



15<sup>th</sup> June 2011,

Attention: **Atalay Bas**  
Planner, Development Assessment  
Ashfield Municipal Council  
260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

Dear Mr Bas,

**RE: Development Application for 46-56 Liverpool Road Summer Hill  
REVISED SEPP 65 COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Thank you for inviting me to comment on this project. I refer to my comments regarding the same application of the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010. I am no longer in possession of the drawings submitted to me for the previous report. This report is based solely on the drawings presented this time.

The following comments have been prepared based on the drawings and documents supplied by Council including: Drawings by Kenedy Associates 1003-A00--A14 dated April 2010 and stamped Preliminary 10/11/10,

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

We have visited the site.

**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)*

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The site is located on the corner of Liverpool Road and Gower Streets in Summer Hill on the northern side of the railway line and south of Parramatta Road. The site includes the heritage listed Carleton House and associated outbuildings such as the Stables. These are to be retained and re-used in the proposed development.

The area is characterised by a mixture of detached dwellings from the 20s and some Federation period dwellings on Liverpool Road. Gower Street has a collection of 2-3 storey 1930's, and later, residential flat buildings.

Sunning Place to the south west of the site also has 2 and 3 storey residential flat buildings.

The streetscape on Liverpool Road is relatively open. The trees in and around the site dominate the streetscape.

The character of the area on the southern side of Liverpool road is well established as a medium density low-rise residential flat area. Additional residential density close to Summer Hill Railway Station and to the services that the town centre provides is appropriate.

**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 above, the area is characterised by 2-3 storey walk-up type buildings on relatively narrow lots. The proposed building is considerably larger both in plan form and in height than buildings in the area. The impact of the height of the 5 storey building on Gower Street is mitigated by the building being stepping back at the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. The building steps down towards the smaller buildings to the south of the development. They are still a couple of storeys higher but this is effectively reduced to one storey due to the pitched roofs of those buildings to the south. The relationship is appropriate.

The neighbours to the south east of the site of the proposed building are presented with a 6 storey building on their North West aspect and will be overshadowed and overlooked by the proposed building. The wings of the building that are closest to the buildings on the south east boundary are four storeys in height. The shadow diagrams indicate that they will leave a minimum of 3 hours of sunlight to the rear yards of the buildings between 9:00am and



3:00pm. These wings are not parallel to the rear boundary and encroach on the minimum 6m setback by 1.5 m with a corner of each wing.

Whilst this may not seem much, it will impact on the development potential of the properties on these sites. There may be 12m separation between habitable rooms between the existing buildings and the proposed building, however this may not be the case if these sites were redeveloped.

**The proposal generally 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)*

The proposed built form is arranged around a courtyard, which establishes a formal relationship with Carleton House and with the stables building. The building is broken into three distinct, wings. building A forms the corner of Liverpool Road and Gower Street. Building B continues the form of Building A down Gower Street and is connected to a parallel wing in the centre of the site. The height of the buildings with respect to the heritage items does not appear out of scale as they have been arranged to either form a backdrop to the buildings or to frame them. Carleton House can be seen completely separately from the proposed building from Liverpool road, maintaining the silhouette of the roof against the sky.

The top floor of this proposal steps back and is recessive, the edge beams of the concrete roof slabs have been used to 'cap off' the building in powerful way. The return of the roofline down the front of the buildings is a useful device to visually separate one part of the building from.

**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 density is certainly appropriate in this location.

**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)*

I have counted 29 of the 70 units in buildings A and B as not having cross ventilation, which is 41%, more than the rule of thumb of 40. Many of these apartments are relatively shallow, which improves the situation slightly but it is still not an acceptable percentage. There appears to be opportunities to increase the number of apartments with cross ventilation or to demonstrate adequate movement of air through some of the single orientation apartments.

The site is large enough to have retained an ample amount of deep soil planting zones.

**The proposal could meet 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 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 cross ventilation issues have been discussed above. The apartments have well-proportioned balconies and most apartments would appear to have adequate sunlight. Cupboard storage is included in each apartment but there is no provision in the basement for additional storage for larger items.

**The proposal generally 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)*

Safety and security have been well handled in this proposal. Active living spaces that overlook the street will enhance the sense of security.

The internal courtyard is well defined and secured with a gate. The residential entrances are open and free of obstructions.

**The proposal meets with 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 dwellings is appropriate to the area and will encourage a range of residents. The common spaces will encourage a communal atmosphere and maximise the opportunities for 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)*

Several aesthetic issues have been covered in the built form and scale sections of this report.

Brick and concrete have been selected as the predominant materials for this development and are a response to the masonry character of the area. Many of the older style residential flat buildings are in a dark face brick. The Carleton House and stables are in a cream coloured painted render.

The building is of a crisp contemporary style with a predominantly masonry design language. The central two floors are expressed in places by a protruding concrete slabs and frames which reduce the overall impact of the building.

Perhaps the continuation of the Type of fencing used along Liverpool Road (or a contemporary version of it) into Gower Street could improve the streetscape and unify the new buildings within a heritage site precinct.

**The proposal generally meets the objectives of this principle.**

## Conclusion

The quality of the documentation and level of attention to each facet of the development is exemplary. The proposal generally meets the objectives of the principles of good design.



The applicant has demonstrated that the major issue of the overshadowing of the south east properties has been addressed.

The buildings have been stepped to reduce their apparent bulk and relate reasonably well to the buildings in Sunning place.

The minor encroachment of the south east wings of the development remain a concern however, as does the number of apartments with poor cross ventilation.

I recommend a conditioned approval that addresses these issues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Williams'.

Tim Williams  
Architect AIA