



Statement of Environmental Effects

Manning Veterinary Hospital

Alterations and Additions to Approved Veterinary Hospital

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22 March 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) has been prepared to accompany a development application for alterations and additions to an approved veterinary hospital (30/2018/DA), in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979*. The development has been fully constructed and the final occupation certificate was issued on 17 March 2020.

The proposed alterations and additions are described in detail in Part 4 of this SEE and are shown on the plans that have been lodged with the application.

The owners have commenced construction of the proposal without consent, and on 16 January 2024 Council issued a Notice of Intention to serve an order under Division 9.3 of the EP&A Act 1979.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject site ("the site") is a 930m² property located on the eastern side of Commerce Street in Taree, on the corner of Cornwall Lane and Commerce Street. The site contains a large, modern two-storey veterinary hospital. The site frontage is heavily landscaped and the building has high levels of articulation, architectural interest and aesthetic appeal.

Access to the veterinary hospital is off Cornwall Lane, which is a sealed public road in reasonable condition.

The site is located close to Manning Base Hospital and several allied health providers, with the neighbourhood generally being a mix of residential, commercial and health service providers.

A site locality map is included at Figure 1.

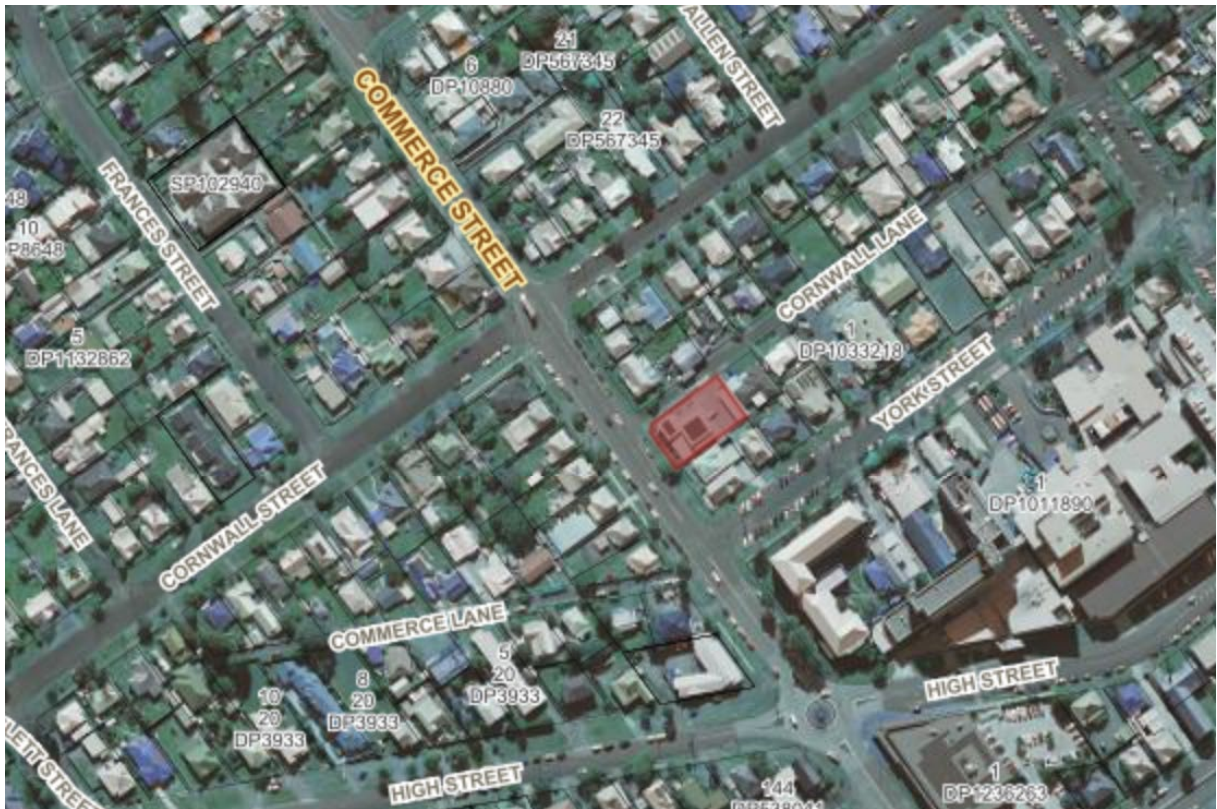


Figure 1: Site location. Source: MidCoast Council online mapping 2024.

The development adjoins an allied health service to the south-east and a residential property to the north-east. Cornwall Lane adjoins the property to the north-west, and Commerce Street adjoins the property to the south-west.

The site is not subject to any mapped natural hazards.

3. EXISTING CONSENT 30/2018/DA

Development consent was granted on 6 September 2017 for the construction of a veterinary hospital. The approved development comprises a veterinary hospital on the ground floor and associated veterinary nursing classroom, staff kitchen, offices and storeroom on the first floor.

Fifteen car parking spaces are provided, with four allocated to staff.

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Approval is sought for alterations and additions to change the use of the room allocated as a veterinary nurse classroom to overnight short-term sleeping quarters for veterinary students and on-call staff. It is also proposed to increase the operating hours of the veterinary hospital to cater for the increasing demand for veterinary services.

Overnight temporary sleeping quarters: The hospital regularly offers short-term placements to veterinary medicine students, as a way of attracting qualified veterinarians to the area. As the universities offering veterinary medicine as a subject are located in major cities across Australia, students are typically from out of the area and require accommodation. With a severe shortage of rental properties in the local area, it is usually not possible to accommodate students in rental properties. Offering a short-term sleeping space, in the form of two bedrooms, will allow the hospital to offer places to students when they don't have accommodation, and also provide a safe way of allowing them to assist with overnight emergencies.

The sleeping quarters will also be used intermittently by on-call staff who are responsible for overnight monitoring and care of critically ill and high-needs animals in the hospital. This provides staff with a safer alternative to driving to and from the hospital during the night.

The area on the first floor that was allocated as a veterinary nursing classroom will have internal walls and doors constructed to form two bedrooms. Built-in wardrobes will also be installed for storage. The remainder of the first floor will be unchanged. There will be no change to the gross floor area and no changes to the external part of the building. Plan number A0.5 revision A shows the proposed changes. It is no longer proposed to offer a veterinary nursing classroom on-site.

Extended operating hours: The hospital requires extended hours of operation to cater for increased demand for services, including puppy socialisation classes, which will be held inside the clinic.

Condition 35 of 30/2018/DA restricts the clinic to Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturdays 9.00am to 1.30pm and Sundays no clinic. With a growing demand for clinical services and shared on-call rosters with other veterinary hospitals, as well as ancillary services such as puppy training, the clinic is seeking to extend its operating hours to 8.30pm on weekdays and 7pm on Saturdays and include a clinic 9.00am to 2.00pm on Sundays.

The modified hours of operation would be:

Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 8.30pm.

Saturday: 9.00am to 7.00pm

Sunday: 9.00am to 2.00pm

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

5.1 Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979

Division 4.3, Section 4.15 of the Act requires that a consent authority, in determining a development application, is to take into consideration the provisions of following matters as are of relevance to the proposed development:

(i) any environmental planning instrument, and

- (ii) any proposed instrument that is or has been the subject of public consultation under this Act and that has been notified to the consent authority (unless the Planning Secretary has notified the consent authority that the making of the proposed instrument has been deferred indefinitely or has not been approved), and*
 - (iii) any development control plan, and*
 - (iiia) any planning agreement that has been entered into under section 7.4, or any draft planning agreement that a developer has offered to enter into under section 7.4, and*
 - (iv) the regulations (to the extent that they prescribe matters for the purposes of this paragraph),*
- that apply to the land to which the development application relates,*
- (b) the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,*
 - (c) the suitability of the site for the development,*
 - (d) any submissions made in accordance with this Act or the regulations,*
 - (e) the public interest.*

These matters are addressed in detail below.

5.1.1 Greater Taree Local Environmental Plan (GTLEP) 2010

The site is zoned R1 (General Residential), pursuant to the GTLEP. A veterinary hospital is defined in GTLEP 2010 as:

“a building or place used for diagnosing or surgically or medically treating animals, whether or not animals are kept on the premises for the purpose of treatment.”

Veterinary hospitals are permissible with development consent in the R1 zone.

The development is consistent with the above definition for a veterinary hospital as the propose bedrooms are ancillary to the primary purpose of the hospital and will support its ongoing operation.

Consent was granted (30/2018/DA) in September 2017 for the construction of a veterinary hospital on the site. The application seeks approval only for a minor internal reconfiguration of the first floor to provide short-term sleeping quarters for on-call staff and students and extended operating hours to accommodate the actual demand for veterinary services.

Part 4 – Principal Development Standards

There are no principal development standards relevant to the proposed alterations and additions. The proposed development does not change the floor space ratio of the approved development (0.49) as it seeks only to introduce internal walls into the built form.

Part 5 - Miscellaneous Provisions

There are no applicable miscellaneous provisions.

Part 6 – Urban Release Areas

The development is not located within an urban release area.

Part 7 – Additional Local Provisions

There are no applicable local provisions.

Schedule 1 – Additional Permitted Uses

There are no applicable additional permitted uses.

Schedule 5 – Environmental Heritage

The development does not impact on any environmental heritage matters.

5.1.2 State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)

There are no SEPPs that are relevant to the proposed development.

5.1.3 Greater Taree Development Control Plan (DCP) 2010

The development as originally approved was assessed against the provisions of the Greater Taree DCP (GTDCP) 2010. The proposed development does not change the consistency of the development with any of provisions of the GTDCP as the application seeks only a minor internal re-configuration of the first floor, partial change of use of the first floor, and increased operating hours.

5.1.4 Relevant Provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation

A National Construction Code Capability Report is under preparation and will be lodged with the application when available.

5.1.5 The Potential Impacts of the Proposed Modified Development

Socio-economic Impacts

The development is likely to have a positive socio-economic impact as it will cater for increasing demand in veterinary services. The business currently finds it difficult to attract veterinarians to the area, and to find short-term accommodation close to the hospital, but with the ability for students to stay on-site short-term when accommodation can not be arranged, the hospital can offer placements to students, thereby increasing the likelihood that some students will remain in the area to work in local veterinary hospitals after they graduate.

The proposed addition of two bedrooms also improves the safety of on-call clinicians who need to provide overnight care to critically ill animals. Under the current arrangement, clinicians need to drive to and from the hospital throughout the night, presenting risks associated with driving when fatigued.

Increasing the operating hours of the clinic will allow local veterinary hospitals to share on-call services. The increased operating hours will also allow the hospital to cater for a rapidly increasing demand for both emergency and non-emergency services. It will allow the hospital

to run puppy socialisation classes once the clinic is closed each evening, providing a service that helps prevent future dog behavioural issues such as barking or attacks.

It is unlikely that there would be any negative socio-economic impacts associated with the modified development.

Context and Setting

The construction associated with the modified development will result in no change to the external fabric of the building, being only minor internal alterations. The development does not increase the number of staff that will be present on site at any one time (generally between 4 to 6 staff) and does not require any additional parking.

The modified development has been designed to retain the development's overall compatibility with the character and amenity of the setting.

Privacy and Neighbour Amenity

The proposed bedrooms will not result in any visual intrusion for neighbours as no private open space is overlooked.

Although it is proposed to increase the operating hours, it is not proposed to introduce any significant noise-generating activities beyond those that currently occur on site. It is proposed to run puppy socialisation classes once the clinic closes in the afternoon, however all of the classes would be held inside the clinic, with a maximum of eight puppies. There is sufficient parking to cater for eight clients, and at this number it is expected that noise levels would be similar to those currently experienced in normal daytime operations, where up to eight puppies may be on site during clinics.

No additional noise or amenity impacts are expected.

5.1.6 The Suitability of the Site for the Development

The development seeks to provide an improved veterinary hospital service and improved employment conditions for staff. The proposed development is consistent with the previous approved development and will achieve minimal impacts on the site and on neighbouring properties.

There will be no significant changes to the nature of the development or its intended use. The proposed alterations and additions will not result in any significant impacts on adjoining properties, the surrounding streetscape, or the local area and will involve no external changes to the building.

The site is suitable for the modified development.

5.1.7 The Public Interest

The modified development will improve the orderly and economic use of the site and will have a positive socio-economic impact. The modified development is unlikely to result in any significant adverse impacts on neighbour amenity or on the natural or built environments. Approval of the development is in the public interest.