



**Planning &  
Infrastructure**

***MODIFICATION REQUEST:  
Residential and Childcare Centre  
Development  
14-18 Boondah Road, Warriewood  
  
Modification MP09\_0162 MOD 1***

Director-General's  
Environmental Assessment Report  
Section 75W of the  
*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

December 2011

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an assessment of an application by Meriton Apartments Pty Ltd to modify an approved Concept Plan at 14-18 Boondah Road, Warriewood (MP09\_0162).

The Proponent has sought to delete the internal road, re-align the bicycle path; provide a requirement for adaptable units at a rate of 5%; amend the resident car parking requirement for two bedroom units from 2 spaces per unit to 1 space per dwellings; and the visitor car parking rate to 1 space per 5 dwellings.

The application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions as detailed in the Instrument of Modification attached at **Appendix D**.

On 14 September 2011 the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure delegated his functions to determine Part 3A applications to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) where an application has been made by persons other than by or on behalf of a public authority.

The application is being referred to the PAC for determination as Pittwater Council has lodged a submission objecting to the proposal.

## 2. THE SITE

The subject site, 14-18 Boondah Road, Warriewood, is located in the Warriewood Valley Release Area within the Pittwater Local Government Area (LGA). The site is irregular in shape, has an area of 8.118 hectares and frontages of 293 metres to Boondah Road and 273 metres to Macpherson Street. Vehicular access is available from both road frontages. The land slopes approximately 2.5 metres to the rear (south) towards the wetlands.

The site locality and site boundary is illustrated in **Figure 1**



**Figure 1:** The site

The site is currently being developed in accordance with the approved Stage 1 Project Approval (MP10\_0177).

### 3. MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL

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On 18 January 2011, the PAC approved a Concept Plan (MP 09\_0162) and Stage 1 Project Application (MP10\_0177) for a multi-unit housing development and childcare centre, private and public open space, parking, road works, pedestrian and cycle pathway, landscaping and ecological rehabilitation works. The Concept Plan involved Stage 1 and Stage 2.

#### 3.2 Stage 1 (Project Approval MP10\_0177)

The Stage 1 Project Application comprises:

- demolition of the existing buildings and structures on site and tree removal;
- excavation, earthworks and flood mitigation works;
- construction of 7 residential buildings apartments with associated pools and gymnasium;
- childcare centre;
- external road works, internal public access roads, pedestrian and cycle way; and
- ecological rehabilitation and landscaping works.

The PAC approved the development subject to a number of conditions including:

- a reduction in dwelling yield and height; and
- an increase in on-site car parking (in accordance with Pittwater DCP 21).

##### *Dwelling yield and height*

Condition B1 imposed by the PAC required:

- a reduction in dwelling yield from 75 dwellings per hectare to 60 dwellings per hectare; and
- reduction in height of Buildings D, E, F and G from 5 storeys to a maximum of 4 storeys.

On 6 June 2011, the Director-General approved amended plans to satisfy Condition B1 resulting in a reduction in dwelling yield from 295 to 226.

##### *On-site car parking*

Condition B13 required the car parking provision to be increased in accordance with Pittwater Council's DCP 21 requirements. DCP 21 which requires the following parking rates for medium density residential development:

- 1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling
- 2 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling
- 2 spaces per 3 bedroom dwelling
- 1 visitor space per 3 dwellings.

This would require **502** spaces for the 226 dwellings (as modified on 6 June 2011).

#### 3.3 Modifications to Stage 1 Project Approval (MP 10\_0177)

On 15 July 2011, the PAC approved a modification application (MP10\_0177 MOD 1) in relation to the Stage 1 Project Approval which included the deletion of the second basement level and provision of a total of **474** spaces within a single level basement. This was based on a rate of:

- 1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling;
- 2 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling;
- 2 spaces per 3 bedroom dwelling; and
- 1 visitor space per 5 dwellings (this rate was endorsed by Pittwater Council).

On 12 October 2011, the Director General approved a modification application (MP10\_0177 MOD 2) in relation to the Stage 1 Project Approval which involved the modification of Condition C19 – Ground water to allow for the installation of a permanent pumping system to ensure the basement is free of stormwater.

On 15 November 2011, the PAC part approved a modification application (MP10\_0177 MOD 3) in relation to the Stage 1 Project Approval to reduce car parking numbers and to delete a vehicle entry/exit at the eastern side of the basement car park. The PAC did not support the component of the application seeking to reduce the total number of parking spaces from 474 to 395 by allowing a car parking rate of 1.57 spaces per two bedroom unit (approved rate of 2 spaces per unit).

### 3.4 Stage 2 (approved in principle under Concept Approval MP09\_0162)

The Concept Plan gives 'in principle' approval for 7 residential building envelopes over the Stage 2 site. The development of Stage 2 will require a separate Development Application to Pittwater Council. The Concept Plan provides the assessment requirements for the assessment of any application by Council.

Modification requirements of the Concept Approval granted by the PAC include:

- a reduction in dwelling yield from 75 dwellings per hectare to 60 dwellings per hectare; and
- a reduction in height of Buildings K, L and M from 5 storeys to a maximum of 4 storeys.

On 6 June 2011, the Director-General approved amended plans to satisfy Condition B1 resulting in a reduction in indicative dwelling yield from 264 to 221.

In relation to car parking for Stage 2, the PAC report stated:

*Having regard to the challenges of road access and public transport in the area, the proposed parking provision in the concept plan is considered insufficient. The Commission believes the parking rates required by Council's DCP 21 are more appropriate and should apply to the site.*

Notwithstanding this position being expressed in the PAC's report, there are no modifications or future assessment requirements prescribed in the Concept Plan approval MP09\_0162 relating to car parking provision that would apply to Stage 2. In the absence of a specified parking rate in the Concept Approval, the car parking for Stage 2 is required to comply with the following rates expressed within the Proponents PPR:

- 1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling
- 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling
- 2 spaces per 3 bedroom dwelling
- 1 visitor space per 7 dwellings

Table 1 below provides an indication of parking numbers for the Stage 2 development based on the currently approved car parking rates and likely dwelling mix:

**Table 1:** Indicative parking numbers based on approved rate, reduced dwelling yield of 221 dwellings and likely dwelling mix.

| Unit mix              | Approved rate           | Parking numbers |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 35 x studio /1br unit | 1 space per dwelling    | 35              |
| 160 x 2br unit        | 1.5 spaces per dwelling | 240             |
| 26 x 3br unit         | 2 spaces per dwelling   | 54              |
| Visitor               | 1 per 7 dwellings       | 32              |
| Total (221 dwellings) |                         | 361             |

### **3.5 Legal Proceedings**

On 29 March 2011, Pittwater Council commenced Class 4 judicial review proceedings in the Land and Environment Court challenging the PAC's approval of the Concept Plan and Stage 1 Project Application. The central concern was that the conditions imposed by the PAC were legally uncertain. The matter was heard from 24 May 2011 until 26 May 2011. The appeal was dismissed on 12 September 2011.

## **4. PROPOSED MODIFICATION**

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The application originally sought to modify the Concept Plan Approval as follows:

- delete the internal road linking Macpherson Street and Boondah Road and replace with two driveways;
- re-align the bicycle path;
- make no requirement for adaptable units;
- reduce visitor car parking to 1 space per 10 units; and
- reduce the resident car parking requirement for two bedroom units from 2 spaces per unit to 1 space per unit.

In response to submissions from Council and the RTA, the Proponent amended the application to:

- provide visitor parking at the rate of 1 space per 5 units (consistent with the approved rate for Stage 1 and as endorsed by Council); and
- provide adaptable units at a rate of 5% of all units.

The Department notes that the proposed modification to the car parking and adaptable unit requirement of the Concept Plan will in effect only relate to Stage 2 as Project Approval has been issued for Stage 1.

## **5. STATUTORY CONTEXT**

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### **5.1 Modification of the Minister's Approval**

The modification application has been lodged with the Director General pursuant to Section 75W of the Act. Section 75W provides for the modification of a Minister's approval including "revoking or varying a condition of the approval or imposing an additional condition of the approval".

The Minister's approval for a modification is not required if the project as modified will be consistent with the existing approval. However, in this instance, the proposal seeks to modify the Concept Plan approval and therefore, approval to modify the application is required.

### **5.2 Environmental Assessment Requirements**

No additional environmental assessment requirements were issued with respect to the proposed modification, as sufficient information has been provided to the Department in order to consider the application and the issues raised remain consistent with the key assessment requirements addressed in the original DGRs.

### **5.3 Delegated Authority**

The Minister has delegated his functions to determine Part 3A applications to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) where an application has been made by persons other than by or on behalf of a public authority.

The application is being referred to the PAC for determination as Pittwater Council has lodged a submission objecting to the proposal

Under clause 3C of Schedule 6A to the EP&A Act, section 75W of the Act (as in force immediately before its repeal on 1 October 2011) continues to apply for the purpose of the modification of a concept plan approved before or after the repeal of Part 3A.

Consequently, this report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part 3A and associated regulations, and the PAC may approve or disapprove of the modification to the project under section 75W of the Act.

## 6. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

Under Section 75W of the Act, a request to modify an approval does not require public exhibition. However, under Section 75X (2) (f) of the Act, the Director-General is to make publicly available requests for modifications of approvals given by the Minister.

In accordance with Clause 8G of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*, the application to modify the approval was made publicly available on the Department's website and referred to the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Rural Fire Service, the Department of Transport, and Pittwater Council for comment.

Pittwater Council objected to the proposal. The RTA objected to the originally proposed reduction in the visitor car parking rate and also stated that the Department should ensure removal of the internal road link does not result in unsatisfactory performance at the intersections with Macpherson Street and Boondah Road. The Department of Transport did not object to the application and no submissions were received from the general public. The Rural Fire Service raised no concerns with the proposal.

A summary of the issues raised in submissions is provided below.

### 6.1 Pittwater Council

Pittwater Council provided a submission (supplemented by a traffic study prepared by traffic that supports Council's position) which objected to the modification application on the following grounds:

#### *Reduction in car parking provision*

- The proposed changes to car parking rates will result in a significant under provision of parking on site.
- The application does not contain sufficient information to justify the reduction in parking rates.
- The deficiencies in the parking provision is exacerbated by the deletion of the internal road, causing traffic congestion and increased demand for kerbside parking in the local road network.
- The application is inconsistent with the application to amend the Stage 1 Project Approval for the site.
- The proposed modification diverges from the PAC's determination of the Concept Plan, in particular the PAC's requirement that the development provide parking in accordance with Pittwater DCP 21.

#### *Deletion of the internal road and re-alignment of the bicycle path*

- Council does not seek to own the road.
- Deleting the internal road reduces connectivity within the site creating adverse access, safety and traffic/pedestrian management issues.
- Inadequate design of the share way.
- Uncertainty with the function and connectivity of the pedestrian/bicycle path route.
- Share way should provide emergency vehicle access including Fire Brigade and Bushfire Brigade vehicles.

- Access arrangements have not been made for bushfire access to the southern portion of the site.
- The cycleway should be publically accessible.

#### *Adaptable housing*

- Pittwater has an aging population with 16% of the population aged 65 years or older in 2006 with current trends showing that this is likely to increase to 22% by 2031. The provision of adaptable housing responds to the changing needs of residents.
- The 50% requirement for adaptable housing responds to demand for aging in place, consistent with the Draft North East Subregional Strategy.

### **6.2 Roads and Traffic Authority**

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) advised the following:

- The RTA does not support the proposed reduced visitor parking space allocation rate of 1 space per 10 apartments. This development is in an area of Pittwater which has access to very limited public transport service during off peak and week ends. The majority of visitors would be using a private vehicle.
- No objection is raised to the proposed 1 car parking spaces per unit for two bedroom apartments.
- Department of Planning should ensure that the removal of internal road link does not result in unsatisfactory performance of the intersection of Macpherson Street and Boondah Road.

### **6.3 Department of Transport**

The Department of Transport advised that it has no objections to the proposed reduction in parking rates.

### **6.4 Rural Fire Service**

*No concerns or issues were raised.*

### **6.5 Proponent's Response to Submissions**

The Proponent amended the application in response to issues raised in submissions by:

- increasing visitor parking from the rate proposed in the original modification application of 1 space per 10 units to 1 space per 5 units (this figure is consistent with the approved rate for the Stage 1 Project Approval which was endorsed by Pittwater Council);
- incorporating turning areas at the end of the internal driveways suitable for bushfire and fire vehicles;
- providing adaptable units at a rate of 5% of all units; and
- allocating 2% of car spaces as disabled parking.

## **7. ASSESSMENT**

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The Department considers that the key issues for the proposed modification are:

- the reduced car parking for two bedroom units;
- the deletion of the internal road and re-alignment of the bicycle path; and
- provision of adaptable units;

### **7.1 Reduced car parking for two bedroom units**

The proposal seeks to reduce the rate of car parking for two bedroom units from 1.5 spaces to 1 space per unit. The proponent identifies that Stage 2 will include 160 two bedroom apartments. The reduced rate sought equates to a reduction in the overall approved parking supply for Stage 2 by 80 spaces.

*Proponent's justification*

The Proponent outlined justifications for the reduced car parking rate including:

- the RTA has not objected to the proposed reduction in resident car parking rate of 1 space per 2 bedroom unit; and
- an analysis of 2006 Census data for Pittwater LGA indicates a car ownership rate of 1.29 vehicles per 2 bedroom unit which is comparable with the RTA rate of 1.2 spaces per 2 bedroom unit for medium density developments.

*Council's comment*

Pittwater Council objected to the proposed car parking rate. Its submission is supplemented by a traffic report prepared by traffix which argues that the car parking rates under Pittwater DCP 21 of 2 spaces per 2 bedroom unit are appropriate for the following reasons:

- they are consistent with the RTA's Guide for medium density residential flat buildings which sets a minimum rate of 1.2 spaces per 2 bedroom unit (subject to consideration of local circumstances);
- the DCP rate was established with consideration of local circumstances having regard to public transport accessibility, geography and social characteristics of the local area; and
- the proposed reduced parking rate would create further demand on on-street parking and public transport.

The Council argues that the reduction of car parking provision places a heavy reliance on off-site parking on the surrounding street system where there is no surplus capacity.

*Department's comment*

The Department notes that the proposed rate of 1 space per 2 bedroom unit is less than the rate of 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom unit previously supported by the Department in its original assessment of the Concept Plan Application.

In the assessment of the Concept Plan Application the Department supported the proposed car parking rates of 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling and took the view that this rate provides a good balance between addressing local car parking need and reducing car reliance and minimising traffic impacts. The Department noted that:

- the parking rate exceeded the RTA's Guide (minimum 1.2 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling) but was less than Council's requirements (2 spaces per 2 bed dwelling);
- the RTA had not objected to the parking rate;
- although public transport in Warriewood is limited it can be accessed from the site and that Sydney Buses had indicated that the level of service can be reviewed once the development has been completed; and
- the proposal seeks to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity in the area to encourage other non-car transport modes for local trips.

In the absence of a specified parking rate in the Concept Approval instrument, the approved car parking rate for Stage 2 is 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling as set out in the PPR.

The Department has re-examined its earlier view in its assessment of an appropriate car parking rate for the development and considers that reasoning remains valid. It is also noted that in addition to being significantly lower than the Pittwater DCP requirement, the rate requested by Meriton is also lower than the rate provided in the RTA Guide and also the 2006 Census data for Pittwater LGA of (1.29 cars per 2 bedroom unit).

The Department maintains that 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling is appropriate and that the provision of 1 space only would result in a significant under provision of parking on site. The Department considers that this would create reliance on parking on the surrounding street system to an extent that would negatively impact on the efficient operation of the local street system and on the amenity of the local area.

Further, the Department notes that this proposed rate is inconsistent with the Proponent's previous application to modify the Stage 1 Project Approval (MOD 3) to a rate of 1.57 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling (noting this rate was not supported by the PAC).

The Department maintains the view that the approved rate of 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling is appropriate and has accordingly specified this rate in the recommended instrument of approval.

## **7.2 Deletion of the internal road and re-alignment of the bicycle path**

The proposal seeks the deletion of the internal road linking Macpherson Street and Boondah Road. Access to the site is proposed by separate driveways having lengths of approximately 150 metres from Macpherson Street and 80 metres from Boondah Road. The approved cycleway is located along the vegetated buffer zones associated with the creek line in the southern part of the site and is to be publicly accessible. The proposal seeks to relocate the cycleway so that it is positioned in the location of the approved internal road and to function as a "shareway" that additionally provides access for emergency vehicles.

### *Proponent's justification*

The Proponent advises that the internal road was a by-product of a previous approval for town houses, is not necessary for access to the apartments and Council now does not wish to accept the dedication of the road.

The Proponent submitted a traffic report by Halcrow which states that the deletion of the internal road would allow the satisfactory performance of the intersection of the driveways with Macpherson Street and Boondah Road. Further, the Stage 1 car park would function appropriately and vehicle access to Stage 2 on site parking will not be impacted. Consultant reports were also submitted stating that fire and bushfire access via the driveways is adequate. The Proponent states that there will be no pedestrian and vehicle conflict on the shareway as vehicles will not have access (except for emergency vehicles).

### *Council's comment*

Council argues that whilst it does not seek to own the road, the deletion of the internal road reduces connectivity within the site creating adverse access, safety and traffic/pedestrian management issues. Council raises concerns with the design and function of the shareway and whether adequate emergency vehicle access for Fire and Bushfire Brigade vehicles is provided. It also questioned whether the proposed pedestrian/cycleway continues to provide appropriate connections to and from the site.

### *Department's assessment*

The Department notes that Council has advised that it does not seek dedication of the road, despite the Proponent's Statement of Commitment to do this. Further, this road is not required for vehicular access to the approved residential flat buildings (as they are provided with basement parking with internal access).

The Department also notes that the traffic report submitted by Halcrow specifically investigates the RTA's enquiry about the performance of the intersection of Macpherson Street and Boondah Road. The report states that the deletion of the internal through road will involve a minor redistribution of traffic movement. However this would not significantly affect the current good operation (Levels of Service A) of the intersection of driveways with Macpherson Street and Boondah Road that would be the case with the currently approved internal road.

In relation to access and loading, the Department notes that a dedicated loading area was included in the Stage 1 Project Approval (and would also be able to be provided in a similar manner for Stage 2) which has been designed to accommodate delivery and removal

vehicles. The Department considers that this arrangement is consistent with contemporary design practice and is appropriate for a residential development of the type and scale approved.

In relation to emergency vehicle access, the Department notes that the Proponent submitted consultant reports confirming that emergency fire and bushfire access was adequate. Also, the Rural Fire Service has raised no concerns with the proposal to delete the road.

Despite Council's concern about impacts to pedestrian access through the site, the Department notes that the realigned bicycle / share way will maintain access through the site in a similar manner to the original Concept Approval between Boondah Road, McPherson Street and the residential property adjoining the site to the north west. The construction of the cycleway network remains part of the Statement of Commitments for the Concept Plan Approval. Public (pedestrian) access through the site can be provided as Condition A6 of the Stage 1 Project Approval requires the creation of appropriate easements and rights of way, sufficient to provide appropriate legal rights for access as part of the future required subdivision application to Council.

On this basis the department considers this aspect of the proposed modification to be satisfactory and recommends deletion of the internal road.

### **7.3 Provision of Adaptable units**

Whilst the provision of adaptable units was not specifically addressed in the Concept Plan Approval, Pittwater Council's DCP 21 requires that 50% of the apartments be adaptable in accordance with AS 4299-1995: *Adaptable Housing*. The Proponent proposes to provide adaptable units at a rate of 5% of all units and provide 2% of all car spaces as disabled spaces. This would equate to the provision of 11 adaptable units, and 7 disabled car parking spaces (on the basis of the currently approved car parking rates and likely dwelling mix for Stage 2).

#### *Proponent's justification*

The Proponent argued that there is insufficient demand for adaptable units and that seniors' living developments are the appropriate form to address this market. The Proponent noted that there was a seniors' living development across the road from the site as well as others in the vicinity. The Proponent stated that the requirement for a provision of 50% of adaptable units, as required by Pittwater DCP21 is excessive.

The Proponent also stated that the car parking requirement for adaptable units should be reduced to reflect a limited demand for disabled car parking spaces and proposed that 2% be provided which is equivalent to that required by the BCA for retail development. The spaces are to be used as a visitor spaces until allocated to persons with a disability.

#### *Council's comment*

Council sought that 50% of units should be designed as adaptable units and stated that Pittwater Local Planning Strategy – Planning for Pittwater Towards 2031 reinforces the need for adaptable housing and is consistent with the objectives of the Draft North East Subregional Strategy.

#### *Department's comment*

Adaptable housing is designed so that it can be easily modified in the future to meet the needs of a person with a disability. AS 4299-1995: *Adaptable Housing* also draws on the provisions of AS 1428: *Design for Access and Mobility*. It sets a number of requirements for the design of residential units including:

- provision of an undercover disabled car parking space for each adaptable unit;
- provision of a continuous accessible path of travel from street frontage and vehicle parking to the unit entry complying with AS 1428.1 gradient requirements; and

- minimum entry and internal circulation dimensions.

The Department has examined the policy requirements for the provision of adaptable housing and notes that Action D2.2 of the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 requires that at least 10% of all new multi-unit residential development to be adaptable for use by people with a disability. The Pittwater DCP 21 requirement that 50% of dwellings are to be adaptable is significantly higher than the 10% set out by the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036. Consistent with the broad policy requirement of the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036, the Department considers that it is appropriate to provide 10% (22) of the dwellings constructed as part of the Stage 2 works as adaptable dwellings.

The Department also notes that *AS 4299-1995: Adaptable Housing* requires the provision of a disabled car parking space for each adaptable unit. The Department considers it appropriate to identify the requirement for the provision of 10% of the Stage 2 units to be adaptable and that a disabled car parking space be provided for each adaptable unit.

## 8. CONCLUSION

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The Department is satisfied that this modification application falls within the scope of section 75W of the Act. The proposed modification does not change the original assessment as to the site's suitability for this development.

The Department considers that the proposed car parking rate for 2 bedroom units and the provision of 5% of units to be adaptable is not appropriate and recommends that the Concept Plan be provided with further modifications setting out an appropriate car parking rate for 2 bedroom units at 1.5 spaces per unit and the provision of 10% of units to be provided as adaptable units (with at least 1 accessible car parking space per unit).

The Department considers that the proposed deletion of the internal road and the realigned bike path /share way are acceptable as the road is not necessary for access within the site or for local traffic and public access through the site will be maintained by the realigned share way.

The proposed modification is generally consistent with the terms of the Concept Approval and is considered to be acceptable subject to further modifications regarding increased car parking and provision of adaptable units.


## 9. RECOMMENDATION

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It is recommended that the Planning Assessment Commission:

- (A) **Consider** the recommendations of this report;
- (B) **Approve** the modification, subject to conditions; under Section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. 1979*, and
- (C) **Sign** the attached Instrument of Modification (**Appendix D**).

Endorsed by:

 6/12/11

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