



## **URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING**

### **ITEM No. 5**

Date of Panel Assessment:	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
Address of Project:	38 Hannell & 2-4 Bishopsgate Streets, Wickham
Name of Project (if applicable):	NA.
DA Number or Pre-DA?	DA 2017/01399
No. of Buildings:	2 Tower Blocks above 3-storey podium
No. of Units:	165
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	None
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u> Luke Mahaffey Darren Holloway Anthony Darcy Nick Whitton  <u>Council</u> David Paine

*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 a Development Application for a large-scale high-rise residential development with commercial at the ground floor. Although the documentation as submitted includes the basic material for assessment, the architectural character is relatively undeveloped: as advised by the architect this was due to time pressures. The submission is supported in principle subject to various issues being resolved.

### **1.Context and Neighbourhood Character**

The site is part of the rapidly changing area of Wickham which has been rezoned for high-density residential and commercial redevelopment. It comprises a large part of a block zoned as B3 Commercial Core with an FSR of 5:1 and maximum height of 45 metres. It is close to the new Wickham interchange, and the Throsby Creek/Harbour waterfront.

On the adjoining site at the corner of Bishopsgate and Charles Streets there is approval for a new 10 storey residential block, and adjoining on the Dangar Street corner the sites of three remaining houses will also inevitably be redeveloped.

On the immediately opposite side of Bishopsgate Street is Wickham Public School, listed as a local Heritage Item. Its relationship to the development is one of the design challenges to be resolved.

## 2. Built Form and Scale

Two 12-storey residential towers are proposed above a three storey podium. Both towers are 46.5 metres high, some 1.5 metres in excess of the LEP control. The podium with parapet is approximately 11.6 metres high and with its two upper residential levels expressed strongly should provide an appropriate pedestrian-scale base for the development.

The Statement of Environmental Effects (p.55) states that the FSR is 4.27:1, -well within the LEP standard.

Whilst the basic plan arrangement and the amenity of residential blocks should be satisfactory and are supported in principle, it is considered that the character of the development would be enhanced if there were to be some differentiation in the heights of the two towers. If one were to have at least one additional level and the other were to be reduced by at least one level their visual impact and silhouette would be improved. Such increase in height for one of the blocks would be marginal and should have no adverse impacts, whilst the other would then be below the height control.

Detailed refinement of the building forms is necessary:-

- (a) The tower blocks Adequate resolution of the issues raised below under 'Amenity' relating to the balconies is likely to result in significant changes to their form and materials. See also 'Housing Diversity and Social Interaction'.
- (b) Podium Development of its form and character should be addressed to provide greater articulation and variation in response to comments below under Landscape and Aesthetics. Provided that the podium design resolves these concerns, the tower setbacks from the street frontages as proposed should be acceptable.

## 3. Density

Compliant and acceptable.

## 4. Sustainability

On a site of this scale additional initiatives beyond BASIX are encouraged, for example solar energy collection and rainwater recycling at least for landscape watering.

## 5. Landscape

There is opportunity for extensive landscape on the communal podium, which very desirably could extend to planting adjacent to the podium parapet which would 'green' the image of the building as viewed from the street. Roof-tops of the two towers could also be 'greened'.

Planting of large trees, paving and street furniture along all three street frontages is particularly important, and should be developed in consultation with Council.

## 6. Amenity

The following issues should be addressed:-

- (a) Commercial/retail activities along the three street frontages are required and are highly desirable, but the shallow depth of spaces, in particular at the southern end, raises questions as to their commercial viability. Toilet facilities will also be required.
- (b) Natural light and ventilation is needed to the long internal corridors serving residential units on the two podium levels, perhaps by way of openings at both ends as well as adjacent to the central stair.
- (c) Typical floor plans of both tower blocks indicate that lift lobbies and corridors would be well-lit, and the amenity of units would be of good standard and compliant with ADG recommendations. The design of balconies requires considerable development: as proposed particularly those on all four corners at each floor would be highly exposed to winds and uninviting, and at many times unusable. Substantial screening, adjustable or otherwise is *essential*. A large proportion of balustrades should be of solid material to ensure that at least in part the balconies have some privacy and allow for screening of washing and storage. This can readily be achieved whilst still allowing more than adequate outlook and views.

## 7. Safety

Satisfactory

## 8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

The unit mix as proposed is limited. Inclusion of a reasonable proportion of 3-bed apartments would be very desirable in a development of this size, to cater for variations in demand and increasing number of children living in high-density areas such as this.

The podium level could provide some communal amenity, but will require thoughtful detailed design if it is to function effectively. Impact of strong winds funneling between the two towers, and resolution of the interface between communal and adjoining private terraces pose significant challenges. It is strongly recommended that in addition to this deck, a communal area be provided at the top of each of the two towers: these need only be small and fitted with an enclosed room with kitchenette facilities, and adjacent deck screened from winds, and each would then specifically serve the residents living in that block. They should be set well back to the centre of the block and although marginally increasing building heights would have no adverse impacts, -rather they should be designed to attractively enhance the silhouette of the towers, by contrast with the presently unarticulated roof profile.

## 9. Aesthetics

The design as presented is somewhat bland and requires refinement to resolve the range of issues raised above, all of which will impact on the detailed character of the development, including in particular those discussed under Built Form, Amenity, and Housing Diversity and Social Interaction.

A particular challenge relating to the heritage-listed school, is to design the podium along the Bishopsgate Street frontage to ensure that it responds in detail to the character of this building, -whether achieved by way of materials and finishes, detailed articulation, planting, or all three in combination.

## Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality

All the issues raised above should be addressed. If these are sensitively resolved the basic building form and design is likely to be supported by the Panel.

**Summary Recommendations**

The above issues should be addressed and the application referred back to the Panel



## **URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING**

### **ITEM No.1**

Date of Panel Assessment:	22 February 2018
Address of Project:	38 Hannell Street, Wickham
Name of Project (if applicable):	—
DA Number:	2017/01399
No. of Buildings:	1 (two towers above a podium)
No. of Units:	164 residential units and commercial tenancies. 176 car-parking spaces and associated infrastructure.
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	—
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u>  Luke Mahaffey Darren Holloway Anthony Darcey Nick Whitton Scott Chapman  <u>Council</u>  David Paine

*This report addresses the nine Design Quality Principles set out in the Apartment Design Guide (2015) under State Environmental Planning Policy No.65.*

*These principles are also appropriate for applications which do not include residential flats or do not meet the strict criteria of the ADG and for developments in sensitive urban, heritage or natural contexts where complex design issues must be assessed.*

### **Background Summary**

This is a Development Application (DA) for a large-scale residential complex with two towers above a commercial and parking podium.

The Urban Design Consultative Group (UDCG) has previously reviewed this application and each time it is apparent that the applicants have been able to positively adapt their proposal in response to comments and advice.

Two slightly different versions of the design were tabled before and at the meeting and discussed (the differences were mostly associated with the tower heights) and while most of the issues identified previously have been resolved, there remain some factors that still require refinement.

## **1. Context and Neighbourhood Character**

The site is part of the rapidly changing area of Wickham that has been rezoned for high-density residential and commercial redevelopment. It comprises a large part of a block zoned as B3 Commercial Core with an FSR of 5:1 and maximum height of 45 metres. The site is close to the new Wickham transport interchange and the Throsby Creek/Harbour waterfront.

On the adjoining site at the corner of Bishopsgate and Charles Streets there is a 10-storey residential block under construction. On the immediately opposite side of Bishopsgate Street is Wickham Public School, listed as a local Heritage Item. Its relationship to the development is one of the design challenges that has not yet been satisfactorily resolved or demonstrated.

## **2. Built Form and Scale**

Two, 14-storey (+ rooftop communal space) residential towers are proposed above a 3-storey podium. Both towers are approximately 46.6 metres high — being 1.6 metres in excess of the LEP control. However, if the height exceedence is only for access to the communal rooftops, and it is well setback from the edge of the tower form, the UDCG believe that it should be acceptable.

The podium with parapet is approximately 11.6 metres high and it comprises three commercial tenancies on the ground floor and two levels of apartments sheathing car-parking above.

While the two towers are proposed to be the same height, they have been modelled and expressed in different ways, responding to comments in the previous UDCG report.

In general, the location, scale and massing of the towers and podium are appropriate (although see comments under Amenity and Aesthetics hereafter).

## **3. Density**

Compliant and acceptable.

## **4. Sustainability**

The response to sustainability remains unclear although the applicants state that they are working to accommodate a more refined set of systems and standards. On a site of this scale additional initiatives beyond BASIX are encouraged, for example solar energy collection and rainwater recycling at least for landscape watering.

## **5. Landscape**

The landscape design for the podium remains slightly diagrammatic and formal, with the planting seemingly constrained into small artificial zones. The applicants are encouraged to consider an approach that reverses the dominance of paths and paving over

landscaped areas, so that the podium design reads more as a landscaped space, which has had some paths and spaces inserted into it.

Planting of large trees, paving and street furniture along all three street frontages is particularly important, and should be developed in consultation with Council.

## **6. Amenity**

The following issues should be addressed:

- (a) The separation distance between the west façade of the northern tower, and the adjacent apartment building is below that recommended by the ADG. Furthermore, balconies and windows in the north tower directly face this other building. The distance between balcony edges/habitable spaces in the northern tower and the site boundary to the west should be 12ms, but it is proposed at between 8.4 and 9 metres which isn't acceptable. If the western façade of the north tower had a much more solid treatment, with no balconies and windows angled (or screened) so that they only look north and west (not directly west) or south and west, this would be acceptable. This would not only solve a major amenity problem (exacerbating a shortfall in minimum setbacks), but it will most likely improve the environmental performance of the building.
- (b) The towers have extensive glass balustrades in front of similarly extensive glass walls. The projecting corner balconies particularly at higher levels would be extremely exposed to winds, and often unusable. The ADG strongly recommends that a more balanced approach to balustrades (half solid, half glass) be adopted, along with the provision of moveable screens to balconies. Furthermore, such screens are most likely needed to hide air-conditioning compressor units and drying areas, along with supporting the psychological needs of users at the upper levels.
- (c) The ground floor commercial tenancy has extensive glass walls which may require shading (in the form of street awnings or louvres) to reduce the associated heat load.

## **7. Safety**

Satisfactory

## **8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction**

- The unit mix has been improved in this variation of the DA and is now appropriate.
- Communal roof-top terrace is now included for the north block, but not the southern, which also should have communal space. It is highly desirable to also include a small enclosed space with kitchenette facilities serving each space. .

## **9. Aesthetics**

The aesthetic expression of the proposal has continued to evolve but there remain two considerations that require further development.

- (a) The expression of the podium on the north elevation, where it abuts the adjacent building, remains uncomfortable, and requires some minor modelling or variation in the façade materials to accommodate the change in levels.

- (b) The northern façade is directly opposite the heritage-listed school and it is unclear how the two buildings are related in terms of scale, materiality, texture and colour. It may be that the proposed podium form has a reasonable relationship to the heritage building but this has not been demonstrated. This was also raised previously and it is still unresolved.

### **Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality**

The following issues remain to resolved:

- (a) Western façade design (balconies and windows) of the northern tower to accommodate a reduced set-back to the boundary.
- (b) Reduce, modify or screen the extent of glass balustrades in the design.
- (c) Use formal modelling, materials, colours, textures or planting to respond to the scale and texture of the heritage listed school.
- (d) Communal facilities

### **Summary Recommendation**

The UDCG supports the proposal, subject to these issues being resolved.