



Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 26 May 2022

3 - DA2022 0456 - 62 Myoora Road TERREY HILLS

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The proposal was presented to the Panel as a Pre-DA at the meeting of 26 August 2021.

The following comments were made by the DSAP on the proposal:

- *Unsupportive of design in its current form.*
- *The Panel does not support a design approach driven primarily by a business model resulting in an overdevelopment of the site.*
- *Design presents intensity of development without adequate landscaping, screening and tree planting and is not within accordance of the objectives of the RU4 zone and DCP irrespective of the permissibility of the land use itself.*
- *The Panel greatly appreciates the proponent attending a pre-DA that has allowed major issues and challenges to be identified.*
- *The Panel notes the access from Mona Vale Road is unresolved and could require a significant reconfiguration of the planning and site layout.*

Relatively minor modifications have been made to the design, but the essential issue remains the same, that is that the proposal represents an over-development of the site, resulting in numerous non-compliances for which no justification has been provided.

No details of the existing areas have been provided in the documentation, and there is a mix of indoor/outdoor, covered, shaded and open sales areas that make any direct comparisons difficult.

Nevertheless, it would appear the proposal is to increase the NLA from about 2,400 sqm to 6,475 sqm. (SEE p13) and this is what has driven the increase in car parking from 127 to 382 spaces

Several recommendations have been incorporated into the revised design. These include:

- The reduction in the size of the 'pylon signage'.
- Removal of carparking from within the front setback area to Mona Vale Road

Overall, the Panel still considers the proposal to be an over-development of the site, irrespective of the permissibility of the proposed uses with an intensity of use that is not in keeping with the objectives of the RU4 zone:

- *To maintain and enhance the natural landscape including landform and vegetation.*
- *To ensure low intensity of land use other than land uses that are primary industry enterprises.*
- *To maintain the rural and scenic character of the land.*

In other words, while Schedule 1 (18) of the WLEP 2011 permits the Additional Permitted Use (APU) of the land for "garden centres and restaurants or cafes" any proposal for these should also achieve these other objectives and the built form controls, site coverage and landscape controls in the DCP have been formulated to achieve these objectives.

It is noted that the number of car spaces exceeds that required by 80 spaces that has the effect of pushing the development and buildings out towards the boundaries and leaves little space within the site for deep soil planting.

At the previous meeting the proponent indicated that the re-arrangement was in accordance with the 'formula' that has been developed at other Flower Power outlets. However, the Panel remains of the view



that these outlets vary considerably from place to place and that it should be possible to develop a design that is more sympathetic to the aims of the DCP and the RU4 zoning.

The Panel also suggested that the proposal should aim to present as a 'nursery' or 'botanical garden' and consider reducing the overall amount of building and increasing the landscaped area including trees in the parking area and throughout the site. This is not evident in the revised scheme with extensive areas of unshaded car park.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

Refer to comments previously made at the meeting of 26 August 2021. The following recommendations are still applicable.

Recommendations.

1. Consider developing the site to present as a 'nursery' or 'botanical garden' with screen planting along the entire boundary.
2. Signage on the building is unnecessary and not in keeping with the RU4 zone. Presumably people will be quite aware they are at "Flower Power" having driven onto the site. The applicant's attention is drawn to WDCP2011 D23 Signs that specifically refer to Mona Vale Road and Myoora Road:

For Land in the RU4 zone with frontage to both Mona Vale Road and Myoora Road: Only small, non-obtrusive and non-illuminated signs that identify the use of a site are to be visible from Mona Vale Road. Signs that are designed of such size, height or visual appearance so as to attract passing trade are not considered appropriate and are discouraged. All signs are to be in keeping with the colour and textures of the natural landscape.

Scale, built form and articulation

Previously the Panel recommended a setback of 10m from Cooyong Road to facilitate the development of a landscaped area and minimise the impact of the long unbroken building façade. This is shown in the amended design however the service and work area and 'pot sales' area is only set back by 5.150m and 0.0m from Myoora

The Panel recognises that efforts have been made to lower the car park and to provide a buffer alongside the main building.

Panel supports the redesign of the main building and roof form.

No justifications have been provided for reduced setbacks. (Refer to SEE p22 and 23)

No justifications or calculations have been provided for the reduced landscaped area from 70% to 28% up from 11%

The Panel does not agree that the proposal's

"site is dominated by plants and trees and creates a lushy landscaped space" (SEE p23)

Recommendations.

3. All structures and high walls (up to 3.4m high in places) should be set back 7.5 m from Cooyong and Myoora Road in conformity with the WDCP 2011.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The Panel notes the removal of car parking from the front set back area to Mona Vale Road.

The Panel also notes the over provision of carparking by 80 spaces and has reviewed the Traffic and Parking report. This report shows that there is ample parking for the garden centre function at both Thursday and Saturday peak periods. (p12)

The report notes:



"Parking provision for auxiliary facilities associated with a plant nursery are not included in these figures. Refer to appropriate guidelines for parking provision rates of auxiliary facilities with appropriate allowance for dual or complementary use"

This is then used as an argument for higher parking provision related to the amount of 'ancillary uses' that are part of the 'Flower Power Business Model'.

The SEE states:

"Further, the existing Terry Hills site has insufficient carparking to meet the needs of the existing customers, so the proposal seeks to overcome this issue by providing additional car parking."

This statement would appear to be at odds with the Traffic and Parking report that shows abundant parking during peaks (p12)

The reason the Panel is interested in the car parking rates is twofold:

- Firstly, the overall objectives for the area set out in the WLEP2011 in relation to landscape and the impact the parking has on the site.
- Secondly the rationale for the car parking rates having been generated by the amount of the 'auxiliary' uses that form part of the 'Flower Power business model' which is not a justification for the amount or intensity of use on the site

The use of the term 'auxiliary' by the RTA is not consistent with EPAA terminology which refers to 'ancillary'

Auxiliary would indicate that the activity is need for activity itself, whereas an 'ancillary' activity is not essential. The loading and services areas might be considered 'auxiliary', pet shops are not to the functioning of a garden centre or nursery.

Recommendations.

4. Car parking numbers should be reduced by 80 spaces. A high proportion of these should be from the surface car park and replaced by shade trees to aim for 100% shade cover to the car park area.

Landscape

Previous Panel comment:

"The proponents suggested that the whole outdoor area could be considered 'landscaped area'. The Panel sees some merit in this suggestion, however the current scheme presents more as a built industrial/retail facility than a nursery or garden."

It is worth noting that there is a state policy that aims to achieve a 40% canopy cover across the urban area. The site is in the vicinity of extensive areas of bushland, but it is ironic that the garden centre itself would appear to have less than 10% canopy cover that includes planting in the setback areas.

The SEE states:

"Given the nature of the business, the landscape design is a critical component of the overall site design. The buildings have been arranged based on the unique circumstances of this site and to achieve a balance between the needs of the business and the interface with surrounding properties and enhancing the streetscape."

The Panel notes that the buildings have been lowered and ground level modified, however there appears to have been little attention given to the landscape design and planting itself. The proposal still presents more as a light industrial precinct than a nursery or garden centre.

Recommendations.

1. Consider the use of green walls and trellises to provide shade to the walkways and car park.
2. Introduce more landscaping and mature tree planting into the car park areas



Amenity

The previous comments remain relevant, there has been no improvement to the car park or any attempt to create a pedestrian friendly space.

"The overall configuration has the car park as the principal 'meeting or public space that provides access to all the other facilities.

Recommendations.

5. If the over-all planning changes, consider clustering the retail around a smaller 'public square' or courtyard rather than having the car park as the principal shared space. It is not clear what advantage the current arrangement has over more 'co-location' (retail tends to feed off retail)

Sustainability

The previous Panel comments still apply:

The Panel strongly commends the commitment to collection and reuse of water on site as well as the inclusion of PV panels.

These elements could be made features of the design. The Panel sees great potential for education and awareness-raising about the environmental benefits and eco-system services that are provided by plants in the development.

The Panel made a number of suggestions with the expectation that these would be taken up and developed. Instead, it appears that the amount of PV has been reduced and that only 47.5% of the toilet flushing and irrigation will be from harvested stormwater. (Northrop section 2.7 Water conservation)

The Panel notes in the stormwater report that the consultants have stated "beyond the 50kL tank (proposed) the curve flattens off and the percentage rainwater reuse begins to increase insignificantly which does not justify the cost for a larger tank" (p12) An additional 50kl tank would increase the reuse to 60% or 12.5% of 1919kL /yr. Given that most of the cost of the stormwater system is in the reticulation the **marginal** cost of an additional 50kl capacity (a bigger tank) would be in the order of \$5,000 and would offer a ten year or less pay back.

Recommendations

6. Investigate the use of solar panels as shading device on the car park, (**not shown or adopted**)
7. Optimise the amount of PV on the roof; consider the roof area as a resource. Inclusion of PVs noted, but **amount of PV has been reduced**
8. Investigate the potential to show how stormwater is directed, treated, stored and re-used as a demonstration of sustainability and water sensitive design. (**No further details provided on how stormwater system might be revealed and celebrated**)
9. Investigate increasing the capacity of the stormwater harvesting tank by 50kL.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the design in its current form.

The Panel does not support a design approach that is driven primarily by a business model that results in an overdevelopment of the site.

The Panel is of the view that the intensity of development without adequate landscaping, screening and tree planting is not in accordance with the objectives of the RU4 zone and DCP irrespective of the permissibility of the land use itself.