

LEXINGTON DRIVE, BELLA VISTA

ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSE TO THE BELLA VISTA STATION PRECINCT PROPOSAL

25 February 2016



Introduction

This report is an architectural response to the Bella Vista Station Precinct Proposal by the Department of Planning And Environment.

The sites in question are 1-3 Meridian Place, 13-15 Lexington Drive, 17-19 Lexington Drive, and 21-23 Lexington Drive, between Woolworths Way and Meridian Place, Bella Vista.

The Precinct Proposal outlines a range of changes in height, FSR and land use as a response to the new rail station, currently under construction.

The subject site is currently intended to be capped in height at RL 128 (38m to 51m, due to steep topography), provided with an FSR of 2:1, and zoned B7 Business Park (residential not permitted).

The current uses on the sites include a tavern, warehousing with associated offices, and a vacant lot. All lots are not currently attaining their highest and best use, and the owners wish to implement a strategy that reflects the objectives and changes being undertaken within the precinct and surroundings.

Aims of the Precinct Proposal

The Precinct Proposal intends bringing an urban intensification around the station, and to generate a mix of uses, including residential and commercial.

The Precinct Proposal includes FSRs of up to 3:1 and 4:1, heights up to 68m, and a mix of land uses.

A finer grain of through site connections is also envisioned.

A respect to heritage views is also to be considered.

Site Location

The subject site is located between 390m and 720m of the proposed station. As such it is ideally positioned to provide a mix of uses, including residential.

The current Precinct Proposal locates the major element of High Density Residential at a distance greater than 800m from the station, which is counter to the intent typically in locating increased density close to existing and proposed stations.

Proposition

Included with this report are drawings outlining an alternative proposition for the site that meets the objectives of the Precinct Proposal.

The drawings reflect a total FSR of 3:1 (2:1 residential and 1:1 commercial).

The building heights generally conform to the height control of 68m.

The mix of uses incorporates retail at ground, commercial, and residential, with sleeved podium parking. The tavern is proposed to be retained at the southern end of the site adjacent to Woolworths Way. All other existing buildings are to be demolished.

The built form is predicated on a landscaped podium that defines the street and through site links, while also providing activation. The silhouette to the sky is given articulation by towers of varying heights and proportions.

There are two large, publicly accessible plazas that are activated with retail. One of these marks a new through site link (in accordance with the Precinct Proposal) that provides permeability to future developments adjacent, and through to the Green Link.

This approach to the ground plane has been possible by considering the four sites together, and has provided the opportunity for meaningful public benefit, and a freeing up of the ground plane.



There will be large amounts of deep soil that will provide WSUD benefits, as well as deliver large scale landscaping opportunities.

As such, the built form proposal, taken with the landscape proposition, maintains the approach of a business park type setting (buildings in the landscape), while incorporating elements of urbanity for the pedestrian by way of clearly defined streets and plazas.

All of these suggested controls are commensurate with the site's location adjacent to the station, and as a major entry point to the new centre by car or on foot along Lexington Drive.

The location of the site will not impact on the views to and from Bella Vista Farm Park as the site is located to the almost immediate north, outside of the important view corridors. In addition, the current proposed 68m height control immediately behind the site will mean that buildings around the station will already be located within the same line of site.

Conclusion

Mixed use developments bring a 24/7 dynamism and vitality to precincts, ensuring that Bella Vista will not present with dormant streets and plazas in the evenings and weekends.

This is an opportunity to create an integrated suburb that incorporates residential uses without denigrating the opportunity for meaningful workplace uses.

The proposal included with this submission incorporates a good, cogent approach to urban design by being able to consider 4 large lots together. This integrated approach provides a large block of land that delivers a balance of open space and built form that grows from the current business park setting, and develops it into an urban language that respects the pedestrian.

The location of the site adjacent to the proposed station, taking into account the inappropriate nature of the current developments on the site, offers the opportunity for a higher density than is currently being considered, and a true integration of mixed uses.

We therefore propose that the controls should be amended to an FSR of 3:1, a height control of 68m, and a zoning of B2 Local Centre, in line with its location adjacent to the station.