

High rise proposal for Soldiers Point – submission guide

DA 2020-242, 7 level, 62 unit apartment building 118A Soldiers Point Rd
Key points for submissions, due by 5pm Monday 23 February 2021



Image from p20 of
Architectural Plans
– Appendix 2 to
the Statement of
Environmental
Effects (SoEE) for
DA 2020-242



LANDSCAPE IS INDICATIVE ONLY-
REFER LANDSCAPE PLANS FOR
PLANT SPECIES AND DETAILED LAYOUT

VIEW FROM CROSSING

PROJECT: 2020-242 DRAWING NO:
LOCATION: 118A SOLDIERS POINT SCALE: 1:50
CLIENT: SPDC DATE: 19/02/21
PROJECT NO: 2020 ISSUE: 1



Anyone with concerns about this proposed high rise development behind the Soldiers Point Club may want to make a submission by email to council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au citing DA 2020-242

For more information see <https://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/your-council/public-exhibition/development-applications-on-exhibition>

Key points are set out below in the summary and conclusion from TRRA's draft submission

Summary

The proposal is to replace an approved design for four lower apartment blocks with a single higher (7 level – 25 metre) building at the front (east) of the site, with 11 fewer units overall. The existing approval is for four separate buildings with a maximum height of 8 metres above ground level (the ones to the rear of the site would appear higher when viewed from some directions as the ground level slopes). The footprint and site coverage of the approved buildings would be much greater and the landscaped area much smaller. Some of the immediate neighbours to the west and north may consider the new design less intrusive, and there would be more landscaped open space.

The rationale given is that hard rock issues makes construction of the approved design difficult (presumably affecting the viability of the development). Having encountered site constraints, the developer is understandably keen to have an alternative design approved that maximises their potential return. However, Council should not be taking commercial viability into account in assessing this proposal. Council's decision should ultimately be on planning grounds alone.

The proponent argues that the new design will give a better overall outcome, with less impact on adjoining properties given a larger residual landscaped area at the rear of the new building. They admit that a benefit of the new design is 'to maximise views towards the water' (SoEE pp 3 &7)

The proponent argues that there will be 'no anticipated negative impacts on the locality...' and that 'The proposal is considered to be a suitable use of the site and within the public's best interest.' (p3)

TRRA disagrees with both these assertions.

We submit that the proposed 25 metre high building would have a significant negative impact. It is too high and 'blocky' to be sympathetic either to the immediate environment or to the existing and desired character of the wider area. It would be highly visible from long distances when observed from nearly all directions except possibly the north west. The Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix 22 to the SOEE) does not include any long distance views - a major omission.

Approval would also inevitably set a precedent which would encourage other landowners in the vicinity to apply for high buildings despite the LEP height limits for the Soldiers Point peninsula (almost entirely 9 metres). They would be able to use the precedent to make a case for major variations under clause 4.6, which Council has shown itself to be inclined to favour.

The proposed high building is not in our view a suitable use of the site and is not overall in the public interest. The community has been supportive of seniors housing on the site, but has also consistently argued that both the previously approved plans (and this re-design) are an over-development of the site and not in keeping with the existing or desired neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The SoEE asserts that:

'... there are no anticipated negative impacts on the locality as a result of the development.'; '... respecting the environment in which it is located.', and '...the proposal will have no significant impacts on the surrounding properties [to] that it is likely to adversely affect their enjoyment or amenity (p33)

TRRA strongly disagrees. The few immediate neighbours can speak for themselves, but we submit that the impact on the wider community will be seriously detrimental – significantly affecting, adversely, the local 'low-rise' character of the Soldiers Point area which is highly valued by residents and visitors alike.