

Urban Design Report - Addendum

Module Shopping Centre Beecroft Redevelopment, Hannah Street & Beecroft Road



Multi-unit Mixed Use Development

April 2015

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I. Introduction

GM Urban Design & Architecture (GMU) has been appointed by the Applicant to prepare an addendum urban design report to consider the urban design response to the site and the appropriate built form outcome for the site in light of the amalgamation of the original site with the former isolated site located at 93 Beecroft Road. This addendum report will form part of a Sec 96 (2) Application for the consolidated site. The original Development Consent approval granted on 17 December 2014, (DA/1006/2014) considered a mixed use proposal for the site located at 87-91, 95 Beecroft Road and 16-24 Hannah Street, Beecroft NSW. The original site comprised 7 lots: Lot B DP 117495, Lot B DP 4367; Lot 1 DP 1096815; Lot 1 DP 900898; Lot 1 DP 211441; Lot 11 DP 601185 and Lot 12 DP 601185. The consolidated site adds Lot 2 DP No. 211441 to the original land holding for a consolidated development site at the corner of Hannah Street and Beecroft Rad. The site is also known as the Module Shopping Centre Beecroft Redevelopment and it is within the Hornsby Council LGA. The site is subjected to site specific controls for the Beecroft Road Precinct under Part 9 – Heritage Conservation Areas – 9.6 Beecroft Heritage Precinct, which provides guidance as to the desired future character for the precinct.

The current Sec 96 (2) Development Application (DA) proposes the demolition of the current structures on the former isolated site and the construction of a mixed use building above a retail/commercial podium and shared car park or basement levels to link to the original approval for the site. The additional proposed building on the isolated site includes a 4 storey mixed use building fronting Beecroft Road. This proposed structure will have residential levels above a retail/commercial component facing the internal open space as a 5 storey building on the south-western corner of the public courtyard. The consolidated site and the proposed modifications being considered as part of this Sec 96 (2) application are subject to the Hornsby Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013 as well as the Hornsby Development Control Plan (HDCP). In addition to local controls, SEPP 65 and the Residential Flat Design Code also apply to the site.

The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed amendments to the original approval for the site and whether the proposed massing and form of the additional development on the former isolated site achieve an appropriate urban design response given the existing approval, the applicable controls, SEPP 65 considerations and the surrounding context.

The conclusion of this report is that the inclusion of the isolated site to the existing approval provides a unique opportunity to consolidate the site and to complete the streetscape with a coherent and seamless streetscape. The inclusion of the former isolated site is a positive outcome which allows a complementary development on that site to link to all levels of the existing approval to deliver a consistent response to the streetscape at the lower ground level as well as the upper levels for a cohesive built form response.

The proposed changes in combination with the original approval on the site provide a well-considered solution for the consolidated site given the unique characteristics of the context providing the much needed regeneration of an outdated but important site at the heart of the Beecroft community. Retail and commercial tenancies along the public domain will activate the street frontages and a central courtyard/plaza space will provide a vibrant meeting place for the community. Residential uses above the podium level will help to overlook the public domain and open spaces and better integrate the proposal with the surrounding residential precinct to the north and west, which is a positive outcome.

I.1 Documents Reviewed

In preparing this report, GMU has reviewed the following applicable controls and documents describing the site and its immediate surroundings:

- Development Application drawings prepared by DKO:
 - Basement Plans 10733/DA/2002-2004
 - Plan Drawings 10733/DA/2005 -2012
 - Elevations 10733/DA/3001 -3004
 - External Finishes Board 10733/DA/3005
 - Sections 10733/DA/4001-4002
- Landscape Concept Drawings date April 2015 by Oculus:
 - 01. Level 01 + Level 02
 - 02. Hannah Street Ground Level + Level 01
 - 03. Plaza Detail Plan

- 04. Planting Layout
- 05. Soil Depth Profile
- 06. Planting and Materials Palette
- Development Application Statement of Environmental Effects dated April 2015 by GAT & Associates Pty Ltd
- Design Verification Statement by DKO dated April 2015
- Landscape Design Report Rev. E by Oculus dated April 2015

GMU has previously reviewed the applicable controls for the site which are also relevant to the current Sec 96(2) development proposal:

- Hornsby Local Environmental Plan (HLEP) 2013
- Hornsby Development Control Plan (HDCCP)
- SEPP 65 and the Residential Flat Design Code

GMU has previously conducted extensive site visits and photographic documentation of the site and its context.

1.2 Site Description

The consolidated site is located at the corner of Hannah Street and Beecroft Road, Beecroft. It is a quadrilateral site that bounds Hannah Street to the south, Beecroft Road to the west, and a single existing heritage property to the north (Section 6 DP 758074). The northern boundary is 75.135m with the fourth boundary to the east being occupied by existing retail/commercial facilities (1-5 DP 11738 and part of the rear and servicing areas of the retail plaza at SP 31888). The eastern boundary is approximately 85.495m. The Hannah Street frontage is approximately 184m to the south. The new combined boundary to the west (inclusive of the former Lot 2 DP 211441) is 84m. The consolidated subject site has a site area of 5,972.4m² in total. The land has a moderate slope of 10-11m from the north western corner of the site on Beecroft Road (RL 152.94) to the south-eastern corner of the site on Hannah Street (RL 142.03).



Photographs showing the existing improvements on Lot 2 (the former isolated site)

The approval site is currently occupied by a mix of commercial and retail uses with surface car park at the rear of the site along the northern boundary. The former isolated site (Lot 2 DP 211441) is currently occupied by a single storey commercial tenancy with no underground facilities. The images below show the existing facilities on that site. That site also had an access easement for the benefit of the approval site; however based on the amalgamation of the site this easement is no longer required and not intended for future vehicular access into the site.

1.3 Proposed SEC 96(2) Amendments

The modifications being considered as part of this Sec 96 (2) application include the following:

- a. Inclusion of adjoining site 93 Beecroft Road
- b. Reconfiguration of Building D into an L-shaped floorplan to include 93 Beecroft Road, including:

- i. Reconfiguration of core location
 - ii. Replanning of apartment units and increase total number of apartments in Building D to 31 units (from 24 units in previous DA)
 - iii. Reconfiguration of communal courtyard to include additional commercial spaces and Building D lobby
 - iv. Changes to Building D elevations and balcony locations
 - c. Reconfiguration of Buildings A, B, C
 - i. Reconfiguration of core location
 - ii. Replanning of apartment units and the articulation of slots on courtyard facing elevations
 - iii. Changes to elevations and balcony locations
 - iv. Reconfiguration of building lobbies
 - v. Increase total number of apartments in Building A to 40 (from 39 units in previous DA)
 - d. Substation relocated from basement to NW corner of the site, accessed off Beecroft Road
 - e. Reconfiguration of floor levels, landscape planters, skylights, stairs and ramps within communal courtyard
 - f. Reconfiguration of shopping mall layout to include 93 Beecroft Road
 - g. Reconfiguration of basement car-parking levels to include 93 Beecroft Road

2. The Controls and the response of the Sec 96 (2) proposed Amendments

There are a number of controls applicable to the site and these controls inform the desired future character for the area. As part of the urban design commentary on the proposed Sec 96 (2) amendments, it is important to understand the resulting development form and how this responds to the applicable controls; however, GMU's previous Urban Design Report dated August 2014 discussed at length the original proposal's response to the applicable controls and this discussion will not be repeated here for expediency. Only the most relevant controls that affect the Sec 96 (2) amendments and the proposed built form will be discussed within this section of the report.

3.1 Hornsby Local Environmental Plan 2013

The HLEP 2013 zones the subject site as a Local Centre Zone (B2). The objectives of the HLEP are to "provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live, work and visit the local area". Other objectives include encouraging "employment opportunities in accessible locations" and "to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling". The objectives of this zone are to ensure sustainable growth of the village centre and reinforce the function, role and identity of established business centres. It seeks to integrate residential and business development while minimising noise, traffic and waste to maintain amenity.

The allowable FSR for the zone is 1:1; however, the site is within area 5, cl. 4.4(2c), which allows the FSR to exceed 1:1 if it comprises shop top housing and any other floor space ratio of at least 0.5:1. This is an important provision, due to the fact that any mixed use development on the site will require greater density and scale than that which is characteristic of low scale residential development which is normally feasible within or less than 1:1 FSR.

The B2 Local Centre zone has as its objectives to provide a range of business, entertainment and community uses and to encourage employment in accessible locations. It seeks to maximise use of public transport and to provide for business and community uses with moderate traffic generation. Business uses are not to compromise the amenity of the residential surrounding them.

3.2 DCP

Hornsby DCP contains both general and specific controls for the area and the zone type as well as the development type. Part 4 of the HDCP considers Height, FSR, setbacks, private open spaces, communal open space and landscaping, which apply to the proposed Sec 96 (2) being considered as part of this application. Other relevant controls to the subject site under Part 4 discuss sunlight and ventilation, public domain and design details. However, the more relevant parts of the HDCP are the sections relating to the Beecroft Heritage Precinct under Part 9 of the DCP – 9.6 Beecroft Heritage Precinct, which are discussed below.

9.6 Beecroft Heritage Precinct

Section 9.6 provides a desired future statement for residential and mixed use development in the precinct, which is intended to provide a sensible response to the low scale character along the ground floor, provide a sympathetic form and scale and protect the local heritage providing an environment meeting the principles of good urban design. The various key principle diagrams suggest that future development is to maintain amenity and provide a 'sense of place' and community with linkages and access to public open space. The heritage values of the plan place emphasis on protecting and conserving the cultural heritage of the area including places and buildings while the character and identity of the area are to also be enhanced through regeneration and uplift in scale. The sections of the HDCP that provide guidance on Private Open Space, Sunlight and Ventilation and Vehicle Access and Parking will apply to the additional units being proposed as part of this Sec 96(2) Application; however, this addendum report concentrates on the provision of a narrative on the urban design outcomes of the proposed built form and changes to the publicly accessible court yard. Therefore, the discussion of the internal performance of the additionally proposed units will not be included as part of this report. For a discussion on the additional unit's environmental performance, please refer to the Design Verification Statement by DKO dated April 2015. The most relevant controls in the HDCP that guide the built form are:

State Environmental Planning Policy - SEPP 65

- *Buildings have to be design in accordance with the 10 principles of the State Environmental Planning Policy - SEPP 65 – while the overall proposal's response to the 10 principles in SEPP 65 has been covered extensively in the previous Urban Design Report dated August 2014, the proposed Sec 96(2) amendments will still be considered under Principle 1: Response to Context, Principle 2: Scale, Principle 3: Built form Response and Principle 6: Landscape.*

Heritage Conservation

The Sec 96 (2) amendments being proposed under this application are not directly adjacent to a heritage item; however, the addition of a proposed structure to complement the original streetscape will have to respond positively to the conservation principles in this section of the DCP. The most relevant controls are as follows:

- *New shops/commercial buildings should be designed to be seen and accessed directly from their street frontages by complying with the setback controls in the DCP.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle through-links should be provided in accordance with the key principles diagrams and Town Centre Linkage Diagrams contained in the DCP.*
- *Pedestrian and bicycle through-links should be provided in accordance with the key principles diagrams and Town Centre Linkage Diagrams contained within the DCP.*
- *The setting of Beecroft Village should be maintained through the retention of significant landscaping and major trees.*
- *Shopfronts should be designed with suspended, traditional steel box-section awnings over footpaths to assist maintain the village character and fabric of the commercial area.*

Height

- *17.5m height limit*
- *5 storeys (excluding basement car parking)*
- *Business uses, including shops and offices, should be confined to the lower two storeys, providing a broad “podium” for dwellings from levels three to five.*
- *Dwellings may be located on level two within the podium and may incorporate a component at ground level facing a side street or lane provided that they would not interrupt the desired continuity of commercial activity.*

Setbacks

- *2 storey podium setbacks:*
 - *All streets, laneways and side or rear boundaries: 0m*
- *3rd storey and above:*
 - *Primary and secondary streets: 3m from business podium façade*
 - *Rear streets, laneways or pedestrian alleyways: 0m*
 - *Side or rear boundaries that are shared with neighbouring properties: 6m*
 - *Stop storey setback: 3m should be provided between exterior walls of the lowest storey above the podium and exterior walls of the top-most storey.*
- *Minor encroachments are allowed, being a basement ramp up to 6m wide, roof eaves, pergolas, sunshades and blade columns.*

Building Form and Separation

- *Residential floorplates should have a maximum dimension of 25m measured perpendicular to the primary retail frontage and between opposing exterior walls at any point. Balconies and terraces may project beyond this maximum.*
- *The minimum separation between buildings up to 5 storeys/over 12m is 18m between unscreened habitable rooms/balconies/principal POS areas.*
- *In addition to the above, where the Key Principles Diagrams require separate building on the same site, buildings should be separated by open-air pedestrian walkways that are at least 6m wide at street level.*
- *Podium façades to consist of brick, shopfront windows and entrances.*
- *Exterior walls on residential levels should be substantially face brick in medium to darker tones, although a portion of walls may be brickwork and render.*
- *Balconies should be framed behind the face of exterior walls or between masonry blade walls and should have balustrades of brickwork, painted masonry or steel strapping.*
- *Facing primary and secondary streets, at least two steps should be provided between the podium facade and upper residential storeys along 50% of any facade.*

- *At street level, shop and office windows and building entrances should occupy 90% of the primary frontage, 30% of facades facing side streets or alleyways and 10% of rear facades.*
- *Facades should be expressed as two or three distinct levels.*
- *Provide continuous awnings along active street fronts.*
- *Articulation of residential facades should be achieved by dividing facades into vertical panels generally no wider than 8m, and by visually separating the adjoining panels by steps of at least one metre such as:*
 - *Indentations or projections in the alignment of exterior walls;*
 - *Balconies that are indented behind and/or project forward of exterior walls; and/or*
 - *Eaves, pergolas and awnings that project forward of exterior walls.*

Public Domain and traffic Management works

- *Development of the public domain should make each precinct an attractive place that encourages development and provides amenity for residents.*
- *Embellishment of the public domain should include street furniture, new street plantings, and footpath improvements.*
- *All active street frontages should have fully paved verges.*
- *Provide pedestrian linkages as shown the key development principles diagrams and town centre linkage diagrams.*
- *Mixed use development within centres should enhance the role of the public domain as a meeting and gathering place and should encourage active use of the public domain through active street frontages.*
- *Where required, ground level walkways between mixed use buildings should be open air, attractive pedestrian thoroughfares which encourage activity.*
- *Balconies should not be located on, or overhang the road reservation.*
- *For development incorporating shopfront awnings, the awnings should be continuous and setback from the edge of the kerb in accordance with Council or the Roads and Maritime Services requirements.*
- *Outdoor dining areas should be located in areas with good amenity, landscape, outlook, solar access in winter, shading in summer and a compatible local traffic environment.*
- *Traffic Management works should be undertaken in accordance with the traffic improvements identified in the key development principles diagrams.*

3.3 Discussion

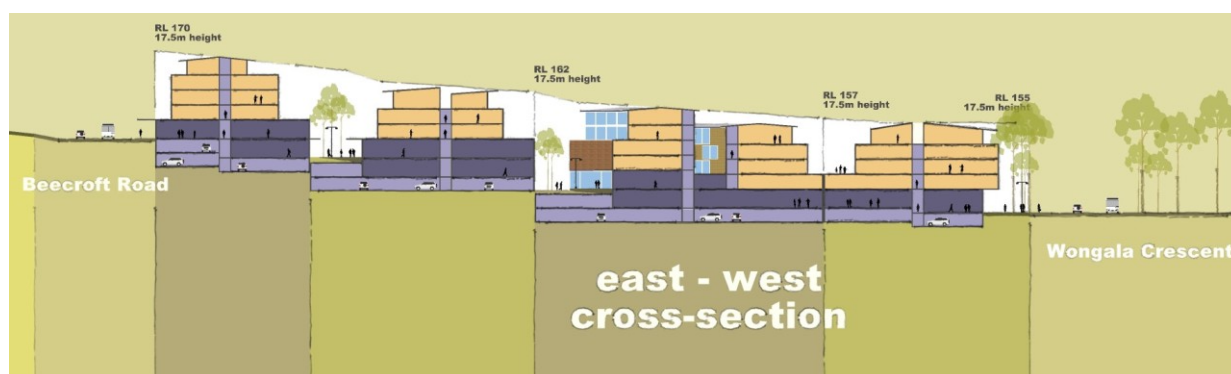
Council's controls regarding the heritage character of the area including those related to the overall height and street wall height and permeability through the site are strongly related to Council's desired future character for the precinct. The HDCP sets out character statements around the residential and mixed use desired urban form, discussing building elements such as setbacks, heights and landscape. These controls were closely consulted in the preparation of the original DA for the original site, which was granted approval on 17 December 2014, (DA/1006/2014). These controls have also been consulted in the preparation of the amendments to the original approval on the site to ensure that a seamless transition is achieved with the proposed addition to the approved built form along Beecroft Road.

Street wall height (podium) controls direct all future development to maintain a sensitive response to the 'fine grain' character of parts of Hannah Street as part of a business or mixed use zone from the rest of the residential precinct. This had been achieved as part of the original proposal, which also provided a 'fine grain' response to Beecroft Road as it turned the corner from Hannah Street with a taller marker. The inclusion of the former isolated site (Lot 2 DP 211441) allows for the continuation of the streetscape and the vision established by the existing approval on the rest of the site. This also responds positively to the built form considerations in the Beecroft Heritage Precinct provisions, which include the following:

"Provision of a continuous podium up to two storeys high facing all streets, and shape each podium to address street corners. Avoid extensive sheer vertical facades by setting upper storeys back from podiums. Provide gently-pitched roof forms with eaves. Design quality of facades should consider visibility from all quarters".

The allowable height on the site up to 5 storeys indicates the control's departure from the traditional two storey shop top housing to a more robust retail precinct with residential uses above. The allowable heights underline the importance of the village centre as a destination at the heart of the Beecroft community. While the overall heights in the rest of the approved proposal have adhered to the 5 storey DCP control, the proposed additions for Lot 2 (DP 211441) have been kept at 4 storeys (as seen from the street) in order to achieve a sympathetic response to the surrounding context and the minimisation of any visual impacts from the proposed built form as seen from the lower vantage points diagonally across and further south from the intersection at Beecroft Road and Hannah Street. Therefore a sympathetic response is being proposed that relates sensitively to the existing approval and to the surrounding contributory elements of the streetscape, which is what the heritage part of the DCP aims to achieve.

The future desired character defines the future scale of the centre as 5 storeys. The Key Development Principles Diagram - Typical East-west Cross Section shows a series of 5 storey 'pavilion buildings' cascading down the slope on the northern footpath of Hannah Street. Due to the change in the level of the topography, some of the buildings portrayed in the diagram are 5 storeys to the higher side of the slope and 6 storeys to the lower side of the slope with the upper storeys being setback from the lower level.



Key Development Principles Diagram - Typical East-west Cross Section shows a series of 5 storey 'pavilion buildings' down Hannah Street (extract from the HCDP Part 9)

The existing character along the eastern side of Beecroft Road is very dissimilar to that of Hannah Street. The eastern side is marked by the scale and street wall response of the retail/commercial facilities in the village centre, which extend one block north and one block south of Hannah Street. However, this proposal presents the opportunity to create a cohesive streetscape response to the both streets as part of a single development. This is now specially possible as the inclusion of the formerly isolated site closes a previous missing gap in what could have been a discontinuous façade along Beecroft Road had the isolated site been left undeveloped. This is a positive outcome not only for the site but for the village centre as a whole.

The gradual redevelopment of the village centre area with mixed uses and larger amalgamated sites will transform the character of the retail precinct in comparison to the traditional housing on the surrounding areas. The advantages of development in large consolidated sites will be the provision of well integrated development. In this case, the proposed amendments to the approval also provide containment and additional surveillance to the variety of intimate and publicly accessible open spaces and the network of pedestrian links that are designed to connect to other areas of the suburb enhancing the connectivity across the precinct. Other advantages of the proposed amendments include better coordinated parking levels, access and servicing areas that respond better to the changes in the topography and take advantage of the entirety of the consolidated site. The proposed amendments to the built form along Beecroft Road ensure the containment of the central open space with a built form buffer from any potential acoustic impacts from the existing traffic levels on Beecroft Road.

A positive outcome of the inclusion of the isolated site is a more robust built form that creates a defined and active edge to the street, overlooks the street as well as the internal open spaces.

3.4 Section Conclusion

The proposed amendments comply and stay far below the overall height and street wall height controls. The amendments achieve a sensitive built form response to the lower levels of Hannah Street and Beecroft Road; it complies with the required uses for the site and provides higher levels of amenity to the publicly accessible open spaces thus providing the local residents with a new intimate and relatively quiet open space for casual gatherings, outdoor dining and/or shopping. The amendments to the approval seek to close the missing 'gap' in the streetscape to create a balanced and appropriate street scale relationship to Beecroft Road and to the future publicly accessible open space, while creating a destination and a new meeting place for the community in general. It also contributes to the activation and natural surveillance of both the street and the internal open courtyard. Therefore, the additional amendments perform well with regards to the relevant controls affecting the built form, the existing approval and their combined relationship to the existing context.

3. SEPP 65 and RFDC Commentary

This section of the report provides a review of the proposal against the principles SEPP 65 including consideration of the objectives and rules of thumb in the Residential Flat Design Code. The report provides further commentary on the proposal's performance and its response to the surrounding context and the applicable controls.

4.1 Principle I: Response to Context

“Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's current character or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character as stated in planning and design policies. New buildings will thereby contribute to the quality and identity of the area.”



Aerial view of the subject site and its immediate context (Courtesy of Google)

Comment

The general built form context for the precinct is characterized by a mix of development including traditional 'fine grain' development to the east of the subject site which will be complemented by the recently approved DA for the original subject site. Other form of development being considered for the subject block is larger residential developments to the north of the consolidated subject site. Due to the lots in the village centre being occupied by large footprint retail except for the 'fine grain' street edge, any new development will have to be carefully articulated to provide a 'fine grain' response to the rest of the streetscape. The original approval had taken careful steps to achieve a 'fine grain' response to the street and the proposed amendments to close the 'gap' along the façade follow the same design principles and architectural language to successfully achieve a unified response to on the consolidated site.



Figure Ground Diagram (Courtesy of DKO)

As shown in the figure ground diagram above, the proposal will respond better to the desired future character of the precinct with the consolidation of both sites which will ensure a more consistent streetscape, the retention of previously approved pedestrian links and the provision of an internal open space. The proposed footprint for Building D still resembles a 'pavilion' building arranged around the courtyard. The proposed amendments also retain the proposed pedestrian links which carve out the built form above the podium and create view corridors from Beecroft Road into the rest of the development site. The figure ground diagram also shows, at the broader scale, that the relationship between built form and open space within the site and the separation distances between buildings is also representative of the future desired character for the block. The proposed Sec 96 (2) amendments continue and build upon the response to the terrain and the topography put forward as part of the original approval. In essence, the proposed amendments as part of this Sec 96(2) do not alter the character of the original approval, but complement and complete the proposal for this section of the block.

With regard to the proposed amendments' to the lower levels of the public domain, the closing of the built form on Beecroft Road continues the desired street wall height, approved materials and height of the approved buildings which in turn respond well to the rest of the desired future character on Beecroft Road. The original approval consisted of contemporary buildings inspired by traditional ordering principles with high quality and robust materials, and these are used again for the proposed amendments on the isolated site. The typology and grain of the proposed building facades to both the road and the internal courtyard will be discussed below and the issues of height and scale will be discussed in more depth in the section relating to the principle of scale.

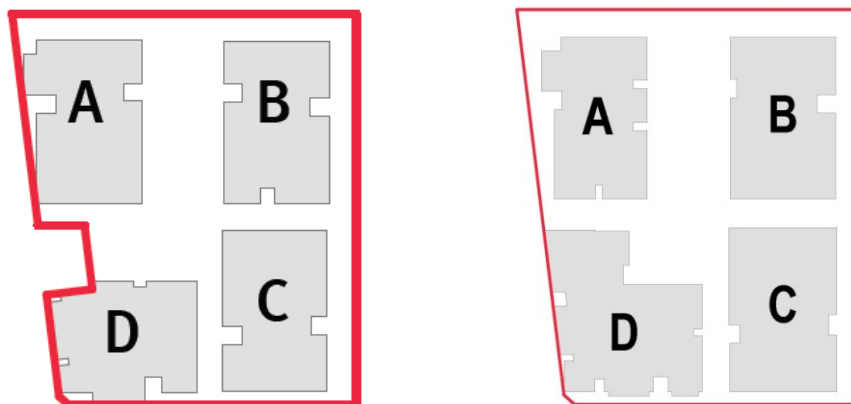
The predominant character of Beecroft Road across the site consists of 1 to 2 storey single house forms with roof above to the north of Hannah Street; recently approved (under construction at the time of writing this report) seniors living developments might introduce a variety in scales to this segment of the Beecroft Road. The existing scale of development to the south of Hannah Street diagonally across the proposed development is 2-3 storey residential strata units or walk-ups. The proposed built form addition to the approved streetscape has been carefully designed to maintain a consistent lower scale response to the street, especially when seen from the vantage points across the street. The proposal could in fact achieve one more level of development similar to the approved Building A and B (with a SEPP 1 objection for a minor encroachment into the height plane) however, the proposed addition has been kept to a total of 4 storeys to this section of the road and stepping the built form behind a secondary setback above the podium height.

This achieves two objectives. The preservation of the hierarchy of the distinctive built form marker at the corner of the site and the minimisation of the bulk and scale as seen across the street and on approach from the south on Beecroft Road. The contrast in built form typologies between the two main frontages of the site varies in use, scale and setbacks to the street on the ground floor. However, the vision and character of the approval has been maintained by following the same objectives achieved in the original approval. The response of the development application is to present a unifying element along the street frontage facing Hannah Street and Beecroft Road with an articulated 2 storey podium with the additional levels above setting back after the podium and further setback on the upper 4th level to continue the streetscape response to the rest of the approved street elevations. The proposed reduction in the number of levels and to the overall building height to one level less than that allowed by the controls for this segment of the site ensures a more sympathetic human scale to the internal plaza as the perceived overall height from the plaza will be 5 storeys, which is one storey less than the perceived internal height of Building A. Surveillance and overlooking are also provided by the residential units above the retail level of the internal plaza.



Artist's impression showing proposed built form response to Hannah Street (Courtesy of DKO)

The proposed awnings at the street level carefully follow the approved design. Additional landscaping is being proposed to improve the landscape character of this segment of the street which could not be achieved before the amalgamation of that site. The landscape master plan has been updated to provide a consistent overall streetscape on Beecroft Road.



Comparison between approved key map (left) and proposed key map (right) (Courtesy of DKO)

Length of buildings -

The proposed Sec 96 (2) amendments provide a continued street wall length to the public domain along Beecroft Road, which could not be achieved before as shown in the comparative diagram above which shows the 'gap' in the built form response to Beecroft Road. For ease of discussion, the proposed buildings have been labelled A, B, C and D and they are arranged clockwise on the site starting from Building A -located on the north western corner of the site. The proposed amendments to Building D close the 'gap' with Building A including reduced building heights, similarly articulated elevations and generally a one storey frontage above podium with a recessed 4th storey. This complements the two storey frontage above podium with a recessed fifth storey seen along the rest of the streetscape on Building A; however this responds better to the slope of the topography and maintains the hierarchy of the corner marker of Building D. The length of the proposed frontages on the subject site presents a moderate and scaled down version of the DCP suggested building envelopes.

The approved Building A presents a 2 storey street frontage above the 2 storey podium with a setback 5th storey. The frontage of Building A as seen from Beecroft Road will be approximately 34m.

The proposed amendments to Building D will be mainly visible from the Beecroft Road frontage. This building's new and combined frontage to Beecroft Road will be approximately 34m long with a deep 3m recess after 18m from the corner marker. It is important to mention, that the proposal has considered the development potential of the site at No. 93A Beecroft Road. The original approval always envisioned the redevelopment potential of the isolated site and that is why the current proposal has easily resolved the response to the consolidated frontage as it was anticipated that any proposal on the formerly isolated site would have to attach to the approval resulting in a longer elevation as seen from the corner.

The resulting frontage for Building D on the Beecroft Road frontage is approximately 34m, which is in character with the approved length of Building A (35m) and the proposed buildings to the north of the heritage item along this road's frontage.

Conclusion

The overall heights, setback upper storeys, strong podium and gradual stepping of the massing with the topography as well as fragmented building lengths follow the approved street-wall response to create a cohesive streetscape character. The proposed amendments also follow the approval's choice of traditional language and individual pavilion buildings above the podium level consolidating the sensitive streetscape response to Beecroft Road.

In general, relationship between building footprints and open space as seen in the figure ground diagram above is also in keeping with the rest of the precinct and the recently proposed developments for the northern part of the block. Therefore the proposed amendments to the approved development are considered to relate well to the desired future character not only in terms of choice of materials and the typology of the buildings but also in terms of building placement, proposed separation distances and retention of the previously approved open space. The amendments to the approval fulfil this principle.

4.2 Principle 2: Appropriate Scale

"Good design provides an appropriate scale in terms of the bulk and height that suits the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings. Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to the scale of existing development. In precincts undergoing a transition, proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the desired future character of the area."

Comment

The predominant scale applicable to any future development in the precinct in terms of heights is the existing applicable height control for the site of 5 storeys as well as the proposed buildings' relationship to the topography of the land. For this site, the maximum height control is 17.5m (or approx. 5 storeys). It is important to note that the height control in Part 4 - Business has a number of important provisions, which include a podium of 8.5m high/ 2 storeys, a setback of 3m above podium along the street frontages and a transition in building height to provide a sensitive interface to adjacent heritage items.



Height plane diagram (Courtesy of DKO)

The proposed overall height is measured from the existing ground level, at the front of the building. As the building height plane diagram above shows, the modification being considered as part of this Sec 96 (2) Application stay way below the maximum height control with a proposed maximum height of approximately 12.08m (4 Storeys), which is approximately 1 storey below the allowable height. The proposed amendments also meet the required height along the street wall height. The proposal presents a very strong street wall height to complement the rest of the approved elevations on Beecroft Road. The glass to glass building line on the upper storeys is also setback (3m) at the upper storey of Building D on the Beecroft Road frontage.

In general, the proposed heights for this segment of the street perform better than the prescribed provisions of Part 4 – Business Height Controls as they respond more sensitively with an overall reduction in height to approximately 12.08m or 4 storeys (as seen from Beecroft Road) instead of the 5 storeys allowed by the height controls at this location. The approved corner element has been maintained and it provides a deliberate alternate response to that suggested by the controls by not setback at the upper levels in order to mark the corner and provide a built form marker at the intersection of Hannah Street and Beecroft Road. As shown in the west street elevation (Beecroft Road), careful attention has been given to maintaining the relationship to and the hierarchy of the approved corner element. The approved frontage to Beecroft Road has been expressed with a strong two storey podium element in order to achieve a consistent datum for a more sympathetic response to the heritage item and to the public domain. As shown in the diagram below, the approved scale to Beecroft Road is, in general, a total of 4 storeys with a setback fifth storey toward the northern end of the site including a strong podium level to further articulate the elevations. However, the proposed additions on Lot 2 (DP 211441) follow the configuration of the southern part of the site with 3 storeys and setback forth storey.



Elevation Diagram showing the relationship of the proposed Beecroft Road elevation with the rest of the approved elevation (Courtesy of DKO)

As shown in the diagram above, the approved response to Beecroft Road attempts to provide a comparable scale relationship to the heritage items with articulated elevations and reduced footprints at upper levels. The proposed extension to Building D has a good contextual fit with the rest of the approved streetscape. The upper floors are setback 3m above the street wall scale to create a continuous pedestrian experience at the edge of the street. Building A has a maximum height at the roof level (excluding the plant) of RL 168.300. The maximum height of the proposed addition to Building D has an RL of 164.3. This helps to mitigate the overall scale to the south of the pedestrian link off Beecroft Road. The drop in the scale along the northern elevation of Building D assists to create a better human scale response to the 7m wide corridor between Buildings A and D.

A 7m wide separation has been provided between Buildings A and D to achieve discontinuous building forms, which provide the opportunity for view corridors through the site breaking up the massing and allowing view glimpses into the site from the surrounding public domain and *vice versa* as shown in the following image.

Conclusion

The proposed heights and scale respond well to the desired future character for the site maintaining a lower overall height across all frontages to the public domain.

The proposed amendments to Building D are organised around a publicly accessible space and the footprint, scale and overall height of the proposed extension responds sensitively to the streetscape and the internal courtyard. The proposed amendments respond appropriately to the desired future character of the precinct; therefore, the Sec 96 (2) proposal satisfies this principle.

3.5 Principle 3: Built form response

“Good design achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building’s purpose, in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.”

Comment

The proposed amendments relate well to the consolidated boundaries of the site by maintaining and responding to a number of existing and approved alignments and setbacks. The approval builds to the site boundary on the ground and level one of Buildings B, C and D. Given the deeper setbacks of the properties opposite on the western side of the road, this is a reasonably consistent response that is characteristic of a retail/commercial precinct and it will reinforce the sense of enclosure to the street and offer a greater level of definition to the public domain.

The addition of a façade on the missing ‘gap’ on Lot 2 (DP 211441) reinforces this principle. Unlike the dwellings across the Beecroft Road, the proposal does not present vehicular entries as part of the interface with this road but instead provides lower commercial/retail uses that offer much needed activation to this side of the site. Lot 2 (DP 211441) currently gains its vehicular access directly from Beecroft Road and has an easement to provide vehicular access to the site immediately behind. However, the addition of this site to the rest of the property ensures a consolidated vehicular access point on Hannah Street. Thus, the benefits of eradicating vehicular access points from Beecroft Road are twofold; the full activation of the ground level is complete and the continuation of the pedestrian experience is enhanced by eliminating any pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.

To all frontages above the podium level, the original approval provides a consistent response with regards to setbacks, except for the corner which will act as a marker on arrival to this important intersection. The setbacks have in this case been deliberately ignored in order to create a point form that marks the corner. The success of this volume rests in the transformation of geometry that joins together the two frontages in this one point. The addition of the rest of the façade on Lot 2 (DP 211441) reinforces the role of the corner with a sympathetic response that retains the role of the corner marker.

The proportions of the facades in the original approval help to provide an adequate response to the streetscape as the design concept relies in the provision of a strong base with a taller mass above recessing at the upper levels. This design concept is maintained throughout the modifications to Building D as part of this Sec 96(2) Application.

The original approval utilised the spaces between the buildings for the provision of pedestrian links that visually connect to other spaces in the precinct. For instance the corridor between Buildings D and A will be visible across the street. It is proposed as a 7m wide entry point to enhance its visibility and amenity for enhanced ‘way-finding.’ This open space will become the ideal entry point to the residential lobbies as they will all be visible from the western end at the arrival point between Buildings D and A. This also helps to break the perception of a continuous wall of development along Beecroft Road when on approach from the north or south. This pedestrian link has been designed in a way to be able to connect to future development to the east; this will add an important connection enhancing the connectivity of the precinct. Ideally these two areas will connect in the future and create a network of visual links to offer better ‘way-finding’ in the precinct.



Elevation Diagram showing the 7m pedestrian link and view corridor on Beecroft Road (Courtesy of DKO)

Conclusion

The proposed modifications as part of this Sec 96(2) follow the principles of the original approval on site and respond to the approved built form across all levels. This reinforces the perception of each building as individual pavilion buildings linked by a network of internal open spaces.

The proposed additions also respond to key existing and approved street setbacks and street wall heights reinforcing view corridors and pedestrian links that could only be suggested in the previous approval as any potential future development for Lot 2 (DP 211441) could only be suggested by not guaranteed. In general, this addition complements the approval's quality of interface to the street and internal areas with the introduction of retail and commercial uses along the street edges and direct street entries to and from internal open spaces. Therefore, the additional modifications being considered as part of this Sec 96(2) Application meet the built form principle.

4.3 Principle 6: Landscape

'Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in greater aesthetic quality and amenity for both occupants and the adjoining public domain. Landscape design builds on the existing site's natural and cultural features in responsible and creative ways. It enhances the development's natural environmental performance by co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy and habitat values. It contributes to the positive image and contextual fit of development through respect for streetscape and neighbourhood character, or desired future character. Landscape design should optimise usability, privacy and social opportunity, equitable access and respect for neighbours' amenity, and provide for practical establishment and long term management.'



Plan showing the updated landscape strategy for the internal courtyard (Courtesy of Oculus)

Comment:

Oculus was engaged by the Applicant to update the landscape design for the public and private landscaped areas of the original approval. According to the original Landscape Design Report, “the landscape design for Module Shopping Centre Beecroft Redevelopment aims to provide an attractive and functional public domain for residents, office workers and shoppers, while addressing the design of public domain interfaces and private residential courtyards”. The proposed additions being considered as part of this Sec 96(2) Application follow the original principles for the site. These include the following:

- Address the public domain interfaces to the surrounding streets, namely Hannah Street and Beecroft Road;
- Provide a dynamic internal landscape that caters to a variety of uses, taking into account the view from the apartments;
- Create through-site links from Beecroft Road and Hannah Street;
- Address the level change in the landscape to provide equal access across the site;
- Integrate the landscape with the architecture; and
- Create attractive and functional private spaces for residents, ensuring privacy is maintained.

Response to the Public Domain -

According to the *Landscaping* provisions under Part 9 – Beecroft Heritage Precinct,

- *Primary and secondary retail frontages should be landscaped with tree-plantings combined with paving in accordance with the following:*
- *Trees should be planted as widely-spaced avenues along kerbsides, using a consistent range of species for each precinct or centre;*
 - *Species should have elevated canopies and should achieve mature heights of at least 10 metres to 12 metres; and Pavements within each precinct should be of a consistent design, constructed of durable and non-slip modular units that are resistant to fading, discolouration and chipping, and that may readily be removed and replaced following future installation of in-ground services.*



Artist's Impression of the central courtyard space (courtesy of DKO)

The approved landscape works included the “creation of a generous network of open spaces and legible access through the site from north to south and with the provision of a potential link from east to west to cater for the future potential redevelopment of the adjacent site to the east. The purpose of this was to provide a legible network of safe publicly accessible open spaces that encouraged the use and patronage by the wider community. The addition of the ‘missing’ structure on Lot 2 (DP 211441) completes the scheme and allows for the provision of greater containment to the approved internal courtyard and pedestrian links as shown in the diagram below.

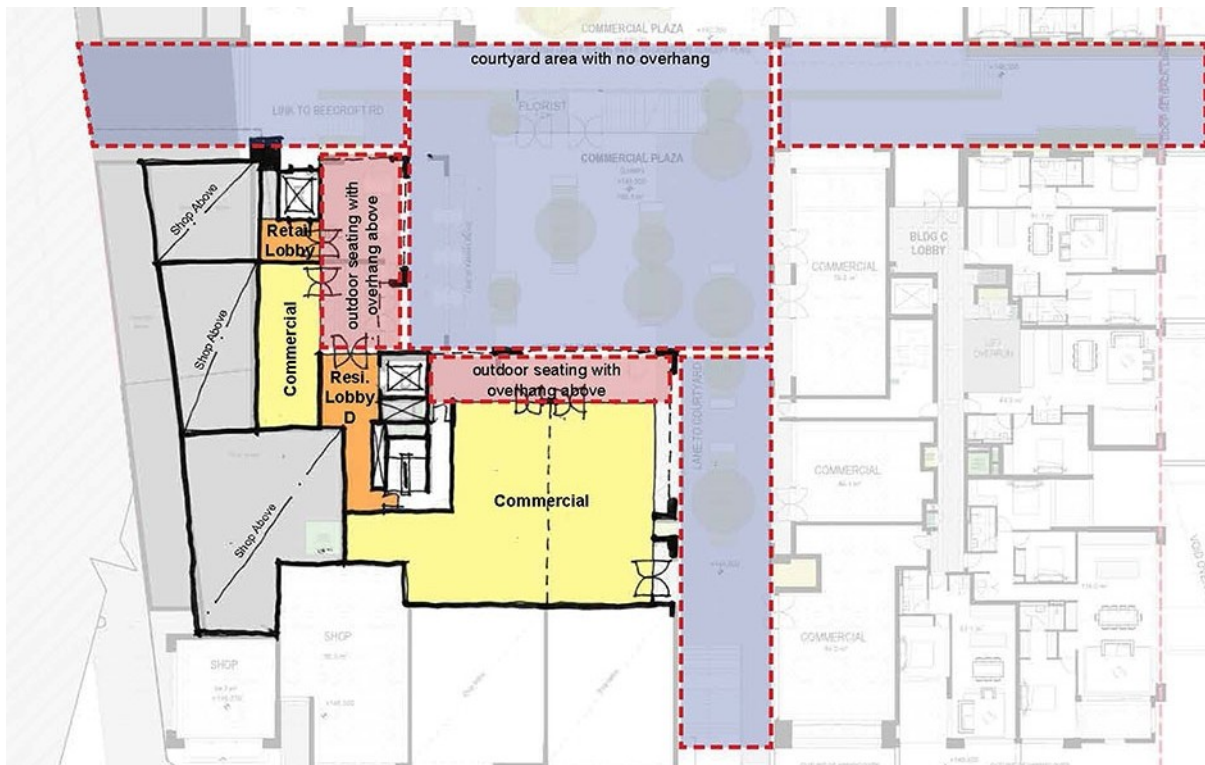


Diagram showing the areas of courtyard open to the sky (Courtesy of DKO)

There is little in the way of an existing vegetated character on the site, so the approval's strategy was to rely on the creation of a considered landscape plan to enhance the character of the site and introduce some natural shading to central open areas and to improve the vegetated character along the footpaths, especially along Beecroft Road, which currently has a very poor landscape character. The addition of the 'missing' frontage on Lot 2 (DP 211441) completes the scheme as the improvements to the overall footpath can now be done holistically for this corner of the block. This would not have been possible before as the improvements in front of Lot 2 (DP 211441) could only be projected as a possible vision for the whole of the footpath but not guaranteed until that site redeveloped. Now that the site is fully consolidated, all landscape concepts and strategy can be delivered in a compliant scheme with Council's requirements for kerbside plantings along primary and secondary retail frontages.

Separation between the public and the private domain -

The original approval for the site was designed with a pedestrian network of links and open spaces to allow access through the site with an emphasis on the creation of a 'heart' in the form of a publicly accessible plaza in the southern half of the site. The proposed additions being considered as part of this Sec96 Application include modifications to the central open space due to the ability to better enclose the space with the extensions to Building D. However, the proposed additions have been carefully designed to maintain the quality of the space achieved as part of the original approval. The proposal maintains the same original plaza area on the ground floor as shown on the following diagram and introduces active uses to activate the space as shown on the diagrams below.



Diagram showing proposed active uses around public open space (Courtesy of DKO)

Based on the proposed amendments, the revised area of landscaped communal open space has been in great part retained although enhanced from the original provision of approximately 2,062m² which is almost 35.4% of the total site area. This surpasses the RFDC requirement which requires up to 25-30% of the site to be dedicated as communal open space. According to the RFDC rules of thumb, 25% of the communal open space should be deep soil. The deep soil area required for this site should be equivalent to a minimum of 515m² and the proposal provides approximately 570m² of deep soil area including planting on structures.



Diagram showing the areas of deep soil and planting on structures for the subject site (Courtesy of DKO)

The proposed modification to the plaza include the following:

- Reconfiguration of communal courtyard to include additional commercial spaces and Building D lobby
- Reconfiguration of floor levels, landscape planters, skylights, stairs and ramps within communal courtyard

The amendments to the levels of the plaza ensure a more integrated space visually; however the change in levels still provides for the creation of two distinct characters, one that is more residential and the plaza, which is more public in nature. The new planting configurations add softening and shading to the central space while providing area for congregation and community activities at the 'heart' of the proposal.

Conclusion

The proposed additions maintain the high levels of aesthetic quality and amenity for both future residents and the community at large with the introduction of semi and private open spaces and a series of publicly accessible areas, pedestrian links and improved public domain areas. The updated landscape strategy for the plaza and the public domain of Beecroft Road enhance the development's natural environment as it responds well to the changes of topography. An important outcome of the amended landscape design is the reinforcement of the site's interconnectedness and high levels of open space, which meet the objectives of the RFDC. Therefore, the amendments being considered as part of this Sec 96(2) proposal fulfil this principle.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

GMU considers that the inclusion of the formerly isolated site on Lot 2 (DP 211441) is a very positive outcome for this development. The consolidated site achieves an improved response to the surrounding existing and future context in terms of built form, open space, amenity and streetscape character. It is GMU's opinion that the addition of Lot 2 (DP 211441) into the overall proposal further achieves a better outcome for the site as a consolidated proposal with a consistent set of principles across the site. Great care has been taken to complement the original design with a responsive solution to the topography and landscape features approved as part of the original scheme for the site. This reinforces the desired future character supported by Council and achieves a more consistent evolving character for this precinct.

The proposal as a whole provides the following positive outcomes:

- Consolidation of a formerly isolated site;
- Increase in the variety of dwelling types for different lifestyles;
- Increased passive surveillance to Beecroft Road as well as the internal open space;
- Better containment of the east-west pedestrian links;
- Improve public domain, specifically the completion of the pedestrian amenity along Beecroft Road which could not be achieved before the amalgamation of Lot 2 (DP 211441);
- A continuous lower scale retail level on both Beecroft Road and the public open plaza;
- A vibrant streetscape and public domain response with improved streetscape and renewed architecture and landscaping to all frontages of the site;
- The enhancement and better containment of the central 'heart' or gathering space with additional retail/commercial tenancies;
- The retention of the hierarchy of the visual gateway on arrival to the precinct at the corner of Hannah Street and Beecroft Road, and
- Complementary massing that responds to the existing approval and topography of the site.

The proposed additions being considered as part of this Sec 96(2) Application complements the original approval on the site and further consolidate the proposal as a well-designed, multi-unit mixed use development that will help strengthen the 'sense of place' for the Beecroft Village delivering a great place to live and work for the local community; therefore it is GMU's recommendation that the proposal be considered for approval.