

**Report and Recommendations of the
Design Review Panel, Sutherland Shire Council
Thursday, 7 March 2024**

Panel Members: Peter Hill (Chair), John Dimopoulos, Bruno Pelucca, Jared Phillips (Landscape)

Consultants / Adrian Melo (The Planning Studio) /
Council Staff: David Sheehan & Amanda Treharne (SSC)

Applicant Team: Andrew Whiteman (Aliro P/L), Christopher Curtis (Ethos Urban),
Javier Ferre (Architect - Watson Young), Online: Colin
McDonald & Jesica Male (Aliro), Gordon Kirkby & Jethro Yuen
(Ethos Urban), David Vago (Landscape Architect Habit 8)

DA No: DA 23/0721

Project Address: 13 Endeavour Road, Caringbah

Proposal: Eight new buildings for warehouse distribution / light industrial /
industrial retail outlet / commercial / child care / café and
associated site works

PREAMBLE

The site was visited by the Panel members prior to the meeting.

Although this type of development is not required to comply with SEPP 65 the proposal has been considered in relation to the Design Quality Principles of the SEPP as being well recognised minimum standards for the attainment of good design.

Issues considered relevant to the proposal are noted below.

COMMENTS

The Panel supports well-considered design and acknowledges that care has been taken in the preparation of the development proposal. However, good site planning and architectural design proceeds from a thorough understanding of the site context, and the site analysis provided as a basis for this design proposal is inadequate. There are certain aspects of the proposed design that the Panel recommends for further consideration, as outlined below:

Context and neighbourhood character

Built form and scale

1. This expansive site has, over time, moved from the single ownership of Toyota to a potentially more open arrangement of light industrial and distribution functions. The large industrial building at the northwest of the site, Building 1 occupied by Australia Post and Woolworths, is to remain, together with Building 2. The remainder of the site is proposed to be:
 - a. razed, with all other buildings removed, and nearly all trees removed;
 - b. re-graded, with considerable amounts of fill across the site, to improve stormwater management; and
 - c. constructed with a new layout of roads, buildings and some trees.
2. Significant areas of well-established landscaping exist throughout the site. The proposal removes most of the existing landscaping to accommodate different levels across the site, larger buildings and greater areas of impervious surfaces. There is an opportunity for the landscape design to drive the stormwater management and site planning to greatly enhance the overall design response.
3. In the precinct planning the position of the site next to Solander playing fields at the east, and the boardwalk alongside the mangroves of Wooloware Bay at the north, has not been seen as a benefit. The precinct is mostly closed to these edges. In the Panel's view, establishing a better relationship between the main movement/ pedestrian spine of the precinct and the edges of the site will create a better design that acknowledges the unique location and its natural beauty, and a better connection to Country. There are opportunities for a landscape design response to influence the overarching connectivity of the precinct.
4. In the landscape planning the significant stands of eucalypts in the centre of the site, planted to shade existing carparking spaces, have not been seen as a benefit; all of these trees are proposed to be removed; the only trees that are to remain are at the southern and eastern edges. In the Panel's view, certain trees that are significant and provide a positive contribution to the site should stay – the stand of trees located at Building 6 have been identified as the most valuable trees. Rather than re-grading the site and removing all existing trees there is an opportunity to retain an established mature tree canopy which contributes to the character of the new development. Trees can also readily become focal points in the precinct, the centres of good amenity for staff break areas, the café, or the child care centre.

5. The pedestrian spine with its swale would benefit from greater width, with some consistent canopy trees, treated as a street that can organise the building elements and their openings, creating a positive arrival experience, rather than a narrow walkway that is obviously secondary to vehicle movements. Wayfinding should be clear and obvious to pedestrians and drivers.
6. The new light industrial buildings proposed are mostly attractive examples of their different types, but they could be anywhere. Functions other than light industrial and distribution are limited to a small child care centre and a small café. These are located near the site's main entry on Captain Cook Drive, ostensibly to remove the need for pedestrians and people unfamiliar with the precinct to be traversing the site and reducing the potential for encounters with heavy vehicles. While this strategy to manage vehicle movement makes some sense in maximising the industrial/ distribution functions, a light industrial site in this location should be able to provide a better response to its site while at the same time providing safe pedestrian pathways throughout. The potential for the layout of the precinct to provide more than a standard industrial site should not be lost.
7. Panel recommends that the unit mix and site planning be reconsidered to employ more of the multi-level units, which could allow the central spine to provide more space for pedestrian movements, and the site edges to be opened further. The multi-level units could be stacked closer to the centre of the site, near the large industrial building 1, which would free up the site's footprint and allow for a ring road system, as discussed, that should be explored further as an option to engage more with the site's edges, by either replacing or integrating with the spine solution.

Amenity

8. More space should be provided for comfortable external space for staff facilities, in more places with good amenity. The place at the junction of Building 4 and Building 6 should be made larger, and the route between buildings and site edges be made comfortable, accessible, and safe. More room between Buildings 4 and 6 would also allow for a visual landscaped corridor connected to the adjacent wetland. Likewise, it is recommended to widen the break between Building 3 and Building 4 to create a visual corridor that connects the staff facilities with the landscaped area.
9. The proposed child care centre is poorly designed, and should be sited in a place with better amenity. It is proposed to be in a central location as noted, with play spaces set on roof tops overlooking a sea of cars. In a large precinct with parkland on two sides the child care centre should be relocated, with an outlook to trees or park rather than the carpark, and play spaces on natural ground level shaded by established trees. Access to the child care facilities on the first floor is by way of a single lift or stair – as parents may be managing younger children in prams or strollers, an upper level facility should be avoided if at all possible.

10. Panel notes that the proposed location of the café is set very close to a path for heavy vehicle movements; consideration should be given to relocating the café to a place with better amenity.
11. Given the large population expected to occupy the site, consideration should be given to multiple break-out or gathering spaces that could be provided within and around the site. The Panel recommends that the applicant reconsiders the need for the regimented fencing around the site, as its removal would benefit the occupants by allowing them to engage with the park and the foreshore in a more immediate and direct way.

Sustainability

12. Although sustainable strategies were not discussed in detail at the meeting, the Panel recommends that a full suite of well-considered sustainability measures should be designed and integrated into the proposal during design development. As a minimum this proposal should provide rainwater reuse tanks for irrigation and WC flushing and truck washdown, electric systems rather than gas for HW. The large roofs provide good opportunities for solar PV cells. Consider battery storage, and EV charging stations throughout the carparking.

Landscape

13. The landscape response shall seek to retain as many existing trees as possible, improve or introduce existing or new breakout spaces and build on the existing established landscape character of the site and its surroundings.
14. The landscape scheme proposes a number of principles and objectives, although it is difficult to understand how these have achieved or influenced the design response. Diagrams would be useful to understand how the landscape scheme responds to the overarching principles and objectives.
15. Within the electrical easement corridor, a number of breakout spaces or activity nodes exist. These spaces provide tables and chairs and an amphitheatre for small events. There is an opportunity to integrate these areas throughout the development rather than trying to accommodate them in a left over area which is back of house, cut off from the main public areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form. The potential for the layout of the precinct to provide more than a standard industrial site should not be lost. The issues noted above should be taken into account in a revised proposal to realise an outcome that could be supported by the Panel.