

31 May 2017

Mr Lucas Flecha
Stockland
Level 25, 133 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000 Our Ref: 16-0330lfc2

Re: Lourdes Retirement Village, 95 Stanhope Road, Killara—Response to Draft Urban Design Study, May 2017

Dear Mr Flecha,

GML Heritage (GML) has been engaged by Stockland to comment on the draft Urban Design Study (UDS) for Lourdes Retirement Village dated May 2017, and the Planning Proposal dated 26 May 2017, both prepared by Architectus. The Master Plan included in the UDS aims to consolidate site development and intensify Lourdes Village's built form to bring accommodation to a standard that meets current demand and provides improved accessibility, retaining the site's mature landscape setting.

To achieve this Master Plan, initial heritage advice has informed the planning proposal which seeks amendments to the *Ku-ring-gai Local Environment Plan 2015 (LEP)* in terms of a higher density land use zoning, and increased height and floor space ratio controls applicable to the site.

Heritage Listing Context

The heritage context of the site has been an important consideration in the concept development of the Master Plan to date, and is articulated in the UDS. Whilst the site is not presently heritage listed, GML's Heritage Significance Assessment (prepared for Stockland in 2017) found that the former Headfort School building (Headfort House) in its garden setting is of heritage significance to Ku-ring-gai. The site is immediately adjacent to two heritage items listed on the LEP 2015.

The Seven Little Australians Park (heritage item I1100) adjoins the eastern, southern, and part of the northern boundary of the site of Lourdes Village. The Crown Blocks Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) (C22) adjoins to the west, south and east of the site and several other individually listed items are also in the vicinity.

Residential development is located to the north and west of the site. Houses on Stanhope Road are single or two-storey free-standing houses of Interwar and later construction. These are generally built in face brick, with timber joinery and terracotta tiles, and set back from the street in large gardens with mature trees—both remnant native forest and exotic plantings. The importance of conserving the local streetscape context has been integrated in the urban design treatment of the proposed Stanhope Road interface of the

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development, the site entrance and the conservation of historic Headfort House in its garden curtilage.

History of the Site

The development history of Lourdes Village site is characteristic of Ku-ring-gai municipality. Aboriginal occupation was gradually displaced by European settlement, initially timber getting, followed by modest farming pursuits. Clarke's Dairy is recorded on the site after 1899, operating until the land was purchased for the establishment of Headfort School in 1917, and the surrounding land was gradually subdivided for residential development. Headfort School grew quickly to accommodate 20 boarders and 100 day boys, eventually being sold in 1927 to the Congregational Union, which re-named it Milton Grammar. The school closed in 1934 and the site was subdivided.

The buildings were left vacant until 1942, and were dilapidated when requisitioned by the Australian Army for the AWAS training company, which ran courses there until 1944. The main site area of 12 acres was purchased by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary in 1944 and the Catholic Church Trust, which converted the buildings for use as a hospital. The Lourdes Hospital opened in 1946, with 16 beds for tuberculosis (TB) patients. In 1966 it became an annex of the Mater Hospital, continuing to treat acute TB cases. In 1980 the site was sold to the Hibernian Australia Catholic Benefit Society, who developed the Lourdes Retirement Village after 1982. At that time the former Headfort School building was refurbished to include a chapel and administration rooms were added to the rear, linking to a community centre.

The Proposed Development

The site currently includes 108 independent living units, an 83 bed residential aged care facility (RACF) and a range of administration and communal facilities dating from the 1980s. The Master Plan consists of the major reorganisation of the site, including the relocation RACF and Community Centre, which will be carried out by Opal, the current owners, in conjunction with Stockland.

The proposed Master Plan identifies several precincts of distinct character which will accommodate approximately 266 new independent living units and serviced apartments, as well as a residential aged care facility (RACF) which will accommodate 130 residents. The project will include the restoration (to future detail) of Headfort House as the gateway to the site, a new Village Green and community hub, with terraced gardens and open spaces linking between. A series of layout options has been developed and assessed, considering the traffic and transport issues, bushfire and heritage considerations.

Proposed building heights will vary across the site from three storeys up to six storeys (at the centre of the site) with a range of building heights, footprints and envelopes relating to landscaped communal spaces of lower scale towards the fringing bushland and adjoining residential properties. The six-storey building components are part of three-to-six storey buildings, with the six-storey components responding to the topography of the site. Existing vegetation along Stanhope Road is to be retained and the remaining garden elements of Headfort House will be conserved. It is proposed that Headfort House be conserved within its garden curtilage, which will form an important element of the new gateway to the village.

Headfort School Site

The Lourdes Retirement Village has been constructed largely on the former site of the Headfort School grounds. The original two-storey Arts and Crafts style Headfort House facing Stanhope Road remains relatively intact. The eastern wing was converted into the Lourdes Village chapel in the 1980s. An

administration wing has been added to its rear and ancillary rooms to the south. Upstairs continues in use as a residence.

Although the appearance of Headfort House has been altered by the extension and loss of original fenestration of the east wing, it still presents strongly as a heritage house in a mature garden setting to Stanhope Road. The Master Plan proposes to retain it as an integrated component of the Village redevelopment. Careful consideration of its refurbishment and adaptive reuse as a community entry point will be essential and a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is recommended to guide its conservation. The front garden includes several mature plantings and its original spatial layout is evident. A curtilage delineation within the CMP is needed to define and manage an adequate setting for the house.

Grotto

A small bush-rock memorial grotto is located to the east of the administration area in a garden setting. It features statuary—Our Lady of Lourdes—and a plaque commemorating missionary sisters of the Society of Mary who died in Guadalcanal in 1942. The social significance of the grotto needs research and community consultation as part of the redevelopment process. Depending on the outcome of this research, it is anticipated that the relocation of the elements of significance within the grotto (statue and plaque) would be acceptable to a suitable location on the site.

Statutory Context—Heritage

The Lourdes Retirement Village site is not statutorily listed as a heritage item. However, GML's Heritage Significance Assessment report for the building (2017) concluded that Headfort House in its garden setting is of local heritage significance for Ku-ring-gai, and the concept development of the Master Plan has incorporated this commitment.

The 2015 LEP and the *Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan 2015* (DCP) are the relevant Ku-ring-gai Council legislative considerations and guidelines for the proposed redevelopment and Master Plan. LEP considerations are discussed under the relevant sections below.

The site immediately adjoins the heritage item Seven Little Australians Park (I1100) to the east and south, and the Crown Blocks HCA (C22) to the west, south and east—which is also listed on the 2015 LEP. Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park (I1099) is located to the east of the site, and Swain Gardens (I1103) is located to the west—both areas are listed as individual heritage items on the 2015 LEP and are within the Crown Blocks HCA.

Ku-ring-gai LEP 2015—Heritage Provisions

The preparation of the Master Plan for the redevelopment of the site will need to take into consideration Clause 5.10(5) of the 2015 LEP in respect of the Seven Little Australians Park and the Crown Blocks HCA adjoining the site:

(5) Heritage assessment

The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:

(a) on land on which a heritage item is located, or

(b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or

(c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b),

require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.

The statutory listing provides an effective mechanism for managing change to heritage places across Kuring-gai. Heritage listing on the 2015 LEP generally means that proposals for external and structural alterations, demolition and subdivision of a heritage item or within an HCA need to be approved by council so that the impacts on the item, or HCA as a whole can be considered.

A Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) will need to be prepared at the Development Application (DA) stage to accompany the Master Plan assessing the potential impact of the development on the heritage significance of Headfort House and the adjacent heritage items and conservation area.

Although not a listed heritage item, it is recommended that the Master Plan take into consideration Clause 5.10(6) of the 2015 LEP in respect of the former Headfort House:

(6) Heritage conservation management plans

The consent authority may require, after considering the heritage significance of a heritage item and the extent of change proposed to it, the submission of a heritage conservation management plan before granting consent under this clause.

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) should be prepared for the site prior to the DA stage, with a focus on Headfort House. The CMP will guide the development of the Master Plan and future development within the site. The CMP will:

- undertake further historical investigation to better understand the history of the site;
- assess the significance of the site and Headfort House;
- identify priority conservation works;
- identify unsympathetic alterations and additions that should be reversed;
- determine an appropriate landscaped curtilage surrounding Headfort House;
- include policies in relation development in the vicinity of Headfort House and adjacent heritage items; and
- recommend policies for the social values assessment, conservation and possible relocation of the grotto.

An Interpretation Strategy should also be prepared at the DA stage, with specific reference to the history of the site and Headfort House. Its selected recommendations will be developed into an Interpretation Plan to be implemented via construction certificate condition as part of the redevelopment of the site.

Ku-ring-gai DCP 2015

Council's 2015 DCP supplements the heritage controls contained in the 2015 LEP and provides more detailed guidance for new development within the HCAs and in the vicinity of heritage items.

Proposed development will need to take consideration of:

- Section 20F.1: Development in the Vicinity of Heritage Items or HCAs;

- Section 20F.2 Building Setbacks; and
- Section 20F.3: Gardens and Landscaping of the 2015 DCP.

Though not strictly a heritage consideration—Part 13 of the 2015 DCP: Tree and Vegetation Preservation—will also apply to the redevelopment of the site.

The overall design of the Master Plan will need to be in accordance with the above DCP guidelines.

Building in the Vicinity of a Heritage Conservation Area or Item

The Crown Blocks HCA is considered to be of high local aesthetic significance for its relatively intact and cohesive late nineteenth and twentieth-century subdivision pattern and development. The HCA is characterised by streetscapes of good, high-quality examples of one-two storey freestanding houses from the Federation, Inter-war and Post-war periods enhanced by garden settings, wide street proportions, street trees and plantings, remnant and planted native trees and introduced species.

The design of new buildings within the proposed redevelopment should not imitate nearby heritage buildings, but should be based on the careful analysis of the streetscape and character of the HCA. The NSW Heritage Office/RAIA (NSW), *Design in Context: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment*, 2005, outlines the design criteria for new development in a HCA.

Swain Gardens, located to the west of the site, is a heritage item located within the Crown Blocks HCA. The English-style terraced gardens in a bushland setting contribute strongly to the aesthetic character and social significance of the HCA, and form a well-known local resource, now managed by council. Careful assessment of the impact of the village development on bushland views from the gardens is necessary. Its proximity may also offer an opportunity for developing a community relationship with the village through voluntary collaborations as a broader community contribution by the new development.

Bushland Reserves Plan of Management

The *Ku-ring-gai Bushland Reserves Plan of Management 2013* (Bushland Reserves POM) identifies the Seven Little Australians Park as a Ku-ring-gai bushland reserve (land management unit 165). The Bushland Reserves POM notes the park is 'High Value/Low Pressure', and indicates that development on the fringes of such bushland areas may create a range of management concerns such as the visual impacts of urban encroachment, and impacts on water catchment and endangered species (of which some may be located within the park). Section 6.7.2 of the POM (Heritage) identifies steps to be undertaken to ensure the protection of heritage items in bushland. Minimising urban encroachment on the park will require careful consideration of drainage, shadowing and visual analysis.

Consideration of the potential impacts on matters outlined in the Bushland Reserves POM, including Section 6.7.2, will be needed as the development of the Master Plan proceeds.

Aboriginal Heritage and Archaeological Values

The valley surrounding the site is recognised in the Bushland Reserves POM as having high Aboriginal archaeological potential and significance. Consideration of potential impacts on Aboriginal heritage values of development on the adjacent area is required. The assessment of Aboriginal heritage values comprises both the archaeological values and the cultural values of the area and will need to be undertaken at the DA stage so findings can be taken into consideration and responded to as the Master Plan proceeds.

An Aboriginal heritage due diligence assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*, DECCW (September 2010). A due diligence approach to the assessment of Aboriginal heritage involves taking reasonable and practicable measures to determine whether development actions are likely to harm an Aboriginal object and whether an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) would be required. This assessment provides a defence against prosecution, should any unexpected Aboriginal objects be uncovered through development works at Lourdes Village. It is likely that the Director General's requirements will include an Aboriginal and non-indigenous archaeological assessment.

The Master Plan will need to take into consideration Clause 5.10(8) of the 2015 LEP in respect of places of Aboriginal heritage significance within and adjoining the site:

(8) Aboriginal places of heritage significance

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause to the carrying out of development in an Aboriginal place of heritage significance:

(a) consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the place and any Aboriginal object known or reasonably likely to be located at the place by means of an adequate investigation and assessment (which may involve consideration of a heritage impact statement), and

(b) notify the local Aboriginal communities, in writing or in such other manner as may be appropriate, about the application and take into consideration any response received within 28 days after the notice is sent.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) (NPW Act) provides that a person who exercises due diligence in determining that their actions will not harm Aboriginal objects has a defence against prosecution for the strict liability offence if they later unknowingly harm an object without an AHIP.

The due diligence assessment would:

- identify whether or not Aboriginal objects are, or are likely to be, present in the area;
- determine whether or not the activities of the proposed project are likely to harm Aboriginal objects (if present); and
- determine whether an AHIP application is therefore required.

Given the layers of occupation of the site, the Master Plan will need to take into consideration Clause 5.10(7) of the LEP 2015 in respect of places of historical archaeological heritage significance within and adjoining the site:

(7) Archaeological sites

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause to the carrying out of development on an archaeological site (other than land listed on the State Heritage Register or to which an interim heritage order under the Heritage Act 1977 applies):

(a) notify the Heritage Council of its intention to grant consent, and

(b) take into consideration any response received from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the notice is sent.

Previous buildings on the site suggest that a historical archaeological assessment would need to be prepared at the DA stage in accordance with the *Archaeological Assessment and Assessing Historical Archaeological Significance* guidelines prepared by the NSW Heritage Branch.

Commentary

Following initial discussions with council in 2016, and further analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site, GML has provided ongoing heritage advice to the development of the planning proposal, which is now focussed on the northern part of the site. It is understood that areas of the site to the south and east of First Avenue, currently occupied by independent living units, are to be excluded from consideration at this time. The planning proposal seeks approval for an amendment to zoning to facilitate development and use for seniors housing and an amendment to height controls to permit buildings of three to six storeys in height and an overall increase of floor–space ratio (FSR) controls to 0.8 across the site. The UDS illustrates the scale and type of building envelopes and footprints that could be achieved under the proposed controls, so the rezoning application can be assessed. All buildings would be subject to design and assessment through the DA process and at that point, the heritage matters outlined above would be assessed in detail.

The integration of early heritage advice in the planning of the proposed development has led to the careful conservation and sensitive adaptive reuse of Headfort House in its surrounding garden curtilage in the UDS. It proposes to engage the building as part of the gateway entry to the site, conserving its existing character and interface with Stanhope Road. As part of this strategy, the mature trees within the front garden will be retained, and the perimeter hedge restored. It is proposed that the grotto be relocated to a new garden area, located to the southeast of Headfort House, which will also feature a new lightweight pavilion structure. A bridge element is proposed to connect the chapel building to the proposed new RACF, which is consistent with the history of the building, and which has the potential to link the two buildings without adversely impacting on the chapel building. This will be part of the further consideration of heritage impacts of the proposal and the CMP would inform and accompany development applications prepared in consultation with council and the community.

The Master Plan retains the existing vegetation within the property along Stanhope Road, which will be further strengthened to provide a well landscaped setback for the new development. Building height slopes down and is lower near Stanhope Road, recognising the significance of the surrounding lower-scale HCA. The presentation and scale of the rear elevations of the new village main street buildings to Stanhope Road will require careful consideration of the adjoining Crown Blocks HCA which is characterised by detached housing, large garden settings and remnant and planted native trees.

The Master Plan locates the denser development towards the centre of the site, with three to six storeys close to the crest of the hill, which will break the tree canopy but is at the most distant point from the predominantly one to two storey scale of the surrounding HCA. The Master Plan includes the retention of the existing low-height independent units along the site's eastern and southern interfaces with Seven Little Australians Park, and these will act as a buffer between the new development and the park. Any future development proposed in these eastern and southern areas should be developed to act as a buffer in a similar way.

The impacts of permitting increased density and height require careful consideration of the massing of building envelopes, specific modulation, materials, colours and visual impacts. Scaling down the height of the buildings at the perimeter of the site, particularly along the bushland fringe is a positive design principle, the impact of apparent height from within the park will need to be assessed.

It is considered that the detailed design of the proposed five-storey RACF as shown on the masterplan can potentially be further developed to be sympathetic to Headfort House, and not adversely impact on its setting. The new building envelope of the RACF behind Headfort House is of five storeys, and is set back from the chapel. A reasonable setback (as shown on the Master Plan), together with localised stepping of the height of the building on its western side and careful articulation of the facades and materiality of the new RACF will be ultimately required to ensure that the new building will not overwhelm or visually dominate the chapel. These aspects of design development can be considered further at DA stage. The proposed development of landscaped gardens in the area currently occupied by a carpark has the potential to enhance the setting of Headfort House, and represents a suitable location for the relocated grotto.

Photomontages will assist in providing a better understanding of the streetscape impacts from key public viewpoints by showing how the proposed height and density of the village development will sit within the HCA and in relation to the heritage items in the vicinity such as Swain Gardens and points within Seven Little Australians Park.

Bushland Fringe Interface

Vegetation within the edges of the site adjoining the Seven Little Australians Park should be retained and protected to maintain an appropriate buffer between the redevelopment and the park. Original or significant landscape features associated with the Seven Little Australians Park and the Crown Blocks HCA, or which contribute to their setting, will need to be identified, assessed and retained. Plant species used in the new development should draw on characteristic native species within the Seven Little Australians Park and supported in a landscape plan.

Landscape Character

The established landscape character of the Seven Little Australians Park and the Crown Blocks HCA—including the height of the existing tree canopy and density of boundary landscape plantings—should be respected and strengthened through the Master Plan landscape concepts. Additional planting may be considered to provide appropriate screen planting on the side and rear boundaries of the site. Landscaping planning for the village in the vicinity of Headfort House, should respond to the historic garden features evident in the early aerials of the site, and remnant physical evidence of paths and remnant plantings, such as restoring the garden hedge.

Scale, Bulk, Height, Character, Setback, Colours and Materials

Careful consideration of colours, materials and setbacks of the village buildings will be needed to ensure that houses and their garden settings in the HCA and heritage items in the vicinity of the village will not be adversely affected by the development. The materials and finishes proposed in Section 4.2.10 of the UDS are considered to represent an acceptable conceptual basis for material selection.

Further Investigations to be undertaken as part of the next stages of design:

To fully assess the proposal from a heritage perspective GML recommends the preparation for the site of:

- A CMP for the site, including Headfort House, prior to the DA stage. This would require:
 - historical investigation to better understand the history of the site as a whole;
 - analysis of the significance of the site and its components;

- indication of priority conservation works;
- identification of unsympathetic alterations and additions to be reversed;
- delineation of appropriate curtilage and garden setting surrounding the building;
- management policies including:
 - o identification of locations for any extension in association with Headfort House;
 - o guidelines for development in its vicinity; and
 - o specific advice about the value and conservation of the grotto.

It should be noted that some aspects of this work have already been undertaken as part of the Heritage Significance Assessment for Headfort House undertaken by GML in 2017.

- An Aboriginal heritage due diligence assessment at the DA stage.
- An historical archaeological assessment at the DA stage.
- A HIS assessing the potential impact of the redevelopment on the heritage significance of the site and the heritage items and conservation area in its vicinity will need to be prepared at the DA stage.
- An Interpretation Strategy with specific reference to the history of the site and Headfort House will need to be prepared at the DA stage.
- Final photomontages showing the impact of the highest buildings from key public viewpoints in the HCA, Seven Little Australians Park and across the valley in East Lindfield will need to be prepared at the DA stage.
- An assessment of the impacts on matters outlined in the Bushlands Reserve POM will need to be undertaken at the DA stage.

The preparation of a Heritage Significance Assessment for the site, undertaken earlier this year, further reinforces Stockland's commitment to understanding and respecting the heritage aspects of the site. The early preparation of a CMP and IS to inform the design process would demonstrate Stockland's long term commitment to the retention and conservation of Headfort House, confirming that the significance of the heritage context of the development is seen as a foundation point of the Master Plan. The implementation of the CMP will ensure that the right decisions are made about site layout and curtilage delineation for the Lourdes Village design process.

Yours sincerely
GML Heritage Pty Ltd



Sheridan Burke
Partner