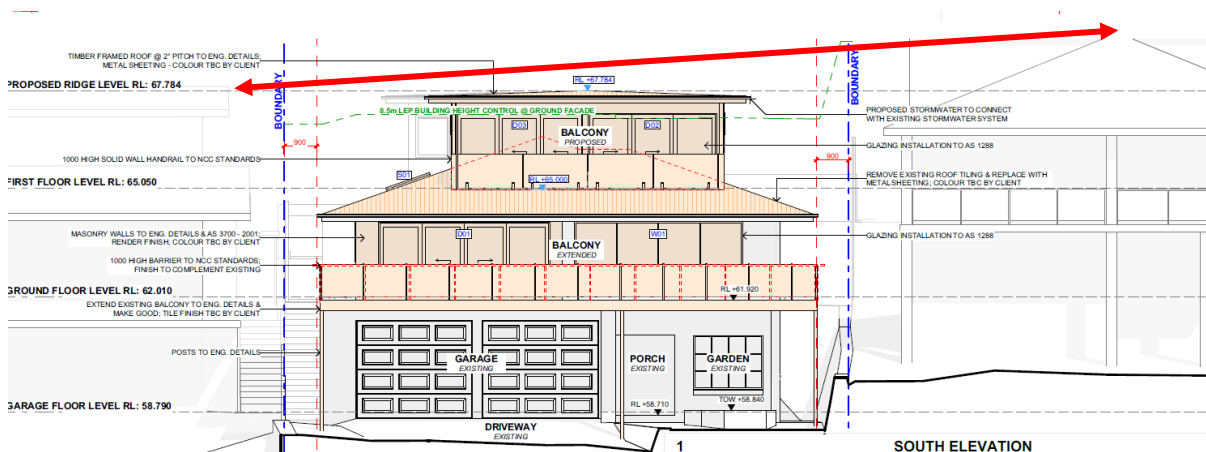
The proposed development is compatible with the height and scale of surrounding and nearby development. It is noted that notwithstanding the proposed breach to the building height, the proposal is below the maximum building height for the majority of the proposed dwelling and when you take into consideration the topography and man-made level changes existing on the site, the proposal would comply if the natural ground level was taken, as demonstrated by the extract from the architectural plans on the following page.

Notwithstanding the proposed breach to the building height, the proposal transitions between the maximum RLs of the adjoining neighbours, and the approval would not result in significant impacts

to the bulk and scale of Lincoln Avenue. It is important for Council to acknowledge the existing streetscape, particularly No. 14 and 18 Lincoln Avenue which is of a similar design, bulk and scale, noting the additional third level which is consistent with the proposed development.



The site currently is not compatible with the height and scale of surrounding and nearby development. Refer to the streetscape and visual analysis which outlines the bulk and scale and three storey nature of the northern side of Lincoln Avenue with building heights in excess of 9m. It is important for Council to recognise and acknowledge the existing streetscape of Lincoln Avenue and recent approvals with three storey dwelling houses built within the required front setback, three storeys in height over the maximum 8.5m height limit. Strict adherence for our site would impact the existing streetscape and create a dwelling that is out of character and not compatible with the locality. The excerpt below shows that the dwelling has been designed to flow and transition with the maximum heights approved for the adjoining dwellings at 14 and 18 Lincoln Avenue.



On the basis of the above, it is our professional opinion that the proposal meets objective (a).

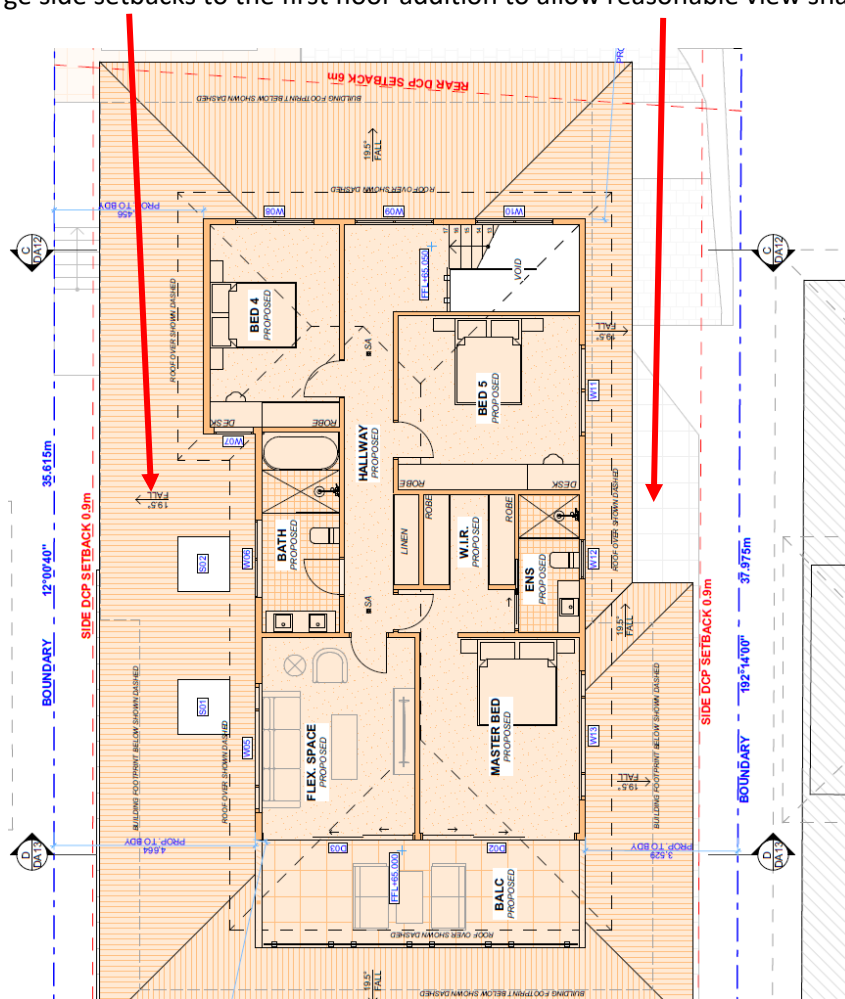
*(b) to minimise visual impact, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access,*

The proposal has been strategically designed by the project architect to have compliant and varying side setbacks and a near fully compliant boundary envelope. The proposal will not have a visual

impact, will not adversely disrupt views, will not increase privacy or amenity impacts and will not create an unreasonable loss of solar access.

The proposed height variation will not result in a loss of views with the rear of the dwelling which could impede views 2.6m-3m below the allowed 8.5m building height. The dwellings to the rear of the subject site, at 13 and 15 Norfolk Avenue may enjoy partial views to Dee Why Lagoon, as well as Dee Why Beach. The large side setbacks also create reasonable view corridors down the side of the development noting a 3.456m to 4.664m side setback to the western side and a 3.529m setback to the eastern side.

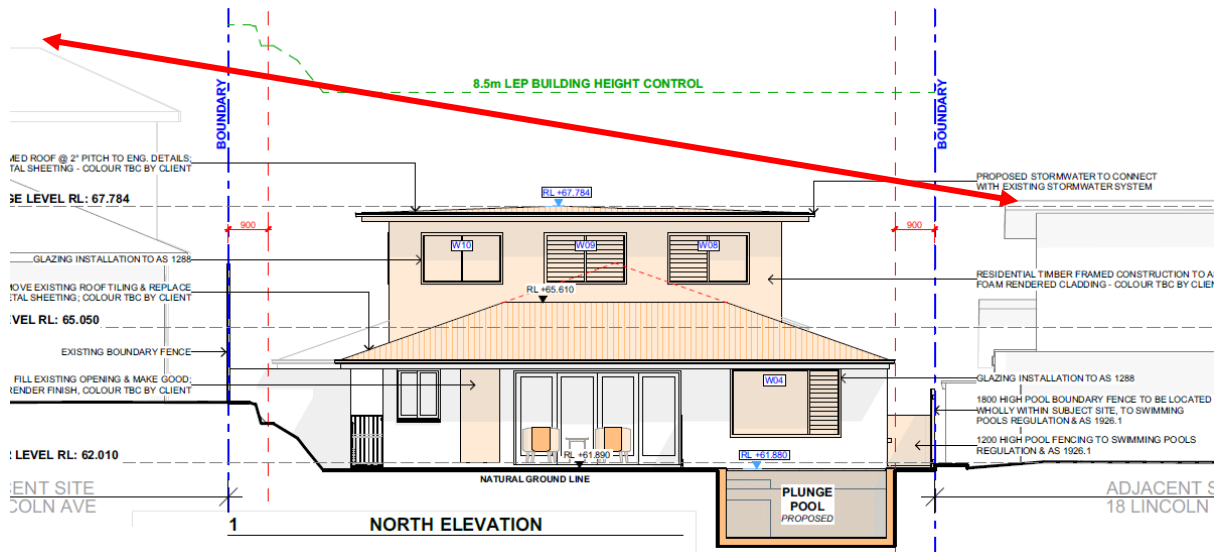
Large side setbacks to the first floor addition to allow reasonable view sharing



The excerpt below from the north elevation plan shows that the dwelling has been strategically designed to be consistent with the bulk and scale of the streetscape noting the three storey bulk and scale of adjoining properties. It is noted that my clients are within their rights to increase the dwelling to 8.5m at the rear of the dwelling which would have a far greater albeit compliant impact on the adjoining neighbours to the north. My clients have designed their dream home not only on their requirements, but also on the basis to ensure the future development potential of the adjoining neighbours.



## Alterations and Additions to Existing Dwelling House



The excerpt above shows that the design is respectful to the neighbouring bulk and scale whilst acknowledging views, privacy and amenity to adjoining properties. On the basis of the above, the proposal minimises visual impact, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access. This objective is met.

*(c) to minimise any adverse impact of development on the scenic quality of Warringah's coastal and bush environments,*

The project designers have strategically designed the proposal to integrate seamlessly into the existing streetscape of Lincoln Avenue which promotes facets of Warringah's coastal and bush environments through high quality finishes and design. This objective is met.

*(d) to manage the visual impact of development when viewed from public places such as parks and reserves, roads and community facilities.*

The proposed development will be of a similar scale to surrounding development with an appropriate height transition between adjoining properties. Accordingly, the visual impact of the development when viewed from public places is negligible. This objective is met.

The proposal is consistent with the stance Council has taken on developments along Lincoln Avenue and surrounding streets noting numerous approvals granted for variations to the building height control. Most notably Council recently approved a variation to the building height for premises 9 Lincoln Avenue. Other variation approvals include 4, 6 and 8 Lincoln Avenue and 20 Lancaster Crescent.

It is our professional opinion that the building by virtue of its height, bulk and scale, is consistent with the locality and desired character of the area. We have formed the considered opinion that the project is a sympathetic design and development with a bulk and scale consistent with the existing and future character of the area. The proposal is not offensive, or unsympathetic in a streetscape context nor the context from Lincoln Avenue, and therefore the building height as proposed, can be supported by Northern Beaches Council.

For the reasons outlined within this written request, the proposal will achieve the objectives of Clause 4.3 and accordingly, are of the view that the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the development standard.

#### 4.3 Are there sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard?

There are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard. Whilst there is no requirement that the development comply with the objectives set out in clause 4.6(1) it is relevant to note that objective (b) provides:

*“to achieve better outcomes **for and from** development by allowing flexibility in particular circumstances.”*

It should be noted at the outset that in *Initial Action* the Court held that it is incorrect to hold that the lack of adverse impact on adjoining properties is not a sufficient ground justifying the development contravening the development standard when one way of demonstrating consistency with the objectives of a development standard is to show a lack of adverse impacts.

There is an absence of environmental harm arising from the contravention and positive planning benefits arising from the proposed development as outlined in detail above. From a planning perspective, there is sufficient grounds to justify the variation to the height of buildings development standard for the following reasons:

1. Historical excavation and site disturbance
2. Topography of the site
3. Characterisation of the development
4. Streetscape Appearance
  - The sites topography and existing man-made excavation of the garage level distorts the height plane for the site. If the natural ground level was taken, the proposal would comply with the building height control.
  - The proposed alterations and additions respond to the desired future character of the locality as depicted by the built form controls outlined in the Warringah DCP. Furthermore, the subject dwelling will continue to integrate into the existing streetscape and pattern of development within Lincoln Avenue with a transition between the existing maximum heights of 14 and 18 Lincoln Avenue.
  - The development does not result in any unnecessary or undue bulk or visual impacts on adjoining properties and is of a scale that is compatible with the existing and surrounding buildings. The streetscape analysis completed within the Statement of Environmental Effects notes numerous recent approvals with a variation to the building height and the immediate properties are all three storey's in height, apart from 12 Lincoln which is ripe for redevelopment and not consistent with the changing character of the street.
  - The amenity impacts to neighbouring residential properties, arising from the non-compliant building height, is negligible. Adjoining properties will continue to receive suitable solar access, privacy impacts are suitably minimised, and views are reasonably maintained.
  - The building height breach is minor and relates to only a small portion of the proposed addition only (Refer Figure 1), which will largely be indiscernible when viewed from Lincoln Avenue. It is important to acknowledge that the rear component will comply by 2.6m-3m, therefore well under allowable height.
  - The proposal is consistent with the stance Council has taken on developments along Lincoln Avenue and surrounding streets noting numerous approvals granted for variations to the

building height control. Most notably Council recently approved a variation to the building height for premises 9 Lincoln Avenue. Other variation approvals include 4, 6 and 8 Lincoln Avenue and 20 Lancaster Crescent.

Having regard to *Initial Action Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council* [2018] NSWLEC 118, and further to the proposal's consistency with the above strategic and statutory environmental planning provisions, the proposal is consistent with the following objectives under Section 1.3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act):

*(c) to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land; and  
(g) to promote good design and amenity of the built environment,*

1. In response to (c), the proposal will facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of the land in a manner that is desired by the planning controls because it will facilitate the revitalisation of the dwelling that is functional. In considering the contrary (refusal of the DA), retention of the building in its current form would not promote the orderly and economic use and development of land in the manner that council's strategic and statutory planning provisions seek. Retention of the building in its current form makes no advancement towards achieving the goal of creating functional development opportunities.

2. In response to (g) the proposal has been designed to promote good design and amenity of the built environment, with a consistent built form retained for Lincoln Avenue.

As outlined above, it is considered that in many respects, the proposal will provide for a better planning outcome than a strictly compliant development. At the very least, there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard.

Based on the above, it has been demonstrated that there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify the proposed height of buildings non-compliance in this instance.

## **5 Conclusion**

Pursuant to clause 4.6(3), the consent authority is satisfied that the applicant's written request has adequately addressed the matters required to be demonstrated by subclause (3) being:

*(a) that compliance with the development standard is unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances of the case, and  
(b) that there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard.*

As such, I have formed the highly considered opinion that there is no statutory or environmental planning impediment to the granting of a height of buildings variation in this instance.