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Ku- ring- gai Municipal Council SEPP 65 Assessment 07-11-11

DA: 2-8 Gilroy Road Turramurra

Revised DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION 0196/11

Urban Design Comments

This report provides additional comments related to the revised DA to the original assessment of the design proposal for **2-8 Gilroy Road Turramurra** in terms of the ten SEPP 65 Principles.

<u>The Content</u>

Description of the Proposal

SEPP 65 Criteria

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Description of the Proposal

The proposal is for two residential flat buildings with a common lift access linking them to form one building. The building is located on an amalgamated site at 2-8 Gilroy Road Turramurra. The building contains 40 apartments with 50 car spaces.

The Proponent is IC Holmes Pty Ltd.

The Architects are Mackenzie Architects.

The Landscape Architects are Vision Dynamics.

Note: Some of the Drawings are incorrectly dated .They should be 11-08-11

Drawings Reviewed are: SK 01B; SK 02B; SK 03B; SK 04B; SK 05B; SK 06B; SK 07B; SK 08B; SK 100B; SK 102B; SK 200B; SK 201B; SK 202B; SK 300B; SK 301B; SK 302B; SK 303B; SK 304B; SK 400B; SK 401B; SK 402B.

Compliance

The land is Zoned R4 and 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 is located on Gilroy Road where it turns a right angle corner from an east/west alignment to a north/south alignment. The main frontage faces east. At the rear of the site to the west there is a local park called Cameron Park. To the south across Gilroy Rd is a second open space. This formal open space is located at the front of dwellings and appears to be a bowling green and part of a precinct which contains Commercial / Community facilities.

The site is an amalgamation of 4 sites. These currently have a single dwelling on each one and they face east The site therefore has street frontages on the east and the south and relates to two open space areas Cameron Park on the west and the bowling green on the south

The consolidated site is 2620.5 m^2. The site has a fall from south to north diagonally across the site. In the west / east direction it falls to the west. The proposal locates two buildings on the site joined by a common vertical access point. The southern building is sited half a level higher than the northern building. This reflects the slight slope in the land to the north

The building is 5 storeys above 2 storeys of car park. The building is set back 10 -12 metres from Gilroy Road on the eastern frontage and 6-8 metres from Gilroy Road on the southern frontage. Private courtyards extend slightly into this front set back zone.

The building has a set back to the upper level on the Gilroy Road frontage and Cameron Park frontage. The upper two levels are set back on the Gilroy Rd South frontage.

Refer to **Figure 1** for a locality map. **Photos 1 to 8** show the site and surrounding areas.

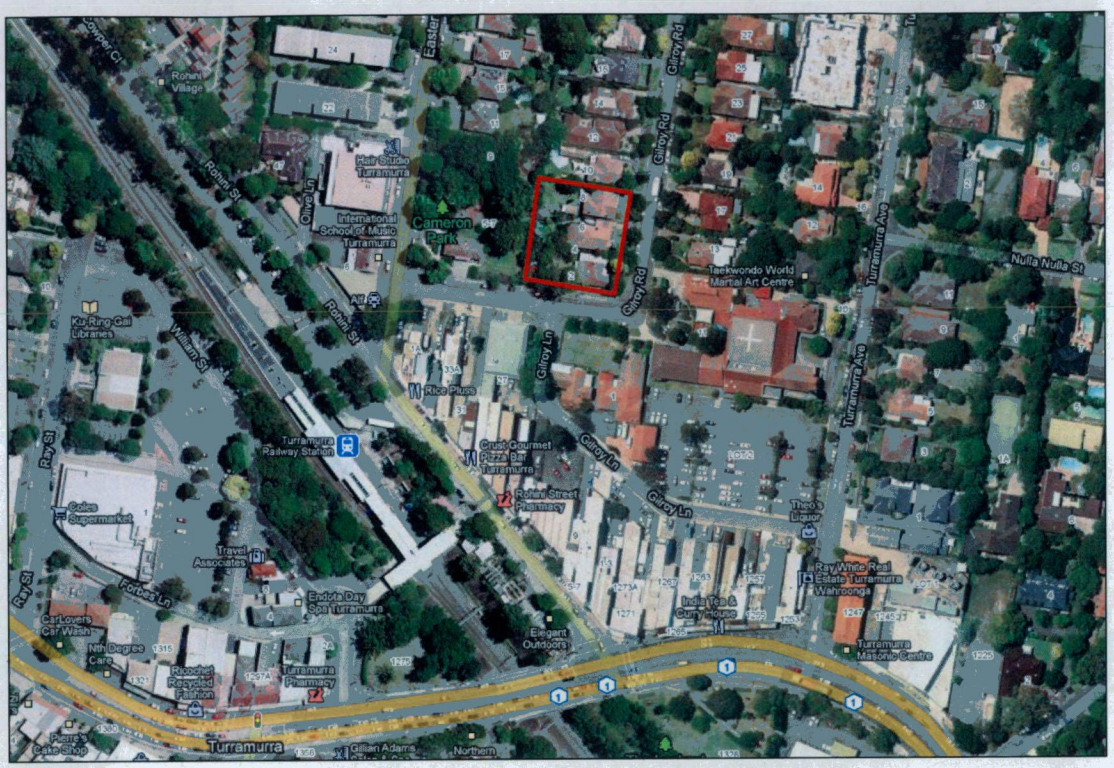

Figure 1 – Locality map

Photo 1 – Gilroy Road, view of eastern frontage

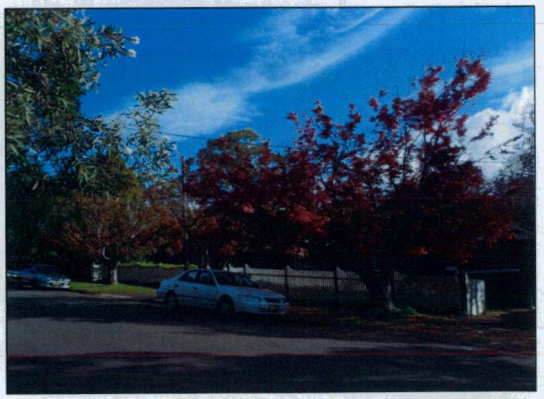

Photo 2 – Gilroy Road, view of eastern frontage

Photo 3 – View of site from Cameron Park

Photo 4 – View of site from Cameron Park

Photo 5 – View of bowling green on southern side of Gilroy Road

Photo 6 – View of bowling green on southern side of Gilroy Road

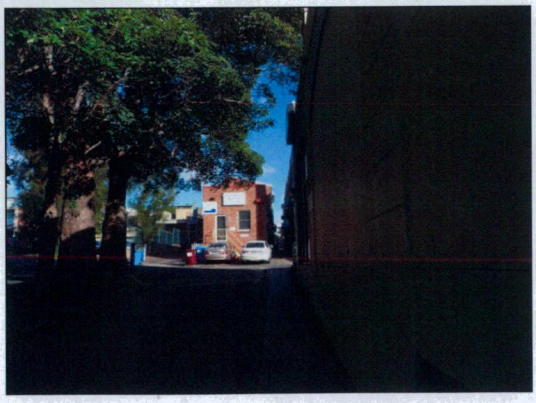

Photo 7 – View from site to Gilroy Lane and pedestrian access to Rohini Street

Photo 8 – View from Gilroy Lane and pedestrian access to the site

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 designed as part of the overall three dimensional outcome for the precinct and not as a "stand alone" building unless dictated by specific design development controls.
- Have a form which sets up a positive spatial relationship with appropriate spacing and alignments between buildings on the site; buildings around the site; with parks; streets and other open spaces.
- Respond to the street and block pattern
- Have an appropriate density
- Reflect the existing and / or proposed subdivision pattern in terms of its form
- Address the street frontages and public domain
- Reveal the natural features.

The Response

Contributing to the Precinct

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 Turramurra Town Centre and to Turramurra Railway Station to the south. The area has been rezoned and there will be blocks of apartments of similar size to the proposal constructed in the future. The site is on the corner nearest to the town centre. It differs from the majority of sites in this rezoned area because it has Cameron Park on the west site; an open space across the street on the south and it terminates the view from Gilroy Lane There are no specific building envelopes/ design controls which recognise the particular characteristics of this site.

The proposal responds to the precinct in the following ways:

- The building reflects 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.
- The building does not address and/or particularly acknowledge the open spaces and street configuration
- The building is designed to have some attributes that create a positive arrangement of space with potential neighbouring buildings and some aspects of the design which tend to make it read more as an "object" building.

There are no drawings showing the context. These would reveal the relationship of the proposal to:

- The park
- The surrounding open space and street systems.
- The subdivision pattern

Context drawings would also highlight the extrapolation of the DCP setbacks when considered on the neighbouring sites.

Many of the site features are common to the adjacent sites however there are points of difference. These are:

- The corner condition
- The extension of the Gilroy Lane and pedestrian access way to the southern part of Gilroy Rd
- The park frontage

These are all aspects which could be translated into the site design so that the building offered a much greater contextual solution.

The Spatial System

Set up a positive spatial system with appropriate spacing between buildings.

An urban spatial system consists of both public and private spaces. It comprises the street network; front; side and rear setbacks and any internal courtyards etc. 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 building change as a result of the introduction of a new building typology and new setbacks. Ideally the new development sets up a positive spatial system with appropriate spacing between any buildings on the site; buildings around the site; with parks; streets and other open spaces.

In order to minimise the impact of large buildings even if they are in a landscaped setting, there is a need to create positive spaces between them and between buildings on adjacent sites. Buildings which have plans that have regular straight walls which align with the street and not curvilinear or irregular walls; simple flat and / or skillion roofs are more likely to achieve a successful outcome. These regular characteristics assist in making a building less of an "object" building. It is very difficult to create a successful relationship between one "object" building and another whereas buildings with regular plans and clear straight sections have the potential to create positive spaces along the street and between one building and another.

The Response

Definition of Spaces

The proposed building reflects a new spatial pattern which is driven by the controls rather than the context The spaces around the building are a mixture of defined and "left over" This is the result of the number of indentations and direction changes in the plan and in the section of the building, too much modulation rather than too little. Generally the space is "left over" and not defined. The lack of clear distinction between the heights of the two parts of the building exacerbates this.

Proportion and Size of Spaces

Because the site has only one building and it is designed as a slab building with indentations at the centre at the front and rear entrances there are no spaces which are well enough defined around the building and with potential new buildings off site to establish a readable proportion. The size of the space around the building in terms of setbacks is adequate. [See later comments re front setbacks]

Shape of Spaces in Plan and Section

The irregular shape of the proposed building in plan and section and the lack of any extension of the building via terraces to the street weaken the external spaces. The use of a flat roof and the regular alignment on the north provides the potential for a "positive" spatial system with any new development to the north.

The reconfiguration of the raised planter boxes in the entry area at the rear has resulted in a less satisfactory solution for the spatial system around the buildings. This area which forms an entry to the building facing the park is now narrower and less defined. It has no value as a communal space. It is left over space around the building and reinforces the object characteristics of the building rather than the spatial characteristics.

Street and Block Pattern

The street and block pattern is a long but narrow grid. It reflects the low density development which previously and currently predominates in the area. The long blocks are perpendicular to the rail line and Rohini Street. This is a classic pattern around the older rail lines in Sydney and an excellent one for passenger rail as it feeds people easily to the station.

The combination of density, height and front setbacks are such that on a street block of this size and shape the previously large rear setbacks along the centre [and the vegetation corridor] of the street block will be lost with the new development. This is evident in the proposal.

The set back to Gilroy Road is very large given the depth of the lots. This part of Ku-ring-gai is much more suburban and denser than many other parts. It has the traditional grid pattern streets and not the curvilinear sinuous streets of St Ives. Gilroy Road is approximately 20 metres wide and the buildings are only 5 storeys. A reduced set back to the street would provide a deeper set back at the rear on the Cameron Park side. This would still provide more than adequate separation across the street. While this set back arrangement is not so critical on this site because of the park it will be more critical in the development on adjacent sites where the apartments will be back to back. A larger rear set back, will create a better balance of space, privacy solar access etc such that there would be approximately 36 metres across the street and at least 16 -18 metres at the rear between apartment blocks.

Density

The proposal responds to the density 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 linked buildings forming one long building which:
  - faces Gilroy Road and Cameron Park
  - has an overly generous 6-12 metre landscaped setback to the street frontages and a 6-8 metre landscaped setback to the Cameron Park frontage.

The density is appropriate for the area.

The Subdivision Pattern

Reflecting the spacing and building pattern of an earlier subdivision in an area undergoing change to a new typology and higher density 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 Gilroy Road is an amalgamation of 4 sites, all running between Gilroy Road and the Park. The traditional pattern of development in this precinct is a front garden; relatively small side setbacks and a large rear set back.

The proposed development responds to the subdivision pattern by locating the buildings to face the street with a front garden and a smaller garden at the rear

The proposal does not reflect the previous subdivision pattern of the four lots other than by breaking the building form into two blocks and then linking them. This possibly reflects a potential amalgamation of two sites. This form is partially due to the DCP controls which mandate the setbacks. The side setbacks however are wider than the previous setbacks which were related to single dwelling houses. This results in a certain dimension which has to relate to the internal requirements of the new buildings as well as the overall plan area in which a building can be built. The new building therefore does not really reflect the previous subdivision pattern. The organisation and design of the entrance paths also does not reflect the previous development pattern.

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 entries and / or elements in the design of the building which reflect the contextual spatial system such as streets/ paths / parks at right angles to the building
- Have entrances and / or openings / balconies facing the street or have clearly visible entries
- Have multiple pedestrian entries where possible
- Minimise the impact of vehicle entries
- Have private courtyards / terraces which extend to the street boundary with private entrances
- 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 Response

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

Relationship between the ground floor and the ground plane

The relationship of the ground floor and the ground plane is acceptable except for the resolution of the pathways and levels relating to those pathways; the courtyards and the resolution of the landscaping [see below].

Relationship to the Contextual Spatial System

On the southern frontage there is a pedestrian lane from Rohini Street to Gilroy Road South. The railway station is located on Rohini Street about 3 minutes walk from the site. This short pedestrian lane is narrow but it adjoins a wider street Gilroy Lane which has a fine stand of median planting. This meets Gilroy Road at right angles on the southern side of the site. Ideally

there would be a response to this setting reflected in the site by locating an entrance here or some penetration in the building which responds to the place and its unique spatial arrangement.

No attempt has been made to address this consideration

Entrances and Balconies Facing the Street

The building is elevated with windows, balconies overlooking the street and the park although the opaque glazing of the balustrades reduces visibility to the street.
A 1.2 metre high fence is proposed along the frontage to the street boundary

Multiple Entries

Ideally developments have multiple entries. There is only one pedestrian entrance to the apartments on Gilroy Rd.

The proposal has created one pathway from Gilroy Rd but the pathway now leads into the rear of the lift shaft rather than to the entry doors. This is tortuous and unclear. It is still unsatisfactory. The entry path is domestic in scale too narrow and does not provide an appropriate entry space to the building. The proposal has not introduced another entry which could relate to the different ground floor levels of the different parts of the building and the related topography. The single narrow entry is a mean approach to the street given that it previously had 4 entrances

The proposal would be better if separate and direct entrances were provided to each entry from the street.

The building is 5 storeys and extends the length of 4 detached housing lots. It requires a sense of entry that relates to the scale of the development and which addresses the street.
There is no entrance and no pathway from the station side of Gilroy Rd into the site as discussed. Nor is there any acknowledgement in the design of the building on this southern façade that relates the building to this part of Gilroy Rd.

Vehicle Entries

The basement car parking entrance is located at the northern entrance point on the site and it provides direct access into the basement garage. The entry from the 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 and it is quite discrete. This minimises the impact of the driveway and the garage entrance doors on the street

Relationship of Courtyards to the Street

None of the private courtyards extend to the street and / or the park. Allowing some gardens to come to the street either in real terms or at least visually would provide a greater number of entries to the street and a different apartment type, more akin to a villa. This also slightly diversifies the potential mix as people moving into these apartments providing opportunities for people who may be "down sizing" and may be previously used to very large private gardens. Mix of apartments applies to both the internal and external qualities. Terracing of some of this front set back area would improve the relationship of the building with the street.

Fenestration

There is no pattern of blade walls which dominate the view from along the street. The balconies are semi recessed and the view from the street of their underside will not be dominating.

Services /Plumbing/ Air Conditioning

There are no details as to the plumbing resolution. The requirement for concealed services can be conditioned by Council.

The Natural Features

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
- Ensure that the natural features of surrounding context 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 elevation treatments 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 natural features on the site are limited to vegetation and the slope of the topography. The surrounding context however has the open spaces of Cameron Park and the bowling green.

The Response

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

- The proposed building is partly designed as "space defining" and partly as an "object" building.
- The spaces around it should be given a much greater sense of importance. This would reduce the visual dominance of the building form and could be achieved by its simplification. A reduction in the amount of stepping in plan and stepping in section would greatly assist.
- The building aligns with the street frontages and the park. This highlights the importance of both the public street and the park .The building will therefore provide:
    - clear edges to Gilroy Road east
    - less defined edge to the park frontage due to the stepping in plan and double set back on the southern end
    - less defined edge to Gilroy Road south due to the stepping in plan and double set back on the upper levels of the southern end It is also important to note here that the open space across the road a could be better defined with a clear edge to this frontage .

The visual impact of the building would be reduced if there was less stepping in plan and in section. This would mean that the natural characteristics of the site could be more dominant. The overall appearance of mass of the buildings would be minimised and the reading of the

space around the buildings maximised including enhancing the relationship of the two open spaces on the adjacent sites that is Cameron Park and the Bowling Green

The proposal has not addressed any of these comments. I appreciate that there are minimum requirements related to the size of wall areas above which appropriate articulation is required however in this case the differences in plan and section are not meaningful. The building will appear more visually dominant and larger in scale with the minor indentations rather than with fewer indentations which are meaningfully related to the plan and the height of the building. Where the changes are small in plan and extend all the way up the building they distort the proportions of the building. Indentations that are satisfactory at 2 storeys can be problematic at 5-6 storeys.

Stepping in Plan

Areas where improvements have been made are by reducing the number of steps in the plan:

- The penthouse northern ,eastern and western elevations
- The removal of the blade wall on the northern elevation on the first floor at units12-13.

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.

Firstly, a building has to be resolved at the larger scale as a balance between building form and the spatial system of the precinct / city. In this context scale is influenced by 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 particular 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. 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 internal requirements.

The apparent scale of a 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 Size of the Building

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 controls and the subdivision pattern of the site within the street and block.

The size of the building including the height is appropriate. The footprint and shape could be resolved to improve its relationship to the context.

The shape of the building and the shape of the space around the building

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

- The proposed building reflects the DCP which envisages 5 storey apartment buildings with underground car parking located in a landscape garden setting.
- The five storey height creates a well proportioned street. Although a smaller front set back would result in the street having a greater sense of definition and a larger rear setback would give an improved relationship with the park.
- The parallel alignment of the building with the street and the side boundaries enables adjacent buildings and those across the street in Gilroy Road 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.

The Organisation of the Mass into its Form

- The proposed building is heavily stepped in plan and section. The overall form could be better scaled if the form had less stepping in plan and in section. This would minimise the dominance of the buildings on the site and relate the building to the street; the park and the potential neighbours to the north.
- A simpler plan shape would enable a better proportioned building because it would enable the articulation to be considered more fully than just the extrapolation of the plan. The current approach has resulted in the proportion of some of the vertical elements of the form being too narrow and tall because they extend from the ground for four floors. It is difficult to ensure a satisfactory resolution of the fenestration when this approach is adopted.
- Greater definition of a base and the combination of some of the vertical walls into the same plane would reduce the apparent scale.
- The buildings have a recessed top level so that the introduction of stronger horizontal elements would create a base, middle and top without the need to employ arbitrary horizontal elements.

There have been minimal changes to the massing of the building. Sandstone cladding has been introduced to create a clear demarcation of the base of the buildings.

The use of a similar material treatment on the lift shaft wall actually contradicts the use of the different material at the base. The sandstone should not be used on the lift shaft wall.

The aluminium screens on the lift core have been broken by the panels but there is no notation as to the materials of the panels. Furthermore the division of the lift core area into three vertical

strips does not assist the elevations. It would be preferable to treat the lift core walls as a single unit.

The Articulation of the Form

The form of any building is 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 how it is articulated.

- The proposed development has an urban form which could be improved by a simpler plan and section. This would provide greater opportunity for a more considered organisation of vertical and horizontal elements; a mix of "hole in the wall" openings together with panels of glazing and the potential for how the materials are used.
- The northern elevation is less articulated in plan and massing and this is more successful
- The uppermost level could be better integrated with the overall design by the use of glazing and panels and the reduction in the number of conventional windows in a wall.

The windows on the penthouse level are still articulated as "hole in the wall" windows. Grouping of these windows and increasing the amount of glazing so that the openings structured the walls of the penthouse level would assist in reducing the apparent bulk.

- The roof is flat and integrated with the treatment of the elevations.
- The selection of materials includes Colourbond roofing; render on masonry; mini orb cladding and on balconies/ balustrades; aluminium window frames and glass louvers. This is an appropriate palette [except perhaps for the solid balustrades] for the building typology; the location and can be maintained relatively easily.
- The mini orb balustrades have been replaced with opaque glazing. The height of the balustrades is approximately 1100 mm. This is the eye height when a person is sitting so it can preclude the ability to look out to the surrounding area. The solid balustrade does however provide privacy from the street. Perhaps a more satisfactory answer would be to have the balustrades solid only for part of their height.

The changed material for the balustrades does not achieve what was intended in the comments above. The opaque glass will appear lighter from the external view than the mini orb but it still limits the view into the street and park from the interior of the apartments etc.

- 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 street view. Depth in this proposal is predominately the result of the modulation. The use of panels of different materials, glazing to the underside of the ceiling and location of windows on the internal skin are positive devices which could be employed rather than the modulation.

There has been no change to address this concern.

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 setback 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 two similar sized buildings linked by the vertical circulation element creating one building. The linking of the buildings makes the development appear more massive than if the buildings had been designed independently Two individual but complementary buildings with a view to the park between them and separate entrances would appear be less massive and more in keeping with the objectives in the code and the future character of the area. .

- Although this would mean the provision of two lifts it would reduce the amount of external wall and so may not be more expensive.

This has not been investigated.

- The relatively parallel alignment of the buildings with the streets and side boundaries is helpful as is the use of flat or skillion roofs

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 Requirement

The density is appropriate for the area

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 Turramurra town centre.

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.

Solar access is provided to most apartments.

Cross ventilation is provided to most apartments.

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

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 vegetation and the park
- 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 landscape design is not appropriate for the development size and scale, nor does it relate to the open space system surrounding the site.

20 of the existing trees on site are to be removed because they are in the proposed location of the building footprint; would be situated close to the proposed buildings and/or their root zone would be adversely affected. One large tree is to be retained facing Cameron Park and one on the southern boundary. This will assist in integrating the proposed buildings within their context however not enough to offset the overall landscape approach

Planting is proposed 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 fall on the site.

The relationship between the ground floor and the ground plane

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

- Stepping the building internally so that the internal levels of both sides of the building relate to the natural ground plane

An improved relationship however could be obtained by:

- Designing the external levels around the building to relate to the interior in the form of extended terracing. This may create the need for a fence / retaining wall at the boundary in some places but it could "seat" the buildings and reveal the contrast of the slope
- Creating direct links from the street into the buildings
- Redesigning the landscaping to relate to the site and its context.

The landscaping proposal in the revised drawings has not improved and none of the matters raised above have been addressed

The Relationship of Interior and Exterior Spaces

The landscaping design is divided into two clear parts. One is the landscaping around the building. The other is the landscaping on the perimeter of the site. The area separating the two is turf. The area of turf and the space it defines ranges in width from about 1.5 metres, a relatively narrow strip for most of the site to 10 metres at the communal area. This design response fails to integrate the building with the site and the surrounds.

There are a large number of planters on the basement podium. Some of these relate to the private courtyards; others relate to the entrance areas. They fill up space rather than create an edge to it.

The pathways into the building are narrow. A different more generous design related to the vegetation offer the opportunity of linking the building with its site and with the street.

Overall this landscape proposal reinforces the reading of the building as an object. The narrow strip of turf running around the building is out of scale with buildings of 5 storeys. .The two unrelated strips of planting one around the building and one around the perimeter of the site will not assist in the integration of the building in its context. It is a very domestic solution for an apartment building.

The proposed private open spaces do not assist in integrating buildings (physically and functionally) with the landscape.

Plant Species

The proposed plant palette appears to be appropriate for the area

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 mixed.

Entrances

- The pedestrian entrance/s from the street to the apartment blocks are not generous and would be improved by having at least two direct entrances.
- Mail boxes are easy to access.

Circulation

- Vertical circulation from the car park and throughout the building is legible and direct if using a lift. There appears to be no direct stair access to the lobby from the basement car parking.

Communal Open Space

An area of communal space is located on the ground floor at the rear of the buildings and between both buildings This space appears to be very left over and it is not clear how it would actually be used A considerable amount of the paved space is taken up with planter boxes... These are not structured in any way to enclose one or a series of useable spaces.

The reconfiguration of the entry area and the raised planter boxes has resulted in a less satisfactory solution for the communal area This area which forms an entry to the rear of the building has no definition as a communal space. It is as stated above left over space around the buildings.

Furthermore land which is denoted as communal area to the north and east of the buildings is actually not usable communal space. The area is landscaped into planting beds with a strip of turf. It has value as deep soil and visual outlook only but not as useable communal open space area.

It could be argued that the development is adjacent to the park and does not require communal open space but given the amount of land and size of the site the absence of communal open space is the result of poor design and not lack of area.

The Apartment Design

The apartment plans are not well resolved in the following ways:

- There are a number of apartments with areas nominated as studies. These areas are large enough to be used as bedrooms. This in itself is not a problem but if walls to separate them were introduced they have no light and /or ventilation

- Generally the overall sizes of the apartments
  - have a floor space which relates to the number of bedrooms / number of residents.
  - are able to be appropriately furnished
  - have a reasonable relationship between the interior living areas and the external living areas [except as discussed below on the ground floor units No 6;7;8and 9] In all units the relationship could be improved by using glazing that extended the full width and height of the living room walls

- The distances between apartment windows provide good visual privacy.
- Most apartments have an outlook to the street and front garden or to the park The upper levels will have district views.[Note comments re solid balustrades]

Private Open Space

The balconies are a mixture of recessed or semi recessed with solid party walls thereby avoiding issues of overlooking. This design solution also assists in limiting the potential of noise transmission.

- Apartments No 6, 7, 8 and 9 have sliding doors that open out on to a very narrow area of paving and it is not clear what surface adjoins this and how useable the area is. This needs to be clarified.

This has not changed and there is no clarification as to how these areas are treated. Can they be planted? Do they form part of the deep soil zones or should the hard paving be extended? It is particularly problematic where the sliding doors open into the space.

- Some of the balcony / courtyards would offer better amenity to the apartments and provide a much better relationship to the site if the area to the boundary fence was included as courtyards - possibly split level, rather than as a strip of open space around the boundary and the building. 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 park and to the south 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. It also enables the buildings to be "grounded" with the land in a more deliberate way and to relate to Gilroy Lane and the pedestrian access to the station rather than the tendency for the buildings to "float"

This has not been addressed. See entry but this would require an initiative from Council to provide some relaxation given the corner characteristics of the site. A more contextual approach would certainly improve the outcome.

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.

The building addresses all the streets and provides overlooking of entrances; the park and the streets but note the comments re the opaque balustrades.

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; Hornsby; Gordon ;Chatswood; and St Leonards 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

Aesthetically the proposal could be better resolved .The overall form could be simpler in plan and section so that the buildings related better to the site and potential neighbours. This would enable the detailed architectural resolution of the buildings to read more clearly.

The Relationship of the Building Form to the Site

The poorly resolved issues are:

- The linking of the two parts of the building into one building. This creates a more massive appearance
- The number, proportions, direction and lack of generosity of the entrance paths and entrances to the building from the street
- The relationship of the communal space with the buildings and the planters. The shape and organisation of the "communal" space
- The organisation and inappropriate design of the landscaping for a 5 storey building.

The well resolved issues are:

- The use of level differences internally to ensure that the different parts of the building relate to the ground plane levels and natural attributes including vegetation

The Relationship of the Building Form to potential surrounding Development

The poorly resolved issues are:

- The form in plan and in section on Gilroy Road South does not engage with Gilroy Lane and the pedestrian access to the station
- The form in plan and in section on Gilroy Road South does not engage with the space to the West of Gilroy Lane

The well resolved issues are:

- The form in plan and in section on Gilroy Road East enables any proposed development across the street to from a positive spatial relationship
- The relationship of the buildings to the northern boundary enabling a positive relationship with future development.

The Resolution of the detail articulation relative to the Building Form

The main weakness in the design is the resolution of the form rather than the resolution of the detail. In terms of detail however the poorly resolved issues are the:

- Proportions of the vertical to horizontal elements.
- Organisation of the windows and openings of the living areas relative to the overall proportions of the rooms.
- Solid balustrades relative to their height.

There are still issues with:

The Proportions

The visual dominance of the building is greater than it need be due to poor proportions. This is the result of the amount of articulation in plan which is then extended through the height of the buildings.

The use of the feature wall and range of treatments on the lift shaft creates a confusion of materials between those denoting the base and ground floor level from the upper levels. This approach is less satisfactory than the previous scheme.

The organisation of the glazing and wall fenestration on the penthouse level would be improved if it was treated as a simple continuous level with glazing and panels which were not similar to those on the lower / mid-levels

The balustrades are now opaque glazing. See previous comments.

Conclusion

The proposed development for IC Holmes Pty Ltd is for two residential flat buildings containing 50 apartments to be located at 2-8 Gilroy Rd Turramurra. The density is appropriate for the location and reflects the aspirations of the DCP.

Designed by Mackenzie Architects with landscaping by Vision Dynamics the areas which should be resolved more fully resulting in an improved solution are:

- The separation of the building into two buildings with the use of two vertical circulation points
- Rationalisation of the form into simple plans and sections
- An increased set back at the rear and a reduced setback at the street While not so critical on this site because of the park it will be problematic on the adjacent sites
- The creation of at least two entrances which relate directly to the street
- The extension of some of the courtyards / balconies at ground level to the side and / or street setbacks .to enable the development to be better integrated with the site and to provide a variety of external conditions and not just a variety of internal conditions
- Reconsideration of solid balconies to a height of 1100mm
- A total redesign of the landscaping to better integrate the development with the site; its context and to reflect the apartment typology and scale of the development.

The proposal has had minimal changes. Furthermore the changes are token e.g. the balustrade treatment and the plan modifications of the penthouse level.

In summary:

- The building is still too contorted in plan. These plan differences are then extrapolated vertically for 4 storeys resulting in poor proportions and an overly massive appearance.
- The penthouse level would benefit from panels of glazing and solid material rather than "hole in the wall" treatment.
- The "feature" wall on the lift shaft weakens the use of the introduction of a new material at the lower level of the buildings.
- The entry on the East has not been resolved satisfactorily.
- The buildings do not address the Southern street frontage in terms of entry; design of the elevation and relationship of courtyards.
- The scale and design of the landscape does not relate to a 5 storey urban building
- There is no useable communal space.
- The balustrades do not permit views to the street from a sitting position internally.