

2015SYE156 – 1085, 1081 & 1091A Old Princes Highway,
Engadine

DA15/1325

ASSESSMENT REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix	A	Architectural Review Advisory Panel Report dated (3 December 2015)
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Architectural Review Advisory Panel

Proposal:

Construction of mixed use development including 116 residential apartments with ground floor commercial and basement car parking

Property:

1081, 1085 & 1091A Old Princes Highway ENGADINE NSW 2233

Applicant:

Regent Pacific Capital

File Number:

DA15/1325

The following is the report of the Architectural Review Advisory Panel Meeting held on 3 December 2015 at the Administration Centre, Sutherland Shire Council, Eton Street, Sutherland. The report documents the Panel's consideration of the proposed development described above.

“DA15/1325 – Construction of a Mixed Use Development Including 116 Residential Apartments With Ground Floor Commercial & Basement Car Parking at 1081-1091A Old Princes Highway, Engadine – JRPP Application

Council's Peter Brooker and Stevie Medcalf outlined the proposal for the Panel, including providing details of Council's relevant codes and policies.

Craig Shelsher, James Heron, Damon Semanic, Mark Kumarasinhe and Andrew Darroch addressed the Panel regarding further development of the proposal and how they have addressed the issues raised by the Panel at the previous meeting.

Description of the Site and Proposal

This DA proposal is for 690sqm retail, 116 units (comprising 1 x 1 bed, 107 x 2 bed, 8 x 3 beds) and basement level parking. The site is located at 1081-1091A Old Princes Highway, Engadine. The site area is 5,311sqm.

The site is within Zone B3 – Commercial Core, has a maximum FSR of 2:1 (10,622sqm GFA), a maximum height of building of 20 metres and the landscaped area is not applicable.

Key Controls:

Sutherland Shire Local Environmental Plan 2015 (SSLEP 2015)

Draft Sutherland Shire Development Control Plan 2015 (DSSDCP 2015)

Applicant's Submission

The functions and responsibilities of the Panel were explained to the Applicant. The application is subject to State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (Amendment No. 3), June 2015 and the Apartment Design Guide, June 2015.

PRINCIPLE 1 – CONTEXT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

The proposed development has been the subject of a previous ARAP review and it is evident that a number of the issues previously raised have been addressed in the revised proposal.

In contextual terms the development presents as a 6 storey building to Old Princes Highway, with retail at the ground level and residential above. The total development provides for some 116 apartments, together with a ground floor commercial area to Old Princes Highway and two floors of basement car parking across the majority of the site.

The form of development to the Highway has been articulated to reflect the prevailing 1 and 2 storey built form within the Engadine Centre.

The balance of the development will not be readily visible, given that the primary form of vehicular access is from an internalised Council car park accessed from Miyal Place and the balance of development effectively wraps around the existing Telecom facility and extends to the water towers.

The balance of the built form varies between 5 and 6 storeys in height above the elevated 'ground plane'.

The proposed servicing for the entire development is via an existing right-of-way from Old Princes Highway and a 3 metre high loading dock adjacent to the proposed commercial space.

The principal pedestrian access to the entire development is located along the northern boundary of the site, where it abuts existing commercial development. The pedestrian access path then deflects to the southern side of the site and traverses under the proposed Building 2 and deflects further to the south to gain access to Building 1.

Relationships to the existing Telstra complex, the mobile telephone towers and the water reservoir towers will be evident as part of the proposed pedestrian movement pattern via Building 3 through the site to gain access to Buildings 1 and 2.

The proposed development is located within a B3 - Commercial Core land use zone.

PRINCIPLE 2 – SCALE AND BUILT FORM

The prevailing scale of the development is 5 and 6 storey. It is understood from the Applicant that Building 2 has been limited to 5 storeys based on controls determined by Telstra.

The general pattern of development and scale is consistent with the permissible building height but is substantially at variance with the existing Engadine Centre.

The proposed built forms associated with the three major buildings have been articulated and careful consideration has been given to ensuring that pedestrian access can be gained within a strong landscaped framework.

While the built form in detail has integrity the site design strategy, in particular the circulation and the orientation/footprint of the middle building, is flawed.

PRINCIPLE 3 – DENSITY

It is understood that the density of development complies with an FSR of 2:1.

The density is reasonable if the rear and middle buildings can have a more meaningful and legible connection to the street.

PRINCIPLE 4 – SUSTAINABILITY

The pattern of residential development appears to take advantage of the northern aspect wherever possible but, given the nature of the site, many apartments face north-west, while apartments in Building 3 face the north-east. The pattern and layout of apartments is common, with little evidence that orientation has led to subtle plan adjustments. The aspect of apartments could be much improved with the reorientation of the middle building.

It is also noted that many apartments have 'snorkel' windows despite their non-permissibility under the ADG.

Based on the available documentation there appears to be no provision for the capture and reuse of rainwater for irrigation purposes despite the extensive landscape proposals associated with the development of the site.

PRINCIPLE 5 – LANDSCAPE

While a setback and deep soil area have been provided, it is not clear from the drawings that the tree protection zones of the existing trees have been respected, with significant level changes and new structures such as walls and fencing shown.

The landscape design provided is comprehensive and creates an identifiable character for the development. Aspects of the landscape design that could be improved include:

- Providing planting along the southern boundary that will successfully screen views from the open space areas to the existing infrastructure.
- Providing toilets and water that are easily accessible from the main area of the communal open space.
- Ensuring minimum solar access as required by the ADG to the main communal open space area, presently in an undercroft.
- Providing protection for falls from height at the interface between the development and the car parking to the north.
- Liaising by the Landscape Architect with Council officers regarding selection of appropriate/preferred plant species.

It is questionable whether the seamless integration between deep soil planting and on-structure planting as shown on the ground floor landscape plan (north-west corner) can be successfully achieved. Evidence that this can be achieved should be provided or the area redesigned as necessary.

A site of this area should aim for a minimum of 15% deep soil. This could be provided along the interface with the public car park or where it will provide amenity for communal open space within the development.

The hierarchy of entries and access to the development is not apparent and appears unresolved and pedestrian access to the middle and rear buildings is long and circuitous. The size and design of the 'primary' pedestrian access from the Old Princes Highway is inconsistent with the entry's role in providing an address and identity for a group of buildings of this scale. Entry and access arrangements must be further explored – including the option of providing access within the site along the southern boundary.

Whilst existing and designed levels at the boundaries are not easily discernible from the drawings provided, it appears from the north elevation, (dwg A.3.00), that there is a large expanse of blank wall for the basement and retaining walls fronting the existing car park. Regardless of whether the car park offers the primary vehicular and pedestrian entry for the development, the building should more positively address this interface with what is, in effect, public open space.

Visual impact on public open space should be mitigated by minimising the protrusion of car parking above ground level or setting back the basement further to allow for planting. Planting will soften the visual impact and also reduce the likelihood of graffiti.

PRINCIPLE 6 – AMENITY

The Panel suggests that the level of amenity that has been demonstrated primarily through landscape measures, could be enhanced further by a more clearly articulated entry sequence rather than the convoluted form that is currently proposed.

The option of developing a well-landscaped primarily pedestrian access potentially via a clearly defined pedestrian pathway on the southern edge of the complex should be pursued. This would allow for a direct line of sight through the building complex and would simplify pedestrian way-finding and the distances that need to be traversed to gain access to Buildings 1 and 2 in particular.

The ability to combine vehicular access for servicing with appropriate pedestrian landscaping would provide an enhanced pattern of access to the site and would also allow for a series of landscaped courtyards to be experienced as part of the access sequence, particularly to Building 1. Such a pattern of access would also diminish the emphasis that appears to be placed on the Council car park as the sole point of vehicular access to the two-level car park for the complex.

Limiting the access to such a complex via a Council controlled car park, which in turn may well be redeveloped, requires careful consideration. It also raises safety issues associated with peak shopping periods and the extent to which that may impact on ready access and egress to the complex via the Council car park.

There is a need for further resolution of the interface between the development and the Council car park given the proposed level changes between the raised ground floor of the development and the Council car park.

There is a need to carefully consider the measure of securing the site against random access from the car park and, where the height differences are significant, ensuring that the edge condition provides for appropriate balustrade control.

Apartments are generally well designed. However typical apartments such as 3002 and 3001 have snorkel type windows that are no longer allowable under the ADG.

The top level apartments have non-complying separation according to the ADG.

Why are all the apartment types and elevations the same no matter what the aspect to the street or courtyard? Could there be a greater nuance and sense of place with differing characters reflecting the location and aspect?

PRINCIPLE 7 – SAFETY

The Panel is concerned about the convoluted pedestrian access into the site and the measures of control that might be required where visitors need to traverse significant areas prior to gaining access to the relevant building at the rear of the site.

As indicated above, a more direct sequence for pedestrian entry would provide for an enhanced, more direct entry experience and simplify the movement pattern. It would also provide a pattern of through-site movement that is compatible with CPTED principles (refer also to “Amenity”).

PRINCIPLE 8 – HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

While it is arguable that the pattern of social interaction may be increased by the complex pedestrian entry arrangements, the way-finding issues associated with the complex need to be carefully resolved.

There is limited housing diversity given that the majority of the proposed apartments (92%) are 2 bed.

PRINCIPLE 9 – AESTHETICS

Further design attention needs to be given to the plan form and elevation treatment of apartments with significantly different aspects.

While the aesthetics are clear there is nothing to distinguish the aspect or the project of the location in height or in plan and so a building of this scale has a certain formulaic quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:

The Panel has a number of concerns associated with the proposed development.

While recognising that extensive consideration has been given to detailed landscaped proposals within the complex, there are concerns that a single communal open space under the northern edge of Building 1 does not provide for a communal space that can be readily accessed by residents in Buildings 2 and 3.

The project has much to commend it architecturally however the primary circulation diagram is not resolved, as previously noted by the Panel, and is now also contrary to the ADG.

As the Architect stated, it is “a journey”, so much so that the Landscape Architect has made it “episodic”, with the urban, the cultural and the natural passages. However this is an unsafe, dog-legged, circuitous, entry sequence. It should be a well-scaled internal pedestrian way, creating a coherent urban armature linking all three buildings back to the Princes Highway.

The middle building has been placed the wrong way around. Its zero setback to the Telstra building should be increased and it should form an L-shaped courtyard to the north allowing more north-western sun to graze the rear of the street building. This is a consequence of the misapplied dog-legged circulation.

Many questions arise about the car park entry. Can this be resolved with Council? Do not all cars need to enter this from a street? Is the Council making the necessary changes to the status of the car park to ensure this is so? Is it an insurance issue? A building of such scale with so many apartments deserves a more improved, rational and carefully crafted connection to the street.

As a consequence the Panel requires a clear and resolved, site contained, circulation and entry strategy as suggested above, if it is to support a mixed-use development on this elongated and highly constrained urban infill site which is critical to the coherence of the Engadine Town Centre. The Applicant has not yet demonstrated that the site is appropriate for a high density, living environment.

In the Panel's view further consideration should be given to addressing the following:

- Appropriate provision of communal open space within each of the buildings so that there is a measure of independence associated with each apartment complex.
- The pattern of pedestrian access to the complex and the provision of a much more direct approach to the overall complex, which should also be reflected in the built form of each structure.
- The establishment of a pedestrian environment that also provides for site servicing during selected hours should be carefully considered and the sequence of courtyards integrated with the overall development pattern.

- Avoiding level changes and structures within the tree protection zones of existing trees.
- Minimising the protrusion of basement walls above ground level.
- Ensuring a hierarchy of entries is apparent and providing more direct pedestrian access to the building at the rear (building 01).
- Creating a positive interface with the adjoining public car park by planting in front of basement walls and retaining walls.
- Addressing the suggested amendments in 'Landscape', including increasing the area of deep soil.

The Applicant is requested to respond to the suggestions of this ARAP report as part of the resolution of design quality issues arising from its submission. The Applicant's response should be descriptive and adopt a format of Panel suggestion and response, clearly transcribing the suggestion from the report, followed by the Applicant's response under each Principle."

Frank Stanisic
ARAP Chairman

21 December 2015