

To: Max Duncan:

REPORT ON THE EXTENT OF MODIFICATION OF THE EXISTING HOUSE AT 15 DRESS CIRCLE ROAD  
AVALON BEACH: 20/11/20.

This report is submitted in response to Council's request for clarification of the extent of modification to be made to the external envelope of the existing dwelling at 15 Dress Circle Road.

It is structured in response to the planning principal sent to the writer by Council via Max Duncan , being Land and Environment Court Ruling Coorey V's Municipality of Hunters Hill (2013) NSWLEC 2287.

The case in Edgar Allan Planning Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council [2006] NSWLEC 790; (2006) 150 LGERA 1 is also addressed.

The chain of reasons and decisions that were made to reach the design for the alterations and additions to the existing house at 15 Dress Circle Road are set out as follows.

Alterations and Additions to 15 Dress Circle Road:

The central idea of the design for 15 Dress Circle Road as noted in the Statement of Environmental Effects, has two parts:

The first part is to recycle the existing cottage by adaptively re-using it in its existing form.

The second part is to make a small existing house function in an expansive modern way, and to provide it with more amenity, without demolishing it, and without building a larger new house. This represents a substantial saving in resources and labour.

The existing cottage is a solidly built structure which has existed comfortably with it's neighbours, and within the existing neighbourhood context for a long period of time. It makes good sense to keep it.

The adaptive re-use will make the existing cottage function in a more meaningful way, providing more commodity than the existing house does at present.

The existing fabric will be augmented with durable materials, improved ventilation, thermal insulation and sun control to make the building function better than the existing building by employing passive methods of climate control.

The Owners (one of whom is the Architect), will live in the house throughout construction thus saving resources and providing advantage to the quality of the architecture and construction. This "occupancy during construction" is dependant on keeping the existing building fabric. The adaptive re-use scheme has been configured to facilitate this.

All of the above endeavours constitute principles of environmental sustainability.

The following components of the existing house are to be retained:

The existing roof, insulation and roof structure in full.

The existing ceilings, and ceiling structure.

(except for the ceiling over the existing garage and laundry which is made out of asbestos cement sheet. This will be removed and replaced for health and statutory reasons).

The existing floor and floor structure comprising hardwood bearers and joists.

The existing sub floor, existing brick piers and their pad footings, and three quarters of the existing foundation walls and their strip footings.

The existing gable ends.

The existing east and west walls.

(The east wall will have two window openings made within it. The existing west wall will have three panels of asbestos cement removed and infilled with timber frame and timber cladding and will have 4 small windows made within it).

The existing north and south walls are to remain above the heads of the existing windows and doors, but parts of the walls will be removed below these heads and replaced with new posts and walls within the plane of the walls.

One internal wall is to remain in place, the others are to be reconfigured as shown.

Reasons for modifying the north and south facades:

Increasing the extent of the openings in the north and south walls provides level access from the habitable rooms to the new adjacent areas of private open space, thus creating greater amenity to the habitable rooms. Most particularly the northern verandah will be a viable living space in most periods of clement weather, as it is to be fully covered and screened against insect entry.

The modified openings transform the cottage into a more expansive residence without changing its three dimensional form or without increasing its fully enclosed area. They are an essential means to achieve the environmentally sustainable idea which is to give a small cottage more amenity without increasing it's floor area.

Utilising the roof space:

The roof space of the existing cottage is to be converted into storage space resulting in a reduction in the space required for wardrobes and storage within the habitable floor area and thus an increase in useable floor space without increasing the size of the dwelling. A permanent stair is proposed to make this an active storage space.

Separate forms for existing and new work:

The development leaves the existing structure in tact in its original form, and adds a verandah structure with its own separate roof form situated adjacent to the northern face of the existing house.

### **Qualitative issues considered in assessment of the proposal:**

#### **How is the appearance of the existing building to be changed when viewed from public places?**

The northern facade of the existing building is masked from view from the street by the proposed new verandah.

However the form of the existing house will remain much the same behind the verandah.

Changes to the openings in the north wall of the existing structure will not be seen from the street.

The NE and NW corners of the existing house will be visible. The form of these corners is the same form as the corners are at present. That is, the planes of the walls and the juxtaposition of the roof planes are the same. The roof of the existing house will be visible from the street, and it is not changed.

#### **To what extent, if any, will existing landscaping be removed and how will that affect the setting of the building when viewed from public places?**

The Statement of Environmental Effects describes the scheme for the garden. In summary this scheme involves creating a robust native bush garden which will form a complete setting for the building. A few plants need to be removed to construct the driveway. Two plants need to be removed to construct the verandah. Extensive additional native landscaping will be planted which will beautify the setting of the house when viewed from public areas.

#### **To what extent, if any, will the proposal impact on a heritage item, the curtilage of a heritage item or a heritage conservation area?**

There are no heritage items in the vicinity. The subject dwelling and land is not a heritage item. The proposal thus will have no impact on any heritage item.

#### **What additional structures, if any, in the curtilage of the existing building will be demolished or altered if the proposal is approved?**

No structures of any architectural or aesthetic significance will be removed from within the curtilage of the existing building.

The brick and concrete porch structure will be removed to allow for the construction of the new verandah, to facilitate car parking and the creation of a front door vestibule. It is argued that the existing porch is not aesthetically or architecturally significant, and it will be replaced with a structure that has improved functionality, and improved aesthetic quality.

#### **What is the extent, if any, of any proposed change to the use of the building?**

There is no change to the use of the building.

#### **To what extent, if any, will the proposed development result in any change to the streetscape in which the building is located?**

The proposed development involves building a verandah on the northern side of the existing structure. The verandah is built substantially within the footprint of the existing verandah and extends across the full width of the northern facade.

The new verandah will be the main element in the streetscape with the presence of the existing unchanged building form behind it, the two parts sitting comfortably together.

The building is set well back from the front boundary, it is of a low and sympathetic scale, it is sited within a bush garden, it is designed with proportion and materiality in mind and will be an improvement to the streetscape.

To what extent, if any, are the existing access arrangements for the building proposed to be altered?

The original access arrangement of the building was via a front door on the northern facade at the floor level. The proposed access arrangement is via a vestibule on the northern facade at the lower floor level which leads immediately up to the entrance in the northern facade of the existing house.

To what extent, if any, will the outlook from within the existing building be altered as a consequence the proposed development?

The outlook from within the existing building will be maintained to the north and the south.

Is the proposed demolition so extensive to cause that which remains to lose the characteristics of the form of the existing structure?

The characteristics of the form of the existing building remains unchanged.

#### **Quantitative issues considered in assessment of the proposal:**

To what extent is the site coverage proposed to be changed?

The impervious area on the site is increased from 273 to 322 square metres an increase of 18.3 percent of the original impervious area. Much of this increase is created by the new driveway which is required to satisfy the parking requirements of the DCP.

The gross floor area of the development is increased from 100 to 136 square metres. Much of this increase in area occurs from building bathrooms, laundry and the pantry within the footprint of the existing garage which is itself contained within the envelope of the existing house.

To what extent are any existing non-compliances with numerical controls either increased or diminished by the proposal?

There are no numerical non compliances in the proposal.

To what extent is the building envelope proposed to be changed?

The envelope of the existing cottage is proposed to remain unchanged.

The envelope of the new verandah structure sits within the building envelope prescribed by the DCP.

To what extent are boundary setbacks proposed to be changed?

There are no changes proposed to the boundary setbacks of the existing house.

The verandah addition complies with the boundary setbacks prescribed by the DCP.

To what extent will the present numerical degree of landscaping on the site be changed?

The existing landscaped area of the site is 75% of the total site area.

The proposed landscaped area is 68% of the total site area of 1088 square metres.

Much of this minor decrease in landscaped area is associated with the new driveway which is required to park two cars on the site in the method prescribed by the DCP and the parking code.

To what extent will there be changes in the roof form?

There will be no change in the roof form of the existing house.

The verandah has a discreet roof form as it is a separate addition to the existing building.

The two forms sit comfortably together and are expressed as two separate entities.

To what extent will there be alterations to car parking/garaging on the site and/or within the building?

The car parking is increased to two cars situated under the proposed verandah.

This brings the proposal into line with the requirement for two car spaces in a configuration which conforms with the relevant Australian Standard for parking.

The cars are parked under the addition to the existing house, substantially out of site from public view.

To what extent is the existing landform proposed to be changed by cut and/or fill to give effect to the proposed development?

The landform under the proposed verandah addition is to be excavated to allow for car parking and an entrance vestibule.

This excavation is within the footprint of the existing porch (which is to be removed), and in the footprint of an original porch on the site which was removed a few years ago as it was in a dangerous condition. There is a small amount of excavation required under the northern edge of part of the existing cottage to allow for the full length of a vehicle in accordance with the parking code, but apart from that the excavation does not extend under the existing cottage.

What relationship does the proportion of the retained building bear to the proposed new development?

The form of the existing house, is retained in it's entirety as a separate and unchanged form.

The verandah addition is designed as a separate and discreet form, which is shaped to express it's particular function which is principally to allow light into the northern face of the existing house, and to step down at it's east and west ends to minimise scale effects on the neighbouring properties.

The two different roof forms join at the box gutter that runs along the northern edge of the existing roof.

The form of the existing building expresses a fundamental part of the form of the development. The form of the existing building is fully retained, with the new verandah is given a completely separate and individual form. The two forms are separate and pure.

### Prescriptive method of evaluation:

The planning principle in The case in Edgar Allan Planning Pty Ltd v Woollahra Municipal Council [2006] NSWLEC 790; (2006) states:

“A development application to alter and add to a building will be taken to be that relating to a new building where more than half of the existing external fabric of the building is demolished. The area of the existing external fabric is taken to be the surface area of all the existing external walls, the roof measured in plan and the area of the lowest habitable floor.”

In the proposal for alterations and additions to the house at 15 dress circle road 10.9% of the existing external fabric of the building is proposed to be demolished.

Please see the accompanying drawing DA 10c, and the following table of areas.

Area of roof measured on plan	183.0 sq m
Area of floor measured on plan	122.0 sq m
Area of solid wall measured in elevation:	135.0 sq m
Total area of roof, floor and solid parts of perimeter walls	440.0 sq m
Area of solid wall removed from elevations:	48.0 sq m
Total area of perimeter solid walls to be removed as a percentage of total area of roof, floor and solid parts of perimeter walls	10.9 %

### **Conclusion:**

The central tenant of the proposal is to adaptively re-use the existing cottage, and to add a separate verandah structure along it's northern edge replacing the existing verandah structure.. The design is based on principles of environmental sustainability.

The form of the existing cottage remains strongly in tact and the numerical extent of alterations to the external fabric of the existing cottage is minor.

The chain of reasons and decisions that were made, describe a design that is clearly an alteration and addition both a qualitative and quantitative sense.