ITEM No. 4

Proposed Residential Development

282 Bunker Road Adamstown

Date of Panel Assessment 23 May 2012

DA 1/1391

No. of Buildings 1

No. of units. 93.

Declaration of

Conflict of Interest None Expressed.

Attendees. Michael Rathbourne (Project Manager), Tony Melroy (Adamstown Club), Steve Moore (Design Partnership).

Peter Crystal NCC

Patrick Quinlan NCC

This report is based on the ten Design Quality Principles set out in State Environmental Planning Policy No.65 which must be addressed in considering residential flat development in NSW. It is also an appropriate format for applications which do not include residential flats.

Generally

The proposal was previously reviewed by the group at the January 2012 meeting. The applicant has submitted amended plans based upon comments provided at that meeting.

1.Context

The subject site located to the western rear side of Adamstown RSL Club is currently occupied by three single storey residences and an extensive bitumen paved carpark serving the Club. The rectangular site slopes to the long eastern street frontage of Date Street with the northern boundary facing Victoria Street. The setting is defined by freestanding single storey residences of early and later 20th Century construction, the scale of construction rising to the east.

It was previously noted that:

The proposed development represents a dramatic increase in scale and density within the context. Reflecting recent changes to development controls the development rises 6 storeys above Date Street with the centre section of the western, street elevation stepped back at the third and sixth level. Despite setbacks, the pronounced end elevations of five and four storeys remain the defining interface of the building with the established low scale context.

The amended application has introduced some reconfiguration of building mass to lessen the impact upon the setting. The group maintained its opinion as previously stated that the

proposal represents a response to the current development controls which by virtue of site amalgamations provides a development substantially unrelated to the existing low scale and density of the residential surrounds, particularly that of Date Street.

2. Scale

The proposal rises six storeys in a setting of predominantly one storey construction. The group previously noted the bulk and scale of the building was substantially increased by the shear end elevations, length of the building and construction over two levels of above ground parking. The narrow width of Date Street and the consistency of surrounding building height to the west and north further emphasise this disparity in scale.

The amended proposal has introduced some reduction of scale through deletion of one floor of the southern bookend together with removal of balconies and blade columns from the bookends. Introduction of terraces and pergolas over the sloped roofs of the lower apartments between the bookends has also sought to reduce the visual bulk of the building.

3. Built Form

The proposal comprises an elongated central range of residential apartments located above split level parking and book-ended by four and five level rises of apartments. Carparking whilst partially set into the slope rises two levels above grade.

Despite efforts to reduce bulk through stepping of the central western elevation; provision of two level apartments at the eastern street frontage; step back of mid level apartments and further step back of the penthouse level; the overall assembly is considered to remain an exceptionally large element within the existing and likely future context.

As noted in comments on scale, amendments proposed to lessen the bulk of the building have provided some improvement but remain of limited effect upon the overall mass of the building. Council briefing notes that the proposed building height is 500mm above the Draft LEP 2011 control, and 2.5m above that recommended for the 'Adamstown Renewal Corridor'. It was questioned why the reduction as proposed in storey height to the southern bookend was not provided at the more exposed northern bookend overlooking the junction of Date and Victoria Streets - this being the more prominent street exposure of the building. Similarly it was questioned why the raised skillion roofed element remains to the southern roof area - this appearing an uncohesive element adding to the complexity of the upper roof areas.

The panel maintains its opinion that too much of the form and planning of the building derives from the preferred carpark set out serving both the apartment building and the adjacent club.

4. Density

As previously noted the group acknowledges the development, whilst based upon current zoning and floor space ratio controls, has evolved as a significantly disproportionate element

within the setting. This has been identified as the result of site amalgamations allowing a development unlikely to have been envisaged in recent planning amendments. The resultant density, whilst within the allowances of recent planning amendments, remains subject to requirements of urban amenity, safety and limitation of impact upon the adjacent and surrounding setting.

In addition it is understood that carparking, which is a major contributor to the bulk of the building, is excluded from FSR calculations. Although parking for the club which is at basement level does not contribute to the above-ground bulk, it occupies space which would in other situations be used for residents' parking, and thus reduce the building bulk.

As previously noted the development is considered by the group to provide a visual outcome appearing so out of cohesion with the setting that factors other than density must be the determining considerations in assessing the application.

5. Resources, Energy and Water Efficiency

It was previously noted that positive aspects of sustainable development including roof mounted solar panels and indications of waste water and rainwater management do not balance the negative impacts resulting from the form, planning and orientation of the development. Some additional efforts have been made to improve this situation including the introduction of ventilation shafts and the relocation of balconies to the northern sides of apartments within the rear areas of the bookends. Further improvement was recommended by the group in the form of skylights providing illumination and ventilation to top floor bathrooms.

A significant aspect of energy efficiency previously noted and remaining as a direct outcome of the proposed form is the orientation of nearly a third of all apartments west without a secondary aspect. The provision of sun louvers to these apartments is still considered unlikely to ameliorate the effects of orientation, and is seen to limit daylight access to these apartments over extended periods during summer.

6. Landscape

The amended development incorporating greater areas of rooftop garden is considered an improvement as is the provision of decks over the central lower level apartments. The group considered that more attention was required to screen planting between the southern end of the building and the adjacent carpark. It was also noted that a general absence of deep soil planting removes any ability to screen areas of the base with substantial vegetation.

7. Amenity

The proposed development was explained as a means of ensuring the survival of the adjacent club and its community services.

Amenity issues raised by the group derive from the plan form and orientation of the building. Improvements are noted including the provision of 5 accessible units and roof gardens accessible to the residents. It was recommended that the later include small but practical enclosed areas to maximise the benefit of these common areas. The group still considers a

physical security system separating private and public pedestrian movement is needed to prevent club patrons wandering into private areas including the recessed entries to ground floor apartments. The lack of separation between club and residential parking is considered a potential amenity issue with no provision for peak flow and the circulation system able to be blocked by a single vehicle waiting to access the residential parking area.

Access to bicycle parking continues to require entry via the main carpark entry and boom gates unless the bicycle is carried up stairs from the lobby.

8. Safety and Security

Previously identified aspects of safety and security relating to the interface of club and residential parking remain within the proposal. As noted in section 7(Amenity), the lack of controlled pedestrian entry to the residential carpark remains a security issue. The safety of rear entries to ground floor apartments has been improved by recess of entries.

The vulnerability of the vehicle flow routes to a single point blockage appears unresolved in the amended application with the management and pickup location of garbage bins appearing a likely source of blockage to traffic flow.

As previously noted the cross over from the carpark to the club entry raises safety issues particularly in relation to service vehicle movement.

9. Social Dimensions

The group considered that social interaction locations had been improved, particularly with the introduction of roof top garden areas. The provision of sheltered enclosures within both the roof top garden areas as recommended in Section 7 (Amenity) above and the provision of a carwash bay with some seating area were identified as means of furthering social interaction. It remains the group's opinion that the adjacent club cannot be relied upon as the only catalyst for social interaction.

10 Aesthetics

Improvement to the overall form has been noted in Sections 2 & 3. It is considered that the amendments to the roofline recommended by the Group will serve to improve the articulation of the building. The proposed light coloured metal panel cladding system is considered appropriate to the form and aesthetic of the building and to the setting.

Despite these changes the building remains a challenge to the character of the setting in terms of by overall bulk, orientation and interface of levels. The role of the bookends as a relief to the core volume remains of limited success by virtue of the size and height of the end elements particularly the exposed northern bookend overlooking the junction of Date and Victoria Streets.

Recommendations

The group remained of the opinion that the large and singular volume remains at odds with the existing setting. Whilst amendments have addressed some issues previously raised, the limited illustration of the development in relation to the established setting leaves a distinct impression that the building will be of greater impact than suggested in the application. This

impact is not ameliorated by the very limited planting about the building, the height of the development at the exposed intersection of Date and Victoria Streets and the persistence with a built form that provides a continuous volume disparate with the low scale surrounds. The location above a two storey carpark exacerbates this impact which appears likely to be far greater than any other foreseeable future development within the immediate visual catchment of the site. This is a somewhat extreme case where the exclusion of the substantial volume generated by parking from FSR calculations negates the value of this measure to control building bulk. Council might give consideration to how amendments might be made to overcome this problem in relation to future developments.

The amended design and the recommended refinements are considered to provide some improvement in relation to its context, but a development of this overall bulk will inevitably result in an impact of this order. It is acknowledged that the building proposed in the application would generally be compliant with the draft planning controls, but given concerns about its impact the Panel remains unsupportive. At the very least it should be modified to comply with the draft height controls, and to satisfy other detailed design issues raised under Items 5 to 10 above.