

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY PANEL MEETING REPORT

DA2025/0533 – 14 Aquatic Drive FRENCHS FOREST

PANEL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This Development Application was presented to the Panel at Pre-DA stage on 25 July 2024. The advice provided the following conclusion:

The Panel is supportive of the proposal subject to the incorporation of the recommendations above

24 July 2025

In principal, the Panel acknowledges and commends the design development that has addressed *some* previous Panel recommendations that have improved outcomes compared to the previous PLM presentation. However, the Panel does not support the following proposed design in its current form that has either not addressed recommendations from the previous presentation or as a result of fundamental design changes:

- streetscape massing and presentation to Warringah Road
- aspects of building and amenity performance
- design quality of the façade treatments
- further work to increase canopy to Warringah Road and reduce hard-stand/impermeable surface impacts
- the above in context of departures from site coverage.

These will need to be addressed as per the Recommendations of this report in order for the Panel to support the development application proposal.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

Warringah Road is a harsh, vehicle focused environment that requires the northern verge and site's northern setback to maximise deep soil so that larger canopy planting and substantial landscape can achieve the intended future desired character.

While the Panel acknowledges bushfire considerations and NSW government acquisition for road widening. However, these are contextual site conditions that a design proposition is expected to satisfactorily resolve.

The Panel notes the existing footprint and provisions that enable a zero setback along the eastern and south-eastern part of the boundary. This continues to present interface challenges with implications for both site character and building performance.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

1. Consider future opportunities for block porosity and respond in terms of building alignment and access/servicing

- Positive changes from the PLM include:
 - Deleting the western vehicle ramp to Level 1 – improves pedestrian entry character and amenity, increases deep soil, enables a pedestrian link to Warringah Road.
 - Pedestrian link to Warringah Road – achieves good amenity via a path through significant deep soil landscape that also serves as a natural/landscape respite from both the westerly sun, Warringah Road's harsh environment, and provides a break-out landscape space for workers at the ground level.
 - Main Building entry treatment – deleting the ramp improves the internal entry address. The south-western corner is more open up and helps separate pedestrian and vehicle movements.
 - Creating an outdoor staff area at the north western corner that is elevated at Level 2 and opportunities for integrated podium landscape to cool the hardstand and hard surfaces.
- No change to the eastern or south-eastern zero-setback condition.
- Configuration of warehouse GFA has been rotated to an east-west alignment rather than the PLM north-south. This results in flow-on impacts to increasing appearance of physical bulk, and impacts to building and amenity performance inconsistent with the Panel's previous comments:
 - the monolithic form and lack of modulation of the façade treatment impacts on the streetscape character and quality of the public domain interface character.
 - Rather than achieving the intended porosity, the building shuts out sky and airflow opportunities.

Further recommendations for DA:

1. Re-consider the space-to-built form arrangement of the rotated warehouses to achieve adequate visual permeability and access to natural daylight and ventilation for all warehouses.
2. A reconsidered spatial layout will increase opportunities to improve the composition and resolution of the elevations and expression of internal layouts and functions. This is needed to:
 - Improve the streetscape presentation to Warringah Road,
 - improve amenity
 - better express features elements such as the norther-western corner treatment of the staff area, car park aisles, pedestrian entry to the building.
 - introduce a restrained but visually interesting and disciplined materials palette that has texture, depth and opportunities to play with light and shadow.

Scale, built form and articulation

The rotation and reorientation of the warehouses and the proposed design solution for the built form and elevations has increased the horizontal scale and bulk to Warringah Road and creates a bland presentation more generally. This is not supported by the Panel.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

- II. Protect and encourage views through building to encourage sense of permeability

Further recommendations for DA:

- 3. Further work is required to reconsider how the rotated warehouses present to the north (Warringah Road) and south (within the site and along the boundary interface) to achieve visual and permeability to the built form and improve amenity.
- 4. Reconsider the arrangement of GFA to create effective natural cross-through ventilation and daylight paths through the Level 1 and Level 2 plans.
- 5. Reconsider the composition of elevations to provide visual relief to the long northern and southern built form.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

Improvements to the access, and resolution of vehicles movements is positive. Deleting the western ramp creates opportunities for the architectural treatment along the south-eastern and western elevations while also delivering improved pedestrian amenity.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

- III. Consider experience and safety of pedestrians within the structure
 - o Deleting the western ramp has resolved the recommendation. It has further enhanced opportunities for deep soil landscape and staff amenity.
- IV. Consider Pedestrian Access from Warringah Road
 - o Deleting the western ramp provided the opportunity for a high-amenity, north-south pedestrian link that resolves recommendation.
- V. Consider providing a publicly accessible through-site link from Warringah Road to Aquatic Drive
 - o As above, the proposal resolves recommendation, which is commended.

Further recommendations for DA:

- 6. Reconsider the finer detail configuration of vehicle movements at Level 2 and potentially Level 1 to improve the permeability to the built form and create daylight and natural ventilation pathways for Level 1 and Level 1 Mezzanine.

Landscape

With few new canopy trees proposed, the bulk and scale of the building will be difficult to mitigate especially from Warringah Road.

Work with the Bushfire consultant to provide further opportunities for tree planting including fire retardant/less flammable species eg. Rainforest trees.



The Panel supports the pedestrian link through the site and staff seating areas. The endemic planting mix is also supported,

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

- VI. At the next stage provide developed landscape design prepared by a suitably qualified Landscape Architect. The extent of landscape provision should be considered with a view to increasing the landscape area provided across the site.
 - The Proposal partially resolves previous recommendations – see following comments.
- VII. The landscape should, as noted in presentation, focus on a low water, native/endemic with high biodiversity value. Where possible a WSUD approach should be taken across the site to increase permeability, increase tree canopy and reduce exposed/impermeable hard surfaces.
 - The proposal resolves recommendation to reduce impermeable surfaces along the western side of the building, which is commended. Further work is needed to increase ground permeability through the selection of surface finishes.
- VIII. Deep soil areas should be utilised as much as possible for the provision of significant tree plantings to increase canopy cover on the site.
 - The proposal has resolved the recommendation along the western side of the building but requires further work to Warringah Road and within at-grade car parking to improve performance.
- IX. Amenity for staff and users should be provided through an external functional space.
 - The proposal resolves recommendation, which is commended.

Further recommendations for DA:

- 7. Further opportunities to increase canopy is required, noting bushfire provisions need to be satisfied. Select fire-retardant/less flammable species.
- 8. Surface finishes are to increase overall site permeability to reduce the extent of impermeable hard stand.

Amenity

The quality of amenity is varied across the development. Level 2 achieves good levels of daylight and access to ventilation for mezzanine/office spaces and warehouse areas. However, Level 1 generally has poor access to natural daylight and ventilation and through-building air flow paths for natural cross ventilation.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

- X. Increase access to natural light and air flow to lower levels of building



- Further work is required to address the previous recommendation.

XI. Provide comfortable and clearly identifiable amenities for staff. These could include, communal dining/kitchen, end of trip, communal deck/garden/lounge area

- The proposal resolves this recommendation.

Further recommendations for DA:

9. Addressing the arrangement of GFA to resolve the reoriented warehouses is required to improve both levels' cross-through ventilation and in particular for daylight and natural cross ventilation amenity for Level 1.

10. Shade protection is required to exposed northern, eastern and western windows. Dark tinted glazing is not supported due to poor daylight performance and outlook amenity.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The Panel notes a reduction to the quality of the facades and the architectural character achieved by the proposed design compared to the PLM proposal. This has impacted on the overall presentation of the building to the public domain, the actual and perceived building bulk, and created a monolithic, 'flat' treatment of elevations.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

XII. Building expression, materiality to be developed such that a more honest and essential character

- Further work is required to address the previous recommendation.

XIII. Explore re-use of elements/fabric from existing structures on site

- The Panel notes the proponents are exploring options to re-use materials and/or to incorporate into new elements/materials. However, there were potential limitations noted.

Further recommendations for DA:

11. Reconsider the materials palette and composition of building mass to better articulate the building form, better express internal functions, create play of light and shade demonstrating a depth and texture to the facades and material selections.

Sustainability

Many of the previous sustainability comments have been addressed in the new scheme, including:

- rainwater recycling
- use of light colours
- landscaping to reduce heat island effect
- efficient hot water systems,

- EV charging and bike facilities.

However, not all of these are represented on the drawings.

In addition, the light and ventilation in the previous scheme performed better. A redesign to include more openings on the north and south facades will improve performance and/or may remove the need to mechanically ventilate the circulation spaces, if not improve .

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from Pre-DA stage:

- XIV. Ensure Capacity for more EV charging points that the 4 proposed, so that there is the ability to add more in the future
 - Further work required to confirm commitments to be shown on architectural drawings.
- XV. Investigate ways to re-use the demolished materials on site
 - The Panel notes work is continuing to explore ways to re-use demolished materials.
- XVI. Include bike parking and EOT facilities
 - Further work required to confirm commitments to be shown on architectural drawings.
- XVII. Select light colour materials and/or provide vegetation to shade hard surfaces to reduce heat island effect
 - The proposal partially resolves this recommendation with light tones selected. However, see recommendations at Façade treatment/Aesthetics for further work required.
- XVIII. Consider a green roof under the PV. The combination provides longevity to the roofing materials as well as improves the efficiency of the PV
 - Further work required to demonstrate how this recommendation is being addressed.

Further recommendations for DA:

- 12. See previous comments above to be addressed.
- 13. Provide better natural ventilation to the circulation spaces to avoid mechanical ventilation.
- 14. Continue to investigate ways to re-use the demolished materials on site.
- 15. Include EV charging, bike parking and EOT facilities on the drawings.
- 16. Include shading to the northern windows to reduce heat gain in summer.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel commends the design team for the improvements that have been made following the PLM presentation. However, changes to the design proposition have introduced significant issues that require further consideration and to address some previous recommendations that remain outstanding.



The Panel further notes the sought departures from maximum site coverage in context of the recommendations.

While the Panel does not support the design in its current form, it is noted that alternative options are available that can address the recommendations.