



AWTM Pty Ltd ATF Witherby Family Trust (ABN 50 285 185 541) T/A Wakefield Planning

Submission by way of Objection

X/1578/2024
Macquarie Road and David Road
Springwood

Client: Springwood Residents Group
Revision 1.1

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Document Control Details		
Document Author(s)	Angus Witherby	
Internal Quality Review		
Project Reference	Springwood submission	
Document Revision	Comments	Date
1.0	Draft for Client Review	9 February 2025
1.1	For Council Submission	10 February 2025

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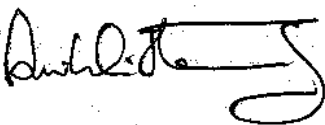
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I certify that I have prepared the contents of this Report and to the best of my knowledge:

- The information contained in this Report is neither false nor misleading; and
- It contains all relevant available information that is current at the time of release.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fabcott, the development arm of Woolworths, has lodged a development application for a supermarket development in Springwood. The application is a modified proposal from a previous DA for the site, which was withdrawn.

The proposed development makes a number of changes to the earlier proposal, but retains the same floorspace.

The development site includes the Oriental Hotel, which is a heritage item under Blue Mountains LEP 2015.

1.2 This submission

This submission is by way of objection to the revised proposal. The key grounds of the objection are:

- Quantum of floorspace and the associated impacts on Springwood and the lower mountains
- Traffic impacts in the immediate vicinity and more broadly around Springwood including impacts on key pedestrian pathways
- Urban design, including but not limited to the presentation to both Raymond Road and David Road
- Impacts on the Orient Hotel
- Lack of pedestrian connectivity to Macquarie Road
- Lack of consideration of the need for detailed traffic management for both service vehicles and the proposed parking
- Lack of consideration of the Springwood Masterplan 2018
- Outdated and incorrect economic modelling

This submission is supported by separate reports covering traffic issues and economic issues. Those reports should be read in conjunction with this report. The author of this report is an experienced retail planner, economist and transportation planner. Accordingly, I have formed my own independent views regarding the economic and traffic aspects of the development. That being said, I am in agreement with the views put forward in the other reports. I have previously done work in the Springwood Town Centre (most recently for St Vincent de Paul) and have previously conducted a parking study of the Centre. I have also done previous work for the NSW Department of Planning to prepare a draft SEPP addressing a centres policy and best practice around retail impact assessment. I am also a bushfire planner.

It needs to be noted that there is no objection in principle to an appropriately designed supermarket proposal on the site, of a floorspace which is consistent with actual demand. This would be in the order of not more than say 1700m².

Declaration: Funding for this work has been provided by Lloyds IGA, which is submitted on behalf of the Springwood Residents Group. Notwithstanding the source of funding, this submission represents my independent professional view of the development. As a planner, I have undertaken development work with Coles, Woolworths, Metcash, various IGA operators and Foodworks.

1.3 Context

Springwood is located in the lower Blue Mountains. The nature of the topography means that the urban footprint is dispersed, concentrating on the ridgelines. Historically the Blue Mountains has consisted of a “chain of villages” each with its own character and characteristics, hubbed on railway stations. Over time some of those boundaries have blurred due to changes in travel methods and

patterns, and increased urbanisation. The Mountains remain and continue to develop as a significant tourist destination for local, interstate and international travellers. The setting is dominated by landform which constrains transport options. In addition to providing local transport connectivity, the Great Western Highway is a major connection route from the greater Sydney region to the central west of NSW.

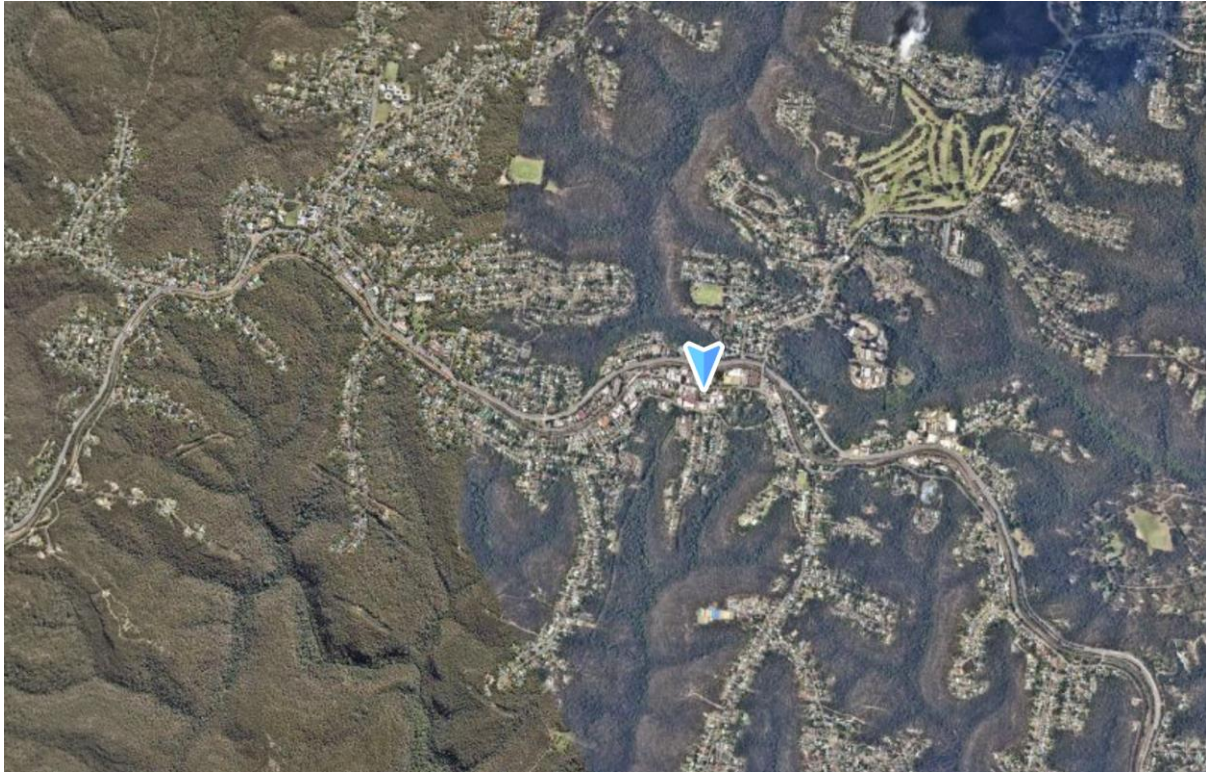


Figure 1-1 - Context

The more detailed context for the development locates the development site as being in the south-east corner of the town centre. This is confirmed from the aerial built form and also the zoning map. Although the site adjoins residential development across David Road (R3 Zone) it should be noted that the uses at the top end of the lower section of Raymond Road include a child care centre on the eastern side as well as residential to the west. A youth centre is located in Springwood Avenue opposite the Raymond Mall.

These figures are set out below:

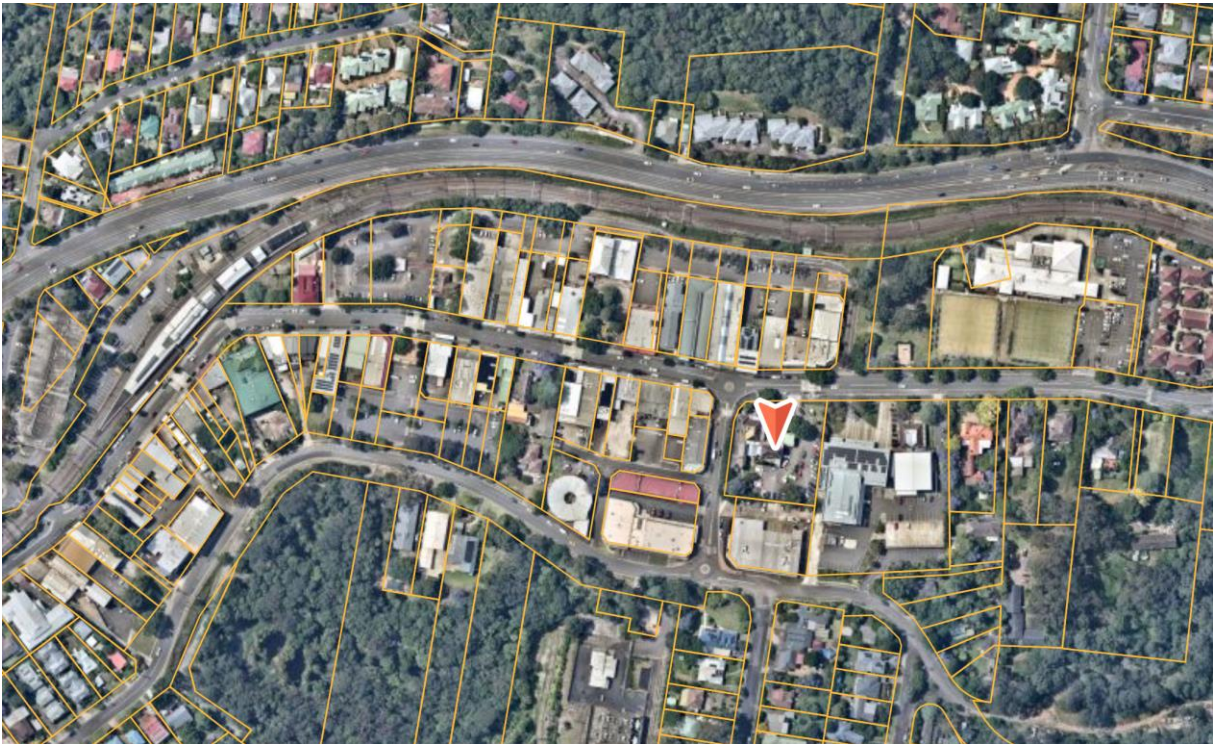


Figure 1-2 - Site in its urban context

Adjoining the site to the east is the “Hub” which includes a neighbourhood centre and theatre. The site is well-used for performing arts, including use of the forecourt area.

North of the site is low-scale shop-front retail and commercial, as typical uses in a “high street” strip. To the west is further commercial and retail frontage, again with an active streetscape to Raymond Street. Lower down the hill, opposite the former IGA site is a stand-alone shopping centre, Raymond Mall. This has direct entry from Raymond Road and again presents as a low-scale development, although it reaches two stories to the Springwood Avenue frontage. There is an additional access from Springwood Avenue, shortly before the existing roundabout.

The overall traffic environment is that of a local road network, with the Springwood town centre bypassed by the Great Western Highway. Key roundabouts affecting the site are at the intersections of David/Springwood and Raymond, and also Macquarie and Raymond. Key pedestrian crossings are currently Macquarie Road, immediately to the east of the current Oriental Hotel driveway and across Raymond Road immediately south of the Macquarie Road roundabout.

A brief observation study on a Monday lunchtime (12:30-1:30 5th February 2025) identified traffic volumes along Macquarie Road in the order of 820 vehicles per hour, at the Macquarie Road pedestrian crossing. These are quite evenly split, west to east, although there is a significant movement of right-hand turning traffic west-bound on Macquarie Road into Greenway Lane. This movement impedes west-bound traffic unless a break is provided, generally by pedestrian activity across the pedestrian crossing. To some degree the traffic comes in waves, with surges of congestion. This is not reflected in hourly traffic count data.

The Oriental Hotel driveway had some 66 movements in the lunch-time hour, serving the existing 22 spaces. Limited turnover information suggested a 20-30 minute stay. This is probably lunch-time traffic. Heavy vehicle traffic on Macquarie Road was evenly split between trucks and buses, at around 4.4% of total traffic movements, with vans representing another 3% of total movements.

Anecdotal information from residents indicated that significant events at The Hub created severe congestion at times in the surrounding road network, including David Road, and that significant bus movements were associated with both events and school bus movements. These were not able to be

captured during the observation study, which was conducted outside school times. Resident information also confirmed the rat-running along Springwood Avenue, and also identified a significant issue at the Springwood Macquarie Road/Great Western Highway access.

There are limited options in accessing the Springwood Town Centre travelling westward, with the left hand turn into Macquarie Road being the primary access. One needs to travel past the commercial centre, and turn left at the traffic lights at Great Western Highway and Fergusson Road to find the next opportunity. This provides access via a roundabout under the railway line to Macquarie Road to the west of the CBD, and is the main access for vehicles travelling from the west. This is significant in terms of the trade areas identified for the proposal.

Significant friction occurs from pedestrian movements, and reverse parking of vehicles. At times, pedestrian activity causes a bank up of east-bound vehicles to the extent that the Macquarie Road roundabout is blocked.

Probably as a result of congestion in Macquarie Road, Springwood Avenue is used as a local “rat run”. This creates additional loadings on the roundabout connection to David Road and Raymond Road.

In terms of pedestrian movements, there is no effective footpath adjoining the Oriental Hotel to the west, as shown in the streetscape view below. This requires pedestrian traffic to cross Raymond Road south of the Macquarie Street intersection and walk down the western side of Raymond Road before re-crossing if they want to access the former IGA site.

Key streetscape views are set out below, setting the site within the streetscape context.



Figure 1-3 - Site detail aerial

Note the former IGA carpark provides separation from the curtilage of the Hotel, which is largely preserved through gardens and the carparking and access. The direct adjacency of the Hub can be seen to the right. This presents a sheer wall to the boundary. Note also the location of the entry off David Road, also directly adjacent to the boundary, and the access to undercroft parking further to the east.



Figure 1-4 - Macquarie Road looking west

Note the prominent position of the Hotel in the streetscape, and also the compromises to the building associated with the 60's Sports Bar addition. The location of the current pedestrian crossing is clearly visible, with the roundabout in the background. Significant right hand turn movements occur just before the pedestrian crossing.



Figure 1-5 - Macquarie Road - looking east

Note the very low scale of the existing strip shopping with flat roofed forms and single storey construction. The roundabout is mountable, but experiences clogging when traffic is interrupted by pedestrian movements at the crossing.



Figure 1-6 - Raymond Road frontage - Oriental Hotel

This view looking up Raymond Road is the most significant and dramatic frontage of the Hotel, and represents one of the more original facades. The row of Crepe Myrtles is a very significant streetscape element, particularly when in flower. This row extends well beyond the rear of the building. Note in particular the lack of footpath on this frontage.



Figure 1-7 - Raymond Road frontage - former IGA

Looking down the hill, this view shows the continuity of the Crepe Myrtles but also the lack of footpath until reaching the former IGA which has a significantly wider road reserve and generous footpaths.



Figure 1-8 - View from Oriental Hotel carpark over former IGA

The top of the IGA is barely visible, with the hedge at the rear of the carpark, and is generally unobtrusive in terms of the setting of the Hotel. The Hub presents a very dominant visual element on the property boundary eastern side. Rooftop plant is an ugly and intrusive element on the former IGA building. The building and vegetation obscure most distant views from ground level.



Figure 1-9 - Top of Raymond Rd - Former IGA and child care centre



Figure 1-10 - David Road looking west



Figure 1-11 - Springwood Avenue looking east

The significance of the site as a key entry to the Springwood Town Centre is clear from these viewpoints. Design solutions for the site should enhance these viewlines. In this respect the viewline from Springwood Avenue is considered an improvement on the current presentation. Concerns relate mainly to Raymond Road (lower section) and David Road.

In summary, the context demonstrates key features of the streetscape, the key role of the site in the Springwood town centre, and aspects of the local traffic and pedestrian environment. The site is both sensitive and significant and poses considerable design challenges. The degree to which the current proposal successfully meets these challenges will be explored throughout this submission.

1.4 Documents reviewed as part of this submission

The following documents have been reviewed for this submission:

Proponent:

- The Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE)
- Traffic Study
- Economic Study
- Acoustic Study
- Arborist Study
- Geotechnical and Groundwater Studies
- Heritage Study
- Fire Study
- Architectural Drawings
- Architectural plans and artists impressions (including landscaping)
- Civil Drawings

Statutory and Strategic

- Blue Mountains LEP 2015
- Blue Mountains DCP 2015
- Springwood Masterplan 2018

Other submissions

- Traffic study – Transport Modellers Alliance (Feb 2025)

- Economic study – Bull and Bear Economists (Feb 2025)

1.5 Deficiencies in information

It is our submission that there are serious deficiencies in information that prevent the full and proper analysis of the impacts of this development. To some degree submissions fill those deficiencies, however the responsibility of the proponent is to provide sound and thorough documentation.

The key deficiencies are highlighted below:

- **SEE** – This is based on supporting reports, but does not address either the LSPS or the Springwood Masterplan as two key strategic document relevant to Springwood and the site. In addition, the SEE is very narrowly focused on the site itself and its immediate surrounds without genuinely considering the broader impacts of the development. Further, the SEE fails to give sufficiently detailed consideration to the specific clauses of the LEP that relate to the development. See also commentary on DCP compliance.
- **Traffic Study** – Refer to the Traffic Modelling Alliance report for further information.

From my own review this is a very localised and generalised modelling exercise that shows limited consideration of the broader traffic implications of the development. No observation studies appear to have been undertaken to assess the actual street characteristics, and to understand the existing travel environment. In general terms, it is not broad enough in scope, and not sufficiently “data led” with traffic counts being very limited and not representing peak times of the year. There are concerns that the model has not been properly calibrated as a result of this.

We suggest that this work needs to be re-done with a much broader scope, to include enhanced consideration of the access points to Springwood from the Great Western Highway and the likely impacts on the local road system from those points (including rat running potential), as well as from traffic generated within Springwood itself.

The work should also include a good understanding of pedestrian movements, including the role of key crossings in providing friction in the system, and the likely impact of the development on those movements. For example, the western relocation of the Macquarie Road crossing would create further issues with traffic banking through the roundabout, which would become much more heavily loaded as a result of the development.

There is no management plan to address potential failure of the turntable, or to address scheduling issues given the “one truck at a time” approach.

The development, together with access to the Hub, means multiple driveways in very close proximity. The impacts of this have not been adequately addressed (in terms of movement conflicts and pedestrians), nor have the implications of the new roundabout, with its very close proximity to the existing Raymond Road roundabout. Pedestrian movements in/from David Road, Springwood Avenue, Raymond Avenue to the South, and across Raymond Avenue to the north, have not been properly addressed in terms of safety, and impacts on traffic movements.

In addition, the operation of the split parking has not been adequately explored. In particular, there are potential issues with queuing into the proposed David/Raymond roundabout, as a result of inadequate storage lengths into the lower carpark. As this is likely to be the carpark of preference, there are concerns that it may attract circulating traffic (churn) if occupancies are over 90% which would potentially create difficulties.

Traffic unable to park, would then need to exit and try for the upper level, which is a convoluted path from David Road, up Raymond Road, right into Macquarie Road, and then a right turn into the Orient Hotel driveway which would inhibit east-bound traffic. Specific management measures should be considered to address these issues if the development is approved.

Taxi access has not been addressed, nor has bus access, except for one generalised statement. For those without cars a common mode of shopping is bus to the Centre, and taxi home with the groceries.

Pedestrian access to Macquarie Street has not been given any real consideration, in particular as the route is convoluted, and involves a lift or stairs.

The study should also have given extensive consideration to construction aspects, in particular noting the very significant excavations proposed.

- **Economic Study** – This study should be considered in light of the submission by Bull and Bear economists.

In my summary assessment, the study is outdated, and does not contain accurate population data either for existing population or future population. Further, there are serious concerns relating to some of the underlying assumptions in terms of trade draw from other areas. There is no retail census of Springwood, to better understand the current retail mix, so as to permit a more nuanced impact assessment other than a crude percentage across all floorspace. It is submitted that the economic impacts on Springwood are severely understated with a real risk of multiple business failure. There are also internal inconsistencies. The work is not adequate to properly inform assessment.

- **Acoustic Study** – This could usefully have also included the youth centre in Springwood Avenue, as well as residential properties at the top of Scott Street. I note the use of Penrith weather data, and suggest that rainfall, in particular, may not be reflective of the site. Operating hours are noted, however night stacking may result in additional vehicle movements outside these hours. As noted on the traffic study, the undercroft parking may prove more desirable, and a 50/50 split may therefore not occur. The Hub is highly sensitive to noise, and the use of commercial criteria are considered insufficiently stringent. It is suggested that the 5dB(A) threshold be adopted for the study. The visual impacts of the potential acoustic treatments should be assessed (by others). Specific consideration should also be given to the geotechnical report, in particular the proposed excavation methodology. Apart from the above the acoustic study is considered satisfactory, with the major concern being on the Hub. This matter could be conditioned.
- **Geotechnical and Groundwater Studies** – These are generally satisfactory. The geotechnical report correctly identifies the need for vibration specialist input. I would suggest that the lower threshold (mm/sec) is more likely to be appropriate for the Hotel, in particular given visible cracking in part of the rear structures. It also identifies groundwater contamination issues. This is a matter that should be conditioned on any approval, as should condition requiring a specialist vibration report.
- **Heritage Study** – The main concerns with this report relate to a need to further consider views, both of the Oriental Hotel and from the hotel. It is also considered that insufficient consideration has been given to the degree to which the curtilage of the building is being significantly affected by the development, including a range of built forms associated with

the hotel refurbishment and the supermarket development. In addition, the development overall fails to respond adequately to the concerns in the previous application regarding the overall treatment of the Hotel. In the figure below, the lift lobby/travellator structure is identified (blue) as a significant visual intrusion into the current view of the hotel, on its most significant façade. Essentially the development “crowds” the building.



Figure 1-12 - Visual Issues

- **Architectural plans and artists impressions (including landscaping)** – The main concern here is the lack of renderings of the development (artist’s impressions) which limit the ability of the public, in particular, to understand the impacts of the building. It is also unhelpful when these renderings are taken from an elevated perspective. This tends to reduce the visual impacts as compared to, say, 1.7m above ground, which is a better representation of a pedestrian viewpoint. The omission of perspectives of the southern façade, and the views from David Road, Raymond Road and Springwood Avenue is of particular concern. The landscape plans are noted, and do achieve the current percentage of tree cover as per the Greater Sydney 2022 mapping. These plans are not, however, fully reflected in the perspectives, in particular the foyer to Raymond Road (pink oval).

1.6 Planning Context

This site is located within the Blue Mountains Council LGA within the Greater Metropolitan Region. The land is subject to the following primary planning controls and policies:

- Various State Environmental Planning Policies
- Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015
- Blue Mountains DCP 2015
- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- Springwood Masterplan 2018

Relevant maps are shown below. Further detail is provided in the Statutory Assessment portion of this submission.

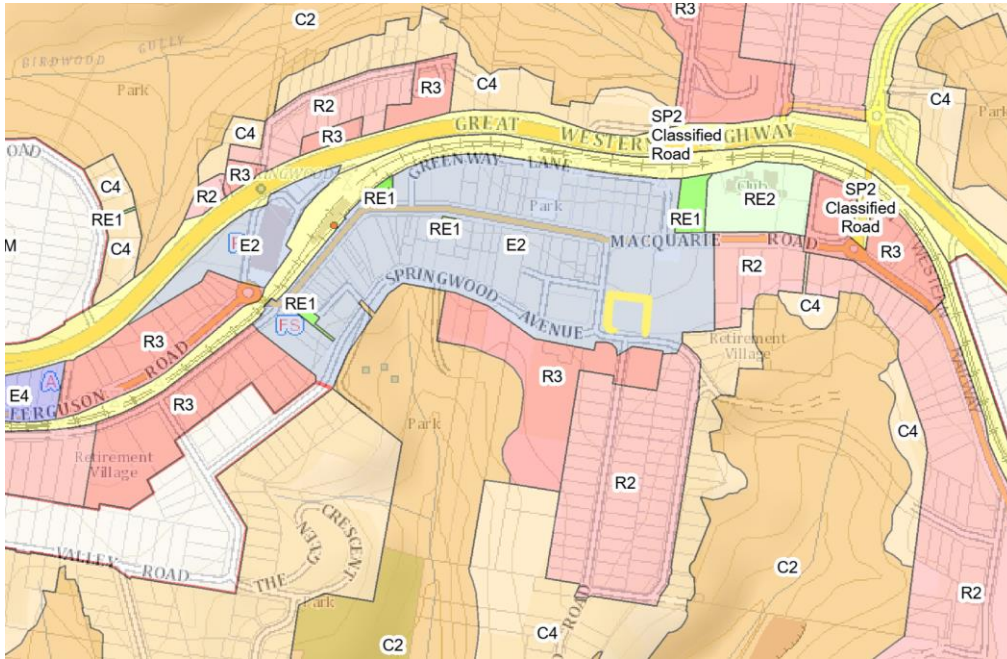


Figure 1-13 - Site in its zoning context

The site is zoned E2 and the development is permissible with consent.

The site is also located within the heritage conservation area of Springwood as shown on the figure below.

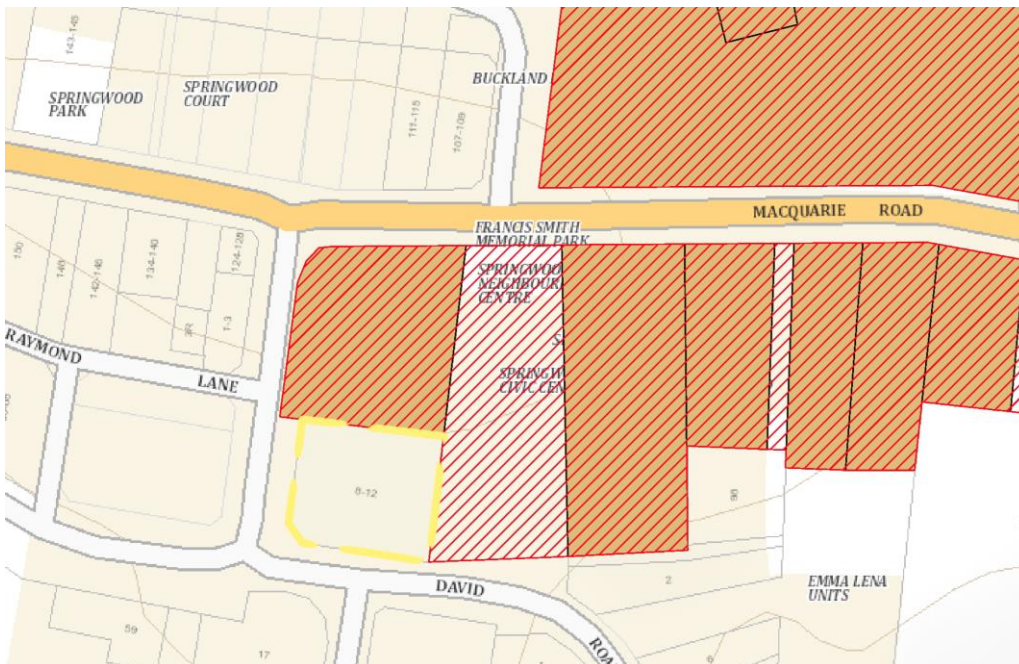


Figure 1-14 - Heritage Context

The orange areas represent specific sites of historical significance, with the hatched area showing the overall conservation zone. While the former IGA site on David Road is not part of the conservation area, the proposed development includes the Orient Hotel site. The site is affected by the heritage provisions of the LEP.

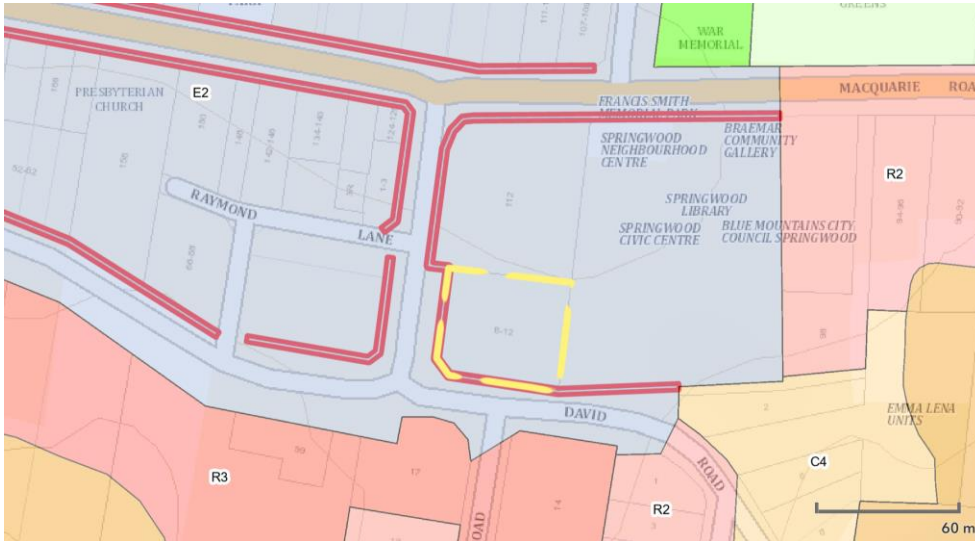


Figure 1-15 - Active Street Frontage Map

This identifies all three frontages of the site as active frontages. The relevant provisions of the LEP therefore apply to the application.

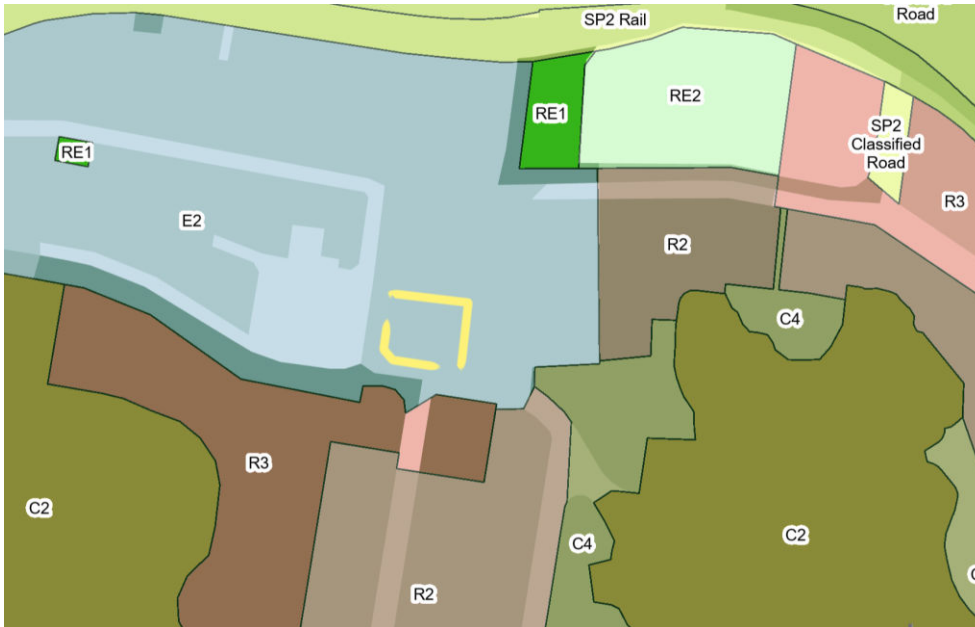


Figure 1-16 - Greater Sydney Tree Cover Map

The land shows existing coverage of just over 6%. It is noted that the Springwood Masterplan looks to additional greening in the commercial centre and to introduce vegetation corridors.

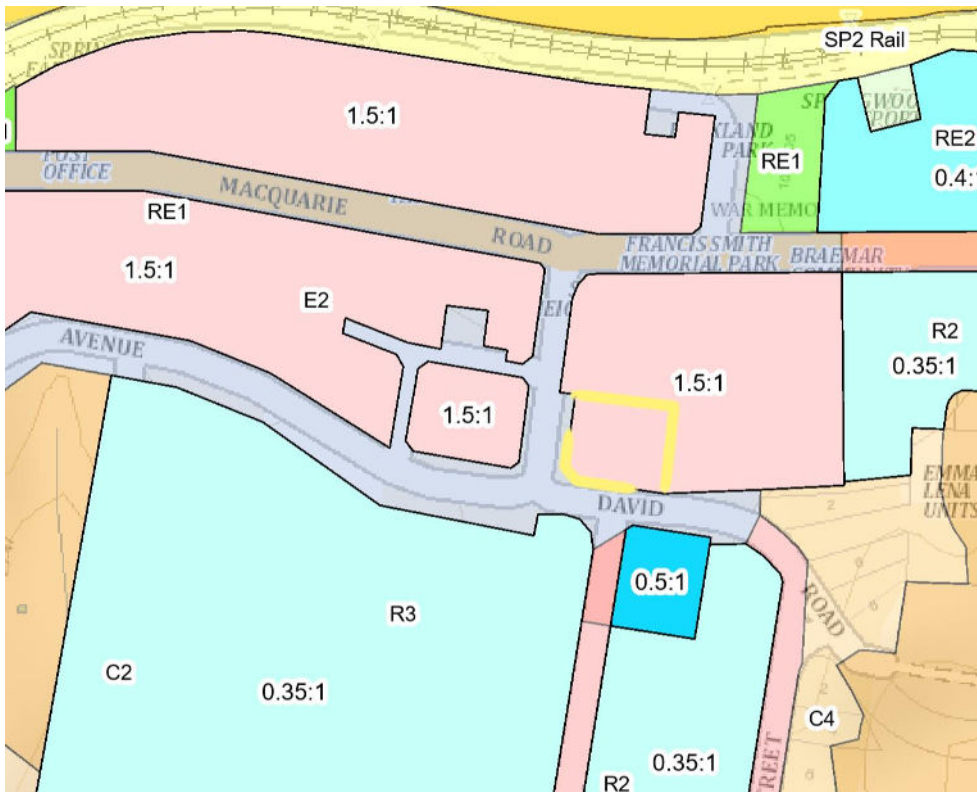


Figure 1-17 - Floor Space Ratio Map

This shows 1.5:1 as the FSR. The development is well within this floorspace limit.



Figure 1-18 - Height of Buildings Map

This shows the consistent use of the 9m limit throughout the commercial centre and also in the R3 zone to the south. The development breaches this height limit as will be further discussed.

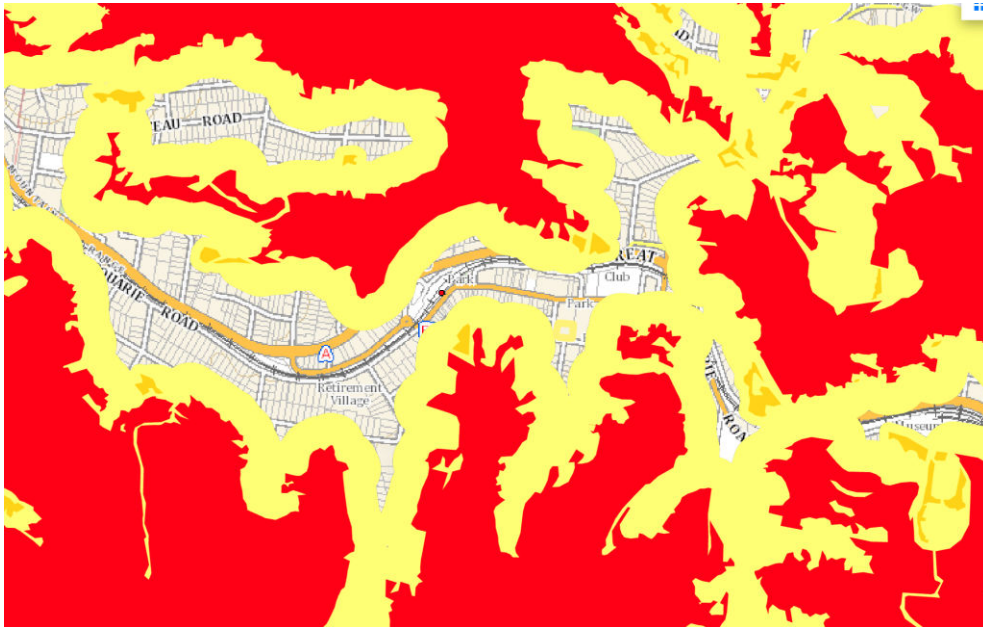


Figure 1-19 - Bushfire Map – Context

The site is fractionally outside the mapped buffer area as shown on the detail below. Nevertheless the mapping demonstrates the well-known fire issues in the Blue Mountains. In particular, fire can isolate parts of the individual communities. The ridge-top location makes urban development vulnerable to fire, in particular during Extreme and Catastrophic bushfire days. Prudently, the impact of bushfire events should be considered in the review of this DA. There is a general duty to assess social, economic and environmental impacts, whether or not they are addressed by specific legislation or policy. In other words, just because there is not a statutory trigger, doesn't mean an issue isn't significant.

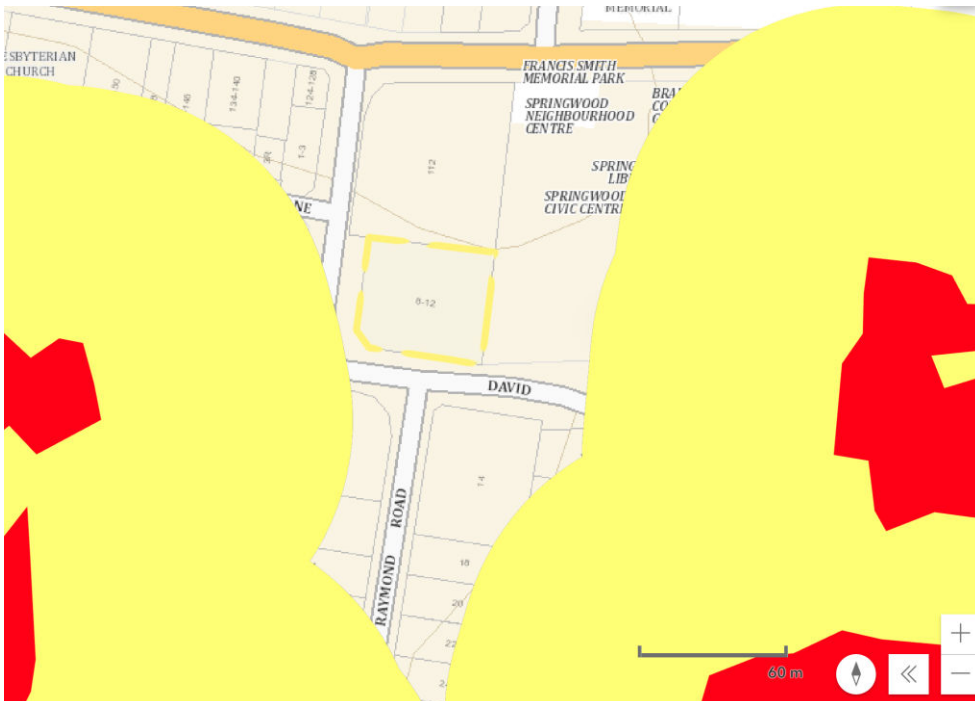


Figure 1-20 - Bushfire Mapping – Detail

This demonstrates that is an accident of cadastre with the unusually wide road reserve west of the former IGA which means that the site is not formally identified as bushfire prone. This does not mean the land is not affected by bushfire.

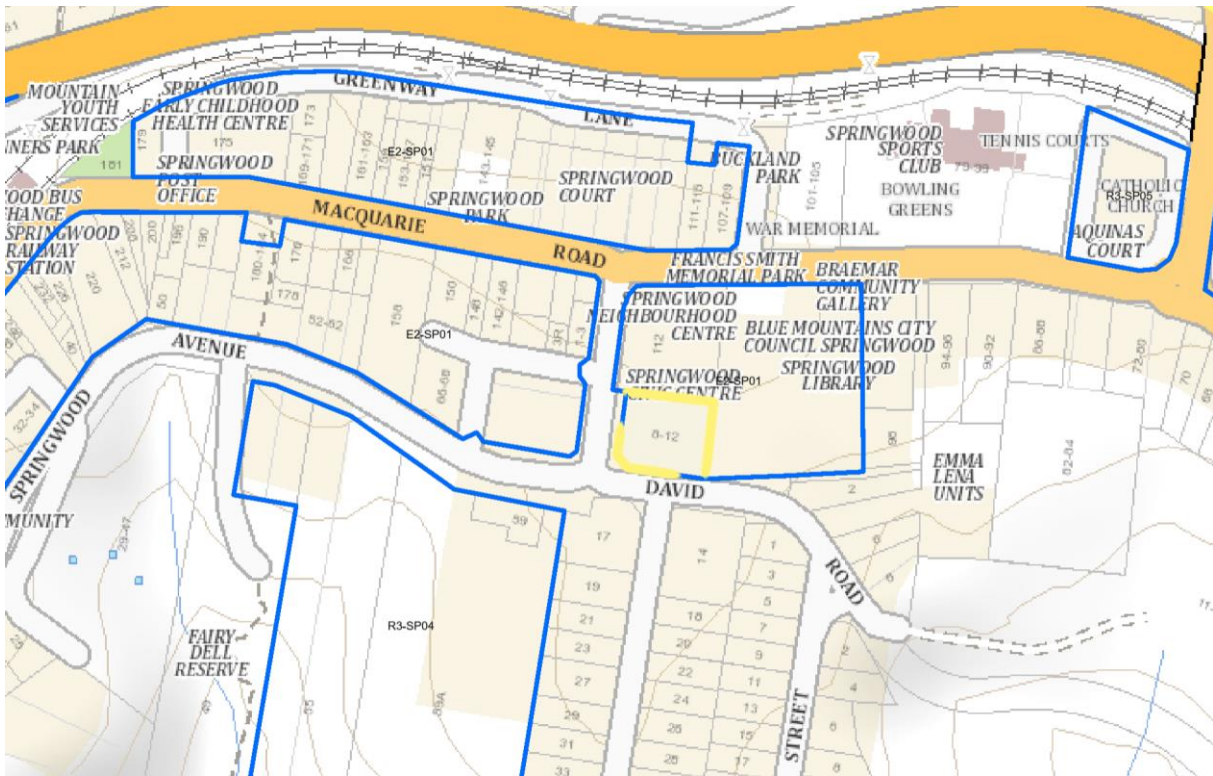


Figure 1-21 - Built Character Map

The land is within the built character map, which calls up Clause 7.11. This is further addressed in the part of the submission relating to statutory compliance.

2 Details of the Proposal

2.1 Use of the land

The land is currently used for an Hotel and a former IGA supermarket, together with parking.

2.2 Details of the Development

Full details are available in the SEE. In summary, the development includes:

- 3489.8m² supermarket (up from IGA at 1,200m²)
- Specialty retail 83m²
- 160 parking spaces (including 5 direct to boot). This includes a provision of 22 spaces for the hotel.
- Integrated development – Groundwater issues
- Capital value \$33,471,000 including GST
- Statutory authority – Sydney Western Planning Panel

3 General Considerations under the EP&A Act

The EPA Act is the guiding legislation, with the following objectives:

The objects of this Act are as follows—

- (a) to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment by the proper management, development and conservation of the State’s natural and other resources,
- (b) to facilitate ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment,
- (c) to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land,

- (d) to promote the delivery and maintenance of affordable housing,
- (e) to protect the environment, including the conservation of threatened and other species of native animals and plants, ecological communities and their habitats,
- (f) to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage),
- (g) to promote good design and amenity of the built environment,
- (h) to promote the proper construction and maintenance of buildings, including the protection of the health and safety of their occupants,
- (i) to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning and assessment between the different levels of government in the State,
- (j) to provide increased opportunity for community participation in environmental planning and assessment.

These objectives are very germane to the development and should be kept in mind during the assessment process. As mentioned, it is often convenient to look at what might be considered the “non-discretionary statutory pathway” as the only matters to be considered. However, when we look at the assessment criteria under the Act we see:

(1) **Matters for consideration—general** In determining a development application, a consent authority is to take into consideration such of the following matters as are of relevance to the development the subject of the development application—

- (a) the provisions of—
 - (i) any environmental planning instrument, and
 - (ii) any proposed instrument that is or has been the subject of public consultation under this Act and that has been notified to the consent authority (unless the Planning Secretary has notified the consent authority that the making of the proposed instrument has been deferred indefinitely or has not been approved), and
 - (iii) any development control plan, and
 - (iiia) any planning agreement that has been entered into under section 7.4, or any draft planning agreement that a developer has offered to enter into under section 7.4, and
 - (iv) the regulations (to the extent that they prescribe matters for the purposes of this paragraph),
 - (v) (Repealed)

that apply to the land to which the development application relates,

- (b) the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,
- (c) the suitability of the site for the development,
- (d) any submissions made in accordance with this Act or the regulations,
- (e) the public interest.

This reinforces the above point and again sets the frame for assessment. This submission follows the above framework.

4 Review under Section 4.15 of the EP&A Act – Matters for Consideration

4.1 Characterisation of the Use

The use consists of a retail development. This is permissible with consent.

4.2 State Environmental Planning Policies

No specific issues are raised other than those already set out in the SEE.

4.3 Strategic Planning Documents

The following strategic planning documents have been identified as relevant to the development, as they inform the key aspects of assessing the likely impact of the development and the suitability of the site:

4.3.1 Blue Mountains Local Strategic Planning Statement

This identifies the following enduring local planning principles:

- **Limiting urban expansion** This principle is generally supported by the current population projections which are fairly flat, and even declining in some areas. This has implications for the asserted trade area population and population growth which appears overstated.
- **Managing the environment** This supports increased densities around transport nodes and services and reinforces sustainable modes of transport. This has implications for the trade area reach of the proposal, which is well beyond the primary Springwood trade area. This will tend to exacerbate car travel in the lower mountains due to the dependency on the secondary trade areas, in particular to the west.
- **Meeting housing and social needs** this is relevant to the proposal in that it supports mixed use centres. This proposal is a straight retail development.
- **Protecting town and residential character** This are key issues and stress the importance of conserving locally significant character and heritage elements, including responding to recognised character and heritage values. In our submission the development fails to appropriately reflect heritage values, and does not contribute to the village character. This is further detailed later in the submission.
- **Promoting local employment** This element promotes sensitive local employment. While the development would be a significant employer, this would likely come at the expense, in part, of local small business employment. Refer to the economic report prepared by Bull and Bear.
- **Providing sustainable transport and access** This goes to urban form. The development does not include a residential component, and does not integrate residential and non-residential land uses. Mixed use developments have benefits in providing activity and surveillance and creating a stronger sense of vibrancy in a centre. The development would not impact on the extent of urban development, but does not promote sustainable access due to its very wide trade area draw. In addition, the development is not bus, cycle or pedestrian friendly. The development would not negatively impact on access to housing or public buildings, other than through additional congestion which would impact on access to the Hub.

Springwood is identified as Area 4 and a town centre.

The Blue Mountains Sustainability Model is referenced. This focuses on improvements to the quality of life. It talks to a lighter touch on the land, and ecologically sustainable development. In our submission the development is over-scale for its context, even within a town centre, and it would be preferable from a planning perspective for retail demand to be enhanced in the secondary trade areas, providing local containment, while the subject development is sized appropriately for a tighter trade area.

The 20 year vision highlights:

- Sustainable living
- Respond to the world heritage setting
- Hosting a centre of excellence
- Responding to climate change and bushfire with engagement with Traditional Owners (custodians)
- Key town centres enhanced and revitalised, with greater housing choice, walkability, and connection for local community.

- An evolving “Blue Mountains Style” for building design, quality and built form.

These aspirations have led to a series of local planning priorities. These are:

1. Living sustainably in the City within a World Heritage National Park
2. **Managing bushfire risk** and responding to climate change in our unique environment
3. Planning for the increased well-being of our community
4. Strengthening Creativity, Culture and the Blue Mountains as a ‘City of the Arts’
5. **Conserving and enhancing heritage, character and liveability**
6. Meeting the diverse housing needs of our community
7. **Sustaining a healthy local economy**, including a focus on Katoomba as our Strategic Centre
8. Leading destination management and sustainable tourism
9. Improving local transport connections and **accessibility, including walking and cycling**

Of these, the ones highlighted in bold are considered relevant to the development. These will be further addressed. Key take outs for the development of this site from the detail of these are:

- Responding to the need to reduce urban heat islands
- Maintaining waterway health
- Sustainable use, management and planning of urban areas in particular reducing carbon footprint
- Ensuring development is responsive to bushfire threat, and located so as to reduce interface issues with fire
- The importance of the site in promoting a connected community
- Preserving the built heritage and overall character, including the “small town” character. Towns and streetscapes must be part of ongoing place-making opportunities.
- The economy needs to be diverse, robust and inclusive, based on sustainable businesses and enhanced self-containment within the City.
- Retail serves both residents and tourists. The Urbis study identified different needs in different areas. Lack of a full-line supermarket was identified as a need in Springwood and Blaxland
- The “main street” shopping experience needs to be maintained.
- Provide greater pedestrian and cycling connections, and more equitable access to stations, shops and services.
- Hawkesbury Road at Springwood is an identified congestion area.
- Reduce the demand for car travel in the Blue Mountains.
- Usable biking and walking networks.
- Recognise the multi-functional role of streets.
- Prioritise pedestrian links, especially in town centres.

These are all addressed in this submission.

Under the LSPS, Springwood is identified in the Structure Plan as a Strategic Centre. A key traffic congestion point is noted, as is the significance of the Springwood Hub.

This document highlights a number of key areas of focus for future development. A full-line supermarket was acknowledged as a need. From a retail planning perspective, this is linked more to the number of lines, than the floorspace. Typically, a full-line supermarket would stock some 21,000 lines, and this can be conducted in around 1700m² of floor space provided the business model does not rely on shelving to provide significant stock reserves. With appropriate delivery models, it is quite feasible to meet consumer choice needs in this amount of floorspace, noting that diversity and competition within a centre will further enhance choice. For this to occur it is critical that the new entrant not threaten the viability of the existing supermarket.

It also reinforces the need for development to respond to the bushfire environment, which is a matter not addressed in material submitted with the DA.

Pedestrian connectivity emerges as a key theme, as does the vital role of streetscape, and character. Development needs to facilitate pedestrian connectivity, in particular where there are challenges of slope. The site offers a real opportunity for the use of travellers to integrate the supermarket effectively with the town centre, through the Oriental Hotel site. An active streetscape can and should have been provided on all frontages.

While there is a strong push for multi-functional centres, the current proposal is retail only. That is not necessarily to be discouraged, however a more modest floorspace would create opportunities for integrating housing into the development site.

Heritage needs to be recognised. The iconic Oriental Hotel is the dominant building in the heritage precinct, and notwithstanding unsympathetic changes and additions, can be re-imagined to be a central draw piece for the town centre. Concerns regarding heritage impacts are discussed later in the submission.

Car based travel will not be minimised by a development with excessive draw. In addition to trips from and to the Centre, there is the issue of local circulation and the existing problems with Great Western Highway access and congestion within the town centre that is already occurring. Again, an appropriately scaled retail offer would enhance community containment. To some degree there is, however, benefit in “claw back” of expenditure from Winmalee, where the Coles, at some 3300m² provides an offer unavailable at present in Springwood. For this reason an improved supermarket offer is desirable in achieving this aim.

4.4 Springwood Masterplan 2018

The Springwood Masterplan is a significant document, as the key expression of policy with respect to the Springwood Town Centre. Based on extensive community consultation it should be considered as a key guide to what “design excellence” means in the context of Springwood. Essentially it provides the “merit lens” to the application, in terms of the general obligations under the EPA Act in assessing development.

Key elements of the Masterplan have been abstracted and are presented below with commentary on the degree to which the development achieves them:

Reduce car dependence and enhance pedestrian connectivity

It is submitted that this is not achieved by the development. In particular, the development is strongly car-oriented with poor pedestrian connectivity to the town centre, and a significant trade area that would serve to bring additional traffic into Springwood. Recovery of escape expenditure to Winmalee would not reduce actual trip-making, however would result in those trips being shorter, local trips with a different pattern of impacts on the road network. This would be a benefit in terms of reduced vehicle kilometres, but this would need to be offset against the additional trips drawn into the Springwood centre.

Town centre that is vibrant with “buzz”

Springwood, currently is a vibrant centre, with strong pedestrian high street traffic, and a reasonably diverse offer. To the degree that the proposal puts at threat various existing business sectors, such as fresh food, groceries, flowers etc the development would not support this aim. In the Location ID economic study it is noted that the overall estimated impact from the proposal is nearly 12%. In retail planning terms, a 10% impact is the general rule of thumb for an impact being significant. In addition, this is even more critical in a catchment with no or very limited population growth where it is not possible to “grow into” an over-provision of floorspace. In the economic analysis by Bull and Bear they point out that the impact would not be evenly spread across the business sector within Springwood, but would disproportionately impact “competitor” businesses. Impacts could easily be in the order of 20% on vulnerable sectors when viewed in this way, and potentially over 30% if existing businesses fail, which is likely.

Reinforce multi-function centre

As a straight retail development (noting the hotel essentially continues unchanged in its operations) the proposal fails to reinforce a multi-function centre. If appropriately sized, there is potential to include other development types into the site.

Quality public domain

There are key aspects to this, in particular vegetated corridors, avenue planting, and general “greening” of the town centre. The development is consistent with the Greater Sydney 2022 mapping, however offers no further amenity. In part this is due to the over-crowded nature of the site, which has resulted in significant built forms, with rooftop parking which severely limits landscaping options. The plaza to Raymond Road is quite barren and does not provide, in our submission, a quality public domain interface to Raymond Road.

In addition to the vegetative aspects, there is the question of active street frontages. While the Oriental Hotel frontage remains and can be considered improved as an active frontage, the same cannot be said for David Road in particular, notwithstanding the nominal retail tenancy on the corner with Raymond Road. Further, the Raymond Road entry makes at best a marginal contribution to the public domain in terms of active frontage contribution. The need to make multiple crossings of Raymond Road to access this entry from Macquarie Road suggest its role will likely be fairly minimal except from people also visiting Raymond Mall, opposite.

Community/village atmosphere

We submit that the development does not contribute to this atmosphere, as it is designed to internalise shopping, not to integrate with the town centre. It does not contribute, as outlined above, to the public realm to any substantive degree.

“Green” centre – Native tree avenue Raymond Rd; biodiversity David Street

The development does not facilitate either of these outcomes. In part this is due to the constrained nature of Raymond Road on the eastern side, and the need to protect the curtilage of the hotel. See also notes above.

Maximise views, openness

The use of roof-top parking, without shade sails, does mean that there is a reduced impact on views when compared to other built form possibilities, noting that there are significant intrusions above the 9m height limit. The development is fully internal, and does not take advantage of any outlook. The views to and openness currently surrounding the Oriental Hotel will be significantly impeded.

Public art

None appears to be proposed.

Historically respectful

See comments on the heritage study. In brief, the proposal “crowds” the Hotel, and the extensive carparking with very limited vegetation does not provide a sympathetic curtilage to the Hotel. See figure below.

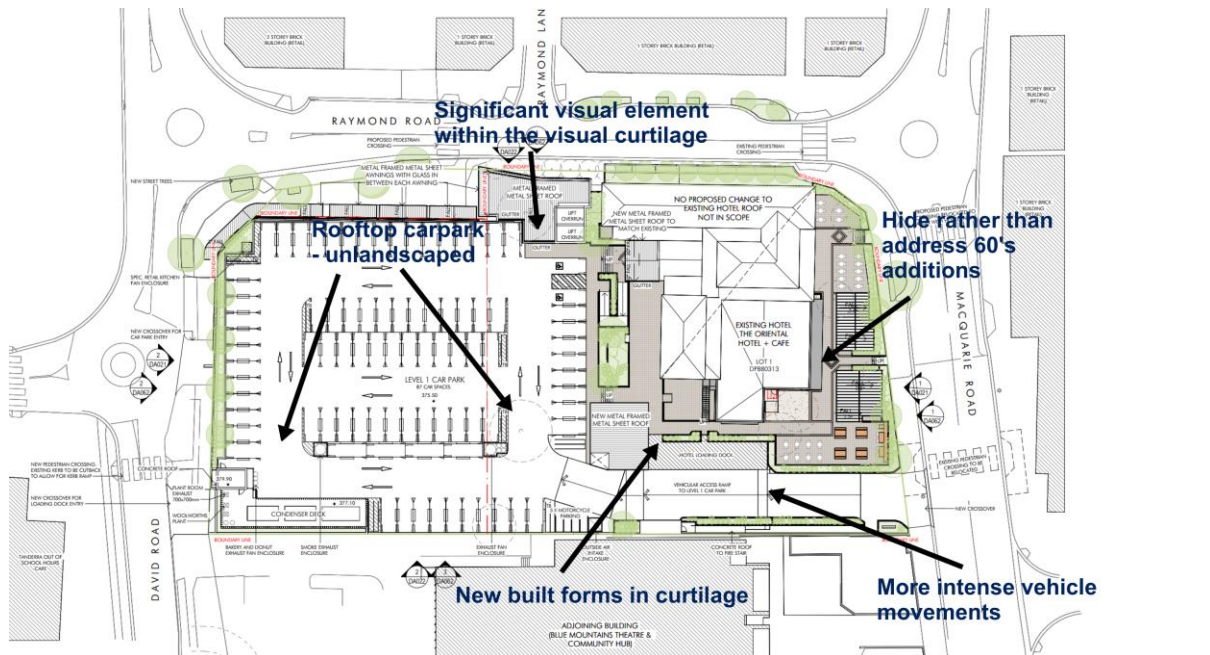


Figure 4-1 - Key heritage impacts

Low-rise built form investigate for higher – This, in part, is for when mixed use developments are being considered. In principle, exceeding the height limit on David Road may be acceptable, subject to how the development presents. At present, this is “back of house”.

Greenery in/around buildings- This aim is not significantly achieved, with the Hotel, in particular, largely losing its current vegetated context.

Very open frontages/active frontages – Not provided. See earlier comments.

Site reflects importance as primary point of arrival – The development presents its “back of house” to the key frontage to the south, and does not contribute in a positive way to a sense of arrival to the Springwood Town Centre.

Site is opportunity site for fine-grained character - This is not evident in the current design. While it is far from being a “basic box” as is so often the case, the lack of meaningful active street frontage has meant that it is not of fine-grained character.

CPTED Safe Zone – The lack of active frontages limits CPTED achievement. Further, lift lobbies and the associated stairwells may create CPTED issues.

Pedestrian friendly zone (all 3 road frontages) – This is not achieved, see other comments.

Intersection issues (Raymond/Springwood/David) – Some changes are proposed, however it is suggested that these will not be positive in terms of this intersection. See also comments on traffic study.

On proposed additional bus route – This is positive, however the Raymond Road frontage makes no provision for the possibility of a bus stop.

Widened footpath treatment/parking removal – This is not part of scope of this development.

Investigation site for renewal/Town centre expansion – The current site is in need of renewal, and additional supermarket offer is needed in Springwood. See, however, comments on scale of this.

4.5 Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015

The objectives of the zone are relevant, noting the development is permissible.

4.5.1 Objectives of the Zone

The objectives of the zone are:

1 Objectives of zone

- To strengthen the role of the commercial centre as the centre of business, retail, community and cultural activity.
- To encourage investment in commercial development that generates employment opportunities and economic growth.
- To encourage development that has a high level of accessibility and amenity, particularly for pedestrians.
- To enable residential development only if it is consistent with the Council's strategic planning for residential development in the area.
- To ensure that new development provides diverse and active street frontages to attract pedestrian traffic and to contribute to vibrant, diverse and functional streets and public spaces.
- To promote the unique character of each of the towns and villages of the Blue Mountains.

While the proposal meets the technical test of consistency with the zone objectives, we note that the impact of the development would be mixed in terms of strengthening the role of the centre, and on employment overall. The proposal does not have a high level of accessibility and amenity, particularly for pedestrians. Strategic planning does support mixed uses, which is not provided for in the development. Diverse and active street frontages are not provided, and the development does not contribute to functional streets and public spaces. Finally, it does not appear to be of a character that reflects Springwood, in particular its heritage.

4.6 Specific LEP Clauses

4.6.1 Clause 5.10 Heritage Conservation

This issue has been discussed elsewhere in this submission. In summary, our submission is that in exercising its role under (4), the consent authority has discretion to form a view regarding the heritage impacts of the proposal, noting in particular concerns around impacts on the curtilage of, and views to the Oriental Hotel, to the effect that the heritage impacts are unacceptable.

4.6.2 Clause 6.9 Stormwater Management

This is an issue for the site, due to its drainage into a sensitive environmental area. The development application does not address the requirements of this clause. In our submission any development should be conditioned to require both stormwater quality and quantity management. That being said it is noted that the overall increase in impermeable areas is modest. Key attention, both during construction and operation, therefore needs to be on water quality. In this regard it is submitted that the erosion and sedimentation control information on the Civil Plans is inadequate. There will be particular challenges during major storm events during the excavation portion of the construction.

4.6.3 Clause 6.14 Earthworks

This clause again is not given specific consideration. Refer to previous comments on the Geotech and groundwater reports which highlight key issues. While it is submitted that the Geotech report is generally sound, detailed conditions are essential on any approval to specifically address (3) and the associated sub-points.

4.6.4 Clause 6.19 Design Excellence

Design excellence is critical to the success of the development of this site. In our submission the development fails to achieve site excellence as set out below:

- (a) whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved,

Comment: We submit this has not been achieved, most notably in the lack of a fine-grained response to the active frontages, the concentration of back of house on David Road, and the lack of well-articulated pedestrian pathways through the site.

- (b) whether the form and external appearance of the development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain

Comment: See above. We submit that the development will not improve the quality and amenity of the public domain, in particular on the David Road frontage.

- (c) whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors

Comment: The development would negatively affect view corridors to the Oriental Hotel.

- (d) whether the development detrimentally impacts on any land protected by solar access controls established in the Blue Mountains DCP

Comment: Complies

- (e) the requirements of the Blue Mountains DCP

Comment: See comments on the DCP compliance table provided by the proponent.

- (f) how the development addresses the following matters

- (i) the suitability of the land for development,

Comment: The development is suitable for a supermarket of appropriate scale, however the limitations imposed by the existing heritage item pose significant constraints on the intensity of development that is realistically achievable.

- (ii) existing and proposed uses and use mix,

Comment: The development is a pure retail development. See comments elsewhere in this submission about mixed use.

- (iii) heritage issues and streetscape constraints,

Comment: See previous comments on heritage issues and streetscape, particularly in the context of the Springwood Masterplan.

- (iv) the relationship of the development with other development (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,

Comment: The development does not relate effectively to the Oriental Hotel (see heritage comments) in particular by failing to ensure adequate separation of buildings. The development relates poorly to the residential area to the south, although it does address the Raymond Mall across Raymond Road. Pedestrian amenity is poor, and the urban form in terms of the southern façade fails to achieve an appropriate entry statement to the Springwood Town Centre.

- (v) bulk, massing and modulation of buildings,

Comment: The development is of excessive mass and bulk for the site, notwithstanding meeting the FSR. Modulation is very poor, as noted in previous comments.

- (vi) street frontage heights,

Comment: The development proposes a breach of building heights in two areas as outlined on the figure below. In the overall strategic context, however, these can be considered minor, although the architectural treatment of the breaches could be given further consideration, in particular noting the Springwood Masterplan intent to set back higher levels from the streetscape.

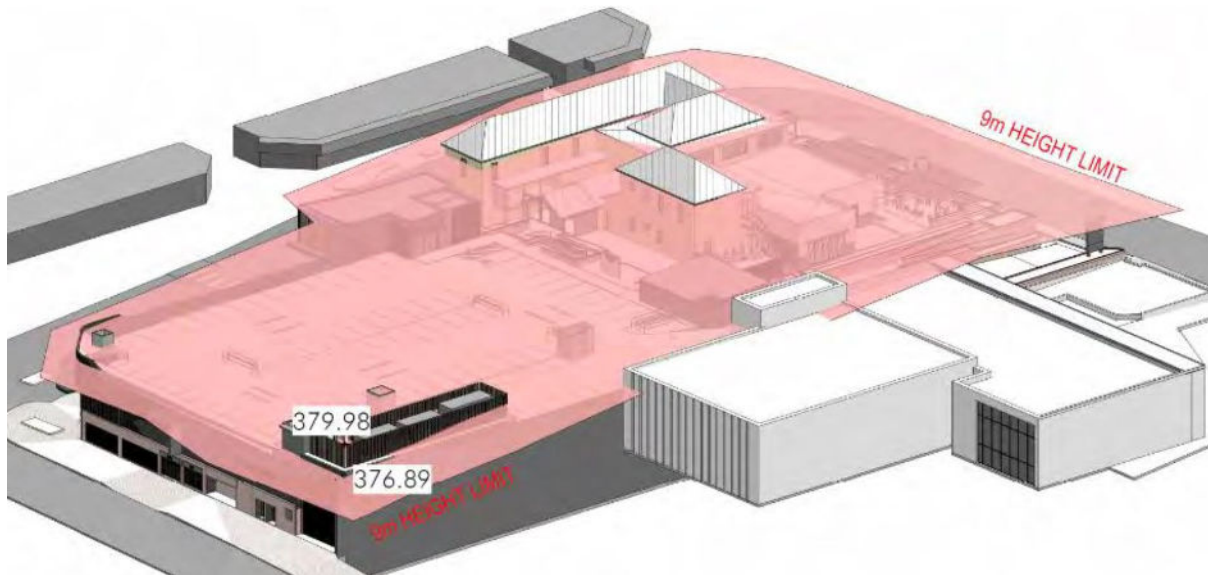


Figure 4-2 - Height limit breaches

- (vii) environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity,

Comment: These would appear to be generally satisfactory at a building level, noting the impacts of the development in encouraging additional car traffic into Springwood.

- (viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,

Comment: See above.

- (ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements,

Comment: As detailed extensively throughout this submission, there are major concerns with all these areas.

- (x) the impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain.

Comment: See comments elsewhere in this submission. In short, although the development would improve a situation with respect to a vacant site, the development fails to provide anything other than minor improvements to the public domain.

In summary, it is our submission that the development fails to achieve design excellence as set out in this clause.

4.6.5 Clause 6:20 Active Street Frontages

The development fails to comply with this clause, despite the token retail provision on the corner of David Road and Raymond Road, and the entry from Raymond Road. While it is noted that an active frontage is not required for vehicle access areas, there are significant portions of the David Road frontage that are not directly required for access.

4.6.6 Clause 6.21 Sustainable Resource Management

Concern is expressed that an overall impact of the development would be an increase in car travel, which would not contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Total water cycle management is difficult to achieve on the site, in part due to groundwater contamination. Waste avoidance and minimisation can be conditioned to a degree. It is noted that a significant excavation with significant off-site movement of spoil is a product of the site design.

4.6.7 Clause 6.23 Essential Services

This is a specific matter for consideration, but is capable of conditioning.

4.6.8 Clause 7.11 Springwood Precinct

The built character clause is a key clause for the consideration of this development. Comments are provided below on the specific objectives:

(1) The objectives for development on land identified as “Springwood Precinct E2-SP01” on the *Built Character Map* are as follows—

(a) to maintain and enhance the distinctive traditional pattern of continuous retail terraces interspersed by landmark buildings,

Comment: In terms of the frontage to Macquarie Road it is considered that this is achieved. It does not, however, enhance this pattern on either Raymond Road or David Road. It is noted that the enhanced driveway off Macquarie Road would interfere more with pedestrian traffic, including to the Hub, than the present driveway.

(b) to maximise the diversity of retail and other business-related services provided primarily to local communities,

Comment: To an extent this is achieved in that it improves the supermarket offer, which is needed, however as set out in our the part of the submission on economic impact, the proposal may in fact reduce diversity if it out-competes other businesses in the centre with an overlapping offer. Small businesses, in particular, are quite vulnerable to the market power of major entrants, unless the scale and scope of that entrant’s offer is appropriate.

(c) to accommodate permanent residents in shop top housing that promotes housing choice, incorporates high levels of residential amenity and encourages passive surveillance of streets and other public places,

Comment: Not achieved.

(d) to encourage increases in floor space that are consistent with the desired appearance and functions of the town centre and to which public access is provided via streets, laneways or car park frontages, rather than indoor arcades,

Comment: Concern is expressed that the development is not consistent with either the appearance of the town centre, or its relation to streetscape as an internally focussed development.

(e) to encourage building forms and designs that are consistent or compatible with the scale and architectural character of existing buildings constructed during the early 20th century,

Comment: Not achieved.

(f) to maintain the established village character and modest scale of existing development,

Comment: Not achieved.

(g) to control building heights to maintain existing National Park vistas from public places and to follow the line of sloping topography on hillside sites,

Comment: Generally achieved noting comments elsewhere in the submission.

(h) to provide landscaped frontages along Springwood Avenue.

Comment: Not relevant, however by extension, there would logically be a continuation into David Road.

4.6.9 Summary of Statutory Review

In summary, in our submission, the development fails to achieve the outcomes set out in the key statutory provisions applying to the site.

5 Development Control Plan

The Blue Mountains DCP 2015 applies to the land. This section is limited to a brief commentary on the compliance table included in the SEE. Most of the issues have been addressed elsewhere in the submission.

- There is a need for a preliminary construction traffic management plan. This should not be deferred, due to the very significant traffic impacts associated with a significant excavation.
- The application is inconsistent with respect to parking rate compliance. Overall the shortfall has not been justified sufficiently.
- Circulation routes need to include movements between the two parking areas. This has not been addressed.
- Separation of service vehicles is not achieved with the Oriental Hotel. It is considered that an appropriate site design could potentially achieve this.
- Bicycle parking should also be considered on the rooftop parking.
- Pedestrian travel is poorly developed in terms of an effective connection from the supermarket to Macquarie Road.
- CPTED has been previously addressed.
- Signage – The restriction to six signs in the DCP is considered reasonable.
- Additional active street frontage to David Road and Raymond Road should be considered. The lobby is not considered to provide true active street frontage, except for the actual entrance doors and immediate area behind.
- Removal of canopy trees has not been sufficiently compensated for in the proposed landscaping.
- Increased use of the Oriental Hotel driveway is contrary to the DCP and will significantly increase pedestrian hazard as well as create potential bottle-necks in particular when right hand out movements are proposed, which may instead lead to additional loadings on the roundabout in Macquarie Road. Moving the pedestrian crossing west of the driveway will lose the current traffic breaks provided by the crossing which facilitate exit movements.
- Insufficient consideration has been given to pedestrian movements, both within the site and around it.

5.1 Bushfire Prone Land

In our submission this remains a significant, and unaddressed issue, noting that the land is not technically bushfire prone. In particular, given this is the Blue Mountains, this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Our concerns are based on several issues. The development would provide an extra 2,300m² of floorspace. This contributes to an additional 95 spaces with an extra 190 movements from the lower carpark in the peak hour.

Firstly, the development would draw people to Springwood from the wider trade area who may lack a close familiarity with the local road network. According to residents, David Road and Springwood Avenue have been known to have significant numbers of fire appliances operating during a fire event.

Secondly, on Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger days, the access to the site is vulnerable, and traffic seeking to evacuate the site potentially in unfamiliar circumstances is likely to add significantly to issues of access and egress. A worst-case scenario would see a fire event in the valley affected by a southerly change, which would rapidly push it up to the ridge-line, creating a high hazard situation.

In summary, there is a need to ensure a competent bushfire management plan with any proposed development of the site.

5.2 The public interest

On balance, the development is not considered to be in the public interest.

5.3 Conclusions

The proposal should be refused in its current form. If an approval is granted, it is requested that it be conditioned to address the recommendations made in this submission.

6 Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

AEP – Annual exceedance probability – This refers to the probability of a given flood occurring in any year. For example a 1% AEP flood has a 1% chance of occurring in any year.

DCP – Development Control Plan – Detailed local planning guidelines that work within the context of the Local Environmental Plan.

ET – Equivalent Tenement – the level of demand for water and sewer of the average single household dwelling.

Flood Hazard – Flood hazard is usually defined by the likely depth and velocity of water in a defined flood event. Flood hazard classifications are set out in the NSW Flood Risk Management Guide. H1 is generally safe for people, vehicles and buildings; H2 is unsafe for small vehicles; H3 is defined as unsafe for vehicles, children and the elderly; H4 is unsafe for vehicles and people; H5 is unsafe for vehicles and people and buildings need special engineering; H6 is considered unsafe for vehicles, people, and all buildings are vulnerable to failure.

FPL – Flood Planning Level – A level that floors of new buildings need to achieve to be approved in flood areas. Traditionally this has been the 1% AEP flood (formerly known as the 1 in 100 flood).

LEP – Local Environmental Plan – A series of statutory controls over land use that have the force of law. The LEP establishes the land use zones and includes a number of clauses dealing with specific development types and issues.

LGA – Local Government Area – The area controlled by a local Council, such as Murray River Council.

Masterplan – A comprehensive plan, generally for a complex development, which sets out the way the development is intended to develop over time.

MLS – Minimum lot size – Generally the smallest lot within a zone where a dwelling may be built. Usually this is provided as a lot size map in the LEP.

PMF – Probable maximum flood – Refers to the largest flood that is theoretically possible based on catchment size and estimated maximum possible rainfall.

SEPPs – State Environmental Planning Policies – These include policies relating to particular land uses, as well as establishing development standards for many development types which (generally) override Council's LEP.

Structure Plan – A generalised plan showing where the main land uses might occur in a development area.

Urban Growth Boundary – Defines an area where rezonings and subdivisions for urban and related lifestyle living areas can be considered. This generally looks to a 20 year planning horizon.

Zone - A coloured area on the LEP map that shows where particular groups of land uses are allowed. For example there are a number of residential zones that permit differing types and densities of residential development.