

Royal Far West – Stage 2 – Architect Announcement

Wednesday 7th August, 2019

Q: Why did you choose the architects?

We chose to partner with Australia's most decorated architect Glenn Murcutt and fellow architect Angelo Candalepas because of their proven talent; ability to design aesthetically beautiful buildings and their commitment to create an iconic site for RFW that will nestle proudly and humbly in the heart of Manly. Glenn's close and long-standing relationship with Manly, having grown up in the local area and knowing intimately the micro-climates, landscape and culture of the site, was also an important factor.

Q: What are your plans for the redevelopment of the existing site?

RFW is expanding rapidly in an effort to meet the rising challenge of country kids in need. In the last 10 years we have grown ten-fold in the numbers of people we have served. In the next 10 years we will have a greater challenge again.

There was some controversy as to what would be built on the site when we obtained our approvals in April 2013. There was also some misunderstanding and misinformation that made it difficult to communicate RFW's future plans.

With the recent rapid growth of our speciality services and the increased demand for RFW support from communities across Australia, our plans have evolved. We now need to build more "country-style" accommodation for our families and friends from the bush. We need to enable more rural people to come to Manly for holidays, respite and therapy. We need to grow our health and professional consulting facilities to serve country kids and their families. And we want to build opportunities for local residents and businesses to support RFW by being part of the new campus. It would be our aim that any co-located health and wellbeing services on the site may support the local community as well as our country families.

Q: What about the RFW School/DOE land?

The DOE is a partner in the approved Part 3A and Masterplan. The old RFW site sits largely on RFW land, however there is a small parcel of land owned by the DOE. We are currently in negotiations with the DOE, as we have been for some time, to acquire this land and will be following the government process. Any questions regarding the DOE land acquisition process should be directed to James Griffin MP or the DOE directly.

Q: Are any buildings being demolished? If so, which buildings?

The approved Part 3A and Masterplan encompasses the site bound by the corner of Wentworth Street and along South Steyne in Manly. The second stage of our campus redevelopment will require us to demolish our former Medical Centre and the old RFW School, once we have all our planning approvals in place. Demolition won't be undertaken for at least 2 years. These old buildings will be used for business purposes until the DA is approved.

Q: When is the RFW campus redevelopment happening? How long will construction take?

At this stage, the appointed architects are commencing a concept design process for the campus. We anticipate the initial concepts for the campus masterplan will be publicly exhibited in RFW Centre for Country Kids in 2020.

Firstly, the DA will need to be approved by the relevant planning authorities. The actual construction work will take two to three years, depending on the design and sequencing of the works. With 2 years to DA and 2-3 years to complete the construction, the new campus could be operational by mid 2024.

Q: What will be happening at the site in the meantime?

We plan to activate our old RFW Medical Centre on South Steyne for use as a co-working space to help local businesses, aligned charities and friends of RFW with office space. The income generated by this activity will help to fund the operating expenses of our health business and offset the costs of maintaining this old building.

Q: What is happening to Drummond House?

Drummond House will continue to provide guest-house accommodation for country families who travel to Manly from remote areas of NSW to receive specialist paediatric services.

Drummond House will remain a critical part of the future campus masterplan. The ability to provide holiday accommodation and respite to country families doing tough will be a big part of our service.

Q: Who is the developer?

At this stage, we have not appointed a partner/developer. Royal Far West will undergo a rigorous process of selecting the most appropriate partner/developer to deliver the approved DA at an appropriate time.

Q: Will there be a 5 star international hotel on the site?

RFW will not be building a five-star international hotel on this site. RFW's primary need on this campus is accommodation for RFW clients, friends and guests, and country families at large who want to holiday or seek respite in Manly. As demand for our services is growing rapidly, we are looking to expand our care-by-parent accommodation facility for country families.

We are also looking to provide much-needed health and medical consulting suites for local health professionals with paediatric, family and community expertise.

Q: Will there be restaurants within the new campus?

The design phase is just commencing. We are currently exploring, and will continue to consider all options for retail, residential and community use, with our architects and with local stakeholders. RFW is 95 years old and this development must future proof RFW for the next 100 years and beyond to allow us to grow our service footprint as well as provide Manly with a beautiful and inclusive design that will be good for Manly, good for the state and good for the nation. Whatever facilities are planned into the retail section of the campus, they will be high-end, beautifully presented facilities that will enhance the district and the local décor.

Q: What will be the impact upon traffic and parking within the town centre?

As we design the new RFW campus, there will be no immediate impact upon traffic and parking within the town centre.

We will be planning for adequate parking facilities within the campus to cater for staff and visitors and when we move closer to the construction period, we will be implementing a detailed traffic management plan in line with Council requirements to ensure that the impact of vehicle movements associated with construction will be minimised.

Q: Are you selling? Why / why not?

Royal Far West has operated out of the South Steyne and Wentworth Street site since the 1920's, bringing country children and families to the beach for specialist care and respite to improve their health and well-being. This is a vital part of our ethos and our service model. Manly is our home and it is a "second home" to many of our country families.

We are not selling our land. We are not commercial developers. Our land is an asset to be used for the good of country people. We remain true to our ethos and mission.

We are future-proofing our ability to help country families in need and keep our promise to rural Australians – to support them when they are in need. We need to develop our site to enable us to a) expand our services and help more children and b) make sure we can deliver services for the next 100 years.

Q: Who owns the land? DOE?

Over nearly a century, hundreds of volunteers have worked hard to acquire this beautiful property that RFW owns. In the early part of last century, homes and shops in Wentworth Street and on South Steyne were donated to Royal Far West to support the work of the charity. These assets have been well protected and owned by RFW for many years.

RFW owns all but one small parcel of land that fronts Wentworth Street, which is owned by the DOE.

Q: Will the Manly community be consulted in the design of the development?

RFW has operated on our site for close to 100 years. Throughout the Stage 2 process we will ensure that we provide both formal and informal opportunities for community input and consultation in an honest and transparent manner. In fact, the consultation and engagement of community has been ongoing for some time through the first stage of the masterplan being the construction of the Centre for Country Kids. We see this as just a continuation of that process.

Q: Will you be casting a shadow on the beach?

No. The masterplan was approved based on strict height requirements and detailed shadow diagrams were included in the Part 3a process.

Q: How many stories will the development be?

The Part 3A has approval for 5 stories at the beachfront and 8 stories at the back of the site.

Q: Will there be parking available for the campus?

We will be planning for adequate parking facilities within the campus to cater for staff and visitors as required by the consent authority and approved in the Part 3a approval.

Q: Will you provide services for local families?

Whilst we are still in the early stages of the development, it would be our aim that any co-located health and wellbeing services may support the local community as well as our country families.

Q: Are you going to have a 24 hour medical centre?

The design phase is just commencing. We are currently exploring, and will continue to consider all options for retail, residential and community use. The design process has just begun so is too early to address specific requirements or questions regarding design but it is great to get thoughts around what might be desirable.