

Wollongong Design Review Panel 30 July 2019
Meeting minutes and recommendations DA-2019/534

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| Date | 30 July 2019 |
| Meeting location | Wollongong City Council Administration Offices |
| Panel members | (Chair) David Jarvis (Member) Tony Tribe (Member) Marc Deuschle |
| Apologies | |
| Council staff | Nigel Lamb - City Centre & Major Development Manager (Acting) Pier Panozzo -Manager Development Assessment & Certification (Acting) |
| Guests/ representatives of the applicant | Dr Rashid Elaine Treglown Woojin Kang |
| Declarations of Interest | Nil |
| Item number | 2 |
| DA number | DA-2019/534 |
| Reasons for consideration by DRP | Voluntary. |
| Determination pathway | Southern Regional Planning Panel. (Sch 7, cl 5, SEPP (State and Regional Development) 2011). |
| Property address | Warwick, York & Nottingham Streets Berkeley |
| Proposal | Medical Centre and Child Care Centre - Stage 1 of concept approval MP10_0147 medical centre, day surgery, respite care centre, specialists' rooms, child care centre including construction of access roads and carparking, tree removal and drainage works |
| Applicant or applicant's representative address to the design review panel | The applicant conceded proposal was hastily prepared to meet Concept Master plan consent expiry deadline. This explains panel's expressed concern at the apparent minimal design development between concept and DA submission. The level and clarity of documentation provided was also lacking, the proposed aesthetic of the buildings where poorly described and drawing legends where unclear / missing, making very difficult to fully understand the proposal. |
| Background | The site was Inspected by the Panel on 30 July 2019 |
| Design quality principals | |
| Context and Neighbourhood Character | <p>The proposal is the first stage of a Master plan for the on this 16.88-hectare site. When complete the master plan will provide a High-Tech Holistic Cancer and Medical Hospital Facility, to be known as City Life.</p> <p>The sites immediate context consists predominantly of low-density residential dwellings, in a suburban landscaped setting. A generous curtilage has been established around most of the site perimeter, as part of the Master Planning process. The stage 1 entrance connects to Warwick street, which is the only location where the built form of the development will have a direct relationship with the surrounding low-density neighbourhood.</p> <p>The stage one proposal lacks a meaningful site analysis to describe the context of the site and outline an appropriate design strategy. The proposal should be better informed / developed in response to a more detailed analysis of the site and its immediate context. Refer to ADG appendix 1 for an example of detail requirement for a site analysis.</p> <p>The access and address of this stage, from the corner of Warwick</p> |

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| | St & Hopman Crescent needs design refinement to address multiple intersections, conflicts and wayfinding. |
| Built Form | <p>Little design development appears to have occurred since the original master plan was conceived. Stage 1 proposals appear to be a very literal interpretation of the master plan diagrams. Given the complex and detailed nature of the proposal the Panel would anticipate further detail refinement of building siting, layout, access and form would be beneficial at this stage of the design process. Further detail development of the following issues is recommended:</p> <p><u>Medical Centre Entries</u></p> <p>Multiple entries/egresses are proposed to the centre.</p> <p>Basement: North Carpark, ambulance,</p> <p>West: Pathology/Radiology, Respite from west carpark</p> <p>Ground Floor: North Main Entry from small carpark, East via ramp from main carpark, South: Service Dock</p> <p>First Floor: via ramp from main carpark.</p> <p>The panel is concerned with the physical adequacy, safety and visual impact of circulation generally and strongly recommends the involvement of an accredited access consultant in the design development, For example:</p> <p>The first floor of the medical Centre is accessed by a long (approximately 18m) 1:14 ramp that leads to a narrow landing. The ramp reads as a major element in the eastern façade of the building, contributing to signifying the level 1 entry it serves, as the centre's main entrance. However, the landing to this entrance is very tight, the door swings shown on the drawing, indicate that when the doors swing open, there will be no room on the landing. A more generous functional entrance should be developed. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recessing the ramps and / or the landing into the form of the building. - Incorporating a generously proportioned set of steps at the northern end of the ramp - Increasing the setback between the adjacent road and the building to create more space for ramps, steps and landings. <p>The requirements of a passing bay at the mid-point of the entry ramp should be checked with an access consultant and must comply with their recommendation and AS1428.</p> <p><u>Childcare Centre car park</u></p> <p>The childcare centre will have a very immediate connection to Warwick street, the location of the car park servicing this building relates poorly to the suburban landscaped setting of this street. It is recommended that a large portion of these spaces could be relocated to the west of the childcare centre allowing the forecourt to be dedicated to deep soil landscaping, helping to form a more appropriate interface with the adjoining residential street. The general street arrangement within this area should be reviewed as part of any such change, with particular thought to setting up a hierarchy or wayfinding strategy. This area currently requires up to six decisions to be made by any driver within a very small space.</p> |

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| | <p><u>Childcare Built Form</u></p> <p>The three individual forms of the childcare only became apparent upon the review of perspectives tabled at the meeting. This break-up of forms, as opposed to what appeared upon first review to be a single large floorplate and built form, could be developed to ensure the childcare centre reads as an appropriate extension of the residential character ascending Warwick Street by expressing the breaks along the front facade, not only the rear.</p> <p>The childcare centre appears to be built on fill raising the ground levels up to 3m above existing ground levels. It is hard to understand the justification for this, particularly in consideration of how this relates to the lower residential properties further down Warwick St.</p> <p><u>Childcare Roof form</u></p> <p>The childcare building has been expressed with three large skillion roofs. The roof forms work against the topography of the site increasing the perceived bulk of the building. Consideration should be given to developing the building with a crisp linear flat roofed aesthetic, similar in style to the Medical Centre, helping to unify, and reinforce a cohesive 'campus' design theme for the development</p> <p><u>Childcare spatial quality</u></p> <p>The design intent described by the applicant at the meeting (<i>to create spacious rooms with high ceiling that facilitated good natural light</i>) is commendable. However, the current roof forms and window configuration do not appear to be providing controlled solar access or an appropriate balance of intimate and open spaces. Further detail development should seek to provide controlled solar access and more intimately scaled spaces for children.</p> <p><u>Service Plant & Equipment</u></p> <p>The extensive required plant and equipment for such a development needs to be evident in documents to assess physical and visual impacts.</p> |
| Density | <p>The proposal is modestly scaled. Pending further refinements of the proposals interface with Warwick Street and the development of an appropriate landscape setting, the proposal will not read as an over development of the site.</p> |
| Sustainability | <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>The use of photovoltaic cells and solar panels is also encouraged.</p> <p>The requirements of Concept Approval Schedule 3-10 are noted.</p> |
| Landscape | <p>The landscape plans are not coordinated with the architectural plans. They show different resolution for several areas particularly the medical centre entry and adjacent carpark.</p> <p>The Stage 1 site is intensely developed with buildings, roads and car parks. Substantial bulk earthworks will be required.</p> <p>The panel strongly recommends the use of planted embankments in lieu of structural retaining walls wherever possible.</p> |

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| | <p>The childcare centre in particular appears to have a retaining wall along its boundary up to 1.8m high, with a 1.8m high acoustic wall above this. These walls appear to be set back substantially from the site boundary. Given that the childcare centre is raised significantly above natural ground, and that retaining walls are not desired the following is suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The floor level of the childcare centre be re-evaluated to reduce it to an appropriate level that balances the cut and fill of the site. - The reduction of the FFL should allow the retaining walls to be removed or significantly reduced (this should occur regardless of FFL). Any remaining overall level change within the play area should be exploited to help divide the space into smaller zones for different uses via low walls, sloped walkways and steps/terraces. - The play area should take advantage of as much of the available space by extending to the site boundary wherever possible. <p>The childcare centre should endeavour to create a series of exciting and usable spaces that promote imaginative play, opportunities for passive and active play, and opportunities for carers to teach/interact with small and larger groups.</p> <p>A good reference document to review in consideration of this may be: 'Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia', Department of Education and Training, 2009.</p> |
| Amenity | <p>Both the Childcare Center and the Medical Centre have generally been developed to provide functional floor plans, that require further detail refinement.</p> <p>Further detail refinement of the childcare center should seek to improve the variety and quality of spaces provided (refer to comments above, Built form). Detail development of the lower levels of the Medical Centre should seek to maximise natural lighting and rationalize the entry process.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to introducing a generously proportioned sky light in the ground floor entry (to the west of the reception area).</p> <p>Notwithstanding the panel's minimal expertise in medical centre planning it also questions the rationale of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The location and orientation of the cafe and outdoor terrace to the south west. This is possibly the worst aspect for such potentially spirit-raising facility which ideally would enjoy sun and wind protection all day. -The location of the chemist, with blank shelf-lined walls to the north adjacent to the forecourt. -Respite care rooms oriented to south, no sun. -Windowless operating theatres monopolising best solar access and outlook. - 180mm high stairs and overly long ramps provide difficult and problematic access to facilities. |
| Safety | <p>Safety related concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motorway noise impacts to mental wellbeing of patients but particularly children at the childcare centre. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extremely large drops via retaining walls, especially at the rear of the childcare centre present problems if fencing not properly maintained. - Overly complicated road networks at key entry points. - Facility access directly off street/from carpark – no pedestrian network is provided. |
| Housing Diversity and Social Interaction | The proposal will provide a commendable facility. For it to be successfully integrated with this residential neighbourhood, further detail development of the Warwick street entry and development of an appropriate landscape setting is required. |
| Aesthetics | <p>Only very basic elevations have been provided to describe the buildings. For a project of this scale more three-dimensional studies (perspectives and modelling) of the building form should be provided.</p> <p>The Panel favoured the simple linear approach applied to the medical facility as opposed to the skillion roofs of the Childcare Centre which was jarring and clashed with the topography of the site.</p> <p>Servicing of the building must be considered at this stage of the design process. The location of substations, service risers, car park exhausts, AC condensers, down pipes and fire hydrant boosters should be accommodated.</p> |

Design Excellence WLEP2009

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| Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved | WLEP Design Excellence requirements do not apply to this site. However, the Concept Approval (Schedule 3-17 Design Excellence) requires all applications to be prepared by a registered architect, not just residential components. |
| Whether the form and external appearance of the proposed development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain, | The site is isolated from the public domain. |
| Whether the proposed development detrimentally impacts on view corridors, | Site Analysis should include views to the site. This should include from all elevated lands (e.g undeveloped hill to NE). |
| Whether the proposed development detrimentally overshadows an area shown distinctively coloured and numbered on the Sun Plane Protection Map, | NA |
| How the development addresses the following: | |
| the suitability of the land for development, | Concept Approval |
| existing and proposed uses and use mix | Concept Approval |
| heritage issues and streetscape constraints, | NA |
| the location of any tower | NA |

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| proposed, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other towers (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form, | |
| bulk, massing and modulation of buildings | Concept Approval |
| street frontage heights | NA |
| environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity | See Concept Approval Condition Schedule |
| the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development | See Concept Approval Condition Schedule |
| pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements | Detailed accredited consultant review recommended |
| impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain | NA |
| Key issues, further Comments & Recommendations | <p>Further detail development / consideration of the following issues are required to improve amenity and better relate the proposal to its context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a comprehensive site analysis, for the stage 1 development. - Detail development of the medical centre entries. - Relocation of Childcare centre parking. - Development of childcare centre built and roof form - Development of childcare centre spatial quality. - Implementation of sustainability initiatives. - Further development to improve natural lighting into lower levels of the Medical Centre. - Provision of three-dimensional building studies to further assist detail development of the building Aesthetic. - An improved design for the childcare centre providing active and passive spaces for use. |