

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL ASSESSMENT REPORT

DA No.	62/2015
DA Title and Location	Lots 2 and 4 DP 219028 and Lot 2 DP 545358 90 Cartwright Avenue Miller
Applicant	Jea Holdings (Australia) P / L
DA Planner	George Nehme
Date lodged with Council	
Applicant's designer confirmed as SEPP 65 compliant	Yes
Date of Design Review Panel review	26 February 2015
Pre-DA or DA consideration	DA
Panel members in attendance	Brett Newbold (chair) Jennifer Bautovich Roger Hedstrom
Council representatives in attendance	Lina Kakish, Manager Development Assessment George Nehme, Senior Assessment Planner
Declaration of conflict of interest	nil

Introduction

The subject site is zoned *B2 Local Centre*, and is the largest single site within the Miller Town Centre. Principal development standards include a maximum building height of 21m and a maximum FSR of 1.7:1.

Prior to the meeting, Panel members reviewed DA plans and visited the subject site.

The Panel meeting was attended by the Applicants and their project architects.

Summary

This report should be read in conjunction with the May 2014 report by a previous panel which recommended various amendments to a detailed development concept for mixed use redevelopment of the subject site.

The Panel acknowledges that the current development proposal remains substantially the same as the original development concept which was reviewed in May 2014, and that current plans have responded positively to the majority of recommendations in the preceding report. In summary, amendment of the original concept has involved substantial reconfiguration of residential Block A together with changes to street level retail and access to parking areas, together with numerous minor changes.

The Panel's review of the current development application has identified several further-amendments which would enhance design quality of this proposal, and would achieve the most-effective catalyst for redevelopment of the surrounding precinct:

- Primarily, by the refinement of facades in order to complement landmark status of the proposed development, as well as providing substantial justification *in terms of urban design quality* for non-compliant building heights which are proposed; and
- Secondly, by adjustment of carpark exit paths in order to minimise conflicts with pedestrians along Cartwright Avenue and, consequently, to maximise commercial potential of the proposed shopfronts; and
- Thirdly, by providing a variety of effective pedestrian pathways between the residential podium and Cartwright Avenue or the shopping centre.

Amended plans should be reviewed by the Panel chair in order to confirm that recommendations in this report have been implemented appropriately.

The development proposal

The subject site relates to a single allotment which is occupied by the Miller Central shopping centre building and its outdoor carpark. Although the total site area is approximately 2.59ha, the subject application proposes redevelopment of the carpark only which has an area of approximately 6,250m².

The proposed development comprises two residential buildings above a podium which contains a row of shops facing Cartwright Avenue and two levels of parking.

The proposed residential buildings comprise six and seven residential levels, and accommodate a total of 145 dwellings which comprise a mix of one, two and three bedroom units. All levels have lift access to basement parking, and there is a secondary lift which provides access from the residential podium to Cartwright Avenue and the shopping centre.

Proposed GFA is approximately 60% of the permissible maximum FSR for the subject site (as defined by title). Proposed building heights exceed the permissible maximum by up to 8m (approximately).

Carparking comprises a total of 381 spaces over three levels. Two basement levels are accessed via Woodward Crescent, and contain a total of 219 spaces which would be allocated to residents, visitors and commercial staff, together with cycle parking and storage areas. Covered parking at street level would be accessed via Cartwright Avenue with a secondary exit via Woodward Crescent, and accommodates 162 spaces for shoppers together with cycles and storage areas.

Proposed buildings are broken into two or three distinct layers: the ground-floor podium, plus between five and seven residential levels and an additional penthouse storey above portion of each building.

Landscape plans describe detailed treatments for communal open space above the carpark podium, and for garden beds are located at street level but within the boundaries of the subject site.

Comments

i Considerations for design excellence

In relation to the subject development application, the Panel notes that considerations for urban design quality are determined by:

- i. The *Liverpool LEP 2008 (LLEP)*:
 - Aims in clause 1.2;
 - Objectives for zone *B2 Local Centre*;
 - Objectives for height and FSR in clauses 4.3 and 4.4.
- ii. Part 6 of the *Liverpool DCP 2008 (LDGP)*:
 - Predominantly, objectives to revitalise and enhance centres.
- iii. In relation to the proposed residential component: *SEPP No 65* and the associated *Residential Flat Design Code (RFDC)*.

ii Built form and aesthetics

The Panel notes that DA plans incorporate the following amendments:

- Heights of both buildings have increased by one storey in order to absorb GFA which has been recalculated for the subject site (defined by title), and exceed the *LLEP*'s maximum permitted by up to 8m;
- Residential Block A has been reconfigured to present a longer frontage to Woodward Avenue, and provides a signature element of this landmark redevelopment;
- Facing the intersection of Cartwright Avenue and Woodward Crescent, curved shopfronts at street level provide a significant corner design feature;
- The podium courtyard which faces north toward Cartwright Avenue has been widened, and an increased proportion of that communal area would receive midwinter sunlight;
- Building forms and facades incorporate significant articulation and a variety of design treatments.

Notwithstanding positive improvements, the Panel recommends the following further-amendments to the current DA documents in order to address design quality considerations that are statutory requirements:

- i. Amendments to Block A in order to achieve a landmark corner building that marks the gateway to a significant redevelopment precinct:
 - Northern and western elevations should be realigned to 'turn the corner';
 - Realignment may be achieved by extending balconies to complement the curved alignment of ground floor shopfronts which face the street corner, and by extending certain rooms parallel to the splayed alignments of street frontages (note that this would not require alteration of the current rectilinear set-out for Block A which matches that of Block B);
 - Balconies which surround type E apartments facing the street corner are the primary element which should be extended: the extended balconies should incorporate curved balustrades which complement the ground level shopfront in terms of radius and set-out, and balustrades should incorporate a continuous smooth curve (which, due to visual prominence, demands an appropriate high quality construction such as perforated aluminium sheeting or pre-cast concrete rather than rendered block or cast in-situ concrete);
 - Balconies and bedrooms of apartments which flank the street corner unit should be extended to incorporate splayed end-walls or balustrades that run parallel to street alignments (note that this requirement should be applied selectively in order to achieve the most-coherent composition of facade elements).
- ii. Refinement of building forms to moderate scale and to offset visual impacts of non-compliant building heights:
 - In Block B, the central portion of the western elevation incorporates an 'egg-crate verandah' on the top-most storey which moderates scale and bulk by providing a positive contrast to planar walls and 'picture-framed' balconies;
 - By way of partial justification for non-compliant building heights, the modified corner element of Block A should incorporate the 'egg-crate verandah' on at least the upper two storeys of Block A;
 - This technique should be applied selectively to other facades which would be visually-prominent, for example the western elevation of Block B.
- iii. Refinement of elements and proportions in order to moderate the perceived scale of tall buildings, and to achieve more-coherent compositions for elevations that are visually-prominent:
 - Repetitive vertical stacks of identical windows which are visible from street frontages tend to accentuate perceptions of scale and bulk, and should be reconfigured to contribute to more-dynamic patterning of facades;
 - For example, repeated stacks of conventional windows-and-spandrels in apartments at the north-western corner of Block A should be reconfigured, for example as vertically-proportioned windows that are arranged in staggered patterns, or by selective application of 'folded eyebrow' or 'boxed' window surrounds such as currently-proposed for Block B;
 - Glass louvres at the eastern end of corner balconies in Block A should be deleted (in conjunction with the recommended reconfiguration of those balconies)
- iv. Confirmation of construction details and finishes:
 - Provide a detailed section and elevation which describes construction and detailing of at least one typical facade (consistent with requirements that are specified by *Schedule 1* of the *EPA Regulation*);

- The detailed section and elevation should incorporate a graphic schedule of finishes.

iii Pedestrian activity

The Panel notes that DA plans incorporate the following amendments:

- Vehicle access from Cartwright Avenue has been consolidated at the western end of the proposed development, and moderates potential conflicts with pedestrians;
- Retail spaces have been consolidated, and ground floor walls have been reconfigured in order to provide unbroken sightlines along Cartwright Avenue from the existing shopping centre entrance toward the proposed shopfronts;
- A lift provides access for residents from the podium to Cartwright Avenue and the shopping centre, and responds to the panel's May recommendations that residential lifts should incorporate street lobbies: the current Panel accepts that street lobbies cannot be achieved without significant disruption of the retail parking level and substantial reconfiguration of the proposed residential layouts;
- The podium lift would consolidate the role of the proposed communal open space as a 'pedestrian transfer zone', and would enhance potential of that area to encourage social interaction between residents.

Notwithstanding these improvements, and having regard for design quality considerations that are statutory requirements, the Panel recommends the following further-amendments to the current DA documents:

- Circulation within the retail carpark should be reconfigured to minimise potential pedestrian conflicts along Cartwright Avenue:
 - The proposed access point in Cartwright Avenue should provide inbound access only, and should not allow egress due to the obstruction of motorists' sightlines by walls and fire stairs;
 - Carpark egress should be via the proposed ramp to Woodward Crescent which, due to the roundabout between Woodward Crescent and Cartwright Avenue, would minimise local traffic congestion by permitting optimum flexibility for return journeys.
- The podium lift and stair should be enclosed by a secure lobby:
 - Enclosure is necessary to ensure after-hours safety and security for residents and their visitors;
 - The lobby enclosure should be glazed, and should match the horizontally-proportioned shop-front glazing system which is proposed.
- A secondary means of stair access should be provided between the podium and the shopping centre's side entrance:
 - An additional stair should be provided at the southern end of the communal courtyard and, subject to BCA requirements, should incorporate substantial glazing in order to maximise visibility of the interior and perceived security for residents.
- Egress paths along the perimeter of the retail carpark should incorporate security screens:
 - At both street-frontages, the proposed paths should have security gates which remain closed during day-to-day operations.

iv Amenity

With regard to amenity, the Panel notes that DA plans incorporate the following amendments:

- The communal open space at podium-level has been extended, and has been designed to accommodate pedestrian paths and recreation areas;
- Sunlight to the communal open space has been improved by the wider separation between the amended Block A and Block B;
- Podium-level lift lobbies have direct visual links to the surrounding communal open space;
- Upper-storey lift lobbies have windows that overlook the communal open space;
- Landscaping along the perimeter of the podium incorporates a combination of hedge-plantings and feature trees which will screen neighbouring activities which are not compatible with residential amenity (such as the shopping centre delivery dock).

With regard to other matters that relate to amenity, the Panel received relevant advice from the Applicants:

- Operation of the centre, including access to the side entry and access by third parties to the carpark, is the subject of historical arrangements which include legal agreements;
- BCA provisions will require a fire wall between the proposed development and the neighbouring hotel premises which have been constructed in proximity to the common boundary, and which currently enjoy pedestrian access from the shopping centre carpark;
- Management of garbage within the shopping centre dock is soon to be via compactors that will minimise noise, odour and visual impacts typically associated with the operation of conventional skips, and consequently overhead screening of the dock is not necessary.

Having regard for design quality considerations that are statutory requirements, the Panel concluded that further recommendations in relation to amenity are not necessary.