

**Shellharbour Design Review Panel  
Meeting minutes and recommendations for an Eco Tourist Resort**

Date	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
Meeting location	Shell Harbour City Council, Administration offices
Panel members	David Jarvis (chair) Tony Quinn Marc Deuschle
Council staff	Jasmina Micevski (Present at DRP Meeting only) James Douglas Jennifer Southan (Present at site visit only)
Guests/ representatives of the applicant	Steven Norton Giovanni Cerillo Anthony Peterson
Declarations of Interest	Nil
Item number	1
DA number	PR0077/2017
Reasons for consideration by DRP	DA application
Determination pathway	Southern Regional Planning Panel
Property address	71 Fig Hill Lane, Dunmore
Proposal	Eco Tourist Resort
Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel	Giovanni Cerillo
Background	The site was inspected by the Panel on the 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 prior to the DRP meeting.
<b>Design quality principals</b>	
Context and Neighbourhood Character	<p>The proposal is located on a 39.44 ha site, the majority of which is zoned E3 and E2 limiting potential built from development on the site. A small portion of the site is zoned RU2 allowing the development of an Eco tourist resort. This portion of the site is located in the NW corner of the site on a ridge which is highly visible from the surrounding area.</p> <p>An incomplete, derelict dwelling, known as Minnamurra Mansion, is currently located on the ridge of the site looking down across the surrounding valleys. The existing building form is extremely prominent when viewed from the surrounding area, particularly when approached from Riverside Drive.</p> <p>The existing building sits above the ridge line presenting a large orange roof and unfinished pale toned walls to the surrounding area. Both the massing and the materials of the existing building create a very inappropriate addition to the natural environment in which the building sits. Any future building/s on this site must</p>

	<p>provide a form that does not dominate the ridge line and utilises a material pallet that sits harmoniously within its natural setting.</p> <p>The existing building form is inappropriate, it must not be seen as a minimum benchmark for future developments. It should be viewed as an inappropriate response from the past that must not be repeated.</p> <p>The south eastern edge of the RU2 portion of the site is bound by a bush fire asset protection zone that further restricts the placement of built form on the site.</p> <p>Vehicular access is limited to a single entry and exit point in the north western corner of the site that connects to a shared driveway.</p> <p>Further development of a comprehensive site analysis is required, refer to Appendix 1 of the ADG for detail requirements of a site analysis. Of particular importance to this site is a view analysis. Further to this, SLEP Clause 5.13 Eco Tourist Facilities should be reviewed and addressed as part of this process.</p> <p>Given the proposals highly visible location within a visually sensitive natural environment, a comprehensive visual impact assessment (ideally prepared by a suitably qualified external consultant) is essential for this site. The applicant must dedicate time to exploring the broader context of the site and developing an understanding of where the site will be visible from, then create views from these areas. This is an essential step in developing an appropriate response to this site.</p>
<p><b>Built Form and Scale</b></p>	<p><u>Carpark</u></p> <p>The proposed at grade car park will create the entry experience for site. The panel questions whether this is the appropriate way in which to arrive at the Eco Resort. The experience will be poor and not in keeping with the experience such a facility should offer. Is there an alternative strategy for the parking? Could it be located below ground (perhaps, within the footprint of the existing building), or arranged differently (or elsewhere in smaller pockets) to avoid such a large, dominant and prominent carpark at the entry.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended by the panel that a more sensitive and appropriate response be designed for the entry experience and carparking for the development. If it is demonstrated that the car park must unquestionably remain in its current location, soft landscaping and surface finishes will play an important role in creating an appropriate entry for the resort.</p> <p><u>Primary building</u></p> <p>The applicant outlined a strategy, where the existing building was to be demolished down to ground floor slab level, with the subterranean basement to be retained in its entirety, thus create a level plate form to accommodate the main building form (containing reception, restaurant, servicing and accommodation) of the Eco resort.</p>

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It was explained that this was an approach aimed at minimal impact given the extent of demolition and removal required to remove the entire structure. Whilst there may be merit in this strategy on some projects, it must not be treated as the sole driving factor of this new building. The panel questioned if removing the insignificant remaining portion of the existing structure was not a better approach and allowed more flexibility in moving forward with a more appropriate design strategy for an eco tourist resort. Consideration could then be given to:

- A better entrance experience not governed by 'existing' built form constraints.
- Splitting the buildings into separate elements that allow clearer more pronounced views through the site to views beyond, for example when entering reception and / or accessing the car park. (The intent to create a view from the reception through the main building to the view beyond is a positive initiative that was outlined by the applicant. This strategy could be developed further by a pronounced split in the building form)
- Splaying the northern wing to be orientated in a more easterly direction, for improved outlook.

The height and expression of this building must be tested and developed with the aid of a view analysis / impact assessment. The panel is currently concerned with:

- The perceived bulk of this building and its perceived insensitivity to its surroundings.
- The accommodation proposed at roof level, which appears to be detracting from the building's horizontal expression.

The applicant must demonstrate compliance with SLEP clause 5.13 Eco Tourist Facilities item (3)(g):

*The development will be located to avoid visibility above ridgelines and against escarpments and from watercourses and that any visual intrusion will be minimized through the choice of design, colours, materials and landscaping with local native flora,*

#### Accommodation pavilions

The applicant outlined the strategy for the placement of the accommodation pavilions, as being building that touched the ground lightly; sitting the buildings slightly above natural ground level to minimize disturbance of the site during the construction process. This is as acknowledged as a valid strategy that has merit in its application in this context. However, it does potentially not align with SLEP 5.13 (3)(g) given the roof forms are elevated.

It was discussed how the perceived bulk of buildings could be assisted by stepping and sliding the forms. The spaces between buildings and the arrival experience of walkways/pathways also needs detailed consideration.

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	<p>The applicant also outlined an earlier design strategy that had sought to push the pavilions into the ground, creating forms that utilised the natural topography of the site, nestled into the hill side and expressed with green roofs to minimise the buildings visual impact on the site. This is also acknowledged as a valid strategy that has merit in its application in this context. It was explained by the applicant that this was explored but not possible due to potential contamination to the waterways below the ridge from excavation and ground. Further analysis is recommended to develop an informed opinion as to which approach to the treatment the pavilions should be progressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Input from an environmental engineer should seek to develop a better understanding of the risks associated with some excavation on site, that would ideally result in an equal amount of cut and fill. Can this process be managed with minimal risk to the ecology of the site?</li> <li>- A view analysis / impact assessment, will also assist in providing an understanding of the visual impact of both strategies when viewed from a distance.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration should be given to splitting the pavilions into smaller groups (with trees and landscape between) to nestle the built form into the environment. In particular the group of nine units may benefit from further fragmentation. Again, the view analysis will be an essential tool in assessing and developing an appropriate approach this issue.</p> <p>Further detail information should be provided to document how the proposed pavilions relate to existing site levels, levels and grades of paths and the extent and finish of retaining structures.</p>
<p><b>Density</b></p>	<p>A visual impact analysis / impact assessment must be provided to demonstrate that this proposal does not present as an over development of this highly visible site.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<p>The proposal must meet the requirements of SLEP clause 5.13 Eco Tourist Facilities. A written response must be provided to each item outlined in this clause and design initiatives outlined clearly with the DA documentation package.</p> <p>For a development of this type, strong environmental credentials are expected. The development should be striving for excellence in this respect. In direct response to SLEP clause 5.13 Eco Tourist Facilities, and notwithstanding all aspects of this clause, particular emphasis should be given to how the development sits within and maintains the environmental and cultural values of the site /area and how the proposed facilities will enhance an appreciation of these values over time. Consideration and detailed solutions should be provided for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing site systems, flora and fauna and environmental and cultural values existing on the site</li> <li>- Water collection and reuse for irrigation and toilet flushing</li> <li>- Solar panels for energy generation / hot water</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passive solar design</li> <li>- Natural cross ventilation</li> <li>- Reusing of existing materials on site, (crushed tile and concrete for road base).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape</b></p>	<p>The landscape design for this development exists on several levels. Firstly, and most importantly there is the strategic in how the overall development fits within the requirements of SLEP Clause 5.13. Given landscape is intrinsic to this for such a development, the landscape design must be given more consideration for this development at this level.</p> <p>Secondly the spatial quality of the landscape is extremely important for such a development. More collaboration and integration between the disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture need to be evident in the spatial planning of the site. The obvious examples of where this should be improved are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The arrival experience driving up the hill is not included as part of the design resolution. The escarpment and ocean form dynamic backdrops to this experience but nowhere is it detailed how they are highlighted or addressed via views or other means.</li> <li>- The arrival into a large carpark is a poor experiential response to the site and must be reconsidered. It is too dominant and while adding trees and planting is important and appropriate, its sheer scale is not in keeping with the eco tourist requirements, and its location is poor relative to the remaining arrival experience.</li> <li>- The significant views along the above-mentioned two portions of the arrival sequence should be explored and documented. It should then be demonstrated how important views can be captured and celebrated throughout the arrival experience. Built form should be designed and positioned complementary to the retention of these important views.</li> <li>- The purpose of several of the large open spaces is vague from the documentation. For example, why are there three large lawn areas and what is each of their functions; is it appropriate to have one such lawn so close to the effluent treatment area; is it appropriate to have the pool likewise so close to this area; what is the function of the terraced garden near the carpark; can people access the kitchen garden – if so, how?</li> <li>- Is the scale and arrangement of the proposed spaces appropriate for this development –ie large open lawns with very few trees (notwithstanding it is an APZ trees can still be included). Should there also be some more intimate spaces?</li> <li>- Where are the activities that celebrate environmental and cultural connection to the land? What are these and how do they fit into the overall landscape masterplan?</li> </ul> <p>Finally the aesthetic of the landscape is extremely important to the development's success. The current landscape strategy starts</p>

	<p>to address the retention, succession and introduction of flora species contained upon the site which is positive. Where trees are located should be informed by the comments above related to views and spatial planning. Many species appear to be endemic, and it was explained during the meeting that seed would be collected from the site which is extremely positive. Adequate timing should be factored into this process to ensure plant stock can be grown to a large size to make its use viable after collection.</p> <p>The choice of materiality generally appears to be sensitive to the type of project this however needs further exploration in some areas. One such example is the extensive use of large sandstone blocks site for terracing. The surrounding area is arguably better known for bluestone so the choice of materials may be further explored to help get a stronger sense of place.</p> <p>Implementation of WSUD in the carpark is commended and should be explored throughout the entire constructed landscape extent.</p>
<p><b>Amenity</b></p>	<p>The development appears to be missing provision for a commercial kitchen to service the proposed restaurant, lounge areas and bars. This is an important component of the development that will require a substantial amount of space and need to be located to provided efficient servicing of the building. The program of the building cannot be established without considering how this essential service is provided.</p> <p>A large amount of the basement area appears to be taken up by circulation space. Further development should seek to develop a more efficient layout that maximises functional space.</p>
<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>Consideration must be given to providing safe pedestrian paths from the car park to the reception.</p> <p>Consideration must also be given to the detail treatment of paths (including lighting, surface finishes and handrails / balustrades where necessary) providing access to the accommodation pavilions.</p> <p>Given the substantial level change to the southern edge of the developable portion of the site, how to secure these areas must be considered.</p>
<p><b>Housing Diversity and Social Interaction</b></p>	<p>If developed in an appropriate and sensitive manner the proposal could provide a positive contribution to this area.</p>
<p><b>Aesthetics</b></p>	<p>The contextual elevations provided play an important role in assisting with visualizing the buildings in context. However, further detail is required convey the architectural quality of each building. An individual elevation of each building should be provided. These elevations should aim to convey the architectural / aesthetic quality of each building. Detailed elevations should</p>

show; How much the roof overhangs, what material is used for fascia's and soffits, how the roof drainage work, what type of window openings are being used, glazing type, and relationship to the surrounding existing / proposed landscape

Servicing of the building must be considered at this stage of the design process. The location of service risers, kitchen exhausts, grease traps, AC condensers, down pipes, fire hydrant boosters etc should be accommodated.

Materials and aesthetic expression should complement the surrounding natural environment. When viewed from a distance the proposal must seek to blend with its environment as per SLEP clause 5.13.

### Summary / Recommendations

The panel is supportive of the development of this site as an Eco resort. However, further development is required to ensure that the current proposal relates appropriately to this visually and ecologically sensitive environment. Consideration should be given to the following:

- A more detailed site analysis, inclusive of view analysis.
- Further analysis / development of primary built form to refine siting and reduce perceived bulk.
- Further development of primary built form to include an appropriately sized commercial kitchen.
- Further analysis / development of form and siting of accommodation pavilions.
- A more detailed level of documentation to be provided to establish an appropriate building aesthetic.
- Further development of the projects environmental credentials.
- More integration between landscape and architecture.
- More consideration of how the landscape design can address the requirements of SLEP 5.13.