northern beaches council

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting

DA2020/1287 - 58 Forest Way, FRENCHS FOREST

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This site is at the lowest limit of acceptable frontage width and area, with a frontage width of 21.46m and an area of 1012 m2. The lot narrows down to being 16.335m wide at the rear.

These dimensions and area make it essential to have an efficiently planned design at ground level if the proposal is to comply with all the planning controls, fit into the character of the area and the proposed FSR not create unacceptable impacts.

The proposal has an FSR which must be seriously considered against the impacts this creates. This combined with the decision to have on grade car access and parking increases the building bulk (car parking is enclosed but not counted in GFA), the impermeable area and footprint of the building. These have a series of flow on- effects, the most significant being the impact on existing trees and vegetation.

Strategic context

The provision of additional affordable housing in close proximity to services and amenities is consistent with state and local policies.

Urban context: surrounding area character.

The site is 420 metres from Forestway Shopping Centre, however bus stops are located in closer proximity along Forest Way. The Seniors Living SEPP requires siting within 400m to services and facilities or public transport. The Panel does not consider this minor non-compliance significant.

Public domain

The existing concrete block retaining wall extends into the public footpath. The existing mature vegetation provides a visual barrier and contributes to the streetscape along Forest Way

Recommendation

1. The existing concrete block should be removed, and any retaining wall be located entirely within the site, while every effort should be made to protect and retain the existing vegetation.

Density Scale, built form and articulation,

Whilst the proposal complies with the SEPP HSDP density control, the proposition of large internal voids and above ground car parking, which are not counted in FSR calculations, add building bulk.

The high roof form in the rear 25% of the site does not meet the objective of the single storey control in the SEPP, as the high built form adds overshadowing to the neighbouring yard and will be excessively visually prominent, with a 2-storey appearance.

The 2 buildings are 2.7m apart, which is insufficient separation to provide a view corridor and visual separation between the buildings. If a separation between the 2 buildings is provided it needs to be substantially more than 2.7m.

The ground floor living rooms are very close to the northern boundary and the adjoining house. They will be overshadowed for a large part of the time and would have poor amenity.

The two storey dwellings have living areas at ground level and upstairs. The top level living area has the potential to be converted into a bedroom by a future occupant and is undesirable, as additional bedrooms would trigger additional car spaces if proposed at DA stage.

The overall internal planning and built forms are highly irregular. The top floor steps around 2 storey internal volumes and external forms and roofs are primarily a result of internal planning decisions. More regular internal planning could make more efficient use of space. It is recommended that more regular planning, external forms and roof forms would create better proportioned buildings, without losing the ability to have some facade articulation.

Recommendations

2. Comply with the single storey limit on the rear 25% of the site
3. Increase the distance between front and rear building to improve amenity and allow for some vegetation to screen the blank wall

Landscape

The arborist's report states that the proposal is to remove 6 trees, 4 of which are high value trees and one of which very high value (T6). This T6 tree has a large canopy that sets the landscape character of the site and is visually prominent in the neighbourhood. Tree 4 has an A1 retention value and is located on the neighbouring site. While the arborist nominates a methodology to manually excavate to retain and protect this tree, locating the building further from this root system would be preferable, as the long-term health of this tree could be substantially diminished with the proposed methodology.

The loss of the proposed trees will substantially reduce the tree canopy and landscaped character of the site. This character would not be reinstated with the proposed landscape, which contains only 1 replacement native canopy tree, in the street front N-E corner of the site. The non-compliance of the landscaped open space area, large paved areas for vehicular access and only 1 canopy tree would lead to an outcome that does not fit into the landscaped character of the area and does not retain trees of high intrinsic value.

The removal of almost all the trees bar one specimen is an issue with the loss of urban canopy as well as landscape character. The development will lead to the removal of 7 significant endemic trees on site of great size, in good condition and currently providing over 50% canopy cover to the site.

Recommendations

4. Redesign the development footprint to provide deep soil to provide for tree retention of all significant trees. A suggestion is to flip the driveway, reduce the garage footprint, to increase the trees retained and make more space available for additional planting.
5. Consider basement car parking that may free up even more space to allow retention of trees.

   Landscape Areas appear less that the 30% required are noncompliant leading to a poor landscape outcome noted above and screening issues to boundary e.g. Driveway and courtyards to Units 2/3.

6. **Recommend:** Increase landscape areas to be 30% requirement.

Amenity

The ground floor living rooms will be overshadowed for a large part of the time as they are very close to the northern boundary and the adjoining house. Setting back from the side boundary or re-orienting the living rooms would enhance amenity.

The acoustic report should recommend high performance glazing to address acoustic issues related to Forest Way.

Recommendation

7. Investigate re-arrangement of internal planning to minimise noise impacts, note the requirement under infrastructure SEPP 2007 (Mandatory under clause 102 of the Infrastructure SEPP Roads (Freeways, tollways, transitways and >40,000 AADT))

Safety and social interaction

The pedestrian path to the rear dwellings is shared with the car driveway and pedestrian safety and amenity are compromised by this design.

There are no communal open spaces and any social interaction would take place around the car driveway and garages. This is not a place conducive to social interaction in the current design.

Recommendation

8. Include design features and improve the quality of paving and landscape to allow the use of the driveway as a shared courtyard space; consider trellises and shade trees over the driveway. Include traffic calming measure to reduce the speed to 10km, ensure clear lines of sight.

Sustainability and resilience

The nomination of 3-star rating for toilets is low. Glazing performance is also low and higher performing glazing would improve climate resilience.

Only 1 kw of solar is proposed for 1 dwelling only.

The large voids over living areas make heating and cooling more difficult and have led to high heating loads in the BASIX assessment.

Gas has been included.

Recommendations

9. 4 Star rated toilets are recommended and would be easier to source.
10. Photovoltaic panels are recommended for every dwelling and with a higher performance than proposed.
11. Removing the voids would increase heating performance.
12. Electric induction cooking would be preferable.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form.

This site is at the lowest limit of acceptable frontage width and area, with a frontage width of 21.46m and an area of 1012 m2. The lot narrows down to being 16.335m wide at the rear. These dimensions and area make it essential to have an efficiently planned design at ground level if the proposal is to comply with all the planning controls, fit into the character of the area and maximise the FSR.

This proposal fails to satisfy the planning controls and does not fit into the character of the area. The lack of landscaped open space, the shared pedestrian path and the removal of 6 trees, 4 of which

are high value trees and one of which very high value (T6), demonstrate non compliance and a failure to fit into the landscape a character of the area.

A re-design is required, and it is recommended to:

- Locate the car driveway to the northern side of the frontage;
- Provide underground car parking;
- Retain all 6 high value existing tree.

This approach will allow for the re-siting of dwellings away from side boundaries, possibly with living areas oriented east west. Dwelling types could be single level dwellings stacked on top of each other in two storey buildings, or 2 storey dwellings side by side. Built forms should be more regular than currently proposed and buildings should contain more than one material.