[redacted]

27th July 2010,

Attention **Peter Thomas**
Manager, Development Assessment
Lane Cove Council.
48 Longueville Road
Lane Cove NSW 2066

Dear Mr Thomas,

RE: Development Application 290 Burns Bay Road, Lane Cove

Thank you for inviting me to comment on this proposal.

The following comments have been prepared based on the drawings and documents supplied by Council Including: Drawings by Redshift Architecture & Art. A0.00-A0.04, A1.01-A1.18, A2.21-A2.32 and A4.01, dated 30/6/2010. A statement of environmental effects by DFP Planning consultants dated 7/07/2010 dated December 2009.

I have visited the site and viewed the model.

We take on face value the accuracy of all the documents given to us and rely on them to form our assessment.

DESIGN QUALITY PRINCIPLES

Part 2 of SEPP 65 sets out the following design quality principles as a guide to assess a residential flat development. The 'Residential Flat Design Code' (The Code) is referred to as an accepted guide as to how the principles are to be achieved.

1. **Context**

Good design responds to and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's character or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character as stated in Planning and design policies. New buildings will thereby contribute to the quality and identity of an area. (SEPP65)

The site is located on the East side of Burns Bay road on the narrow strip of land that separates Burns Bay and valley from the Lane Cove River to the west. The land slopes steeply away to the east, towards the Valley. The immediate landscape is dominated by Burns Bay Road, which runs down the

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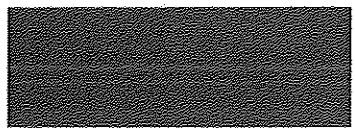


ridge of Linley Point. Both sides of Burns Bay Road are heavily vegetated with native trees which contribute to the overall impression of a green landscape despite a busy Burns Bay Road.

The subject site is serviced by a private road network that is accessed off Burns Bay Road. The site is the second property one comes to as one enters the precinct. The land has been benched into fairly large terraces to accommodate semi industrial and commercial premises The site currently has a 3 storey commercial building with at grade carparking underneath. Trees have been left around the perimeter of the sites, which reduces the impact of the buildings and maintains the overall green environs.

The subject site runs roughly east-west and has a long side facing south over a public open space some distance below. There is a commercial building to the north of the site on a similar sized block of land which overlooks the subject site. There are no existing buildings adjacent to the subject site to the east, west or south.

The East side of Burns Bay Road has a mixture of 4 storey apartment buildings and similar sized commercial buildings. There is an 8 Storey apartment building known as Riverview Apartments is sited at the bottom of the hill, which is not visible from burns Bay Road.

The proposed 6 storey apartment building would not be out of context in this area. This corner of Lane Cove has already been established as a precinct of residential flat dwellings. The footprint of commercial premises in the area lend themselves to conversion to residential flats.

The steeply undulating topography reduces the effective impact of taller buildings as they step down the hill.

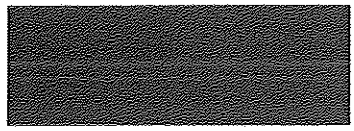
The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

2. Scale

Good design provides an appropriate scale in terms of the bulk and height that suits the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings.

Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to the scale of existing development. In precincts undergoing a transition, proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the desired future character of the area. (SEPP65)

As mentioned in the Context Principle section, the proposal is generally in keeping with the scale of the buildings and site configuration of the east side of Burns Bay Road. The 1 and 2 storey detatched dwellings on the west side of Burns Bay Road will not be effected by larger buildings on the eastern side due to the distance , topography and amount of vegetation, which screens buildings on this side.



The height of the building needs to be well understood as it will be taller than the current surrounding buildings and be visible above the tree line in this area. It would be the first building in the area to do this.
The building will be approximately 4½ storeys above the height of Burns Bay Road at the bend in the road where the private road begins. The building will be very visible as one drives south down Burns Bay Road from Bridge Road. It will be more or less in front of you.

The horizon line of tree canopy will be broken. It should be noted however, that should the property at 280 be redeveloped, it would be taller than the building on the subject site, obscuring the view of the proposed building from that angle.

The footprint of the existing building on the site has been used as a rough template for the proposed building. The major change in scale is the height needed to achieve the permissible F.S.R.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

3. Built form

Good design achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose, in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type and the manipulation of the building elements.

Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscape and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.(SEPP65)

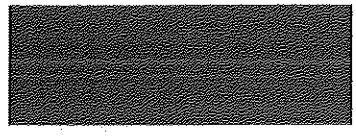
As discussed above, the building roughly follows the footprint of the existing building but maximises the amount of courtyard on the north-eastern quarter of the site. This arrangement allows for a North-facing garden courtyard which benefits from a natural rock outcrop and which would be the internal focus of the development.

The building form generally follows the contours of the land, which allows the natural topography to be understood.

The northern wing of the L shaped building presents a 6 storey façade at a distance of less that 6m to the northern Boundary. A 6 storey façade with habitable rooms should be set a minimum of 9m from a boundary to allow for an 18m separation from a similar adjoining development. It is noted that privacy louvres have been proposed on the windows northern façade, which is an acceptable solution for privacy for the first four floors but not for the top two floors which should, in my opinion, be set back the full 9m from the Northern Boundary in order to allow for adequate separation from the neighbour.

A consequence of designing the building in an L shape is that there is the potential for noise and privacy issues across the internal corner of the building.

It is noted that on the model provided by the applicant, that indicative volumes for possible developments on adjoining properties have been provided. The applicant has assumed that the



adjoining neighbour to the north at 288 Burns Bay Road would set their building back from the southern boundary by 9m. Even at this distance it is clear that winter sun access to the proposed development would be compromised, especially to the courtyard.

The applicant obviously has no control over the design of the property at 288 and has made the appropriate design decisions to minimise the impact of a future building on that site. The positioning of the building on the southern boundary maximises the potential exposure to northern sun.

The proposal generally meets the objectives of the principle, however the Northern wing is too close to the northern boundary and should be set back at the upper two levels.

4. Density

Good design has a density appropriate for a site and its context, in terms of floor space yields (or number of units or residents)

Appropriate densities are sustainable and consistent with the existing density in an area or, in precincts undergoing a transition, are consistent with the stated desired future density. Sustainable densities respond to the regional context, availability of infrastructure, public transport, community facilities and environmental quality. (SEPP 65)

The combination of the particular topography of the site , it's position along well serviced public transport routes and the proximity of recreation facilities makes this a suitable location for higher density living. Large apartment buildings already exist in the precinct and in my opinion seem to be in balance with the amount of greenery and natural bushland that is characteristic of Lane Cove.

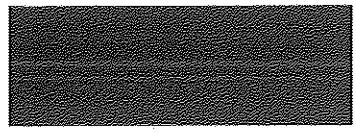
The proposal appears to be in accord with Council's stated desired future density.

The proposal meets with the objectives of this principle.

5. Resource, energy and water efficiency

Good design makes efficient use of natural resources, energy and water throughout its full life cycle, including construction. Sustainability is integral to the design process. Aspects include demolition of existing structures, recycling of materials, selection of appropriate and sustainable materials, adaptability and reuse of buildings, layouts and built form, passive solar design principles, efficient appliances and mechanical services, soil zones for vegetation and re-use of water. (SEPP65)

It is unfortunate that, given the buildings footprint being so similar to the existing structure, more use could not have been made of the existing structure.



The proposed building is designed so that all apartments have good cross ventilation or at least ventilation on two facades.

Access to northern sun is not ideal in the scheme. The east-west part of the L has an external access-way along the northern façade which will limit the likelihood of people utilising the terrace or opening up the façade to the northern light.

Apartments on the north-south wing will need to have both the north-facing windows and the openings to the terraces screened with louvres for privacy which will reduce the exposure to the sun. There is perhaps a clever way to design the screens so that they can provide privacy while at the same time protecting the apartments from Summer sun and allow in the winter sun.

Apartments in the south-west corner have no northern sun exposure and only early morning and late afternoon sun in summer. If the terraces on these apartments were located on the corner of the building they would receive more direct sun and protect more of the western facing façade from the Afternoon summer sun.

It is understood that the main view from the building will be to the south. It is unfortunate however that the main outdoor areas are orientated to the south as they are likely to only be used in summer.

A 5000 L storm water storage tank is provided which is of little benefit to the building. It would not be enough to water the garden. There is no attempt to harvest storm water for toilet flushing or laundries. This is not difficult to do and would save significant amounts of potable water.

The report shows a commitment to using low energy and water consumption appliances and fittings.

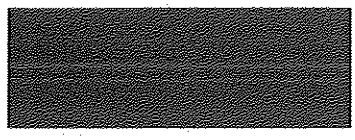
I am concerned about the in-situ and pre-cast masonry on the western façade, which will act as heat sink in the summer and will transfer heat to the interior. Perhaps a lighter form of construction could be considered here. Thermal mass is not always an advantage.

The proposal generally meets the objectives of this principle

6. Landscape

Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in greater aesthetic quality and amenity for both occupants and the adjoining public domain.

Landscape design builds on the site's natural and cultural features in responsible and creative ways. It enhances the development's natural environment performance by coordinating water and soil management, solar access, microclimate, tree canopy and habitat values. It contributes to the positive image and contextual fit of development through respect for streetscape and neighbourhood character, or desired future character.



Landscape design should optimise usability, privacy and social opportunity, equitable access and respect for neighbours' amenity and provide for practical establishment and long-term management. (SEPP65)

The landscape design retains significant existing trees and utilises the existing rock outcrop as a visual feature. The landscape is one the project's most important attributes. Plantings appear to be well researched and implemented for the conditions.

The Landscape in the area is very important as it appears to be a public asset of remnant bush. The continuity of habitat reduces the impact of large buildings such as this one.

It is not clear whether the landscape is accessible in all areas.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

7. Amenity

Good design provides amenity through the physical, spatial and environmental quality of a development.

Optimising amenity requires appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, outlook and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility. (SEPP65)

The setback issues on the northern Boundary have already been discussed.

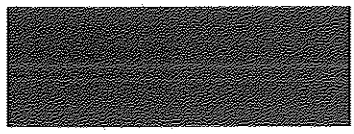
As mentioned, there are privacy and noise issues across the internal corner of the building. The distance from the terraces on the eastern apartments of the N/S wing are only 9m from the so-called private terraces of the E/W wing. Screening should be provided to the south side of the terraces on the N/S wing.

The external accessways to the apartments in the E/W wing are unusual and will either foster a friendly street-like atmosphere or result in the small terraces being close off for privacy. The benefits of being able to provide cross ventilation and access to northern light outweigh the potential inconvenience.

It is noted that the S/W corner apartments are adaptable. This is commendable, however it is essential that the entrance to the building be made accessible. It is not acceptable to require mobility-impared people to enter via the car park.

The general layout of the apartments is good with efficient use of space and adequate storage.

The proposal does not meet the objectives of this principle everywhere. Some re-design is required to make the building and landscape accessible and address the privacy issues across the internal courtyard.



8. Safety and security

Good design optimises safety and security, both internal to the development and for the public domain. This is achieved by maximising overlooking of public and communal spaces while maintaining internal privacy, avoiding dark and non-visible areas, maximising activity on streets, providing clear, safe access points, providing quality public spaces that cater for desired recreational uses, providing lighting appropriate to the location and desired activities, and clear definition between public and private spaces. (SEPP65)

The proposal has clear views to the entrance and adequate passive surveillance of the entry court area. It is assumed that adequate lighting would be provided in both the public and private outdoor areas of the proposal.

The proposal meets the objectives of the principle.

9. Social dimensions

Good design responds to the social context and needs of the local community in terms of lifestyles, affordability and access to social facilities. New developments should optimise the provision of housing to suit the social mix and needs of the neighbourhood or, in the case of precincts undergoing transition, provide for the desired future community. (SEPP65)

The proposed mix of 2b and 3b dwellings allows for a healthy range of residents and appears to respond to the needs of the neighbourhood.
The building's unusual circulation design can promote exchange and opportunities for social interaction.

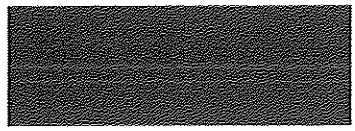
The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

10. Aesthetics

Quality aesthetics require the appropriate composition of building elements, textures, materials and colours and reflect the use, internal design and structure of the development. Aesthetics should respond to the environment and context, particularly to desirable elements of the existing streetscape or, in precincts undergoing transition, contribute to the desired future character of the area. (SEPP65)

The proposal is of a simple modern aesthetic that expresses the construction type used and the planning of the building. The warm muted tones of the building with blend nicely with the tones of the landscape. From within the precinct, the building will be recessive and not draw the eye as the existing white building does. The materials appear to be of good quality. The report indicates a reassuring level of detail and attention to construction issues.

From the north, the building will be visible above the tree line as discussed above. There is enough modulation and variation of the façades to reduce a potential monolithic effect.



The building's alternating rythms of windows, coloured panels and sunscreens will add visual interest and are pleasingly playful.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle

Conclusion

The proposal generally satisfies the principles of good design. However, the following items are of concern and should be addressed prior to the granting of a consent:

- Setbacks from the North boundary should be 6m and stepping back to 9m at the 5th and 6th levels.
- The pedestrian entrance to the building should be accessible as should the landscape areas.
- Privacy issues across the internal corner of the L should be addressed.

Tim Williams
Architect AIA

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