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Ku- ring- gai Municipal Council SEPP 65 Assessment 16-05-11

DA: 32-34 McIntyre Street and 35-39 Dumaresq Street, Gordon

VERSION 2 Issue C DA drawings

Urban Design Comments

This report evaluates the design proposal for 32-34 McIntyre Street and 35-39 Dumaresq Street, Gordon in terms of the ten SEPP 65 Principles.

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Description of the Proposal

The proposal is for two residential flat buildings to be located on an amalgamated site at 32-34 McIntyre Street and 35-39 Dumaresq Street Gordon. The buildings contain 80 apartments with 111 car spaces; 24 bicycle spaces and storage.

The Proponent is: Demara Pty Ltd.

The Architects are: Wendy Lewin Architect and Angelo Candalepas and Associates Pty Ltd

The proposal is very similar to the original but the key differences between this proposal and the earlier proposal are:

- A reduction in the number of units
- A reduction in the number of car parking spaces
- More varied articulation in the rear of Building A and the western elevation
- The introduction of the viewing platform over the riparian zone
- Communal open space on the western side of the development
- Slightly different configuration of the "through" terraces / open space zones
- Better connection between the communal open space in Building A and the communal open space at ground
- A more generous informal courtyard in Building A

Compliance

The proposal is to comply with the following Council Codes and Planning Instruments:

- Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan (Town Centres) 2010 (the LEP)
- Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan (Town Centres) 2010 (the DCP) - (Parts 3C, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 15)
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 Design Quality of Residential Development
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX)

The Site

The site runs between McIntyre Street and Dumaresq Street in a North / South direction. The proposal locates two buildings on the site. Building A with the larger footprint has a frontage to McIntyre Street and Building B with the smaller footprint has a frontage to Dumaresq Street.

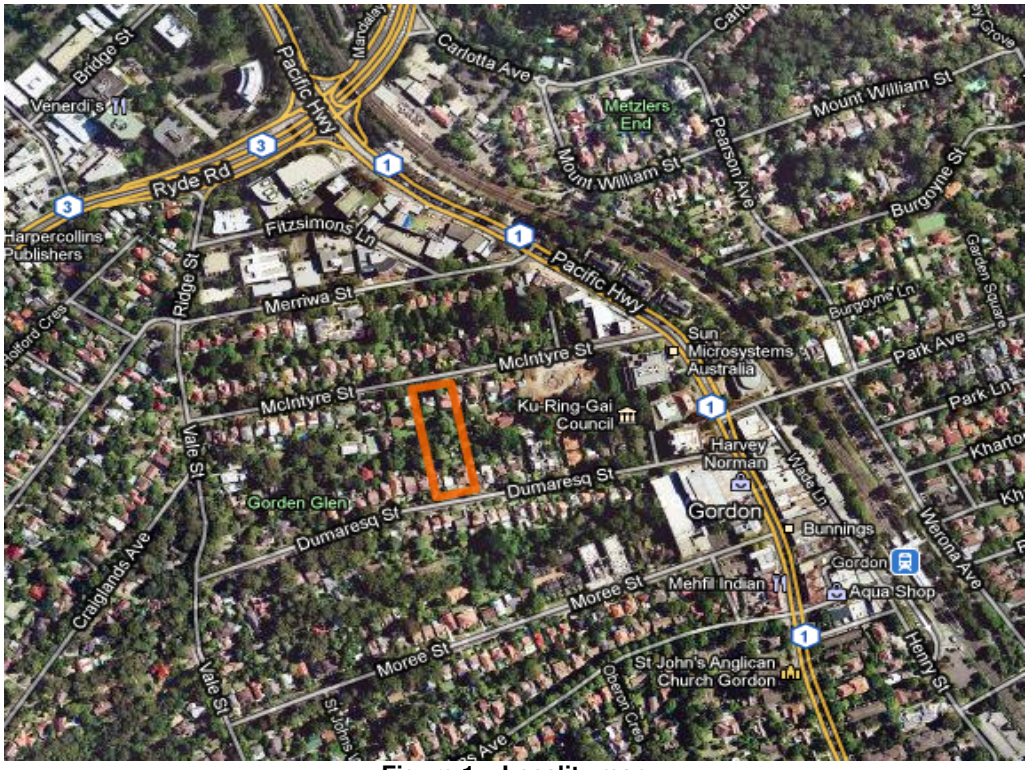

Figure 1 – Locality map

A new local street is proposed to the west of the site between the two existing streets. Both buildings have a frontage to the proposed new street which will provide the site with a third street frontage.

A riparian creek corridor runs East / West through the site and the proposed buildings are located on either side of this zone. The consolidated site is 6,018m². The site has a fall in east to west across the site. In the north / south direction it falls to the centre of the site between the McIntyre Street and Dumaresq Street frontages where the riparian corridor is located in the centre of the lot.

Building A is 5 storeys above 2 storeys of car park. The building elevation is set back 10 metres from McIntyre Street and 10 metres from the proposed new street but terrace and garden areas protrude into this frontage.

Building B is 5 storeys above 2 / 3 storeys of car park. It is set back 10 metres from Dumaresq Street and 10 metres from the proposed new street but terrace and garden areas protrude into this frontage.

Both buildings are designed around internal courtyards. They have one step in level in line with the fall in the site. This results in a 5 storey frontage to McIntyre Street and to Dumaresq Street and a 5 storey frontage at the rear of the buildings facing the riparian corridor. Both buildings have a small set back to the upper level on the street frontages to McIntyre Street and to Dumaresq Street.

SEPP 65 Criteria Assessment

PRINCIPLE NO. 1: CONTEXT

Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of the area.

The Requirement

To ensure that a development responds to its context it needs to:

- Be considered as part of the overall precinct / street not as an individual stand alone building
- Respond to the street and block pattern
- Be an appropriate density and form
- Reflect the existing and / or proposed subdivision pattern
- Relate to the street
- Set up a positive spatial system with appropriate spacing between buildings
- Reveal the natural features. In this case, the fall in the land; the rocky outcrops and vegetation

The Response

<u>The Precinct</u>
The site is in the area denoted for "*high density residential*" under the Ku-ring-gai Planning Scheme Ordinance (PSO). It is close to the Gordon Town Centre and to Gordon Railway Station to the East. The area has been rezoned and there are blocks of apartments of similar size to the proposal already constructed or under construction.

The proposal responds to the precinct in the following ways:

- The buildings reflect the controls in the PSO and DCP in terms of the location of the site. The DCP envisages 5 storey apartment buildings with underground car parking located in a landscape garden setting. A 5 storey residential flat building 'Gordonia' is under construction on Dumaresq Street to the east.
- The proposed development is conceived as an integrated whole. This is evident in the footprints of the buildings; the siting of the buildings; the relationship of internal and external spaces and the areas designated as open space relative to those designated as planting.
- The buildings are designed to complement each other and the setting. This is evidenced by the organisation of their mass into two similar but slightly different buildings.
- The buildings are designed to create a positive arrangement of space between them; with neighbouring buildings and with the land. They are not designed as "object" buildings.

<u>Street and Block Pattern</u>
The development is located in a street and block pattern which is large and reflects the low density development which previously predominated in the area. The proposed new cross street on the west side of the site will reduce the size of the street block and enable better connectivity.

<u>Density and Form</u>
The proposal responds to the density and the form in the following ways:

- The density of the development is 1.3:1 FSR. This is the density prescribed.
- The overall allowed density is organised into two complementary building forms which have:
  - one building facing McIntyre Street and one building facing Dumaresq Street.
  - the riparian corridor which runs through the site which becomes the centre piece of the development. The buildings open out onto this area at the rear.
  - a generous 10 metre landscaped setback to the street.

The Subdivision Pattern

Reflecting the spacing and building pattern of an earlier subdivision in a new subdivision configuration can be a key way of integrating new development into an area. This can be achieved through the organisation of the form; footprint and spacing of new buildings.

The site at McIntyre and Dumaresq Streets is an amalgamation of 5 sites, 3 facing Dumaresq and 2 facing McIntyre Street. The traditional pattern of development in this precinct is a front garden; relatively small side set backs and a large rear set back.

The proposed development responds to the subdivision pattern by locating a building facing each street with a front garden and a green corridor behind.

The proposal does not reflect the previous division of the site into 2 or 3 lots. This is partially due to the DCP controls which mandate the set backs. The side set backs are wider than the previous set backs which were related to single dwelling houses. This leaves a certain dimension which has to relate to the internal requirements of the new buildings as well as the overall area in which a building can be built. The new building therefore cannot always reflect the previous dual or tripartite division.

Relationship with the Street

To ensure that a building and / or group of buildings has a positive impact at the interface with a street they need to:

- Have a clear level and generous relationship between the ground floor and the ground plane
- Have entrances and / or openings / balconies facing the street or have clearly visible entries
- Place vertical blade walls so that don't create the appearance of a "solid wall" when the building is viewed obliquely along the street
- Organise balconies so that all balconies do not all sit proud of the façade. This creates the appearance of a "solid wall" when the building is viewed from the street. This can be achieved with fully recessed or partially recessed balconies
- Have all plumbing concealed including drainage from balconies

The proposal responds to the street interfaces in the following ways:

McIntyre Street and Dumaresq Street Frontages

The pedestrian entrances are located on the street elevations in a direct line from the street. The McIntyre Street entrance is level at grade from the street and is the stronger because of this. Access from Dumaresq Street is by steps down from the street and a ramp. The ramp is less successful because the travel path is at right angles to the building. Given the constraints and levels this is inevitable. The strong connecting space between the two entrances of the buildings through the site strengthens the relationship of the buildings to the street frontages.

Figure 2 – Illustrates a typical site sloping from the street. Locating a level entrance as shown in the proposal will create a strong interface with the street.

The buildings are both elevated with windows, terraces etc overlooking the street.

The basement car parking entrances are located at lower level points on the site and provide direct access into the basement garages. The entry from each street to the driveway and the garages will have some impact on the street because of the level differences and the set backs but a single entry only is required to each basement. This minimises the impact of the driveway and the garage entrance doors on the street. The McIntyre Street entry is the more successful because it is straight and the opening narrower.

There is no pattern of blade walls which dominate the view from along the street. The balconies are semi recessed and there will not be a dominating view of their underside from the street. There are no details as to the plumbing resolution. The requirement for concealed services can be conditioned by Council.

New Local Street Frontage
Both buildings are set back 10 metres from the proposed new road. The western elevation has windows and balconies which face the new street. The windows are predominately horizontal There is only one ground floor terrace facing the new street and there are no entrances from this new street although the buildings have the potential to overlook and address the new street in a more engaged way. Particularly important in this respect are the “through” balconies in Building A. These run from the internal courtyard to the external wall of the building and they do provide a strong spatial interface with the front set backs and the garden.

The addition of a new street in that location as specified in the DCP / LEP is to be applauded as the increase in density warrants a smaller street and block pattern. This is a fact often overlooked in changes to density and building typologies.

The proposed street will be quiet different from the existing streets in the area because of the topography and the fact that it is a short cross street. The topography is such that the street will have a fall to the centre and the views at either end will be terminated by buildings.

The nominated street boundary set back of 10 metres from this street fails to capitalise on the ability of this new street to engender a complementary but different feel to the precinct,

complementary in terms of its ability to reveal the landscape / topography but different in that it could be tighter spatially thereby providing meaningful variety. The contrasting north / south orientation of this street also provides an additional point of difference in terms of sun and shade. This could be reinforced by street tree planting.

It is considered that a lesser street set back could be explored. This would still provide adequate separation across the street but enough spatial difference to be able to read it as a different street type from the 10 metre set backs in the east / west streets.

Figure 3 – Illustrates the type of profile of the new road and the potential to define this differently from the long streets which run down the ridges and valleys

In the case of this particular proposal, the additional width across the buildings would provide more north facing apartments; wider internal courtyards and the potential for greater separation between the buildings around the riparian corridor as the floor space could be realised in a wider form.

A 1.8 metre high fence is still proposed along the frontage to the new street boundary. This may only be a temporary proposal. Certainly, it is not an acceptable outcome as a frontage in the long term.

Terracing of some of this front set back area would improve the relationship of the building with the street with the possibility of even bringing one or two gardens to the street with their private entrances. This also slightly diversifies the mix as people moving into these apartments may be down sizing and may be used to very large private gardens. Mix of apartments applies to both the internal and external qualities. The location of communal open space on this section of the site has the potential to improve the relationship of the development with the street and to provide surveillance.

<u>The Spatial System</u>
The spatial system has both public and private spaces. It comprises the street network; front; side and rear set backs and how those spaces link to internal communal courtyards. Urban areas are as much about the spacing between buildings as they are about the resolution of the building. This applies both to the proportions of the space and the shape of the space. The subdivision pattern and the spaces around the buildings have changed as a result of a new building typology and new set backs being introduced.

Proportion and Size of Spaces
The proposed buildings reflect the new spatial pattern. The buildings have 12 metres between the adjacent buildings on the side boundary; approximately 40 metres across the public streets and there is 20 metres between the two buildings at the rear around the riparian corridor. The side separation and generous front set back reflects the relationship on the sides and front of the former pattern. This rear separation gives a rough portion of 45 degrees between the height of the building and the width of the space - an ideal spatial relationship.

Shape of Spaces
The regular shapes of the proposed buildings in plan and section and the use of a flat roof ensure that a "positive" spatial system is created between the buildings and that there is the potential for "positive" spaces to be created with adjoining development.

A flat or skillion roof assists in making a building less of an "object" building. Where a hipped roof is used on a building with a large square footprint over 2 storeys in height and is not a building in its own setting, the building reads more as an "object" building. It is very difficult to create a successful relationship between one "object" building and another.

In order to minimise the impact of large buildings even if they are in a landscaped setting, they need to relate to each other. Simple flat and / or skillion roofs together with plans that have straight and not curvilinear walls are more likely to achieve a successful outcome.

Figure 4 – Illustrates how parallel buildings create: - a positive space between them, and - views through the site to the neighbouring street

<u>The Natural Features</u>
The response to the natural features of any proposal depends on the ability of that building and / or group of buildings to:

- Reveal the site and not to obliterate it.
- Ensure that the natural features of site are enhanced as important elements

To do this, buildings need to:

- Be designed so that they are not “object” buildings but are buildings which define a spatial system. In this way the spaces created around them and with adjacent buildings are “positive” spaces in which the shape of the land is understood and the other natural features are key elements.
- Create internal spaces and façade designs that address the external spaces including the street. This ensures that the street and other spaces read as important places.
- Ensure that the ground level of the building sits appropriately on the ground plane. This can be done in a range of ways including relating internal / external levels with platforms and / or walls and open spaces that relate to the footprint and height of the building.

The proposal responds to the natural features in the following ways:

- The proposed buildings are designed as “space defining” buildings and not as “object” buildings so that the spaces around them are important and not left over
- Both buildings face onto the street frontages and the internal riparian corridor. This highlights the importance of both public streets and the corridor.
- The buildings maintain the 5 storeys on both edges i.e. the street and the riparian corridor. The buildings will therefore provide:

    - clear edges to both the riparian zone and the street frontages.
    - a clear roof line against the sky when the buildings are viewed either from / along the street and / or from the open space riparian corridor. This will ensure that the overall appearance of mass of the buildings is minimised and that the reading of the space around the buildings is maximised.

- The buildings have internal spaces which run from the entrances through each building at ground level / street level and which align with each other.
- Their relationship is enhanced by the provision of a viewing platform which extends from the communal space in Building A out over the riparian zone .This will enable the whole site, including the shape of the site; the change in levels and the riparian zone in the gulley in the middle of the site, to be understood from the entrances and from the street in a dramatic way.
- Both buildings have an internal courtyard with a large landscaped planter. In Building A the planter has substantial tree planting. The planters bring into the building the leafy feel of the area and the site.
- The communal open spaces overlook the riparian corridor one level above the ground. This is at a height and distance that it will provide a sense of the outdoors coming into the buildings.

PRINCIPLE NO. 2: SCALE

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

The Requirement

Successful resolution of the scale of a building is complex and needs to be resolved in two ways. Firstly, the resolution of the mass of building into a particular form; and secondly, the resolution of that form into architecture. It is not a two step linear process but an iterative design process.

The first step needs to be resolved at the larger scale as a balance between building form and the spatial system of the precinct / city. In this context it encompasses the shape of the building; footprint; height of the building relative to its typology and together with the spatial system around it including the street. This is where the overall mass is organised into a particular building form.

Secondly, a building needs to be resolved in how that form is articulated. In this context the resolution deals with the placement of openings; organisation of balconies; walls; use of materials; and roof form.

Buildings of a similar size may appear to be very different in scale due to the way that they are articulated. Too much articulation will make a building appear more dominant as will too little articulation.

The apparent scale of the building depends on:

- The actual size of the building, height and footprint.
- The shape of the building and the shape of the space which is left over around the building and between that building and other buildings.
- The way in which the mass is articulated into a particular form of vertical and horizontal elements.
- The way in which the form is further articulated by the openings; balconies; screens; blade walls and other elements.

The Response

The Form and Spatial System
The area is clearly undergoing a significant change from a low density precinct of detached dwellings to a higher density precinct of residential flat buildings.

The actual height and overall size of the building is in large part dictated by the DCP and the riparian corridor in the centre of the site. How the resulting form is articulated will contribute to the impact of the buildings in the landscape setting; their relationship to neighbouring buildings and the requirements and quality of the interiors.

The proposal responds to the neighbouring buildings in the following ways:

- The proposed buildings reflect the DCP which envisages 5 storey apartment buildings with underground car parking located in a landscape garden setting.
- The proposed buildings are well scaled in both form and articulation. This minimises the dominance of the buildings on the site and relates the buildings to the street and potential neighbours
- The buildings comply with the setbacks with very minor modifications; density and height and these controls will determine the outcome of its future neighbours. The size and form of the proposal is in keeping with the new and proposed adjacent properties.
- The five storey height creates a well proportioned street. Although a slightly smaller front set back may have resulted in the street having a greater sense of definition.
- The parallel alignment of the buildings with the street and the side boundaries enables adjacent buildings and those across the street in Dumaresq Street to reflect that alignment and create a positive spatial relationship.
- The simple flat roof also enables adjacent development to be designed in a way that the buildings along the street can be read as a suite and not as one building standing out from another. This positive contribution contrasts with that of buildings which are irregular in plan and / or section and / or roof profile. Plan forms such as curving; sections that are heavily stepped; roofs that are pitched or hipped on large footprint buildings such as the apartment typology create building forms with which neighbouring buildings cannot relate.
- The regular plan shape is articulated into discrete repetitive vertical elements related to the units over the first, second and third floors; and / or first, second, third and fourth floors. The plan shape of Building A is now less regular at the rear. I am not convinced that this is preferable to the previous scheme however it still provides a sympathetic relationship with Building B primarily due to the levels; topography and vegetation. The

proportion of these articulation elements relates the height of the buildings to the width of the buildings and the number of vertical divisions. The proportions of these vertical elements are roughly one in three. This provides a well balanced solution.

- The vertical elements sit on a solid horizontal base and the buildings have a recessed top level so that the arrangement also creates a base, middle and top without the need to employ arbitrary horizontal elements.

Figure 5 – Illustrates the scale of the proposed buildings in relation to the street

The Resolution of the Form

The form of any building needs to be further articulated by entrances / window openings / balconies / screens / material use. The success of outcome will depend on how well the overall form is resolved as well as the articulation. The proposal produces an urban form which results in well proportioned and interesting facades in the following way:

- The organisation of the elements is related to the overall proportions of the form and to create coherent panels of different materials / glass / render / timber combined with some “hole in the wall” openings.
- The western elevation is less articulated in plan and massing however this contrasts with the more detailed modulation of the rear; front and Eastern boundary facades. The intent of the KMC DCP is met in terms of modulation to ensure an appropriate scale.
- The roof is flat and integrated with the treatment of the elevations.
- The selection of materials includes concrete; face brick; render; timber screens; aluminium louvers and metal balustrades. This is an appropriate palette for the landscape setting and building typology and can be maintained relatively easily.
- The organisation of the materials; openings and walls appear to create “depth” in the elevation. All external walls need “depth”. Depth in a wall is achieved by the actual thickness of the wall; where the openings are located in that depth i.e. on the outer face or inner face or centre. Depth makes an important contribution to the apparent scale of a building as it eliminates the potential “flatness” of the facade without contorted articulation. It provides shadow lines and strengthens the relationship between the building and the outside. The use of panels of different materials, glazing to the underside of the ceiling and location of windows on the internal skin all assist in this modulation.

- The design is quite sophisticated and so much can change between the DA and the Construction Certificate. It uses off form concrete and a blend of hard and soft materials The quality of the final outcome will depend on whether the detailing reflects accurately what is outlined in the DA proposal. For this reason, I would suggest that KMC DA consent is tied to the drawings [model???] to ensure that the final outcome will reflect the proposal. Small modifications to the organisation of the openings such as the substitution of "hole in the wall" openings in the places which are currently delineated by whole floor to ceiling panels would have a detrimental impact on this proposal. Likewise small changes in materials or the relationship of the materials can dramatically impact on the final result.

PRINCIPLE NO. 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 manipulation of building elements

The Requirement

An appropriate building form on any site needs to:

- Follow the desired building alignment. The building alignment may vary from the existing in areas undergoing change. Any alignment requirements should endeavour to create a "positive" spatial system with the street and between buildings. In this case the building alignment is informed by the set back controls although they do not stipulate a specific alignment or "build to" line
- Create clear edges and a clear roof line against the sky
- Use plan and section resolution to articulate the form into a series of well proportioned elements which can be further articulated
- Use openings; projections; balconies etc to further articulate the elements which create the overall outcome.

The Response

The proposal resolves the building mass into an appropriate built form in the following ways:

- It creates buildings which align with the street and with each other so that the space becomes the dominant element
- It distributes the floor space into two differently sized buildings so that the building forms relate well in plan and section as individual buildings and as a composition
- It steps the buildings internally so that a clear edge is created to the street and to the riparian corridor. This ensures the dominance of the spatial system
- It uses flat roofs with set backs and screening to form tops which are regular in shape and provide a clear roof line against the sky
- Is well articulated by openings [see aesthetics]

PRINCIPLE NO. 4: DENSITY

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

The Response

The proposal reflects the objectives in the LEP and DCP in terms of the location of the site. The objectives are to create a specific area of medium to high density development that is close to the rail station and Gordon town centre. The proposal achieves the maximum density in two well considered residential flat buildings.

PRINCIPLE NO. 5: RESOURCE, ENERGY AND WATER EFFICIENCY

Good design makes efficient use of natural resources, energy, and water throughout its full life cycle including construction.

The Requirement

Well designed buildings should meet the BASIX targets and extend these where possible. Buildings should minimise the use of natural resources by employing a range of measures. These include

- Passive solar design / shading etc
- Maximising natural light
- Optimising cross ventilation
- Water reuse
- Using materials with low embodied energy

The Response

The proposal meets the targets set out in BASIX although it does not extend these to any great degree.

Northern solar access is provided to most apartments. The “through” balconies are slightly less deep in the original scheme. They are an innovative idea and will provide a useful outdoor area with good cross ventilation however how successful they are in allowing sun access is not clear.

There are some apartments which have only a south facing aspect but given the proportions and orientation of the site it is difficult to avoid this without a detrimental impact on the Dumaresq Street elevation. The right choice has been made to have the apartments facing the street.

The two penthouses on Building A have an east or west and south aspect opening onto a terrace. Given that it would be possible to have a northern aspect this is a less desirable configuration but this is driven by the height line and the creation of a clear edge and sky line to the street view.

Cross ventilation and sun screening is well handled.

There is no reference to ceiling fans and / or air conditioning. Ideally the development should provide an option to install ceiling fans.

The embodied energy of materials is complex. The proposals states that the material selection uses materials with low embodied energy but this is hard to verify.

PRINCIPLE NO. 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 the residents and for the public domain.

The Requirement

To ensure that a development responds to its landscape context it needs to:

- Retain, reveal and enhance the natural features. In this case, the fall in the land; the rocky outcrops; vegetation and the riparian corridor

- Have a well considered relationship between the ground floor and the ground plane
- Integrate the interior and exterior of the building and design the buildings; planting; levels and open space into a cohesive whole
- Use the appropriate plant species

The Response

Retain and Reveal the Natural Features

The landscaping treatment is similar in principle to the previous scheme. The extended terraces on the western side are an improvement as is the communal ground floor space.

62% of all existing trees on site including those in the riparian corridor are retained. Large trees will be retained in the riparian corridor. This will ensure that the large trees will not pose a safety hazard for dwellings and that the proposed buildings will visually sit well within their site and context.

Figure 6 – The characteristics of the riparian corridor

Selected trees will be removed because they are in the proposed location of the building footprint or are large predominately exotic trees that would be situated close to the proposed buildings and their root zone would be adversely affected. Other trees proposed to be removed comprise known noxious species, for example, *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False Acacia) *Ligustrum lucidum* (Large Leaf Privet).

The riparian corridor will be rehabilitated with plants and addition of physical elements (rip rap boulders), designed to define the watercourse, prevent erosion, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area.

Planting is proposed or will be retained to side boundaries to protect the amenity of adjacent residents.

The underground car parking and the size of the building footprint will result in changes to the topography but the development does respond to the falls on the site.

The proposed development reveals and enhances the natural features. [See Context]

The relationship between the ground floor and the ground plane

The proposed development integrates the buildings with the ground plane by:

- Stepping the building internally so that the ground floors of both buildings relate to the natural ground plane
- Designing the levels around the building to relate to the interior
- On the western side of the building more terracing could reduce the impact of the development even more. It may create the need for a fence / retaining wall at the boundary in some places but it could "seat" the buildings and contrast with the slope and informal nature of the riparian zone.
- Creating a direct link from the street level into the buildings

The Relationship of Interior and Exterior Spaces

The proposed development integrates the external and internal spaces in a range of ways.

Firstly, there are the penetrations into the building form by:

- The entrance lobbies conceived as "through" links. These provide views to the interior of the site
- The "through" balconies which link the internal courtyards with the external gardens

Secondly, there is the use of the internal courtyards. These will ensure there is amenity for future residents and "draw" the site into the building.

Thirdly, the proposed private open spaces are an extension of balcony / courtyard areas. They assist in integrating buildings (physically and functionally) with the landscape however it is not clear from the plans whether these private open spaces will be delineated by fencing or paving, as the material is not indicated on the plans. [See comments on private open space]

Green roof planters on the fourth floor of the proposed buildings will also soften the visual impact of hard surfaces and visually integrate the buildings with their landscape setting.

Plant Species
The proposed plant palette comprises predominately native plants, with the exception of tree species, Japanese Maple and Crepe Myrtle. Other exotic plants comprise *Clivea miniatia* (Trumpet Lily) and *Canna indica* (Cleopatra Canna Lily), *Dietes iroides* (African Iris), *Kniphofia uvaria* (Red Hot Poker), *Phormium* 'Bronze Eaby' (Dwarf Burgundy Flax) and *Tradescantia pallida* (Purple Heart). Collectively these plants will act as feature planting through adding colour (flowers and / or foliage) and are hardy and drought resistant species that require little maintenance.

The proposed plant palette represents an appropriate selection for the site.

PRINCIPLE NO. 7: AMENITY

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

The Requirement

To ensure that an apartment building has a high level of amenity it needs to:

- Provide clear safe visible places which create a sense of entry
- Good vertical and horizontal circulation throughout the buildings
- Have adequate useable communal open space
- Have apartments which:

    - are the right size for the number of occupants
    - are well planned for circulation and furniture placement
    - have a good relationship between the exterior and the interior
    - have aural and visual privacy
    - have a pleasant outlook
    - have adequate useable private open space
    - meet the requirements re solar access; cross ventilation etc [see Resource Energy and Water Efficiency]

The Response

The overall quality of the apartments is high.

Entrances

- The pedestrian entrances to the apartment blocks from the street are generous and direct. Mail boxes are easy to access.

Circulation

- Vertical circulation from the car park and throughout the building is legible and direct.
- Lobbies are generous and able to accommodate furniture removal.

Communal Open Space

An area of communal space is located at the ground / first floor in both buildings. These overlook the riparian corridor and have direct access to the main lobbies. Although they are designated as “open” space they are to a large degree internal. They have a ceiling but are open at one end to the lobby and one end to the riparian corridor. It is not entirely clear how these would be used. They are not suitable for a barbeque / child play area etc but more as a meeting room. Screening to the external wall might assist in making them more useable throughout the winter months.

There is a ground level communal space with a barbeque on the west. This is connected by a direct stair to the internal / external communal open space in building A and directly into the lobby. There is also a pathway which links across the creek area and through to Dumaresq Street. This complements the semi external / internal spaces at the higher levels. The site is a good one for outdoor use as it is overlooked without being directly outside an apartment.

The Apartment Design

The apartment plans are well resolved in the following ways:

- The apartments have well considered plans which:

    - have a floor space which relates to the number of bedrooms / number of residents.
    - are able to be appropriately furnished
    - relate the interior living areas well to the external living

- Apartment circulation is generally well resolved although in units SLG 02; 03 04; 08 and 09 on all levels the movement around the furniture as shown is tortuous. This could be reorganised with the only down side a more exposed view into the kitchen area.
- The distances between apartment windows provide good visual privacy.
- The internal courtyards may have some implications for noise which will need to be addressed by planting and the use of materials which deflect sound.

- Most apartments have an outlook to the street and front garden or to the riparian corridor. The upper levels will have district views.

Private Open Space

- Every unit has a well proportioned open space. The balconies are all recessed or semi recessed thereby avoiding issues of overlooking. This design solution also assists in limiting the potential of noise transmission.
- The balconies to the ground floor apartments on the east side would offer better amenity to the apartments if the area to the boundary fence was included as courtyards - possibly split level, rather than as a strip of open space along the boundary. A similar strategic approach related to specific balconies; apartments and their levels could be taken to the west so that side of the development could engage with the new street possibly even providing additional entrances from the street to the ground floor apartments. This provides an additional choice in terms of residents who want to have a more generous garden area. This approach would "ground" the buildings with the land in a more deliberate way rather than the tendency for the buildings to "float".

PRINCIPLE NO. 8: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Good design optimises safety and security, both internal to the development and for the public domain

The Response

The basic principles of CPTED are evident throughout the proposal as for the previous scheme.

The buildings address all the streets and provide overlooking of entrances; the riparian corridor and McIntyre Street and Dumaresq Street. The fence proposed along the western boundary is not a suitable edge for a public / private interface when the new street is developed.

The buildings are secure and have controlled access to basements and entrance doors. There is a clear delineation of public and private domain**.**

PRINCIPLE NO. 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.

The Response

The location of the precinct provides excellent access to shops; services; railway station; bus routes and open space in a lovely part of Sydney as for the previous scheme.

The introduction of well designed apartments in this area provides the opportunity for people to buy at a more affordable level or to downsize from the larger houses and gardens in the surrounding suburbs. It also adds to the housing mix and enables people without cars or who can no longer drive to be able to live here with reasonable access to immediate facilities and other parts of Sydney including facilities in the City; Chatswood; St Leonards and Hornsby on a direct train line.

PRINCIPLE NO. 10: AESTHETICS

Quality aesthetics require the appropriate composition of building elements, texture, materials and colours and reflect the use, internal design and structure of the development.

The Requirement

Successful resolution of the aesthetics of a building is like scale in that any building needs to be resolved in two ways.

Firstly, it needs to be resolved at the larger scale as a balance between building form and the spatial system. This needs to reflect the context of the precinct / city. In this context it encompasses the shape; footprint; height of the building together with the spaces between and around the buildings.

Secondly, it needs to be resolved in how the particular form is articulated. In the case of an apartment building it deals with the placement of openings; organisation of balconies; walls; use of materials; roof form etc.

To ensure that a development has a high level of aesthetics in relation to the level of massing and form it needs to:

- Relate the building form to the site dimensions; shape and topography
- Relate the building form to the other buildings on the site and those in the precinct
- Create a positive spatial system around it

To ensure that a development has a high level of aesthetics at the detail level of articulation it needs to:

- Ensure that the openings; projections and materials relate in proportions to the overall massing and arrangement of the form
- Organise the openings; projections and materials into a cohesive whole
- Use materials that relate to the building typology and the precinct

The Response

The proposal is aesthetically well considered in terms of the overall form; its relationship to the site and as well as the detailed architectural resolution of the buildings. This is for the following reasons.

<u>The Relationship of the Building Form to the Site</u>

- A smaller and a larger building both addressing the streets and the riparian corridor
- The use of level differences internally to ensure that the buildings relate to the ground plane levels and natural attributes including vegetation
- The generous direct pedestrian entrances and the relationship of these spaces with the communal spaces and the riparian corridor
- The relationship of the buildings to each other and the street and block pattern.

<u>The Relationship of the Building Form to other Buildings</u>

- The simple form in plan and in section enables any proposed adjacent development to from a positive spatial relationship with this design either on the sites adjacent or across the street.

<u>The Resolution of the Building Form</u>

- The way in which the design of the units is reflected in the modulation and articulation of the facade.
- The combination and selection of materials.
- The organisation of the windows and openings relative to the overall proportions of the building
- The use of the central courtyard as an organising element of space and light

Conclusion

The proposed development for Demara Pty Ltd is for two residential flat buildings containing 80 apartments to be located at 32-34 McIntyre Street and 35-39 Dumaresq Street, Gordon. The density and form is appropriate for the location and reflects the aspirations of the DCP.

Designed by Wendy Lewin Architect and Angelo Candalepas and Associates Pty Ltd it responds to its context; is an innovative solution to a complex site and shows a high level of architectural sophistication, skill and understanding.

The floor space is organised into two complementary buildings that reveal and respect the street and the natural features of the site. They do this by linking the internal and external spaces in buildings which define a clear inter-related public and private spatial system. The form reveals the natural and topographical features of the site through the changes of levels; the introduction of internal courtyards and "through" entry / communal spaces enhanced by the addition of the viewing platform and ground floor open space. The apartments are well designed, circulation is well resolved and the use of materials / openings / entrances and detail arrangements potentially create a successful outcome.

The areas which I believe could be resolved more fully are:

- The extension of the courtyards / balconies at ground level to the side set backs where possible on the eastern boundary and to the street on the western boundary for the reasons outlined above about the value of a variety of external conditions and not just a variety of internal conditions.
- The western elevation and ground plane relative to the proposed new street could include the levels; fencing and possibly individual entries to some apartments. I would still recommend a reduced set back to this street as outlined but that initiative would involve a redesign of the whole proposal.

The proposal is developed around a strong idea about space and the organisation of the buildings on the ground coupled with quite fine resolution of the details. Because of this a key factor in the successful implementation of this development is that the current architectural consortium is retained to detail the proposal through to construction. It is the kind of proposal that could lose much of its quality with unsympathetic detailing and poor construction but I am not sure how this can be secured.