

Urban Design Referral Response

Application Number:	DA2018/1924
Date:	30/10/2020
To:	David Auster
Land to be developed (Address):	Lot 20 DP 1209801 , Forest Way FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086

Officer comments

URBAN DESIGN REFERRAL 29/10/2020 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RECEIVED 11/09/2020

The revised drawings received in October 2020 document changes to the road carriageway in response to requirements for future proofing the traffic network in accordance with the requirements of RMS.

Urban Design comments seek to address only the urban design issues that are a consequence of the additional carriageway not the carriageway itself.

It is noted that an additional carriageway running north/south on Forestway has been extended further to the west boundary alignment of the Forestway elevation. Comments and amendments in previous referrals sought an increase in the provision of adequate circulation spaces along this frontage, noting that in the future this will be a key circulation node for the centre.

The additional lane to the road carriageway will reduce pedestrian circulation and pathways to the Forestway frontage. Without any further relative set back of the building line, this reduces the pedestrian paths and circulation zone to a minimum standard; that which we sought to rectify in previous referral comments.

The fact that this will be a major bus set down with many pedestrians both alighting and waiting and circulating along this zone demonstrates little consideration to the development holistically. The road carriageway amended in isolation to the frontage and precinct as a whole is ill considered with little thought given to the projected future pedestrian activity or good urban design outcomes.

The significantly reduced pedestrian paths, circulation zones and landscape treatments along the Forestway frontage will result in a hostile environment. The reduction in planting to the Forestway Russell street alignment have all been significantly reduced to the point one would question the ability to achieve any buffering, significant tree canopy or relatively decent interface between building, circulation and roadway. This is not a small building and will be a significant community space into the future. Further forethought and consideration of a good design outcome should be acknowledged and demonstrated in the documentation.

Urban Design would seek to have the previous dimensions and layout of the forecourt frontage

running along Forestway and moving around the corner into Russell Street; pedestrian paths, planting beds and circulation zone re-instated to the previous planning layout arrangement and dimensions shown on comparative analysis drawings by way of pulling the building line back to accommodate the previous public realm scheme and layout. Refer dot point 1 below which refers to an 8m minimum setback comprising 3.5 pedestrian paths, 3.4m planting bed with a residual 1m which would allow for varying alignments and clearance from building edges.

END

URBAN DESIGN REFERRAL 13/04/2020

The revised drawings submitted have addressed the previous Urban Design Officer comments as follows;

1. Pedestrian Entry off Forestway

Resolved entry sequence rationalising the accommodation/tenancy envelopes with widening of the pinch point at the top of the disabled ramp can be supported. However it would seem with the widening of the pedestrian path and pushing back into the boundary and a slight adjustment of tenancy floor areas to the north eastern sector of the development, the north south pedestrian axis internal to the site has reduced by about 3m; down from 11m to 8m approx. Whilst less circulation space here is not ideal it can be seen that the amendments to the general planning demonstrating an increased amenity for the entry square and consolidation of the internal planning edges and circulation are resolved and can be supported.

2. Facade Treatment

With the front facade now hard up to the pedestrian path and circulation paths to the streetscape of Forestway careful consideration should be given to the treatment and potential finer grain detail of the platform/podium face to the streetscape, the platform/podium being a result of the change in levels from street to the centre proper. The presentation to the street at this level is important as it relates to the user experience of the centre. Blank hard walls that present at this scale should be avoided so as not to encourage graffiti, loitering or other such behaviours.

The finer grain detail needs to address the human scale along this very prominent street edge condition.

3. Overhead Pedestrian Connection to New Frenchs Forest Town Centre

It is noted that precedent images in the Report by Urbis reference the suggested future overhead connection on Forestway between the two development centres. Whilst it is referenced as a potential treatment it does not demonstrate the connection/contextual relationship with the proposed design and as such cannot be commented upon in the context of this DA. There are several different typologies of overhead bridges in the vicinity of the locality, both good and bad. It is acknowledged that the reference is of a higher design standard with more attention paid to the user experience through the design outcomes. Further development of the design of this element of the Forestway centre would require to be assessed independently of this DA and ideally would be based upon drawings that demonstrate the actual context of the resolved Forestway design.

END COMMENTS

URBAN DESIGN REFERRAL 16/01/2020

As previously noted the proposed development can generally be supported. However revisions to amend issues that have not as yet been adequately addressed will require amendments to satisfy the urban design officer.

Pedestrian Entry off Forest Way

Previous comments provided (see dot point 6 below) are still unresolved in the current drawings. Whilst there have been some amendments the entrance to the centre from Forest Way is still lacking in adequate circulation coming off the ramp from the street into the complex/centre. The tenancy on the southern side of the entrance encroaches into the top of the ramp circulation zone leaving very little room for the quantum of pedestrians entering the centre. Deletion of this tenancy will allow for the creation of an adequate circulation zone for both access and egress.

The significance of the entry gesture to this street frontage cannot be understated. The length of frontage to the Forest Way elevation in terms of scale and proportion is significant enough to warrant additional circulation area, opening up the centre to provide a more generous entry sequence and street address that is identifiable.

END COMMENTS 16/01/2020

PREVIOUS COMMENTS REFERENCED IN CURRENT REFERRAL ABOVE (COPIED HERE FOR EASE OF REFERENCE)

6. Forest Way Pedestrian Access and Entry

As the site is bounded by street frontages, all with different methods of approach, scale, permeability and pedestrian access, careful consideration of each of the entrances and their relative adjacent roads and edge conditions is required to address the context and user amenity at the pedestrian scale.

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS - URBIS

The building is orientated towards the street frontages, however the key improvement from the existing is the interface with Forest Way; a prominent road within the LGA. The orientation of the built form to this street frontage:

- Reflects the retail nature of the use allowing high visual exposure;*
- Increases glazing and natural surveillance from the ground level retail and level 1 gymnasium; and*
- Increases activation of the local area through the transformation of a currently uninspiring and monolithic frontage and providing a pedestrian through link into the centre (and accommodated a future link to the east to the new Frenchs Forest town centre)*

RESPONSE

There is a pedestrian access point to the centre off Forest Way which will provide access for pedestrians utilising the public transport connection on Forest Way and peripheral links surrounding the centre. The entrance gesture provided demonstrates little wayfinding tactics in the planning and design, and is not clearly delineated as a major entry point from the full length glazed façade at the lower level. A more generous treatment to the entrance on this street frontage is recommended so as to provide a clearer wayfinding treatment and welcome gesture to the entrance off Forest Way. Pedestrians accessing the centre from Forest Way are met with BOH, blank walls, circulation stairs and lifts that feed into an enclosed lobby. Whilst signage may direct pedestrians, preference would be to open this access to the internal light filled courtyard/atrium of the centre, providing visual and through site links and a more open and welcoming entry gesture to the centre. The lift and circulation can be maintained but further incorporation into the overall planning at a fine grain level of detail is required. They are not major changes but a more sympathetic approach to the planning of the entrance off this street is

required.

The opportunity to open up the internal experience to the greater landscape should be considered with planting that provides green links and through site visual connections. The build to line street edge interface needs further consideration and design detail to address pedestrian legibility, sense of arrival and pedestrian scale issues. Attention to these details will be required to be submitted prior to approval.

Visual and Pedestrian permeability as discussed in the architectural design statement nominates all entrances to have a visual and pedestrian permeability to the central shopping zones.

PREVIOUS COMMENTS

ADDITIONAL INFO RECEIVED - SEE TRIM

The revised drawings submitted in response to the Urban Design comments have addressed the main issues raised by Council's Urban Design Officer. The amended development proposal can be supported.

END COMMENTS

The proposed development is partial demolition and extensions to the existing Forestway Shopping centre.

The proposed development in its current form cannot be supported for the following reasons.

URBAN DESIGN SUMMARY

The current Development Application was subject to a pre-lodgement meeting held on 3.07.2018 which afforded Northern Beaches Council's Urban Design Officer review and comment on the urban design implications of the proposed development. Several issues were raised in the pre-lodgement in relation to urban design, built form and planning to be addressed in subsequent development applications. The following comments address previous issues that have been satisfactorily addressed and raises further concerns with several urban realm, built form, material and planning issues that, through the provision of further information and design revision, may be readily addressed and thus supported.

General Comments Pre-Lodgement

1. WLEP Building Height

Statement of Environmental Effects

Lift overrun on Forest Way: +12m

Built form: +12m (projections above height plane include shade sails, lift overruns, car park upstand and pitched roof forms at corner)

Variable range from 1.97m to 4.98m above the 12m standard

RESPONSE

The pitched roof form's exceedance of the building height can be supported considering the architectural expression that acknowledges the village typology through its reflection and contemporary expression of the clustered/ multiple gable roof form typical of the pitched roof typology of the local residential context. The architectural form and style does not present as excessive bulk and mass but rather as gesture taking cues from the context with its unique expression.

The roof typology sits relatively sympathetically with the surrounding suburban context of low rise residential neighbourhood with a design response that reflects the bulk and scale of the adjacent low rise development and can be supported.

The increased 2m setback to address the street activation and permeability of Russell Avenue and access to the rooftop parking is supported.

Similarly the northern segment of Sorlie Place activation with the use of oversized timber trellis structure to provide an activated colonnade presents as a welcoming gesture whilst providing a fine grain approach to the edge condition and treatment at the pedestrian ground plane.

This is a less harsh environment than the Forest Way elevation and as such requires a more human scale treatment. Extending the proposed landscape and hard surface edge activation and treatment further around the arc of Sorlie Place is highly recommended.

Forest Way elevation requires further development to activate the ground plane and permeability to the centre proper from Forest Way.

The current planning at this street interface cannot be supported. See further comments below.

Pedestrian Access

Incorporating existing laneways, arcades and new cross-block links into the design of ground floor public spaces contributes to the permeability and vibrancy of a development. These spaces increase opportunities for connectivity and legibility of the local centre.

3. Sorlie Place

The Sorlie Place treatment at the pedestrian and building interface is supported, however further details and treatment to capture the whole arc of the pedestrian street interface is required as follows.

General Entrance Sorlie Place

Sorlie place is a secondary entrance and provides a more pedestrian scale interface to the shopping centre, with local residents being the more likely the predominant users of this entry point.

Currently the landscape treatment at the edge condition is broken up by some car spaces that sit directly in front of the centre's entrance. Building lines, in particular the 'back of house Woolworths façade and the post boxes are silent on the contribution to the public domain at this point with token landscape treatment provided and 2 metre wide pedestrian path at the building line. A continuous and connected trellis treatment as with the northern segment of Sorlie Place would assist this public interface to read as a holistic response, thus creating a more legible pedestrian zone. Widening of the 2 metre pedestrian path will be required to be demonstrated on the drawings.

A more generous response that treats the whole arc of the bounding area to the carpark should be further explored. The opening up of the Woolworths façade as a second entry would provide enhanced convenience for the rapid shopper wishing to gain entry at this point rather than having to enter the entire facility. Similarly the other building edges on this arc are hard up to the edges and rectilinear in form and provide no sense of entry or welcoming gesture. This could be resolved by increasing the width of the pedestrian path/zone and pulling back the building lines.

The northern segment of this arc with restaurant and Charrill Charlies has a narrow doglegged corridor that resembles a back of house corridor to access the centre rather than an access point to the central shopping zone and atrium area.

Further amendments to the design should consider the arcade typology providing a more generous and accessible entry to the main shopping complex; a secondary arcade in the hierarchy of pedestrian through site links and access to the central shopping atrium.

Landscape Treatment Sorlie Place

The bold line and curve radii of the landscape edge condition and planter beds is generally supported for its consideration of pedestrian scale and the provision of informal seating for centre users. Material selections are supported for their robust simplicity and consideration of occupation and circulation movement creating a more permeable pedestrian scale to this zone of the centre.

4. Grace Avenue

The proposed green walls along the Grace Avenue elevation which serve to both mask the back of house services and access zones and also provide acoustic attenuation can be supported.

Strategies that ensure drought tolerance species are represented in the final construction along with the extent of the coverage of the green walls are recommended.

5. Russell Avenue and Forest Way

The permeable treatment of the Russell Street and Forest Way corner provides for a welcoming approach to the centre. Visual cues to the urban context of low rise residential responds to the predominant building typology sympathetically. The architectural design intent is supported. The removal of driveways on Russell Avenue activating the pedestrian permeability and retail edge is also supported.

Similarly the treatment and material response of the façade on Forestway responds to the harsh context by way of material selections and articulation which is generally supported.

However further design resolution and details will need to be provided by way of further information to support the proposed development.

6. Forest Way Pedestrian Access and Entry

As the site is bounded by street frontages, all with different methods of approach, scale, permeability and pedestrian access, careful consideration of each of the entrances and their relative adjacent roads and edge conditions is required to address the context and user amenity at the pedestrian scale.

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS - URBIS

The building is orientated towards the street frontages, however the key improvement from the existing is the interface with Forest Way; a prominent road within the LGA. The orientation of the built form to this street frontage:

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RESPONSE

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The opportunity to open up the internal experience to the greater landscape should be considered with planting that provides green links and through site visual connections. The build to line street edge interface needs further consideration and design detail to address pedestrian legibility, sense of arrival and pedestrian scale issues. Attention to these details will be required to be submitted prior to approval.

Visual and Pedestrian permeability as discussed in the architectural design statement nominates all entrances to have a visual and pedestrian permeability to the central shopping zones. However the drawings demonstrate there is still minimal permeability to the Forest Way entrance as well as hard back of house edges to the Sorlie Place elevations demonstrated in the hard edge line of the

Woolworths elevation along with the post boxes and other circulation elements. Efforts to address a more amenable design the express the sequence of entry and enhanced visual and pedestrian through connectivity will be required.

6. Façade Materials Forest Way

A question around the use of 'perforated concrete' is raised in that pre-cast concrete panels are typically reinforced. Further details are required to ensure that what is approved can be represented in the final built form. What is implied by the drawings and material palette is that a Cemintel or similar perforated type panel treatment that is typically applied as a panelised system is inferred. Confirmation of the actual materiality and construction methodology is required in order to accurately assess the building in the context life expectancy of the built form; expressed joints and fixing system details should be identified in the final façade expression if it is a panelised application system. Or if it is a reinforced concrete panel system, how the perforation is achieved. There is no indication of the materiality of the blank panels to the elevation on the Forest Way proper. A perspective drawing shows one of the panels as being designed with an etched panel design. Confirmation that the whole façade will receive the same treatment is required in order to confirm what is assessed and approved will be constructed across the entire façade system in the final built form and not just the single panel as indicated in the perspective drawing.

Refer Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) Figure 11, Page 43.

Built Form Controls

7. WLEP 2011

Height of Buildings - Non Compliances

The exceedance of the building height control nominated in the SEE of between 1.97 – 4.98m is generally supported in view of potential future uplift in the area. Noting that the exceedance exists by virtue of the parapet / upstand wall to the carpark area on the roof and the unique gable roof design the exceedance is considered minor and thus supported.

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS - URBIS

Portions of the proposed development do not comply with the 12metre height standard with the greatest exceedance and maximum building height of 16.89 metres to the top of the lift overrun adjacent to the Forest Way frontage. The areas of non-compliance relate to the lift overruns, roof plant, shade sails, car park upstand and pitched architectural roof forms. Importantly the building, including any areas of GFA are below the 12m building height.

RESPONSE

It was noted in the pre-lodgement meeting the height exceedance needed to be addressed.

Subsequent drawings received with the development application clearly further develops the architectural intent and design through articulated and reduced massing and bulk and materials strategies revealing a further height exceedance with no reduction in the lift overrun.

The height exceedance can be supported when considering the articulation of the exaggerated gable roof form in that there are points of the angled roof form/valley gutters that fall equally below the maximum allowable building height. The expressed form of the roof and it's relation to context outweighs the non-compliance and can be supported.

Grace Avenue elevation shows a greyed out building form behind the treated elevations.. Further developed drawings need to indicate/ annotate accordingly if this mass of building is part of the proposed development or other buildings in the background and heights of these buildings annotated accordingly.

8. WDCP 2011

Setbacks

The provision of the increased setback as outlined in the SEE is supported. However as discussed in

regards pedestrian access on Forest Way, the further increase of a setback zone to the building line or a splayed/chamfered edge to the entrance off Forest Way is recommended to increase the circulation, pedestrian amenity, clear wayfinding strategies /welcome address and through site links into the centre proper.

Similarly further setbacks of the building line on Sorlie Place to increase footpath widths is required to be demonstrated on drawings.

9. Pedestrian Connection to Future Frenchs Forest Town Centre

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS-URBIS

The design allows for incorporation of a possible future residential scenario as envisaged in NBHSP structure plan, including provision of 600-900mm columns, flexibility in leases and workable orientation and design which could have the ability to comply with the ADG. The design also allows for connection to the potential for future green link. It is noted that there is no certainty at this stage or any amendments to controls exhibited or gazetted, so a residential outcome is speculative at best as this stage.

RESPONSE

Strategic Planning has provided a response to the adopted Frenchs Forest Hospital Precinct Structure Plan (HPSP). It was noted in the pre-lodgement response from Council's Urban Design Officer that the proposed development should consider the future connections to the HPSP to provide connections to the new Frenchs Forest Town Centre. The SEE notes that 'design also allows for connection to the potential for future green link'.

Opportunities to address the potential future link and how this is addressed in the design needs to be demonstrated through analysis of the context showing how the building/ground plane might adapt to address this connection. Demonstration that minimal construction changes to the proposed DA would render some parts of the current development redundant or result in substantial changes to the approved DA.

We note that drawings still show no indication of how this will be achieved.

Consideration of the potential inclusion of this link in the future to connect pedestrians and cyclists is to at least consider the impacts on the proposed DA.

Refer to the Strategic Planning comments regarding future connectivity to the Frenchs Forest New Town Centre.

The current design and lack of details demonstrating future connectivity to the future town centre needs to be reconsidered in the design outcomes for the proposed development. Design revisions demonstrating how the current design addresses future connectivity should be demonstrated on the drawings and resolved as a holistic response to the desired future character and the HPSP.

10. Southern Elevation Woolworths Building Adjacent School Open Space

There is an opportunity to address the open space adjacent to the Frenchs Forest Primary School through the use of detailed panel systems, public art or other strategy to provide a civic response to the public space and urban realm. The wall currently reads as a blank wall that turns its back to the open space.

Further details providing options to treat this façade will be required.

Northern Beaches Draft Arts and Creative Strategy 2019 outlines the vision and outcomes to enhance wellbeing and build social cohesion; Better Places and Spaces.

Urban Design, Architecture and Public Art has a 40% participation rate demonstrating the opportunities for the contribution to the urban realm is driven by the population of the local government areas' residents.

11. Sustainability

The sustainability report submitted with the DA indicates the proposed developments' targets meet with

the minimum requirements of the NCC for sustainable development. Whilst the feasibility of Green Star Certification is not a requirement design and systems demonstrating best practice Green Star achievement for the centre is highly recommended to be demonstrated. Some of the strategies associated with passive design have been addressed in the current design however further strategies to increase a sustainable response to the whole of site include, but are not limited to;

- Layered facades, operable windows, natural ventilation
- Building setbacks, glazing, light wells and skylights
- Laneways and cross block links

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development in its current form cannot be supported. Design amendments in the form of further information are required to address the planning and Design concerns raised herein.

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED ;

1. Design amendments to the Forest Way entrance at pedestrian level to provide through site connections to the central atrium of the centre proper.
2. Design consideration of future pedestrian connectivity to the new Frenchs Forest town centre demonstrating pedestrian and cycle connectivity can be achieved from Forest Way. Drawings showing connections to new town centre Green Streets.
3. Report from structural engineer indicating structural systems are designed to consider retrofit of future uplift as per the strategic planner's comments.
4. Design and feasibility consideration to address the Woolworths blank wall through public art or treated façade articulation addressing the public realm/open space.
5. Elevational drawings showing extents of façade concrete ornamental treatments will be required.

The proposal is therefore unsupported.

Note: Should you have any concerns with the referral comments above, please discuss these with the Responsible Officer.

Recommended Heritage Advisor Conditions:

Nil.