

## Design Character Statement

**PROPERTY TITLE:**

*No 173 Pennant Hills Road, Thornleigh*

**THE PROPOSAL:**

*Affordable Rental Housing development*

**CONSENT AUTHORITY:**

*Hornsby Shire Council*

**REPORT DATE:**

*8 July 2011*

**CLIENT:**

*Urban Link pty ltd*

**OUR REFERENCE:**

*9711-1*

**Mobile:** 0488 655065

**Postal Address:** P.O. Box 42 Lindfield NSW 2070

**Email:** [barry@planningprinciples.com.au](mailto:barry@planningprinciples.com.au)

**Phone:** 1300 671144

**Office:** Unit 6/12 Tryon Road Lindfield NSW 2070

**Web:** [www.planningprinciples.com.au](http://www.planningprinciples.com.au)

This report has been prepared by  
**Planning Principles Pty Ltd**

*B Cotten*

**Barry Cotten**  
Certified Practising Planner  
MPIA

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## **1.0 Design Character Introduction**

This design character assessment has been prepared to be read in concurrence with a development application submission to the consent authority of Hornsby Shire Council.

As the development is currently before council, and given the amendments to the ARH SEPP Hornsby Shire Council has requested that a design character assessment be undertaken to ensure that the proposal is inkeeping with existing and future design(s) of the Pennant Hills Road locality.

The proponent seeks council's determination of approval for an Affordable Rental Housing development consisting of nineteen (19) multiple dwellings at Lots 1, 2, 3 & 4 in DP 200153 and Lots 1 & 2 in DP 214167 No 173 – 179 Pennant Hills Road, Thornleigh.

Within the planning framework, the concept of character primarily focuses on physical planning outcomes and the design of the built environment in the public realm. This may include characteristics such as particular groups of land uses, architectural styles, building densities, building heights, building materials and building setbacks as well as the spatial definition or patterns of particular locality, including subdivision layout patterns.

The character of a suburb may also be partly based on unique topographical or natural landform features, scenic environmental quality of the particular suburb including significant remnant stands of trees or streets which are lined by a particular tree species. In addition, the character of an area may also be based upon the number of heritage items or conservation areas within that particular area.

This design character assessment has categorically concluded that the proposal is consistent with both the Department of Planning and Hornsby Shire Councils strategic objectives for the zone, ensuring that the provision of housing stock is adequate to meet the varying needs of residents in the locality and is also considered to satisfy the current and future design character of Pennant Hills Road and the general locality.

On balance, the development as proposed is considered to be ecologically sustainable, compatible with the existing and future character of the area and in the public interest.

## 2.0 The Site Context

The site encompasses no improvements, is irregular in shape, and has an overall area of approximately 3,647 square metres. Topographically, the land has no distinctive site features. Access to the site is direct from both Pennant Hills Road to the north and Nelson Street to the east.

Styles and eras of buildings in the Pennant Hills Road streetscape and general locality are a mixture of multi dwellings and single dwellings of varying designs, bulk and scale on small / medium allotments of land.

There appears to be no consistency of development forms or subdivision patterns in the streetscape however multiple dwellings are most evident, particularly immediately to the south and east of the subject site.



*We refer to minor landuse mapping above.*

### **3.0 The Proposal**

The proponent seeks council's determination of approval for an Affordable Rental Housing development consisting of nineteen (19) multiple dwellings at Lots 1, 2, 3 & 4 in DP 200153 and Lots 1 & 2 in DP 214167 No 173 – 179 Pennant Hills Road, Thornleigh. The development proposal has been prepared by Urban Link pty ltd.

Looking closer at the proposal, car parking will be provided within the basement for all dwellings. Access to the basement garage is from a common driveway system running parallel to the eastern boundary from Nelson Street. No Vehicle access is proposed directly from Pennant Hills Road.

The dwellings are proposed in two distinct blocks. Dwellings numbered one to sixteen fronting Pennant Hills Road and dwellings numbered seventeen to twenty four fronting Nelson Street. All dwellings are proposed in a two store from.

All private open spaces are general orientated due north to achieve adequate solar access. Landscaping treatments compliment the entrance and private courts and rear boundary spaces.

The dwellings are located in the central core of the site, therefore providing adequate solar access to the internal living rooms, and to also reduce and perceived solar access impacts to adjoining sites.

Materials and finishes include concrete slabs and external masonry rendered, aluminium windows and treatments and metal deck roofing. External colours are considered medium to blend in with the site and its surrounds.

### **4.0 Land Use**

The planning instruments / design controls applicable to the proposal are:

- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009;*
- *Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994;*
- *Hornsby Shire Development Control Plan – Low Density Multi Unit Housing;*

## **State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009**

State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 had been was gazetted on 31 July 2009 with the following relevant aims:

*The aims of this Policy are as follows:*

- (a) to provide a consistent planning regime for the provision of affordable rental housing,*
- (b) to facilitate the effective delivery of new affordable rental housing by providing incentives by way of expanded zoning permissibility, floor space ratio bonuses and non-discretionary development standards,*
- (c) to facilitate the retention and mitigate the loss of existing affordable rental housing,*
- (d) to employ a balanced approach between obligations for retaining and mitigating the loss of existing affordable rental housing, and incentives for the development of new affordable rental housing,*
- (e) to facilitate an expanded role for not-for-profit-providers of affordable rental housing,*
- (f) to support local business centres by providing affordable rental housing for workers close to places of work,*
- (g) to facilitate the development of housing for the homeless and other disadvantaged people who may require support services, including group homes and supportive accommodation*

**Comment:** At the time of lodgement, this policy provided for affordable rental housing to be developed on any residentially zoned allotment on which dwelling-houses / multiple dwellings are permissible with the consent of council. The policy aimed to address a developing state-wide deficiency in the availability of affordable rental housing in all local government areas.

### **Clause 10 Land to which Division applies**

- (1) This Division applies to a development site on land if the development site is within any of the following land use zones or within a land use zone that is equivalent to any of those zones, but only if development for the purposes of dwelling houses, multi-dwelling housing or residential flat buildings is permissible within the zone:*
  - (a) Zone R1 General Residential,*
  - (b) Zone R2 Low Density Residential,*
  - (c) Zone R3 Medium Density Residential,*
  - (d) Zone R4 High Density Residential.*

**Comment:** The Department of Planning equivalent zones table indicates that the Residential (A) zone pursuant to Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994 (HSLEP1994) is equivalent to the R2 Low Density Residential zone. Therefore the proposal is permissible in the zone

The above plan is known as the Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994 (HLEP1994) and is the main planning instrument for the site. As noted the subject site is located within the Residential A (Low Density).

#### Objectives of Zone

- (a) to provide for the housing needs of the population of the Hornsby area.*
- (b) to promote a variety of housing types and other land uses compatible with a low density residential environment.*
- (c) to provide for development that is within the environmental capacity of a low density residential environment.*

**Comment:** It is considered that the proposal satisfies one or more of the objectives, in particular the proposal encourages redevelopment for low - medium density housing forms.

#### **Hornsby Shire Development Control Plan – Low Density Multi Unit Housing**

The purpose of the Hornsby Shire Development Control Plan is to illustrate the controls that apply to particular types of development. This HSDCP supplements Hornsby Shire Local Environmental Plan 1994 (HSLEP1994).

**Comment:** It is considered that the proposal satisfies one or more of the purposes noted above, particularly enhancing residential amenity and providing housing choice.

## **5.0 The Streetscape / design**

Streetscape refers to the way a street appears and assists to provide local amenity and identity. The presentation of buildings in a street is the most critical element and determines the character of not only the street, but also the locality.

In this instance building form of development within the streetscape will not be affected by the proposed, as existing dwellings storeys, height and envelopes that contribute to buildings bulk and scale are similar or greater than the development proposed.

Quality streetscapes are those in which the buildings and associated spaces form attractive streets and neighbourhoods. New buildings need to be sensitive and in context with the landscape setting and the environmental conditions of the existing and future site and locality.

Pennant Hills Road streetscape comprises a variety and intensity of land uses and building forms. There appears to be no consistency or dominance in any building types, with the exception of multiple residential dwellings, however higher density forms of multiple dwellings / units are also prevalent.

The proposals built form and scale is sensitive and responsive to the visual, physical and natural qualities of the site and locality. The proposal will set a consistent form of multiple dwelling development within the locality, both current and proposed.

## **6.0 Character / Design**

The built form of the building is appropriate for the site and the public domain and it will provide a well articulated and interesting building form. The design will provide for the manipulation of building elements, balconies and a mix of building materials. This will effectively contribute and maintain the landuse character and landscape settings of the Pennant Hills Road streetscape.



The building form has been designed to address each of the orientations of the site. As a result of the architectural building design in the form of two storey buildings, the development presents as a two storey building, with the basement parking relatively unseen.

To the pedestrian at street level, the street context will be protruded balconies and fences, blade walls and diversity of landscaping at the front. The building is strategically hidden behind gardens and plantings, and as noted predominantly presents as a two storey form. The land form drops away from Pennant Hills Road, therefore it to be expected that the dwellings will present in single storey form to Pennant Hills Road.

The balconies and private courtyards along the remaining elevations add life to the streetscape and provide good passive surveillance within the site and to both Pennant Hills Rod and to Nelson Street. In addition the use of selected building finishes, types of materials, proposed front, rear and side setbacks present a built form that will add to and improve the streetscape.

It is noted that adjoining developments are at a similar height and present more intrusively than the proposed building with considerable more dwellings onsite.

The quality of landscaping and maintenance will improve the aesthetics of the building and the amenity of residents, and provide greater streetscape presentation. The landscaping is designed to incorporate privacy planting, use of native trees and deciduous tree species for solar access in winter months and summer shade.

Medium and mature plantings to the perimeter of the site will ensure the buildings context and landscape setting is unaltered and not out of character with the existing and future buildings within the streetscape.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

As noted, the proponent seeks council's determination of approval for an Affordable Rental Housing development consisting of nineteen (19) multiple dwellings at Lots 1, 2, 3 & 4 in DP 200153 and Lots 1 & 2 in DP 214167 No 173 – 179 Pennant Hills Road, Thornleigh. It is further noted that the proposal satisfies all the development standards pursuant to the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP.

The aesthetics of the proposed development will provide for a mix of building elements, textures and colours. The building form will provide a link to the Pennant Hills and Nelson streetscapes and the surrounding area, and compatibility with adjoining buildings, while maintaining a two storey appearance.

Numerous buildings with considerable streetscape presentation are evident within the streetscape and general locality, therefore reinforcing the developments character within the locality. The development is increasing the much needed residential density of the area, while maintaining character with the surroundings, and is in fact less intrusive.

The land and surrounding locality may be proposed to be rezoned to R2 Low Density, of which will provide building forms similar in floor space ratio and bulk and scale, with multiple dwellings and more than likely residential flat buildings being permissible.

The buildings setbacks and the location of windows and private open space areas have been designed to protect privacy, solar access and maintain general amenity for adjoining properties.

The proximity of the site to public transport and the permissibility of multi dwelling developments in the zone demonstrate that the site is appropriate for affordable rental housing pursuant to the ARH SEPP. The development is designed to respond to different aspects of the site and different site conditions and constraints while maintaining an overall design cohesion.

The proposal is an important contribution to the existing and future character of Pennant Hills Road and Nelson Street and general locality and will provide a step towards the rejuvenation of this streetscape with a design that can be concluded as being compatible with the existing and future character of the area.

**Planning Principles Pty Ltd**



**Barry Cotten**

Certified Practising Planner

MPIA