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Mr Nick Winberg,
Director

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Dear Nick,

SummitCare Randwick - Independent Urban Design Peer Review

01 Background and Purpose

SummitCare controls land at 11-19 Frenchmans Road, Randwick. The subject site is comprised of three existing lots, 11-15, 17 and 19 Frenchmans Road.

An existing aged care facility operates across two of these lots, at 11-15 and 17 Frenchmans Road, and has been providing aged care services for approximately 50 years. This existing facility provides 98 beds and associated services from three buildings situated on the two lots.

The adjacent site at 19 Frenchmans Road currently comprises a single-storey detached dwelling and has been acquired by SummitCare.

The combined site area is approximately 2,710 square metres and has a frontage to Frenchmans Road of approximately 76m.

It is proposed to consolidate the three lots into one single site, demolish all existing structures and develop the land for a 'vertical village' as defined under Clause 45 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004* (Seniors Housing SEPP)

The same clause of the Seniors Housing SEPP makes provision for bonus floor space equivalent to and additional 0.5:1 Floor Space Ratio (FSR) beyond that permitted by the Randwick Local Environmental Plan (RLEP)

The site is zoned R3 Medium Density Residential within the RLEP and the relevant development standards for FSR and building height are:

_Floor Space Ratio - **0.9:1** (+0.5:1 bonus FSR) - maximum FSR - **1.4:1**
_Maximum Height of Building - **12m**

Additional to its primary frontage along Frenchmans Road, the site benefits from a secondary frontage to McLennan Avenue. The existing low-scale dwellings situated at 12, 23 and 25 McLennan Avenue are mapped as heritage items within the RLEP. These three dwellings present as detached Californian bungalows, and 23 and 25 McLennan Avenue share a side and/or rear boundary with the subject site.

This independent peer review seeks to respond to Clause 31 of the Seniors Housing SEPP relating to the design of in-fill self-care housing. The particulars of the clause are as follows:

'In determining a development application made pursuant to this Chapter to carry out development for the purpose of in-fill self-care housing, a consent authority must take into consideration...the provisions of the Seniors Living Policy: Urban Design Guideline for Infill Development published by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources in March 2004.'

Consequently, this peer review assesses the alignment between the design proposal for the site and these published guidelines. The objective is to support the environmental planning justification, highlighting design merits demonstrated by the proposal.

02 Report Authorship

This independent peer review has been prepared by Matthew Pullinger Architect. Matthew is an award-winning architect and urban designer whose interest and experience lies in the design of the city and urban centres, commercial office buildings, urban transport systems, recreational and cultural precincts and also in the design of mixed use residential projects.

Matthew has worked on strategic projects at all scales and in public policy supporting good design in the built environment.

Matthew is a Past President of the Australian Institute of Architects (NSW), an inaugural member of the NSW State Design Review Panel formed in April 2018 and has recently been appointed as an Acting Commissioner of the Land and Environment Court of NSW.

03 Report Structure and Methodology

This review has been structured to reflect the five key sections of the *Seniors Living Policy: Urban Design Guideline for Infill Development* (the Guidelines). In doing so, this review considers criteria relevant to the design and resulting amenity of an aged care facility and the suitability of its design for its site and context.

The five key sections of the Guidelines deal with the following design issues:

- _ Responding to context
- _ Site planning and design
- _ Impacts on streetscape
- _ Impacts on neighbours
- _ Internal site amenity

The author of this report was engaged on 26 November 2019 and received two detailed briefings from the architect of the design proposal on 6 December 2019 and 25 June 2020. The author has been able to influence aspects of the proposal during design development and a number of suggestions for improved contextual response have been adopted by the architect.

This report is to be read in conjunction with the submitted Design Statement, site analysis and drawings prepared for the purposes of submitting a development application, generally dated 14 August 2020.

04 Assessment Against the Guidelines

The development proposal is described in detail in drawings numbered DA00 - DA24 and also in a Design Statement, both prepared by architects Boffa Robertson Group.

This section of the peer review assesses this proposal against each of the five key design issues set out within the Guidelines and discusses the design merits of the proposal in its response.

Responding to context

The first section of the Guidelines sets out a series of considerations for identifying, and responding to, the character of a site and its immediate context, with the expectation the resulting design solution will positively contribute to this identified character.

In order to establish an understanding of the existing character of an area, the Guidelines set out matters such as street layout and hierarchy, block and lot patterns, the built environment, trees and vegetation, and relevant Council policy, which might be included in an LEP or DCP.

The Guidelines go on to encourage an applicant to analyse these features of a locality in order to inform the preparation of a design proposal. At the same time, Clause 30 of the Seniors Housing SEPP sets out in detail the necessary features of the site analysis, which must be submitted at the time of the application.

In the case of the subject site and corresponding design proposal, the architect Boffa Robertson Group has prepared a site analysis addressing the features required by the Seniors Housing SEPP and as called for within the Guidelines.

Review of this site analysis identifies the following attributes, which are critical to establishing and understanding the positive attributes of the site's neighbourhood character.

Street pattern, geometry and local topography

Frenchmans Road is an important local 'high street' and can be characterised as having a gently undulating topography, with the subject site situated at a locally identifiable high point. This natural elevation affords the site some prominence within the local area.

The view along Chapel Street, terminating on the subject site at its northern end, gives further prominence to the subject site.

On McLennan Avenue, the narrower width of the street and its 'dead end' configuration result in a more intimate and local character distinctly different to that of Frenchmans Road.

Diversity of building type and scale

In the vicinity of the subject site, Frenchmans Road is characterised by considerable diversity evident within the existing built form.

Clearly an area undergoing transition, and underscored by its current R3 Medium Density Residential zoning, the northern side of Frenchmans Road comprises a mix of lower-scale detached single- and two-storey bungalows, a pair of two-storey attached Victorian-era terrace houses, and a larger detached two-storey Victorian-era manor house. These traditional low-scale residential forms sit alongside a number of more recent two-, three- and four-storey residential apartment buildings more reflective of the current development standards for building height and floor space ratio.

Further to the east, at the intersection of Frenchmans Road with Clovelly Road, lies an existing service station, which in turn signals the nearby presence of a local retail centre including local shops and services.

In contrast to the primary street frontage of Frenchmans Road, McLennan Avenue is characterised as a residential street with greater consistency evident within its buildings' form and scale. This street is lined with houses of primarily one- and two-storeys, and typically in the Californian bungalow style. There are some exceptions to this prevailing pattern, but these exceptions are discretely sited and not particularly prominent or contributory to the overall character of McLennan Avenue.

Within this diverse neighbourhood context, the existing aged care facility is notable for its larger site area and longer street frontage to Frenchmans Road, but in other regards it forms an element reasonably consistent with the character evident in the neighbourhood.

Existing vegetation

As noted earlier, Frenchmans Road, generally holds the elevated topography and adopts a geometry comprising of linked, straight segments following the ridge line. This road geometry means a number of existing mature, large canopy trees have particular prominence in the area as they terminate sequential views and vistas along the street.

This is the case when moving east or west along Frenchmans Road, and also when moving north along Chapel Street, where large canopy trees, typically eucalypts, contribute to a strong sense of character in the locality.

This characteristic is particularly relevant in the case of tree T07 identified within the site analysis and in the site survey. This is a mature large canopy eucalypt with high visibility along both Frenchmans Road and on the terminating vista along Chapel Road.

There are other instances of similar trees reinforcing this pattern elsewhere along Frenchmans Road making it an important defining characteristic of its character.

On McLennan Avenue, the existing vegetation is typical of many local residential streets of the area and in this case comprises fewer large canopy trees, instead having a leafy character achieved through smaller- and medium-sized trees drawn from a number of species common across the eastern coastal suburbs of Sydney.

One important exception to this prevailing pattern of vegetation on McLennan Avenue is a larger melaleuca street tree located near the boundary of the subject site, and noted within the site analysis and as T022 on the site survey. This tree serves to establish a taller, green element that terminates the street when looking west, and contributes positively to the character of the street.

In summary, the positive features which serve to define the existing neighbourhood character can be described as the coincidence of the underlying topography, the street pattern and geometry, the significant diversity evident in built form types, scales and architectural expression, and the presence of a series of significant marker trees.

Further to this understanding of the immediate local context, reference has been made to Randwick City Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and the relevant draft Local Character Statement (LCS) for this part of the wider local government area.

The draft Randwick Local Character Statement highlights a number of attributes that contribute to define the existing urban character, and which are similar to those set out in the Guidelines. These include the relationship between street patterns and topography, the presence of sandstone as a familiar building material and the importance of mature existing street trees.

A recurring theme of the LSPS and LCS is the need for future development to recognise, incorporate and build upon the positive attributes of local context.

Appreciating and valuing these features has influenced the detailed design of the proposal in a number of ways which are discussed in the remainder of this report.

Site planning and design

The second section of the Guidelines deals with site planning and design issues, with the key objectives being to:

- _ Minimise the impact of new development on neighbourhood character
- _ Retain existing natural features of the site that contribute to neighbourhood character
- _ Provide high levels of amenity for new dwellings
- _ Maximise deep soil and open space for mature tree planting, water percolation and residential amenity
- _ Minimise the physical and visual dominance of car parking, garaging and vehicular circulation
- _ Provide housing choice through a range of dwelling sizes

Discussion and evaluation

Review of the design proposal indicates the objectives of good site planning have been met.

The design of the proposal generally adopts the footprint of the existing aged care facility such that - in siting terms - it is consistent with the existing site character. Importantly, a number of the more sensitive relationships to neighbouring dwellings have been improved to benefit the resulting amenity of both proposed dwellings and existing neighbours. These points are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Two trees, identified as T07 and T022, which are significant to the establishment of local character, have been retained and incorporated into the site planning. This is a critical attribute of the proposed design, and has the effect of maintaining key natural features of the neighbourhood character. The design proposal also allows for additional large canopy trees to strengthen this aspect of the local character.

In generally adopting the footprint of the existing aged care facility, the primary street setback has been maintained and the majority of deep soil provided by the proposal coincides with this same primary street setback. The benefits of this approach include the reinforcement of existing street alignment for built form, the retention of significant existing trees, particularly T07, and the provision of deep soil in a location where large canopy trees can be established and where these will contribute to the amenity of the primary streetscape.

Additionally, the detailed architectural treatment to Frenchmans Road comprises a series of carefully modulated forms which, although configured as a single building, serve to present to the primary streetscape as a series of smaller, united elements with the objective to adequately break down the scale of this primary elevation.

The site planning includes a single, consolidated basement entry for all vehicles entering and leaving the site. The basement entry serves the primary street frontage, rather than the more sensitive, residential environment of McLennan Avenue, and is sited toward the eastern boundary to maximise the consolidation of deep soil areas and to consolidate a greater extent of more active frontages.

Given the diverse nature of existing building and dwelling types evident in the immediate vicinity, and given the proposed residential aged care uses, which include a mix of one- and two-bed units along with the inclusion of some independent living units, the design proposal positively contributes to greater housing choice within the neighbourhood.

Impacts on streetscape

The third section of the Guidelines deals with impacts on streetscape, with the key objectives being to:

- _ Minimise impacts on the existing streetscape and enhance its desirable characteristics
- _ Ensure that new development, including the built form, front and side setbacks, trees, planting and front fences, is designed and scaled appropriately in relation to the existing streetscape
- _ Minimise dominance of driveways and car park entries in the streetscape
- _ Provide a high level activation and passive surveillance to the street

Discussion and evaluation

Review of the design proposal indicates the objectives of (minimising) impacts on streetscape have been met.

Again, the design decision to generally site the proposal within the footprint of the existing aged care facility does much to minimise impacts on the streetscape, effectively maintaining the current condition into the future, albeit with a number of significant improvements over the existing building quality and character.

Additionally, the retention of trees T07 and T022 is critical to the maintenance of the existing vegetated character of Frenchmans Road and McLennan Avenue. These points have been discussed previously in this report.

The more sensitive side setbacks to adjacent neighbouring dwellings have been maintained or increased to benefit both the proposed new dwellings and to preserve the amenity of existing neighbours.

The design creates areas along Frenchmans Road and McLennan Avenue suitable for the establishment of meaningful landscape, including large canopy trees in deep soil on the primary street frontage. The site is proposed to be suitably fenced and secured to appropriately mediate between the public realm and the semi-public realm of the aged care facility. This is particularly evident on the primary street frontage of Frenchmans Road where open palisade fencing strikes the appropriate balance between the public and private realm.

Car parking, servicing and waste management are discretely concealed within basements to minimise impacts upon the streetscape.

The primary building address, reception, cafe and many of the common facilities are located at street level along Frenchmans Road to establish good passive surveillance and levels of activation and animation appropriate to the building use.

Impacts on neighbours

The fourth section of the Guidelines deals with impacts on neighbours, with the key objectives being to:

- _ Minimise impacts on the privacy and amenity of existing neighbouring dwellings
- _ Minimise overshadowing of existing dwellings and private open space by new dwellings
- _ Retain neighbours' views and outlook to existing mature planting and tree canopy
- _ Reduce the apparent bulk of development and its impact on neighbouring properties
- _ Provide adequate building separation

Discussion and evaluation

Review of the design proposal indicates the objectives of (minimising) impacts on neighbours have been met.

As noted previously, through considered site planning side setbacks to neighbouring dwellings have generally been increased - relative to the existing situation - and the design solution addresses the need to reduce impacts on neighbouring amenity and privacy.

Additionally, the specific uses located closest to sensitive neighbours tend to be passive in nature - including a high number of single bed units. More active uses within the proposal are situated along Frenchmans Road where they are better suited to bringing surveillance and animation to the primary street frontage.

Through detailed design, the potential for direct overlooking between adjacent dwellings has been eliminated by considered orientation of openings within the proposed units, and where necessary, by the introduction of carefully located privacy screens.

The shadow diagrams provided with the proposal indicate that generally, overshadowing of neighbouring dwellings and private open space has been minimised. The majority of overshadowing caused by the proposal falls to the south and over Frenchmans Road. In the early hours of the day, there is some overshadowing to the west and similarly, in the later hours of the day, some overshadowing occurs to the east and south of the site. In these cases though, the neighbouring dwellings maintain acceptable minimum levels of solar access during the worst case test of the mid-winter solstice.

The proposed design solution does not obstruct views from the neighbouring dwellings to any point within the public domain nor to existing outlook created by the retained large canopy trees T07 and T022.

Although the proposal represents an increase in building height when compared with the existing aged care facility, this additional height is anticipated by the relevant development standards and in any case, the proposal modulates the built form in a number of critical ways to minimise impacts of apparent bulk and scale.

From Frenchmans Road, the upper-most level of the proposal is set well back from the primary street frontage and is further configured within a traditional hipped roof form familiar to the local area.

Similarly, on McLennan Avenue, the proposed building form has been scaled to be contribute to the streetscape as a two-storey form with a hipped roof in order to reflect the prevailing scale and form of the existing lower-scale dwellings along this street.

In combination with these attributes of the proposed building form, the increased side setbacks are key to the maintenance of neighbours' privacy, amenity and the minimisation of associated impacts.

Internal site amenity

The fifth section of the Guidelines deals with internal site amenity, with the key objectives being to:

- _Provide quality useable private and communal open spaces for all residents
- _Provide dwellings that have distinct identity and safe entries
- _Provide safe and distinct pedestrian routes to all dwellings and communal facilities
- _Ensure adequate solar access to living areas and private open space
- _Reduce the dominance of parking, garaging and vehicular circulation space on the internal character of new development

Discussion and evaluation

Review of the design proposal indicates the objectives of internal site amenity have been met.

The proposal provides a range of useable and amenable private and communal open spaces.

A significant number of the proposed units are provided with a compact balcony or terrace that offers an opportunity for outdoor respite in a format unlikely to create acoustic or visual privacy conflicts with neighbouring dwellings.

Additionally, there are a number of communal open spaces - situated on each level of the proposal - configured to benefit from good solar access and outlook, including into the canopies of retained large canopy trees, without creating privacy issues.

Additionally, two communal open spaces have been provided at ground level flanking the primary internal common space. One of these open spaces is oriented to the north receiving good solar access, and the other addresses the positive south-facing landscaped area along Frenchmans Road.

Although the south-facing, ground level communal open space receives reduced direct solar access, on balance the mix of different communal open spaces and their locations distributed across the proposal is considered to provide useful, high quality open space.

Given the nature of this aged care facility, there is an operational requirement for a single, secure and safe access point. This single access point has been situated to maximise the building address and presentation to Frenchmans Road. In this location, the proposal offers a readily-identifiable and consolidated entry point for all residents, staff and visitors.

For these same operations reasons, the site planning reinforces a single access point for entry to the site and from there to access all communal and private open space in a safe and secure manner.

The primary common space provided on the ground floor of the proposal is oriented north to received good solar access, as are other communal open spaces and common rooms on various levels within the proposal.

As discussed previously in this report, vehicular access and circulation has been consolidated to single, discrete basement location with access on Frenchmans Road to the east of the site. In this location, vehicular access and circulation is effectively isolated from all pedestrian access and circulation, making the proposal inherently safer whilst also preserving its internal amenity and character.

05 Conclusion

It is the author's view the design proposal has been thoughtfully considered to address the five key design issues set out in the *Seniors Living Policy: Urban Design Guideline for Infill Development*.

In its current form, it is the author's view the design proposal meets each of the objectives set out in the Guidelines and is capable of making a positive contribution to the neighbourhood character in the vicinity of the site.

Please feel free to contact the author on 0413 990 052 should you wish to discuss any issue raised in this report.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Pullinger FRAIA
Registered Architect: 6226