

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

Appendix H: Urban Design and SEPP 65 Design Quality Consideration			
SEPP 65 Principle	Urban Design Consultative Group (UDCG) Referral Comments from meeting of 23 May 2012	Applicant's SEPP 65 response for 3 Apartment buildings (and other requested key issues) From Table 3 of SEE page (35-38) and Applicant's Response for Information (RFI) dated 30 April 2013 (both City Plan Services)	Officer Assessment
General Comments	<p><i>Philosophical Issues</i></p> <p><i>The Seniors Housing SEPP has provisions which make major multi-unit new residential development permissible in locations that would well not have been considered appropriate or desirable. The subject application represents a more extreme case in that the site is presently zoned 6(a) Open Space and is in active use as a golf course, proposing that what is in effect a medium-density residential development be located on a site entirely within the golf course, bounded on all sides by golf course fairways and landscaping. The narrow and elongated form of the development generally follows the ridge and higher ground in order to maximize amenity of the residential units. As a consequence this configuration would also tend to maximize its visual impact and intrusiveness in relation to the surrounding environment, and necessarily raises three questions:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Should amenity of future residents within the development be privileged over that of people enjoying the present open landscape from more distant viewing points?</i> <i>Should the present 'open' environment of this part of the course be significantly affected so that golfers will inevitably feel that the ambience of the course is comprised by an immediately adjoining urban development?</i> <i>Does the proposal inhibit or prevent the future use of the subject land for other purposes, given the fact that the golf club has been operating under financial pressure for at least a decade?</i> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <p><i>The development in the form proposed is not supported, primarily for the reasons stated under Built Form, Scale, Landscape & Social Issues. If a layout occupying this part of the golf course site were to be favourably considered, the design should respond to the more detailed design issues raised under these and other headings.</i></p>	<p><i>The proposal includes the development of 3 apartment buildings which would meet the definition of a residential flat building. While the current concept proposal is not required to be accompanied by a Design Verification Statement Clause 30(2)(b) provides that the consent authority should take into account the design quality of the proposal in relation to the design quality principles. A general discussion of the proposal's compliance with these principles is provided below. Provided by the project architects, BHI Architects Additional details of the proposal's compliance with SEPP 65 will accompany subsequent detailed DAs for residential flat building development.</i></p>	<p>It is acknowledged that the provisions of the Seniors Living SEPP enable isolated sites that meet certain criteria to be developed for the purposes of Seniors housing, which may not be in the most desirable or suitable locations (in particular due to isolation issues). However, as this State planning instrument enables it, and the proposed concept development can meet these provisions (including transport services), then this is not an issue that warrants refusal or rejection of the concept proposal.</p> <p>With the exception of the immediately adjacent golf course, the proposed development for the seniors living on the ridge will have limited visibility from surrounding areas due to existing vegetation to be retained, buffer of the golf course and low scale (1-2 storey) dwellings and proposed landscaping. The higher buildings are positioned at the southern end of the site adjacent to higher University buildings and vegetation. Therefore the amenity of those viewing from other areas will be limited. It is a commercial decision of the golf course and a personal choice option for existing and future membership as to whether the proposal affects the ambience of the golf course. If developed, the land surrounding</p>

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

			<p>the proposal will have limited uses to that permitted by the current zoning (RE2 Private Recreation), unless rezoned. There is ample land that could potentially be utilised for other uses , subject to site investigation, however this would require rezoning of the land.</p> <p>The proposed concept development application will require detailed future development applications for each of the stages (including SEPP 65 compliance for the 3 apartment buildings)</p>
Context	<p><i>There are no other existing residences within reasonable walking distance of the site, nor are there any shops, medical rooms or other services. The layout of the internal roads within the site has been generated by locating a central 'spine' road along the axis of the site. Off this spine run access roads which are all aligned in the same direction, running east and west of the 'spine'. This creates an impression of considerable density with row upon row of identically aligned dwellings while the east-west layout of the access roads allows the proposed villas good northern orientation, the plan would have benefited from some minor variation in the roads to account for retention of high-value existing trees, and to take account of the landform. This would have provided some relief to the otherwise relentless uniformity of the orientation of all dwellings.</i></p>	<p><i>The subject site sits on a natural ridge which is surrounded by and overlooks the golf course and existing wetlands. The land is bordered by dense vegetation and/or has significant separation from adjoining development on most sides, creating a visually isolated area dominated by the green open space of the golf Course and landscaping. The only area adjoined by built development is along the southern boundary, where buildings of significant bulk and scale associated with the NIER complex sits. The apartment buildings have been deliberately located in the southern portion of the site so their height and scale will be sympathy with this development and provide a significant 'gateway' to the seniors housing development to the north. The proposed development incorporates large areas of landscaping which help to screen built development and create a sense of continuity between the seniors housing and the surrounding golf course.</i></p> <p><i>RFI Response: It is noted that residential development will be positioned over an existing 'ridgeline', which slopes gently away to the north. All dwellings within the footprint have been positioned in order to maximise northern orientation and associated solar access. While on a 2-dimentional plan this layout may appear repetitive and monotonous, the villas will in reality follow the natural cross-fall of the ridge, creating a diversity of building heights and 'stepped' appearance. Further, the provision of landscaped 'green corridors' or landscaped roads between every row of dwellings will create interest and diversity, and will screen/soften the views of development behind. This positioning and landscaping, combined with the use of varied building heights (1,2 storey) and interesting façade treatments, will alleviate any repetition that may be envisaged and will provide an appealing amenity.</i></p>	<p>The street layout is considered to be appropriate, as is it legible and takes advantage of the views and solar access opportunities to the proposed dwellings. It is agreed that the future built form (attached villas), particularly the lengthier streets, have the potential to be identical and repetitive (as indicated in the submitted plans). Improved streetscape treatment will be required to be demonstrated in DAs for future stages. It is also agreed that high value trees should be retained. The general street layout and building heights (predominantly 1 storey with the occasional 2 storey dwelling) is supported, however improvements to the streetscape and tree retention opportunities for proposed streetscapes and green corridor areas to improve urban design outcomes will be required at each stage. This may impact on the yield of dwelling as submitted.</p>
Scale	<p><i>"Scale" in the context of this proposal relates to both the actual length of the frontage of buildings to the golf course, and the height of buildings. The former is considerable,</i></p>	<p><i>The proposed Apartments have been sited in the southern area of the site, where the topography is relatively low in relation to nearby proposed Villa development. This location will help to decrease the appearance of bulk and</i></p>	<p>It is agreed that the scale of the development footprint is considerable. Given the relative</p>

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

	<p>being of the order of continuous frontage of new buildings and landscape some 800 metres long to both the S.E and N. W sides. The latter includes both the large majority of the frontage of single-story 'villa' units, - extending along about 80% of the length, -as well as the three three-story self-care units and the four and five level residential care facility on the southern part of the site. The villa units would be appropriate in scale, whereas the other buildings would be somewhat intrusive due to their height and immediacy to the course.</p>	<p>scale, as much of the surrounding development is located on steadily rising ground. The use of the natural site contours, existing mature vegetation and proposed landscaping help further soften and screen the proposed building, thereby further reducing the appearance of bulk and scale, in addition to the significant façade articulation proposed for each building. It is noted that the proposed Apartment buildings will only be 3-4 storeys in height (4-5 storeys where the basement layer is partially exposed due to sloping topography), which is not out of context with surrounding NIER development and will not appear incongruously tall in the context of the surrounding golf Course use. It is emphasised that only 3 Apartment buildings are proposed within the site.</p> <p><i>RFI Response: The provision of apartment buildings and a RCF provides affordability and lifestyle options for residents. However, by their nature and in order to achieve economies of scale, these type of development require larger development footprints than other forms of residential development. In order to minimise ground-level impacts associated with larger, lower buildings, the proposal incorporates taller development forms.</i></p> <p><i>The positioning of these types of development within the site is constrained by the topography of the site and the functional requirements of the golf course layout. These taller elements have been positioned in the southern area of the site, in close proximity to the existing tall, bulky built elements of the existing NIER buildings.</i></p> <p><i>A Height Analysis Section has been prepared (see Appendix I to this report) which demonstrates the relationship between the proposed buildings, the existing Club house and existing NIER buildings. This Section clearly demonstrates that the tallest proposed building element (the RCF) will have a maximum elevation more than 12m lower than the existing NIER building (Tunra). The proposed RCF will still be lower than the canopy of surrounding trees, ensuring that the appearance of the building will be visually softened and screened.</i></p> <p><i>It is re-emphasised that the subject site is visually isolated by its location adjacent to a rail line, golf course, wetlands, a main road and bushland associated with the 'back of house' operations of the University. Therefore the buildings cannot be considered to be visually domineering in relation to adjacent developments, nor will they be overly prominent in the broad landscape.</i></p> <p>Refer also Applicant's response to 'Density' below.</p>	<p>visual isolation from other areas, on balance, this is not considered to be of concern. However the long narrow site footprint for the seniors living development has the potential for dependency on private car or the proposed mini-bus service for residents to access areas for on-site social gathering and services. Given the relative isolation of the site in general to off-site services, future residents would therefore need to take this into consideration prior to deciding to reside in the complex. It is the scale also that provides an economy of scale for the on-site provisions of services. A smaller development footprint may not necessarily enable the provision of on-site services, which are critical to this proposal which is relatively isolated from existing off-site facilities, services and amenities. Refer also to response under heading 'Social Dimensions'.</p> <p>The proposed location and height of the three apartment buildings and RCF building are considered to be satisfactory.</p>
Built Form	<p>The layout of buildings and landscape which generates the form of the development is a critical issue. It is assumed that amenity of future residents has been a prime consideration. Whilst the layout satisfies these objectives, there are also negative consequences flowing</p>	<p>The Apartment buildings will be aligned to the north to maximise solar access. They incorporate significant façade articulation features (even at this conceptual stage) to present an attractive elevation to the street, as well as reducing the appearance of bulk and scale. The buildings, which contain only 3-4 levels of Apartments, are considered to have an appropriate medium</p>	<p>Refer to comments under 'General Comments' and 'Context' above regarding visual impact on golf course and 'sameness' of villas.</p>

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

	<p>from this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximizing impact on the surrounding open landscaped areas of the golf course Long central access road and paths, and lack of variety in urban spaces, -a 'sameness' about approach and entry to all the villa units. <p>The panel was not provided with any information as to alternative layouts, and is not convinced that the built form proposed is the most desirable option, taking into consideration a balance between amenity for residents and external impacts. There are obvious options which would reduce impact on the surrounding environment, such as consolidating development towards the southern boundary, and there are obvious alternative options for the internal layout.</p>	<p>density character which has a good relationship to the surrounding open space character to the site. The provision of the patios and/or balconies to each Apartment helps to provide connections between the surrounding open space and internal living areas, and provides attractive outlooks and vistas over the golf course and wetlands.</p> <p>RFI Response: Discussions with aged care service providers (eg RSL LifeCare) have indicated the design is appropriate and workable, and the co-location of community facilities with the RCF is desirable.</p>	
Density	Not an issue	<p>The footprint of proposed built development (particularly when referring to Apartment buildings only) is small in relation to the size of the overall subject site. The significant open space areas, including proposed private and public open space, significant landscaping, and pedestrian networks, will continue to dominate the character of the site. The visually isolated nature of the site and lack of surrounding built development provides a unique opportunity to create and appropriate density of development that relates primarily to the nearby University development and surrounding golf course. The density of development is considered appropriate as it will allow for a significantly sized community of residents to reside in a place with a range of housing options available on-site, allowing them to 'age in place'. The economies of scale provided by the proposed development will allow for the provision of a range of services and facilities, including a mini bus and ancillary retail services based in the RCF.</p>	The applicant's comments are noted and concurred with.
Resource, Energy and Water Efficiency	<p>The applicants advised that it is intended to integrate best-practice technology into the design in relation to water management, and environmental issues and this is strongly encouraged.</p>	<p>Long term performance, social and financial viability, and amenity, requires appropriately sophisticated environmentally responsive design. The Apartments will achieve Green Star rating in addition to requisite BASIX ratings. Details of proposed efficiency measures can be provided to support subsequent DAs, following detailed design of Apartments. However, the following aspects are noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings and their living areas are oriented to the north to minimise energy usage through maximising solar access and passive climate control. Most Apartments will have dual aspects to allow for natural cross ventilation. Buildings will be of low carbon design Detailed efficiency components which will be considered include Solar Hot water, Photo voltaic electricity etc 	The proposed seniors living development will be required to demonstrate resource, water and energy efficiencies, with details will be required to be provided in future development applications.
Landscape	It appears that virtually all the extensive areas of existing mature tree canopy and its understory are proposed to be	Extensive landscaping is proposed throughout the development to soften and screen built form, create visual interest, integrate the existing landscaped open	Refer to section 6(b) of the Section 79C Assessment report, which

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

	<p>removed from the site, with no apparent consideration given to retaining stands of significant trees. Further, the extensive stands of trees of the first fairway, appear to be designated for removal. While the landscape plan shows some new planting is proposed along the boundary of the site in these locations, the corners of many of the dwellings closest to the fairways have virtually no landscape buffer between them and the fairway itself. This is of concern both in a practical (safety) sense, and in respect to the considerable visual impact arising. The landscape design as shown indicatively is otherwise generally supported but is strongly suggested that more emphasis could be given to a prime objective of minimizing the visual impact of the buildings as perceived from the golf course.</p>	<p>space with residential development, create privacy and cool shaded open space areas, and to create habitat for native wildlife. Green corridors have been created between housing components to enhance amenity and create connections with the existing natural environment. These corridors, orientated in the east-west configuration, connect the main central spine of landscaping which occurs along the natural ridge line, with the remainder of the development.</p>	<p>addresses the issue of tree removal and flora and fauna in detail. Should the development be recommended for approval, a number of conditions are recommended for the concept which specify the required extent of compensatory planting and minimum landscaping requirements within the seniors living development footprint (and adjacent golf course).</p>
Amenity	<p>The design should result in individual units achieving excellent amenity, but as suggested above there are reservations in relation to the overall amenity of the site, - lack of variation in the layout and character of the roads, spaces and orientation of buildings.</p>	<p>The conceptual Apartment layouts provide for a good standard of privacy, outlook, natural ventilation, sunlight, acoustic and visual privacy and good access both to private and public open spaces. Ease of access has been considered through all aspects of design due to the Apartments' proposed use as seniors housing, and</p> <p>Apartments will comply with the relevant standards under the Housing for Seniors SEPP. The Apartments will accommodate generous room sizes, well above the SEPP minimums. Additional details can be provided after detailed design has been completed</p>	<p>The development of each of the seniors living dwellings has the potential to provide high residential amenity for residents. Streetscape amenity of buildings will however need to be demonstrated in individual DA for future stages.</p>
Safety and Security	<p>It is noted that the development is proposed to have five stages, the last of which is the residential aged care facility in which most of the activity and community facilities are proposed to be located. Given the isolation of the site, concern arises as to the safety and well being of the relatively small number of initial residents who would be reliant on assistance from outside the isolated site in the event of any security occurrence or medical emergency. Even when all five stages are completed the site will remain an island within an area which is isolated after dark, but at least if and when all five stages are completed, there would be full time staff in 24 hour attendance. An obvious concern arises in the event that only one to four stages of the development were to be completed because of demand for the units or other external reasons. This would leave all residents living without the community and other facilities and staff that are required for this type of development.</p>	<p>The proposed development incorporates a number of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) features to maximise safety and security, including passive surveillance opportunities from each building façade (balconies, windows etc) use of landscaping to delineate public areas from private open space, and the provision of appropriate lighting throughout the development site.</p> <p>RFI Response: Whilst the proposed development will be staged, the provision of meals, nursing care and other services will be available to residents from the time of first occupation. The operator (e.g. RSL Lifecare) is anticipated to provide 24/7 access to emergency services for those residents who desire it. Further, the site is located in close proximity to a range of medical facilities within a short driving distance, including several Medical Practitioners and two hospitals within 7km of the site.</p> <p>As the site is adjacent to established urban areas, any emergency call from dwellings to public emergency services (e.g. to the police or ambulance) would expect a response promptly.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the village has been primarily designed to attract active/healthy seniors interested in golf course living. Residential accommodation for more frail, aged people (e.g. the RCF) will not be established until later stages of development, when a 24 hour staff presence is anticipated on site.</p>	<p>The development of the RCF at Stage 5 will mean that permanent on-site occupation will not occur until completion of this Stage. This is not desirable or acceptable from a safety and security point of view, and furthermore, does not meet the provisions of the SEPP for the subject development. Should the concept development be recommended for approval, a condition will be imposed requiring to RCF to be developed at Stage 1 of the complex.</p>

Final Draft.TCG Planning.21/10/13

		<i>Note that preliminary CPTED analysis of the site has been undertaken (refer to p71 of the SEE). A more detailed analysis cannot be undertaken until more detailed design is proposed (ie after concept approval).</i>	
Social Dimensions	<i>The development would respond to the needs of a particular socio-economic group in the community and it would have strong appeal to those with a propensity towards golf as a recreation and lifestyle. The amenities of the existing golf club would be available, but the University: it is a lengthy walks and an indirect drive of several kilometres. Within the site other amenities would then potentially be the focus for communal life, but there are reservations about the indicative design, with its emphasis on the approach to the main entry to the 'residential care facility'. Even if those taking up residence in the dwellings select this development because they are active golfers, with an average age entry age of 75 for many a time will come when they are no longer able to participate in the sport. Especially if mobility is an issue, these residents are at risk of becoming very isolated in their independent living homes and will become dependent on other means of transport over time.</i>	<p><i>The proposed development will allow for the development of a rich sense of community for its residents. The site has a pre-existing social hub (the Shortland Waters Golf Club), which will provide a focal point for the new community, a meeting place, and a centre for recreation. The nearby University of Newcastle campus also provides extensive social and educational opportunities. The proposed RCF will provide another community hub, and will include a small range of shops, community and library facilities. Accordingly, residents of the proposed Apartments will have a wide range of social support facilities in place to choose from. The range of Apartment sizes proposed, encompassing 1, 2, and 3 bedroom types provides size and cost choices of seniors residents. Social issues are discussed further in Section 4.5.3 of this SEE.</i></p> <p><i>RFI Response: The maximum distance for residents from their dwelling to the RCF is 600m, with 80% of dwellings being within 400m. It is noted that the 'higher care' and more accessible accommodation options (ie the RCF and apartments) are located close to each other in the southern section of the site. Accordingly, those residents who are perhaps more frail and less mobile will have the choice of living in these accommodation options in very close proximity to the proposed services and facilities. Discussions with aged care service providers (eg RSL LifeCare) have indicated the design is appropriate and workable, and the co-location of community facilities with the RCF is desirable.</i></p>	<i>It is agreed that the site, while being located within an existing urban area of the Newcastle LGA, and only several kilometres from the Newcastle CBD, is relatively isolated from existing facilities and services. There will be a dependency on vehicle use for access to off-site services, and for some less able residents. On site services due to the elongated scale of the development footprint. While this is not ideal, the proposal meets the required provisions of the Seniors Living SEPP with respect to access to facilities and services, and therefore does not warrant lack of support. The proposed Seniors Living development will appeal to a certain sector of the aged housing market, who will most likely consider this factor prior to purchasing/locating to this facility.</i>
Aesthetics	<p><i>Whilst it is premature to discuss detailed issues the following comments are made:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A skillion-roof form appears to be indicated for all the villa units. Greater variety in the roof forms would also be desirable.</i> <i>The proposed residential care facility would be a large structure, four and five storeys high. It will require sensitive design development if it is not to be experienced as very dominant building form in relation to the golf course.</i> <i>Similar comments apply to the three-storey serviced self-care housing units.</i> 	<i>Even at this conceptual stage, a range of features have been incorporated into the proposed development to enhance amenity, including building and façade articulation, landscaping, and building height variation. During detailed design, other features will be employed to ensure a high standard of aesthetic quality and responsive design solutions, such as material types, textures and colours.</i>	<i>The aesthetics of individual buildings will be addressed in individual DA for future stages. The UDCG comments are concurred with and an advisory condition is recommended to be included in the conditions should the proposal be recommended for approval.</i>