

ATTACHMENT 2

GM Urban Design Report



Urban Design Report

**Redevelopment of Harbord Diggers Club –
Stage 1 Development Application
Evans Street, Freshwater**

May 2013
PREPARED FOR WARRINGAH COUNCIL

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief and purpose of the report

GM Urban Design & Architecture has been engaged by Warringah Council to undertake an assessment of the proposed Stage 1 DA for Harbord Diggers Club at Evans Street, Freshwater.

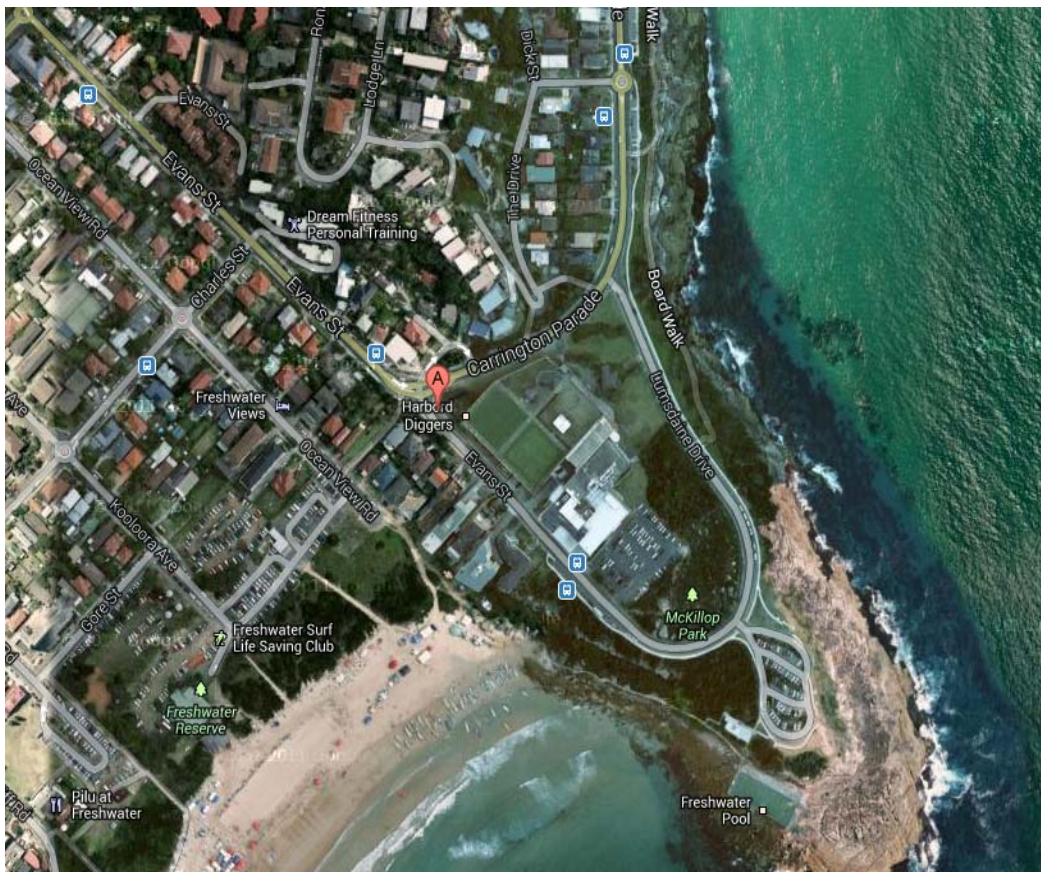
The purpose of the assessment and this report is to provide an independent urban design opinion of the proposal to assist Council in their assessment of the application. In arriving at the conclusions and recommendations within this report GMU have:

- Undertaken a site and context visit
- Reviewed the relevant information to the urban design assessment from the Development Application pack
- Undertaken an onsite briefing and meeting with Council staff on the application
- Considered the objectives and controls of the WLEP 2011 and WDCP 2011.
- Considered the objectives and controls of SEPP Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) and the Seniors Living Policy – Urban Design Guidelines for infill development.
- Urban design referral from Council officers dated 20 May 2013

2.2 The site and Development Proposal

THE SITE:

The site is located at 80 Evans Street, Freshwater. The site includes both the existing club site and a dwelling house lot at 4A Lumsdaine Drive, Freshwater. The lots are legally described as Lot 100 DP 1136132 and Lot 2 DP 579837.



Aerial showing the subject site Courtesy Google Maps

Current uses –

The site is currently occupied by the Harbord Diggers Club and car parking structure as well as a detached dwelling house on the corner of Carrington Pde and Lumsdaine Drive.

Site area –

The site area is 15 599 sqm. It benefits from extensive frontages to Carrington Parade, Evans Street and Lumsdaine Drive.

Topography and vegetation –

The site is located on a highly visible peninsular of land between Queenscliff Beach and Curl Curl. It is a prominent hill top along the coast and juts out into the ocean. The topography of the site rises from a low point at the intersection of Evans Street and Carrington Parade to the centre of Carrington Parade where the site falls away again to the corner of Carrington Parade and Lumsdaine Drive. The site also rises to the south east towards McKillop Park which is on the top of the headland. From here the land slopes again towards the cliffs to the ocean and the parking areas and outlook to the south.

The site is extensively developed and contains very little vegetation. Due to the large footprint of the club and its ancillary uses the only green spaces are the verge setbacks which contain grass and some low shrubs and low trees, the bowling greens which are on top of the existing car park structures and the landscaping provided on the dwelling lot.



Aerial showing site and existing vegetation within and around the site (Courtesy Google Maps)

Street address –

The existing land uses provide a poor address to all street frontages. To Evans Street the existing above ground car park presents blank facades for 2.5 storeys. The club presents partially inactive frontages up to 3 storeys with taller massing behind. The entry to the club is the only active area in the façade.

To Carrington Pde and Lumsdaine Drive the car park and the club also present largely inactive frontages. None of the existing development contributes positively to the streetscapes or public domain.

Built form –

The site is currently occupied by a 5 storey club building in the south eastern part of the site and a 2-3 storey car park structure. The dwelling house lot contains a 2 storey dwelling and garage.

Views –

The site benefits from panoramic views across the ocean and to the beaches and headlands to the north and south. A number of properties on the slopes behind the existing club have views across the club land also to the water although the existing location and extent of the taller parts of the club restrict these views to some degree.

THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION:

The Development Application is a Stage 1 DA setting out an envelope for new development on the site and the adaptive reuse of the existing club building as well as consolidation of the two lots to a single lot. Land uses are intended to be a new club, seniors living independent units, long day care centre, gym, community and respite centre.

Four senior living buildings are proposed on the site facing onto the Evans Street and Carrington Street frontages. Partial adaptive reuse of the existing club building is also proposed. It is intended to house some seniors living apartments with community care and respite day care services. The final height of the adapted building will be 5 storeys or RL 38.50.

Below existing ground level is car parking and the new club which will be located with frontage towards Lumsdaine Drive. It will include a new outdoor area close to the level of the street which will involve significant excavation on the site.

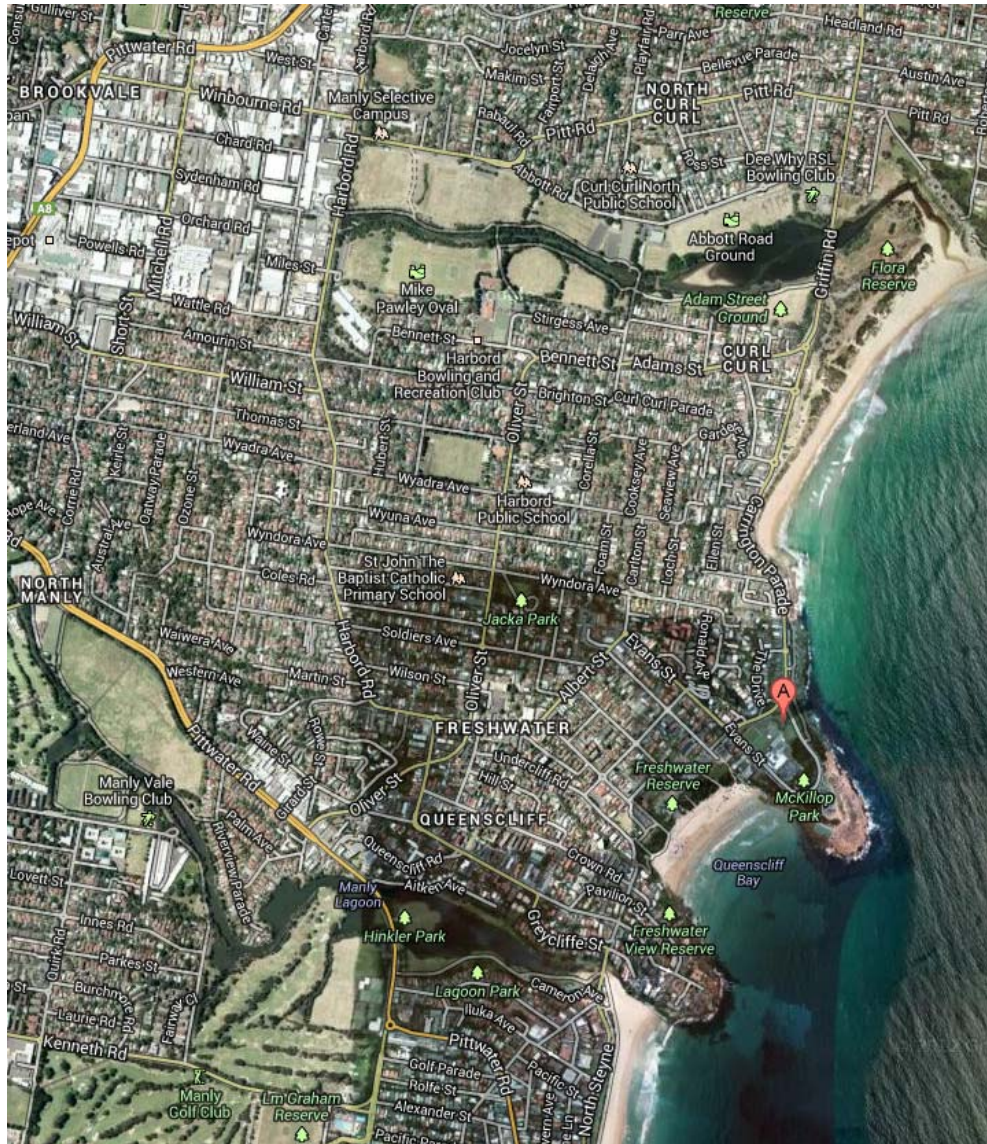
The stage 1 DA also seeks consent for a variety of land uses which include seniors independent living units, new Harbord Diggers Club, Long Day Child Care Centre, community centre and respite centre.

The proposed indicative GFA for the site is 21 900 sqm. Final GFA for the site will be the subject of further Development Applications which is concerning as it does not deliver certainty for the site. This GFA equates to an FSR of 1.4:1 based on a site area of 15 599 sqm. These areas and compliance with the GFA definition have not been reviewed as part of this report.

3 CONTEXT AND PLANNING CONTROLS

3.1 Local Context

Freshwater is a residential neighbourhood located within the Northern Beaches area close to North Manly and Queenscliff. The locality benefits from a high amenity with a beach side atmosphere and well patronized local centre at Freshwater Village Centre. The Harbord Diggers Club is an existing development that is located to the east of the local centre.



Aerial showing the location of Freshwater and the site in the broader context (courtesy Google Maps)

The suburb benefits from proximity to Queenscliff Bay, McKillop Park, Freshwater Reserve, Jacka Park and Harbord Park with Richie Roberts Reserve further to the north. The area is predominantly residential in character and due to its location is relatively quiet in terms of traffic movements.



Aerial showing the location of the location of the site in the more immediate context (Courtesy Google Maps) (Site is indicated by the red A)

The subject site is located away from the local centre and other facilities within Freshwater. It is on a peninsular of land that is adjacent to McKillop Park. This park offers passive recreational opportunities and a public look out to enjoy the coastline and views to the surrounding beaches and headlands.

The street network around the site links into the coastal road network that runs up to North Curl Curl Beach. This route continues up to North Curl Curl and eventually to Dee Why Lagoon. Whilst well trafficked this road would not carry the majority of traffic moving between neighbourhoods as alternative and more direct routes are available such as Harbord Road to the west which links to Pittwater Road to the south and north.

The site is accessed via Evans Street. This street links to Albert Street and then back to Lawrence Street where the local centre is located. Evans Street once past the intersection with Carrington Parade is a lower order street that provides (with Lumsdaine Drive) a loop system around the park and club and back to Carrington Parade. As such this road carries little traffic apart from visitors to the club, park and lookout as well as local residents. Bus routes run along Evans and Carrington Street.

Streetscape character for Evans Street –

Evans Street changes in character along its length and close to the site. The south western side of the street consists of low side lots and sloping topography near the corner of Carrington Pde with little public domain vegetation and most landscape provided by the front gardens to dwellings. In this area built form is generally two storey detached housing on narrow lots located below street level.

Closer to the club the character changes to high rise development. The built form varies from 3-8 storeys above street level in the form of apartment developments. There is sporadic street planting with low scale trees but the majority of planting (where provided) is within the front garden areas of the apartment developments. The street presentation of these buildings is poor with large setbacks, exposed parking areas and plant and frequent driveway crossings due to the narrow lot configurations.

The side of the road containing the club has a narrow verge close to the club with a wider grassy verge adjacent to the car parking structures. There are small palms and low shrubs in some locations. Overall the club does not contribute to the amenity or character of the street and offers little landscape quality. The existing club building is located on the boundary alignment with the street and this creates a very narrow footpath adjacent to the club. The two sides of the road contrast sharply due to the larger setback of the apartments and the hard proximity of the club development.

The existing club building is some 1-4 storeys to this street with the car parking presenting as 1-2 storey structures. Neither offers real activation to the street. Further to the south the street enclosure is created by the bush land open space areas of the park and the ocean reserve with no built form in these locations.



Evans Street close to the intersection with Carrington Pde looking north west



Evans Street to the south near the park entry looking towards the existing club building



Evans Street close to the intersection with Carrington Pde looking south east towards the high rise residential development

Streetscape character for Carrington Parade –

Carrington Parade has quite a different character to Evans Street. Whereas development along Evans Street is highly visible, development on the north eastern side of Carrington Pde is only seen through a screen of coastal vegetation. The most prominent built form is on the corner with Evans Street where a 3 storey brick apartment development is located. Further to the east the built form is 1-3 storey houses cascading up the slope to the ridge line. A slip road is provided for access to these properties and the median between the two streets is vegetated with a range of planting including native trees.

The streetscape therefore on this side is one of landscape with glimpses of houses and cars on the slip road behind. The footpath here is very narrow. The visibility of the dwellings and the redevelopment of the club to each other will be limited here until above the tree line along the median and retaining wall to the street.

The southern side of Carrington Street is created by the club and single dwelling house which is proposed to be amalgamated into the club lot. Currently the club car park creates the built form and ranges from 2 large storeys behind a landscape setback to the corner with Evans Street reducing to a single storey closer to the footpath due to the rising topography of the street.



Carrington Pde is framed by the low scale vegetation in the median with the slip roads and retaining walls with the housing rising up behind this vegetated screen



Carrington Pde to the south is created by the car park built form ranging from 2 storeys at the intersection with Evans Street down to 1 storey near the crest of the hill as can be seen above

Streetscape character for Lumsdaine Drive –

Lumsdaine Drive is different again to both the other streets. The ocean side is predominantly open space with low scrub planting, grassed areas and public walkways before the topography falls off a cliff to the ocean. At the tip of the headland the road provides access to the parking areas and outlook and then curls around to connect to Evans Street. The other side of the road shares its boundary with the single dwelling house and the club land as well as the park.

The single dwelling is well setback from the road and has a scale varying from 1-2 storeys. The club is also well setback currently with the foreground created by a grassy slope rising up to the club building. It rises some 5 storeys above this level. Further to the south the edge of the street is created by the vegetation within the park with no built form visible. Vegetation is low and scrubby with no street trees or significant landscape elements.



Lumsdaine Drive looking towards the look out and public parking areas



Lumsdaine Drivew close to the intersection with Carrington Pde looking towards the club building



Lumsdaine Drivew looking towards the club building across the park vegetation

3.2 Summary of Urban Design Controls and key principles

The primary controls for the area and the site are somewhat at odds with the scale and form of the club uses on the site. The Senior SEPP is the main control that applies to this type of development underpinned by the Seniors Living Policy: Urban Design Guideline for Infill Development. These documents place an emphasis on achieving an integrated development with adjoining uses and built form and mitigating adverse impacts to neighbours and the street.

The SEPP controls limit height to 8m and 2 storey developments. The proposal does not comply with these standards. The existing car park would sit under the 8m height control but the existing club building already exceeds this sort of height in both metres and storeys. Therefore the application of such a height control for the adaptive reuse of a built form is not necessarily appropriate.

The guidelines call a number of outcomes which in summary include:

- Scale of development is to reinforce the existing street patterns
- Response to the typical lot patterns
- Model development on built form that offers a positive relationship to the street and respond to consistent scale and massing and spatial rhythms
- Respond to significant trees and landscapes within the neighbourhood. Protect and enhance existing vegetation.

- Maintain existing natural features and provide high levels of amenity. Minimise dominance of car parking and circulation and provide housing choice
- Bulk is to be located to the front of sites with rear development more modest in scale.
- Provide at least 10% of the site area as a single area to the rear of the site and provide a minimum of 30% of the site as landscaped area with 15% of the site as deep soil.
- Scale development in relation to the existing streetscape and provide a high level of activation and surveillance to the street.
- Respond to building siting, height, separation and front setbacks and reduce visual bulk through articulation and breaking up building massing, variation in materials and colours and setting back upper floors.
- Improve the streetscape with new landscaping and clearly define front setback areas as private or communal. Provide street entries to dwellings and avoid domination of the street by car entries
- Respond to Council planning instruments that specify character or desired character for an area.
- Minimise impacts to neighbours relating to privacy, amenity, overshadowing, views and outlook as well as bulk.
- Mitigate the length of unrelieved walls with lengths no longer than 8m.
- Solar to allow for 3 hours direct sunlight in midwinter between 9am and 3pm.
- Provide quality useable private open space and communal open space that is accessible with quality landscape solutions.

Warringah LEP 2011 also applies to the site. It zones the site as R2 Low Density Residential. Objectives include meeting housing needs in a low density environment and enabling other land uses to service residents. The intent is that development sits within a landscape setting that is in harmony with the natural environment of the area.

The height control for the site and area is 8.5m maximum. It is understood that the proposal breaches this height control.

The Warringah DCP 2011 also applies in terms of understanding the desired future character of the area. The DCP includes controls for the site and area. The maximum wall height for this site and area is 7.2m with a 5m building envelope. Street setbacks are 6.5m with 0.9m side setback requirements. Rear setbacks are 6m.

Other controls within the DCP centre around minimising bulk and scale and response to topography through setbacks and minimising excavation. Similar controls to the Residential Flat Design Code and guidelines exist for solar access and amenity. There are no site specific controls that apply to the Harbord Diggers development site.

4 URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

General comments -

This assessment considers the bulk, form and scale of the proposal, its response to the local context and streetscape and its aesthetics. In considering the suitability of the Stage 1 DA consideration must be given to the fact that the existing buildings (including the above ground car park) have an adverse impact on the locality and do not contribute to the sense of place or ambience of this important headland site.

The existing building forms provide little activation or interaction to the streetscapes and the existing club building acts as a visual barrier across the site from most vantage points of each of the three streets. The 5 storey club building is the most aggressive form on the site and is the component that in an ideal world one would seek to demolish as it is out of scale with most of the area.

However it must be remembered that the building exists and its scale and massing is already a feature of the context, even if it is adverse. The car park area also exists and creates very high site coverage. Therefore given the poor urban design and streetscape quality of the existing development redevelopment of the site should be encouraged to improve on these elements. It must also be acknowledged that to achieve redevelopment development similar to some degree with the scale of the existing club is likely to be sought. Under the current Stage 1 application this is being done under the auspices of an adaptive reuse of part of the existing club building but no detail is really provided.

There is merit in seeking to reuse existing built form from a sustainability viewpoint however it is not clear how a residential development will be integrated into the existing frame and slab configurations given the greater floor to floor height seen in a club in comparison to a residential development. Therefore there is some question as to how much of the existing structure would really be retained and reused or whether the intent is really to seek to retain the existing envelope in terms of its height, location and potential yield.

Topographically the site contours provide some opportunities and some issues. At the corner of Evans Street and Carrington Parade there is a dip in the topography with the adjoining dwellings set low down below the road and the houses on the opposite side of the street raised up. Therefore massing on this corner has little impact on those dwellings as they do not look directly across to it. The lower topography does make this corner highly visible on approach from Freshwater Village and will tend to exacerbate the massing.

Redevelopment of the site also offers the opportunity to improve streetscape landscape as well as address some of the scale issues within the site. Given the paucity of landscape to the streets around the site other than at the park any new development should seek to substantially improve the landscape in the public and private domain of the site as well as softening the massing of the club at the interface with the park and parking area to mitigate its impact.

The redevelopment of this site is a great opportunity to improve the amenity, connectivity, view lines and overall quality of architecture for this area. However to achieve this ideally the large and bulky club building should be demolished and other opportunities explored that is more sensitive to the high visual quality of the site and its significant location. The applicants are within their rights to seek to retain this building and in some form reuse it but this does not truly realize the best outcomes either for the site or the area around it.

We would encourage Council and the applicant to work together to 'think outside the box' for this Stage 1 DA to achieve a solution that allows relocation of the massing on the site to achieve a better outcome whilst recognizing the economic imperatives of redeveloping such a large and outdated facility. This will require challenges to the existing controls as discussed below.

Response to context –

- The site and streets around it have little if any meaningful vegetation so the massing is exposed to full view. Carrington Pde as some softening through vegetation on the median and Lumsdaine Drive also benefits from the bushland plantings on the reserve. However the site itself does not contribute to this character currently.
- The planning controls that apply to the site do not actually reflect the massing that currently exists either on this site or in fact in parts of Evans Street.
- This creates an immediate tension which is resulting in the applicants seeking to retain the massing of the existing club so as to not lose its gross floor area or exceedance of the current height controls.
- The low density zoning for the site and area also does not reflect some of the apartment development seen on Evans Street.

- However there are also low scale 2 storey detached dwellings within the immediate context that do fit the controls and intent of the controls.
- So the challenge for this site is that it has an interface to both of these scenarios – the higher development along Evans including the club building and the lower scale dwellings seen in part to Evans Street and to Carrington Pde in particular.
- To Carrington Pde 2-3 storey buildings setback behind the vegetation in combination with the rising topography partially screens the dwellings whilst allowing an outlook across the site to the water for some of the dwellings. However this view opportunity is blocked by the large 5 storey club building which extends along the boundary of the site as a large bulk.
- The proposal suggests a height of 8.5m to the corner of Evans St and Carrington Pde. This diminishes to roughly a single storey scale further along Evans Street but increases to 8.5m at its highest along Carrington Pde. This sort of height would normally translate into a 2 storey built form which would be consistent with the character of this part of Evans St and Carrington Pde.
- Given the height controls applying to the site are 8.5m then these envelope heights are consistent. Further the SEPP allows 8m to ceiling so arguably a higher development could be achieved if a sloping roof form was introduced. The stage 1 envelope in this part of the site is considered a better outcome in terms of height and is supported.
- To Lumsdaine Drive the proposal increases in height. Whilst the strict measurement from existing ground level maintains a 2 storey scale at some 7.9 – 8.5m the actual perceived height of the proposal will increase to some 3 storeys near the corner with Carrington Street. This is due to extensive excavation to the existing ground plane to accommodate the club.
- The result is a complete change to the character of Lumsdaine Drive from a street with landscape to both sides and setback building form to one that is cut down to street level and offers a continuous built form that is much more visible to the streetscape.
- The height then increases considerably at the existing club building, which is intended for partial adaptive reuse. This scale is already out of character with the area and is adverse in terms of the setting of the headland.
- As mentioned earlier it is already in existence and therefore the applicant is entitled to retain the building. However this is an unfortunate outcome given the intrusiveness of the built form and a better result may be able to be achieved for the site as a whole and for the headland if this GFA was redistributed in response to the real context rather than just retaining it where it exists.
- The scale of this building will also be exacerbated by the extent of excavation for the club building to this street. It will increase the scale of the building by at least one large storey as the existing 5 storey building will be viewed with this additional massing. Whilst it is understood that the applicant wishes to minimise the impact of the club by placing it underground to reduce the visual massing the impact of this additional scale to Lumsdaine Drive on approach to the public outlook is not supported.
- To mitigate this it is suggested that the existing ground level is maintained for the perimeter of Lumsdaine Drive i.e. in the order of perhaps 10-15m which could provide deep soil for bushland landscape that extends the character of the park along that street and reduces the visual impact of the development. This would still allow a recessed courtyard for the club buildings and uses and reasonable open space whilst not increasing the apparent scale to the public domain.
- Evans Street has a range of scales from housing to larger apartment buildings. At its south eastern end the apartment buildings reach 7-8 storeys and introduce a scale that is more in character with the existing club building. Due to this Evans Street in this location has the capacity to absorb greater scale that elsewhere on the site whilst not appearing too dominant or unreasonable relative to the context.
- The proposal is suggesting heights of 7.9m close to the existing club building which is considered reasonable given the context. The height then increases considerably to some 13.7m where the existing club is located and rises further beyond the street.
- The scale here is in character with these taller apartment developments. Given this greater height there is an argument that it would be appropriate to locate taller massing along Evans Street to respond to this scale rather than deep into the site as occurs with the club building at present. This is discussed further later in this report.
- However response to context is not just about the height of development. It also includes the grain or spacing built form to open space, street interface and enclosure and landscape character etc.
- The proposal includes new lower scale building envelopes of considerable length. The length is not in character with the existing dwelling houses and tends to emulate the length of the large flat buildings which would not comply with current standards or approaches to apartment development. This is not considered to be an appropriate precedent based on the SEPP or Councils controls.

- The 'grain' of the development needs to be finer to recognize the narrow lot pattern which is still apparent even in the apartment developments opposite as well as for the lower scale houses. Greater breaks between the building forms would assist to achieve this.
- Ideally the end building at RL 31 on the corner of Evan Street should break into two smaller forms to reduce the extent of façade as you approach up Carrington Pde and from Evans Street itself.
- Ideally these breaks should correspond to at least some of the breaks in the apartment buildings on the other side of the road to allow view corridors through to the water. One additional break should be provided in the longer building closer to Carrington Pde especially given that this is the end which relates more closely to the fine grain low scale housing forms.
- Lumsdaine Drive has a significant setback from the street which allows a landscape setting to this street. This is positive, although the new buildings extend further towards the corner than the current car park. However given there is a dwelling on the corner lot currently this is probably reasonable.
- This development also comes closer to the corner of Evans St and Carrington Pde than the current car parks. This will bring the massing closer to the public domain. A 6.5m setback is proposed which is consistent with Council controls and therefore this is considered acceptable.
- The proposal seeks to adaptively reuse part of the large club building, which due to its massing, cuts views across the site to the parkland and ocean beyond. It is also located hard up to Evans Street which is not characteristic for the area. This is an adverse outcome which further encourages consideration of removal of this building to allow a reasonable setback to be provided.
- Otherwise the proposal should seek to minimise the massing it proposes to Evans Street within the structural ability of the existing building. Ideally a setback as close to 6.5m as possible should be provided. Alternatively lowering the scale of the existing building to perhaps only 2 storeys with the rest of the massing set further back would at least achieve an improved dialogue with the scale of the new buildings proposed.
- To improve the relationship to the surrounding streets it is imperative that the proposal provides a strong concept for landscape that softens the streetscapes and the impact of the development from the public domain as well. The apparent lack of 'real' deep soil planting is a potential issue in the future as the entire site appears to be occupied by underground car parking or other uses and then built back up to street level. This appears excessive when an additional level of car parking could reduce the coverage and allow natural ground to be retained in more areas – particularly given the large site area for this development.
- Council needs to ensure that real deep soil planting is available within courtyard spaces and to all street verges including Lumsdaine Drive where the proposal appears to seek to extend the car park right out to the boundary. This would be a poor outcome. It is not considered reasonable to extend the car park over the entire site as proposed.

The biggest issue in relation to the context is the decision to retain the existing club building. Whilst there are good arguments for this normally (in terms of adaptive reuse and sustainability) the club building is the biggest visual blight and dominates the site and the peninsula. Its elongated form running effectively north to south cuts across the site and blocks any opportunity for long view lines through the site from east to west or to the park land.

Council and the applicant are encouraged to investigate opportunities to relocate and break down this massing perhaps by relaxing height controls over other portions of the site along Evans Street to encourage a better outcome. With improvements in the grain of the proposal by reduced building length and additional breaks between the buildings the response to the context of the lower buildings is considered to be reasonable subject to detail landscape and architectural design and adequate articulation of the built form.

Built form suitability –

- Adaptive reuse of the existing club building, whilst an understandable strategy, does not assist with improving the visual or movement connections across or through the site or assist with the bulk. In our view this development needs to be seen as an opportunity to improve the existing outcomes on the site rather than maintaining the status quo.
- The overall height of the new buildings is generally less than height limit above natural ground and is acceptable.
- However study of the plans reveals that the third storey is being achieved by cutting the envelope down into the ground.
- Whilst this approach might be acceptable for the club it can cause negative amenity impacts for apartments which are in effect down in a cutting with privacy impacts from the street, low light and ventilation and reduced outlook and solar access.

- This is particularly the case for Building B which appears incised into the slope and then is also opposite the loading area.
- The buildings should step to follow the topography and should relate to ground level. To achieve privacy ideally the ground levels of the apartments should be some 1m above the street level. This is likely to result in a 2 storey outcome in some locations on the site rather than 3 storeys if the amenity issue cannot be resolved.
- The building length to Evans and Carrington Pde is considered to be excessive as discussed in the previous topic and one additional break per street would assist in easing this issue.
- The proposal provides positive breaks in the building form to Carrington Street that are a reasonable width.
- Unfortunately none of these visual breaks continue through the master plan to provide a greater visual or movement permeability through the site.
- The break between Building B and C is then blocked by Building A at its end.
- The same occurs for Building A breaks due to the reuse of the existing club building.
- Breaks between the buildings wherever possible should continue through the site to provide a 'breathing space' to reduce the impact of what is unavoidably a different form to much of the rest of the area.
- Ideally the existing club building should not be retained. To achieve this we consider that an alternative would be to consider allowing a 5 storey development component along Evans Street for a greater length than currently exists.
- Given the greater scale of this context, so long as building length is contained it could deliver a better overall outcome.
- In terms of the relationship of the envelopes to the ground the issue with excavated units has already been discussed. In addition to this the extent of excavation for the club building and its courtyard has also been discussed relative to its impact to Lumsdaine Drive.
- A large courtyard excavation also appears to be proposed adjacent to Building D to service underground facilities.
- This is a poor outcome in terms of disturbance to the site but also will stop the potential for any landscape right next to the main parkland which is especially important to mitigate the bulk of the development if the existing club building is retained and reused.
- The small building located next to the park is also right on the boundary. This should be setback to provide external seating opportunities within the site and ensuring an active edge to the park. It will also allow a buffer of some sort whilst the adjoining land remains a car park.
- It is also not clear exactly how much of the existing club is proposed to be retained. The plans suggest all structure to RL 38 but the floor plates and floor to floor heights in the club are unlikely to suit the apartment use so more detail around this should be sought to ensure this is a genuine retention of structure rather than a 'grab' to retain that sort of massing.

Views and visual absorption capacity -

- The view study shows that the proposal will have little impact on distance views due to the scale of the existing club building. But what these views also show is that the club building is quite an aggressive element on the headland.
- Consideration of different options for the location of this mass may deliver a better outcome for the community and for the public domain as well as the development.
- The view study shows that the southern leg of the headland has more capacity to absorb the massing that exists and is intended to be retained.
- Whilst the existing club is visible it is adjacent to a grouping of taller apartments that are already visually prominent.
- The viewing angle means that the length of the club building is seen as though it runs along Evans Street. The sheer length of this building along the site results in adverse visual impact that already exists. That does not necessarily justify the continuation of these impacts given the extent of new development and effective change to the entire site as well as stripping back the existing large massing.
- From Freshwater Village the outcome is only acceptable due to the large mass of the club that is already visible. Reorienting this massing would reduce this visibility and achieve a better outcome.
- From Freshwater Reserve the club creates a transition from the hilltop but still its length and width are visible. The proposal retains this massing and its negative outcomes rather than considering options to improve the existing situation considerably.

- The view to the development from the corner of Evans and Carrington has a significant massing. This is due to the existing club building form and the proximity of the development to the street currently. Again relocation of the club building massing as a new building would allow this form to be setback to give a better result to the streetscape.
- Options for location of massing - To achieve the best solution for the site ideally the existing club building should not be retained. Options to relocate this massing are considered as follows:
 - It is recommended that discussions are held with the applicant to relocate the proposed club massing into two buildings.
 - The first taller building would be oriented along Evans Street and setback from Evans Street to match the new smaller building setbacks.
 - It would extend from the current club edge to the south east over where the child care centre and café are proposed.
 - This will give view opportunities for the building and will not reduce the existing views for residents in the adjoining tower building.
 - Another smaller building could then be provided to the north east (where the current club finishes) which could achieve the 3 storey scale of the other building forms on the site and not require such extensive excavation as it can be designed to suit the ground level.
 - If additional massing is needed then it could be provided by an additional level to the middle level of the Evans Street lower scale buildings as a response to the increasing scale of Evans Street at that location. It is acknowledged that this would result in new development that does exceed the current height controls and SEPP height control but it is considered that a better outcome overall would be achieved.
 - The benefits of this are that it:
 - eradicates the long tall massing of the club across the middle of the site which creates the heavy massing seen from so many locations,
 - it opens up views into and through the site in an east west general direction both from the public domain and also for new residents,
 - it achieves a better grain relationship for the development,
 - it locates the higher form to Evans Street where it is already established by the current apartments,
 - it will improve private views on the headland and reduce the visual impact of the whole site whilst also allowing a continuous landscape setback to Evans Street.
- If this is not possible then there should be a reduction in the height of the 5 storey Building D towards Lumsdaine Drive by a minimum of 1 storey to achieve some sense of transition and to lower the height impact of the building from the north when viewed from the public domain. The setback should be sufficient to make the upper floor recessive.
- The existing massing of the club should be reduced also to Evans Street either by an increased setback to the existing building as it is redeveloped or by reducing the scale of the building to only 2 storeys to tie into the rest of the streetscape on this side of Evans Street.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposal has the potential to revitalize an aged and poor quality development that does not contribute to the area or streetscape. Overall the intent of the proposal is supported and it has the potential to greatly improve the amenity of the streets and the architectural quality of the area.

However there are some areas of concern that should be addressed to achieve an improved outcome. As discussed the existing club building is a poor quality built form and presents a massing that has myriad adverse impacts. This development provides the only opportunity to address and improve those outcomes by relocating the massing in less onerous positions within the site.

It is understood that seeking to relocate massing away from the existing building location within a lower height zone could be problematic for Council given the extent of departure from the current controls. However this is a development under the Seniors SEPP so there is some flexibility to consider scale and massing relative to the existing context that would be consistent with the intent of the guidelines.

If this is not possible then we suggest the following design amendments to the scheme to mitigate the impacts as well as other considerations to gain an appropriate urban design outcome –

- Reduction in the height of the 5 storey building D towards Lumsdaine Drive by a minimum of 1 storey to achieve some sense of transition and to lower the height impact of the building from the north when viewed from the public domain.
- Provide a deep soil landscape buffer to the park (currently car parking) along the eastern edge to reduce the sharp interface with the development.
- Delete the colonnade to the entry and replace with either an increased setback to the existing building as it is redeveloped or by reducing the scale of the building to only 2 storeys to tie into the rest of the streetscape on this side of Evans Street.
- Introduce an additional break in the buildings to both Evans Street and Carrington Pde to achieve a more responsive building length to the existing grain.
- Ensure amenity is acceptable for apartments on lower levels.
- Require retention of a 10-15m strip of raised landscape area at existing levels to Lumsdaine Drive to reduce the apparent bulk to that street of a 6 storey building through the new development as well as exposure of the club facility in what is currently a street more dominated by landscape
- This will also allow establishment of quality bushland landscape to carry the character of the remainder of this street past the site.
- Reduce the extent of the basement car parking to ensure high quality landscape solutions to all streets.