

**ATTACHMENT 5****Wollongong Design Review Panel - Meeting minutes and recommendations**

<b>Date</b>	30 March 2022
<b>Meeting location</b>	Wollongong City Council Administration Offices
<b>Panel members</b>	(Chair) David Jarvis
	(Member) Gabrielle Morrish
	(Member) Marc Deuschle
<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>Council staff</b>	John Wood – City Wide Development Manager Rodney Thew – Senior Development Project Officer Mary-Jane Craig – Development Project Officer Alexandra Mc Robert – Architect – Development Assessment & Certification
<b>Guests/ representatives of the applicant</b>	Andrew Connor – Canberra Town Planning Craig Perrott – AMC Architecture David Pearce DSBLA - Landscape Architect Stephanie Tyrell – Adria Phillip Bull – Canberra Town Planning
<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	None
<b>Item number</b>	1
<b>DE number</b>	DA-2022/136
<b>Reason for consideration by DRP</b>	
<b>Determination pathway</b>	
<b>Property address</b>	7-13 Bellevue Road and 38-40 Princes Highway, Figtree
<b>Proposal</b>	Construction of a mixed-use seniors living complex including various ancillary uses such as a gym, wellness centre, club house, café, chapel, Seniors Day Care and flooding/ stormwater infrastructure, demolition of existing structures and tree removals
<b>Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel</b>	
<b>Background</b>	The site was Inspected on the 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 The proposal was previously reviewed by the Panel (Pre DA) on 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2021.
<b>Design quality principals SEPP 65</b>	
<b>Context and Neighbourhood Character</b>	<p>The proposal is located within a low-density residential neighbourhood on the perimeter of Figtree retail centre. The sites proximity to Figtree retail centre makes this an ideal site for the proposed age care development.</p> <p>The proposal incorporates an existing church and community hall into the development. These uses will potentially contribute to an active and diverse community development. The hall and church are located in the northern portion of the site adjoining a group of local retail shops that extend down Bellevue Road to the corner of Princes Highway.</p> <p>The remainder of the site consists of an L shaped area of land that wrap around the north-west and south-west boundaries of the site. Both the north-west and south-west boundaries interfaces adjoin sites containing low density residential dwellings, these boundaries are sensitive to potential privacy issues and perceived bulk / scale.</p> <p>A single residential lot connects the site to Benny Avenue. The lot provides vehicular access to the RACF and the southern at grade carpark. However, the proportion of the lot provide little opportunity to accommodate additional built form.</p> <p>The site is subject to flooding, an engineered solution has been developed to contain water flow through the site from north to south. The southern end of the site adjoining Princes Highway is located in a high flood risk area.</p>
<b>Built Form and Scale</b>	<p>In response to the Panels previous comments building forms have been modeled and articulated to reduce the perceived bulk of the development and better relate to immediate context of the site. However, the Panel remains concerned with the bulk and scale of proposal's interfaces with the low-density residential neighborhood adjoining the sites northwest and southwestern boundaries:</p> <p><u>Southwestern interface</u></p> <p>The proposed 4 storey buildings, orientates large banks of windows and balconies back towards the adjoining residential homes. The scale and proximity of these buildings to their low-density residential neighbour will create significant privacy issues. The proposed buildings will be perceived as very long and bulky within the existing context, which consist predominantly of 1 and 2 storey dwellings. An appropriate transition between the proposal and the neighbouring low density residential dwellings has not been provided.</p>

	<p>The position the loading dock adjacent to boundary fence will also create privacy issues with neighbours. The location proposed positions delivery trucks so they will be visible from neighbouring properties as they reverse directly adjacent to the boundary fence creating both visual privacy and acoustic issues.</p> <p>In the northwestern corner of the site a terrace (servicing residents with dementia) has been elevated approximately 2m above natural ground level. The terrace will overlook the rear garden areas of the neighbouring residential properties. This will also create acoustic and privacy issues to the adjacent property. If a terrace is to remain in this location, the level of the terrace should be lowered so it is not possible for residents to see over the boundary fence. A solution that positions a tall fence to try and block view lines would not be supported by the Panel as it would cause bulk and shadow issues. Alternatively, a much greater setback could be provided to the raised terrace so that its alignment satisfies ADG separation standards adjacent to a lower scale neighbours.</p> <p>In this low scale residential context, the proposal should aim to read as a two-storey building with a recessive upper level (3<sup>rd</sup> storey) to its southwestern neighbour. To achieve this goal the upper level of the RACF could be set back further from the southwestern boundary.</p> <p>Consideration must also be given to the detail treatment of windows and balconies. It is recommended that balconies are not provided to southwest orientated rooms. However, a common balcony should be provided to each house (wing) to provide a convenient external space which is accessible to the residents of the house, orientated to benefit from solar access and to avoid privacy issues with residential neighbours..</p> <p><u>Northwestern interface</u></p> <p>The proposed 4 storey buildings, also orientates large banks of windows and balconies towards the adjoining residential homes. The scale and proximity of these buildings to their low-density residential neighbour will potentially create significant privacy issues.</p> <p>Further analysis / detailed information is required to assist in determining an appropriate interface with the northwestern neighbour. The layout of the neighbour should be clarified to determine the positions of habitable rooms and primary areas of private open space. Detailed sections should be provided to demonstrate how potential privacy issues are mitigated and assist in developing an appropriate design response.</p> <p>Given that the subject site will contain a significantly denser (taller, longer buildings, higher FSR) development than neighbouring sites a minimum setback of 9m is recommended to the sites northwest and southwestern boundaries.</p> <p><u>Central plaza</u></p> <p>The proposal has been developed to create a central village square, activated at ground level by the existing church and community hall. The proposed community facilities housed within the ground floor of the RACF, will also contribute to activating the proposed village square. This is a sound strategy that could provide a positive contribution to the development pending further detail development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Resolution of potential vehicular and pedestrian conflicts. It is proposed that vehicles enter and exit the Plaza through a narrow gap between the Church and Hall and utilize the plaza as a vehicular drop off point and parking to service the RACF. The Panel remain concerned that this will significantly impact the nature / quality and safety of the square, limiting the square's potential activities and creating conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.</li><li>- The central square appears to be intended to provide communal open space to the Independent Living Units. A dedicated area of communal open space must be provided to service the independent living units. The central square is a very public space that will be accessed by visitors to the Church and community hall as well as providing vehicular access to the RACF, as such it will not provide the level of amenity required to service the independent living units. A dedicated area of communal open space that meets the objectives of the ADG must be provided.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The community hall addresses the central square with a waste store. Further development of the community hall should seek to provide a more active contribution to the central square and a more discrete servicing strategy.</li> </ul> <p><u>Southern at grade carpark</u> All carparking should be located within basements to allow at grade areas to be dedicated to open space / deep soil landscaping.</p> <p><u>Bellevue Road</u> In response to the panels previous comments an increased street setback has been provided to Bellevue Road to provide an improved street address.</p>
<b>Density</b>	<p>The proposal presents as a significant over development of the site. The Panel are particularly concerned with the proposal's interfaces with its low-density residential neighbours.</p> <p>It must be acknowledged that the potential capacity of this site is restricted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flooding in the southern portion of the site</li> <li>- The access lot connected to Benny Avenue is too constrained to accommodate building form.</li> <li>- Existing buildings on the site (church and hall) reduce the potential to locate taller building forms in a less sensitive area of the site.</li> </ul> <p>These constraints will reduce the sites potential to realize the full extent of permissible GFA on the site, whilst providing an acceptable response to the immediate context of the site.</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>The use of solar power and water heating is strongly encouraged, particularly to service communal areas.</p> <p>Opportunities to harvest rainwater for use in maintaining any plantings established on the building or the site should be explored. Other water minimization measures (reuse of rainwater for toilet flushing and washing machines) should also be considered.</p> <p>Landscape plantings should address aims for biodiversity protection, weed minimisation and low water use.</p>
<b>Landscape</b>	<p>General compliance needs to be checked and clearly demonstrated for the landscape with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deep soil zones – locate, quantify and show minimum dimensions,</li> <li>- Communal Open Space – locate and quantify</li> <li>- General Landscape area</li> </ul> <p><u>Deep Soil Zones</u> Further to showing compliance, deep soil zones should be located to ensure medium to large canopy trees can be established in appropriate locations throughout the site. Currently many trees appear to be located in narrow strip of planting that do not appear wide enough to support them or are surrounded by hardscape. Likewise, many are located along boundaries where future developments may impact their health / longevity.</p> <p>The establishment of an urban tree canopy across this project should be targeted at 40% coverage. Particularly areas with a high percentage of hardscape (such as at-grade carparking, and plazas) need to maximise coverage.</p> <p>If any at-grade parking is required, it should be planted at the ratio of 1 tree / 5 spaces (with a full space dedicated to each tree)</p> <p>It is not clearly demonstrated how the watercourse interfaces with the plaza and where it goes thereafter? It appears the plaza on the southern end ends in planting; does the water resurface here?</p> <p><u>Communal Open Space</u> There is a shortfall of COS and a distinct lack of meaningful COS at the ground level. There is also no COS specifically provided for the ILUs. It appears the central plaza is also regarded as COS for residents though this was not clarified.</p> <p>Quality COS at the ground level is extremely important for ILUs and especially RACF as it is some residents' only outside opportunity.</p>

	<p>People may not feel part of community on the rooftop. It is not acceptable to expect ILU residents to enter the RACF and go to the rooftop to access COS. Equally the Panel does not consider that the plaza space is adequate for their COS either as it would not allow passive or active recreation.</p> <p>Sufficient COS must be provided for the ILUs, the RACF, and substantially more should be provided on the ground floor. If the at-grade carpark was located within the basement, the space left in this location could be used as COS</p> <p>Some sections of COS could be improved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing a circuit through the site that connects several / all ground floor COS,</li> <li>- Better connecting the sensory garden for all residents to access,</li> <li>- The 'Central Lawn' near the carpark is approximately 2.5m wide. The adjacent exercise area is only 25m2. The area connecting them is dominated by paths to/from the carpark and other parts of the development. This area must be better planned to get more landscape provision such as a larger, substantial lawn, minimising or removing dominance of circulation and providing smaller programmed landscape spaces / rooms.</li> </ul> <p><u>Central plaza</u></p> <p>It is unclear if the central plaza / square is being counted as COS. Given it is public in nature, is a shared zone often utilised by cars, and is predominantly hardscape circulation space, it should not be part of the COS calculations. It may be retained as a part of the 'entry' space or as 'public' space but additional COS must be provided elsewhere to ensure minimum standards are met.</p> <p>The plaza's current arrangement is likely to experience significant clashes between adjacent uses and its function as a driveway. Especially for the elderly residents this could lead to confusion, discomfort and cause traffic vs pedestrian safety issues.</p> <p>Issues with the plaza that should be reconsidered or improved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The grass area is small and will likely not be used for recreation. There is a concern it would be used for 'just need a minute' parking or driven over by turning vehicles,</li> <li>- Likewise, vehicle impact to walls within this central space is a concern,</li> <li>- The In/out driveway seems problematic as it appears too narrow for two cars to pass side-by-side,</li> <li>- The jagged paving edge to the south of the plaza looks interesting and appears to float above planting – if so, this will very likely lead to trip hazards and falling,</li> <li>- WSUD opportunities should be explored within the plaza. Paving could be graded to trees / lawn to maximise permeability and water infiltration.</li> </ul> <p><u>Rooftop</u></p> <p>The rooftop COS design seems well arranged and appropriate for the RACF. Improvements to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All lawn should be natural if at all possible. If artificial must be used adequate shading must be provided to offset UHI effect.</li> <li>- It is unclear how the 'sheltered seating area' –is sheltered,</li> <li>- Enlarging, by stretching to edge, the southern lawn, and moving seating to eastern edge,</li> <li>- Minimising the extent of hard paving, and increasing the canopy cover, to minimise the UHI Effect and provide better microclimatic conditions for users.</li> </ul>
Amenity	<p><u>Independent living units.</u></p> <p>A reasonable strategy has been developed to provide both cross ventilating and solar access to independent living units.</p> <p>Further development of the following units is recommended to address ADG amenity objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unit type 1A has an internalized kitchen, void of natural light.</li> <li>- Unit type 1B is accessed directly through the kitchen.</li> <li>- Unit type 1C provides a very narrow living room (under 3.6m).</li> <li>- Unit type 3B, the back wall of the kitchen is in excess of 8m from a window.</li> </ul> <p><u>Residential Age Care Facility</u></p>

	<p>A functional layout has been proposed that will generally provide a reasonable level of amenity to residents. However, further consideration should be given to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large, internalized living spaces have been provided within each house (wing). Consideration should be given to relocating these rooms to improve natural lighting / outlook. Consideration may also be given to developing skylight / clerestory windows to provide natural lighting to the upper levels.</li> <li>- It is recommended that balconies to all rooms orientated towards northwest and southwestern boundaries are removed (to reduce potential privacy issues with neighbours) and each house be serviced by a modest northeast facing balcony to provide residents with convenient access to a sunny external space.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<p>Further detail development is required to reduce potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians within the central square. The Panel are particularly concerned with the safety issues relating to providing a communal open space for residents of the independent living units within a public square that is also a shared zone for vehicular drop off and parking.</p>
<b>Housing Diversity and Social Interaction</b>	<p>The proposal is ideally located for the proposed mix of uses. However, the built form must be developed to better respond to the immediate context of the site if this development is to provide a positive contribution to this neighbourhood.</p>
<b>Aesthetics</b>	<p>The proposal has been articulated in a competent manner and expressed with an appropriate palette of materials. A reasonable aesthetic has been developed for the proposal.</p> <p>The Panel's main concern with the presentation of the proposal is the excessive / contextually inappropriate mass presented to the adjoining low density residential neighbours.</p>
<b>Key issues, further Comments &amp; Recommendations</b>	<p>The site is ideally located to accommodate the proposed age care uses. However, the current design responds poorly to the surrounding low density residential neighbourhood. Further consideration of the following issues is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further development of the northwest and southwest interfaces are required to significantly reduce the perceived scale of the proposed development.</li> <li>- Further refinement of the central square.</li> <li>- Provision of a dedicated area of communal open space, separate from the public central square, should be provided to service independent living units.</li> <li>- Detail refinement of independent living units and RACF to improve amenity.</li> </ul>