



URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

ITEM No. 6

Date of Panel Assessment:	21 September 2016
Address of Project:	73-79 Railway Lane Wickham
Name of Project (if applicable):	na
DA Number or Pre-DA?	DA 2016/00384
No. of Buildings:	One
No. of Units:	157 residential units; comprising 17 studios, 30 one bedroom and 110 two bedroom units with 2 commercial units at ground floor and two basement levels of carparking.
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	Glenn Spicer declared a conflict of interest and excused himself from the meeting.
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u> Craig Marler - Planner Barney Collins - architect Peter Blake -Applicant <u>Council</u> Murray Blackburn Smith Damien Jaeger

This report addresses the nine Design Quality Principles set out in the Apartment Design Guide (2015) under State Environmental Planning Policy No.65. It is also an appropriate format for applications which do not include residential flats.

Background Summary

This is the initial application to the UDCG for this proposal. The development in the form of a higher structure has been the subject of previous Pre DA Application to Council [not forwarded to the Panel].

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

The site is occupied by industrial buildings and an industrial storage yard with Railway Lane to the south currently a narrow carriage way. A similar industrial site to the immediate north is proposed to be redeveloped after site remediation.

2. Built Form and Scale

The proposed development comprises a U- shaped plan form rising 10 stories with the lower four levels expressed as a brick faced podium extending east over the basement vehicle entry. This is commended in principle in that it would assist in creating a comfortable pedestrian scale at ground level. Roof-top gardens are proposed above the main structure and the lower extended podium. A large, landscaped court is proposed to the inner area of the U- shaped plan.

The development is proposed in a location of evolving residential apartment buildings in close proximity to the proposed rail interchange. The development was previously proposed as much higher paired towers, but remains [at approx. 30 m] in excess of the allowable 24m height limit and 600mm above a height which was claimed to have been agreed in discussions with Council planners. There appears to be no justification for exceeding the LEP height limit, and if this were to be approved on the subject site, change to the limit on other similar sites in the zone would also have to be reviewed. It is considered that at least the residential floors should be within the height control, perhaps with the option for communal facilities and service cores exceeding the height.

The continuous elevations about the U shaped plan present as a larger form than other recent developments in the setting.

3. Density

The proposed FSR of 3.2:1 is within the site limit of 4:1, the extended elevations of the U- shaped form being the more apparent aspect of density.

4. Sustainability

Proposed inclusions in the development providing sustainability are identified as compliance with BASIX and exceedence of minimum standards for natural ventilation and solar access. However, a major urban building of this scale should do more than meet minimal compliance levels in this category. The design very desirably should for example incorporate rainwater collection/grey water systems and solar energy.

There is opportunity for improved solar access to central units through deletion of the cross-over corridor on the southern central section of the floor plan.

5. Landscape

The group recommended stairs rising to the lawn in the central court be staggered or have wide treads to improve the sense of a continuous open space

and, similarly, that raised planters for trees about the lawn be limited to 500mm in height.

The inclusion of natural light to the upper level of the basement carpark by way of roof-lights integrated into the landscape design was recommended by the group.

6. Amenity

Deletion of the cross-over corridor as suggested above in 'Sustainability' is strongly recommended. This would both improve the amenity of the two central units on each of levels 2 to 8, and create a better sense of community for residents living in units served by each of the two lift cores.

It was recommended that the upper roof-top common areas incorporate small covered areas and wind protection, and be separated into two parts, each serving the residential units accessed from the nearest lift core.

Resolution of street parking and issues of street widening and ownership need to be clarified in relation to the ability for pedestrians to move about the inner side of the angled parking bays.

7. Safety

The comments above regarding widening of the road and pedestrian movement about parking bays are both an amenity and a safety issue.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

Whilst not specifically discussed, the number of apartments and the variety including studios caters to the identified market in this evolving location. The predominance of two bedroom apartments over studios or single bed apartments provides flexibility for most occupants.

The group recommended relocation of the lounge recesses from the cross over corridors to the lift lobbies.

9. Aesthetics

The group supported the use of brick cladding to differentiate the lower podium levels noting that this would benefit from articulation as a plane set forward of the wall line or detailed with a raised top [potentially to the window line above].

The group recommended variation in the upper roof line to break up the extended skyline.

Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality

In order to achieve design quality provisions within SEPP65, and satisfy planning controls the following issues should be addressed:- :

- Compliance with LEP height controls

- Resolution of the cross-over corridor to improve solar access to south facing apartments.
- Resolution of street front parking bays and pedestrian movement.
- Refinement of brick cladding to the podium.
- Provision of small enclosed areas and wind protection to upper roof common areas.
- Further design development of the central court including light shafts to the first basement car park, refinement of stairs to the raised lawn and limitation of height to planter beds.

Summary Recommendation

The application is generally of good quality and is recommended for approval subject to the above issues being resolved to the satisfaction of Council.