

Appendix 7:

City of Nedlands Design Assessment

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, LANDS AND HERITAGE
DATE 29-Oct-2020

FILE
SDAU-004-20

RE: THE MELVISTA; Doonan Road and Betty Street Nedlands

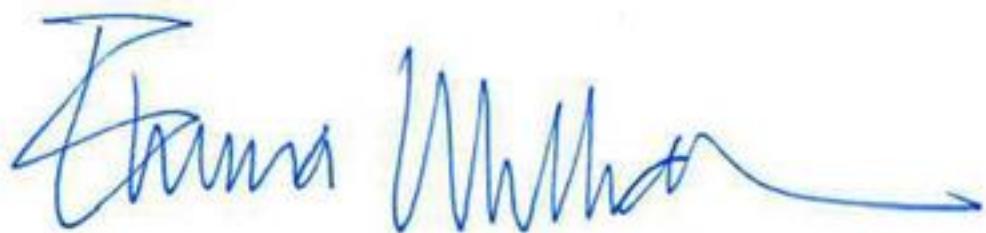
Dear Aviva,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal for the new aged care facility, The Melvista, located on Doonan Road and Betty Street Nedlands.

In this letter I provide an overview of my assessment of the scheme based on the presentation by the applicant along with the submitted documentation relating to the project. I have also included a more detailed set of notes that I used during my assessment that is based on the matrix provided in SPP 7.3. This sets out each of the elements that should be considered for each of the 10 principles.

If you have any further questions or issues requiring clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emma Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct flourish at the end.

Emma Williamson

PEER REVIEW: THE MELVISTA, Doonan Rd and Betty St Nedlands.

CONTEXT AND CHARACTER 2

The applicant presented a broad overview of the context and character of the neighbourhood, illustrating the diversity of scales and styles within the area. This should be used to more strongly guide the design response, in particular the east and west street elevations could be enhanced through a greater reference to the post-war domestic architecture of the area.

LANDSCAPE QUALITY 2

The landscape design works to enhance the overall design and create a leafy interface with the street. Whilst it is disappointing that existing trees have not been retained on site this has been ameliorated in part through the planting of large and small trees to the east and west.

The calculation of the deep root zone is unclear with more than 50% appearing to be given over to hardscape. Further exploration of the opportunities of this to increase the amount of vegetated landscape could further enhance the interface with the street.

BUILT FORM AND SCALE 2

The building, whilst bulky, does work to address this on the east and west elevations by setting the upper floor of the building back and presenting a more domestic scale to the street. As noted, I believe there is an opportunity to refine the design of the street elevations to make these less generic and speak more closely to the scale and detail of the post-war architecture of the area.

The southern elevation will be quite visible due to the sloping nature of the site however the design of this elevation takes this into consideration and creates visual interest through the addition of shadow boxes around the window openings.

The roof form works well to hide the plant and equipment from view.

FUNCTIONALITY AND BUILD QUALITY 3

The planning of the overall development is highly functional and presents a new model for aged care of smaller “neighbourhood” groupings for meals and communal spaces. This approach is commended.

The applicant has noted high quality finishes, and these should not be compromised in any value engineering exercise as these will significantly impact on the quality of the design within its context.

Additionally, it is noted that the landscape will require significant ongoing maintenance to achieve the high quality depicted in the project renders.

SUSTAINABILITY 3

The submitted drawings, along with the sustainability report, indicate that the project will exceed the section J Building Code compliance by 10%. Importantly the majority of residential rooms have a northern aspect with all rooms having the potential for natural ventilation through a combination of openable windows and doors.

Given the extent of planting the opportunity of grey water harvesting for reticulation to planters would be encouraged.

AMENITY 3

The project offers good amenity to residents ranging from the configuration of their individual rooms to the communal open spaces internally and externally. Rooms on the ground floor have visual access to the terraced landscape gardens along the northern boundary. Communal spaces have been located throughout the plan to allow for the formation of smaller “neighbourhoods” of residents.

LEGIBILITY 3

The building uses subtle signage at the street fronts to indicate the building use. The architect has sought to articulate a domestic scale to the east and west street elevations. Further opportunities exist to expand on this with consideration of the opportunities for refining the public domain interface and the density and height of the proposed fence. Within the development the central vertical circulation core and the stairwell / lightwell create a natural centre for the building. As the plans are largely repeated circulation is straightforward, with views outside creating a visual reference point for residents to orient themselves.

SAFETY 1

The building has a high level of safety compliance due to the proposed use. As a result each floor has several key-code entry points that contain free movement from floor to floor. The plans do not indicate fencing and gates to prevent free movement from the development to the street from the east and west courtyards. Additionally, I note that the fire escape corridors and pathways are only 1m wide and may present some challenges for individuals with mobility issues.

COMMUNITY 3

The proposed care model indicates a focus on the development of small communities of residents and staff within the complex through the development of smaller “neighbourhoods” of 12-15 residents. This is commendable. The addition of the wellness business will create a porous interface between the broader community and the residents of The Melvista. This idea is supported although there is potential for this to create some concern in relation to pressures on on-street parking.

AESTHETICS 2

The design works to mitigate its scale through the introduction of the standing seam cladding to the walls and roof of the north and south facades. Visual interest has been created through the irregular placement of the windows and the inclusion of shadow boxes of various depths.

The east and west facades present a more domestic scale but further development of their architectural language is necessary to more accurately respond to the specific context and character of the area. This will go a long way to embedding the project in the neighbourhood.

Design quality evaluation		
Apply the applicable rating to each Design Principle	3	<i>Supported</i>
	2	<i>Supported with conditions</i>
	1	<i>Further information required</i>
	0	<i>Not supported</i>
Principle 1 - Context and character	<p><i>Good design responds to and enhances the distinctive characteristics of a local area, contributing to a sense of place.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12 as relevant.</i></p>	
	<p>1a. [Comments]</p> <p>1b. [Recommendations]</p>	
Principle 2 - Landscape quality	<p><i>Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, within a broader ecological context.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 4.12 and 4.16 as relevant.</i></p>	
	<p>3 Siting the development</p> <p><u>3.2 Orientation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The built form associated with the development covers almost the whole site resulting in removal of every existing tree with no demonstration of tree values or exploration of alternatives. (see further detail below in 3.3) <p>0 – Not supported</p>	

	<p><u>3.3 Tree Canopy and Deep Soil Areas</u></p> <p>3.3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Site Survey plan included in the Development plans shows a number of trees on the existing lots. • The Site Trees plan does not appear to accurately reflect the number of trees on the site shown for removal, 9 are shown on the Site Trees Plan, and there appears to be over 20 shown on the Site Survey. • We note that an arborists assessment has not been provided. • From a desktop review there appears to be at least one very significant tree located on the site (appears to be <i>E. Citriodora</i>) • Every tree on site is shown for removal with no demonstration of explorations to retain any existing trees. • The driveway along the southern boundary will be in close proximity to the existing street tree. A fire booster is also shown to be installed in close proximity. The proponent should commit to engaging an arborist to advise prior to construction. <p>3.3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst exact percentages aren't clear the development will have a reduced tree canopy even once proposed trees are established. • As required by the R Codes the development requires 3 large trees, only two are proposed. Given the removal of all existing trees on site, the proponent should provide clear justification as to why an exemption is allowed. • The area of DSA proposed is 264m² and 298m² is required under the R-codes, a shortfall of 34m². • The areas of DSA appear to be encroached more than the allowable 20%, it appears closer to 40 – 50% • The ground floor states that overall landscaped areas is 920m² (31%) of site coverage. The proponent should provide additional diagrams to demonstrate this. <p>0 – Not supported</p>
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	<p><u>3.4 Communal Open Space</u></p> <p>3.4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal open space is provided that relates to the adjoining internal spaces. • The area of external communal spaces appears limited given the expected number of residents. • The landscape intent of creating sensory gardens is supported, however inclusion of areas for residents to participate in gardening could be explored • There is no opportunity for an outdoors walk loop within the development, this should be explored. <p>3.4.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted that communal open space is mostly for adults, facilities for young children are not provided (without adult supervision). <p>1 – Further Information Required</p> <p><i>Proponent to provide information to demonstrate:</i></p> <p><i>Opportunity for more varied communal outdoor activities</i></p> <p><u>3.6 Public Domain Interface</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The articulation of the façade into ‘two houses’ with the inclusion of the tree is supported • The use of planters instead of fences at the pedestrian entries is supported. • The use of visually permeable fences will provide passive surveillance over the street. • The basement driveway along the southern boundary may present as a dark ‘trench’ that is not accessible to pedestrians. The use of planting is noted, however additional information should be provided to confirm how this planting will thrive in this environment. • There is an existing seat under the southern street tree on Doonan St, this should be retained or relocated to a suitable location on the verge. Given the shortfall of trees and DSA, the proponent should consider improvements to the verge plantings, furniture etc. as an off-set. <p>1 – Further Information Required</p> <p><i>Proponent to provide information to demonstrate:</i></p> <p><i>how the landscape will improve the basement driveway entry.</i></p> <p><i>Improvements to the verge</i></p> <p><u>4.12 Landscape design</u></p> <p>4.12.1</p> <p>As a general note it appears that many of the decisions relating to building scale and siting have been made prior to the engagement of a landscape architect. A more collaborative approach earlier in the design process could lead to better outcomes especially with regards to tree retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments above relating to representation of existing trees to be retained and
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	<p>removed are relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proponent should provide justification for why the removal of existing trees, shortfalls in DSA and new trees should be allowed. • The landscape materials and finishes generally complement the development <p>4.12.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of sensory plantings that complement the garden character of the surrounding urban context is supported • Plantings on Levels 1 and 2 show the same varieties in full sun and full shade. More detail should be provided to demonstrate how plants will thrive with differing solar conditions. <p>4.12.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No water point is shown however the intention to irrigate all softscape areas is supported. • Additional information should be provided to demonstrate best practice water wise irrigation. <p>1 – Further Information Required</p> <p><i>Proponent to provide information to show:</i></p> <p><i>How plants will thrive in different solar aspects</i></p> <p><i>Why the shortfalls in tree retention, new trees and DSA are offset/appropriate.</i></p> <p><u>4.16 Water Management and Conservation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach to water management is not outlined in the proposal. The proponent is to provide additional information. <p>14.16.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strategy to manage small or large rainfall events on site is provided. The basement driveway will act as a sump. Additional information in relation to de-watering this area should be provided. <p>1 – Further Information Required</p> <p><i>Proponent to provide information to demonstrate surface drainage.</i></p>
	<p>2b. [Recommendations]</p> <p>The removal of all trees on site without any proper assessment of value is not supported. In addition Further information is required as described above to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The condition and value of existing trees • Justification for removal of all trees on site • Justification for why in addition to all trees being removed that shortfalls in DSA, new trees and DSA encroachment required by the R-Codes is acceptable. • Commitment to the protection of the existing street trees and potential verge improvements • Efforts to improve the visual amenity of the basement car park entry driveway

Principle 3 - Built form and scale	<p><i>Good design ensures that the massing and height of development is appropriate to its setting and successfully negotiates between existing built form and the intended future character of the local area.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.2, 3.3, 4.10 and 4.11 as relevant.</i></p>
	3a. [Comments] 3b. [Recommendations]
Principle 4 - Functionality and build quality	<p><i>Good design meets the needs of users efficiently and effectively, balancing functional requirements to perform well and deliver optimum benefit over the full life-cycle.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18 as relevant.</i></p>
	4a. [Comments] 4b. [Recommendations]
Principle 5 - Sustainability	<p><i>Good design optimises the sustainability of the built environment, delivering positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.2, 3.3, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.11, 4.12, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17 as relevant.</i></p>
	5a. [Comments] 5b. [Recommendations]
Principle 6 - Amenity	<p><i>Good design optimises internal and external amenity for occupants, visitors and neighbours, providing environments that are comfortable, productive and healthy.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 4.11, 4.12, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18 as relevant.</i></p>
	6a. [Comments] 6b. [Recommendations]
Principle 7 - Legibility	<p><i>Good design results in buildings and places that are legible, with clear connections and easily identifiable elements to help people find their way around.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.1, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.5 as relevant.</i></p>
	7a. [Comments] 7b. [Recommendations]
Principle 8 - Safety	<p><i>Good design optimises safety and security, minimising the risk of personal harm and supporting safe behaviour and use.</i></p> <p><i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.1, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.5 as relevant.</i></p>
	8a. [Comments] 8b. [Recommendations]
Principle 9 - Community	<p><i>Good design responds to local community needs as well as the wider social context, providing environments that support a diverse range of people and facilitate social</i></p>

	<i>interaction.</i> <i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.5, 4.9, 4.18 as relevant.</i>
	9a.[Comments] 9b.[Recommendations]
Principle 10 Aesthetics	<i>Good design is the product of a skilled, judicious design process that results in attractive and inviting buildings and places that engage the senses.</i> <i>As informed by SPP7.3 Element Objectives 3.1, 3.4, 4.8 as relevant.</i>
	10a.[Comments] 10b.[Recommendations]