



MONA VALE DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY MEMO

1.1 BACKGROUND

Kinesis was engaged by Pittwater Council to provide an analysis of the current conditions and development potential of Mona Vale with a focus on providing affordable housing.

This analysis provides:

- (1) an evidence base to demonstrate challenges and opportunities and
- (2) an outline of the approaches needed to deliver a substantial amount of affordable housing and housing choice in the centre

A decision to pursue these approaches will inform and influence the future vision.

Analysis of the development potential of four sites in Mona Vale centre was undertaken. A range of design options considered:

- retention of existing structures with development of underutilised land
- demolition and redevelopment of the entire site
- varying the amount and type of car parking,
- varying building heights for current controls.

The analysis showed these factors as well as the ownership pattern, existing zoning and specific housing types and choices taken together determined whether a development was viable and feasible.

The findings of this study showed that due to the sensitivity of the feasibility to this wide range of factors, and the particular characteristics of each site, each site needed to be considered individually and a generic adjustments to planning controls would be unlikely to achieve the desired outcome.

The analysis showed that it should be possible to achieve social and environmental objectives, but this will require a more proactive, site based approach by Council.



1.2 KEY FINDINGS

- **Affordable housing vs lower cost dwellings**

The analysis of the current condition shows that Mona Vale faces a challenge to retain young people. In addition to this, the demographic analysis shows that the largest group (29%) of the individual workforce is on the lowest income quartile. Considering that housing is the second biggest household expenditure after food, it is essential that the future strategy should include a form of affordable housing. The analysis shows that providing options for lower cost dwellings will not deliver affordable housing objectives. An integrated approach which includes some concessions and interventions for eligible intensified/redevelopment sites, is recommended to deliver the preferred outcome.

- **IN2 zone and it's potential for 'SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009' and/or New Generation Boarding House**

Pittwater has a high level of containment, 42% of employed local residents work within Pittwater and a further 18% work in neighbouring Warringah. Mona Vale IN2 zone is strategically located within a 400m radius of the town centre, which means that this area can share most of the amenities that the centre offers. Selected sites on Darley and Harkeith Streets have potential to continue the ground floor light industrial employment generating uses with potential opportunities to introduce affordable housing residential uses on the upper floors. This will require a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) amendment and negotiation with the Department of Planning & Environment. Affordable housing would be permitted, subject to; the consent authority being satisfied that it is provided in accordance with the objective of the zoning and the vision of the Mona Vale Place Plan; is compatible with existing, approved and permissible uses in the vicinity; comprises non-residential uses on the ground floor; and will not have an adverse effect on the environment.



- **Potential Redevelopment of B4 Zone**

Sites located within the B4 zones are not without challenges. Some of these sites are quite narrow, fine-grain, and consist of fragmented ownership. However, selected sites within the existing B4 zone have opportunities for intensification and/or redevelopment. The test sites show a common result for feasibility analysis. They are feasible and viable for Affordable Housing sites, but less viable as 'market' housing. The redevelopment of these sites is subject to the fulfilment of the zone objectives and protection of the existing retail and commercial space. Ground floor and first floor are generally allocated for non-residential uses.

- **Reduction of on-site car parking provision**

Pittwater Development Control Plan (DCP) 21 requires higher on-site car parking provision in comparison to Road and Maritime Services (RMS) and other Local Government Area (LGA) such as Warringah. Considering the cost of providing parking on-site, whether it is at grade or basement parking, the analysis shows that all test sites are neither feasible nor viable to comply with the current provision. In light of the Pittwater Council Active Transport Strategy vision, the centre will benefit from improved public transport services and walking/cycling infrastructure augmentation. Comprehensive car parking strategies that reduce on-site parking requirements in conjunction with the Active Transport Strategy are integral to housing affordability, and essential to foster sustainable growth in the long term.

- **Existing building height.**

The analysis shows that B4 zone height limit (13m or 4 storeys) does not comply with the revised height definitions in the Standard instrument and the recommended floor to floor dimension in the Apartment Design Guide. In light of the recent redevelopment pattern and the feasibility of selected



test sites, greater heights such as 6 storeys can be suggested where there is no adverse impact to amenity.

- **Block planning and site amalgamation**

During the analysis it has become clear that approaching renewal on a site by site basis has limitation and that approaching the design of entire street block may have significant urban design and financial benefits. There are a number of mechanisms that may be worth investigating further, including tradable development rights and 'land re-adjustment' techniques. The incentive/stimulus for such an approach would need to be a significant increase in land value, which could be achieved through changes to the permissible uses, floor space ratio, heights or a combination of all three. This concession will be subject to the fulfilment of the vision of the Mona Vale Place Plan, to express the existing Mona Vale fine-grain, human-scale and village character.

- **Opportunities for increasing housing diversity and density around the centre**

The study shows opportunities for updating Council planning controls to provide for an increase in density around the centre with providing extensions and/or modification to accommodate ancillary dwellings in the areas within a 1km radius of the centre. Existing R2 zone within a 400m radius of the town centre such as areas fronting Dygal Street, can also benefit from up-zoning to R3 to allow development of residential apartments.

- **Increased amenities within redevelopment sites**

The potential of roof terraces to provide common open space which would provide high amenity and have little impact on adjoining sites, should be considered and allowed for in the DCP.



1.3 CONCLUSION

In the course of testing the feasibility of both 'conventional market housing' and 'affordable housing' options, the need for changes to planning controls (additional permitted uses, building heights and roof terrace), strategic planning (car parking), and planning mechanisms for more holistic planning, has become apparent.

It is important to recognise and integrate the Affordable Housing State Environmental Policy into the planning for housing choice in Mona Vale. There is a great opportunity to tailor this policy within the LEP and DCP by definitive provisions in relation to height, car parking and other potential concessions.

1.4 POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK REQUIRED

- (1) Undertake further work to develop a policy which includes legal and planning processes for the delivery of affordable housing, and for Council's potential role and involvement.
- (2) Undertake more detailed feasibility costing for selected development sites that may engage local landowners via transparent and equitable processes defined in step (1).
- (3) Undertake an analysis of potential for value adding/sharing between local landowners and Council via S94 or other mechanisms.
- (4) Undertake more detailed demand and supply analysis of residential, employment and industrial lands in Mona Vale.
- (5) Undertake work to amend Council's Planning Controls including the discrepancies between existing and standard LEP definitions, and the incorporation of policy and strategic considerations.