

Clause 4.6 Justification

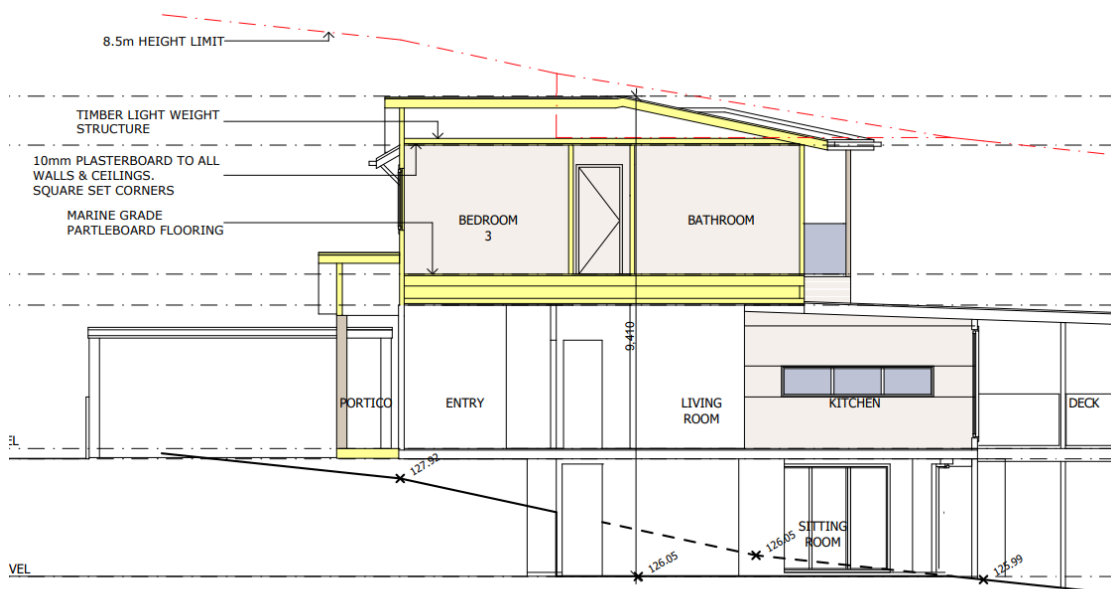
No 13 Mary Street, Beacon Hill

Introduction - Content of the clause 4.6 request

Clause 4.3 of the Warringah LEP 2011 relates to Building height. The maximum permissible building height for the subject site is 8.5m.

The proposed development has a non-compliant building height more than the maximum permissible height standard for a small portion of the roof by a maximum of approximately 0.91m. Accordingly the proposal relates to a maximum building height of 9.41 being a departure of approximately 10.7%.

Given the above non-compliance with clause 4.3 of the LEP, consideration of the matter is given pursuant to the provisions of clause 4.6 of the LEP. The variation to the height control occurs along the southern elevation at the rear of the dwelling and is due to the fall in the land towards the rear and the existing under building area.



SECTION A-A

The objectives of clause 4.6 of the LEP 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.

Clause 4.6 of the LEP notably is designed to provide **flexibility when applying development standards particularly when the variation of the standard enables a better development outcome.**

The proposed increase in building height arrives owing to the change in levels along the allotment and the benched nature of the specific building zones down the width and slope of the site. A recent L&E Court case, *Merman Investments Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council [2021] NSWLEC 1582* states that *the existing ground level on a brownfield site must be taken from the excavated ground level below the previous natural contours of the site.* Accordingly, an exaggerated building height eventuates.

A degree of flexibility to the application of the building height development standard is warranted in this instance.

The breach in the building height arises because of an existing excavated lower floor level at the rear of the dwelling and the slope in the land. Should the measurement of building height relate to the external ground level around the dwelling, compliance would be achieved.

The existing dwelling is structurally sound and retains quality usable floor space. The location of the upper level as proposed is logical and appropriately relates to the street, rear yard, neighbouring dwelling circumstances and the slope of the land down the allotment. The proposed upper level has been sited forward of the dwelling to minimise impacts and the extent of the building height breach.

Clause 4.6 of the instrument provides flexibility when applying development standards.

The proposed development has been architecturally designed to provide a well composed building that provides improved amenity for future occupants, while respecting the amenity of existing neighbouring properties.

The proposal is consistent with the built form in the locality, which includes some large dwellings.

No adverse planning consequences (privacy, visual impact, urban design/streetscape, heritage, neighbourhood character) arise from the variation with the proposed development sitting comfortably on-site within the required setbacks. Rather, in this case the variation facilitates a good design outcome in terms of amenity, streetscape and built form.

A compliant low roof profile with the relevant Australian Standard has been applied in this instance and standard floor to ceiling heights are provided.

For reasons expressed in this submission the ‘flexibility’ provided by clause 4.6 of the LEP facilitates design outcome that does not impact on any adjoining property despite the proposed variation to the building height standard.

(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.

Comment:

The height development standard is not expressly excluded from the operation of clause 4.6.

(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.

Objectives of development standard

The objectives of the height control development standard are:

- (a) to ensure that buildings are compatible with the height and scale of surrounding and nearby development,*
- (b) to minimise visual impact, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access,*

- (c) to minimise any adverse impact of development on the scenic quality of Warringah's coastal and bush environments,*
- (d) to manage the visual impact of development when viewed from public places such as parks and reserves, roads and community facilities.*

The subject site is zoned to accommodate low density residential development and the immediate precinct contains dwellings built on similar sized lots which contain similarly scaled 2 and 3 level dwellings. The proposed dwelling additions are proportionate with its site boundaries.

There will be no significant disruption of views, loss of privacy or loss of solar access given the site context and the design initiatives that have been incorporated into the upper level.

There will be no erosion of bushland or scenic quality.

Compliance unnecessary

The proposed development proffers an alternative means of achieving the objective of the minimum building height standard. The surrounding precinct maintains sloping land and regular detached dwellings in the zone. Pitched roofs are common in the precinct.

The proposed development achieves the desired residential character without comprising the amenity of the surrounding dwellings in terms of visual impacts and solar access. A low-pitched roof is proposed in this instance to further assist in minimising the building height encroachment.

The exceedance of the building height standard is effectively a technical non-compliance. The existing lower level of the dwelling exists within an excavated portion of the site and is not visible from the street. A typical two store dwelling is presented to the street. The proposed dwelling will not result in a building that is excessively bulky.

The non-compliance will not give rise to adverse impacts, which would adversely affect neighbouring dwellings.

As the development proffers alternative means of achieving the objectives of clause 4.3 based on the site context, strict compliance is unnecessary.

Compliance unreasonable

There would be no purpose served if strict compliance was required by the consent authority.

As will be detailed in subsequent parts of this request the variation does not manifest in any adverse planning consequences in terms of streetscape, neighbourhood character or amenity (overshadowing and privacy). There are no adverse ‘flow on’ non compliances or adverse environmental impacts arising from the variation in this instance.

The proposed dwelling addition is effectively compliant in terms of building height when measured to existing ground levels external of the dwelling.

Despite the building height variation, a typical floor space ratio is achieved facilitating the orderly and economic development of the land.

No particular benefit would be derived from the application of the standard in this instance (rather compliance would result in negative urban design outcomes); strict compliance is therefore unreasonable.

Environmental planning grounds

It is necessary to demonstrate that there are sufficient environmental planning grounds to justify contravening the development standard (cl 4.6(3)(b)).

The term “environmental planning grounds” is broad and encompasses wide environmental planning grounds beyond the mere absence of environmental harm or impacts : Tuor C in *Glenayr Avenue Pty Ltd v Waverley Council* [2013] NSWLEC 125 at [50].

In *Four2Five Pty Ltd v Ashfield Council* [2015] NSWLEC 1008, Pearson C held at [60] that environmental planning grounds as identified in cl 4.6 must be particular to the circumstances of the proposed development on a site. This finding was not disturbed on appeal (Pain J in *Four2Five Pty Ltd v Ashfield Council* [2015] NSWLEC 90 & Meaher JA; Leeming JA in *Four2Five Pty Ltd v Ashfield Council* [2015] NSWCA 248.

Such grounds include matters that ‘relate to (the) subject matter, scope and purpose of the Act, including the objects in s 1.3.’^[14] This leaves developers with a wide range of grounds on which they can rely to justify a 4.6 request,

including, for example, that the variation will promote good design and amenity, will allow for the orderly and economic development of land or that it will promote ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations.

The extent of departure from the building height is effectively a technical breach given that building height is measured from an existing excavated lower level of the dwelling. Should the building height be measured to the external ground level, compliance is achieved.

Despite the above, strict compliance with the building height control in this instance would not achieve any additional architectural integrity or urban design merit of the development.

The proposal has been appropriately sited over the existing dwelling footprint and forward on the site to minimise impacts. The proposal represents the orderly and economic development of the land and does not give rise to adverse amenity issues to neighbours.

The variation will promote good design and internal amenity by providing a conventional finish to the front elevation and a typical 2 storey elevation to the street. There are no adverse economic, environmental or social impacts arising.

Having regard to the above there are well founded environmental planning grounds to vary the development standard in this instance.

(4) Development consent must not be granted for development that contravenes a development standard unless—

(a) the consent authority is satisfied that—

(i) the applicant's written request has adequately addressed the matters required to be demonstrated by subclause (3), and

(ii) the proposed development will be in the public interest because it is consistent with the objectives of the particular standard and the objectives for development within the zone in which the development is proposed to be carried out, and

(b) the concurrence of the Planning Secretary has been obtained.

The objectives of the R2 low density zone are:

- *To provide for the housing needs of the community within a low density residential environment.*
- *To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.*
- *To ensure that low density residential environments are characterised by landscaped settings that are in harmony with the natural environment of Warringah.*

Comment:

The matters required to be demonstrated by subclause (3) have been adequately addressed.

The proposed development will be in the public interest because it is consistent with the objective of the standard and the objectives for development within the zone in which the development is proposed to be carried out.

The proposed development provides for the construction of a standard and well-proportioned upper-level addition and a vast improvement to the built form on-site. Being site specifically designed, the development will positively contribute to the streetscape.

The proposed development is consistent with the desired future character of the locality as it is consistent with the built form character of the precinct.

The proposed development provides an appropriate low-density infill development and contemporary construction.

The proposed height variation is of no consequence in respect of the objectives. Approval of the proposed development will have no adverse impact on any other nearby development opportunities.

The proposed height encroachment does not result in any significant view loss, loss of privacy or overshadowing in the context of the site.

There is no adverse heritage impacts associated with the proposed development.

Standard floor to ceiling height is proposed over two levels inclusive of a standard roof pitch. Having regard to the above the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the height control and the objectives of the zone.

The proposed variation does not raise any matter of significance for State or regional environmental planning.

There is no public benefit that would be achieved by maintaining the development standard or compromised by approving the building as proposed.

Conclusion

No adverse matters arise in respect of the above considerations.

In view of the above, the proposed variation from the development standard is reasonable in this instance. The proposed development is consistent in terms of built form with other dwellings in the vicinity and appropriately addressing site circumstances.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'N' and a stylized 'W'.

Prepared by: Nigel White
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November 2024