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# Urban Design and Heritage Report

Northern Beaches Business Park

100 South Creek Road Cromer



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Project Manager: Brian McDonald  
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11 Dartford Road, Thornleigh NSW 2120  
207/506 Miller Street, Cammeray NSW 2062

PO Box 230  
Pennant Hills NSW 1715

t: 02 9980 6933  
f: 02 9980 6217  
e: [dfp@dfplanning.com.au](mailto:dfp@dfplanning.com.au)

DFP Planning Pty Limited  
ACN 002 263 998  
[www.dfpplanning.com.au](http://www.dfpplanning.com.au)

# Contents

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<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Commission	1
1.2	Material Relied Upon	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Site Context</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Location	2
2.2	Site Description	2
2.3	Surrounding Development	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Proposed Development</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Urban Design and Heritage Discussion</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	Key issues	5
4.2	Heritage considerations	5
4.3	Building Height Bulk and Scale	6
4.4	Streetscape and Landscape	8
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>10</b>

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Commission

DFP has been commissioned by EG Funds Management to prepare an Urban Design Report in relation to a proposed storage warehouse development at 100 South Creek Road Cromer (the Site). The report accompanies a development application for the proposed development.

## 1.2 Material Relied Upon

For the purposes of preparing this report, we have reviewed documents and undertaken the following investigations:

Site inspections undertaken in April 2019

Architectural Plans prepared by SBA Architects dated 1 November 2019:

- DA000 COVERPAGE 10
- DA101 IMAGE 01 10
- DA101-B IMAGE 01 - NOTES 10
- DA101-C IMAGE 01 - EXTERNAL FINISHES 10
- DA102 IMAGE 02 10
- DA103 IMAGE 03 10
- DA103-B IMAGE 03 - NOTES 10
- DA104 IMAGE 04 10
- DA105 IMAGE 05 10
- DA106 IMAGE 06 10
- DA107 IMAGE 07 10
- DA201 SITE PLAN 10
- DA202 GROUND FLOOR PLAN 10
- DA203 BASEMENT PLAN 10
- DA204 LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN 10
- DA205 ROOF PLAN 10
- DA206 DEMOLITION PLAN 10
- DA301 ELEVATIONS 10
- DA302 ELEVATIONS 2 10
- DA305 SECTIONS 10
- DA306 SECTIONS 2 10
- DA400 SHADOW DIAGRAMS\_1 10
- DA401 SHADOW DIAGRAMS\_2 10
- DA500 NOTIFICATION PLAN\_1 10

Landscape plans by Site Image dated 1 November 2019.

Conservation Management Plan by Heritage 21 dated April 2019

Heritage Impact Statement by Heritage 21 dated April 2019

Peer Review of the Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Impact Statement listed above.

## 2 Site Context

### 2.1 Location

The Site is located at the junction of South Creek Road and Inman Street Cromer (see **Figure 1**).

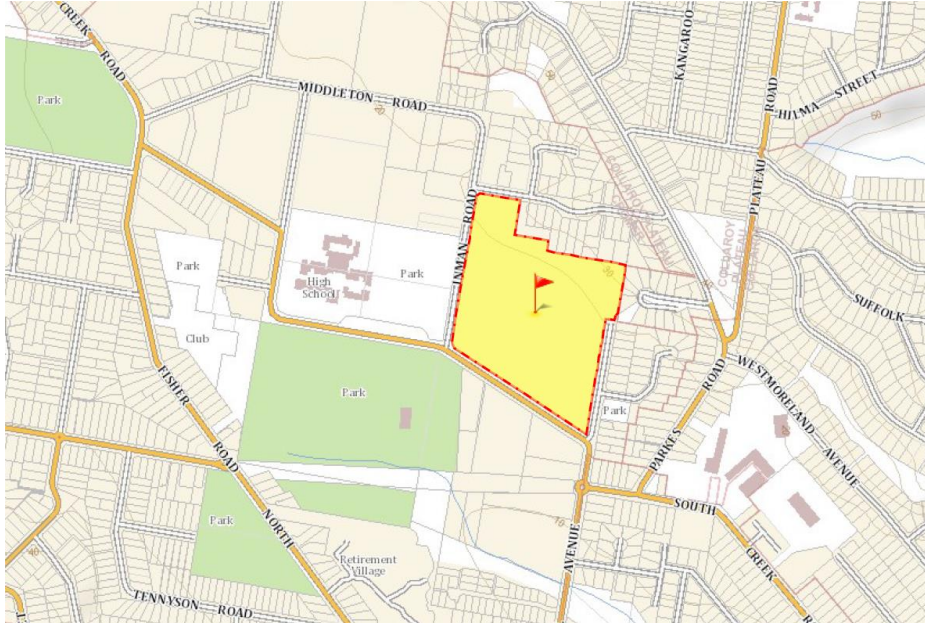


Figure 1 Site Location. Source Six maps.

### 2.2 Site Description

The Site comprises the south-western part of one large allotment, Lot 1/ DP 1220196, and was previously occupied by the former Roche Company including a laboratory, factory, warehouse buildings, administrative offices and stores. The eastern side of the site slopes down to a gully densely covered in well-established forest. A small portion of the site to the north, extending to Orlando Road, comprises a grassed area with scattered trees at a higher level than the main part.



Figure 2 Site Context.

## 2 Site Context

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### 2.3 Surrounding Development

Northern Beaches Secondary College Secondary College – Cromer Campus is opposite the site in Inman Road. Cromer Park, developed as playing fields, is to the south and south-west opposite the site. Across South Creek Road to the south are Manly Warringah Football Association and to the south-east are industrial and storage buildings.

### 3 Proposed Development

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The proposed development has evolved following market feedback and consultations and meeting with staff of Northern Beaches Council. The current proposal represents significant changes resulting from the Council's feedback. The application comprises:

- Retention of the heritage significant Roche office building fronting Inman Road together with the single storey wing from its north-west corner;
- Retention of the grassed area and trees along in front of the entrance and the single storey wing;
- Retention of the existing cottage fronting Inman Road;
- Retention of the hexagonal tower at the centre of the site;
- Retention and enhancement of the existing established trees and landscaping on the Inman Road and south Creek Road frontages;
- Demolition of the rest of the buildings within the western half of the site;
- Site excavation mainly in the south west part of the site;
- Construction of eleven (11) warehouse units: behind the retained office building, to the south of the retained office building in the same position of the large former Roche building; along the northern edge of the site; and along the eastern edge clear of the existing gully and forest area;
- A vehicle court separating the running between the warehouse units;
- At the lower southern end of the site under the ground level buildings, carparking and an area of self-storage units;
- Vehicular access to the warehouses via Inman Road at the existing entry point and egress to South Creek Road at the south-east corner of the site;
- Vehicular access to the carparking level off Inman Road at an existing entry/exit point; and
- Vehicular access to the self-storage units off South Creek Road.

## 4 Urban Design and Heritage Discussion

### 4.1 Key issues

Northern Beaches Council has raised several issues/concerns in the discussions that have occurred and in correspondence. The key issues are:

- 1) Bulk scale and design;
- 2) Extent of retention of the former Roche building;
- 3) Potential for adaptation of the former Roche Building;
- 4) Design compatibility with the retained parts of the Roche building;
- 5) The proposal exceeds the 11m building height control with the proposed 16.5 m high built form; and
- 6) Retention of the front (northern) view of the heritage item.

The following subsections outline the responses to these issues.

### 4.2 Heritage considerations

Heritage and urban design considerations are intertwined in this application due to the nature of the existing buildings and the site context.

The proposed warehouse (unit 10) has been set back from the line of the retained heritage building and further back than the existing building at the south-west corner of the site. It is separated by the same distance as the existing building. This part of the proposed building is about 2.5 metres lower than the existing building and not as dominant in scale as seen from Inman Road. The wall height of the building behind the retained two storey former Roche office building, although exceeding the 11 metre height control from 0 to about 2 metres, is set back behind it sufficiently that it will be of lesser visual impact in perspective as shown in the 3D image at Drawing DA - 104 reproduced below at **Figure 3**. It will be considerably lower than the existing building 11, which is approximately 17.5 metres above the height control.

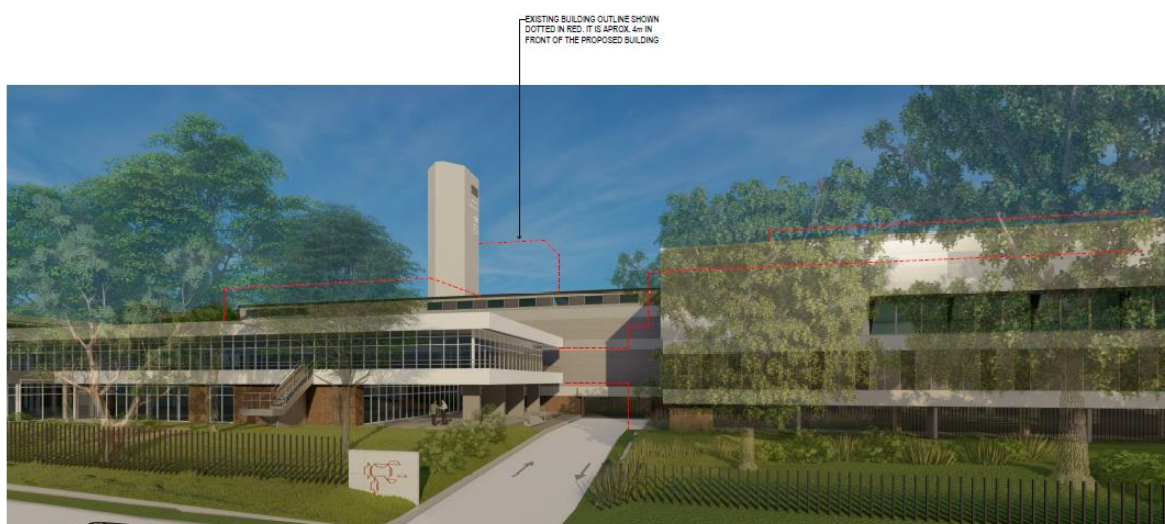


Figure 3 Drawing DA 104 3D image showing the proposed buildings to the south and east of the retained former Roche office building in perspective. The heights of existing buildings are show in broken red line.

The development has retained the heritage significant former office building fronting Inman Road, the single storey office building returning at right angles at its northern end and the hexagonal tower element. The remaining buildings have been designed for very specific purposes and are, in our opinion, will be a challenge to re-occupy other than for low key or office



## 4 Urban Design and Heritage Discussion

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uses. The floor to floor heights are not suitable for warehousing or other uses that might be considered in this location. There is very limited demand for activities that could be accommodated in an adapted office type building. In this regard, there will be a challenge to find uses that can be accommodated in the buildings proposed for retention in the application.

The later phase buildings proposed for demolition immediately behind the office building have been rated as having moderate significance except building 44, which is rated as intrusive. The remaining buildings to be removed have all been rated as low significance.

The design of the new buildings has been substantially improved to harmonise with the retained heritage buildings as shown in **Figures 3 and 4**. The facades now have a horizontal emphasis picking up the white banding of the facades of the retained building facing Inman Road and areas of glazing and ventilation louvres. A strip of glazing along the top of the building behind the retained office building breaks up the façade and in **Figure 3** is the only part seen above the parapet of the retained building.

The proposed corner building has been reduced in height and its façade treatment is attractively articulated. It sits next the retained former office building more sympathetically than the existing building at the corner. Compare **Figure 4** below with **Figure 3**.



*Figure 4 The existing building to the south of the retained former Roche office building. Source Google Streetview.*

An earlier iteration of the amended proposal was reviewed by the Council's heritage adviser, Robert Moore. Elements of the amended proposal receiving favourable comment are:

- Retention of the single storey office wing;
- Treatment of the new corner building with the suggestion that colour and surface finish should be made a bit more recessive compared to the office building by adopting "off white" or similar colour;
- The open space in front of the single storey office wing;
- Recognising the setback of the warehouse units behind the retained buildings with a suggestion for a dark band of glazing in a band along the upper wall area;
- Retention of the hexagonal tower noting that fabric retention and structural support needs to be resolved; and retention of the cottage.

These comments have been incorporated in the refinement of the design as now presented.

### 4.3 Building Height Bulk and Scale

The council's comments with regard to this subject are reproduced followed by a response that reflects the measures taken to produce the amended design.

## 4 Urban Design and Heritage Discussion

The 3D images provided in the amended application package demonstrate that this not the case. Refer to Drawings: DA 101 to DA 106 that provide realistic perspective images.



Figure 5 Drawing SK 101: 3D image showing the prominence of the retained former office buildings from the north-east with the warehouse units receding in perspective behind.

The maximum breach of the 11 metre height control has been reduced from 5.5 metres to 2.71 to the ridge line at the south-western part of the warehouse units by lowering the warehouse floor level and lowering the internal height by 500mm. The wall height behind the retained office building has also been reduced and varies from 0 to about 2 metres.

The 3D images clearly show that by repositioning the warehouse units on the site reducing height and retaining more of the former office building the heritage values of the site are not significantly diminished and capable of interpretation. The southern part of the building is located where the site slopes down significantly. This part presents to the intersection of Inman Road and South Creek Road and to South Creek Road which provides separation not the land on the opposite sides. The interfaces here are not sensitive to bulk and scale of the building because the Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus is to the west and open playing fields and the carpark of the Manly Warringah Football Club are to the south. There is no residential interface. In these circumstances compliance with the height control would not achieve a better urban design outcome and would be unreasonable and unnecessary.

- (1) *As per our previous comments, the view of the northern façade of the original Roche building, should be retained and incorporated into the design. The amended plans do not address this issue or explain why it is not possible. The Urban Design comments are agreed with, in that the proponent should explore the possibility of modifying the warehouse footprint on the northern side, so that the front (northern) view of the heritage item can be preserved.*

The amended plans preserve the northern faced of the original Roche building as shown in **Figure 6**. The warehouse building behind the retained northern section of the Roche building is set back further and is lower than the existing Building 07 in this location. It is also lower than the existing Building 03 immediately to the east, which will be demolished and replaced by the 22 metre wide open space of the roadway thus enhancing the setting of the retained single storey building. The site plan has been amended to place the warehouse units to the north 42 metres from the retained single storey building Leaving a wide field of view as shown in the 3D image Drawing DA 106, see **Figure 7**.

## 4 Urban Design and Heritage Discussion



Figure 6: Drawing SK 104: 3D image showing the retained former two storey Roche office building and single storey northern building with the existing lawn and trees preserved. The heights of the proposed warehouse buildings recede in perspective. The retained hexagonal tower can be seen in the background.

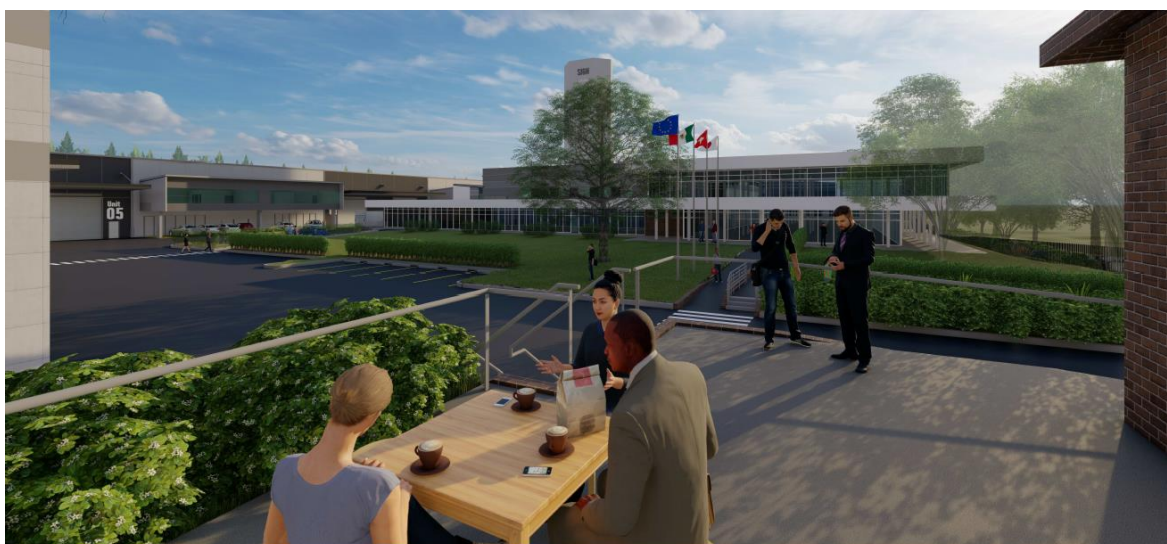


Figure 7: 3D image – Drawing DA 106 showing the single storey Roche office building with the existing lawn and trees preserved. The heights of the proposed warehouse buildings recede in perspective. The south-west corner of the northern warehouse units can be seen at the left-hand side of the image. The 22 metre wide roadway space at the eastern end and the 42 space to the northern warehouse units provides an open setting. The image depicts the retained cottage being used as café.

### 4.4 Streetscape and Landscape

The amended proposal retains the existing streetscape presentation to Inman Road comprising the following elements:

- The retained two storey former Roche office building;
- The retained single-story former Roche office wing at the northern end of the street facing building;
- Dense native trees and understorey planting along the Inman Road frontage;
- The formal lawn and tree plantings on the north side of the office building; and
- The existing cottage at the north-west corner.

## 4 Urban Design and Heritage Discussion

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The warehouse unit building at the south west corner of the site will be lower in scale than the existing building and has been designed to complement the retained former Roche office building. The horizontally banded arrangement of the façade is more in harmony with the architectural expression of the former Roche office building than the building that it will replace. Existing canopy trees at the street corner will be retained and augmented by new planting.

The new warehouse units along the southern end of the site will have a larger streetscape presence than the existing situation. As discussed previously the interface with the playing fields and Manly Warringah Football Club buildings across the road is not a sensitive one. The native “bushland” character of the landscaping will continue along the southern frontage retaining existing trees augmented by canopy trees to 12 – 13 metres at maturity to provide a dominance of vegetation over built form.

## 5 Conclusion

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The amended proposal has been significantly changed through a process of consultation with Northern Beaches Council and internal critiques by the consultant team. The project now achieves a good balance between retention of the key heritage values of the site and development for warehouse facilities in an enhanced landscape setting. The project delivers significant public benefits in adapting the site to functional and economic uses as well as enabling interpretation the history of the activities of the Roche Company.