

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Proposed access stairs with associated soft and hard landscape works



FOR

Mrs S. Mander

at

11 Plateau Rd,

Avalon Beach, NSW 2107

FEBRUARY 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement of environmental effects accompanies a development application for the proposed access stairs with associated soft and hard landscape works, at 11 Plateau Rd, Avalon Beach (Lot 150 / DP 16902).

The purpose of this statement of environmental effects is to describe the proposed development and review the relevant planning requirements relating to the proposal. It provides an assessment of the proposed works in terms of the Evaluation Criteria prescribed under Section 4.15 (1) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.

The merits of the proposal are considered in terms of the relevant Northern Beaches Council planning instruments, codes and policies.

2.0 LOCALITY AND SITE

The property is located within the Avalon Beach locality, part of Pittwater Council and the consolidated Northern Beaches Council, in the County of Cumberland and is shown as Zone C4 'Environmental Living' on the land zoning map. The proposed development is subject to the Pittwater Local Environment Plan 2014 (LEP 2014) and the Pittwater 21 Development Control Plan (21 DCP). The property is noted Area 1 on the landscape area map, class 5 acid sulfate soil, some of the land is noted H1 on the geotechnical hazard map. While some of the land is part of the bushfire buffer zone shown on the Bushfire Map 2020, the proposed development location is not within the buffer zone and exempt from bushfire restrictions. While a small section of the property is showing as part of the biodiversity map, the subject area is located away and on the other side of the lot. Part of the proposed development is proposed to encroach on public land. The property is rectangular in shape, its northern and southern boundaries measure 15.24 m, its western and eastern boundaries measure 45.72 m. The property is bounded by Plateau Rd (north) and 4 adjoining lots along the other sides. The property shares a common boundary with lot 126 / DP 16902 and lot 125 / DP 16902 on its southern side, both lots are occupied by bushland on a steep escarpment. The property shares a common boundary with lot 151 / DP 16902 (13 Plateau Rd) on its western side and a common boundary with lot 149 / DP 16902 (9 Plateau Rd) on its eastern side. The site is a ridge steeply falling from south to north on the northern side of the ridge and falling from north to south on its southern side, the subject area of works is a steep lump of garden. The site contains an existing 2 storey brick residence covered with a tiled roof. The rear of the property is equipped with a deck / terrace Overlooking Bilgola Bay and gully. The front garden includes an inground swimming pool and a steep concrete driveway, which represents the only current accessway to the residence. The front of the property displays a garden principally composed of a level lawn and exotic plant species, invaded by noxious weeds and hedging on the periphery (east). The property sits within a developed fabric primarily composed of small residential blocks and dwellings and bush remnants.

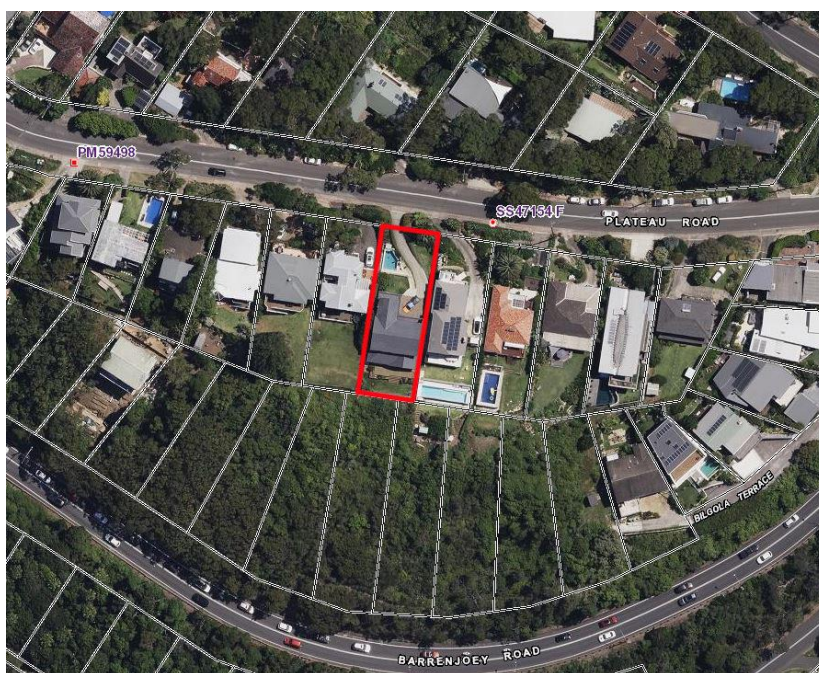


Figure 1 - Locality Map. Source – SIX Maps (site is highlighted in red)

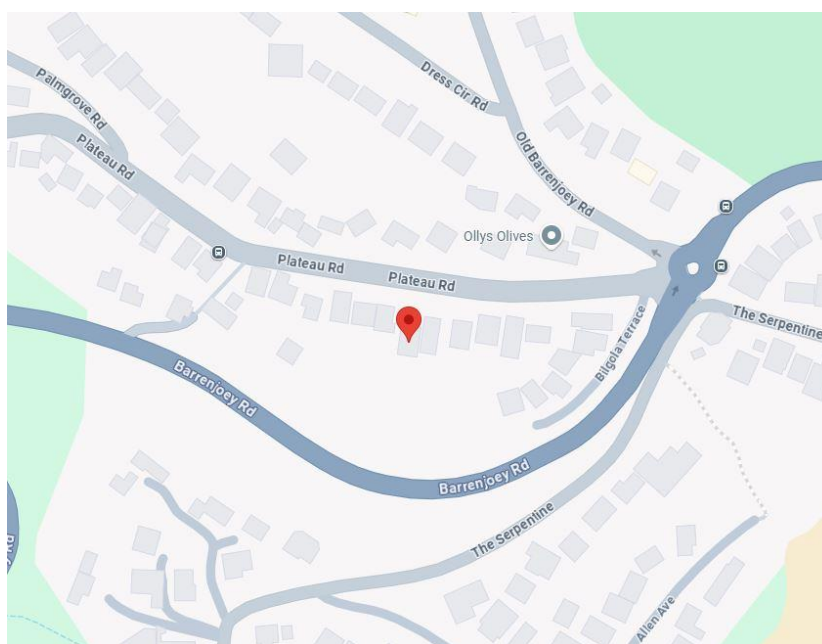


Figure 2 - Locality Map. Source – Google Maps (site is shown with red marker)

3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of:

- Creating a safe pedestrian accessway to the residence under the form of stairs;
- Using part of the stair structure to incorporate a safe and useable bin hide;
- Improving the structural stability of the lump of land currently bounding the driveway (east);
- Improving landscaping and ecological diversity.

The property is occupied by a well-built residence vastly equipped with all the amenity expected by its single resident, who is entering late adulthood.

The northernmost section of this lump of land is currently located outside the subject property's boundary, encroaching on public assets and some of the proposed works are located on public land. The driveway is the only current accessway to the residence, it consists of a long and steep section of concrete, with 6 metres high level discrepancy between its beginning and its end, making pedestrian access physically difficult and treacherous at times, particularly following long periods of rain like the one we've experienced in recent years.



Figure 3 – Photo displaying the existing self-supported lump of land prone to eventual landslip, and the steep driveway.

Wheeling the garbage bins out to the road has become a particularly dangerous and the resident would like a permanent bin storage spot located at the bottom of a safe accessway.



Figure 4 – Photo displaying the layout at n°9 Plateau Rd, sharing similarities with the proposed works at n°11 Plateau Rd. – Source Google Maps

The entry point is also problematic for visitors who sometimes find pedestrian access from the driveway practically impossible, depending their age and physical conditions.

A lightweight timber stairway generally following the existing shape and levels of the land is therefore proposed with the underneath of its lowest section creating opportunity for a proposed bin storage, located within the existing footprint of the current rubble wall (no further encroachment on public land as part of this proposal).

The driveway is bounded by a shotcrete wall on its western side and a steep lump of earth and bedrock (ref. geotechnical report) on its eastern side. This lump of land is currently freestanding and not retained by anything other than a loose rubble wall along Plateau Rd. It is proposed to structurally retain this land and add a narrow strip of planting between the current driveway (retained) and the proposed wall. This proposed planted strip comes in response to a difficult driveway that larger cars have issues to utilise and often scratch the current earth bank.

The earth bank is currently landscaped and maintained but displays multiple species of self-seeded weeds. It is proposed to replant this bank with a selection of Australian native plants, including a dominant majority of locally endemic species.



Figure 5 – Photo displaying the existing escarpment populated by a vast number of weeds including Lantana sp. It is proposed for weeds to be removed by hand, monitored and removed later as part of ongoing maintenance.



Figure 6 – Photo displaying the existing escarpment, currently self-supporting and only retained in its lower section with a loose rubble wall. This photo shows the large presence of Lantana sp. (proposed to be removed).

Note: the proposed stair landing + bin hide shall remain slightly inside (south) of the amenity located in front of n°9 Plateau Rd, therefore creating no sightlines issues.

The application shall include an Infrastructure Works Form due to the proposed encroachment on public land.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS AND POLICIES

The Pittwater Local Environment Plan 2014 (LEP 2014), current version of 23rd February 2024 is the statutory planning instrument that establishes what forms of development and land use are permissible and/or prohibited on all land within the Pittwater Local Government Area (LGA). LEP 2014 is made up of the written instrument and a series of maps. The LEP Maps identify which land parcels in the Pittwater LGA are subject to certain controls, conditions and policies.

Pittwater 21 Development Control Plan (21 DCP) is a policy document. 21 DCP provides the detailed objectives and planning guidelines to guide various forms of development in the Pittwater LGA.

5.0 EVALUATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 4.15 OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT, 1979

5.1 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The proposal is not affected by any draft environmental planning instrument.

5.2 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

LEP 2014

Part 2 Permitted or prohibited development

Land Use Table

The relevant objectives of this section are as following:

Zone C4 Environmental Living

1 Objectives of zone

- *To provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values.*

The proposal has been designed to meet the needs of the resident on a daily basis, with a lightweight approach bearing minimal impact on existing landform, while positively improving the site performance through a vastly endemic proposed planting scheme.

- *To ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.*

The proposed development shall have no negative impact on the values embedded in the C4 zoning. The improved landscaping and plant selection shall in contrary, reinforce the ecological values of the zone.

- *To provide for residential development of a low density and scale integrated with the landform and landscape.*

The proposed stairway shall sit slightly above existing landform, reducing ground disturbance to the minimum. The proposed retaining walls shall ensure the integrity of that escarpment.

- *To encourage development that retains and enhances riparian and foreshore vegetation and wildlife corridors.*

The subject area is covered with exotic plants and noxious weed species, the proposed development shall represent a great improvement in line with this objective.

Part 7 Additional Local Provisions

7.1 Acid Sulfate Soils

Class of soil for the subject property = 5

The proposed works shall not contradict the 6 clauses noted in this subdivision.

7.2 Earthworks

(1) The objective of this clause is to ensure that earthworks for which development consent is required will not have a detrimental impact on environmental functions and processes, neighbouring uses, cultural or heritage items or features of the surrounding land.

The proposed works shall only have positive impacts on the surrounding lands, while stabilising this large self-supported lump of land.

7.7 Geotechnical Hazards

It is the applicant's belief that the current geotechnical condition is rather precarious and the proposal, supported by a geotechnical engineer report, shall stabilise and secure this dominant lump of land.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN

Pittwater 21 DCP

The following provisions of 21 DCP are primarily relevant (but not exclusively) amongst the 4 sections:

SECTION A – SHAPING DEVELOPMENT IN PITTWATER

A3 What Shapes a Development in Pittwater

The proposed development shall bear negligible effect yet remain sympathetic to the existing and desired characteristics of Pittwater, notably via a healthier planting scheme, supporting fauna and creating habitat.

The proposed development is in line with the key objectives of Pittwater 21 DCP and particularly the environmental and social aspect. While the environmental aspect of this proposal represents a neat improvement to the existing condition, the social burden of restricted access to older visitors is a real worry of the ageing resident at 11 Plateau Rd.

A4 Localities

A4.1 Avalon Beach Locality

The proposed development proposed development is a direct response to the dramatic topographic conditions at n°11 Plateau Rd and does not contradict Pittwater Council's intentions noted in the "Desired Character" section of this part.

Existing landform and reduced earthworks have been carefully considered as part of this proposal. The development shall also remain safe from hazards.

SECTION B – GENERAL CONTROLS

B3 Hazard Controls

B3.1 Landslip Hazard

The proposed development is supported by a geotechnical engineer report, which findings have subsequently informed the structural design, also supporting this application (as part of S138).

Landslip hazard has therefore been addressed.

B4 Controls Relating to The Natural Environment

B4.1 Flora and Fauna Conservation Category 1 Land

Controls

Development shall not directly negatively impact on threatened species, endangered populations or endangered ecological communities.

The proposed development shall have no adverse impact on threatened species and in contrary, improve the property's performance within its natural environment.

Development shall retain and enhance habitat for locally native species, threatened species, endangered populations or endangered ecological communities.

The proposed development comprises of a robust planting scheme primarily composed of locally endemic plants, listed and recommended in the *Native Planting Guide - Pittwater Ward and meets this control.*

Development shall result in no significant onsite loss of canopy cover and no net loss in native canopy trees.

The proposed development shall result in an improvement of canopy cover (ref. Planting Plan) and meets this control.

Development shall ensure that at least 80% of any new planting incorporates native vegetation (as per species listed in Native Plants for Your Garden available on the Pittwater Council website). Landscaping is to be outside areas of core bushland and not include environmental weeds.

The proposed planting scheme includes 90%+ of locally endemic species and therefore meets this control.

Caretakers of domestic animals shall prevent them from entering wildlife habitat areas.

N/A – The applicant does not own pets or animals.

Fencing, where permitted, shall be passable by native wildlife.

The proposed development does not include fencing.

B6 Access And Parking

B6.1 Access driveways and Works on the Public Road Reserve

Outcomes

Safe and convenient access.

The proposed stairs shall slightly improve the visibility splay from the current solid rubble wall, making the driveway safer to use.

Adverse visual impact of driveways is reduced.

The proposal shall not require any modification to the current driveway.

Pedestrian safety.

The proposed development shall slightly improve pedestrian safety due to the gradual taper of the proposed stairs in place of the current rubble wall and steep bank.

An effective road drainage system.

N/A

Maximise the retention of trees and native vegetation in the road reserve.

N/A

SECTION C – DEVELOPMENT TYPE CONTROLS

C1.1 Landscaping

The proposed development comes along with 2 proposed small trees over an area where no trees are present. Their size has been purposely selected to not interfere with views on the valley located to the north, while conveying signals that are sympathetic to the locality.

It is the applicant's belief that a tree in the small rear garden setback is inappropriate on a lot which has been designed around its views of the Tasman Sea, while a tree of any size would also upset the neighbours.

SECTION D – LOCALITY SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

D1 Avalon Beach Locality

D1.17 Construction, Retaining walls, terracing and undercroft areas

Controls

Lightweight construction and pier and beam footings should be used in environmentally sensitive areas.

The proposed retaining walls aim at stabilising the large lump of land along the steep driveway and the pier and beam model would be ineffective.

Retaining walls and terracing shall be kept to a minimum. Where retaining walls and terracing are visible from a public place, preference is given to the use of sandstone or sandstone like materials.

The retaining walls are primarily proposed to retain a steep lump of land. The visible section along Plateau Rd is proposed to be clad with sandstone.

In the provision of outdoor entertaining areas, preference is given to timber decks rather than cut/fill, retaining walls and/or terracing.

While the proposal does not consist of an outdoor entertaining area, the proposed stairs shall be made of timber and generally sit just above natural ground surface to reduce ground disturbance and avoid the need for cut and fill.

Undercroft areas shall be limited to a maximum height of 3.5 metres. Adequate landscaping shall be provided to screen undercroft areas.

N/A

5.4 LIKELY IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Context and Setting

The subject site is in an established "Environmental Living" residential area which is comprised predominantly of residential single dwellings. The existing dwelling is well established, and the proposal represents a dramatic improvement of amenity for the property, while remaining sympathetic to the public realm and surroundings. The proposed development shall have no adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity, the public space nor heritage values of the area.

Visual Privacy

The proposal shall cause no visual privacy issues between the subject and adjoining properties nor the public realm.

Acoustic Privacy

There shall be no unreasonable acoustic impacts as a result of the proposal.

Design and Appearance

The proposed development is in keeping with C4 and shall improve the amenity while not altering the public domain interface of the building.

Social, Environmental and Economical

No adverse social, environmental or economic impact shall result from the proposed development.

Construction

The development shall be undertaken in accordance with all relevant Australian Standards. The proposed design shall not compromise the ability of the built form to conform to the building regulations.

Sustainability

The proposal shall result in a development which shall be energy efficient, taking measures to ensure reduced consumption of water and energy. The BASIX Certificate lodged with this application complies with all Building Sustainability Index requirements.

The Suitability of the Site for the Development

The site is zoned, and utilised, for the purpose of residential development. The proposal is consistent with the zone and the surrounding context and is therefore suitable for the development.

Any Submissions made in accordance with the Act

No submissions have been made in relation to proposed development.

The Public Interest

The public interest is considered in terms of compliance with the relevant planning controls applicable to the proposed development.

The continued use of the land for residential purposes is consistent with the objectives for the residential zone and the desired future character for this area. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant objectives and development standards. The proposal shall not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The proposal represents an appropriate and desirable improvement to the function and amenity of the property.

It is a design that is compatible with the built form and character of the area and the surrounding residential development. The proposal shall negligibly impact on the existing landscape and natural features of the site.

It is the applicant's opinion that there are no discernible issues relating to the proposed development that would be contrary to the public interest.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed access stairs with associated soft and hard landscape works, at 11 Plateau Rd, Avalon Beach; are the result of a careful consideration of all existing elements within and around the subject property, all planning instruments, standards and laws enforced.

The property, occupied by a well-equipped residence of high standing, is let down by a lack of practical pedestrian access.

The resident is entering late adulthood and already finding difficult to walk the driveway when it's wet, and finding the task of wheeling heavy bins down prior to collection extremely hazardous.

These small tasks of the everyday life are known to be essential for the single occupant of a property to feel autonomous, independent and capable.

Being an ageing single occupant, the resident is also conscious that this difficult access is a physical impediment to receive the visit of friends and visitors.

While being a healthy 40yo male, the applicant experienced the driveway as an access point and believes no one, irrespective of their age and physical condition, can use this space safely as a pedestrian access and that it should not be the unique pedestrian access serving this property.

The location of the proposal has been determined to create the least possible disturbance to the existing landform, features, adjoining properties and for the public domain.

The sense of garden shall be reinforced by the improvement of the existing bank with a rich palette of locally indigenous Australian native plants, adding interest, creating habitat and allowing for a better absorption of rain water and stabilisation of the grounds.

The proposal has diligently taken all surrounding features into consideration prior to submission to Northern Beaches Council.

Overall, there shall be no negative impacts to the existing locality or visual character of the public realm. The proposal shall result in no loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. All impacts shall be of a positive nature.

The form and design of the proposal is overall responsive to the Clients' brief, Northern Beaches Council's planning instruments and to the specific site conditions that exist.

In the applicant's professional opinion, it represents an appropriate form of development, which shall enhance amenity of the residence and blend in the surrounding environment.

The applicant understands that this application shall be judged on its merits and believes that it should be supported by Northern Beaches Council.

Kind regards,



Thomas Cormoreche

Senior Landscape Architect (BLArch UNSW), Director