



<b>PROPERTY</b>	54-58A Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay	
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Residential Aged Care Facility	
<b>DATE</b>	14 April 2020	
<b>TIME</b>	<i>Commenced:</i> 2.45pm	<i>Concluded:</i> 3.30pm
<b>HELD</b>	Digital meeting via Zoom	

## ATTENDANCE

<i>Chair</i>	Philip Graus
<i>Panel Members</i>	Kylie Legge; David Tordoff; Professor Peter Webber
<i>Council staff</i>	George Youhanna; Michael Stephens
<i>Proponents</i>	Campbell Meldrum (owner), Sue Francis (planner), Lotti Wilkinson (planner), Stephen Davies (heritage), Ethan Chin and Deborah Roberson (project managers), Mark Boffa (architect).

## Background

The subject site comprises of four lots, known as 54 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay (Lot 6 DP 86300), 56 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay (Lot 1 DP 608905), 58 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay (Lot 1 DP 99969) and 58A Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay (Lot 1 DP 79279). The sites have an approximate area of 3439.2 m<sup>2</sup> and encompasses 4 separate lots, as follows:

- 54 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay has an existing single storey brick residence;
- 56 Wycombe Road Neutral Bay has an existing two storey rendered residence, a brick shed and brick building to the south of the boundary. This site is identified as a Heritage item;
- 58 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay has an existing two storey residence and a brick garage, and,
- 58A Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay is an existing two storey existing residential aged care facility known as Lansdowne Gardens.

All sites are located within the Kurraba Point Conservation Area and include one heritage listed site, known as 56 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay, as identified in the schedule 5 North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013 (NSLEP 2013)

The proponent had a pre lodgement meeting with Council Officers on 23 July 2019.

DA 306/19 was lodged on 30 September 2019.

DA 306/19 was previously considered by the Design Excellence Panel on 12 November 2019. (see previous Design Excellence Panel comments below)

DA 306/19 was amended on 6 March 2020.



## Proposal

The proposed development consists of:

- Demolition of the existing buildings known as 54 and 58 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay;
- Reuse of the existing heritage listed dwelling house at 56 Wycombe Road;
- Construction of a three-storey residential aged care facility;
- Basement level car park and services;
- Removal of trees; and
- Construction of a new vehicle crossing on Aubin Street.

The Panel and Council officers inspected the site prior to the meeting.

## Panel Comments on original proposal

*The Panel was disappointed that the architects; urban designer; heritage consultant or planners were unable to attend the meeting as it would have been more productive with such a major development, given the significance of heritage and urban design issues with respect to this application.*

*This application is within a Conservation Area and the proposal involves the adaptive use of a Heritage Item and demolition of two adjacent dwellings. The Panel was advised that the application is to be determined by the Sydney North Planning Panel. As Council might have a perceived conflict of interest, the application is to be assessed by an external consultant planner and referred to an external heritage consultant for comment. The comments from the heritage consultant may not be available for several weeks. The Panel had the benefit of the minutes from the pre lodgement meeting with Council Officers on 23 July 2019. The Panel was advised that little had changed to the previous plans submitted to Council.*

*The Panel's comments relate to the key issues or concerns with the proposal. As the application stands: the site cover appears excessive; there appears to be too much mass of buildings around the heritage building; the gaps between buildings appear insufficient and there are many significant trees being removed with an apparent lack of suitable replacement canopy trees.*

*The Panel was provided with a copy of the Urban Design Report prepared by GM Urban Design and Architecture P/L submitted with the application. The report argues that the proposal is in keeping with its surrounds as well as with the heritage item on the site. The Panel notes that the Urban Design Report describes the proposal as 'keeping most of the development behind the heritage item'. It is assumed that the heritage item referred to is the item on the subject site, no 56. If this is correct, the plans indicate that the new building on Wycombe Road is forward of no 56 in its entirety. Without the consultants present this was not clear. Furthermore, the figure ground plan on 27 highlights the scale of the new building being quite different in footprint than those in the vicinity. The heritage item is isolated from its surrounds by the new building.*

*The applicant explained that the massing principle was to present the scheme as four distinct masses to Wycombe Road. While the principle was supported by the Panel, the minimal gaps between the buildings on Wycombe Road do not achieve the intent as noted above.*



*The treatment of the corner of Aubin Street and Wycombe Road with regard to height and setbacks needs further consideration. There is potential to rebuild the low stone wall and achieve a 1.5-metre-deep planting zone above the wall.*

*The Panel supported the applicant's allocation of multiple common areas throughout the development but felt that open terraces directly accessed from the living rooms would improve the amenity of the project.*

*The living area off the large roof terrace was considered too small, a larger under cover area off the roof terrace needs to be considered.*

*The impact on the amenity of neighbours and residents from the vehicle access was a concern. The loading area needs to be covered with a green roof to reduce noise and provide a more pleasant outlook.*

*Staff amenity was also raised with staff areas proposed in a basement.*

*Materials and finishes were not discussed in detail as the architect was not present. Materials need to be non-combustible with colours complementary to the Conservation Area. Cladding of the upper level on either side of the heritage item requires detailed consideration.*

*The fencing needs to be consistent for the whole frontage with retention of the stone fence that is typical in Wycombe Road. The main visitor entrance to the heritage building should be more prominent perhaps with an indent with the fence and gate and landscaping at the boundary in front of the fence.*

*There may be additional issues raised by the independent consultants assessing the proposal, including a heritage impact assessment. Should amended plans be sought, the above issues need to be addressed along with other changes recommended by the consultants. The amended plans could be referred back to the Panel for further comment and discussion subject to the architect and other relevant applicant's consultants attending the meeting.*

## **Conclusion**

*The Panel does not support the proposal as submitted. Amended plans are required to resolve the above issues.*

## **Panel Comments on current proposal**

It is appreciated by the Panel that the proposal has been amended to increase the setback of the new works from Wycombe Road, closer to the heritage building and this is generally supported. However, the new buildings remain too intrusive and are located too close to the heritage building. The new works at No.54 remain forward of the heritage item to the Wycombe Road frontage. In this respect the statement by City Plan in the 'Response to Design Excellence Panel comments' (p.3) that the proposal has been '...set back to align with the building line of the adjacent, retained, heritage item...' is not accurate. Some projection beyond the façade of the heritage building may be acceptable, but at least the immediately adjacent projecting balconies, and nearest sections of the lounges and dining rooms need to be set back so that they are in alignment.

In relation to colours, materials and finishes, it is not entirely clear from the schedule whether the new building will be excessively dark, as is the existing nursing home building.



Consideration should be given to the use of a range of lighter and warmer finishes in the new building.

In relation to the massing of the building to Aubin Street, while the Panel is aware that there is an 8m height limit under the aged care SEPP, consideration could be given to the possibility of relocating some of the floor space from the northern and southern sides of Courtyard 8 to the upper level of the Aubin Street frontage, in order to simplify the building massing and assist in increasing building separation in Courtyard 8.. This advice is subject to the usual constraints and relevant considerations that arise under SEPP 1 in relation to contravention of the 8m height limit, in particular ensuring that winter overshadowing of existing residential buildings to the south, and visual impact of the building form in Aubin Street is acceptable. The proximity across courtyard 8 between the two wings is not considered adequate. The panel recommends that the courtyard be widened, regardless of whether or not it is possible to extend the footprint towards Aubin Street.

There is insufficient information in relation to the original building entry and stone fence and it is unclear from the submitted documentation whether these elements are to be retained in the development. The stone fence to Wycombe Road is part of the character of the site and should be reinstated, as discussed during the meeting.

The relationship between the wings of the aged care facility at Nos.58A and 58 Wycombe Road raises concerns in relation to the overall quality and amenity of the residential aged care rooms. The scale of the ground floor terraces makes them largely unusable, with inadequate depth, facing a three storey wall, with limited natural light. The first floor and second floor bedrooms appear to face each other directly, with inadequate separation between windows.

The private balconies provided to the aged care rooms are very small and generally unusable. There is also a lack of usable ground level open space, and the provision of additional usable open space should be provided to offset the limited private open space.

The amenity of the three rooms and their balconies at lower ground level immediately overlooking the loading dock and driveway is not acceptable, given that these rooms would also receive little sunlight., It would be highly desirable to delete these rooms and cover the loading dock and landscape the area above , which would result in the rooms above lower ground level then having reasonable amenity

The amenity of the staff room in the basement is considered substandard and is not supported, regardless of whether staff are able to access the resident's outdoor open space areas. The staff room should be relocated to a ground level location with direct external access, such as the location of the Archive Store or the bedroom located behind the Admin room.

Although it would be desirable to retain significant trees on site, it is acknowledged that a number of trees, including significant trees, are located within the building footprint and on this basis the proposed retention of seven trees on site is considered acceptable. Additional tree plantings are encouraged in suitable locations on the site.

## **Conclusion**

The Panel provides qualified support for the proposal, subject to the identified issues being satisfactorily addressed, in particular increasing the width of courtyard 8.



<b>PROPERTY</b>	54 Wycombe Road Neutral Bay
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Residential Aged Care Facility– DA.306/19
<b>DATE</b>	12 November 2019
<b>TIME</b>	<i>Commenced:</i> 4pm <i>Concluded:</i> 4.50pm
<b>HELD</b>	Supper Room, North Sydney Council Chambers

## ATTENDANCE

<i>Chair</i>	Philip Graus
<i>Panel Members</i>	Kylie Legge; Anita Morandini
<i>Council staff</i>	Geoff Mossemenear; Michael Stephens; Robyn Pearson
<i>Proponents</i>	Campbell Meldrum (owner)

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- Removal of trees; and
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The Panel and Council officers inspected the site prior to the meeting. The applicant/owner was available to answer questions from the Panel.

### **Panel Comments**

The Panel was disappointed that the architects; urban designer; heritage consultant or planners were unable to attend the meeting as it would have been more productive with such a major development, given the significance of heritage and urban design issues with respect to this application.

This application is within a Conservation Area and the proposal involves the adaptive use of a Heritage Item and demolition of two adjacent dwellings. The Panel was advised that the application is to be determined by the Sydney North Planning Panel. As Council might have a perceived conflict of interest, the application is to be assessed by an external consultant planner and referred to an external heritage consultant for comment. The comments from the heritage consultant may not be available for several weeks. The Panel had the benefit of the minutes from the pre lodgement meeting with Council Officers on 23 July 2019. The Panel was advised that little had changed to the previous plans submitted to Council.

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## **Conclusion**

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