URBAN DESIGN REPORT

22 MELWOOD AVENUE, FORESTVILLE

FORESTVILLE RSL

WOLSKI ▪ COPPIN

ARCHITECTURE

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to the Design & Sustainability Advisory Panel meeting dated the 8th of December 2022. The specific item number is PLM2022 0218, 22 Melwood Avenue Forestville which seeks approval for the demolition of an existing RSL and construction of a new RSL building including 'Seniors Housing' in the form of residential flat buildings.

The proposed RSL building comprises a new 3-storey building with basement parking beneath. The residential buildings will comprise 3 + 3-storey apartment buildings, containing in-fill self-care housing units for seniors and people with a disability, along with basement carparks.

2.0 Strategic Context, Urban Context: Surrounding Area Character

2.1 Existing Context

The site is located on 22 Melwood Avenue, Forestville. The site is zoned as R2, low density residential and on its western and southern boundaries has a shared boundary with public RE1 zoned land in the form of an open carpark to the south and public parkland to the west.

Figure 1: Context Map of the Site

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Adjacent to the west of the site is a youth centre and community hall and to the south of the site is Forestville Rugby club and the Forestville War Memorial Playing Fields. Directly adjacent to the north of the site at 17 Forestville Avenue are 14, 2-storey townhouses built within approximately 2m of their southern shared boundary with the site.

2.2 Panel Considerations

The major considerations highlighted by the panel were:

- The interface of the R2 to the north
- The connection from Melwood Avenue to the open space to the west of the site
- The character of the laneway and the interface with the parkland

Figure 2: Zoning Map

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2.3 Interface of the R2 to the North

The northern boundary has an approximate 9m setback along its northern boundary. The 9m setback helps to reduce the perceived bulk and scale as viewed from the north and the tiered building design helps to further reduce the impact on the neighbouring residences to the north and provide a more sympathetic interface although this is limited by the townhouses to the north being built in close proximity to their southern boundary. Landscaping directly along the northern boundary also provides further screening and privacy to the neighbouring R2 zone to the north.

Figure 3: Existing Relationship to North

Figure 4: Adjacent Townhouses to the North

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2.4 Connection to Open Space to the West of the Site from Melwood Avenue

The site layout creates a clear connection from Melwood avenue to the open space to the west of the site. As seen in the plan in Figure 5 below, a public pathway runs between the club building and the residential buildings. This pathway is accessible from either the laneway to the west or Melwood avenue to the east and thus creates a connection across the site which is highlighted by the separation space between the buildings as the central access pathway through the site.

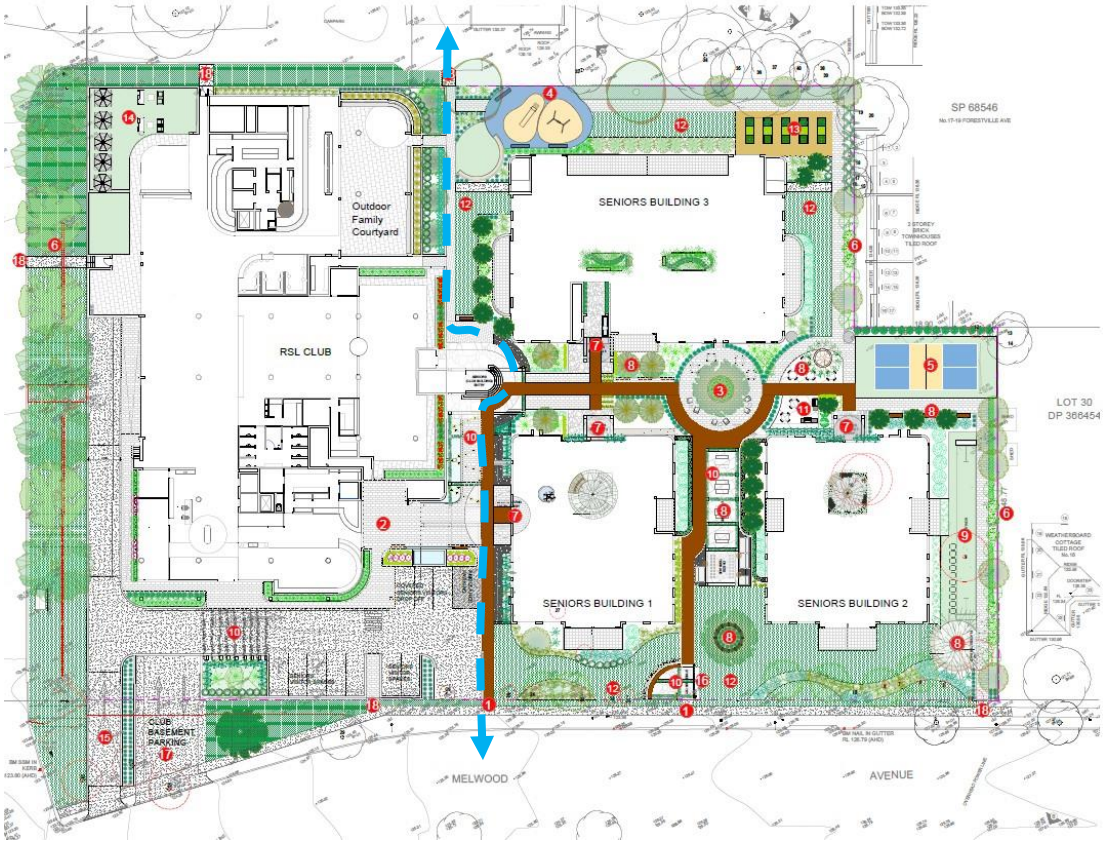

Figure 5: Landscape Plan Highlighting Connection through the Site

The western façade of the residential development utilises a 9m setback to the western boundary. This setback region incorporates a variety of landscaping and deep soil planting, with trees along the western boundary helping to provide privacy screening aiding the transition into the RE1 public recreation land directly adjacent to the western boundary. The design also incorporates an outdoor activity space in the centre of the western façade, a highlighted communal open space which will encourage interaction, activity and create a lively atmosphere, further aiding the transition into the adjacent public land.

While the club building has a reduced setback to the west of the site, the public land directly adjacent to this proposed building consists of a small laneway which has a significant number of large trees and vegetation on its western side. These existing trees and vegetation will provide natural screening when viewed from the north and as such aids the transition of the site into public land.

Figure 6: Existing Laneway View towards the South

2.4 Character of the Laneway and Parkland Interface

The existing laneway consists of a small and narrow cul-de-sac with parking spaces at its northern end. Along the eastern side of the laneway are the existing lawn bowls greens and the existing RSL which is build hard against the western boundary in the form of a 2-storey blank wall as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Existing Laneway and Rear Boundary of RSL Club

The western side of the laneway which is inside the public recreational zone, has a large amount of vegetation opposite the lawn bowls greens, with dense ground level shrubbery and large trees along the edge of the laneway providing visual screening from afar. To the west of the parking spaces at the northern end of the laneway is natural turf and this provides a softer transition into the youth centre space to the north at the end of the laneway.

The proposed development would help to improve the overall character of the laneway. The existing two-storey blank wall is overbearing and its strong and bulky geometric character creates a harsh and abrupt transition from the R2 zone into the RE1 zoned land to the west. The proposed residential building will provide a 9m setback to the western boundary, with deep soil planting within this zone creating a softer transition into the public recreational land whilst also creating natural screening and privacy. This will significantly improve the existing laneway and will as a result improve the visual amenity of pedestrians and those using the youth centre.

3.0 Scale, Built Form and Articulation

3.1 Club Building

The building has been broken up into smaller components, with a main design modification involving stepping the seniors living on level 1. This helps to generate depth and articulation, in turn splitting up the dominant horizontal elements and thus helping to reduce the perceived bulk and scale of building. Pergolas along the ground floor edge of the club building further aid in breaking up the horizontal mass and make it more sympathetic to its surroundings.

Figure 8: Club Building 3D View from Melwood Avenue

Due to the aforementioned dense vegetation along the western edge of the existing laneway (specifically opposite the proposed new club location), this existing section of the laneway allows for limited public and pedestrian interaction, with the lack of an existing footpath extenuating this fact and this existing laneway character is shown in Figure 9. The primary public usage of the laneway would occur toward the northern end, with access to the youth centre and natural turf areas providing for greater public interaction.

The proposed design has responded accordingly to this existing laneway character by incorporating a 9m setback along the western boundary for the residential buildings, opposite the main laneway use areas. Where the laneway usage is limited due to existing vegetation and lack of pedestrian access points, the western boundary has been reduced to help create a transition and gateway into the laneway in conjunction with the existing trees along the western edge.

While the club building has a reduced setback to the west of the site, the existing building to the laneway has a two-storey solid blank wall built directly onto the western boundary and as such the proposed setbacks are consistent with the existing laneway. Additionally, while the ground floor of the proposed club building is built close to the boundary, the upper levels are tiered back, reducing the perceived bulk and scale of the building as viewed from the laneway.

Figure 9: Existing Laneway as Viewed from Southern Entry

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3.2 Residential Buildings

The panel also suggests that the residential buildings should be able to achieve 100% cross ventilation and solar access.

The buildings have been modified to break up the strong horizontal elements by stepping the building and utilising articulation on the upper levels. This will help to reduce the overall perceived bulk and scale of the buildings by creating more depth to the facades and creating more vertical elements in the predominantly horizontal façade.

The design will incorporate a foyer and path accessing the site from Melwood Avenue. This will represent the primary entry point and this will be emphasised with the use of a lynch gate at the front, and a pergola which will aid in encapsulating the entry point and putting it to the forefront of the eastern façade.

The living rooms windows allow for sufficient light into the living space. The living rooms have also been designed with glazing access to balconies, allowing for further solar access and ventilation, ensuring good amenity for the residents.

Each of the three residential buildings has one or more central voids cut through the centre of the building. These run though all three floors and provide light and ventilation to the central corridors and create communal open spaces on the ground floor with large planter boxes, benches and landscaping.

For the residential apartment buildings, the design allows for 82% solar access to living spaces in mid-winter, well in exceedance of the 70% minimum defined in the ADG. Additionally, 100% of these apartments are cross ventilated, well in exceedance of the 60% cross ventilation ADG requirement.

For the residential apartments on the upper levels of the club building, 81% receive minimum 2 hours of sun in mid-winter once again exceeding the 70% requirement set by the ADG. At least 14 out of the 16 apartments (87%) receive adequate cross-ventilation and as such for both the residential buildings and the club building, the solar and cross ventilation requirements have been met and, in all cases, exceeded by at least 10%.

Figure 10: Seniors Living 3D Reder

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4.0 Access, Vehicular Movement and Car Parking

The loading bay has been moved further into the building, allowing for activation of the building on the western façade. Additionally, service access through the northern boundary of the council rugby oval car park is an acceptable long term access point. A total of 7 pedestrian access points are provided on the site, allowing for pedestrian access from the south, west and eastern boundaries.

As seen in Figure 11 there are a total of 3 vehicular access and exit points on Melwood Avenue. The first is a vehicular access point in the south-eastern corner of the site which provides access to the above ground drop-off point and seniors visitor spaces. The second access point provides access to and from the club and seniors basement parking. The final exit point is for the drop off-zone, creating a fluid, single direction drop-off point, helping to minimise traffic congestion.

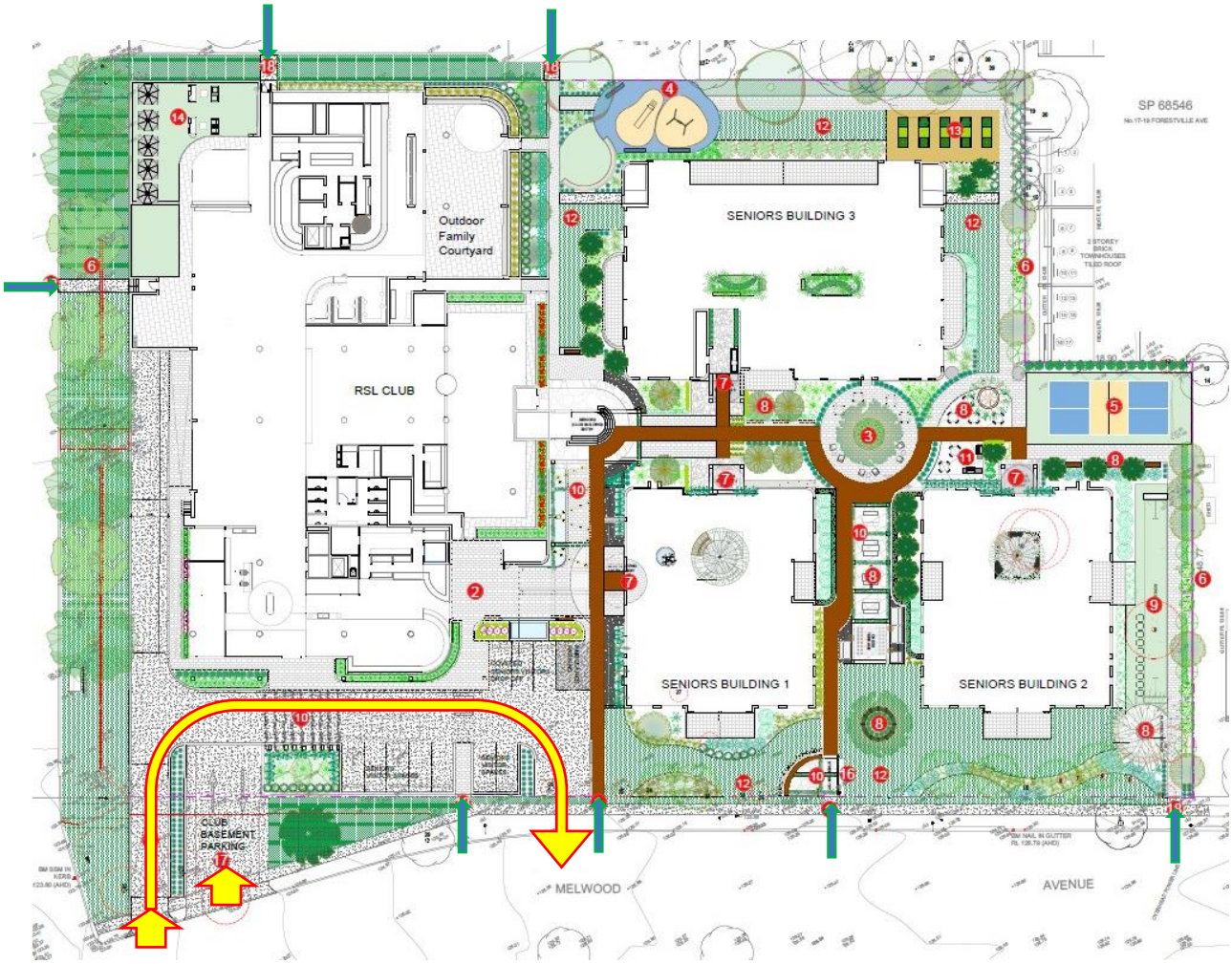

Figure 11: Vehicular and Pedestrian Access Points

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5.0 Landscape and Communal Open Space

The landscape plan exhibits a coherent ground floor public realm that provides safe and clear pedestrian circulation throughout the club and residential component of the site.

The ground level plan identifies a central pond area which serves as the epicentre of pedestrian circulation throughout the three buildings as seen in Figure 12. It serves as a communal space for all residents to use and encourages interaction and creates a safe and welcoming central public realm. All three buildings are within close proximity to this central space and have individual communal open space at their centre, further encouraging a communal environment and aiding to create passive surveillance.

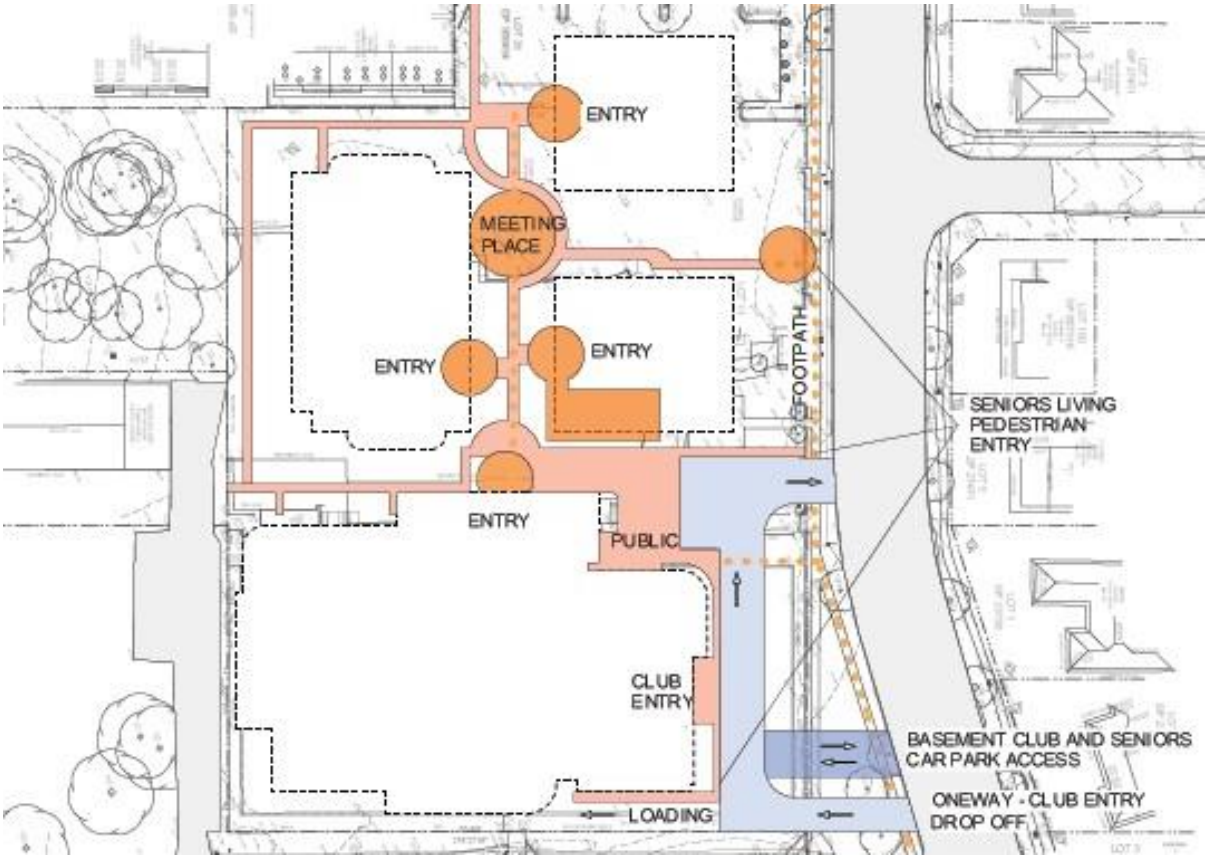

Figure 12: Central Pedestrian Circulation Space

Pedestrian entries along Melwood avenue will incorporate security fencing and passive lighting along the pathways to increase safety especially at night. Along the eastern boundary of the site, a variety of soft landscaping is utilised to create a positive landscape frontage, with planting along the boundary providing for an improved streetscape and a softer transition into the public domain. In comparison to the existing hard carpark, the proposal significantly improves the natural amenity of the site, with landscaping provided to all boundaries of the residential buildings utilising a combination of soft landscaping and deep soil planting improving the transition from the site to the surrounding locality and public recreation land.

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6.0 Amenity

The ground level café in the north-eastern corner of the RSL will help to activate the street and the overall development site. It provides an area for communal gathering and interaction, outside of the RSL and the residential buildings. This will not only encourage residents and RSL patrons to interact, but also create a more welcoming atmosphere for passing pedestrians and other members of the public. Additionally, there are various locations around the residential site which promote communality and increase overall amenity. An activity space to the west of building three next to the boundary encourages physical exercise and further spaces such as a fire pit, players terrace and BBQ terrace provide further spaces for communal engagement. All of these communal open spaces are located along the northern and north-western site boundaries, prioritising solar access to these areas, further increasing resident's amenity.

As a result, this will aid in creating a greater sense of locality and amenity and greatly help to create a link into the neighbouring pedestrian domain.

7.0 Façade Treatment/ Aesthetics

The strong horizontal elements will be stepped and actuated, breaking up the horizontal façade and creating a more modest and sympathetic façade which will have a more subtle transition into the neighbouring domain. The deep soil landscaping will allow for major trees to be planted along the site boundaries, providing further screening and helping to soften the façade.

Figure 13: Seniors Living Elevations

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8.0 Sustainability

8.1 Club Building

The building will aim to commit to achieving a 6 GreenStar rating. This will ensure that environmental impact is reduced and overall costs of running the club are kept to a minimum.

Figure 14: Club Building Elevations

8.2 Residential Building

The development will not include any gas energy supply and will only be electric, aided by PV on the unshaded portion of the roof. EV charging ports will be provided for each unit and ceiling fans will be installed to bedrooms to help provided comfort with minimal energy usage. All of these design considerations have been included to help achieve the overall objective of de-carbonising the energy supply and to move toward more sustainable building design.

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9.0 Conclusion

The development of the RSL and senior living accommodation at 22 Melwood Avenue Forestville has been designed with its interaction with the neighbouring public domain and streetscape at its forefront. It has allowed for considerable setbacks to neighbouring properties and useable public areas, allowing for soft landscaping and deep soil planting to be incorporated within these setbacks, further aiding the transition to public land whilst also providing natural screening to adjoining residences.

The design of the residences has also prioritised the amenity of the residents, with a large communal circulation space at the centre of the three buildings, allowing ease of access throughout the site and providing for a central communal open space, encouraging interaction and activity amongst residents and creating an overall sense of community.

The club provides for ground level hospitality, including a café which will help to generate interest from locals and passing pedestrians, further emphasising the sense of community that the development seeks to create.