

Urban Design Referral Response

Application Number:	DA2021/0212
Date:	01/04/2021
To:	Lashta Haidari
Land to be developed (Address):	Lot 101 DP 1209504 , 5 Skyline Place FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086

Officer comments

Proposed Development

The development application consists of construction of a mixed-use development comprising 3 separate buildings with heights proposed from 3 - 12 storeys with a maximum height of 30-35 metres and a proposed FSR of approximately 3:1. The proposed development includes 941m² of commercial floorspace and 133 apartments comprising seniors living and affordable apartments; a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedrooms. Approximately 3,200m² (42% site of area) of landscaped open space is provided as well as basement parking.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004

The application is lodged pursuant to State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 (SEPP (HSPD) considering part of the development is for 'Seniors Housing'.

The subject site is zoned B7 Business Park under Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011 (WLEP 2011). Development for the purposes of seniors housing is permitted with consent pursuant to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for seniors or people with a Disability) 2004 (SEPP HSPD) by virtue of 'hospitals' being permitted in the B7 Business Park zone.

Issues are raised with the development's consistency with the Aims of the Policy, namely;

- Clause 2c in relation to design and compatibility,
- Clause 33 (a) in that the bulk, scale and height of the proposal is not found to be compatible with the existing and desired future character, nor the quality and identity of the locality, and
- Clause 50 (standards that can not be used to refuse development) Height, Density and Scale.

As a state wide policy the SEPP HSPD provisions cannot anticipate the conditions where it might be applied. Reflected in the height and density provisions; 8m and 0.5:1 respectively as that which cannot be used as the basis for refusal, the development exploits this weakness in the policy (SEPP HSPD) to the extent the proposed development could not be seen be reasonably compatible with with low density residential zones.

Site Analysis - Built Form Context

The site locality is ringed by major transport corridors, is surrounded by a variety of built form uses including warehouses, multi storey commercial and business parks typified by commercial and office uses and further out, residential zones. The site itself sits within the middle of the block and as such does not benefit from broader vistas to the greater landscape conditions of the locality.

The proposed development is of a perimeter block form with a generous central landscaped open space, with buildings articulated as two diagonally opposed tower forms (11 and 12 storey or 39 metres) complemented by lower rise (6 storey or 10 metres) blocks and a three storey communal building with facilities.

Bulk and Scale

The scale and massing across the site is uncharacteristic of the locality; the proposed residential building is significantly higher than surrounding development, by up to 6 storeys. Given there is no FSR control applicable to the site, the combined impacts of the intensity and the proposed scale of development across the site cannot be supported on merit.

Open Space and Public Domain

The proposal sets a central open space piazza within a perimeter block form comprising two long linear blocks with a north south axis on the east and west boundaries. Each of these blocks is comprised of a six storey element and an 11/12 storey element.

The central landscaped piazza is designed with access pathways and varying levels of planting detail. Given the scale, intensity and length of these buildings, the streetwall effect created by the length of the block is somewhat monolithic. Breaking down the scale of the block form and mass further to create an open to the sky through site link mid block is recommended for both the east and west linear blocks. Whilst it is noted there is a through building link at ground level the broader view aspects from a pedestrian scale will be dominated by the scale and height of the proposed development. A less intense proposal across the site is highly recommended to address the human scale in this distinct and unique urban context.

Wayfinding and Access

Similarly, further refinement of a clear wayfinding strategy from public street to internal street is recommended. The potential opportunity to introduce an internal street network that includes a shared zone would benefit access for the residents. The current proposal does not include this in the whole of site strategy and as such may be a missed opportunity to achieve a finer grain public domain strategy. The public domain and open space requires further detailed planning and options analysis to achieve a higher level of public domain amenity.

Additionally, it is noted there is a 20 metre break between the development and the buildings on the adjoining lot. Whilst this assists to relieve the impact of the development somewhat it is driven predominantly by the requirement for extensive driveway access to the underground car parks of both sites. This has the effect of lessening the gesture of open space and building separation.

Circulation

It is noted that the two linear blocks share a central vertical circulation core. Whilst there are efficiencies to this strategy it remains that as a Seniors development a more fine grain approach to building identity and individual address is appropriate for this type and scale of development. The current plan sets the lobbies/ circulation cores deep within the plan of each of the long linear blocks. Articulated as a small rebate in the facade this is less identifiable than providing a clear street address and entry sequence for the blocks. The location of lift lobbies should be clearly identifiable from central courtyards, streets or shared zones. Additionally, circulation cores and lobbies should have access to natural daylighting and cross ventilation. As a minimum, the two linear blocks should be scaled down to four smaller blocks with individual address and circulation core to each.

Amenity - solar and cross ventilation

Aspects of the proposal's planning regime requires further demonstration that principles of solar access and cross ventilation can be achieved. Double loaded corridors with single aspect apartments off a central corridor will find it difficult to achieve these principles. The south western corner accommodating the accessible housing does not demonstrate a high level of amenity with apartments in the least optimal zone of the site, particularly those facing directly west. For people with disabilities the location of these apartments present as the least desirable zone on the lot and could be viewed as discriminatory.

Principally, the dominant courtyard/perimeter block typology demonstrates various opportunities to bring majority of aspects back to the central piazza for all residents. This specifically goes to the

comments regarding double loaded corridors vs double aspect apartments.

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.