

St Leonards South DA Review

Area 13,14 and 15

O C U L U S

13 February 2024

Scope of review:

The following review is based on the following documents provided to OCULUS 16/06/2023:

- TRIM_Access Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715203
- TRIM_Arboreal Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715205
- TRIM_Architectural Design Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_17
- TRIM_Architectural Drawings - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1716270
- TRIM_Civil DA Public Domain - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715208
- TRIM_Design Review and Excellence Panel Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards
- TRIM_Ecologically Sustainable Design Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - D
- TRIM_Public Art Strategy - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715227
- TRIM_Revised Landscape DA Report.pdf - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 202
- TRIM_Survey Plans - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715235
- TRIM_Urban Design Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715238
- TRIM_Wind Report - Proposal at 14-16 Marshall Avenue 2-10 Berry Road and 5-9 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards - DA56 2023_1715229

Previous review comments in grey.

Additional comments relating to revised drawings in black. Recommended actions are noted in *italics*.

Design Excellence Panel:

We agree with all of the observations and recommendations of the Design Excellence Panel, with the exception of supporting a level transition between the pedestrian link and green spine (to the detriment of the green spine communal areas).

Key recommendations relating to landscape that are supported by Oculus include:

1. Develop the landscape and Connection to Country narrative and design and update the Landscape Report.
2. Enhance the connection of the WSUD and landscape design elements that support the creation of wildlife habitat and ground water re-charge.
4. Develop the communal open space design to provide additional variation in landscape characters and amenities, a smoother level transition and to enhance the street address to Marshall Av. consistent with the St Leonards South Landscape Masterplan Private Open Space Typologies - Communal Open Space.
5. Provide compliant deep soil at 25% of the site area, in accordance with Part J of the Lane Cove DCP. This may require a reduction to the basement intrusion into the green spine consistent with Part C of the Lane Cove DCP page 63.

6. Provide a copy of the arborists report and retain additional existing trees.
10. Coordinate communal open space with neighbouring properties to achieve more contiguous design with Areas 12, 15 and 16 as per St Leonards South Landscape Masterplan Private Open Space Typologies - Communal Open Space.
11. Demonstrate visual and acoustic privacy will be achieved between Sites 14 and 12 in accordance with the ADG Parts 3F and 4H of the ADG.
12. Provide additional street activation in the form of ground level apartment gates, letterboxes, seating and planting consistent with Part 4L of the ADG and demonstrate this in a detailed street elevation.
13. Provide additional street legibility to the Building 13/15 entrance through strategies such as a landscaped forecourt, canopy, lighting and signage consistent with Part 4M of the ADG and St Leonards South DCP 7.4.6.
14. Reinstate the indoor communal facilities and roof terrace to Building 14 included in the pre DA design proposal presented in May 2021, consistent with the St Leonards South Landscape Masterplan Sustainability Design Principles and Private Open Space Typologies - Roof Gardens and St Leonards South DCP 7.4 Private Domain and 8.3 Green Roofs.
15. Expand ground floor private open spaces into the communal open space to further activate the space and enhance apartment solar access as per St Leonards South Landscape Masterplan Private Open Space Typologies - Private Courtyards and Terraces.

We note the design changes made to address the majority of these items in the Landscape DA Report and other DA documents as summarised in the Design Review and Excellence Panel Report.

Conceptual Approach:

The landscape design does not have a strong conceptual framework or narrative. This should be derived from the site and context character, and through exploring a Connection to Country.

The landscape and Connection to Country narrative has not been further developed to a significant degree. Whilst some additional reference has been made to Celebrating the Local Environment and Connecting with Country in the Landscape DA Report, this hasn't translated into a fundamental design approach or narrative and appears to be more of a post-rationalisation. For example, reference is made to rock engravings and rock shelters, however, these relate to landscape elements without any explanation of how they are connected or how the design of these elements has been driven by Connecting with Country. Reference is also made to "Food from the Bush," however, the plant schedule and planting plans do not appear to include these in the area highlighted.

Green Spine:

The lowering of the green spine between Areas 14 and 15 from the recommended levels of the Landscape Master Plan has resulted in a greater grade change having to be addressed within the green spine. This has resulted in the bunching up of terraces around the area 12 boundary and a disjointed communal open space overall.

As noted in council comments, an at-grade connection between the green spine and pedestrian link should be secondary to a functional communal open space within the green spine.

Ensure that the play elements provided within the green spine provide for a range of opportunities for different ages and in particular play for the very young. Play elements should be consistent and integrated with the overall character of the landscape.

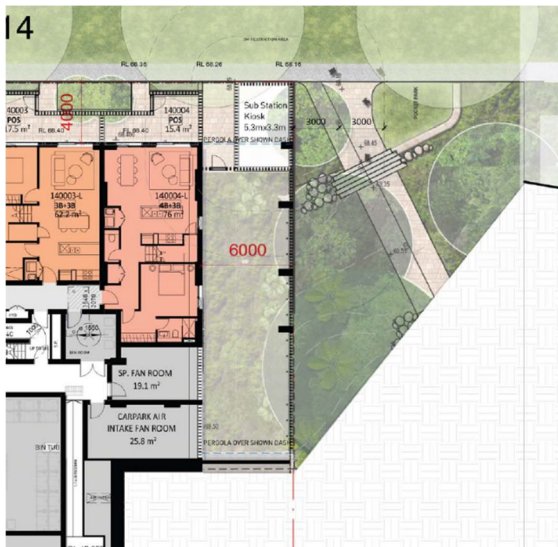
Raise the height of the green spine between Areas 14 and 15 to RL 74-75, and to RL 76-77 adjacent to Area 13 (i.e. more in line with the Landscape Master Plan) to reduce ramping and terracing within the green spine.

The change to the design to adjust the Green Spine levels to more closely reflect those suggested in the Landscape Master Plan (i.e., southern portion of Green Spine at RL 74.5 and northern portion at RL 76.5) is strongly supported.

Demonstrate further coordination with Area 12 to create a well-connected and singular green spine landscape gesture. Levels coordination with Area 12 should include assessing the retention of trees which straddle the boundary with Area 13. Provide clear and direct access within the green spine from Area 12 to the communal barbecue and playground facilities, either through continuing the eastern pathway to Area 12, or providing greater access from Area 12 to the western pathway.

The change to the design to better integrate the Green Spine levels between Area 12 and 13 is strongly supported.

Landscape Area to South of Area 14:



This area appears to be a fenced, fully planted zone with a pergola over the top of it. It's unclear as to what this space is for, why it's covered and whether this space is down at RL68.5 or grades up with the adjacent through site link.

Further clarity should be provided in the DA Landscape Design Report as to the function, access and levels/grades of this space.

East-West Pedestrian Link:

The eastern half of the east-west pedestrian link is outside of the site ownership boundary.

Provide further detail on how the pedestrian link will be coordinated between landowners.

Confirm that the area of pedestrian link outside of the site is not being used in canopy and deep soil calculations.

Provide further detail on how the pedestrian link will be coordinated between landowners.

Ground Level Apartment Interfaces:

The provision of a planted strip to the public domain/site boundary along Holdsworth and Berry Roads is supported. However, it is noted that no planting strip has been provided along the Marshall Ave frontage, nor has any landscape been provided within the boundary between the apartment terraces and the street. This will create a poor outcome for both public and private domains, and result in a lack of privacy for the ground level apartments.

The design should be amended to provide a min 1m wide landscape strip between the ground level apartment terraces and the site boundary/public domain interface. The landscape design should also provide planters, including small trees, within the site on the boundary to the public domain (as has been provided along Holdsworth and Berry Rd).

The interface of ground level apartments with the Green Spine and balancing privacy with activation, is generally supported. However, the interface between the ground level apartments of Area 14 building and the Green Spine appears less than optimal as the width of the planting between apartment terrace and the Green Spine communal open space is narrower than for the other buildings. This interface, being west facing, will also receive some afternoon sun.

It is recommended that the interface between the ground level apartments of Area 14 building and the Green Spine be reviewed to increase the width of planting between in order to provide greater privacy and shade.

Roof Terrace:

The landscape design for the roof terrace on the Area 13 and 15 buildings does not explain how adequate soil volume for the trees shown is achieved, nor the type of planters proposed. Reference is made to modular planters, however, we assume that the larger tree planters are built-in.

The DA Landscape Design Report should clarify the type of planters proposed on the roof terrace and the soil depths/volumes achieved to meet the requirements of the ADG.

Deep Soil:

The provision of deep soil in the design to meet ADG and DCP requirements is noted and supported.

Section 3.4.3 of the DA Landscape Design Report notes that the Green Spine area over the basement car park will achieve 1.2m depth. The Design Review and Excellence Panel Report notes that 1.0m soil depth will be provided over the basement car park.

The depth of soil to be provided over the basement car park under the Green Spine should be clarified in the DA documents.

Existing trees:

There are inconsistencies between the trees noted for retention on the landscape plan, and the arborist's report. Trees suitable for retention should be retained where possible in the landscape design, including within the pedestrian link and green spine.

Further development is required to identify trees suitable for retention and demonstrate how the trees and their TPZs are to be incorporated into the landscape design, considering both location and RLs of the trees.

There appears to have been no further study or exploration of opportunities to retain existing trees, including tree nos 9, 15 and 19, as previously raised by both the DEP and OCULUS. The Design Review and Excellence Panel Report merely repeats extracts from the Arboricultural Report which only assesses the impacts on existing trees based on the current design. There has also

been no further investigation as to whether some existing trees can be transplanted for reuse, such as some of the existing palms e.g. tree no. 9.

Further justification should be provided as to why it is not possible to retain or transplant suitable existing trees, and the Design Review and Excellence Panel Report should both summarise this and options explored in the design to retain trees. The Aboricultural Report contains photos of trees that are just labelled as "Street Tree" – these photos should identify the specific tree number shown.

The diagram included on page 16 of the DA Landscape Design Report (section 2.2 – Retention) suggests that an existing tree is being retained in the centre of the site. This is not the case in the actual design.

This diagram should be updated to remove the tree that is not actually being retained.

Canopy cover:

The high level of tree canopy cover is supported, however opportunities for large trees should be investigated.

The canopy cover calculations should also be adjusted to only include canopy within the site boundary and exclude overlapping canopy, in order to provide an accurate site cover percentage.

Provide species for the two dark blue large trees in the 'Tree Plan'.

Confirm that the soil volumes and depths for trees as noted on the Canopy Plan will be provided within the landscape design, along with any assumptions regarding shared soil volumes and utilising soils outside of tree pit / planted areas (e.g. under concrete paving).

The DA Landscape Design Report includes tree canopy cover calculations. However, these use a standard diameter for different tree sizes and then assume the full area of all trees as part of the canopy cover claimed. A number of trees overlap the site boundary, either with Area 12 or the adjoining streets, and, therefore, the area of canopy outside of the boundary should not be used as part of the canopy cover area and % for the site itself.

The canopy cover calculations should also be adjusted to only include canopy within the site boundary and exclude overlapping canopy, in order to provide an accurate site cover percentage.

The Design Review and Excellence Panel Report states that structural soil cell systems will be used for paving in deep soil areas to enable areas below paving to be utilised as deep soil to support tree roots. The DA Landscape Design Report does not make reference to use of structural soil cell systems.

Further detail should be provided in the DA Landscape Design Report with respect to use of low embodied energy materials (as reference in the ESD Report) and structural soil cell systems (as referenced in the Design Review and Excellence Panel Report).

Wind:

The Wind Report identifies a number of areas where wind speeds will likely create an uncomfortable pedestrian environment, including the Berry Road frontage (especially at the building corners) and the lobby entry between the Area 13 and 15 buildings.

The landscape design should specifically address the recommendations of the Wind Report in ameliorating the adverse wind conditions expected in certain locations.

WSUD:

The incorporation of WSUD into the landscape design and making this a key part of the design is strongly supported.

Landscape Materials:

P2 is indicated as hydrostone on p20, but exposed finish coloured concrete on p21 and 22, neither of which align with the paving intent shown in the indicative illustrations.

Confirm paving materials and ensure they provide a consistent materiality throughout.

The ESD Report notes use of low embodied energy/carbon materials in the design. The DA Landscape Design Report does not specifically address this, and the materials used in the landscape design do not necessarily reflect this.

Planting Design:

The planting plans nominate a very small number of plants for the planters – the planting densities/numbers are considered inadequate to provide appropriate cover and amenity. The planting schedule notes all plant numbers as “TBC.”

The planting densities/numbers should be reviewed to ensure adequate planting is provided at Completion. It is recommended that appropriate planting densities are:

- 4 plants/m² for large shrubs/hedge species
- 5 plants/m² for medium sized shrubs
- 6 plants/m² for low level shrubs and ground covers.

The planting plans should be amended to reflect these increased plant densities. The planting schedule should nominate the quantities of trees and other plants to be provided.

Typical Details:

The typical details included in the DA Landscape Design Report do not include details for typical mass planting on structure (only for tree planting and planter boxes). The details for planting on structure (trees, mass planting, planter boxes) do not nominate proposed soil mixes or refer to A and B horizons. The inclusion of adequate detail for planting on structure is important to ensure the success of the planting.

A typical detail for mass planting on structure should be included. The details for planting on structure should include details of soil mixes/A & B horizons.

Public Art:

The preparation of a Public Art Strategy is supported, however, this identifies public art opportunities only. It will be important to ensure that public art is appropriately implemented in line with this strategy.

Council should consider including a condition of consent to ensure that the public art is actually implemented in accordance with the Public Art Strategy.