



The General Manager

Northern Beaches Council

1 Belgrave Street MANLY NSW 2095

24.06.2021

Re: PLM2021/0123- 53A Warriewood Rd, WARRIEWOOD

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – 27 May 2021

APPLICANTS RESPONSE

The following report is our response to the issues raised by the Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel (DSAP).

General

Strategic context

The applicant has now included a detailed site analysis. The 'views' the panel describes to Narrabeen Creek cannot be improved further in any built form outcome. The context of the surrounding built form between Narrabeen Creek and Warriewood Road is of predominantly free standard dwellings or dual occupancy dwellings on small allotments. The predominant build form on the North East side of Warriewood Road is singularly free standing dwellings. The proposal is entirely consistent with the context in proposing continuation of the predominant built form of the site's context.



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This DSAP proposes that the NSW Apartment Design Guide is used as a guiding document for this proposal. The applicant is not seeking to propose an Apartment building form for this proposal so this comment has been disregarded.

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

- 1. The project needs to embrace the whole site and leverage off the site's unique attributes.*

Given the actual context of the site, the applicant can only conclude that the DSAP has misunderstood the position of the site. We are confident our proposal does precisely this.

- 2. Prepare a more thorough site and context analysis and demonstrate how the opportunities presented by the site and its context have informed the design.*

Our application includes a thorough site and context analysis.

- 3. refer to the ADG Appendix 1 (attached) for an indication of the drawings that should be prepared as part of a site analysis.*

See above, we note our application does not include Apartments. We have provided a Site Analysis.

Urban context: surrounding area character.

The DSAP states that no appraisal of views has been undertaken. This is incorrect. A detailed on-site appraisal was undertaken, however we did not prepare documents of this appraisal to the DSAP. While views to the Narrabeen Creek can be enjoyed while the site is clear, there is no built form outcome that will result in any more than the directly adjoining dwellings enjoying these views. The new shared street that is proposed approximately perpendicular to the Creek is the only Urban Design form that allows public space to enjoy views to the Creek. Views across Warriewood Road, to the north, and when the adjoining site is developed to the south are of predominantly built form with no amenity value to this proposal.

The DSAP states that the design of individual dwellings was undertaken in isolation from context without developing an overall Urban Design approach. This is again incorrect, see above points regarding the proposal being entirely consistent to context. The applicant makes the point that the DSAP appears to fail to understand that this is a medium density development in a medium development site in a medium density zone and that many of the comments are seeking outcomes



possible only in low-density development. The opportunity for outdoor living that seemed somewhat romanticised by the panel because the project is in 'The Northern Beaches' will in reality be of a more condensed type because of the very nature of being Medium Density Development. However, we have taken notice of the spirit of the comment by the DSAP and further improved the outdoor living of each dwelling by increasing the size of decks, increasing the width of decks, reducing the internal area of the dwelling and improving the links to those outdoor areas.

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

4. *Provide long through-site sections to illustrate the constraints and opportunities (falls in level and views, solar access and overshadowing). These sections would be an effective starting point to understand the site and to show how an efficient (in terms of yield) and qualitative urban/architectural strategy might evolve in response to it.*

We have provided long-sections through the site. These sections demonstrate that given the shape of the site, the slope is not sufficient to promote an alternative qualitative urban/architectural strategy in response to it.

5. *Provide a study of the overshadowing impacts from adjacent buildings and fences along the east and west boundaries.*

Our proposal includes shadow diagrams. The DSAP discusses the slope of the site impacting shadows. While this has some impact the overriding characteristic defining shadow outcome is the fact that the site has a long boundary that is approximately 45° rotated from North. This shape of the site itself in any medium density context predetermines a shadow outcome. The first floor of the homes are typically a very generous 3.9m apart on their side boundary providing as much solar access as possible for any medium density outcome. There is no low-rise medium density built form that achieves the DCP's minimum density yield that can 'repair' the predetermined fundamentals of the narrow shape and orientation of the site to the expectations of the DSAP.

Scale, built form and articulation Amenity

The panel correctly describes the proposal as includes 21 dwellings, the DCP states a minimum dwelling density for the site at 17 dwellings. Our first concept presented to Council in the Pre-Lodgement meeting of the 18th of February 2021 had a yield of 23 houses. This has now been reduced to 21 in response to the recommendations of the Pre-Lodgement meeting. Our feasibility requires this 21 dwellings at absolute minimum yield for financial viability of development of this site.

The panel describes the dwellings as sitting in the centre of each lot. This is not correct. The houses are typically zero-lot houses meaning they are sited with a zero setback one side boundary and a more



generous setback on the other. The advantage being that this form provides an improved widened area down one side of each dwelling. This space is between 2.4M - 3.0M wide at ground, and increases to be 3.9m wide at First Floor. This is significantly wider and more functionally useful for residents, and meaningful landscape treatment than would typically be found in complying development R2 low density development that typically has 900mm side setbacks. This proposed zero lot format provides significant opportunities for light and ventilation to enter each home, and provides a wide area between each home for landscape and planting.

The DSAP incorrectly states that the area of each dwelling is 'actually very large' and 'approaching FSR 1:1'. The dwellings are 3-bedroom dwellings with the densest dwellings (lot 10,12,14 & 16) having a GFA of 148 sqm on a site area of 217sqm with a resulting FSR of 0.68:1, and the least dense lot 22 having a GFA of 148sqm on a 316sqm Lot with a resulting FSR of 0.46:1. The NSW Medium Density Design Guide describes typical FSRs for Multi-Dwelling Housing in a range of 0.45-0.7 on a minimum lot size of 200sqm. This proposal is entirely consistent with the most relevant NSW Planning guideline for this type of development. The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that the average 3 Bedroom home is 175sqm, the 3-bedroom dwellings proposed are typically less than 150sqm. The DSAP is not correct in stating that the homes are 'very large'.

The DSAP proposes that the bedrooms located on the first floor could be reduced in size to reduce the footprint of the living rooms on the ground floor and increase the landscape area. The applicant does not understand the logic of this suggestion. The living areas of the home offer the residents quality amenity for the nature of the product but are certainly not excessive, the living areas must be located on the ground floor to enjoy the links to the outdoor living areas the DSAP promoted previously. Our market research has informed the size of the bedrooms on the first floor and the amenity that they offer residents. Being medium density housing these houses can be provided to the market at a more affordable price than low-density development. The applicant is strongly of the view that just because these homes by nature are relatively modestly priced compared to lower density product, the residents should not be penalised with mean minimum sized bedrooms that the DSAP seems to suggest we should provide. With a space between dwellings on the first level of 3.9M well in excess of a typical R2 zone, one can hardly describe these homes as bulky. The applicant is particularly perplexed by this comment when later the DSAP goes on to suggest that row-housing may be a more appropriate form of development of the site.

The panel has suggested that the planning of these dwellings is inefficient. Excluding the very modest entry the typical houses have a total hallway area of approximately 5sqm - or 3.5% of the floor area. The DSAP is not correct in stating that the dwellings are inefficient.

The DSAP has identified that the decks proposed were narrow and small. We have positively responded to this comment and modified the design to increased the width and extended the area of decking to better allow furnishing as proposed.

The DSAP correctly states that the dwellings on the western flank of the site will benefit from the north western orientation and the dwellings on the eastern flank are at a disadvantage with a more southern orientation. Houses on 2 sides of a street are the most common form of housing across the



world, the earth's tilt toward the sun causes a natural difference to the urban environment that the applicant is powerless to control. We have however provided a secondary living area that will enjoy northern sunlight within the houses on the eastern flank.

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

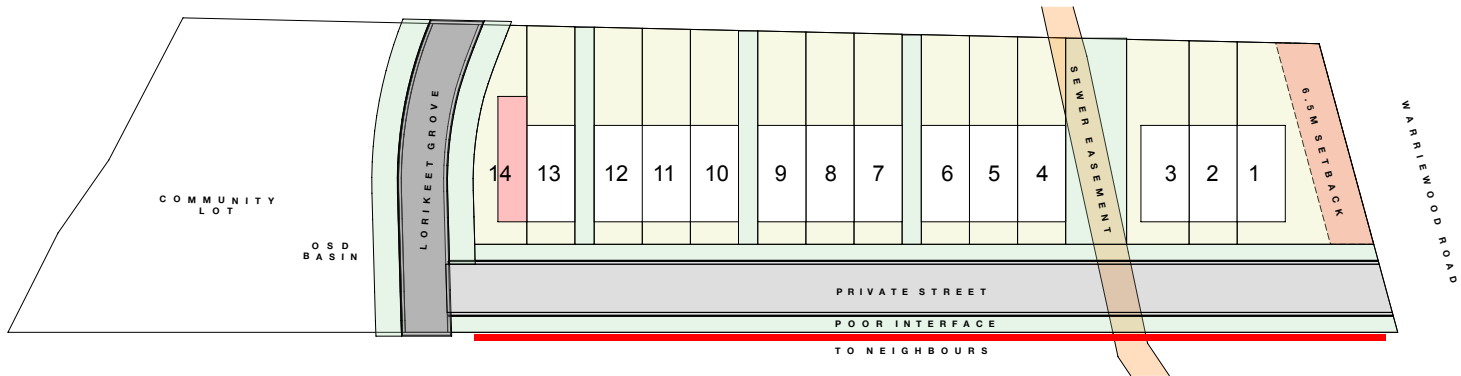
6. Explore the potential of stepping down to become a departure point for the design, facilitating different spaces of varying privacy, intimacy, character and scale.

Our design process explored many different alternatives for the site and we are confident that our proposal is an optimal outcome for medium density development of this site.

7. The Panel suggests other built form solutions be investigated on this sloping site to determine whether these alternatives might allow for a greater (and more equitable) distribution of sun to the living areas (both interior and exterior) of a greater number of dwellings. Could the comparatively longer and narrower parcelization of land that results from a row house configuration achieve this? Could an access road positioned along the eastern boundary also achieve this along with a more generous road width?

We have tested the DSAP proposal and found it to be lacking merit for the following reasons:

- a. In our Pre-Lodgement meeting of 18th February 2021, Council made it clear they did not support row-housing as suitable typology for this site.
- b. A one-sided street is an inefficient form of infrastructure. It also results in one side of the street fronting the back fences of the adjoining property which is a deleterious outcome for those neighbouring properties.
- c. the yield will not meet the minimum requirement of the DCP for this site, see image below.
- d. the narrow row houses will have poorer amenity than the proposal with less ventilation and light and will result in a bulkier built form outcome.
- e. the narrower north-western facade means each home provides less sun than the proposed homes on this flank, however it is acknowledged that each home will be equitably penalised.



8. Internal and room dimensions could be tightened-up which would reduce the overall bulk.

The homes are less than the average size of 3-bedroom dwelling in Australia. However as previously discussed we have demonstrated the bulk is already less than a typical R2 low-density housing outcome with very large side setbacks and the houses are already less than the average 3-bedroom dwelling in Australia.

9. Reducing the upper storey bulk could deliver greater opportunities for un-fettered solar access (and perhaps also improved visual and acoustic privacy) between dwellings.

We have tested this proposal and found the solar access outcomes are only very marginally improved, while causing significant detriment to the internal amenity. The acoustic privacy outcomes of the proposal are already better than typical R2 low-density housing.



10. Increase the amount of outdoor private open space by (sic) reconfiguring the internal ground floor area to open up onto a more generously proportioned and sunlit courtyard.

We have reduced the size of the dining rooms and increased the size and width of the space between dwellings to 3M on ground adjacent to the outdoor living area.

11. Show longitudinal and lateral elevations and sections through the entire site (including neighbouring buildings and structures like retaining walls and/or fences).

We have provided the additional drawings as suggested.

Access

The panel suggests that consideration should be made to remove access to Warriewood Drive. This was our first design approach, however we found with careful consideration that the required turning head on the cul-de-sac to service Waste Collection Vehicles reduced the potential minimum dwelling yield of the site to below the DCP control.

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

12. Opportunities exist to improve the design of the access road and potentially its placement with respect to the site. For example, it remains to be seen whether the central location of the road is the optimal solution; reducing as it does the effective depth of each allotment on both sides and limiting the amount of space that is available in both the front and rear setbacks.

See scheme above testing the outcome of an offset access road that does not meet the minimum yield for the site required in the DCP. This site is a remnant site with no opportunity for amalgamation, it is narrower than ideal and this does put some limitations on the development outcome that Council needs to consider when determining this proposal. The proposal still results in all lots achieving a soft landscaped area in excess of 30% with some of the lots achieving well in excess of 35%. The average soft landscaping ratio is very close to the DCP control requirement of 35%.

13. There is the potential to treat the road as a shared zone, with permeable paving, increased landscape, slower traffic speeds; strengthening it as a landscaped pedestrian path connecting to the public green space to the south and integrating water-sensitive design into its shape and form.



We have instructed our Landscape Architect and Civil Engineer to consider this comment and have responded positively to it. The road pavement at each end has been changed to create a threshold to slow traffic speeds allow the possible use of the street as shared zone. The placement of front walls to each dwelling has been carefully considered and on the north-western side of the street the front walls have been pushed back from the footpath to create a soft-verge like environment. There is a soft landscaped verge on the south-eastern side of the street. We have very carefully considered Water Sensitive Urban Design in the street width but found that there is insufficient space to allow for parking, waste collection and these features. Stormwater is directed to a 'soft' OSD basin at the bottom of the site adjacent to Lorikeet Grove.

14. Consideration should be given to serviceability for waste collection and if it is not possible to manage this on site without unduly compromising the public domain, then a strategy for having rubbish collection points at the Warriewood Road and Lorikeet Grove intersections should be investigated.

This proposal by DSAP is not supported by Council's Waste Management Guidelines, nor is it feasible or close to reasonable to expect a resident to drag bins 85m uphill for collection. This comment has been appropriately disregarded.

Landscape

The DSAP has expressed concerns about the conditions for decent trees and within the 4M setback at rear described as narrow. The 4m setback complies with Council's DCP.

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

15. The street should also have appropriate street tree canopies that will provide a contiguous canopy linking Warriewood Road to the riparian Narrabeen Creek lands to the sites Southern boundary.

Our Landscape Architect has carefully designed the street to ensure that this recommendation has been met.

16. Reconfigure and increase the area of deep soil, consider underground water storage.

We have positively responded to this recommendation and relocated the water tanks underground under the driveways to increase the area of deep soil.



17. Further information is needed on the materiality of the scheme including the design rationale behind the use of privacy screens on select windows (but not necessarily just on windows that could benefit from such screening).

We have provided an illustrated material schedule with our proposal. The privacy screens have been selected on windows to provide privacy and architectural articulation of the facades.

Sustainability

The recommendations of the DSAP are as follows:

18. Consider utilising electric heat pump hot water and induction cooktops to replace the use of gas.

The applicant has considered the use of electric heat pump hot water, we will provide instantaneous Natural Gas water heaters, however we will provide Induction Cooktops. We have provided a complying BASIX Certificate with the application.

The applicant is presenting the homes to the market as Photovoltaic ready, with the option that each purchaser can choose to upgrade to a Photovoltaic panel installation.

Panel Conclusion

The applicant acknowledges that the DSAP does not support the proposal, nor do we expect that this response will gain the support of the DSAP.

Our response has been provided to Council to demonstrate where we have been able to positively respond to the recommendations of the DSAP. Furthermore our intention has been to demonstrate that many of the recommendations of the DSAP are clearly impractical, non-compliant with Council's DCP's or other controls, in conflict with advice the applicant has received in our Pre-Lodgement meeting. Many of the comments of the DSAP have been made without the benefit of significant time required to resolve the development of this remnant site. In some instances it is clear the comments have reflected that the work of our Landscape Architect was not yet complete.

The applicant is confident that the proposal is a good medium density outcome that is consistent with the immediate context of the site and provides a quality public domain and a high level of private amenity and seeks Councils support for the proposal.

END.