



# **DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT LOWER LANDSCAPE WORKS 95 GURNEY CRESCENT SEAFORTH DECEMBER 2020**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report is submitted to Northern Beaches Council in support of a Development Application specifically for the lower garden landscape works for 95 Gurney Crescent.

The report contains a description of the proposal and a Statement of Environmental Effects. This report should be read in conjunction with the accompanying architectural plans Nos. DA120B, DA121A, DA122B, DA123B, DA124B and DA125B, also prepared by Mark Hurcum Design Practice.

## **2.0 Description of Site**

The subject site is identified as Lot 44, DP 11214 and is known as 95 Gurney Crescent, Seaforth. The property is located on the western side of Gurney Crescent, a regular lot with east-west orientation. The site has a steep fall, approximately 26m, from the street down to Pittwater. It has a frontage to Gurney Crescent of approximately 12.6m and approximate side boundaries of 48.3m to the north and 50.2m to the south. The total site area is approximately 594.4 sq.m. The site is zoned E3 Environmental Living.

The existing site is currently occupied by a 5 storey single dwelling structure that is now approved and under construction. The building is located on the upper part of the site. This application is specifically for the lower end of the side, including pathways and garden areas down to the foreshore.

The lower garden area is extremely steep and currently un-trafficable – in fact dangerous. The years of neglect have caused any rough stone walls to become destabilised and the ground is very uneven. Safe access through the site by way of stairs and steps is required.

The works include works within the harbour frontage including landing steps and a waterfront deck. A Coastal management Plan has been submitted with the application.

## **3.0 Previous Development Application and Consent**

The existing site has been through alternating construction phases and stop work phases for the last 20 years starting from its very first development consent in the year 1999. A new DA was lodged and approved for amendments to the original approval and this is now under construction.

## **4.0 Proposed Development**

For the purposes of this application the proposed works are described as follows:

Timber access stair to come off the currently approved end of the pool area landscape and existing retaining wall. The height of the existing retaining wall was dropped as part of the approval by approx 1300mm.

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The new timber stair comes down to a timber deck that sits above the existing exposed rock that the existing wall is built off. The existing retaining wall is to be clad in sandstone. The stair and then a landscape set of stairs after that brings you down to a levelled out lawn – the outer edge of which will require a complying retaining wall that will be either a gravity stone wall or a sandstone-faced blockwork retaining wall.

From the lawn the pathway takes you via a new floating deck walkway and stairs to the area directly above the Mean High Water Mark (MHW). This deck gives access to the waterfront and allows for stabilisation of the edge of the MHW, which is currently loose ground that was previously covered in Lantana. It also allows for a set of landing steps that will bridge the intertidal zone to protect existing shellfish in that area.

**5.0 Development Controls**

**5.1 Coastal Management Analysis**

A separate Coastal Management Report is included in the application.

**5.2 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Assessment**

As covered by the previous Coastal management Plan, as an incomplete and unlive in property for 20 years, the landscaping below the retaining wall had become seriously overgrown and full of invasive, noxious weeds. These had grown over and smothered much of any remanent native landscape that may once have existing in this area. The area was also full of construction rubbish that had been dumped below the wall by parties unknown. While awaiting approval for the building to recommence, the owner had cleared out the noxious weeds ready for improved and sensitive landscaping of the area. This also allowed for the creation of the erosion and sediment fencing measures to be installed along the waterfront – as currently exists while the house works are progressing. As such it is unnecessary to undertake a site specific biodiversity report for this DA.

In re-landscaping the site, the soft landscaping plan has been coordinated in conjunction with the hard-landscape works included in this DA. This soft landscaping plan therefore supersedes the current approved landscape plan for the portion of landscaping below the retaining wall (the lower garden area).

Selections of plant types are in accordance with the Sydney Sandstone Foreshores Forest PCT, with the minor exception of *Carpobrotus Glaucescens* (Native Pigface) and the proposed area of lawn. The use of the Pigface is specifically chosen due to the close proximity of saltwater and to play a role in binding together the planter beds that are created at the base of the natural rivulets between existing stone rock faces. The lawn will be Nara Zoysia native Turf.

Mulch to garden beds will be Australian hardwood mulch.

This plan results in a general reduction in tree numbers from the approved to comply with Bush Fire Report that seeks to reduce tree canopy in close proximity to housing to reduce stop of spread.

### **5.3 Maintenance of Views to the Site**

The proposed works represent an improvement to the site when viewed from Sydney harbour. Existing exposed stone boulders are to be retained which matches the intended aims and objectives to constructions within the E3 zone. All works are low-level with the exception of stairs are required to traverse the site.

### **5.4 Open Space and Stormwater**

The proposed plan does not result in any imperious areas. The only hard-landscaping is either timber decking (which is free-draining) or landscape stairs (which are minimal in area and water will run off into landscaping).

Existing exposed stone boulders are to be retained. These boulders represent existing rivulets that need to be managed. It is proposed that a small garden bed is created at the base of each rivulet to collect any erosion before it enters the harbour.

The Stormwater diagram attached is the same as approved for the House DA and the proposed scour protection works are intended to be incorporated under the last run of stairs as per the plan,

### **5.5 Bushfire**

The site is situated close to bushland and as such a Bushfire report was required, which has been undertaken and has determined that the building requires a BAL40 rating on the North and East facades, and BAL 29 on the West and South facades.

The report also included specific requirements in regard to landscaping, as follows:

Any new landscaping to the site is to comply with the principles of Appendix 5 of Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006. In this regard the following landscaping principles are, where applicable, to be incorporated into the development:

- Suitable impervious areas being provided immediately surrounding the building such as courtyards, paths and driveways;
- Grassed areas/mowed lawns/ or ground cover plantings being provided in close proximity to the building;
- Restrict planting in the immediate vicinity of the building which may over time and if not properly maintained come in contact with the building;
- Maximum tree cover should be less than 30%, and maximum shrub cover less than 20%;
- Planting should not provide a continuous canopy to the building (i.e. trees or shrubs should be isolated or located in small clusters);
- When considering landscape species consideration needs to be given to estimated size of the plant at maturity;

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- Avoid species with rough fibrous bark, or which retain/shed bark in long strips or retain dead material in their canopies;
- Use smooth bark species of trees species which generally do not carry a fire up the bark into the crown;
- Avoid planting of deciduous species that may increase fuel at surface/ ground level (i.e. leaf litter);
- Avoid climbing species to walls and pergolas;
- Locate combustible materials such as woodchips/mulch, flammable fuel stores away from the building;
- Locate combustible structures such as garden sheds, pergolas and materials such timber garden furniture way from the building; and
- Use of low flammability vegetation species.

In compliance with this, the tree cover was reduced from the existing approval and only minimal trees are included.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

This DA proposal is minor in nature and represents an opportunity to improve the long-term biodiversity of the site while at the same time improving its presentation to Sydney Harbour and its amenity (and safety) for use by the owners.

It is requested that approval be granted to this application.