

DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

PROPERTY: 286 – 288 Pacific Highway, North Sydney

DATE: 9 June 2010 @ 4.45pm in the Geddes Room

ATTENDANCE: Panel Members: David Chesterman; Philip Graus; Russell Olsson.
Council staff: Geoff Mossemeneer (chair), Nicola Reeve.
Proponents: Denis Leech (architect), Ashton Wendt (Applicant), Tony Duvernet (Applicant).

This application was before the Panel on 11 November 2009 and 3 February 2010. A site inspection was carried out by the Panel and Council staff prior to the meeting on 11 November 2009.

This proposal is a development application that will be determined by the Joint Regional Planning Panel due to the cost of works involved.

The Proposal:

The proposal involves expansion of the North Sydney Sports Medicine Clinic by the addition of two levels on the existing building fronting the Highway and a new multi storey building with four levels of basement parking to the rear fronting Sinclair Street.

Background

At its meeting of 11 November 2009:

The Panel raised concern about the rear of the site located within the residential zoning. The Panel noted that the proposal did not meet the residential development controls regarding height, building height plane and landscape area. The Panel was also advised that the amount of parking needs to be resolved and that may result in less floor space on the site.

Having regard to the surrounding development, the Panel felt that the site should be considered as a transition between Urban development (Fire Station and development on Highway) and Suburban development (heritage dwellings adjoining to the south).

The Panel noted that the eastern side of the street was characterised with high front fencing/wall and street trees and front elevated landscaping.

The Panel did not support the proposed design with regard to the amount of

landscaping provided; the scale of building near the southern residential boundary; the location of driveways; the finishes and the splayed roof of the building. The proposal was unacceptable with regard to scale and context.

The Panel made the following suggestions for a redesign of the rear building:

- Bulk and scale of building should be confined to the northern two thirds of site having regard to the height and setbacks of the Fire Station.
- The southern third of the site should be low scale and used primarily as a landscape buffer to dwellings
- Incorporate a front boundary wall to continue the link between the Fire Station wall and the front wall of the dwellings
- Relocate the exit driveway to where it exists now to allow for large deep planting area in south west corner of site
- Allow for deep planting along the frontage between the driveways which would result in the loss of some of the stacked parking spaces in the basement
- Consider windows in northern wall of building and increase cross ventilation for building
- The north facade of the proposed building adjacent to the fire station building requires refinement. It should not read as a party wall as it will never be built against
- The chamfered architectural elements are not in character with either the adjoining Fire Station or residential buildings, more rectilinear forms should be used
- overshadowing be minimised by a larger setback to the residential buildings.

At its meeting of 3 February 2010:

Amended plans were submitted to Council incorporating a number of the above suggestions of the Panel.

The Panel noted that the proposal still did not comply with any of the residential controls and that it would be difficult to support a proposal that was so non compliant with the zone controls that relate to height, setbacks and site cover. The upper level breaches the height and its removal would reduce the number of non compliances with the current zoning.

The chamfered architectural elements are not in character with adjoining development, more rectilinear forms should be used.

Overshadowing of the adjoining dwelling is still a major issue and further detailed assessment is required to determine the exact impacts on

habitable rooms of the dwelling. The Panel suggested using “sun’s eye” view shadow modelling to identify the parts of the building that cause the worst shadow impact.

Amended plans

Amended plans were submitted by the applicant in response to the above comments. Additional basement parking was provided and demolition of part of the Pacific highway building was included to resolve the overshadowing issue.

The architect Denis Leech provided a presentation of the amended proposal and was available for questions and discussion with the Panel.

Panel Comments:

The Panel noted that the amended plans resulted in an improvement to the neighbour with regard to overshadowing and this will be addressed in more detail in Council’s assessment of the application.

The Panel considered the proposed rear building to be in context with the area and a good transition from the mixed use zone and Fire Station to the residential. The Panel felt that the setbacks were appropriate.

The Panel supported the proposed materials and finishes noting that the brickwork was to be similar to the Fire Station and not the darker colour indicated on the model. It was noted that careful detailing of the brickwork will be important to avoid staining and that fine brickwork detail would assist in the building’s relationship to the surrounding buildings.

The Panel commended the architect for the redesign and having regard to the Panel’s previous comments. All of the concerns raised previously by the Panel have been addressed. The Panel did not comment on any compliance with zoning controls or traffic matters that also need to be assessed by Council.

Conclusion:

The proposal is supported by the Panel with regard to its urban design.

Meeting concluded at 5.30 pm