

Item 1: Pre-DA –Seniors Housing - 4A Vardon Road Fern Bay

Date of Meeting 9 September 2021 (by video conference)

Panel Members:

Philip Pollard (Chair)

David Moir

Kristy Ryan

Council Staff: Ryan Falkenmire, Courtney Sargent, Emily Allen

Applicant: Murray Blackburn-Smith – Principle Living

Consultants:

Esther Hermans – Landscape Architect – Studio 26

Stephen Leathley – Insite Planning

Michael Rogers – EJE – Architect

David Miller -EJE - Architect

Chris Olde – Project Manager

Background Summary

This was the second proposal for the site presented to the Panel, and follows an earlier consideration of a preliminary design at the 12 August 2021 meeting.

The revised proposal remains at a Pre-DA stage, and is for a seniors living and related facilities development on a site that is within the grounds of Newcastle Golf Club at Fern Bay. The site has been the subject of a boundary adjustment and it is intended in due course that an application will be lodged for a site compatibility certificate for its use.

The revised preliminary design proposal encompasses:

- A Retirement Village consisting of 183 dwellings across 20 duplex style dwellings and 132 units in three apartment buildings.
- A Community Facility (function centre)
- Internal access roads
- A new intersection onto Nelson Bay Road.
- Internal pedestrian and cart access to the Newcastle Golf Club including emergency vehicle access to Vardon Road.
- Internal landscaping including between Retirement Village and Gold Course.
- Stormwater Management infrastructure.
- Carparking.
- Fencing along Nelson Bay Road frontage.

Relevant extracts from the Report of the previous meeting of 12 August are included below in *italics*.

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

12 August 2021: *The identified site is a relatively narrow ribbon of land adjacent to the eastern side of Nelson Bay Road, that extends from the south west corner of the Golf Club site, northwards for approximately two thirds of the Course boundary with Nelson Bay Road. A proposed vehicular entry to the development has been negotiated with the RMS, the location of which is off Nelson Bay Road, not far to the north of the southern corner.*

The site has a steep landform at its southern extremity near Nelson Bay Road, which is in part heavily treed, and which rises to a ground level which is above the roof line of the two storey motel that adjoins the site to its south. This appears to have been part of the dune formation in the area, which has been stabilised by vegetation. From this high point, the land falls to the Club car park immediately to its east, and the Golf Clubhouse, which adjoins the northern edge of the existing car park. The site is undulating, and in some locations contains water courses and water bodies, becoming relatively low towards its northern end...

At present there are mature trees near the practice green that is located in the elevated corner of the site, which provide an attractive buffer to the motel adjacent and to Nelson Bay Road. Other trees are located in discontinuous corpses near the western edge of the Club land, parallel to the Nelson Bay Road boundary. These trees currently provide something of a buffer to the road.

The area on to the north of the Club land consists of an over 50s "Lifestyle Village", while to the east is a large tract of bushland owned by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, beyond which is the beachfront. To the south of the site is low scale, generally single storey single residences, and a Public Primary School which is immediately adjacent to the access road to the Golf Club, off Vernon Road.

On the western side of Nelson Bay Road are single residences facing Nelson Bay Road, for most of the length of the proposed development. Opposite the northernmost end of the subject site, is a seniors living development called Palm Lake, on the western side of the road, which on its western edge, adjoins the mangroves on the shoreline of Fern Bay. This low-scale development has an acoustic fence facing Nelson Bay Road, that is set back from the road boundary...

Documentation being at Pre-DA level is not extensive, however for any development of a residential area on a golf course or other largely open land, it is necessary to consider both the overall area of land – in this case the Newcastle Golf Club – as well as the surrounding areas outside the site. Any resulting design needs in the Panel's view, to be compatible both with both forms of surrounding areas.

In addition to this, documentation for the Site Compatibility Certificate should offer a full overview of all the changes that are consequential of the proposal, and should by no means be restricted to the nominated seniors living site. Any consequential flow-on changes to the Golf Club, its fairways, landscape, natural areas, water courses, parking arrangements, access, and back of house/service areas need to be addressed.

9 September 2021:

The revised Master Planning approach, which has been informed to a much greater degree by the surrounding landscape and context, offers a positive new direction to the overall layout of the proposal, which was welcomed by the Panel.

2. Built Form and Scale

12 August 2021: *The proposal essentially has four components. Near the proposed new road entry off Nelson Bay Road are two, five-storey towers, the southern one of which has its long axis running east-west, and which extends closer to the Road than the adjacent motel.*

Although a substantial reduction in the height of the landform is proposed in the area on which the tower is sited, the base of the building remains considerably higher than the adjacent motel and surrounding land. The resultant form is of a scale very different to any existing or likely future development in the surrounding visual catchment, and the building will appear very dominant as viewed from public areas outside the site....Nearby to the northern tower is a single-storey recreation facility for the residents, which includes an indoor swimming pool and bowling green. To its north are a row of freestanding single storey villas on lots of around 390 m² to 450m², with a group of three larger lots towards the end of the row. These villas primarily face onto the golf course.

The fourth building type is single-storey duplexes, which are located in the centre of the site and along the western area of the site, with their rear open spaces orientated towards Nelson Bay Road.

9 September 2021:

While the four building typologies of the development remain, the proportion of apartments has increased as opposed to duplexes, a move that has permitted a development of almost the same residential density, but permitting a significantly more appropriate landscape character to the area. The proposal to retain a significant proportion of existing tree and shrub cover in areas of the subject site that are not proposed for development, is a particularly welcome revision.

Internal layouts of buildings were not tabled in any detail at this stage, as the primary exercise was a master planning one. However, what was provided, indicated a capacity to permit improved outcomes in respect to views, aspect, amenity and character.

Generally the revised layout was supported, subject to further refinements as outlined under the following headings, and a reduction in some remnant unnecessary areas of road and hardstand. The revised locations of the four major elements now include:

- the community building/leisure centre, now located on the elevated area of land towards the southern end of the site
- the three (previously two) tower blocks pushed further away from Nelson Bay road towards the east, and re-orientated for improved aspects
- the villa units addressing the golf course
- and the reduced extent of duplexes remaining on the western side of the site, but with a more appropriate setback from Nelson Bay Road

Although the preliminary documentation did not include a great deal of information in respect to finished levels and changes in landform, it is apparent that the previously very extensive proposed modification in landform should not be necessitated under the current

revision to the master plan – which is an important consideration and a welcome change in approach. Future documentation should clearly identify all changes proposed to the topography.

In the light of the positive responses demonstrated in the updated master plan, the Panel's comments can be viewed as areas for design development and refinements, rather than major rethinking of the overall design. While pedestrian routes have been much improved, and significant stands of trees retained, further opportunities exist for creating attractive outdoor communal spaces and interesting walking routes that can form part of a cohesive whole. The rather formal, geometric landscaped area between apartment blocks 1 and 2 is somewhat out of character with the smaller, more wandering pathways. It also is quite different to the current treatment of the space between apartment blocks 2 and three. A more integrated design language, that is landscape led, is considered appropriate.

Pedestrian pathways in the centre of the development should align with access paths to the Course on the eastern side of the internal road. The triangular "island" of open space which accommodates a row of visitor car parks can be better integrated with the surrounding open space, with reduced hardstand and easier pedestrian access from vehicles to central pathways.

3. Density

12 August 2021: The Panel noted that although much of the footprint for accommodation is of single storey, a considerable area of the available site has been dedicated to either hard paving for access or to buildings, with very limited spacing between buildings, and a predominance of development as opposed to landscape. What landscape area is available, is in the form of small pocket parks, which cannot provide a landscape setting due to their very limited size. There is a marked contrast between the scale of the proposed apartment buildings and the other residences, which is considered to be exacerbated by the lack of landscape area between the forms.

The Panel considered that a different site planning approach was necessary, that preserves a significantly greater area as high quality landscaped space, that can provide buildings with a much more generous curtilage. Options to achieve increase this should be fully explored, including possibly reducing the number of low scale dwellings in favour of some well-spaced mid-sized apartment buildings of two and three storeys.

9 September 2021: The number of proposed residences in the revised master plan is almost the same as that proposed previously, but the reduction in duplexes in favour of apartments has achieved a much more comfortable spatial relationship, and consequent apparent density. The southern three duplexes have the least successful transition between their low scale and higher density with the nearby apartment block 3. Consideration of further options for improving this juxtaposition was encouraged, with a possibility of a small two-storey apartment building being one possible option, and the provision of a greater landscape separation between the two forms being another.

4. Sustainability

12 August 2021: No specific sustainability strategies were nominated at this Pre-DA stage. Opportunities for northern winter sunlight access to living areas and private open spaces should be pursued for as many residences as possible, and given the nature of the site, statistics for this criterion should well exceed ADG and BASIX minimums.

Concern was raised in respect to the heat island effect potentially arising from the extensive areas of proposed hard paved surfaces. These should be reduced, and the opportunity of re-arranging the existing car park with the inclusion of shade trees within it, is strongly recommended.

9 September 2021: The previous comments are reiterated, while noting the advice that the Landscape Architect as part of her scope of work, was engaged in re-planning the existing Club car park, with a view to functionality, some additional parking, and increased shade. The latter was particularly encouraged.

5. Landscape

12 August 2021: Layout: It is the opinion of the Review Panel that the current layout does not provide sufficient open space amenity for residents. Consideration should be given to the provision of generous and interconnected internal pathway network that provides ample space for mobility scooters and pedestrians. Sufficient area should also be provided for establishing large shade trees along the pathway network with seating and rest points that capitalise on views over the golf course...The provision of sufficient landscape transition areas between Nelson Bay Road and the new residences and between the golf course edge and residences was also considered essential.

It was noted that the Government Architect's Office has recently published a series of guidelines for Designing with Country – which would be a particularly pertinent aspect of this site given its proximity to the Worimi land. Works on the subject site, including the proposed significant alteration of the terrain, should be considered in the light of these guidelines.

No assessment of the trees by a suitably qualified arborist was presented as part of the proposal at this stage, but is considered essential that this be undertaken for potentially impacted trees on both the course and the site, going forward.

9 September 2021:

Generally, the master plan presented at the DRP review meeting is a significant improvement on the plan presented at the previous DRP meeting in August. It is clear that the comments made by the DRP in the August meeting have broadly been addressed, with more appropriate emphasis given to the retention of existing on site vegetation, and a more generous spatial arrangement proposed that provides greater opportunity for integration of the development into the golf course landscape character and, significantly more opportunity for the provision of amenity.

The principles outlined by the project consultants surrounding the provision of amenity, integration of the development with the existing landscape character, retention of habitat and significant trees and establishing a consistent landscape theme through material and planting are strongly supported by the Panel. These principles should be reinforced and retained to guide the overall site planning as the design develops.

The panel identifies the following landscape items for consideration in ongoing design development;

- Further resolution of the recreational pathway loops that encourage activity by residents and promote informal social interaction. Frequent rest/conversation areas should be included along these loops.
- The inclusion of exercise equipment is supported however ideally this would be in the form of a “seniors exercise park” which is cross generational and playful in its function encouraging interaction between seniors and visiting young relatives.

- Opportunity to connect the current carparking “island” with the adjacent central parkland area should be considered to improve safety and reduce the extent of hardstand.
- Outdoor areas adjacent to the apartments should include considerable amenity that provides for activities such as gardening, cooking and games, and that encourages residents to spend time in the outdoor communal areas.
- A tailored wayfinding strategy should be considered in the future design development that reflects the character of the village and is legible for the visually impaired.

6. Amenity

12 August 2021: *Amenity considerations also arise in respect to a number of matters that are raised under other headings. These include the need for an adequate, attractive landscaped buffer between Nelson Bay Road and the site, and for residences to have aspects that reflect the surrounding natural landscape.*

Solar access to dwellings and the communal recreation areas is also an important consideration.

Attractive pedestrian pathways on which residents can safely stroll (or use mobility devices) and that are inter-connected, are needed to ensure resident amenity.

9 September 2021:

The revised master plan offers positive opportunities to address the issues previously raised. Although setback distances are more generous in the revised scheme, one specific issue that was identified was the need for acoustic protection of the rear (west facing) duplexes. This should take into consideration the probability that Nelson Bay Road will at some stage be widened to accommodate two lanes in each direction.

7. Safety

12 August 2021: *The development proposes to add residential living (in the form of seniors housing) to the existing golf course. The applicant stated there is a desire for the golf and residential uses to be seamlessly connected. While this is desirable from an aesthetic perspective, it is important there is a distinction between the two uses to make clear what is semi-public (golf course) and semi-private and private (residential). This is to avoid golf course users (and members of the public) entering the residential precinct by mistake or with purpose.*

The Panel raised concerns that the entry from Nelson Bay Road will be used to access the golf club precinct. The applicant confirmed that the golf club will continue to use Vardon Road as its access and the proposed development will not be a thru-site for golf course users. Emergency vehicle access only between the Club and the residences is proposed to be ensured by lockable bollard, and this connection should have a distinctly pedestrian character...

Careful consideration of the risk of stray golf balls striking pedestrians and residents using their private open spaces. Any necessitated netting or other protective structures should be identified and included in the documentation.

9 September 2021: The previous comments are reiterated. In respect to safety issues arising from stray golf balls, advice was provided that the issue has been considered by experts in

the field, and that only part of fairway / hole 17 was likely to require some safety netting / screening.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

12 August 2021: *The proposed development provides a communal hub in the form of a single storey community building... The Panel encourages the applicant to investigate the opportunity to provide communal uses where the apartments (Building 1 and 2) are located as this could assist in tree retention, reduce the scale at this topographical high point and help provide a buffer between the golf course and residential uses. It could also reduce the impact of an entry road on proposed residential uses.*

9 September 2021: The revised master plan is responsive to the earlier advice.

9. Aesthetics

12 August 2021: *The preliminary architectural treatment of the buildings individually showed good potential for an attractive architectural form – both for the towers and the smaller scaled buildings. However, this positive aspect would not eventuate if the buildings are not provided with an appropriate soft landscape setting. The aesthetic appeal of the area is also dependent upon careful consideration of how very different scaled elements are combined, and by ensuring transitions in form and scale are not exaggerated by a lack of adequate separation.*

9 September 2021:

Considerable progress has been made in resolving the aesthetic challenges identified and the contrast in scales between the apartment buildings and the single storey buildings. The increased landscape area and proposed retention of significant stands of trees contribute to this positively. Though presented in highly schematic form, the simple, modern and layered visual treatment of the apartment buildings represents a welcome, modern approach which could also be carried through thematically to the lower scaled buildings, including the Community Centre and residences. The “Swiss chalet” pitched roof forms of the lower scaled buildings was potentially useful in providing interesting and generous interior spatial volumes – which was supported – but this could also be achieved by high ceiling spaces and voids under attractive, low pitched roof forms. The latter was considered to offer greater potential for an overall cohesive design language for the development.

Previous Summary Recommendation 12 August 2021:

The Panel considered that a rethinking of the approach to the site planning of the development was warranted. Reasons for this are outlined under the headings above, but in summary, the planning of the site should be led by an integrated landscape approach, into which any proposed development should be carefully inserted. Dominance by hard surfaces, including roadways, should be significantly reduced.

The Compatibility Certificate documentation must provide an analysis of all the flow-on works that will ensue from the changes that are proposed, and should not be restricted to the limited component made up by the seniors living site in isolation.

Summary Recommendation 9 September 2021:

The revised master plan, informed as it has been by the primarily landscape context of the area, represents a significant step forward to the planning of this development. The

Applicant and consultants are commended for this approach. As the design is further developed, it is crucial that the retention of significant stands of trees, and the integration of the overall development into the surrounding areas, is led by the achievement of a first class environmental and landscape context.

Item 2: Pre-DA –Seniors Housing - 4A Vardon Road Fern Bay

Date of Meeting 14 March 2024 (by video conference)

Panel Members:

Philip Pollard (Chair)

David Moir

Kristy Cianci

Council Staff: Dylan Mitchell , Courtney Sargent, Emily Allen

Consultants:

Esther Hermans – Landscape Architect – Studio 26

Stephen Leathley – Insite Planning

Michael Rogers – EJE – Architect

David Miller -EJE - Architect

Stephen McMahon- Visual

Chris Olde – Project Manager

Background Summary

This was the third proposal for the site presented to the Panel, and follows an earlier considerations of more preliminary designs at the 12 August 2021 meeting and 9 September 2021 (by video conference).

The revised proposal is a Development Application, and is for a seniors living and related facilities development on a site that is within the grounds of Newcastle Golf Club at Fern Bay. The site has been the subject of a boundary adjustment and it is intended in due course that an application will be lodged for a site compatibility certificate for its use.

The revised preliminary design proposal encompasses:

The proposed development is known as ‘Apperly Village’. Specifically, the proposal includes the following key elements:

- Site preparation and establishment works including vegetation clearing, demolition of existing golf course holes and bulk earthworks including compensatory cut;
- Construction of three apartment buildings containing 125 serviced self-care dwellings;
- Forty seven single-storey serviced self-care dwellings;
- Carparking including 337 spaces across the site with each dwelling being provided with a double garage (94 spaces) and 206 basement carparking spaces within the three apartment buildings and 37 at-grade carparking spaces located in parking bays adjacent to the access roads through the site;
- A combined entry / egress driveway connecting to Nelson Bay Road and required intersection works;
- Establishment of a Community Centre including games room, pool, cinema, dining room, bar, lounge areas, offices, lap pool, gymnasium, multi-use rooms;
- Recreation facilities including lawn bowls facility, open space, landscaping, picnic shelter, public art, open lawn area for passive recreational activities and formal planting;
- Civil works including internal access roads, pedestrian linkages to Nelson Bay Road and the golf club and stormwater infrastructure;
- Connection to Country ‘Keeping Place’;

- Extension and enhancement of physical infrastructure utilities.

Relevant extracts from the Report of the previous meetings of 12 August 2021 and 9 September 2021 are included below in *italics*.

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

12 August 2021:

The identified site is a relatively narrow ribbon of land adjacent to the eastern side of Nelson Bay Road, that extends from the south west corner of the Golf Club site, northwards for approximately two thirds of the Course boundary with Nelson Bay Road. A proposed vehicular entry to the development has been negotiated with the RMS, the location of which is off Nelson Bay Road, not far to the north of the southern corner.

The site has a steep landform at its southern extremity near Nelson Bay Road, which is in part heavily treed, and which rises to a ground level which is above the roof line of the two storey motel that adjoins the site to its south. This appears to have been part of the dune formation in the area, which has been stabilised by vegetation. From this high point, the land falls to the Club car park immediately to its east, and the Golf Clubhouse, which adjoins the northern edge of the existing car park. The site is undulating, and in some locations contains water courses and water bodies, becoming relatively low towards its northern end...

At present there are mature trees near the practice green that is located in the elevated corner of the site, which provide an attractive buffer to the motel adjacent and to Nelson Bay Road. Other trees are located in discontinuous corpses near the western edge of the Club land, parallel to the Nelson Bay Road boundary. These trees currently provide something of a buffer to the road.

The area on to the north of the Club land consists of an over 50s "Lifestyle Village", while to the east is a large tract of bushland owned by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, beyond which is the beachfront. To the south of the site is low scale, generally single storey single residences, and a Public Primary School which is immediately adjacent to the access road to the Golf Club, off Vernon Road.

On the western side of Nelson Bay Road are single residences facing Nelson Bay Road, for most of the length of the proposed development. Opposite the northernmost end of the subject site, is a seniors living development called Palm Lake, on the western side of the road, which on its western edge, adjoins the mangroves on the shoreline of Fern Bay. This low-scale development has an acoustic fence facing Nelson Bay Road, that is set back from the road boundary...

Documentation being at Pre-DA level is not extensive, however for any development of a residential area on a golf course or other largely open land, it is necessary to consider both the overall area of land – in this case the Newcastle Golf Club – as well as the surrounding areas outside the site. Any resulting design needs in the Panel's view, to be compatible both with both forms of surrounding areas.

In addition to this, documentation for the Site Compatibility Certificate should offer a full overview of all the changes that are consequential of the proposal, and should by no means be restricted to the nominated seniors living site. Any consequential flow-on changes to the Golf Club, its fairways, landscape, natural areas, water courses, parking arrangements, access, and back of house/service areas need to be addressed.

9 September 2021:

The revised Master Planning approach, which has been informed to a much greater degree by the surrounding landscape and context, offers a positive new direction to the overall layout of the proposal, which was welcomed by the Panel.

14 March 2024:

The context of the Site is essentially unchanged, and the previous comments are noted.

2. Built Form and Scale

12 August 2021:

The proposal essentially has four components. Near the proposed new road entry off Nelson Bay Road are two, five-storey towers, the southern one of which has its long axis running east-west, and which extends closer to the Road than the adjacent motel.

Although a substantial reduction in the height of the landform is proposed in the area on which the tower is sited, the base of the building remains considerably higher than the adjacent motel and surrounding land. The resultant form is of a scale very different to any existing or likely future development in the surrounding visual catchment, and the building will appear very dominant as viewed from public areas outside the site....Nearby to the northern tower is a single-storey recreation facility for the residents, which includes an indoor swimming pool and bowling green. To its north are a row of freestanding single storey villas on lots of around 390 m² to 450m², with a group of three larger lots towards the end of the row. These villas primarily face onto the golf course.

The fourth building type is single-storey duplexes, which are located in the centre of the site and along the western area of the site, with their rear open spaces orientated towards Nelson Bay Road.

9 September 2021:

While the four building typologies of the development remain, the proportion of apartments has increased as opposed to duplexes, a move that has permitted a development of almost the same residential density, but permitting a significantly more appropriate landscape character to the area. The proposal to retain a significant proportion of existing tree and shrub cover in areas of the subject site that are not proposed for development, is a particularly welcome revision.

Internal layouts of buildings were not tabled in any detail at this stage, as the primary exercise was a master planning one. However, what was provided, indicated a capacity to permit improved outcomes in respect to views, aspect, amenity and character.

Generally the revised layout was supported, subject to further refinements as outlined under the following headings, and a reduction in some remnant unnecessary areas of road and hardstand. The revised locations of the four major elements now include:

- *the community building/leisure centre, now located on the elevated area of land towards the southern end of the site*
- *the three (previously two) tower blocks pushed further away from Nelson Bay Road towards the east, and re-orientated for improved aspects*
- *the villa units addressing the golf course*
- *and a reduced extent of duplexes remaining on the western side of the site, but with a*

more appropriate setback from Nelson Bay Road

Although the preliminary documentation did not include a great deal of information in respect to finished levels and changes in landform, it is apparent that the previously very extensive proposed modification in landform should not be necessitated under the current revision to the master plan – which is an important consideration and a welcome change in approach. Future documentation should clearly identify all changes proposed to the topography.

In the light of the positive responses demonstrated in the updated master plan, the Panel's comments can be viewed as areas for design development and refinements, rather than major rethinking of the overall design. While pedestrian routes have been much improved, and significant stands of trees retained, further opportunities exist for creating attractive outdoor communal spaces and interesting walking routes that can form part of a cohesive whole. The rather formal, geometric landscaped area between apartment blocks 1 and 2 is somewhat out of character with the smaller, more wandering pathways. It also is quite different to the current treatment of the space between apartment blocks 2 and three. A more integrated design language, that is landscape led, is considered appropriate.

Pedestrian pathways in the centre of the development should align with access paths to the Course on the eastern side of the internal road. The triangular "island" of open space which accommodates a row of visitor car parks can be better integrated with the surrounding open space, with reduced hardstand and easier pedestrian access from vehicles to central pathways.

14 March 2024:

The Applicant advised design changes have been made in response to Aboriginal heritage matters and feedback from Registered Aboriginal Parties, as well as previous comments made by the Panel. The Panel acknowledges the revised plan is a commendable improvement on the previous iterations in respect to topography and interface with significant landscape. The fact that this part of the Site is of particular importance in terms of Country highlights its special value, and it is considered an excellent location for a Keeping Place, as proposed.

While the road layout is considered to be more workable and to resolve a number of previously identified issues, and the pedestrian routes are supported in principle, there remain refinements to be made with the latter. Pathway network could be further enhanced to prioritise pedestrians over vehicles, and paths need to provide a continuous route – for example, when crossing a road, continuity of the pathway is needed directly on the opposite side of the road.

The pedestrian route to the Clubhouse should not traverse the car park. Consider means of rearranging pedestrian paths to better connect to the Clubhouse.

Concern raised with regard to proximity of northern most apartment building (Building 1) to Nelson Bay Road. It is setback only 7.5m from the boundary with limited landscape screening. A greater setback will assist in mitigating the contrasting scale between the development and low scale locality. A survey of the height of retained trees at this location could be of assistance in determining a more appropriate setback.

Usability of outdoor spaces around the community centre is limited. Given the south-facing and west-facing aspects, further landscape enhancement to improve amenity is required. The outdoor exercise equipment location could be better placed to improve its relationship to the community facility.

The off-leash dog area is quite close to houses, which could potentially generate conflict. Co-locating dog friendly areas with the community building may be more a manageable outcome.

There is opportunity to include community facilities on the roof of Buildings 2 and 3. This would assist given the topographical challenges at ground level. However, the addition of such facilities should not contribute to building's bulk and be well setback within the floorplate.

The villa and duplex residences have been rearranged and some improvements achieved by varying streetscape and creating some small pocket parks at points where the road 'cranks' in plan.

The dwellings are quite large, in part due to very large garages, and would appear more appropriate in the setting if some greater variety and increased separations were provided. The northernmost duplexes are closer to Nelson Bay Road than is desirable. The closest duplexes and villas should have larger setbacks to improve acoustics and privacy due to the limited buffer and open style fencing proposed. Other strategies to assist road impacts could include variation in the design of each villa and their placement of windows and bedrooms.

Concern was also raised in respect to the extent of benched fill that is near, and in some cases beyond, the site boundaries on both the Nelson Bay Rd (western) and fairway (eastern) side of the spur on which the low-scaled residences are situated. No sections are provided through the embankments, and it is difficult to gain a full appreciation of their steepness. Maintenance of these embankments will be an ongoing requirement, which will be proportionate to the steepness of the banks. The question also arises as to who is responsible for maintenance in locations in which the benching extends into the Club's land.

3. Density

12 August 2021: The Panel noted that although much of the footprint for accommodation is of single storey, a considerable area of the available site has been dedicated to either hard paving for access or to buildings, with very limited spacing between buildings, and a predominance of development as opposed to landscape. What landscape area is available, is in the form of small pocket parks, which cannot provide a landscape setting due to their very limited size. There is a marked contrast between the scale of the proposed apartment buildings and the other residences, which is considered to be exacerbated by the lack of landscape area between the forms.

The Panel considered that a different site planning approach was necessary, that preserves a significantly greater area as high quality landscaped space, that can provide buildings with a much more generous curtilage. Options to achieve increase this should be fully explored, including possibly reducing the number of low scale dwellings in favour of some well-spaced mid-sized apartment buildings of two and three storeys.

9 September 2021: The number of proposed residences in the revised master plan is almost the same as that proposed previously, but the reduction in duplexes in favour of apartments has achieved a much more comfortable spatial relationship, and consequent apparent density. The southern three duplexes have the least successful transition between their low scale and higher density with the nearby apartment block 3. Consideration of further options for improving this juxtaposition was encouraged, with a possibility of a small two- storey apartment building being one possible option, and the provision of a greater landscape separation between the two forms being another.

14 March 2024:

Some moderate reduction in the number of apartments proposed is necessary to enable the greater setting back of Building 1 from Nelson Bay Road. Likewise, a small

number of villas and duplexes may need to be dropped to better site the low-scaled dwellings in the context, and to provide a greater buffer from road noise impacts from Nelson Bay Road.

4. Sustainability

12 August 2021: *No specific sustainability strategies were nominated at this Pre-DA stage.*

Opportunities for northern winter sunlight access to living areas and private open spaces should be pursued for as many residences as possible, and given the nature of the site, statistics for this criterion should well exceed ADG and BASIX minimums.

Concern was raised in respect to the heat island effect potentially arising from the extensive areas of proposed hard paved surfaces. These should be reduced, and the opportunity of re-arranging the existing car park with the inclusion of shade trees within it, is strongly recommended.

9 September 2021: *The previous comments are reiterated, while noting the advice that the Landscape Architect as part of her scope of work, was engaged in re-planning the existing Club car park, with a view to functionality, some additional parking, and increased shade. The latter was particularly encouraged.*

14 March 2024:

The Panel's previous comments are reiterated.

Provision for PV generation and EV charging at completion, along with capacity to expand EV charging points substantially in the future as demand increases are strongly recommended. Power supply and primary wiring to each building, should be sized to accommodate both current and future demand. Electric heat-pump water heating and induction cooktops are recommended.

Western facing and eastern facing glazing and balconies should be provided with external summer shading, to ensure comfortable use of private outdoor spaces and reduce summer heat loads on glazing.

5. Landscape

12 August 2021: *Layout: It is the opinion of the Review Panel that the current layout does not provide sufficient open space amenity for residents. Consideration should be given to the provision of generous and interconnected internal pathway network that provides ample space for mobility scooters and pedestrians. Sufficient area should also be provided for establishing large shade trees along the pathway network with seating and rest points that capitalise on views over the golf course...The provision of sufficient landscape transition areas between Nelson Bay Road and the new residences and between the golf course edge and residences was also considered essential.*

It was noted that the Government Architect's Office has recently published a series of guidelines for Designing with Country – which would be a particularly pertinent aspect of this site given its proximity to the Worimi land. Works on the subject site, including the proposed significant alteration of the terrain, should be considered in the light of these guidelines.

No assessment of the trees by a suitably qualified arborist was presented as part of the proposal at this stage, but is considered essential that this be undertaken for potentially impacted trees on both the course and the site, going forward.

9 September 2021:

Generally, the master plan presented at the DRP review meeting is a significant improvement on the

plan presented at the previous DRP meeting in August. It is clear that the comments made by the DRP in the August meeting have broadly been addressed, with more appropriate emphasis given to the retention of existing on site vegetation, and a more generous spatial arrangement proposed that provides greater opportunity for integration of the development into the golf course landscape character and, significantly more opportunity for the provision of amenity.

The principles outlined by the project consultants surrounding the provision of amenity, integration of the development with the existing landscape character, retention of habitat and significant trees and establishing a consistent landscape theme through material and planting are strongly supported by the Panel. These principles should be reinforced and retained to guide the overall site planning as the design develops.

The panel identifies the following landscape items for consideration in ongoing design development;

- Further resolution of the recreational pathway loops that encourage activity by residents and promote informal social interaction. Frequent rest/conversation areas should be included along these loops.*
- The inclusion of exercise equipment is supported however ideally this would be in the form of a “seniors exercise park” which is cross generational and playful in its function encouraging interaction between seniors and visiting young relatives.*
- Opportunity to connect the current carparking “island” with the adjacent central parkland area should be considered to improve safety and reduce the extent of hardstand.*
- Outdoor areas adjacent to the apartments should include considerable amenity that provides for activities such as gardening, cooking and games, and that encourages residents to spend time in the outdoor communal areas.*
- A tailored wayfinding strategy should be considered in the future design development that reflects the character of the village and is legible for the visually impaired.*

14 March 2024:

The Panel noted that the amended application is a significant improvement on the previous proposal, particularly in the relationship between the landscape and built form, response to existing site conditions and constraints and pedestrian connectivity.

However, it is the Panel's opinion that the current design does not provide sufficient amenity for residents and misses the opportunity to capitalise on the generous open space areas to provide high quality outcomes that reflect the attention to detail in the Architecture and are tailored to the specific needs of the senior residents and their guests.

Pedestrian Connectivity and Pathway Network: It is the Panel's opinion that more detailed consideration of the pathway network is required that is focused on the pedestrian experience. In areas adjacent to traffic movement consideration should be given to ensuring that the pedestrians are given priority over traffic movement. This can be demonstrated through material selection, more generous pathway widths, raised thresholds at intersections and reduced internal traffic speeds. Pathways through open space areas require a more considered design that improves connectivity, provides opportunity for rest and capitalises on the natural elements of the site in a way that encourages residents to connect with nature. The design does not consider the experience of the journey.

Communal areas outside RFB: The large communal area outside the northernmost RFB (Building 1) would benefit from a more considered design that responds directly to the needs of the seniors residents, provides more opportunities for outdoor passive and active recreation (eg. gardening, smaller walking loops) and incorporates more canopy planting that attracts wildlife and provides a more immersive nature experience for residents and their guests (eg. Microforest). It is recommended that communal areas incorporate less turf and more planting that better integrates the proposal with the existing site context and considers the principles of Designing with Country in the species selection and provision of habitat.

Streetscape Planting: The Panel strongly recommends that the species selection and density of street tree planting along the central spine road should ensure that pedestrian pathways are well shaded and that canopy (once established) will assist in managing the significant variation in scale between the villas and the RFB's. The scale and character of trees proposed around villas is very important so that a canopy can be achieved that bridges the strong contrast between the villas and the apartment buildings. Eucalypts illustrated in the montages achieve this goal – and the landscape plan should include these species.

Dog Park: The proposed off leash-dog park is not supported in its current location as it is too small and too close to dwellings.

Play/Outdoor Fitness Area: The Panel recommends relocating the play/fitness area to the west of the tennis courts and bowling green. This would move the area away from the road and allow more space and opportunity for improved amenity. It would also allow for a better resolution of the built form with the site topography to provide an improved interface between the bowling green area and the adjoining open space.

The landscaped buffer from Nelson Bay Road: The landscape buffer should be optimised in respect to filtering the visual and acoustic impacts of the road, to the extent permissible whilst observing the bushfire requirements for Asset Protection. Coordination between the bushfire report, RFS conditions and proposed landscaping is essential to ensure screening to Nelson Bay Road can be achieved. The modelling in montages needs to reflect this.

6. Amenity

12 August 2021: Amenity considerations also arise in respect to a number of matters that are raised under other headings. These include the need for an adequate, attractive landscaped buffer between Nelson Bay Road and the site, and for residences to have aspects that reflect the surrounding natural landscape.

Solar access to dwellings and the communal recreation areas is also an important consideration. Attractive pedestrian pathways on which residents can safely stroll (or use mobility devices) and that are inter-connected, are needed to ensure resident amenity.

9 September 2021:

The revised master plan offers positive opportunities to address the issues previously raised. Although setback distances are more generous in the revised scheme, one specific issue that was identified was the need for acoustic protection of the rear (west facing) duplexes. This should take into consideration the probability that Nelson Bay Road will at some stage be widened to accommodate two lanes in each direction.

14 March 2024:

Internalised Study spaces in the apartment buildings provide poor aspect, and in some instances, such as in Apartments Type A, are internal rooms – which are not permissible under the ADG. Access to light, ventilation and aspect are necessary. These spaces should be deleted from the floor plans.

Solar shading of unwanted summer sun from glazing and private open spaces is strongly encouraged. Fully glazed balcony balustrades are quite hot, and provide minimal privacy.

7. Safety

12 August 2021: *The development proposes to add residential living (in the form of seniors housing) to the existing golf course. The applicant stated there is a desire for the golf and residential uses to be seamlessly connected. While this is desirable from an aesthetic perspective, it is important there is a distinction between the two uses to make clear what is semi-public (golf course) and semi-private and private (residential). This is to avoid golf course users (and members of the public) entering the residential precinct by mistake or with purpose.*

The Panel raised concerns that the entry from Nelson Bay Road will be used to access the golf club precinct. The applicant confirmed that the golf club will continue to use Vardon Road as its access and the proposed development will not be a thru-site for golf course users. Emergency vehicle access only between the Club and the residences is proposed to be ensured by lockable bollard, and this connection should have a distinctly pedestrian character...

Careful consideration of the risk of stray golf balls striking pedestrians and residents using their private open spaces. Any necessitated netting or other protective structures should be identified and included in the documentation.

9 September 2021: *The previous comments are reiterated. In respect to safety issues arising from stray golf balls, advice was provided that the issue has been considered by experts in the field, and that only part of fairway / hole 17 was likely to require some safety netting / screening.*

14 March 2024:

The Applicant advised that the revised layout, and greater separation from the fairways, resolved any issues with stray balls impacting residences or their outdoor spaces.

Pedestrian path layout should take into consideration that some residents may have impairments that reduce their capacity for way finding. Pathways connections should be obvious and as continuous as possible – for example, pathways should align on opposite sides of the road. Paths should not discharge into car parks – eg. the pedestrian path to Clubhouse.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

12 August 2021: *The proposed development provides a communal hub in the form of a single storey community building... The Panel encourages the applicant to investigate the opportunity to provide communal uses where the apartments (Building 1 and 2) are located as this could assist in tree retention, reduce the scale at this topographical high point and help provide a buffer between the golf course and residential uses. It could also reduce the impact of an entry road on proposed residential uses.*

9 September 2021: *The revised master plan is responsive to the earlier advice.*

14 March 2024:

No further comment.

9. Aesthetics

12 August 2021: *The preliminary architectural treatment of the buildings individually showed good potential for an attractive architectural form – both for the towers and the smaller scaled buildings. However, this positive aspect would not eventuate if the buildings are not provided with an appropriate*

soft landscape setting. The aesthetic appeal of the area is also dependent upon careful consideration of how very different scaled elements are combined, and by ensuring transitions in form and scale are not exaggerated by a lack of adequate separation.

9 September 2021:

Considerable progress has been made in resolving the aesthetic challenges identified and the contrast in scales between the apartment buildings and the single storey buildings. The increased landscape area and proposed retention of significant stands of trees contribute to this positively. Though presented in highly schematic form, the simple, modern and layered visual treatment of the apartment buildings represents a welcome, modern approach which could also be carried through thematically to the lower scaled buildings, including the Community Centre and residences. The “Swiss chalet” pitched roof forms of the lower scaled buildings was potentially useful in providing interesting and generous interior spatial volumes – which was supported – but this could also be achieved by high ceiling spaces and voids under attractive, low pitched roof forms. The latter was considered to offer greater potential for an overall cohesive design language for the development.

14 March 2024:

Material selection is important for durability, maintenance and appearance. In particular, imitation timber usually involves a printed surface that often fades in the Australian sun after a short time, and in the case of faux stone, the material often weathers poorly and becomes unsightly.

The external appearance of the buildings has developed positively, and would be further enhanced by the provision of aspect-specific sun and privacy screening.

Previous Summary Recommendation 12 August 2021:

The Panel considered that a rethinking of the approach to the site planning of the development was warranted. Reasons for this are outlined under the headings above, but in summary, the planning of the site should be led by an integrated landscape approach, into which any proposed development should be carefully inserted. Dominance by hard surfaces, including roadways, should be significantly reduced.

The Compatibility Certificate documentation must provide an analysis of all the flow-on works that will ensue from the changes that are proposed, and should not be restricted to the limited component made up by the seniors living site in isolation.

Previous Summary Recommendation 9 September 2021:

The revised master plan, informed as it has been by the primarily landscape context of the area, represents a significant step forward to the planning of this development. The Applicant and consultants are commended for this approach. As the design is further developed, it is crucial that the retention of significant stands of trees, and the integration of the overall development into the surrounding areas, is led by the achievement of a first class environmental and landscape context.

Summary Recommendation

14 March 2024:

The design of this substantial proposal has progressed positively. Recognition of the significance of the steep vegetated dune at the south western corner of the site has been a very positive progression. The use of this landform as a Keeping Place is supported. Recommended revisions and design development does not require major

site planning, but are needed to achieve a good level of site planning, landscape and quality dwelling design, that is fully capable of Panel support.