

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Assessment

In relation to

Proposed Retirement Village

40-48 Burton Road

Mount Hutton

Eleebana Shores

October 2013

Project: 12260

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CPP
CERTIFIED PRACTISING PLANNER

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INTRODUCTION

Site Description

The following data is provided in relation to the site:

Title Description	Lots 11 & 12 DP 830292
Property Address	40-48 Burton Road, Mount Hutton
Site Area	4.96 hectares
Zoning – Lake Macquarie LEP 2004	1(2) – Rural (Living) 7(5) – Environmental (Living)

Figures 1 and 2 show the site and locality.

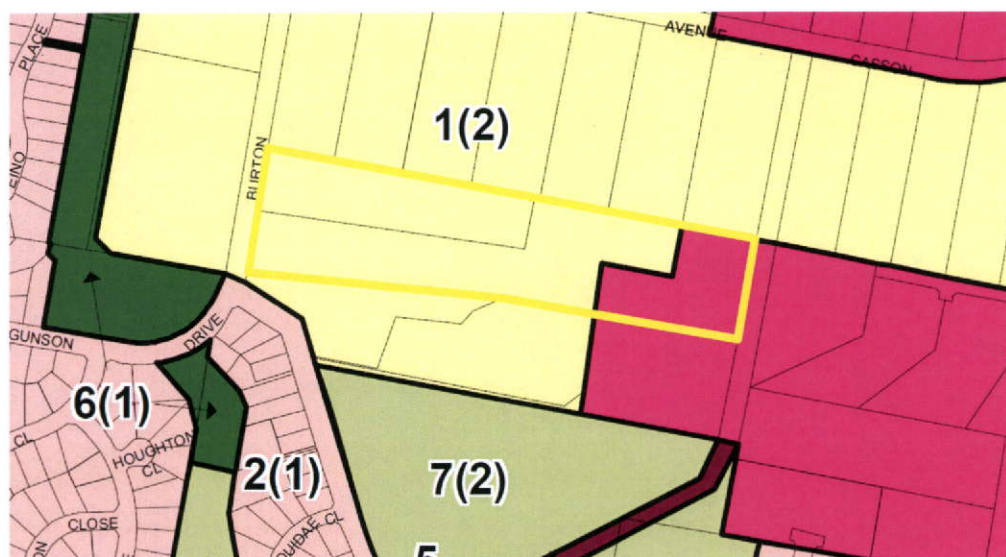


Figure 1 - Site Locality Plan (Zoning)

[Source: LMCC]



Figure 2 - Site Locality Plan (Zoning)

[Source: LPMA SIX Maps]

The site is comprised of two (2) rural residential allotments adjoining existing residential urban areas of Eleebana.

The site has a 120 metre frontage to Burton Road and is improved with kerb and gutter (for most of the frontage) and a public bus stop/bus bay. Access to the sites is provided by existing concrete and sealed driveways which provide access to the existing dwellings on the land. Each of the lots is improved with single dwellings, swimming pools and associated structures. The lots also have rural residential infrastructure in the form of sheds, stables, horse exercise track and paddocks, as well as dams and rural fencing.

Vegetation over the land is derived from previous rural residential occupation of the land, and is primarily comprised of managed grassland areas with planted gardens, and some isolated native trees in paddocks in various states of health.

The land is flat to slightly sloping, with gradients of between 1° and 3° with a grade generally from east to the west and northwest (toward Burton Road). A watercourse known as South Creek passes through the eastern parts of the site which drains land to the east.

The site has access to all urban utilities, including reticulated water, sewer, electricity and telecommunications. The site is located within the larger metropolitan area of Lake Macquarie and is located at an existing public transport link providing excellent access to facilities, such as shops, commercial services, health care and community services.

The site is located within an area that contains a variety of uses, typical of an urban/metropolitan fringe area. Adjoining land to the south is utilised for urban residential use, as well as a tourist facility containing tourist accommodation, restaurant and function centre. Adjoining land to the west (on the opposite side of Burton Road) is currently occupied for rural residential development and is subject to a consent that provides for a retirement village. Land to the north and east of the subject site is comprised of allotments of land used for rural and environmental living purposes with lot sizes of approximately 1 hectare.

The Proposed Development

The proposal involves the development of a retirement village on the subject land in a manner which can feasibly provide accommodation for seniors and persons with a disability, while providing effective on-site services to residents.

Plans of the proposal have been provided by EJE Architecture which includes a site analysis, Site Plan, typical dwelling/unit floor plans and elevations.

The proposal provides a variety of housing types, with single storey detached and semi detached villas and two storey apartment buildings (with lifts) provided. The proposal will provide:

- 61 two bedroom villas with garages.
- 40 x 2 bedroom + study apartments with basement parking spaces.

In addition the proposal will provide a large community/recreation building with a floor area of approximately 450m² that will include:

- Administration and reception;
- Nurses office and medical treatment room;
- Personal Care rooms (hairdresser/beautician etc);
- Bar and function room;
- Commercial kitchen and dining room;
- Indoor games room (darts, pool, indoor bowls);
- Swimming pool/spa and change rooms/showers; and
- Caretaker's accommodation.

The proposal also includes a large maintenance area/shed for maintenance and cleaning staff and for service storage etc.

Access to the development is provided with separated entry/exist driveways off Burton Road. The driveway connects with a loop road that provides access throughout the site. Pedestrian access is provided around the site via a footpath/cycleway alongside the proposed roads, with pedestrian crossing points at key locations.

All buildings, roads and other development have been located over 40 metres from the top bank of the watercourse that passes through the site. All areas of the site will be managed as Asset Protection Zones. This will not require any additional removal of vegetation in the unbuilt portions of the site which are currently maintained in a manner consistent with an Asset Protection Zone.

The proposal includes large areas of the site which will be improved with landscaping to provide gardens and planting to enhance the amenity of the development and provide landscape features in scale with the proposal.

The site drainage has been studied by Northrop engineers who have provided a plan showing concepts for the site. Key drainage measures include:

- Filling of the site to provide flood free levels in the developable areas.
- Provision of drainage paths to allow the continued movement of floodwaters through the site.
- Use of onsite detention tanks for control of stormwater flows from the site.
- Use of rainwater tanks for the collection of roofwater to be reused within the development.
- Provision of stormwater quality control structures to treat stormwater flows from the site.

The proposed development will be carried out in four (4) stages, with the dwellings in the northwest corner developed first. The main community facility will be developed in the second stage, however, it is proposed that the southern dwelling on the land will be adapted as a community facility for Stage 1 and will include administration/management recreational facilities, nursing room and personal care facilities. An existing shed will be utilised as a maintenance shed and a depot for maintenance/cleaning staff in Stage 1.

Purpose of Report

This report has been prepared to accompany a development application. The report examines the existing environment to determine likely crime risk, examines the proposal and surrounding area to identify any areas of significant crime risk and discusses measures to address crime risk areas identified.

Safer by Design

This report has utilised guidelines prepared by the NSW Police Service entitled 'Safer by Design'.

These guidelines provide assistance to determine crime risks and to identify design factors which may influence the likelihood of crime occurring. The guidelines deal with opportunistic crime which can be influenced by design/environmental factors which provide conditions where criminals feel they can commit crimes with a reduced chance of being caught. The guidelines identify three (3) key areas in design which can influence opportunistic crime. The three (3) factors are:

1. Surveillance;
2. Territorial Reinforcement; and
3. Access Control.

With regard to the proposed retirement village, the guidelines have been used to put the area and its crime risk in context using statistics to provide a comparative crime risk description. The site and design features are then examined to identify possible crime risk areas within the proposed development and surrounding locality in regard to the three (3) key design influences. Finally, the issues are discussed and recommendations made to improve the crime safety aspects of the design.

AREA CONTEXT

The site is an existing rural residential property located among rural residential, tourist and residential development. Another retirement village has recently been constructed on the opposite side of Burton Road.

The area context will be discussed in terms of the crime statistics available which show the current levels of crime in the area, and statistics looking at the comparative social economic advantage of the area. Statistics utilised are based upon Bureau of Crime Statistics and research for the Lake Macquarie local government area.

Likelihood and Consequences of Recorded Crime

This analysis of the statistics compares the area to other areas to determine the likelihood of crime occurring and qualitatively assesses the likely consequences of the most common forms of crime.

Likelihood

To examine the likelihood of crime occurring, total crime statistics per 100,000 people were examined for the area and compared with statistics for other local government areas in the state and region. The crime rates per 100,000 persons for key offences for this development type (theft and robbery offences) were ranked as follows:

- Break and enter Dwelling – 54 out of 152 LGAs
- Theft from dwelling – 77 out of 152 LGAs
- Theft from Motor Vehicle – 24 out of 152 LGAs
- Motor Vehicle Theft – 12 out of 152 LGAs

As such, based on the statistics, the likelihood of crime in the Lake Macquarie local government area is Moderate to Likely.

Consequence

The consequence is based on typical crimes that occur in the area. Based on the statistics and the typical crime expected for a residential area, it was considered that the qualitative assessment for crime consequence is minor with some effect on community fear.

The subject proposed development will provide aged housing and it is expected that key crimes for this form of development in the locality would be primarily property related crime and would not be subject to a high rate of injuries to people. This would accord with a Minor Crime Consequence.

Based on these assessments for crime likelihood and consequence, the area rating Matrix would give a value of 2.5 – 3.

Hotspot Weighting

Certain parts of an area can be more likely to experience crime and these areas are identified as hotspots. The subject site is not located in a local hotspot. As

such, the area weighting is only increased by 1. As such, the area rating with allowance for hotspot activity for the site's locality is 4.

Socio Economic Component

The socio-economic profile of an area is relevant to the area rating. To examine the comparative rating for socio economic factors, the SEIFA Index rating for the area is examined. The SEIFA Index rating for the Lake Macquarie local government area is 985. The Safer by Design Guidelines places the SEIFA rating in the fourth band. With this allowance, the adjusted area rating is 6 which is rated as moderate.

This figure is used further in conjunction with the site crime opportunity analysis.

SITE CRIME OPPORTUNITY

The assessment for Site Crime Opportunity Assessment involves examining the area and the proposal to determine any environmental attributes which affect the three (3) key areas of surveillance, territorial reinforcement and access control. After a survey of what positive and negative features are present, these figures are used to give an overall Site Risk Rating (out of 10) in combination with the adjusted area rating.

The environmental site features were rated as minor. When combined with the adjusted area rating, 'Safer by Design' gives a Site Risk Rating of 5 which is considered by the guidelines to be at the low end of a moderate crime risk area.

It is beyond this project to modify the area context rating, however, there were many site opportunity areas which were noted in the assessment which can be observed and addressed in the crime risk assessment. These matters have been discussed under the key heading of surveillance, territorial reinforcement and access control.

Surveillance

The area within the retirement village will have a good level of natural surveillance by both residents and staff of the village. The proposal includes accommodation for an on-site caretaker and there will be staff within the village at all times.

All internal roads are observed from dwellings and there are few areas within the development (outside of dwellings and yard spaces) where a person can walk around without being observed from a dwelling. The provision of suitable lighting over the access roads and pathways should be provided to ensure the natural surveillance is available at night as well as through the day.

The exceptions are the entrances to the units in the southern parts of the site where the pedestrian entrances are at the 'rear' of the building and not casually overlooked by the residents. It is necessary, however, to walk through the rest of the village to get to these areas, where good surveillance is available. In addition, the carparking areas of the units are not well observed if someone can gain entry into the basements. The control of access to these areas will therefore be important. While surveillance could be improved in these areas with CCTV, given the low crime risk of the area, it is not considered that such an outcome is warranted unless issues arise. Controlled access to lifts and stairs from ground level using a controlled access system with cameras may be appropriate.

The Recreation Centre for the village is located at the western end of the property and access through the village to this area is well surveyed with dwellings looking out onto the access road and pathways. From the west, however, there is an area of open space which adjoins a partly constructed road reserve which does not have good surveillance. The on-site caretaker's accommodation is located in the top storey of this building, providing surveillance and ongoing monitoring of the area.

Territorial Reinforcement

The proposed retirement village provides clear delineation of areas and effectively discerns the private areas of the site from the public space and semi public areas. The roads and footpaths within the site clearly define the pedestrian and walkable areas, while the mainly entry gate feature clearly defines the retirement village areas from the public street.

The retirement village will have staff on-site who maintain the gardens and building to make sure it is presented as an area well cared for and which will be defended.

The open space areas to the rear of the site will be different and will be left in a state similar to that which currently occurs. Environmental cues in this area should include fencing structures that clearly designate the site boundaries and signage which indicates that the land is private property and that entry is not permitted.

Access Control

While access to the site is freely available, the treatment of the entries make it clear that the area is a private space and is not open to the general public. While not acting as a formal access control, combined with staff and resident surveillance, the presentation psychologically deters unwarranted entry into the retirement village.

The dwellings themselves will have access available from the front entries, as well as possibly via side gates which provide access to courtyards and setback areas. The doors should be provided with quality deadbolts and should include a screened security door enabling residents to observe the entrance without having to fully open the entrance door. Side access gates should also be fitted with locking and latching devices which cannot be opened by someone seeking unauthorised access from the outside.

The entrances to the units including lifts will need a security locking system which may be automated with an intercom system to prevent unauthorised access into these areas. Like wise, all fire stairs should be locked at ground level to prevent access into the stairwells.

The recreation building will have set opening times for residents generally between 9am and 10pm with the building locked outside these times by the on-site caretaker. The locking mechanisms for doors should be of high quality and windows should be laminated to minimise opportunity for breakage.

DISCUSSION

While the site crime opportunity assessment has revealed a few minor issues, these can be easily addressed through suitable design features, including:

- Provision of lighting to the access roads and pathways.
- Consideration of CCTV and alarm systems for the stairwells/lifts of the unit entries.
- Provision of Security lighting around the recreation building.
- Consideration of CCTV and alarm systems for the recreation buildings.
- Provision of fencing around the site boundaries and provision of signage in isolated open space areas in the rear of the site.
- Villa doors and apartment doors should be fitted with security screened doors with locking mechanisms.
- Main villa and unit doors should be fitted with deadbolts.
- Any private open space access gates should be provided with locking/latching mechanisms that cannot be operated from the outside without a key.
- Unit entries, lifts and fire ground floor fire stair doors should be provided with quality locking mechanisms and/or remote accessed locking mechanisms to prevent unauthorised entry.
- The recreation centre should have high quality door and window locking devices and glass should be laminated.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The locality is identified as having a moderate site area rating for crime risk. This is based upon the crime statistics for the area and a review of the environmental features of the site.

The proposed retirement village is not at significant risk and the design incorporates features which limit potential opportunistic crime. Some recommendations have been made which can be simply incorporated into the proposal as follows:

- Provision of lighting to the access roads and pathways.
- Consideration of CCTV and alarm systems for the stairwells/lifts of the unit entries.
- Provision of Security lighting around the recreation building.
- Consideration of CCTV and alarm systems for the recreation buildings.
- Provision of fencing around the site boundaries and provision of signage in isolated open space areas in the rear of the site.
- Villa doors and apartment doors should be fitted with security screened doors with locking mechanisms.
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