

Proposed residential care facility Floribunda Avenue Glenmore Park

Introduction

- 1 This report evaluates urban design quality of the amended architectural concept which is dated 12 April 2019:
 - i Those plans superceded the original concept which was dated 21 February 2019, and they were provided following discussions with the UDRP on 20 March.
- 2 This review of urban design quality has considered the following controls:
 - i *SEPP (Housing for Seniors ...) 2004 (SEPP SL)*:
 - Design requirements: clauses 30 to 34 and 37;
 - Development standards: clause 40;
 - Development standards that may not be used to refuse consent: clause 48.
- 3 This review also has considered LEC planning principles which are relevant:
 - i Streetscape: *GPC No. 5 (Wombarra) – v- Wollongong City Council [2003] NSWLEC 268*;
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- 4 In summary, there are critical considerations in relation to design quality:
 - i Whether the development concept demonstrates reasonable compatibility with existing character of the surrounding locality;
 - ii Whether siting and design demonstrate reasonable regard for the amenity of existing residential neighbours;
 - iii Whether layout and design would provide reasonable amenity within the concept development.
- 5 Broadly-speaking, these three topics were addressed during the UDRP meeting in March.
- 6 However, advice which was provided by the UDRP in relation to design quality was incorrect in relation to heights which are permissible at the rear of the Site:
 - i According to clause 40 of *SEPP SL*, consent must not be granted if a proposed development does not comply with specified development standards which include:
 - A maximum height of 8m to the top-most ceiling; and
 - A maximum height of one storey for any building which is located in the rear 25% of a site.

- ii Discussions at the March UDRP considered the opportunity for two storey buildings across the rear 25% of the Site:
 - Those discussions were based upon contextual factors which include a public open space which extends along the rear of the Site;
 - Notwithstanding contextual arguments, clause 40 of *SEPP SL* does not provide latitude for 'variation' of the specified development standards;
 - Consequently, "buildings" across the rear 25% of the Site may not be taller than a single storey.

Summary of conclusions + recommendations

- 7 The amended concept is contrary to development standards which are specified by *SEPP SL*:
 - i The building comprises a two storey element in the rear 25% of the Site, which exceeds the single storey limit which applies to that location;
 - ii Near the north-eastern boundary, portions of the building exceed the 8m limit for top-most ceilings.
- 8 The amended concept does not demonstrate a satisfactory degree of compatibility with character of the surrounding locality:
 - i Primarily in relation landscaped areas along the Site's boundaries, and the pattern of landscaping which could be accommodated within those setbacks - in particular, the front setback;
 - ii Secondly, in terms of mass and scale which would be displayed by the proposed building.
- 9 Design of the amended concept does not provide satisfactory responses to the amenity considerations that are specified by *SEPP SL*:
 - i In terms of privacy – both perceived and actual - for residents and neighbours;
 - ii Also in terms of summer sun control for west-facing bedrooms.
- 10 Some elements of the amended interior layout are irrational and do not optimize the level of amenity that could have been achieved:
 - i Locations of service areas obstruct sight lines from primary corridors toward landscaped courtyards which the proponents have identified as signature design elements of the development.
 - ii Irregular and irrational locations for service areas also intrude upon the flexibility of special-purpose spaces.
- 11 Straightforward design solutions could remedy these concerns, and are described in some detail to resolve conflicts which have arisen in relation to *SEPP SL*'s development standards:
 - i The forecourt parking area should be redesigned to emphasise landscaping rather than the service role;

- ii The proposed building form should be reconfigured as five elements which moderate scale and disguise overall mass;
- iii The building form should be amended to provide single storey elements over the rear 25% of the Site, and floorplates should be stepped in order to lower rear-facing portions of the building;
- iv The number of proposed bedrooms must be reduced by approximately 13 rooms;
- ii Staff parking should be relocated to basement level, with a maximum of approximately 15 visitor parking spaces provided in the proposed forecourt (rather than 34 spaces as currently proposed).

Detailed discussion

- 12 The amended development concept comprises a building which does not comply with development standards that are specified by clause 40 of *SEPP SL*:
 - i Two storey elements are located across the rear 25% of the Site; and
 - ii Northern-most portions of the building have ceilings which are higher than 8m above existing ground levels;
 - iii Notably, portions of the building which have non-compliant 'dimensioned' heights are similar to those which exceed the 'storey height' standard.
- 13 Residential character is a fundamental consideration which is specified by clause 33 of *SEPP SL*:
 - i In relation to existing character, relevant 'references' include properties and lands which are visible from the Site:
 - Existing detached dwellings and gardens; and
 - Landscaping along the Parkway reserve.
 - ii Landscaped areas and plantings are significant elements of existing character:
 - Along residential streets, existing character is influenced primarily by front gardens that accommodate a variety of trees and shrubs: buildings are background elements, and paved areas do not dominate these streetscapes;
 - Landscaping of the Parkway reserve comprises irregular clusters of medium-to-larger trees which predominantly comprise native or indigenous species.
 - iii In relation to built form, existing character is influenced by the diversity of detached dwellings:
 - A modest-scale is generated by dimensions of individual street facades which are physically separated from their immediate neighbor;

- Residential streetscapes reveal a degree of diversity which is influenced by floorplates, roof-forms and façade treatments which vary from one dwelling to the next;
 - Although street elevations of each dwelling typically incorporate garages, they manage to display features of a traditional residential 'address' which contribute to active street frontages: verandahs, front doors and living room windows.
- 14 Setting aside compliance with development standards, significant elements of the amended concept do not demonstrate satisfactory compatibility with the locality's existing character:
- i In order to achieve compatibility with the locality's character, screen plantings along the street frontage appear to provide the primary design solution:
 - Three-d images reveal a dense hedge of trees and shrubs along a six metre garden setback;
 - Behind that that hedge, a drive-through parking forecourt is proposed to be located at or slightly-above street level;
 - Entries and exits from the forecourt are located at corners of the Site;
 - Concept plans do not indicate the nature of landscaping which might be proposed along side and rear setbacks.
 - ii Landscaping as proposed does not demonstrate satisfactory compatibility:
 - Plantings along the street frontage do not comprise irregular clusters of trees which are characteristic of the locality: due partly to narrowness of the six metre wide garden bed, overly-formal 'hedge-rows' plantings are proposed.
 - The proposed location of vehicle entries and exits at corners of the Site does not allow for major new trees to 'bookend' the proposed building, and also allows direct views of the parking forecourt from the street.
 - The proposed parking forecourt is a visually-intrusive element which is entirely incompatible with the locality's existing character: size and location at or above street level create a visually-dominating element which cannot be screened without imposing a formalized landscape solution upon an informal streetscape.
 - Within the Site, there is no indication of new canopy trees that might be placed between or around building forms in a manner that might 'bookend' or 'articulate' the proposed structure.
 - iii Size and form of the proposed building fail to demonstrate satisfactory compatibility:
 - By comparison with surrounding detached dwellings, the proposed building presents a massive backdrop to the street due to a street

elevation with an overall width of more than 75m which is flanked by side elevations that have apparent widths of approximately 55m.

- In relation to 'streetscape' character, mass and scale of the proposed building are accentuated by the proposed orientation of 'bedroom wings' which have long walls facing the street, by the large 'attached' roof form which incorporates uniform eaves and ridge lines, by facades which repeat a limited palette of materials, exterior finishes and window compositions, and finally, by the substantial porte cochere which extends toward the street boundary.
 - Facing the Parkway, mass and scale are influenced by similar factors, together with elevation of the lowest floor level by almost 2.5m above existing ground levels.
 - Notwithstanding these concerns, the northern corner of the amended building demonstrates a positive outcome: the bedroom wing in this location has been 'rotated' to present narrow end walls to side and rear boundaries – which has significantly reduced the scale of that element and, consequently, demonstrates a positive solution which should be applied to the other bedroom wings.
- 15 In relation to amenity, *SEPP SL* raises privacy and sunlight as important considerations:
- i Due to orientation of bedrooms wings with long walls facing the SE side boundary, the amended concept is likely to generate a 'perceived' privacy impact for immediate residential neighbours:
 - Approximately 24 bedrooms would face the SE boundary, with modest setbacks of approximately 6m to walls and windows.
 - The 6m boundary setback cannot accommodate clusters of medium-sized canopy trees that might offset perceived privacy impacts.
 - ii The development provides sightlines between opposing bedrooms:
 - Exterior walls are punctured by 'conventional' windows that direct sightlines perpendicular to their wall plane.
 - Windows that overlook internal courtyards are separated by only 9m, and bedrooms that face re-entrant corners have windows located within 2m of each other.
 - Due to the role of bedrooms as day-time living spaces for non-ambulant residents, privacy considerations should address living functions and, consequently, should direct outlooks away from opposing rooms.
 - iii The development accommodates a large number of west-facing bedrooms with unscreened windows that would be exposed to summer afternoon heat and glare.

- 16 Space planning includes irregular arrangements of service and administrative rooms which compromise the potential amenity of common areas and special-purpose rooms:
 - i Views from the spine corridor to the northern courtyard and the rear boundary setback are blocked unnecessarily by banks of service rooms.
 - ii Open-planning of south-facing dining rooms and the extent of outlooks toward the southern courtyard are limited by service areas and nursing stations.
- 17 Shortcomings could be eliminated by alternative design solutions:
 - i Two storey elements over the rear 25% of the Site should be lowered:
 - In that area, the building should be limited to a single storey.
 - In addition, facing the Parkway boundary, scale of the building should be reduced by lowering northern wings of the building: lowering would be facilitated by gentle-ramping of the 'spine' corridor together with a modest excavation of the parking forecourt below street level.
 - ii The street setback should be redesigned to accommodate an informal arrangement of trees and reduce the extent of carparking:
 - Currently shown as accommodating more than 30 vehicles, the forecourt should be reduced to accommodate visitor parking only – staff parking should be relocated to subfloor areas which adjoin the proposed basement.
 - Entries and exits to the forecourt should be moved away from the Site's corners in order to accommodate clusters of medium-to-large trees as bookends to the proposed building, and also to screen streetscape impact of the reduced parking forecourt.
 - To minimise visual impact, the forecourt should be excavated to sit at least half a metre below street level.
 - Along the street boundary, the planter should vary in width from 6m to 10m in order to accommodate clusters of medium-to-large canopy trees.
 - iii The building should be 'separated' into five attached elements which are configured in a manner that would moderate scale:
 - The five elements comprise four bedroom wings plus a 'spine' of common rooms and services.
 - Within the amended concept, orientation of the northern-most wing would moderate scale most-effectively: by comparison with the other wings, the northern wing presents narrow end-walls to the boundaries - rather than long side walls which accentuate mass and scale.
 - The preferred orientation should be applied to at least the SE wing – noting that application to the NW and SW wings could generate privacy conflicts for bedrooms that would face the entrance pathway.

- Facing the street, the spine element should be flanked by landscaped courtyards of equal widths, and the extended porte-cochere (which currently compromises desired landscaped character of the front setback) should be deleted.
 - Each building element should be capped by varied roof forms that highlight the element's function and contribute to articulation: for example, bedroom wings could be pitched while the spine element has a flat roof.
 - Facades of each element should incorporate different material palettes which are appropriate to their function and which also contribute to articulation of the building as a whole: for example, the spine element could present a glazed street façade that provides a visually-recessive 'backdrop' between the 'solid' bedroom wings, with the recessive character emphasised by simple flat roofs that provide a porte-cochere which displays design elements of a traditional verandah.
- iv Privacy should be enhanced by 'alternative' window solutions for some bedrooms:
- 'Splayed' window-walls would be appropriate for south-facing bedrooms that look toward internal courtyards, as well as for east facing bedrooms that face neighbouring dwellings.
 - Splayed window walls could frame vertical panels with opening lights that direct outlooks obliquely away from the opposing bedrooms, together with translucent panels that maximise privacy for opposing bedrooms.
 - Splayed windows could provide sun-protection for west-facing bedrooms, and also could contribute to improved articulation of the otherwise-planar facades.
- v Views from indoor communal areas toward courtyards and landscaped areas should be achieved by consolidation and / or redesign of service areas:
- Lifts and lobbies should be mirror-reversed to allow views from the spine corridor to the northern landscaped courtyard.
 - Banks of service and administrative rooms that flank the spine corridor should be consolidated and reconfigured to allow branches from the spine toward dining or lounge areas through to the landscaped courtyards beyond.



Brett Newbold
13 May 2019

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13 May 2019

FLORISUNDA RCF - URBAN DESIGN SOLUTIONS

CHARACTER PRINCIPLES

- 1 Landscaped perimeter with clusters of trees
- 2 Parking forecourt lower than street
screened by clusters of trees
- 3 Clusters of trees 'articulate' building forms: 'interrupt' continuous walls + eaves
- 4 Building forms as a group of attached but different structures
- 5 Building elements oriented to minimise scale + disguise bulk
- 6 Each building element has individual shape + facades + roof
- 7 Light elements separate solid forms

AMENITY PRINCIPLES

- 8 Privacy - perceived + actual - managed by window treatments: played walls with narrow opening lights + translucent fixed panels
- 9 Solar - managed by window treatment: west-facing screened

GLAZED CONTRAST:
entry, allied health + admin
as curtain wall elements
with flat roof on columns

PRACTICAL ORIENTATION
- modules aligned to separate entry from bedroom
design solutions to moderate scale + bulk.

PREFERRED ORIENTATION
- modules with courtyards facing corners of the site
- long walls facing 'inward' (rather than boundaries)

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REAR 25%
single storey only

GENTLE RAMPs to lower the northern wings

COURTYARDS
signature landscaped features visible from all common areas + corridors

SETBACKS
subject to landscaping + privacy (perceived).

STREET SETBACK
- primarily landscaped or appearance of landscaping
- parking as appropriate
LANDSCAPING of
- street 'corners': clusters of trees

