

Revised plans for Melvista aged care home open for consultation

Oryx Communities' Development Application (DA) for the proposed Melvista aged care home in Nedlands is currently open for public consultation.

The DA was submitted in August to be assessed and determined directly by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), under a newly established approvals pathway for significant developments. Since August, the company's plans for the Melvista project have been through a series of stringent design reviews.

Oryx Communities has made a series of enhancements to the design in response to specialist advice by the State Design Review Panel and has subsequently provided 10 supportive ratings for each of the 10 key design principles – which is the highest assessment rating available.

Oryx Communities Director James Turnbull said the company had engaged collaboratively with the design review and assessment process for the Melvista project. "As a result, we have implemented a number of changes to our initial design to capitalise on the expert recommendations," Mr Turnbull said.

"To facilitate the absolute best practice in design and built form, we have modified our proposed home to accommodate a reduced number of 80 aged care suites.

"Reducing the number of suites has enabled us to increase the size of each suite to be some of the largest suites in Australia. The internal communal spaces also enjoy better connectivity to the external environment."

Oryx Communities has also acted on advice to make other meaningful design changes, including as follows.

- Improving the bulk and scale of the building, including amendments to the façade design. The building remains four storeys on an underground basement, with the fourth storey significantly set-back from the street.
- Modifying the retaining wall design to allow mature trees to be preserved on the northern boundary, and revised planting to create a visual screen to northern neighbours.
- Reducing the basement area to increase the deep soil zone to cater for larger trees on the property, and increasing the basement in height to be able to safely accommodate ambulance, service and delivery vehicles.
- Adding 2 extra car bays, despite the number of suites being materially reduced, with the design now including a delivery bay and an ambulance set-down area. There will be 30 car bays in total.
- Design development of external open space, including the addition of two communal terraces, provision for mature trees and additional landscaping.
- The relocation of the main entry, redesigning it for easier pedestrian access to the building, and vehicular access to the basement parking and services off Betty Street.
- The addition of deep planted setback to the centre of the north façade to reduce the length and bulk of the façade and to reduce overlooking to neighboring yards.



Artist's Impression – View from Betty Street

Prepared by Hassell Studio

Mr Turnbull said the architectural design and care philosophy that underpinned all Oryx Communities' homes also aligned with the latest recommendations from *Counsel Assisting the Aged Care Royal Commission*.

“All Oryx homes, such as the proposed Melvista home, incorporate a Small Household model of care, which is recognised as best practice in the aged care sector,” he said.

“This model is supported by expert architecturally designed spaces comprising a small number of bedrooms placed around a central kitchen, living and dining area, in the same way that a kitchen is the heart of every home.

“Our aged care homes are designed with between 7 and 10 Small Households co-located on the same site.”

The Melvista project will be the only care home in Nedlands located south of Stirling Highway, and seeks to reinstate aged care services in a precinct that, prior to 2012, supported aged care services since the 1970s.

Oryx Communities proposes constructing Melvista across four blocks of land at 73 and 75 Doonan Road, and 16 and 18 Betty Street.

There is a clear need for this service in the area, with demand for aged care in Nedlands exceeding the State average. The local government area has a higher than average (19.7%) proportion of population over 65 compared to Australian average (14%). It is also a similar story in surrounding local government areas.

The application is open for public consultation until 10 December 2020. Full plans, including details of design changes, can be found online at <https://www.consultation.dplh.wa.gov.au>

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