

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 22 July 2021

1 DA2021/0545 – 8 Lady Penrhyn Dr. BEACON HILL

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General; Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The proposal is for ten (10) additional independent living units (ILU) within an existing development complex for 'older people or people with disabilities', currently approved as a development for 34 units, a community centre and ancillary site works.

The proposal is in the 'deferred area' of the Warringah LEP 2000 and in the B2 Oxford Falls Valley Locality.

The Panel notes that housing for older people or people with disabilities ('aged / disabled persons') is permitted adjacent to "urban land" that borders the B2 Oxford Falls Valley Locality.

The Panel's principal charter is related to the design quality of development, not its permissibility.

The design quality is related to its relationship to neighbours (in this case primarily the existing dwellings on the site), relationship to them and any adverse impacts, relationship to the public domain, and where the desired future character of the area has been articulated, how the design responds to, and fits with the desired future character, and the internal and external amenity of the design for occupants and visitors.

The Panel has been briefed by council officers about the context and the history of the development.

Although it has not been possible to visit the site, due to COVID restrictions, the architectural drawings, Google street-view, and most importantly the images of the existing development that are part of the landscape set of drawings has provided a good understanding of the existing development and site conditions, despite there being no supporting site analysis being provided.

For future reference the applicant should note that the Panel considers a thorough site analysis to be an **essential part of any design presentation and DA documentation**.

A thorough site analysis is required by cl 22 WLEP 2000:

Consent must not be granted for any development, except complying development, involving the erection of, or additions to, a building, or the subdivision of land unless the consent authority has considered a site analysis.

Appendix 1) of the Apartment Design Guide provides a good indication of what is required in a site analysis and the Panel expects the analysis to clearly demonstrate how the design has taken into account the constraints and opportunities of the site, not simply describe climatic and topographic conditions etc.

This is also specifically required by the WLEP2000:

A site analysis should be accompanied by a written statement explaining how the design of the proposed development responds to the site analysis, and the relevant general principles of development control in Part 4 and the Locality Statement.

This is a very significant omission in the documentation provide to the Panel.

Additionally, there is no clarity on the successive changes that have been made since the original approval, and exactly what building (siting and forms) and landscaping is currently approved. Noting that the site works are yet to be completed. This lack of clarity makes any assessment extremely difficult impossible.

Desired future character

The 'deferred lands' has a 'bushland character'. The desired future character is worth reiterating in full:

The WLEP 2000 requires that Council be satisfied that the development is consistent with the desired future character (DFC) prior to granting consent. Of relevance to the building design, the DFC for the locality requires:

The present character of the Oxford Falls Valley locality will remain unchanged except in circumstances specifically addressed as follows.

Future development will be limited to new detached style housing conforming with the housing density standards set out below and low intensity, low impact uses.

It is not clear to the Panel how the existing development is consistent with this desired 'future character' which does not resemble 'detached style housing' in any respect. There are many examples of single storey ILUs around Sydney, the existing development more closely resembles 'residential flat buildings'

There will be no new development on ridgetops or in places that will disrupt the skyline when viewed from Narrabeen Lagoon and the Wakehurst Parkway.

N/A

The natural landscape including landforms and vegetation will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

It is not clear to the Panel how the proposed development achieves this based on the cumulative impacts from the existing development and how this responds to the original development passing this test.

Buildings will be located and grouped in areas that will minimise disturbance of vegetation and landforms whether as a result of the buildings themselves or the associated works including access roads and services.

It appears that the entire site within the mandatory setbacks has been razed. The proposal continues this erasure, removes all existing vegetation, and provides a very low proportion of deep soil. Additionally, the introduced landscaping does not seem to have any relationship to the existing or originally approved conditions.

Buildings which are designed to blend with the colours and textures of the natural landscape will be strongly encouraged.

Council has provided the Panel with the material palette of the original approved DA. This does not appear to have been adhered to, and the justification for these changes that have significantly reduced the quality of the design, has not been provided.

A dense bushland buffer will be retained or established along Forest Way and Wakehurst Parkway. Fencing is not to detract from the landscaped vista of the streetscape.

N/A

Development in the locality will not create siltation or pollution of Narrabeen Lagoon and its catchment and will ensure that ecological values of natural watercourses are maintained.



N/A

Recommendation

It has not been demonstrated to the Panel-how, in the context the Desired Future Character, the proposed works which further erode the landscape setting, rather than enhance it, from the original application.

Scale, built form and articulation

The scale is not consistent with the desired future character specifically 'detached housing' that is almost without exception in Sydney a maximum of 2 storeys – the proposal has a 3 storey form and presentation to the majority of the access ways and approaches.

The built form has been determined entirely by conforming with the absolute minimum setbacks required.

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.

Landscape

Buildings are proposed to be built right up against and cut back to align with the setback, and opens onto landscaping that includes unspecified evergreen trees, which are not part of the desired future character. This results in poor design outcomes and indicates over development.

Site calculations for landscape seem to rely on the setbacks. However, these are not usable spaces for residents as they are inaccessible and are to be designed as screening. While providing outlook, this is not able to utilise the required landscape to its full positive effect.

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.

Access

Accessibility around the site is not provided except via contorted routes along linear concrete driveways and through other buildings. The only lobby accessibility is either via stairs or through car parks. This is not acceptable.

Comfortable, accessible, and pleasant pedestrian access for the new residents to the community centre and wider landscaping is required.

The applicant suggested in the presentation that the driveways would be 'convivial meeting places for residents to interact' or words to that effect. This is not evident in the existing development where the 'shared' ways provide very little amenity, are designed solely for the movement of vehicles, do not include well designed landscaping, and are very unlikely to ever be used as gathering or meeting spaces.

The proposal removes the approved curved driveway and an extension of the northern driveway into the basement carparking of Block A1. This curved driveway would retain the more direct access to the basement parking for Block A1, and could remove the need for the northern driveway which will further

decimate the existing landscaping and natural rocks features of the site and cause unnecessary and negative impacts on the apartments of blocks A1 and B1 which look out to the north.

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.

Amenity

The amenity of the proposed dwellings is poor. They have with pitiable outlook, orientation, and little solar access for a number of the dwellings. The larger sections of the balconies are off the bedrooms rather than the living rooms. In addition, they reduce the amenity and outlook of existing dwellings on the site.

Driveways are immediately adjacent to bedrooms with little opportunity for screening

The built form that has been determined entirely by conforming with the absolute minimum setbacks required, means the lower level units have very little outlook, or look directly at other buildings or onto unshaded drive ways. The upper level units' views to the east will be dominated by the roofs of the units below.

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

Refer to previous comments. The panel notes that the materials, composition, cladding, roof forms and external shading devices in the original DA attempted and were reasonably successful in responding to the bushland setting and achieving the 'desired future character'. The current built form and proposal has none of these qualities or characteristics.

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.

Sustainability

No sustainability measures in excess of minimum compliance have been included. Any additional apartments would require reasonable passive design initiatives (such as north facing living rooms) and sustainability initiatives (such as total electrification of the apartment and rooftop PV panels for onsite renewable energy production).

Recommendation

The panel does not make any recommendations because suggestions for improvements would infer that that the proposal could be supported; it cannot.



PANEL CONCLUSION

The existing buildings bear little resemblance to the original approved DA and shown on drawings dated 19-06-2009 provided to the Panel for reference.

It is not clear to the panel how the original DA met or was consistent with the 'desired future character' of the area.

The Panel notes that the existing development is significantly different to that originally approved in terms of quality of materials, architectural detailing, environmental controls and built form that were more sympathetic to the bushland setting. The proposal intends to extend the unsympathetic forms and materials.

The Panel cannot see any benefit or justification for any additional development on the site beyond what has already been approved, which has already been increased since the initial approval.

The Panel does not support the proposal for any additional development on the site, and would be very unlikely to given its lack of design quality, its inability to demonstrate qualities consistent with the "desired future character" of the area, and the impact it would have on the existing residential accommodation.