



16th March 2011,

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

Dear Mr Thomas, Mr Shankar,

RE: DA11/25 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-A0.03, A2.01-A2.09-, A2.21-A2 24, A231-32 and A4.01, dated FEB 2011. A statement of environmental effects by DFP Planning consultants dated FEB 2011

I have visited the site.

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

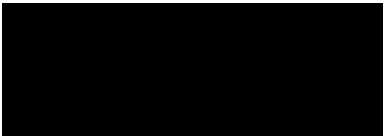
Good design responds to and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's character or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character 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

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slopes steeply away to the east, towards the Valley. The immediate landscape is dominated by Burns Bay Road, which runs down the 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.

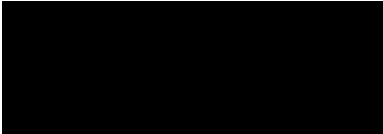
The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

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 detached 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 but lower than the approved apartment building to the north of the site (288 Burns Bay Road), which will obscure the subject site from view as seen from Burns Bay road North.

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.

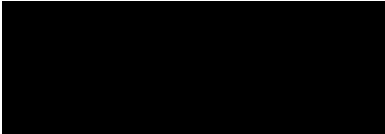
Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscape and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.(SEPP65)

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 building is broken into 6 and 4 storey sections which are set back the required distances from the boundaries. (apart from a couple of minor encroachments.) a central east /west 6 storey element is flanked on the north and the south by 4 storey extensions.

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 building on that site. The positioning of the building on the southern boundary maximises the potential exposure to northern sun.



It is apparent that the approved development at 288 Burns Bay Road will overshadow the subject site. This is unfortunate. It is hard to see how this could have been avoided with the current DCP. A master plan that anticipates future built form for a precinct is one way, but it is obviously too late in this case.

The proposal meets the objectives of the principle.

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.

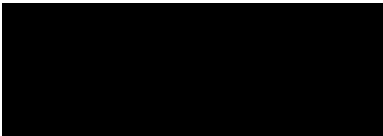
The proposal appears to be in accord with Council's stated desired future density.

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)

The proposed building is designed so that most apartments have good cross ventilation. Only 7 apartments do not have cross ventilation, which represents 18 % out of the 37. This is well within the maximum 40% rule of thumb.



It is hard to measure the number of units that have 3hrs of sun, as the shadow cast by the approved development at 288 are not shown.

If one assumes that the sun access is not affected by the adjoining property, the building complies with the 70% rule of thumb of units receiving 3hrs of sun during winter during 9:00 am and 3:00pm.

The proposal has a BASIX certificate, which ensures that energy and water efficient appliances and fixtures are utilised. A water tank is indicated, however it would appear small at 5000 L given the amount of landscaping to be watered.

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.

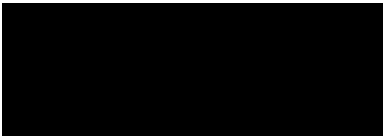
Landscape design should optimise usability, privacy and social opportunity, equitable access and respect for neighbours' amenity and provide for practical establishment and long-term management. (SEPP65)

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.

The landscape is accessible and or visible on both the east and west of the building.

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 units are efficient and well designed, however some of them have long corridors. Living spaces are given the best orientation and have access to generous and well proportioned balconies.

Acoustic and visual privacy have been well addressed and some innovative design features have been incorporated to bring winter light into some of the units through the use of higher level windows and voids.

An appropriate amount of storage has been incorporated into the apartments, however additional storage space in the garages would have been desirable.

The proposal has 8 adaptable units that can be accessed via the main pedestrian entrance.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

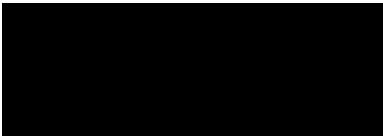
8. Safety and security

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 1b,2b and 3b dwellings allows for a range of residents and appears to respond to the needs of the neighbourhood.

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 accents of green will 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.

The building's alternating rhythms 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 meets the objectives of the principles of good design.

Tim Williams
Architect

