

## Urban Design Report

**Proposed Seniors Living Development at  
43 – 47 Murray Farm Road and 13-19 Watton Road, Carlingford  
Submission to City of Parramatta on behalf of HB + B property**

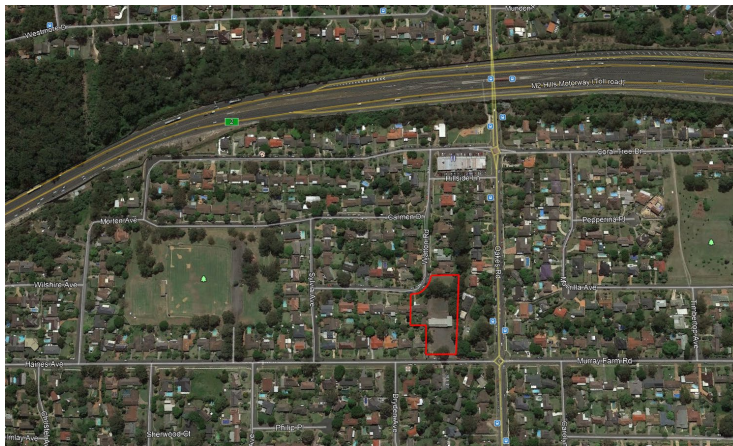


## Introduction

This report has been prepared in support of an amended new Development Application with consideration of the relevant planning controls and capacity to resolve urban design issues raised in the LEC judgment of 8 July 2021. The project involves development of a building complex comprising 110 rooms for residential aged care, with basement parking for 24 vehicles, administration, service and back-of-house facilities, and landscape open spaces associated with internal amenity and public open space relationships.

Comments are based on review of the following:

- Parramatta (former The Hills) LEP and DCP 2012
- SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with Disability) 2004
- Draft Housing SEPP 2021 (due for finalisation before 2022)
- DA architectural plans by Thompson Adsett Architects; issue October 2021
- DA landscape plans by Taylor Brammer, issue October 2021
- LEC judgment – 8 July 2021

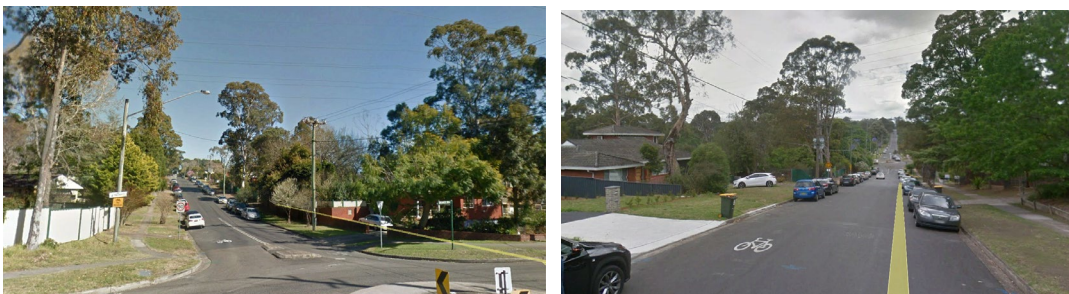


Site location in relation to wider Carlingford precinct (Google Earth)

## Overview summary

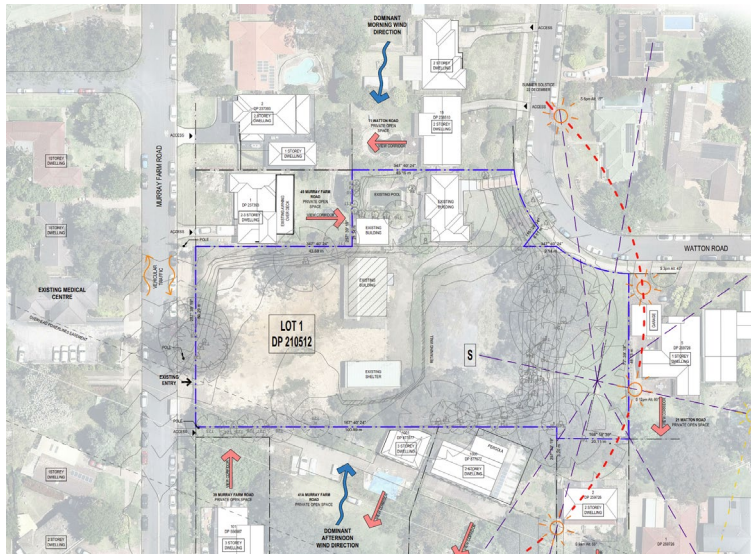
The site that was formerly a bus depot has frontages to both Murray Farm Road and Watton Road and has a significant cross fall in both directions. The R2 Low Density Residential Zone is comprised of standard size blocks occupied with individual 1 and 2 storey houses of modest proportions built in the 1960s to 1980s. Immediately opposite the Murray Farm Road frontage is a pathology laboratory, and there are pharmacy and medical related facilities within a short distance from the site.

There is substantial mature vegetation on the site that is intended to be maintained where possible, and a high voltage power corridor running across the south-east corner of the site. A local public bus route runs along Oakes Road, and there is a bus interchange on the M2 within 400m that connects with Parramatta and Sydney CBD.



Views to site from corner of Oakes Road looking west, and along Murray Farm Road looking east.

This site has redevelopment potential for a residential care facility, with the need being supported by evidence of a growing aged demographic in this area (and noted as a valid point in the LEC judgment), its location relative to the surrounding urban fabric, and the scope to achieve a complementary relationship with the immediate residential precinct.



Existing site analysis (source: Thompson Adsett)

As recognised in the LEC judgment, a residential care facility of this nature and scale is permissible under the SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability 2004), and it is also noted in the Draft Housing SEPP 2021 that the *‘operational, functional and economic requirements of residential care facilities typically require a different building shape from other residential accommodation.’* While the ‘serviced self-care housing’ as proposed is a model that is closer in character to a residential flat building, it is deemed that there is sound justification for the scale of the development, building character and a considerate neighbourhood interface that can provide benefits for future residents and their visitors, working staff and the local resident community.

The design approach builds on the revised DA 85/2019 that was refused by the SCCPP on 11 May 2020, and matters raised in the LEC judgment of 8 July 2021 for refusal of that proposal. The amended design in this new DA shows how issues raised in the LEC judgment can be successfully addressed with adjustment to the built form that will reconfigure the overall bulk to overcome impacts around the critical south-west corner and improve other aspects of the proposal to benefit the completed development.

The urban design merits of the DA are assessed with due consideration of the constraints that location and topography impose on the site, and the potential for a completed residential care complex that will be consistent with the broad objectives for this residential zone.

From the LEC determination against the HSPD SEPP 2004, it is understood that:

1. With regard to site-related requirements the DA 85/2019 proposal satisfies the relevant provisions under Cl.26-29 of the SEPP.
2. As per Cl.31-32 of the SEPP, and consideration of the Urban Design Guidelines for infill Development, and design principles as per Cl.33-39 of the SEPP, it was clear that the key issues needing to be addressed were on Cl.33 *‘Neighbourhood amenity and streetscape’* and Cl.34 *‘Visual and acoustic privacy’*, and the responses to these matters are discussed below.

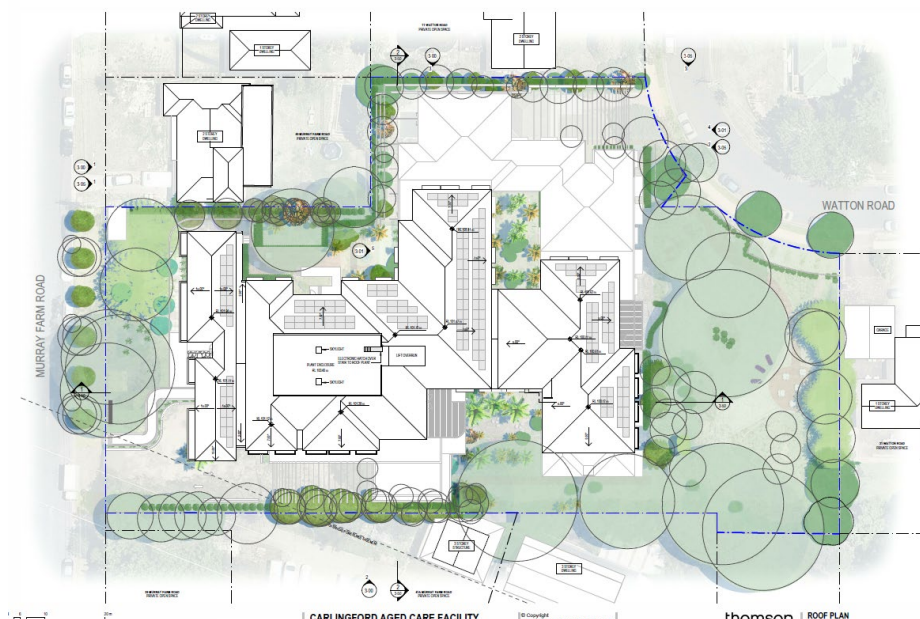


3. As per Part 4 of the SEPP related to standards to be complied with, the issues of compliance with an 8m height limit, and single storey building within the rear 25% of the site were assessed as no longer contested.
4. With regard to Cl.48 of the SEPP and the '*cannot refuse standards*', it was clear that height, density, scale, landscaped area and parking were deemed as satisfactory.
5. With regard to the objectives under R2 zones for PFHLEP 2012 however, there was the issue of visual massing, enclosure and visual privacy for 49 Murray Farm Road, and reference back to Cl.33 and 34 of the SEPP on neighbourhood amenity and streetscape together with visual and acoustic privacy.
6. Further design changes would therefore be required to improve the '*sense of openness in the rear yard*' of 49 Murray Farm Road by reducing built form impacts on the northern and eastern sides of that property.

The significant design changes in response to the LEC determination are as follows:

1. Reduction of the Level 1 floor area on the western wing and lowering of the roof, together with stepping the Ground Floor back by 7.7m at the south-west corner to remove visual bulk from the northern outlook of 49 Murray Farm Road.
2. Setting back the west elevation of Level 1 a distance of 18.3m from the boundary with 11 Watton Road to allow rooms 21-23 an outlook with privacy.
3. Setting back the west elevation of Level 1 adjacent the rear yard of 49 Murray Farm Road a distance of 12-14m to minimise the sense of enclosure to 49 Murray Farm Road.
4. Adjustment of the north elevation to Watton Road to integrate the above changes and ensure a compatible scale and façade character in that context.
5. With consideration for the streetscape on Murray Farm Road, further articulation of the built form and roof profile to achieve a complementary relationship along that frontage.

These changes to the built form, elevations on both street frontages and improved landscaping are now deemed to adequately address the issues raised by the LEC and improve the fit within the urban context while providing a positive social and environmental outcome that will be a quality contribution to this established precinct.



Site layout in relation to immediate Carlingford neighbours (source: Thompson Adsett)

## Urban Design analysis

Detailed review of the revised DA submission is undertaken here against the design requirements of the HSPD SEPP 2004 as follows:

After analysis of the amended design configuration for this new DA, it is considered that the development bulk can now satisfactorily provide a built form that is compliant with an FSR of 1:1, relevant height controls under the HSPD SEPP, and appropriate boundary setbacks while ensuring a best practice approach in addressing the project brief and a range of site-specific challenges.

In this way the development will be capable of addressing the *“impact that the bulk, scale, built form and character of the proposed development is likely to have on the existing (land) uses”*, and satisfy Objectives (ii) (v) of PFTH DCP 2012:

*(i) To ensure that the appearance of new development is of a high visual quality, enhances the streetscape and complements surrounding development.*

## Neighbourhood amenity and streetscape

With consideration of the precinct’s nature and location there are significant benefits that this site can offer for a development such as that proposed, with potential for streetscapes that can be complementary to the character of the surrounding precinct.

Attention has been paid to the layout of the main entry, and well defined and equitable at-grade access for pedestrians is achieved from the Murray Farm Road with distinct separation from vehicular movement paths. Basement car park access for both staff and visitors is accessed from Murray Farm Road, and this includes a direct and legible set down area at the front of the complex prior to entering the basement car park or exiting back to the street. The shared entry ramp is well resolved to minimise circulation conflicts or sightline interference that might create issues for passing pedestrians.



Existing frontage to Murray Farm Road, and CGI view of the proposed main entry (source: Thompson Adsett).

Service vehicle access to the basement from Watton Road is located to minimise environmental impacts and is able to utilise the grade difference with the adjacent property at No 11 Watton Road to create a landscaped retaining wall, with both visual and acoustic benefits to nearby properties.



Watton Road frontage that will incorporate a modulated elevation referencing the residential street scale.

In order to facilitate high quality resolution of the building envelopes, and to enable the best outcome on relationships to adjacent sites, there are legible and efficient floor plans with scope for wall modulation, material selection and balcony or terrace expression. Underpinned by the subtly expressive architectural language, the building articulation transitions well both horizontally and vertically in the streetscape relationships. Scope for inclusion of courtyards, light wells and landscaping will add to the envisaged green and 'biophilic' character of the complex and complement the substantial retained vegetation.



Street edge relationships along Murray Farm Road and Watton Road. (source: Thompson Adsett).

A further attribute of the DA proposal is provision for a communal garden area that can have sensory benefits for the care occupants, and also enable a shared zone where interaction with local residents is envisaged. Recent research on dementia patient management indicates much positive feedback on the exposure to natural stimuli, and interaction with other residents or the local community.



Site analysis in relation to landscaped open space treatment facing Watton Road. (source: Thompson Adsett)

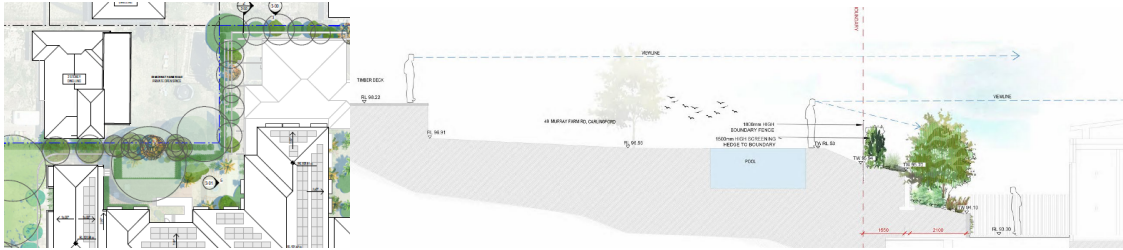
While management, service and security issues related to this concept will need resolution at the delivery stage, there is a very positive community interaction possible with this initiative. Location of the garden along the Watton Road frontage can create both a quality street-front landscape and potential catalyst for local resident gatherings, either with the care residents or separately in a social context.

For the care residents a circuitous walkway is proposed that will take them out below the tree canopy with a range of stimuli along the way through to a garden resting place. This will be elevated above the overland flow path, and also allow controlled access to the communal garden area along on the street front.



## Visual and acoustic privacy

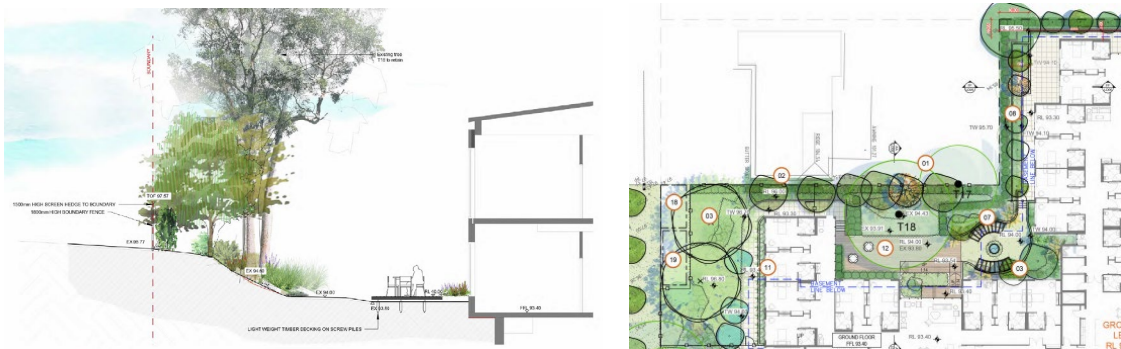
The design approach has further evolved in a considerate relationship to adjacent properties on both street frontages, and strategies to ensure their current and future amenity will not be compromised. From Watton Road the predominant building set back is maintained, and additional height proposed will read as the equivalent of a 2- storey house with roof in relation to adjacent property at 11 Watton Road.



Site analysis in relation to the northern boundary of 49 Murray Farm Road (source: Thompson Adsett)

In recognition of the concerns raised on the implied open space enclosure to 49 Murray Farm Road, there have been adjustments as follows:

- On the northern side at the rear, the west wing upper level of bedrooms has been removed and setbacks applied to the ground floor that will remove any sense of enclosure to the back yard of 49 Murray Farm Road.
- On the eastern side the 2 storey front wing aligns with the house at 49 Murray Farm Road, and behind the setback of the Ground and Level 1 floors has been increased to 12-14m with further landscaping to improve the open outlook there.



Site analysis related to setback on eastern boundary of 49 Murray Farm Road. (source: Thompson Adsett)



Site analysis related to the landscaped open space treatment facing Watton Road. (source: Thompson Adsett)

## Solar access and design for climate

Site configuration of the buildings has been planned for floor layouts to maximise solar access to resident rooms and enable views into the existing tree canopy and landscape elements that will be a major feature of the development. The potential for natural cross ventilation is also an important consideration to help minimise reliance on mechanical ventilation, and the separation of the buildings will allow the benefit of breezes to move through the vegetated courtyards and perimeter landscaped areas.



Ground Floor Plan showing open spaces with extensive landscaping (source: Thompson Adsett)

The lift core is located centrally to all floors of the three building wings, and efficient circulation minimises excessive built form while also ensuring scope for natural light and ventilation for these common areas through various attractive landscaped open spaces.

With respect to the immediate neighbours, issues of privacy are dealt with satisfactorily through the floor layouts that minimise any direct overlooking, and extensive landscaping that will further screen any possible visual intrusions.



VIEW 01



VIEW 04



View analysis from bedrooms showing typical landscaped outlooks. (source: Thompson Adsett)

This facility has been designed to maximise the potential for indoor-outdoor relationships that will enhance the environment for occupants, staff and visitors. Extensive retention of existing trees and landscape treatment in the boundary setbacks, together with internal courtyards and communal open spaces, will help maximise deep soil planting and contribute to the appeal of both public and private green open spaces.

The currently vacant block at the northern and lower end of the site is subject to overland flooding and has significant established native vegetation that creates a visual buffer to the upper levels of the site. This area comprises the requisite 25% open space for the rear of the site, and part of the deep soil zone for the development, while incorporating the overland flow path integrated safely into the landscape setting.



Further benefits of this area include potential occupant use for extended and protected outdoor amenity and will potentially foster local resident relationships through a community garden along the street-front perimeter on Watton Road where a small pocket park is also envisaged. To address any concerns on possible conflicts with the overland flow path, these elements will be designed to avoid any obstruction and be sacrificial in nature in the event of a major event. This landscaped open space will be overlooked by upper levels of the facility and from the street, providing an attractive and active feature to complement social interaction around the site.



Watton Road site frontage and intended accessible open space for occupants and the community.

### Height and built form

While the DA proposes a development scale that is larger than the residential typology in the immediate area, the design approach for this care facility gives due consideration to the site and context relationships. The design is based on stepped floor plates and clean, simple façade planes in a form character that has variety and texture in a coordinated palette of materials and details. Articulation of the building envelopes has been carefully developed to create well modelled forms with a rhythm that reflects the scale and block subdivision of nearby houses, with setbacks and high-quality architectural detail that can mitigate against any concerns about appropriate streetscape character.



Built form and material selection is in sympathy with existing residential context (source: Thompson Adsett).

Arrangement of the complex is to facilitate the evolution of an intimate village character, with scope for social interaction in the generous internal communal open spaces, and at the public interfaces where peripheral activities are located. Security will be of utmost importance, and the strategy to oversee and manage the movement of both residents and visitors has been given primary importance in the manner that sight lines are configured for discrete surveillance of resident rooms, circulation areas and communal spaces.

The public domain frontages provide good access and surveillance of the adjacent streets, and care has been taken to minimise adverse impacts on the local community impacts

through careful integration of traffic and service entries, and to complement the quality of the surrounding public domain.

The well configured floor plates facilitate efficient room layouts with generous circulation and environmental amenity for occupants. Adjusted setbacks and articulation of the building envelopes will minimise privacy issues with adjacent sites, and the expression of facades will provide a break-up of elevations that relate to the size and rhythm of adjacent residential houses. Within the upper two floors of the building courtyards and light-wells will provide benefits for visual outlook and air quality.

The legible configuration of circulation areas provides clear sight lines to pedestrian and lift lobby entries, access to both natural daylight and ventilation, and also allow good visual surveillance of the adjacent communal and public areas to enhance the means of addressing CPTED principles.

### **Design Quality Principles – SEPP 65**

As the residential care facility proposed is not unlike apartment development, review is also provided of its capacity to meet the principles set out in SEPP 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Developments and the Apartment Design Guide.

#### **Principle 1: Context and Neighbourhood Character**

Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.

The intent of this proposal is to contribute to the existing character of this Carlingford precinct in a complementary manner, consistent with the PfTH LEP and DCP 2012 and the SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with Disability) 2004.

#### **Principle 2: Built Form and Scale**

Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings. Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.

The scale and built form have been given careful consideration in creating appropriate relationships to both the topographic elements and existing residential typologies, and with appreciation of the surrounding public realm.

#### **Principle 3: Density**

Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.

In the configuration of the development there is a combination of building wings, open spaces and landscaping that help to disperse the impact of the built form, and there is available infrastructure to support the density proposed.



**Principle 4: Sustainability**

Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials, and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.

The intention for this proposal is to ensure relevant targets can be met, and where possible exceed those regulatory requirements with regard to building services, materials selection and scope for reduction of energy needs by incorporation of p/v solar panels on the roof.

**Principle 5: Landscape**

Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood. Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values, and preserving green networks. Good landscape design optimises usability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity, provides for practical establishment and long term management.

The landscape design has been developed with a thoughtful and proactive approach to retention of the existing site vegetation where possible, and supplementing this to benefit both the private and public realms with potential social and community opportunities.

**Principle 6: Amenity**

Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being. Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.

The proposal has the capacity to satisfy the requirements for amenity and integrate the various elements for this within a cohesive, coordinated development form.

**Principle 7: Safety**

Good design optimises safety and security, within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety. A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well-lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.

With appreciation of the importance of ensuring safety, comfort and security for occupants, visitors, staff and local residents, this proposal ensures all necessary requirements above can be met.

**Principle 8: Housing Diversity and Social Interaction**

Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets. Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people, providing opportunities for social interaction amongst residents.

With the growing need to provide for an ageing community that often includes dementia care, this facility will be an important addition to the housing diversity of the area and has been designed to optimise potential for social interaction.

**Principle 9: Aesthetics**

Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures. The visual appearance of well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.

This development is clearly capable of meeting the ADG guidelines, and the design aesthetic integrates a range of detail and material elements that relate in a compatible way to the suburban context while providing a contemporary architectural overlay.

**Conclusion**

The DA proposal for this residential care development has the potential to establish a quality benchmark for such a facility. As was recognised in the LEC determination, the completed project would help meet the growing demand for residential aged care in this Carlingford precinct, together with provision for local community benefits.

From an urban design viewpoint, it is considered that this proposal is able to achieve a high-quality development capable of satisfying the objectives of relevant planning controls while having adequate regard to the to the neighbourhood amenity and streetscape. On this basis it is deemed that a positive determination for the DA should be supported.

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