

SYDNEY NORTH PLANNING PANEL 2017SNH074

Response by St Vincent's Health Australia to North Sydney Council's Assessment Report

Summary

St Vincent's Health Australia wishes to express its appreciation of the guidance and assistance it has received from the planning officers of the North Sydney Council over the last two years to shape this much needed Palliative Care Service for the benefit of the community.

We note with pleasure the recommendation in Council's Assessment Report to the Sydney North Planning Panel that our development application be approved, subject to certain conditions and it is to these conditions that we address this response and ask that you consider the following:

- A. Change the consent conditions from 'deferred' to 'conditional' to allow an immediate start on the design development and construction documentation.
- B. Remove conditions where the information has been supplied and satisfies the concern or would be satisfied during normal design development (conditions iii, v and vi).
- C. Remove conditions where the concerns appear to be misinterpreted from the available documents (Condition iv).
- D. SVHA is prepared to lower the parapets of the two buildings (condition i)
- E. SVHA cannot accept the compromise to the Palliative Care Service caused by increasing the complying setback to the northern boundary by 2.0m (Condition ii)

Discussion

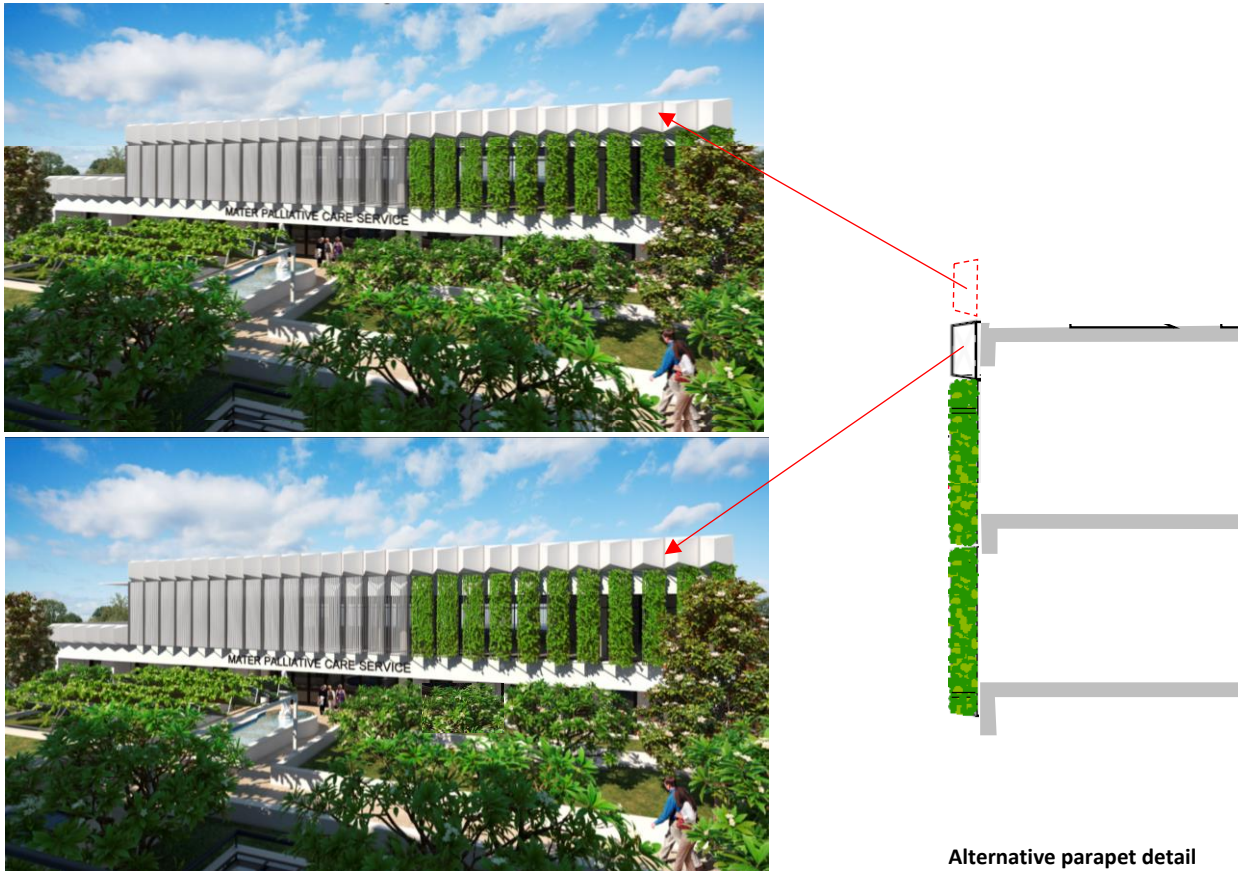
Deferred Consent Conditions

i. Lowering of the parapets of both buildings by 500mm so that the maximum height of the northern (Executive) building is RL100.65 and the maximum height of the southern (Palliative Care) building is RL99.1;

1. St Vincent's Health Australia would be prepared to reduce the parapets of both buildings by 500mm. According to our surveys and calculations that would result in maximum heights of RL100.72 and RL99.20 for the northern (Executive) building and the southern (Palliative Care) building respectively, which are slightly different to the RLs proposed in the CAR.

2. Although the roofs are non-trafficable, the parapet height was set at 1.0 m for perimeter safety for maintenance staff. Reducing the parapet height will require the installation of a safety harness system to achieve comparable levels of safety.

3. To preserve the clarity of the buildings the parapet panel proportion would be retained and the exoskeleton frame height reduced by 500mm.



ii. The northern (Executive) building being setback an additional 2m setback from the northern boundary;

1. The northern Executive building as proposed complies with the required setback.
2. Narrowing the building by 2.0 m is unacceptable as it would result in a net loss to the gross floor area of 130m² which would compromise the specialist consulting rooms necessary for optimal Palliative Care
3. Sliding the building 2.0 m to the South is also unacceptable as it would result in a loss of 70m² of landscaping to the Palliative Care garden.
4. Finding spiritual solace in a natural setting is a critical part of palliative care and we would vigorously resist any attempt to reduce the precious gardens. We concur with the NSCAR when it states (p24):

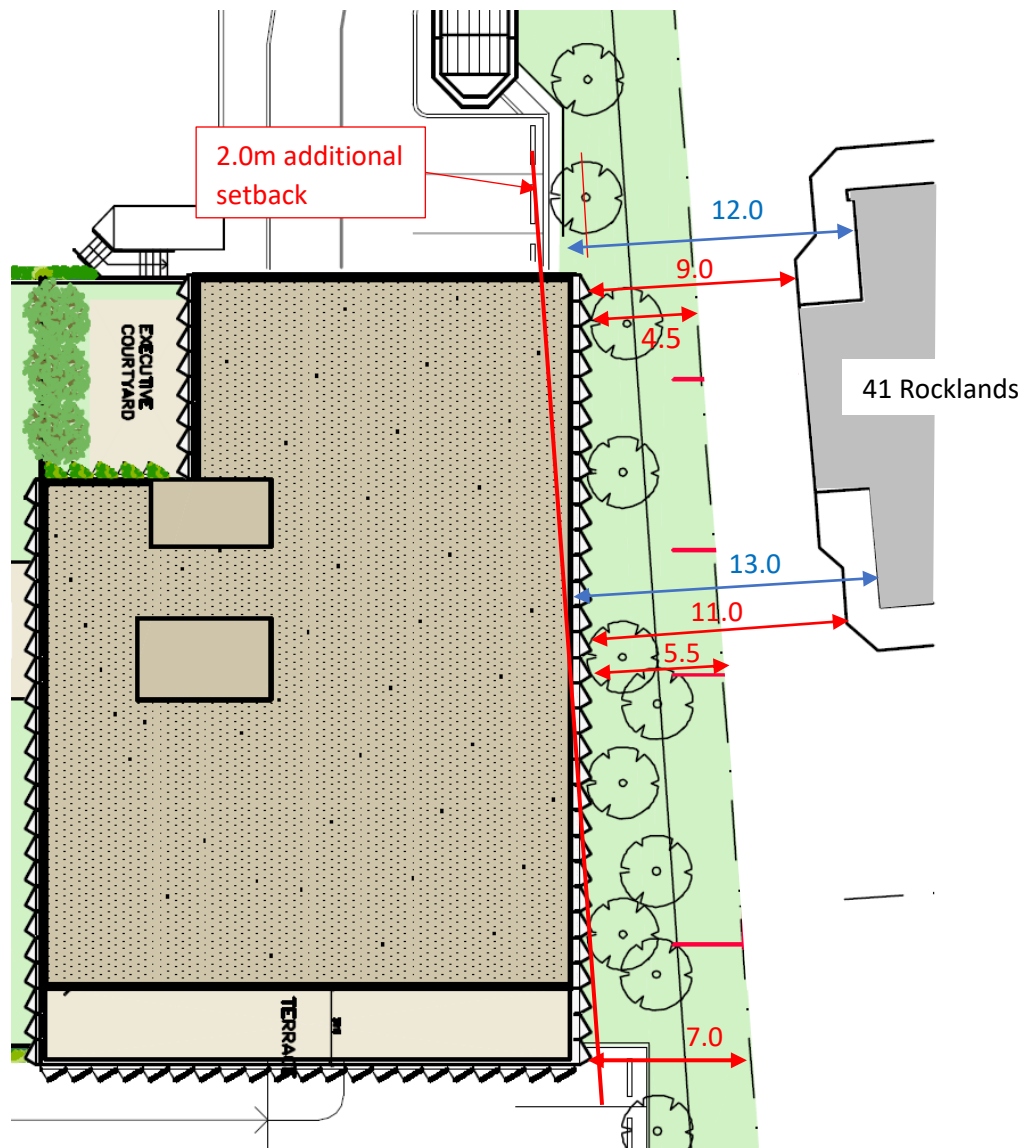
'If the consulting building (top adjacent to boundary) was moved completely over the existing multi level carpark, there would no increase in site cover.

*The result would be a **significantly decreased landscaped courtyard and no benefit other than increased setback to 41 Rocklands Road.** The benefit of the landscaped courtyard is to provide a peaceful outlook, solar access and a meeting place for those patients in palliative care.'*

5. Moving the building 2.0m further away from the boundary has no effect on the existing views from the neighbouring residences:

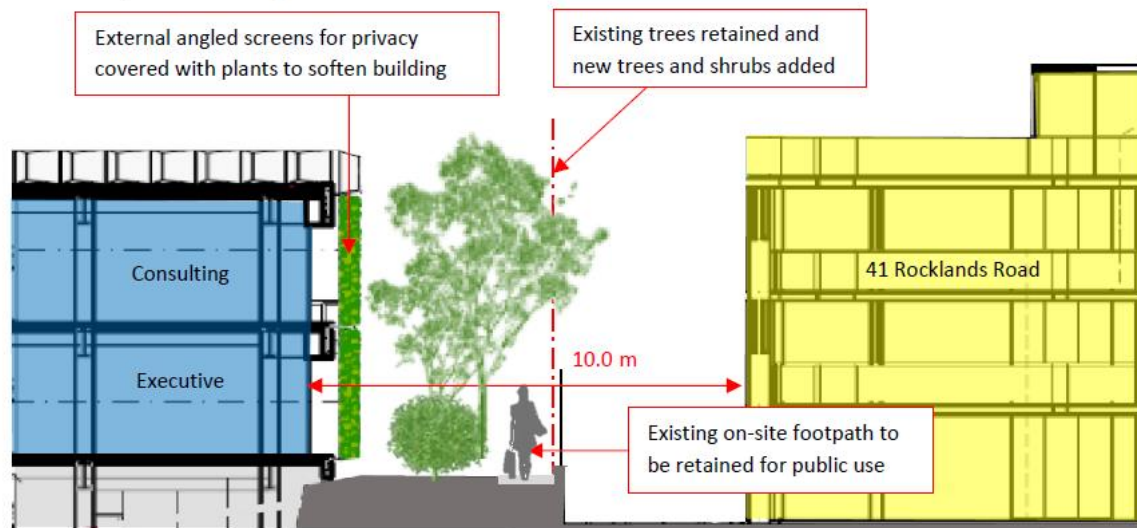
*'To lessen the impact of the scale of the building and amenity impacts on the neighbours at 41 Rocklands Road, the separation distance could be increased **but this would not retain the view** from the lower level units.'* (NSCAR p30)

6. The proposed northern Executive building is not parallel to the boundary, which means that increasing the setback by 2.0 m would only apply to 50% of the building.



7. The neighbouring building, 41 Rocklands, only overlaps the northern building by 15.0m and the separation between the buildings varies from 9.0m at the western end to 11.0m at the eastern end. The distances from the glass line of the consulting rooms to the windows of the principal living areas of 41 Rocklands vary from 12.0 to 13.0m. We would submit that these separations are sufficient for harmonious coexistence without the need for an increased setback.

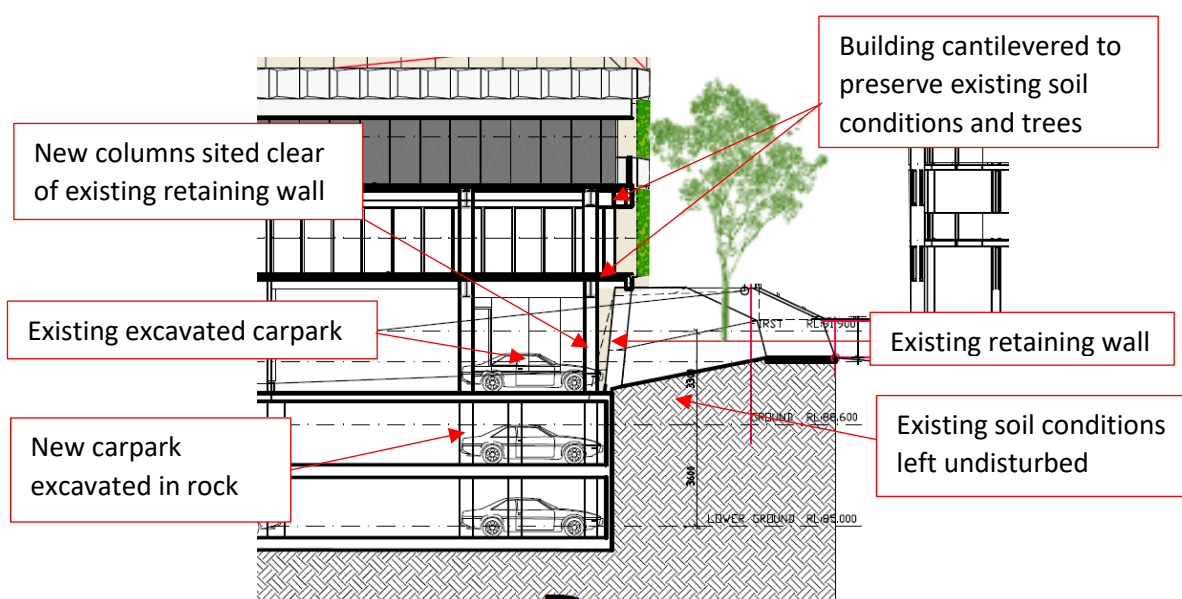
8. The existing screen of trees will be retained and strengthened by the addition of large growing trees and undercover to shield the Executive building from the neighbouring views and protect mutual privacy.



9. The modular angled screens added to the building will not only provide sunshading and visual softening but will further protect privacy against overlooking.

10. It should be noted that the existing footpath is **not a public right of way** but part of the Hospital site. It is a vestigial remnant from the old Sinclair Street which was purchased by the Sisters of Charity when the main site was acquired. Although the footpath can be converted into additional landscaping Hospital has elected to allow its continued use as a public thoroughfare in the interests of serving the Community.

11. As It is intended both to retain as many of the existing trees along the northern boundary as possible and to add to the screen with large growing trees the Executive building structure and underground carpark have been sited to avoid disturbing the existing soil conditions and trees as much as possible.



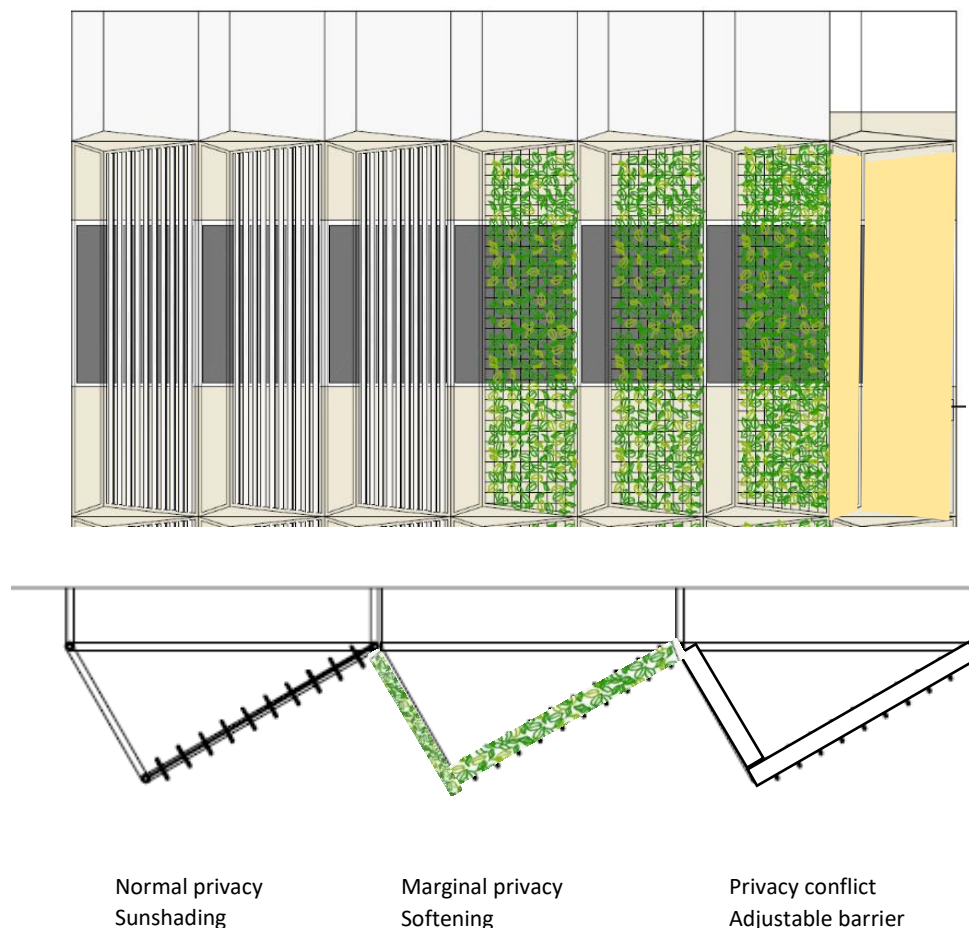
iii. Additional privacy screening being provided to all windows opposite apartment buildings and along the terrace edges;

1. This information has already been provided in principle to Council (email GM 9.8.18):

'We have given considerable thought to privacy, not only overlooking adjacent residences, but internally to ensure patient privacy, particularly in the consulting rooms. The primary control will be internal blinds to all windows. Externally, although the exoskeleton screens are designed mainly for sun control and visual softening of the buildings, they will also afford additional privacy either by the planting or by aluminium vertical elliptical louvres selected from the 'Elipsa' range by Hi-light Industries which will be angled to provide protection from East/West sun and hence prevent any direct view out.'

2. In hospitals privacy is paramount and essential to generating a strong feeling of security to support patients when they are at their most vulnerable. Over the years the Mater has trialled many systems to ensure absolute security without losing the benefits of natural light and external views. Currently the system used in the Hospital is a combination of tinted glass, variable opacity blinds and louvred shutters which allows the balance between privacy and external views to be varied to suit individual needs.

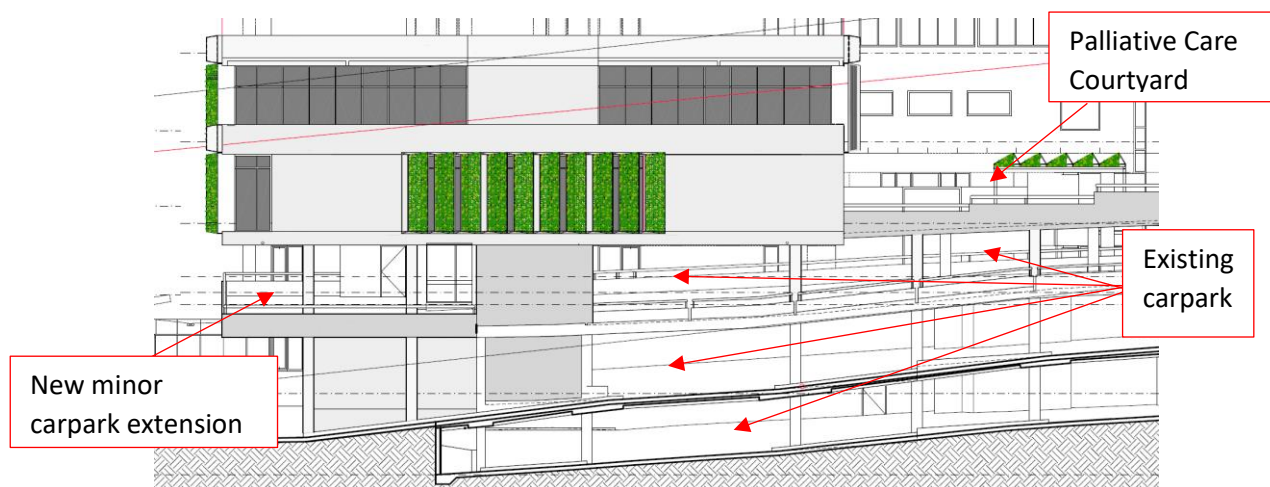
3. In addition the buildings will be clad in an external modular framing system which will permit the insertion of panels ranging from aluminium louvres to living plants of varying opacities. Where a potential privacy conflict occurs between the proposed buildings and neighbouring residences then the panels at that point will be detailed to be the most opaque, with the option of deleting a window completely if the conflict is critical.



iv. Provision of screening (planting and/or architectural panels) on the eastern edge of the carpark below the courtyard;

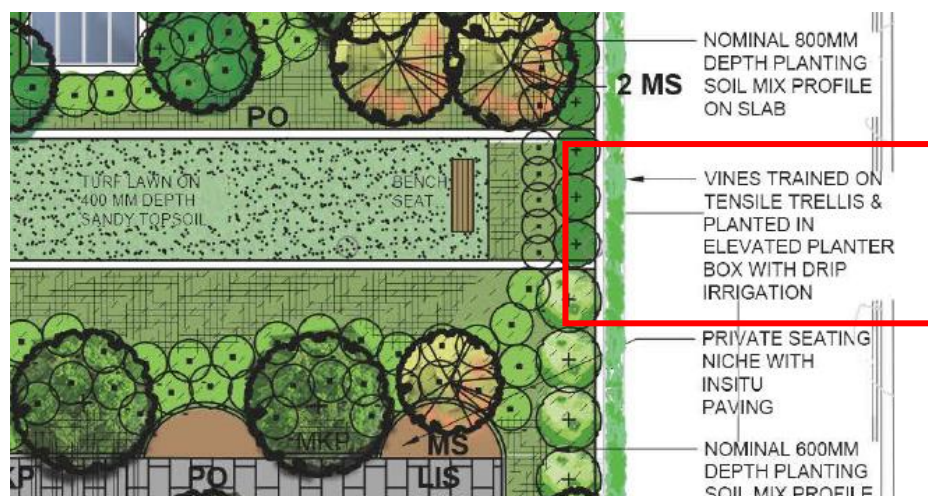
1. This condition is mystifying as the carpark is existing and currently does not have any screening, nor are there any plans to screen it other than by edge softening (see 4). Also the existing boundary fence and trees to the driveway currently screen it from the Hazelbank properties, neither of which have prime living areas overlooking it (20 Hazelbank has no windows).

2. It is intended to slightly extend the car park, but by only 10.0m and **under** the Palliative Care building but this is opposite the adjacent property of 1 Gillies street and at the same level as the existing carpark.



3. To provide edge screens to the existing carpark when it is covered by the new courtyard would impact on its performance as a naturally ventilated carpark and would require mechanical ventilation and hence extra cost.

4. It is however proposed to provide planting boxes with trailing vines, along the top edge of the new landscaped deck to soften the new structure.



5. We would submit that this condition be withdrawn.

v. Details of window treatment/blinds that can control light spillage from both buildings where they are opposite apartment buildings;

1. As for iii. above.
2. The precise detail of which system will be used will be determined during design development and documentation when tenders are sought from the market and budgets established.

• Details of planting species, plant sizes and design of the angled privacy screens are to be provided and equivalent to Filtrex 'Living Walls' System or a similar propriety solution that provides adequate soil, nutrients and water for the longevity of climbing and creeping plants to cover the whole of the trellis system.

1. Initial information has already been provided to Council (email GM 9.8.18):

'The vines for the green screens are the same as shown for the other tensile trellises and vine covered arbours namely: Pandorea pandorana 'Wonga Vine' and Trachelospermum jasminoides 'Star Jasmine'. The selection is tentative at this stage as we want to evaluate a number of alternatives before selecting final varieties and inspect existing installations for coverage, appearance, maintenance and longevity.

The vines for the screens will be selected as mature specimens using the Filtrex Living Wall System (see attached) and potted as soon as the project is approved to enable growth whilst the construction is underway.'

2. SVHA consider the living wall system to be critical to the Palliative Care Garden and surrounding buildings and is prepared to commit a large amount of money to ensure that the correct systems are installed and maintained. Consequently available systems and planting will be fully evaluated (and most importantly, costed) during the design development stage. The Hospital has had 8 years experience with the Fytogreen living walls in its Healing Garden so is well placed to carry out the evaluation.

3. As it requires time for the plants to grow and suppliers are loathe to commit large scale plantings until firm orders are received, it is critical that consent is not delayed whilst the technical details of the system are designed.

• Screening trellises with climbing plants are to be provided along the carpark edge that faces 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road to screen the car parking from the apartment buildings.

1. As for iv above. The car park is existing and is not currently screened.
2. Screens of living walls will be provided to the edge of the proposed external terrace to the Palliative Care building.

• Notations to be made on the drawings that all elevated planters and planter boxes are to be irrigated. Recycled water is to be used where possible.

1. All planter boxes will be automatically irrigated and so noted.
2. Using recycled water harvested from the rainfall via the roof drainage system has

been evaluated and found to be uneconomic; the lengthy payback period meant that capital costs for pumps and storage could never be recovered.

• ***Plan to be submitted that is consistent with the survey plan and shows the location and height of all existing trees to be retained and those to be removed, including those:***

- ***located on the car park median strip that is to be removed along the existing driveway entry,***
- ***within the existing carpark,***
- ***adjacent to and within the public pathway to the north of the site, and***
- ***at the rear of 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road and the north-east corner of 3-9 Gillies Street.***

1. The landscape plan contains this information which has been repeated to Council (email GM 9.8.18).:

'We are retaining all 10 of the existing trees (marked with white circumferences on the attached landscape drawing) plus adding 22 new trees (marked with black circles) to strengthen the green screen.'

2. As several years have elapsed since the initial survey a confirmatory survey will be conducted of all the existing trees as part of the landscape design development stage. In addition an arboricultural assessment will be carried out by a registered arborist.

3. The trees on the eastern boundary opposite 20 and 22 Hazelbank and 3-9 Gillies are existing and unaffected by the proposed works.

Conclusion

We appreciate that Council and its officers recognise the efforts we are making to provide a viable and much needed palliative care service for the community and in turn we know we can rely on their judgement and fairness to give the issues in this response a fair hearing.

Dr Keith Lapthorne
Applicant
15.9.18

SYDNEY NORTH PLANNING PANEL 2017SNH074

Response by St Vincent's Health Australia to North Sydney Council's Assessment Report

Summary of requested changes to deferred consent conditions

i. Lowering of the parapets of both buildings by 500mm so that the maximum height of the northern (Executive) building is RL100.65 and the maximum height of the southern (Palliative Care) building is RL99.1;

[Impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

ii. The northern (Executive) building being setback an additional 2m setback from the northern boundary;

[Delete in its entirety on the basis that the requirement is unreasonable and unnecessary]

iii. additional privacy screening being provided to all windows opposite apartment buildings and along the terrace edges;

[Adequately provided for in the proposal; impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

iv. provision of screening (planting and/or architectural panels) on the eastern edge of the carpark below the courtyard;

[Adequately provided for in the proposal; impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

v. details of window treatment/blinds that can control light spillage from both buildings where they are opposite apartment buildings;

[Adequately provided for in the proposal; impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

Amended landscape plan shall be prepared and further detailed to the satisfaction of Council's Landscape Development Officer as follows:

A. Details of planting species, plant sizes and design of the angled privacy screens are to be provided and equivalent to Filtrex 'Living Walls' System or a similar proprietary solution that provides adequate soil, nutrients and water for the longevity of climbing and creeping plants to cover the whole of the trellis system.

[Impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

B. Screening trellises with climbing plants are to be provided along the carpark edge that faces 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road to screen the car parking from the apartment buildings.

[Adequately provided for in the proposal; impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

C. Notations to be made on the drawings that all elevated planters and planter boxes are to be irrigated. Recycled water is to be used where possible.

[Adequately provided for in the proposal; impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]

D. Plan to be submitted that is consistent with the survey plan and shows the location and height of all existing trees to be retained and those to be removed, including those:

- located on the car park median strip that is to be removed along the existing driveway entry,
- within the existing carpark,
- adjacent to and within the public pathway to the north of the site, and
- at the rear of 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road and the north-east corner of 3-9 Gillies Street.

[Impose as an operative, rather than as a deferred commencement condition]



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Dr Keith Lapthorne
Project Manager Mater Hospital
35 Rocklands Road
CROWS NEST NSW 2060

18 September 2018

Dear Dr Lapthorne,

Re: Existing Tree Considerations to the Eastern Boundary of the Proposed Mater Palliative Care Wing and Consulting Rooms and Additional Landscape Screen Planting (DA Number 359/17)

I refer to North Sydney Council Assessment Report (Panel Reference 2017SNH074), specifically page 8 "Landscaping" bullet point comments and page 39 "Amended Landscape Plan" bullet point requirements. I seek to address two landscape issues noted in the report, namely the sustainability of existing trees located between the right of way pathway and the surface carpark plus additional landscape screening of the elevated parking structure facing the rear of the apartment blocks located to 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road.

I note your advice yesterday that an Arborist has been appointed to prepare a detailed existing tree assessment and that this report will be available in the next few weeks. I also note that an updated survey will be prepared to precisely locate the existing trees along the eastern boundary as some tree locations require confirmation.

Existing Trees Located Along Eastern Boundary

There are nine significant existing trees located in the sloped planting bed between the right of way pathway and the proposed development. Species include *Corymbia maculata* (Spotted Gum - Qty 3), *Fraxinus oxycarpa* (Desert Ash - Qty 1), *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box - Qty 4), *Syncarpia glomulifera* (Turpentine - Qty 1) and a small grove of Lilli Pillis in very poor condition. The nine significant trees are in fair to good condition and would mostly appear to date from the time of construction of the private hospital in the early 1990s. It is likely that five of these existing trees would require removal to accommodate the footprint of the proposed building (one Brush Box, three Spotted Gums and the Lilli Pilli grove). The remaining existing trees are well adapted to the existing sloped ground conditions retained behind the crib lock wall which would be left intact by the proposed development as would the existing ground levels. I would advise, however, that the entire ground surface in this location be covered during the building construction phase by a temporary deck or scaffolding to protect tree root zones from any compaction or disturbance and allow normal air flow and water penetration.

Remedial canopy pruning would be required to clear remaining tree branches encroaching close to the proposed building façade plus discretionary cosmetic pruning to any affected tree, to balance canopy shape and to reduce future stub regrowth. We acknowledge that the precise location of some of the existing trees does not appear to correlate with site plans prepared to date and we seek to confirm the precise locations in the near future with an updated site survey plan. The project team has appointed an Arborist to assess the existing trees in question and advise on the corrective and protective measures required to hopefully retain remaining existing significant trees. The Arborist would be retained during the building construction phase and following project completion to implement any further measures required to ensure the successful long term retention of the trees in question.

2.

The current Landscape Plan details fourteen proposed replacement trees for the area in question including *Tristania laurina* (Water Gum – Qty 7), *Glochidion ferdinandi* (Cheese Tree – Qty 3) and *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (Blueberry Ash – Qty 4). The three species of replacement tree have been selected for reasons of local indigenous origin, suitability for the existing ground conditions, suitability for planting near buildings with their modest mature size and well known canopy screen characteristics. Images of two of the tree species are included on the Plant Image Panel on the current Landscape Plan.

Additional Landscape Screening to Southern Façade of Elevated Parking Structure

In addition to the existing planter boxes containing cascade plantings that are suspended from the elevated parking structure edge beams, it is proposed to considerably extend and increase the extent of suspended modular planter boxes. New cascade type plantings would be installed to these modular planting boxes which in combination with extensive vine plantings trained on tensile trellis facades would present an effectively visually softened and greened appearance of the elevated parking structure when viewed from the apartment blocks located to 20 and 22 Hazelbank Road. Details of the specific trellis details and plant species will be provided on future amended and detailed Landscape Plans. However for indicative purposes the Landscape Plan currently proposes species such as *Pandorea pandorana* (Wonga Vine) and *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (Star Jasmine) to be utilised en masse as both a modular planter cascade planting and a tensile trellis façade trained vine planting.

I trust that you find this supplementary information of assistance in communicating the project team's understanding and response to these two specific landscape issues raised by Council.

Yours faithfully



Peter Lawson, FAILA, MAIH (Qualified Horticulturist)
Registered Landscape Architect