



Sonnblick Lodge Demolition - 10 Bobuck Lane, Thredbo

Development Application Assessment
DA 24/448

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Cover image: Main Range, Kosciuszko National Park (Source: Alpine Resorts Team)

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
BC Act	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>
BC Regulation	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017</i>
BVM	Biodiversity Values Map
Consent	Development Consent
CPP	Community Participation Plan
Department	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
EP&A Regulation	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i>
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
EPI	Environmental Planning Instrument
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
KNP	Kosciuszko National Park
Minister	Minister for Planning
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
Planning Secretary	Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy

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1 Introduction

This report provides an assessment of the Development Application (DA 24/448) for the demolition of an existing ski lodge known as Sonnblick Lodge, located at 10 Bobuck Lane (Lot 802 DP 1119757), within the Thredbo Alpine Resort in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) (**Figure 1 – Figure 2**).



Figure 1 | Location of Sonnblick Lodge (outlined in yellow) within the Thredbo resort area (Source: DPHI Spatial Viewer with DPHI annotations (2025))



Figure 2 | Contextual map of Sonnblick Lodge (outlined in yellow) within the Thredbo resort area (Source: DPHI Spatial Viewer with DPHI annotations (2025))

The site is surrounded by lodge accommodation within the Thredbo Village. To the south is Talara Ski Club at 28 Bobuck Lane, which shares a retaining wall with the subject site. To the north is Bobuck Lane and to the east is a residential three-storey building (Lot 801 'Elevation Apartments') (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3 | Location of Sonnblick Lodge relative to neighbouring lodges in the Thredbo Resort (Source: DPHI 2024)

The land slopes from south to north. The slope is estimated to be in order of 35-40 degrees. The site has minimal vegetation present. However, there are trees on the upside of Bobuck Lane that are on a downward slope, which is indicative of slope movement. This may or may not be historic (**Figure 4**).

Sonnblick Lodge is a three-storey lodge containing 16 beds and 5 apartments. Associated structures include retaining walls, concrete paths, landings, stairs and a concrete driveway. The driveway provides direct access onto Bobuck Lane, which is a one-way road that is accessed via Alpine Way and Banjo Drive and connects onto Friday Drive. Bobuck Lane is a 40km/hr speed limited area and is a narrow road with some parking occurring partially on street (**Figure 5**).

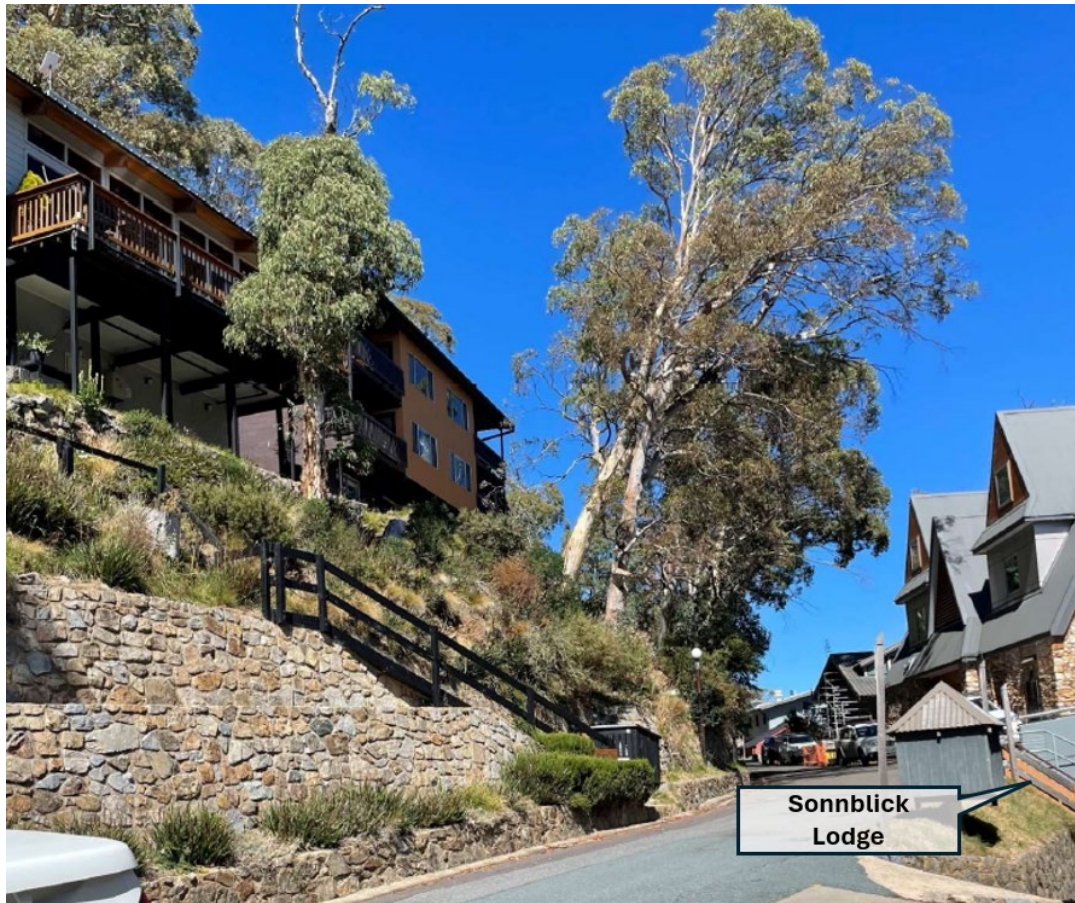


Figure 4 | Trees on upside of Bobuck Lane on opposite side of Sonnblick Lodge, facing west (Source: DPHI 2025)



Figure 5 | Aerial view of Sonnblick Lodge (outlined in yellow) within the Thredbo resort area, facing north (Source: Applicant's documentation)

This application proposes the demolition of the lodge building and includes following works:

- Site preparation and installation of environmental controls
- Demolition of the existing lodge, including:
 - The removal of hazardous material
 - The creation of drop zones
 - The soft strip of the structure
 - The erection of scaffolding and protection
 - The installation of man and material hoist
 - Mechanical demolition
- Site restoration and rehabilitation, including:
 - Stabilisation of the existing retaining wall
 - Maintaining adequate drainage
 - Maintaining the existing vegetation cover
 - Periodic inspection of the slope to determine signs of erosion.

The Applicant indicates that the demolition works are necessary to ensure the existing unused, dilapidated building is removed to ensure potential future improvements for the site through the provision of a new building.

The proposed cost of works is \$279,190.56

Supporting documents to this assessment report can be found on the NSW Planning Portal website at:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/development-assessment/state-significant-applications/projects/state-development-applications>

2 Matters for Consideration

2.1 Strategic Context

South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036

The proposal is consistent with the Regional Plan as the works help promote the regional tourism industry by ensuring the ongoing maintenance and use of Thredbo as a premier regional tourist attraction.

Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct Master Plan

Section 9.1.2 of the Master Plan relates to Thredbo. The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan as the works will contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the Thredbo Resort.

Precincts - Regional SEPP

The proposal is consistent with Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP, where the development will improve the amenities for Thredbo through permitting the demolition of an old, disused building, which supports regional tourism through allowing for a new, vacant developable lot. Works will be undertaken in a way that has due regard to the alpine environment and the conservation and restoration of ecological processes, natural systems and biodiversity. Disturbance to the surrounding environment will be minimised, with measures in place to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment.

Under the provisions of section 4.27 of the SEPP, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have a commenting role as the land manager, which includes administering the Plan of Management framework for KNP that incorporates objectives, principles and policies to guide the long-term management of the KNP. NPWS have recommended conditions to prevent adverse impacts on the natural or cultural environment.

Draft South East and Tableland Regional Plan 2041

The draft plan was publicly exhibited from 8 August 2022 until 23 September 2022. The draft plan underwent extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders with feedback incorporated into an updated version of the draft plan that was re-exhibited from 9 December 2022 to 31 January 2023. The draft plan identifies the alpine areas as providing important biodiversity to the region and acknowledges the alpine area's contribution to the region's tourism economy.

The proposal is consistent with the draft Regional Plan as it will not result in adverse biodiversity impacts and would support the ongoing operation of the Thredbo Resort. This supports the maintenance of visitation to the resort, along with the local and regional economy.

2.2 Permissibility

The proposal relates to the demolition of an existing ski lodge. Pursuant to Schedule 2 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP, the works are not classified as exempt development. Therefore, the provisions of Section 4.9 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP apply to the application, where the demolition of a building or work on land in the Alpine Region may be carried out only with development consent.

2.3 Mandatory Matters for Consideration

Objects of the EP&A Act

Table 1 | Objects of the EP&A Act

Objects of the EP&A Act	Consideration
(a) to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment by the proper management, development and conservation of the State's natural and other resources,	<p>The proposal supports the ongoing use of Thredbo as a premier ski resort. The demolition of Sonnblick Lodge will allow for more safe and suitable development of the site through the removal of an old, dilapidated building and the provision of new accommodation. Impacts on the environment will be minimised through conditions of consent. Therefore, the proposal is considered to have positive economic and social impacts.</p>
(b) to facilitate ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment,	<p>The proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the environment, thus being compatible with ecologically sustainable development.</p> <p>Adverse impacts on the natural environment could potentially occur during the demolition process. Potential impacts include embankment failure, retaining wall and batter failure and shallow soil translational slide. However, the geotechnical review undertaken to inform the assessment of the risks associated with the works has confirmed that the potential risks are rated 'very low' to 'moderate' following the implementation of control measures.</p> <p>The socioeconomic outcomes of the works are expected to be positive, as the demolition of the lodge will allow for more safe and suitable development of the site in the future.</p> <p>Mitigation measures during and after the works have been included in the recommended conditions of consent.</p>
(c) to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land,	<p>The development seeks approval for works that will contribute to promoting the orderly use of the land at Thredbo through the demolition of an old, unused building.</p>
(d) to promote the delivery and maintenance of affordable housing,	<p>Not applicable to this proposal.</p>
(e) to protect the environment, including the conservation of threatened and other species of	<p>Adverse impacts upon the environment are limited due to the contained nature of the works and management of related construction activities within a previously disturbed</p>

native animals and plants, ecological communities and their habitats,	area. Sensitive areas identified on the Biodiversity Values Map and impacts on any threatened species are avoided.
(f) to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage),	The site is not in close proximity to an area or item of built heritage. The development is unlikely to result in any adverse impacts upon an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Nonetheless, the Department has included a condition requiring that the applicant cease works if an Aboriginal relic or artefact become unearthed in the course of works.
(g) to promote good design and amenity of the built environment,	The Department considers that the proposed works will not detract from any built form. The site will be rehabilitated in accordance with the relevant guidelines following the completion of the works.
(h) to promote the proper construction and maintenance of buildings, including the protection of the health and safety of their occupants,	The Department has recommended conditions of consent to ensure the proposal is undertaken in accordance with legislation, guidelines, policies and procedures to provide for the health and safety of occupants in the surrounding area (refer to Appendix A).
(i) to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning and assessment between the different levels of government in the State,	The Department consulted with relevant government agencies and considered their responses (refer to Section 3 and Section 4).
(j) to provide increased opportunity for community participation in environmental planning and assessment.	The proposal was made publicly available in accordance with the Department's Community Participation Plan (refer to Section 3).

Considerations under section 4.15 of the EP&A Act

Table 2 | Section 4.15(1) Matters for Consideration

Section 4.15(1) Evaluation	Consideration
(a)(i) any environmental planning instrument (EPI)	The Precincts - Regional SEPP is the principal EPI which applies to the site for this type of development. An assessment against the requirements of Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP is provided below.

	The Department is satisfied that the Application is consistent with the requirements of Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP.
(a)(ii) any proposed instrument	Not applicable to the proposal.
(a)(iii) any development control plan	Not applicable to the proposal.
(a)(iia) any planning agreement	Not applicable to the proposal.
(a)(iv) the regulations	<p>The application satisfactorily meets the relevant requirements of the EP&A Regulation, particularly the procedures relating to development applications (Part 3 and Part 4) and fees (Part 13 and Schedule 4).</p> <p>The Department has undertaken its assessment in accordance with all relevant matters as prescribed by the regulations, the findings of which are contained within this report.</p>
(a)(v) any coastal zone management plan	Not applicable to the proposal.
(b) the likely impacts of that development	The Department considers the likely economic and social impacts of the development to be positive and that the environmental and cultural values of the site and locality will be maintained.
(c) the suitability of the site for the development,	The works are for demolition of an existing disused building to allow for the future redevelopment of the site, which supports tourism activities in alpine resorts.
(d) any submissions made in accordance with this Act or the regulations,	Consideration has been given to agency discussions during the assessment of the application. See Section 3 of this report.
(e) the public interest.	<p>The works are consistent with the aim and objectives of Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP. The development seeks to demolish an old, disused building within the Thredbo Village to allow for new development. The works will be undertaken in a way to minimise adverse impacts on the environment.</p> <p>As such, the proposal is in the public interest.</p>

Environmental Planning Instruments

State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Regional) 2021 (Precincts - Regional SEPP) is the principal EPI applicable to the development. Consideration of the relevant provisions to the proposal within Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP is provided in **Table 3**.

Table 3 | *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Regional) 2021* - Chapter 4 considerations

Chapter 4 - Precincts - Regional SEPP - Kosciusko Alpine Region	
Section 4.9 Demolition	
The demolition of a building or work on land in the Alpine Region	The proposal relates to the demolition of an existing disused building.
Section 4.21 Heritage conservation	
European heritage	The proposal will not impact on any European heritage items.
Aboriginal heritage	No areas of archaeological sensitivity are known to be located near the work site, given that the works are proposed in a previously disturbed area. Nonetheless, the Department has included a condition requiring that the applicant cease works if an Aboriginal relic or artefact become unearthed in the course of works.
Section 4.24 Flood planning	
Development on land in the flood planning area	The site is not located in a flood planning area and is not subject to flooding.
Section 4.25 Earthworks	
Impact of earthworks	<p>The earthworks required for the installation of the temporary and permanent batters, drainage and buttresses to facilitate the development will have no adverse impacts that cannot be mitigate by the measures that have been included in the conditions of consent.</p> <p>No stockpiling of excavated materials will occur on site. A condition of consent will require appropriate site management measures to be in place in accordance with the NPWS Guidelines.</p>

Section 4.27 Consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service

Consult with, and consider submissions from, the NPWS

The proposal was referred to the NPWS and comments were received. Refer to consideration of the NPWS referral comments in **Section 3** of this report.

Section 4.28(1) – Consideration of master plans and other documents

(a) the aim and objectives of this policy, as set out in section 4.1

The proposal is consistent with the aim and objectives of Chapter 4 of the Precincts – Regional SEPP in that the works will support sustainable tourism in the Alpine Region and will be managed with regard to the Department's Geotechnical Policy to prevent and/or mitigate any potential adverse impacts resulting from the works.

(c) a conservation agreement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* of the Commonwealth that applies to the land,

Not applicable to the development.

(d) the *Geotechnical Policy - Kosciuszko Alpine Resorts* published by the Department in November 2003,

The site is within the G zone identified on the Department's Geotechnical Policy – Kosciuszko Alpine Resorts Perisher Map.

An assessment of potential geotechnical impacts is provided in **Section 4**.

(e) for development in the Perisher Range Alpine Resort—

Not applicable to the development.

(i) the Perisher Range Resorts Master Plan, published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in November 2001 and

(ii) the Perisher Blue Ski Resort Ski Slope Master Plan adopted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in May 2002.

Section 4.29 Consideration of environmental, geotechnical and other matters

Under section 4.29(1) - In deciding whether to grant development consent to development in the Alpine Region, the consent authority must consider the following -

(a) measures proposed to address geotechnical issues relating to the development,	As above.
(b) the extent to which the development will achieve an appropriate balance between - (i) the conservation of the natural environment, and (ii) taking measures to mitigate environmental hazards, including geotechnical hazards, bush fires and flooding,	<p>The proposed works have been designed to avoid and mitigate impacts on the natural environment.</p> <p>The land is identified as being in an area of geotechnical sensitivity. An assessment of potential geotechnical impacts is provided in Section 4. The assessment concludes that the works are acceptable subject to compliance with the measures provided in the consent.</p> <p>The land is not subject to flooding. Measures to protect against bushfire are required in accordance with the Bush Fire Safety Authority that relates to the site.</p> <p>Natural hazards have been adequately addressed.</p>
(c) the visual impact of the proposed development, particularly when viewed from the land identified as the Main Range Management Unit in the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management,	The visual impacts of the works are considered minor, as the works will enable the demolition of an old disused building. Additionally, the Applicant has proposed site rehabilitation and site establishment works following the completion of the demolition.
(d) the cumulative impacts of development and resource use on the environment of the Alpine Subregion in which the development is carried out,	No adverse cumulative impacts are anticipated in relation to the proposal. The development will not result in any changes to resource use or impact the service and waste systems and facilities in place to support development and visitor patronage of facilities in the Alpine resorts.
(e) the capacity of existing infrastructure and services for transport to and within the Alpine Region to deal with additional usage generated by the development, including in peak periods,	No additional usage of the infrastructure and service network is predicted as a result of the project.
(f) the capacity of existing waste or resource management facilities to deal with additional waste generated by the development, including in peak periods.	<p>The project will involve the generation of construction waste. The Department has included a condition requiring the provision of an updated SEMP that includes consideration of the disposal of construction waste and materials, including any asbestos (if relevant).</p> <p>The waste management measures for the works are considered adequate.</p>

Under section 4.29(2) - For development involving earthworks or stormwater draining works, the consent authority must also consider -

Measures to mitigate adverse impacts associated with the works

The Department has included a condition requiring the provision of an updated SEMP that includes management and mitigation measures for any adverse impacts resulting from the works. Subject to compliance with the proposed measures, the Department is satisfied that the works are acceptable.

Under section 4.29(3) - For development the consent authority considers will significantly alter the character of an Alpine Subregion, the consent authority must also consider -

(a) the existing character of the site and immediate surroundings, and

The development will not significantly alter the character of an Alpine Subregion, or the character of the site and immediate surroundings.

(b) how the development will relate to the Alpine Subregion.

As above.

Section 4.30 Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management

Consistency between the development and the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management

The NPWS is satisfied that approval of the proposal would not be inconsistent with the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management 2006, as amended.

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)

The EP&A Act adopts the definition of ESD found in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*. ESD initiatives and sustainability have been adequately considered by the Applicant and mitigation measures are proposed to be incorporated into the design.

The proposal is consistent with ESD principles, and the Department is satisfied the proposal works have been developed having regard to ESD principles.

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

Section 1.7 of the EP&A Act requires the application of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) in connection with the terrestrial environment. The BC Act introduced a Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) that applies when:

- the amount of native vegetation being cleared exceeds a certain threshold area; or
- the impacts occur within an area mapped on the Biodiversity Values Map (BVM) published by the Minister for Environment; or
- the 'test of significance', in section 7.3 of the BC Act, identifies that the development or activity is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats; or
- the works are carried out in a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value.

The information supporting the application indicates that the proposal is not located within an area mapped on the BVM and would not have a significant effect on threatened species, populations, ecological communities, or their habitats. The Department notes that there is currently no declared area of outstanding biodiversity value within KNP. Comments received from the NPWS during the assessment of the application concur that the development, as proposed, will result in minimal environmental impact, subject to appropriate environmental protection measures and conditions of consent.

NPWS provided recommended conditions of consent for the approval regarding the demolition and rehabilitation period and the consideration of Aboriginal and Historic Heritage. Subject to the implementation of the recommended conditions, the Department is satisfied that there is no adverse impact on threatened species or ecological communities or their habitats.

3 Engagement

3.1 Department's engagement

The Department's Community Participation Plan, April 2024, prepared in accordance with Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act generally requires applications to be exhibited for a period of fourteen (14) days. However, applications under Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP are not required to be publicly exhibited if the proposal relates to works which are wholly internal to a building or where the site is located more than fifty (50) metres away from a tourist accommodation building.

As the works include external works/demolition to an existing tourist accommodation building within fifty (50) metres of other tourist accommodation buildings, the Department exhibited the application from 25 January 2024 until 8 February 2024 on the NSW Planning Portal website.

The application was sent to NPWS for comments, pursuant to section 4.27 of Chapter 4 of the Precincts – Regional SEPP.

3.2 Summary of submissions

The Department received comments from the NPWS. One public submission was received.

NPWS provided the following comments on the application:

- NPWS agreed that if conducted in accordance with the documentation provided, the works would result in minimal environmental impact
- requested that the applicant update the SEMP to elaborate on the proposed native fauna management measures during the works, and
- included amendments to the general environmental management measures as part of the consent conditions.

The public submission provided the following comments on the application:

- The submission is provided on behalf of Talara Ski Club, which sits directly north and downslope of the subject site
- Talara Ski Club has a shared boundary with Sonnblick Lodge, which is defined by a concrete retaining wall and limited stormwater and drainage infrastructure. The subject application does not address this, and the potential impacts that could occur to Talara.
- the groundwater and stormwater (and potential snow melt) from the subject site moves down the hill to the rear and sides of Talara Ski Club
- there is a concern about the risk of landslip during and post demolition
- while a silt fence and earth bund / berm has been indicated in the documentation, there is no provision for structural secure and solid site fencing / protection for the rear of Talara Ski Club, which would be greatly impacted by falling building materials or ground matter should it hit the Talara Ski Club building
- Various items were requested, including a dilapidation report, a soil and stormwater management plan, a geotechnical assessment, notification of the proposed works prior to commencement and ongoing site monitoring.

The Department's consideration of the public submission and the NPWS advice is provided in **Section 4**.

3.3 Request for Additional Information

Following the lodgement of the application, the Department issued an informal Request for Information (RFI) on 15 March 2024 for the provision of demolition plans illustrating the proposed works. On 19 March 2024, the Applicant provided a response to the request.

Following the exhibition of the application and a peer review of the geotechnical assessment provided, the Department requested additional information in May 2024, noting that the geotechnical assessment did not comply with the *Geotechnical Policy – Kosciuszko Alpine Resorts* (DIPNR 2003):

- The geotechnical assessment was prepared in accordance with the *Australian Geomechanics Journal*, Vol. 35 No.1, March 2000 (AGS 2000). However, the AGS 2000 has since been superseded by the *Practice Note Guidelines for Landslide Risk Management*, Australian Geomechanics Society. *Australian Geomechanics*, Vol 42, No1 (AGS 2007c). Therefore, the assessment must be drafted in accordance with the most recent version of the guidelines.
- The geotechnical hazards were not adequately described or assessed.
- There were various inconsistencies identified in the hazard assessment, and there was no advice or commentary on how the risks associated with the hazards would be mitigated. Rather, the report provided generic advice on batter slopes and the design of retaining walls, which was considered inadequate.
- The risk assessment was informed by a qualitative risk assessment. However, the AGS 2007c notes that any risk assessment must include a quantitative risk assessment.
- The report did not demonstrate whether landslide risks could be appropriately managed. It was not clear whether the site was suitable for potentially prolonged periods of vacancy or future development.
- The site plan did not provide enough information.
- The cross section was inaccurate and incomplete.
- The scope of the geotechnical investigation carried out on site was inadequate.
- Limited site photographs were provided.
- Several key compliance issues were identified in the development of the geological model, including the provision of the incorrect references to data and mapping, inadequate site investigations and a lack of groundwater monitoring.

On 28 August 2024, the Department received a response to the RFI which included an updated geotechnical assessment. Following this, the Department peer reviewed the report against the requirements of the Geotechnical Policy. The peer review concluded that the updated geotechnical assessment addressed many of the issues raised and provided more supporting information. The main improvements and changes included:

- improved discussion on geomorphology and site description
- more discussion provided on landslide history in the vicinity of the site
- improved review of previous geotechnical investigations undertaken at and in the vicinity of the site
- 3 x additional Dynamic Cone Penetrometer (DCP) tests

- updated landslide risk assessment that included a quantitative risk assessment
- clarification that another proposed change with the proposed demolition works is that the existing retaining walls were not being demolished at this stage.

The Department issued an RFI on 24 October 2024, as the peer review noted the following issues with the risk assessment:

- the interpretive cross section did not show / annotate the location of the hazards discussed in the report
- there were many errors and inconsistencies with the likelihood values used in some of the risk calculations
- there may be additional hazard modes that had not been recognised
- the report included the observation that there were tension cracks at Bobuck Lane that appear unchanged over 1.5 years of monitoring, however, the authors did not have access to the monitoring data
- there was inconsistent information on the state of the retaining walls beneath Bobuck Lane
- some of the likelihood values used in the risk assessment appeared to be based on inconsistent parameters and were non-conservative with the values, the presented stability analysis and the subsequent modes of failure could not be justified nor considered to be reliable
- the quantitative risk assessment introduced a conditional probability factor called “The probability of being Trapped”, which is not used in AGS 2007
- the report summed all the calculated individual risks to produce a so called “total risk”. It is not appropriate to sum probabilities because the resulting number ceases to be a probability. There are no risk criteria to compare this number against and the statement regarding total risk has no meaning
- the calculations for societal risk were incorrect.

The Department also issued a further RFI to request an updated demolition plan on 12 November 2024.

On 21 January 2025, the Applicant provided an updated geotechnical assessment to address the matters raised above. On 28 February 2025, the Applicant provided an updated demolition plan. Following a peer review of the information, the Department was satisfied with the information provided and no further information was requested.

Further discussion regarding the geotechnical assessment and the Department’s response is provided in **Section 4**.

4 Assessment

The Department has considered the relevant matters for consideration under section 4.15 of the EP&A Act, the SEE and supporting information, the RTS and any information provided in subsequent requests for information in its assessment of the proposal. The key issues in the Department's assessment are:

- Managing demolition and geotechnical impacts
- Post-demolition works and geotechnical stability
- Biodiversity

These issues are discussed below.

4.1 Managing demolition and geotechnical impacts

The existing structure on site is Sonnblick Lodge, which is a three-storey structure with a basement. The existing footing and retaining walls will remain on site.

The Applicant provided a Demolition Works Plan (DWP) with the application, which provided the following outline of the site and the proposed works:

- The structure is located below Bobuck Lane, 4m north from the road carriage way, and 5-6m away from two neighbouring buildings, located to the east, west and south.
- The site dips north at the angle of 30° to 40° from RL1398 to RL1390 across the block. Some excavation spoil may have potentially been placed, assuming from cut-to-fill platform construction.
- The concrete pad and strip footings of the main structures and retaining walls are founded on colluvial soils. The footings are proposed to remain buried.
- The buildings, paths, roadways, and other items surrounding the site shows signs of deterioration and unsoundness of the main structure, such as external cracking. The retaining wall had cracking through the mortar. Site erosion has removed the material below the basement rock façade.
- All neighbouring buildings are to remain operational throughout the demolition process.

The Department received a submission during the exhibition from a neighbouring ski club. The concerns raised in the submission are outlined in **Section 3.2**. The Department's response to the concerns raised in the submissions is outlined in the assessment below.

The Applicant provided a Geotechnical Investigation and Slope Stability Risk Assessment (geotechnical assessment) with the application, which provided an assessment of the geotechnical impacts resulting from the works in accordance with the relevant policies and standards, and an outline of the proposed mitigation measures. The Department peer reviewed the geotechnical assessment to confirm the validity of the information. The peer review process is outlined in **Section 3.3**. The geotechnical assessment provides the following discussion and recommendations for the demolition works and the design and development of the proposed slope:

- Excavation conditions and use of excavated materials –
 - Minor excavation is required in front of the retaining walls. The excavation will occur through topsoil and uncontrolled fill, which is readily diggable.

- The colluvial/residual soils can be used in controlled fill construction of building platforms. The weathered granite bedrock is also suitable for fill material. If imported fill is required, a suitable select fill material would include a low-or medium-plasticity soil.
- Controlled fill construction –
 - For the construction of any new fill foundation platforms and road subgrades, it is recommended that areas be fully stripped of all silty topsoil and any uncontrolled fill.
- Temporary batters (during construction) –
 - Temporary site excavations deeper than 1.5m must be battered back at the recommended angles.
 - Where space restriction precludes battering back to a stable angle, batter stabilisation or temporary excavation support systems are required.
 - A geotechnical engineer should inspect all cut batters during construction to confirm stability.
 - Exposed temporary batters should be protected from the weather by black plastic pinned to the face with link-wire mesh or similar.
 - To maintain the stability of all temporary unsupported excavations, the following recommendations are provided:
 - Trucks, heavy construction plants/equipment, and large soil stockpiles must not be located close to the top edge of the batters, especially with the motor idling.
 - A bund or dish drain must be constructed along the top edge of all cuts to intercept and divert surface water away from the batters.
 - To protect the downslope lodge from any accidental falling of material, install a catch fence along the northern boundary of the lot. This should be extended for the full length of the new slope, and the catch fence should be 1.5m high.
 - A geotechnical engineer would be required to inspect the batters regularly. This inspection must be conducted weekly, while a competent person representing the contractor should do daily checks.
 - No work must be conducted close to the toe of the batters during rain and 24 hours after. The batters must be reinspected by a geotechnical engineer following rainfall (about 20mm of rain, or enough rain that the batter faces become wet).
 - If deterioration or significant weathering of the batter face occurs, stabilisation/remediation of the batter must be applied.
- Hold points for geotechnical inspections –
 - During lodge demolition, a suitably qualified geotechnical engineer must inspect retaining walls remaining on site and check that these design recommendations and slope stability mitigation measures have been correctly constructed.

4.2 Post-demolition works and geotechnical stability

Following the demolition works, the geotechnical assessment proposes the following arrangements:

- Form new permanent unsupported cut and fill soil batters. All soil cut and fill surfaces should be protected against erosion by placing topsoiling, grassing, or other suitable means.
- Structural retaining walls should support steeper permanent cuts. Permanent batters should be inspected during excavation by an experienced geotechnical engineer to confirm stability.

- A structural engineer should assess the condition of the walls after demolition and recommend any necessary stabilisation treatments.
- Surface slopes around the development must be protected to prevent erosion using new vegetation or erosion control mats.

Additionally, it is noted that the new slope will comprise the existing retaining walls, requiring further stabilisation. Therefore, it is recommended that the existing retaining walls should incorporate the following (**Figure 6**):

- Retaining Wall 1 to Retaining Wall 3 (currently supporting Sonnblick Lodge) –
 - After the lodge demolition, a geotechnical engineer should also inspect the retaining walls and backfill material to estimate the sufficiency of the existing drainage.
 - Areas in front of the existing retaining walls must be fully stripped of all silty topsoil and any uncontrolled fill/
 - Caged gabion walls or rock buttresses should be placed before the existing walls and battered back not less than 1V:1H.
 - All cut and fill surfaces should be stabilised using a fabric such as Terramat or another suitable fabric approved by the geotechnical engineer. Vegetation can then be established on the slope to protect against scour and erosion.
- Retaining Wall 4 (Supports Bobuck Lane) –
 - Sub-surface horizontal drainage should be installed at the base of Retaining Wall 4.
 - The swale drain should be installed at the toe of the retaining wall to direct the stormwater away from the new slope into the Thredbo stormwater system.
 - There are two options for the stabilisation of the upper faces. Option 1 includes shotcrete the upper faces, while Option 2 may include caged gabion walls installed in front of the existing Retaining Wall 4 up to the level of Bobuck Lane.
- Drainage –
 - Permanent groundwater is not expected within the proposed 10m deep excavation. However, temporary, perched groundwater seepages will be encountered within the proposed excavation depths following rainfall. Therefore, suitable subsoil horizontal drains must be installed, including behind all retaining walls (if they do not already exist).
 - Surface drainage should also ensure rainfall run-off or other surface water cannot be ponded against buildings or pavements.
 - Following rainfall, overland flow from uphill could also be an issue, so a swale / bund drain should be installed in front of the retaining walls and included in the civil drawings.
- Site monitoring –
 - The implementation of a Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP) outlining the monitoring of the site (visual and instrumentation), trigger levels, and actions to ensure the site's risk levels remain tolerable throughout the period prior to redevelopment.
- Hold points for geotechnical inspections –
 - The following is a list of hold points that require geotechnical inspection and sign-off:
 - Review all structural and civil design drawings before the start of demolition and slope updates construction to check that geotechnical design recommendations and slope

stability mitigation measures have been interpreted correctly and incorporated into the design.

- Inspect all the foundation material to ensure it is suitable for the rock buttressing placement.
- Inspect all temporary and permanent cut and fill batters to check stability and advise on remediation/treatment measures.
- Inspection and certification of all controlled fill construction (where it is specified to be controlled fill in accordance with AS3798).
- Inspect all surface and subsurface drainage measures to ensure that they are adequate and advise on additional measures if necessary.

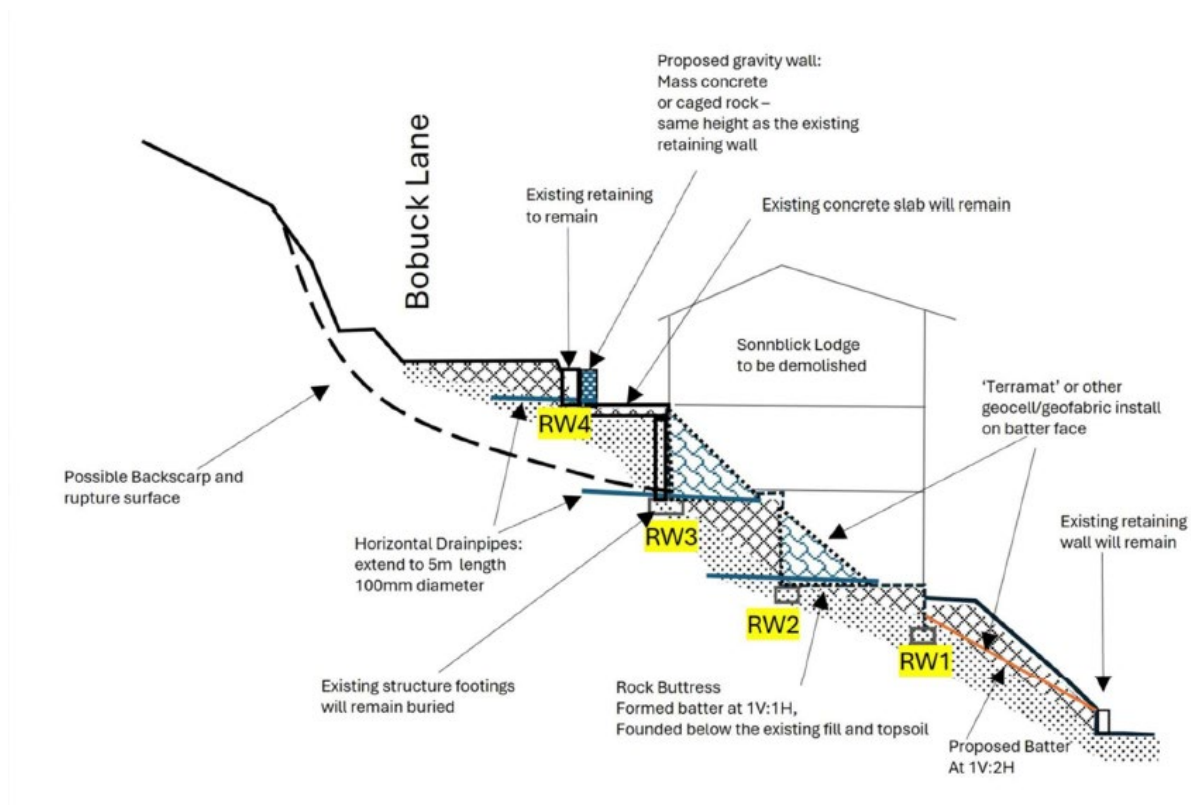


Figure 6 | Sketch of the proposed stabilisation measures after the demolition (Source: Applicant's documentation)

Following the peer review of the recommendations provided in the geotechnical assessment during and following the works, the Department provided the following conclusions:

- The geotechnical model used to inform the geotechnical assessment is fit for purpose for demolition works only. The geotechnical investigation to inform the model would not be considered adequate for any further development, as further definition of the bedrock and its characteristics should be undertaken.
- Regarding the TARP – the responsibility of both the custodian of the site (landlord) and TfNSW in regarding access to and monitoring of TfNSW installed inclinometers appear to be adequate.
- The Societal Risk Assessment Plot provided in the geotechnical assessment (for before and after the works) indicates that the demolition of the lodge and accompanying earthworks will reduce the associated risks once the works are completed.
- Overall, the measures outlined in the geotechnical assessment to manage and mitigate potential risks during and after the works are adequate. Nonetheless, leaving the site vacant for extended

periods of time carries a level of risk. Typically, over time the appetite to carry out monitoring is diminished. Simply because time has passed does not diminish the level of geotechnical risk for this site. To address the geotechnical risks, ongoing site monitoring has been proposed. This monitoring must be maintained. Recommendations within the geotechnical assessment must be maintained until such time that the recommendations are no longer applicable (i.e. the site is further developed).

To ensure the demolition works avoid and mitigate potential risks, the Department has recommended the following conditions:

- The works must be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the geotechnical assessment.
- The SEMP must be updated to include consideration of the most current scope of works, as well as include an updated Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP), Rehabilitation and Landscaping Plan and Demolition Works Plan.
- Prior to the commencement of any works, the Applicant is to engage a qualified structural/civil or geotechnical engineer to prepare dilapidation report/s detailing the current structural condition of all nearby buildings, pedestrian paths, infrastructure and roads.
- Noting the age of Sonnblick Lodge, there is a possibility that the lodge contains asbestos. Conditions have been included that outline the process to identify and dispose of asbestos and other hazardous materials, including the requirement for proper notification and safe disposal.
- The works are to be undertaken in a way that do not negatively impact the built form of the building or cause adverse impacts on nearby buildings or the surrounding environment. Therefore, the Department has included conditions regarding the mitigation of potential noise, vibration and waste impacts.
- For 10 years following the issuing of the statement of completion of the works and prior to the Occupation Certificate (OC) being issued for any future development on site (whichever is the earlier), the Department must receive site monitoring reports every 6 months detailing how all areas on and around the subject site have been monitored by a competent geotechnical practitioner in accordance with the recommendations of the geotechnical assessment and any necessary actions undertaken to ensure that the ground, retaining wall and footing structures remain in a safe condition that do not cause or impose undue risk on the site or neighbouring properties.

4.3 Biodiversity

The ground and drainage works that form part of the demolition are located on land that is heavily disturbed, with no impacts to any threatened species, populations, or ecological communities.

Mitigation and management measures in accordance with an amended Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) will be supported by the implementation of conditions of consent to protect the natural environment.

The Department has recommended standard construction conditions applied in the Alpine area, along with recommended conditions from NPWS. Subject to compliance with these conditions, the Department is satisfied that the proposed works would not impact upon nearby infrastructure or the environment.

5 Recommendation

The Department has assessed the merits of the proposal in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act. The Department's assessment concludes the proposal is acceptable as:

- there will not be a significant impact on any threatened species, populations, or ecological community
- construction impacts on the surrounding environment will be minimised through the recommended conditions of consent requiring effective site management during and after the works
- the works support the ongoing economic maintenance and visitation of the resort through ensuring that an existing unused, dilapidated building is removed to ensure potential future improvements for the site through the provision of a new building.

Overall, the Department is satisfied that the proposal is suitable for the site and in the public interest.

The Department therefore recommends that the application be approved, subject to recommended conditions. In accordance with the Minister's delegation of 9 March 2022, the Team Leader, Alpine Resorts Team, Regional Assessments, may determine the application as:

- no reportable political donation has been disclosed
- there are less than fifteen (15) public submissions in which objection to the proposal has been raised
- the application is in relation to land to which Chapter 4 of the Precincts - Regional SEPP applies.

It is recommended that the Team Leader Officer, Alpine Resorts Team, Regional Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report
- **accepts** and adopts the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to grant consent to the application
- **agrees** with the key reasons for approval listed in the notice of decision
- **grants** consent for the application in respect of DA 24/448, subject to the recommended conditions
- **signs** the attached Development Consent (**Appendix A**).

Recommended by:



Meg D'souza
Senior Planning Officer
Regional Assessments

Adopted by:



Erin Murphy
Team Leader
Alpine Resorts Team, Regional Assessments
as delegate of the Minister for Planning

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommended Instrument of Consent