



URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

ITEM No. 5

Date of Panel Assessment:	26 October 2016
Address of Project:	990 Hunter Street Newcastle
Name of Project (if applicable):	N/A
DA Number or Pre-DA?	DA 2016/00528
No. of Buildings:	One
No. of Units:	76 comprising 10 x studio, 24 x 1 bed, 33 x 2 bed, 4 x 3 bed and 5 x 4 bed plus 3 ground floor commercial spaces.
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	None
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u> Patrick Quinlan KDC Planner Michael Carr Architect Erin Beattie KDC <u>Council</u> Murray Blackburn Smith

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

The application proposes demolition of existing structures on the existing wedge shape site at 990 Hunter Street Newcastle and construction of a shop top housing development with basement and ground floor parking, ground floor commercial space and 76 residential units over 12 stories, comprising studio, one, two, three and four bedroom apartments. The application has been before the panel on two previous occasions.

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

It was previously noted:

The site is a wedge shaped property located between the Newcastle railway line and Hunter Street at the western end of Newcastle City Centre. The setting is characterised by single and two storey wholesale and vehicle sales buildings with an extensive ecclesiastic complex to the southeast and vacant lands lining the rail corridor to the north. Beyond the rail corridor is a substantial area of parkland and the Wickham Village precinct currently dominated by light industrial structures.

The panel supports the applicant's identification of this entry point to Hunter Street as a significant gateway site. In this context the panel considers the proposed building height to be appropriate to the evolving scale of Hunter Street west.

2. Built Form and Scale

It was previously noted:

The proposed building is both tapered and cranked in plan responding to the converging boundaries at the western end and incorporating step backs from the southern and western ends. The outcome is a complex form of considerable drama, the apparent height exaggerated by the slender western elevation.

At 44.5 metres the development is well under the 60 metre allowable height limit, the scale likely to be echoed in future development to the immediate east of the site. The Cathedral precinct to the south is likely to remain relatively low scale in the foreseeable future. Whilst the panel considers the development to be of an appropriate scale to the setting and evolving streetscape, issues of aesthetic resolution and amenity are considered to warrant amendment of the design.

The design has been amended with split level carparking rising to level 3-4 and enclosed by a solid boundary wall to the western side boundary with open screens to north and south external walls. Above the carpark a 6 metre setback extends up to the top of the building facing abutting building sites likely to be redeveloped in the future. The group recommended that window openings in this wall be angled to the north and south with potential reorientation of apartment interiors to limit windows facing west.

3. Density

The proposed development is under the maximum floor space ratio for the site and also within the maximum building envelope for the site.

4. Sustainability

The proposed development identifies efficiency of energy and water use and solar passive design as key elements of sustainability.

Further refinement of internal layouts and external cladding has been provided. These are considered to enhance the buildings sustainability.

5. Landscape

It was previously noted:

Issues identified by the panel include the need to resolve the maintenance of landscaped areas particularly at the upper areas of the building and with the proposed vertical garden to the southern elevation. Plant species employed in vertical gardens should be limited to low maintenance, hardy selections such as climbing figs.

The panel considers proposed street trees to Hunter Street should be increased in number and should demonstrate a continuity of setout. Related to this is the narrow width of the street canopy. The two elements require cohesive resolution.

The group recommended detailed landscape plans be provided for the large private decks. Landscaped beds should be provided in lieu of very extensive, barren, hard paved areas.

The group identified the need for the eastern deck area at Level 4 to be soft landscaped with access limited to maintenance – the 6m setback from the boundary applying to decks as well as interior floor space.

Provision of a watering system for the proposed green wall and all other soft landscape locations should utilize collected rainwater from site.

The group identified the need for wind screening on common decks.

6. Amenity

It was previously noted:

The panel considered amenity of apartment planning is impacted by floor plans failing to generate the tapered form rather than being contorted into the predetermined tapered floor plates. Responses such as a consisted stepped pattern of apartments, relocation and realignment of lift and stair core and corridors and the inclusion of an addition lift are all potential means of improving the layout and amenity of apartments.

The provision of natural light to the lift lobby and corridors was identified as a desirable aspect of design development.

Provision of access to the lobby and apartments is noted as limited from the carpark due to varying levels between residential and parking floors. It may be necessary to further designate disability parking spaces to allow for greater numbers of disabled, or simply, aged residents.

Amendments including provision of a second fire stair, increased ground floor lobby area and reduced travel distances were noted as improving overall amenity. The applicant is encouraged to verify the location of mailboxes in the main lobby is compliant with mail delivery regulations.

The eastern end of the development as proposed is substantially short of the Apartment Design Guide recommended boundary setbacks for building separation. The building should either be set back from the boundary in accordance with the ADG recommended distances, or alternately, apartment layouts revised such that no openings face directly onto the neighbouring

property. The revised apartment layouts illustrated at the meeting in sketch form are considered to substantially improve amenity at the eastern end of the building and are recommended for inclusion in the application.

Whilst travel distances and apartment layouts have better responded to the wedged floor plan, the group recommended further design development to the residential hallways to improve the visual amenity of the interiors.

Given the scale and height of the proposal, the group recommended inclusion of a garage chute at each floor.

7. Safety

It was previously noted:

Safety issues were not discussed in the Pre DA; however previous developments submitted to the panel with direct access from carparking to the main lobby have highlighted the need to ensure safe and secure transition between these areas.

Similarly security at the vehicle entry from the street is considered a necessity in the proposed development.

Consideration of revised planning about the access lift between the residential areas and the carpark is recommended with potential relocation of the carpark DDA lift access to the southern side of the lift with the stairs set to the south. This would remove the need for wheel chair or other disabled passengers to wait in the narrow space between the lift door and the protective bollards.

Similarly, planning of DDA access from the carpark to the main lobby should seek to remove the wheel chair lift by adjustment of levels.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

It was previously noted that:

The mix of apartments was considered a positive aspect of the proposed development.

Opportunity for social interaction was identified in the generous ground floor lobby and the communal terraces at Levels 4 and 10, although it is not clear how privacy would be maintained to the apartment adjacent to the Level 4 terrace.

It remains unclear how privacy will be maintained to the apartment adjacent to the Level 4 terrace.

A sheltered/enclosed room fitted with kitchenette facilities at the tenth floor common area should be included. A small toddler's play area within this common area should also be considered, given the likely population future profile with residents having small children .

9. Aesthetics

It was previously noted:

The dramatic form of the proposed development represents a logical response to the specifics of site and setting. The panel considered the subsequent fenestration of the wedged form to be

distracting from the form and to provide an unnecessary degree of complexity to the building. The provision of so many varied surface treatments tends to obscure the core form and is likely to introduce an unnecessary level of future maintenance. Consideration of these areas should accompany further development of this or alternate planning.

The group considered the design development of the building to have clarified the form and articulation of the building. The group recommended 3D images are included in the submission enabling greater understanding of the form, finishes and relation of the building to the setting.

The group encouraged the applicant to modify colour finishes reducing the 'cold' appearance of reflective glass in favour of warm greys or a similar palette in the external cladding of this prominent building.

The location of air conditioning units on building exteriors should be addressed in the design.

Clear glass balustrades should be utilized in limited locations, such as the narrow outermost end of "the wedge" form. At least two thirds of each of the balustrades to any apartment should be solid, and adjustable sun screening provided. Screening of exposed decks from high winds should also be provided for.

Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality

The issues identified above under Built Form, Landscape, Amenity, Safety, Housing Diversity/Social Interaction and Aesthetics need to be addressed before the application could be supported.

Detailed but important matters including design of street awnings, external signage and lighting should also be resolved.

Summary Recommendation

Generally the applicant has satisfactorily addressed the most important of the previous recommendations. The Group stressed the need for 3D presentation to assist understanding of the proposed design.

If the above matters are resolved to the satisfaction of Council the application need not be referred back to the panel.