

22 December 2017

Ms Sohini Sen
Senior Development Assessment Planner
City of Parramatta

Dear Sohini

DA/158/2017 -CONSTRUCTION OF A 99 PLACE CHILDCARE CENTRE AT 49 -51 NORTH ROCKS ROAD AND 2 SPEERS ROAD, NORTH ROCKS

I refer to the above development and Council's additional information letter dated 5 September 2017. This letter responds to the issues raised /clarification sought in this correspondence noting that key changes to the proposal is a reduction in children numbers from 124 to 99 and the relocation of the driveway to the basement carpark.

1. Traffic Safety

Council's letter raised concern that the sightlines for access to the basement carpark were poor and could result in conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

McLaren Traffic were engaged to conduct a review of the proposal. As a result of this review the driveway to the basement has been relocated and is now located on Speers Road, closer to the intersection of Speers Road and North Rocks Road.

A draft architectural plan was provided to Council on 14 November 2017 that outlined the new location of the driveway.

Council's engineer reviewed the plan and provided the following advice:

The location of the driveway is satisfactory, and the design of the carpark is more likely to encourage use because it has a circulation capability. The number of spaces still needs to meet the DCP requirements. I would be fine with the design if it met AS2890 requirements, met DCP requirements and looked something like the plan provided.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be satisfactorily addressed.

2. Traffic Impact on Speers Road/ North Rocks Road

Council's letter raised concern that the proposal will generate an excessive number of vehicles and have an unacceptable impact on the intersection of Speers Road and North Rocks Road.

As noted above the proposal has been reduced from a 124 place childcare centre to a 99 place child care centre. This reduction in the number of children attending will reduce the number of vehicles utilising this intersection in the future.

McLaren Traffic further reviewed this intersection based on 99 children attending and provided the following advice:

The traffic generation of the site, estimated at some 79 trips in the AM peak hour and 69 trips in the PM peak hour, have been added to the existing traffic volumes and assessed using SIDRA Intersection 7.0. It has been found that the North Rocks Road/Speers Road intersection is close to its safe capacity under the existing traffic volumes and an upgrade to the intersection will be required within four years based on the guidelines contained in the Roads and Maritime Services Guide to Traffic Generating Developments. On this basis, alternative intersection treatments have been considered and it is suggested that a "Seagull" treatment (concept design depicted in Annexure E for reference) is appropriate to improve the capacity and safety of the intersection. SIDRA Intersection modelling has been undertaken and confirms that a "Seagull" treatment would provide sufficient capacity for both the existing traffic volumes and the proposed child care centre traffic now and into the future.

An indicative plan of the proposed Sea Gull intersection accompanies this re-submission. The traffic advice from McLaren Traffic supports the concerns expressed by objectors that it is currently difficult at times to turn into and out of Speers Road given traffic volumes along North Rocks Road. The introduction of an improved intersection design will alleviate the current delays experienced by residents and provide appropriate capacity for both the child care centre and future developments in this R3 -Medium Density Precinct.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be appropriately addressed.

3. Parking Provision

Council's letter outlines that Council's considers that the appropriate rate for car parking provision is the rate contained in The Hills Shire DCP 2012 which states:

1 space per 6 children in attendance and 1 space per staff members.

As the revised centre has 99 children and 17 staff this leads to a requirement for 34 spaces.

The revised development contains 25 spaces which results in a 9 space departure to the applicable DCP.

The objective for parking provision is stated by the DCP to be:

To provide sufficient parking that is convenient for the use of residents, employees and visitor of the development.

Despite the numerical shortfall in parking, the provision of 25 spaces for a 99 place childcare centre is considered to meet the objective of the control as:

- The site is within 185m walking distance of a rapidly development R4 High Density precinct that will shortly accommodate 400 plus residential apartments. This precinct will likely contain residents that will desire access to a childcare centre in close proximity to their residence and are likely to walk to the centre and then utilise public transport to either access places of employment in the Parramatta CBD or access Parramatta Station;
- The site is located within close proximity to an area that contains many commercial and non-residential land uses. These landuses generate a demand for childcare places and typically some parents make their way to their place of employment by public transport or park their car at work and then drop off at the centre;
- There is on-street parking available in front of the site along North Rocks Road that can cater for any additional demand for parking generated by the development. It is noted that the development will increase on-street parking in front of the site along North Rocks Road, through the removal of a cross over to 49 North Rocks Road;
- The traffic and parking report prepared by McLaren traffic calculates that based on, the size of the centre that a maximum of 10 spaces will be required for parents dropping off and collecting children. This calculation is based on an average stay of 10 minutes for a parent dropping off or collecting a child which is generous and greater than the 6.8 minutes suggests by the NSW RMS. This will leave 15 spaces available for the 17 staff;
- The site is within 800m of a high frequency bus corridor along Windsor Road that has over 20 services in the am and pm peak. Given the characteristics of child care centre workers, a high proportion of whom are typically younger worker, it is likely that some staff will not own a car and will not be daunted by the 800m walk to the centre. There is also a high likelihood that some employee will reside in the immediate locality including the rapidly developing R4 precinct to the west of the site that is within 200m walking distance.

- Many families that will attend the centre are likely to have multiple children attending the site which will reduce car visits;
- The site is located in the middle of an existing residential area where the trend is more and more for locals to walk their children to the centre thus reducing on-site parking requirements;
- The staggered timing of drop off and pickups means the car parking is unlikely to be full at any given time of the day; and
- The site is located within 100m of land covered by Parramatta DCP 2011. If the site was located on this site, Council would be accepting that the rate of 1 space per 4 children in attendance would be the appropriate car parking rate for the development. Given the proximity of the site to land covered by the Parramatta CBD and noting that this rate is consistent with the rate suggested by Childcare and Education SEPP 2017 for parking in suburban areas, it is considered appropriate to adopt this rate for the site;

Given the above and the discussion in the McLaren traffic report that accompanies this application it is considered that it has been appropriately demonstrated that the rate of 1 space per 4 children in attendance is an appropriate rate for this development and will ensure that the development will not lead to an unacceptable increase in on -street parking in the vicinity of the site.

Accordingly, despite the numerical departure, it is considered that the provision of 25 spaces for a 99 place child care centre satisfies the objective of the DCP.

4. Scale of the Development

Council's letter raises concern that the scale of the development is excessive and that the scale of the development exceeds the site coverage of 45% suggested by DCP 2012 for townhouse developments on the site with a site coverage of 80% provided.

Section 2.14.2 of the Residential DCP states that the:

The maximum site coverage permitted in residential zones is 60%.

The DCP indicates that site coverage includes:

any impervious area including, but not limited to, buildings, driveways, patios, pools, tennis courts, decks, recreation facilities and the like will be included within the calculation of site coverage;

The revised development has a site coverage in accordance with the definition contained within the DCP of 61%. If the basement carpark is excluded from this calculation, the development would have a compliant site coverage of 41%.

Accordingly, the revised development has only a minor non-compliance with the suggested site coverage of 60%. The minor departure will not be perceptible from a numerically compliant scheme.

The FSR of the buildings on the site has also been calculated as being 0.42:1. A typical floorspace ratio for a R3 zoned in a suburban area such as this would typically be around 0.6:1. Given this, it is considered that an FSR of 0.42:1 for a development on this site demonstrates that the scale and intensity of the development is appropriate for the site and compatible with both the existing and likely future built form in the area.

Finally, it is noted that the original proposal was considered by Council's Design Excellence Advisory Panel that comprised Urban Design and landscaping experts. This panel considered the previous larger footprint and advised:

The grouping of small buildings on the site and variety of open spaces allows plenty of natural light and vistas from within the buildings, and placement to address context issues with surrounding properties.

Given the above, the scale of the revised development is considered to be consistent with the planning controls and consistent with the current and likely future built form in the immediate precinct.

5. Excavation

Council's letter raises concern that the excavation footprint extends to within 900mm of the site boundaries.

The revised plans have relocated the basement carpark and the setback to the sensitive south eastern boundary of the basement carpark is provided with a 1.5m landscaped setback. This in conjunction with the revised landscape plan that incorporates planter boxes within the development will ensure that the landscaped setting of the area is enhanced by the development and facilitates appropriate landscaping around the sites permittees.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be satisfactorily addressed.

6. Deep Soil Zones

Council's letter raises concern that no substantial deep soil zones are provided on the site.

The revised plans have relocated the entrance drive way and altered the basement foot print. Given this substantial deep soils zones are provided on the site and in particular to the western edge of the development that interfaces with low density properties along Speers Road. The revised landscaping plan will demonstrate that the development will appear as a series of buildings in a landscaped setting.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be satisfactorily addressed.

7. Setbacks

Council's letter advises that the 2.2m setback proposed to a portion of the north eastern boundary is non-compliant with the DCP requirements for a 4m secondary setback.

The revised plans ensure that a minimum setback of 4m is provided to this secondary frontage.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be satisfactorily addressed.

8. Building Height

The as lodged development had a minor non-compliance with the 9m height control under THLEP 2012. The revised plans demonstrate that the proposal fully complies with the 9m height control.

Given the above, this issue is considered to be satisfactorily addressed

Conclusion

This submission is accompanied by revised architectural plans and a new traffic and parking report. Revised landscaping plans and hydraulic plans are being prepared and will be submitted in mid January.

I trust the above comments in conjunction with the amended architectural and traffic and parking report satisfactorily responds to Council 's substantive issues and that any remaining concerns with the project can be conditioned to allow a report recommending approval of the application to be considered at a February 2018 Planning Panel meeting.

Should you require any further information, I can be contacted on 9687 8899 or 0405 530 095.

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