

James de Soyres & Associates Pty Ltd  
Nominated Architect: James de Soyres NSW reg #6769  
PO Box 657, Newport Beach, NSW 2106  
T: 02 9979 1823 / E: contact@jdesa.com.au / W: www.jdesa.com.au

Our reference: 1912

11 December 2020

Northern Beaches Council  
PO Box 82  
Manly, NSW 1655

Attention: Anne-Marie Young

Dear Sirs

**Project: 11 Bruce Street, Mona Vale, NSW 2103 – DA2020/1289**  
**Subject: Additional Information regarding the Engineering Referral Response / Driveway Access**

We refer to our recent communication with you regarding the Engineering Referral Response to this development application dated 08/12/2020 which made comments regarding the proposed stormwater disposal and driveway access. This letter addresses the issues of driveway access only. The matter of the stormwater disposal location issue will be addressed separately following the return of the project stormwater engineer from leave next week.

The engineering referral response includes the following comments:

*“The proposed elevated driveway in the road reserve is not supported. The proposed driveway profile is inconsistent with the adjacent driveways in Bruce Street. The slab level at the boundary is significantly higher than the existing ground level which raises safety concerns for pedestrian and cannot be supported. It is recommended that a low level driveway profile be utilized similar to the adjacent driveways. The driveway profiles must be in accordance with one of Council's standard profiles. The road reserve adjoining the new crossing is to include maximum batters of 1 in 6 and the boundary levels to the adjacent properties in either side must match the existing levels.”*

We make the following comments:

1. We have added a shaded outline of a driveway profile that conforms to Northern Beaches Council's standard “Extra Low” profile to our Section A-A. This shows that by utilizing the “Extra Low” profile as requested, the driveway will be more than 1.1m above ground level at the boundary and higher above the existing ground level closer to the street (the pedestrian zone) than the original proposed driveway which conforms to Northern Beaches Council's standard “Normal” profile.
  - Refer to our drawing 1912 DA-30 A Sections A-A and B-B
2. Changing the driveway profile as requested will not improve pedestrian safety but would most likely have a negative impact in this regard. The 1.5m wide strip of road reserve closest to the street has the least cross-fall but it still slopes at between 1:5.2

and 1:5.6. Below this the cross-fall increases to around 1:4 making it an unlikely pedestrian thoroughfare so the risk to pedestrians is minimal.

3. We noted in our letter of 16 November 2020 that adherence to the "Extra Low" profile would require the garage floor level to be located approximately 0.89m above the main floor level of the proposal as submitted. This would drive the floor above to be elevated by a similar amount which would increase the height of the development as a whole.
4. The proposed driveway is consistent with the driveway of the adjacent property immediately to the North at 13 Bruce Street and the properties at 7 and 5 Bruce Street just to the South. All of these driveways are nearly level with the street and in the case of the three existing developments, the ground level between the street and the property boundary has also been filled to make it almost level. All three existing developments have the garage located on the highest level of the building and the main floor level located below and accessed by steps down from street level. This is exactly the arrangement proposed for 11 Bruce Street.

The property at 9 Bruce Street which lies immediately to the South of the proposed development has a different arrangement with a driveway that appears to follow the ground level. Careful observation however shows that the land between the property boundary and the street has been partially filled to bring it up to the driveway level and the driveway has no discernible hump as is required by Northern Beaches Council's current driveway profiles. Adding this hump to make the driveway comply with current standards would make it significantly higher and elevated above the current modified ground levels.

As noted in point 1 above, a driveway complying with any of the current Council standard driveway profiles cannot stay close to the existing ground levels across the road reserve and the construction of an elevated driveway is inescapable and inconsistency with neighbouring low-level driveways unavoidable.

For the reason of overall building height outlined above, the proposed arrangement with a sunken ground floor level with garage above offers a significantly better outcome than a half elevated garage with another storey on top.

5. The existing slope of the road reserve varies between 1:3.7 and 1:5.6 which is steeper than the 1:6 maximum batter proposed by the development engineers. We have amended the proposed ground levels adjacent to the street to include batters at max 1:6 slope to provide a transition between the existing ground levels and the proposed driveway for a strip 1.5m wide from the street edge. This provides for a smooth pedestrian crossing of the driveway along this edge. If the "Extra Low" profile were to be used, there would be similar, but slightly larger batters required.

We have shown the proposed batters on these amended drawings:

- 1912 DA-07 A 3D Renders and Finishes Schedule
  - 1912 DA-12 A Garage Floor Plan
  - 1912 DA-21 A North and South Elevations
6. There is no proposal to amend the ground levels in the road reserve adjacent to the property boundaries.

## **Pre-lodgement Meeting Advice**

We refer back to the pre-lodgement meeting for this project held on 18 June 2020 where an earlier proposal was discussed which included modified ground levels in the reserve reflecting the existing treatment at 5, 7 and 13 Bruce Street. We understand that despite what we see as the advantages to the public realm of this arrangement the Council's engineers were not supportive of the alteration of the ground levels. The proposal which is now before you was amended to comply with the engineering advice to minimise retaining walls in the road reserve (there are none) and reduce the extent of filling (none is proposed other than the batters now requested by the engineers).

The pre-lodgement engineering advice also suggested that the driveway design be modified to be more consistent with those neighbours with low-level driveways. As noted above, the proposal is consistent with 5, 7 and 13 Bruce Street and consistency with the other neighbours whilst complying with current standards is unachievable and to try to do so would have a negative effect on the amenity for all.

## **Conclusion**

We trust our response to the Engineering Referral Response regarding the driveway access addresses the issues raised and will inform a reconsideration of the advice. We also trust that the information provided is sufficiently clear but would welcome the opportunity for a meeting on site with the engineers should that be necessary.

We will respond as soon as possible to the Engineering Referral Response on the matter of stormwater disposal.

Yours faithfully

James de Soyres  
**James de Soyres & Associates** Pty Ltd

cc: B Hastie and C Handley

Encs: 1912 DA-07 A 3D Renders and Finishes Schedule  
1912 DA-12 A Garage Floor Plan  
1912 DA-21 A North and South Elevations  
1912 DA-30 A Sections A-A and B-B

## APPENDIX 1 – PHOTOGRAPHS OF ADJACENT DRIVEWAYS



13 Bruce Street. Note that the garage is elevated, the driveway is almost level and that the ground levels have been filled between the property boundary and the street on the southern side of the crossover.





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9 Bruce Street. Note that the crossover and driveway appear to follow the ground levels, however those ground levels have been altered by partial filling between the property boundary and the street.

Also note the absence of a discernible hump as is required by the current Northern Beaches Council driveway profiles.





7 Bruce Street. Note that the garage is elevated, the driveway is almost level and that the ground levels have been filled between the property boundary and the street.

Also note the stair handrail just visible on the left hand side of the driveway within the property which leads down to the main floor of the house and natural ground level.



5 Bruce Street. Note that the garage is elevated, the driveway is almost level and that the ground levels have been filled between the property boundary and the street.

Also note the stair handrail on the right hand side of the driveway within the property which leads down to the main floor at natural ground level.