

Report and Recommendations of the Design Review Forum Panel

Sutherland Shire Council 25 March 2021

Panel Members: John Dimopoulos, Peter Hill, Peter Brooker

Council Staff: Mark Carlon (Manager Strategic Planning) Ella Roessler-Holgate (Strategic Planner)

Applicant Team: Toby James (Midson Group); Daniel West (Planner); Walter Tattersall & Jay Ng (Wesley Mission); Jenna Keyes (Urban Design); Alister Eden (Architect); John Holland (Landscape Architect)

Project Address: 101 Port Hacking Road, Sylvania

Proposal: Planning Proposal for Frank Vickery Village

PREAMBLE

The Panel notes that this is a Planning Proposal submission that has been referred to the Panel by the Local Planning Panel (LPP) for consideration of the nominated FSR of 1.26:1, and appreciates the opportunity to discuss the proposal before determination by the LPP.

A proposal for the site has not previously been reviewed by Council or the DRF.

The site was viewed electronically by the Panel members prior to the meeting.

Issues considered relevant to the proposal are noted below.

COMMENTS

1. The panel acknowledges the effort, time and expertise that has been required to prepare the masterplan.
2. The panel has reviewed the comments from the LPP meeting, requesting that the DRF directly critique and comment on the feasibility and appropriateness of the nominated FSR of 1.26:1, after taking into account the possible impact of setbacks, building size, siting, separation and height, whilst mitigated via appropriate articulation of form.
3. The panel has concerns that the masterplan, as presented, seems to have inherent built-form and amenity issues, e.g. excessive tightness between buildings, uncomfortable scale through proximity of the tallest buildings to the heritage item, significant overshadowing and less than satisfactory amenity of communal open space- which also lack a formal identity in themselves and which seem to not be in any formal geometric relationship with the enclosing built forms, as well as a less than successful deference to the heritage item in the heritage precinct; all of which seem to point to an FSR that would be on the upper limit of creating an appropriate and balanced formal outcome for a village environment.
4. The panel was therefore of the opinion that the proposed FSR of 1.26:1 is likely to be the maximum the site could handle without a compromise in amenity and quality.
5. The Panel was also not convinced through the discussion that this was the most appropriate massing strategy for the site, especially if one acknowledges the organisational concept driver being the Heritage item and the various Village precincts. The current proposal accrues the most bulk and density along a linear central circulation spine, thus challenging solar amenity, which affects the majority of surrounding open space and courtyards, rather than pursuing a higher and stronger boundary edge form along Port Hacking Road up to the site's northern corner. This would in theory allow to lighten the visual and physical bulk along this central main spine and improve solar amenity and scale overall.
6. As a further example to this issue of FSR misappropriation, the panel feels that Buildings D2 and D3 should be re-configured to reduce overshadowing of the common open space to their south. Building D4 may be allowed to be larger, as it has a different relationship to its southern neighbours than D1.
7. The position of Building C3 at the northern tip of the site, may have unacceptable impacts on trees and stone outcrops in the area. The character of the nature precinct may be better served if the bulk was distributed on the other buildings in this precinct.
8. The proposed 12m street setback to Port Hacking Road places pressure upon the interior quality of the central spine/pedestrian experience which may be improved with a more flexible setback parameter, that won't affect tree retention, along the boundary. While trees are no help with acoustic attenuation, the integration of the green 'village' message into the existing exterior surrounding context can be further improved with augmenting the existing screen of well-established trees with more planting. Furthermore, the panel questions the strategy of locating an area of common open space (at E3) to address Port Hacking Road.
9. The issue of acoustic amenity along Port Hacking Road was seen as a crucial driver of design and needs to be addressed no matter what building form is ultimately pursued., but it should be handled prescriptively by a passive architectural strategy, such as mandating that the

buildings be planned to have the habitable rooms on the quiet side, with circulation spaces and utility rooms on the noisy side. Such planning guidelines will also need to develop the provision of natural ventilation to the apartments (ILU's) alongside the minimisation of acoustic impacts. This would result in the Units facing Port Hacking Road having at least two orientations; no single-orientation units should be facing Port Hacking Road.

10. The panel felt that that the nominated precincts, namely: Heritage Heart / Northern nature / Urban village / Neighbourhood connector / Garden gateway, be included within the site specific DCP and should be defined and articulated by a more fine-grain and curated protocol of design parameters and guidelines to assist future DA submissions to meet a “character test” for each precinct, which the panel considers is not being met by the masterplan in its current proposed building form controls and configurations, reflected by its inability to meet the broad objective of the design statements to generate appropriately scaled and articulated buildings in a landscape setting. In this regard it is recommended that the site specific DCP includes more detail such as the street sections as shown in the Masterplan, in particular showing that the communal courtyards be provided with deep soil suitable for viable planting of large native trees of a scale that suits the buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The submission, still at the conceptual stage, needs to respond in some measure to the matters raised at the LPP meeting, but also, there are a number of strategies that continue to be questionable and which would benefit from further thought and development, based on the above comments, to meaningfully progress the design.

It should be noted that, although the application of the *SEPP (Seniors Living)* allows a bonus FSR for provision of affordable housing, the panel nonetheless believes the masterplan, at the FSR proposed, is at the limit of the site's capacity to provide spaces and buildings that respond with good residential amenity within a garden setting. The panel therefore would not support additional floor space on this site.

John Dimopoulos
DRF Chair