

90-98 Glenmore Ridge Drive Glenmore Park

A Introduction

- 1 This opinion regarding design quality relates to the amended development application:
 - Eleven amended architectural and landscape plans were listed in the email from Think Planners dated 20 May.
- 2 This opinion builds upon my previous design quality advice:
 - August 2019: written advice in relation to DA plans (architectural and landscape);
 - October 2018: UDRP meeting advice in relation to the refined development concept;
 - July 2018: UDRP meeting advice in relation to the development concept.
- 3 This opinion also addresses concerns in relation to urban design matters which have been raised by Council officers.

B Summary opinion

- 4 Amended elements of the DA have not altered critical design qualities which were demonstrated by the August 2019 architectural and landscape plans:
 - i In general, the amended plans do not alter conclusions in paras 2 to 4 and 12 to 15 of my August 2019 advice:
 - Design resolution and attention to detail remain exceptional;
 - Built form and activities together with landscaping and the architectural composition of facades would not be incompatible with character or amenity of residential surroundings.
 - ii The proposed L-shaped layout demonstrates an inherent logic in terms of commercial factors and urban design considerations:
 - The proposed layout provides positive responses to DCP provisions which have prescribed a network of estate roads together with locations for public facilities within the wider eastern village centre;
 - The proposed orientations of buildings and interiors, together with locations of service areas and vehicle access, provide optimum responses to the road layout and residential areas which have been prescribed by the DCP;
 - Layout and design of buildings and landscaped areas would contribute to high levels of streetscape quality, as well as demonstrating reasonable compatibility with the character and scale of surrounding residential development.

- iii The proposed development would contribute to socially-effective activation of the village centre precinct which the DCP has prescribed for the eastern portion of Glenmore Park.
- 5 However, as outlined below, some elements of the DA package require minor further amendments or clarification.

C Siting, general layout + landscaping

- 6 Activation of frontages:
 - i Sites which have 'dual frontages' to streets and parking areas present unique commercial and design challenges: in practical terms, it is commercially impossible to secure a range and style of tenants that would attract high levels of pedestrian activity along the full length of all street and carpark frontages.
 - ii For such developments, it is imperative that pedestrian activity is concentrated around key arrival points and destinations, and that activity is concentrated in locations that allow direct visual and pedestrian access from surrounding streets and places - in this case, via crossings at the residential street corners and midway along Darug Drive opposite the future school.
 - iii For town centre developments of the proposed size, surface parking is commercially inevitable and, subject to design, may provide a highly-desirable generator for visible pedestrian activity - moreso than basement parking which would conceal activity and, consequently, which would further-separate town centre developments from their residential surroundings:
 - In this regard, highly desirable urban design outcomes may be achieved by the activation of what are strictly 'private' frontages - provided that such activation would be highly-visible from surrounding street frontages.
 - iv As indicated in my previous advice, I have concluded that the L-shaped layout for the proposed centre is contextually-appropriate as well as commercially-logical, and that the alignments of proposed arcades and alleyways would visually and physically link surrounding neighbourhoods and future destinations within the wider village centre to the primary focus of pedestrian activity within the proposed development (notwithstanding that the primary focus would face the surface carpark to the north and east rather than directly-abutting a public street).
 - v In this situation, it is appropriate that public street frontages should accommodate a 'hierarchy' of visible activity which would concentrate highest levels of activity next to arcade and alley-way entries to the centre, and with lesser levels of activity located toward the 'peripheral' street corners.
 - vi The amended development proposal responds positively to these considerations:
 - Although the primary focus for pedestrian activity would face the carpark, location of that focal point not only would maximise commercial and social activity within the proposed centre, but also would ensure that such activity

is visible from surrounding streets – consequently, satisfying urban design principles that advocate visible activation of street frontages as well as ‘advertising’ commercial qualities of the centre to passing traffic;

- Facing Deerubin Drive, highest levels of visible activity would be generated by the centrally-located arcade together with ‘flanks’ of small retail tenancies and residential lobbies, with lesser (but not insignificant) levels of activity generated by long-hour operation of the medical centre, gym and childcare centre;
 - At the corner of Darug Street and Glenmore Ridge Drive, the proposed swim school would provide a well-lit ‘bowl of activity’ facing a prominent street corner which is commercially-remote from primary pedestrian activity within the centre, and the larger commercial tenancy AR11 has a street frontage of almost 10m which would be more-than-adequate to reveal indoor activity and attract pedestrians;
 - Activation of these ‘secondary frontages’ would not be compromised by the likelihood that shop-fronts might be partly-obscured by blinds or advertising panels - for secondary frontages, the most important outcome is to generate pedestrian activity rather than to display a range of retail goods, personal services or cafe facilities (which, as implied by previous comments, are best-located facing the primary focus for pedestrian activity within the proposed centre);
 - For the ‘gateway’ frontage to Glenmore Ridge Drive, ‘low-key’ activation would be achieved by the proposed carwash and cafe which, in terms of land use, would not compromise urban design quality of this prominent street corner - notwithstanding that minor architectural amendments are desirable for this element of the proposed development, a basement location would be neither desirable nor appropriate in relation to the activation of street frontages.
- vii Consequently, and in terms of urban design considerations, there is no need for further amendment of street frontages in order to increase visible activity.

7 Pedestrian access to the surface carpark:

- i Three points of access are proposed:
 - Midway along the western edge of the carpark: a ramp which is approximately 1.5m wide would sit within a 4m wide ‘corridor’ that would be free of parked cars; and
 - At the south-western corner of the carpark: a level transition to the pedestrian promenade is approximately 8m wide; and
 - Midway along the southern frontage to the carpark: a dedicated pathway approximately 1.5m wide is proposed within a 3m wide ‘corridor’ that would be free of parked cars.
- ii All points of access rely upon shared use of carpark driveways by pedestrians and vehicles - consistent with conventional design practice for public carparks:

- The western access point also has the benefit of an 'intermittent' pedestrian-only pathway which would provide access from the northern-most third of the carpark.
 - iii The distribution of proposed access points would allow convenient pedestrian access from all quarters of the above-ground carpark.
 - iv In terms of urban design considerations, further amendment of pedestrian access to the ground level carpark is not necessary.
- 8 Basement entrance from Deerubin Drive:
- i Sight lines between motorists and pedestrians are unsatisfactory:
 - Satisfactory visibility is achieved by 'quarter rounding' of proposed tenancy BR06 at the south-eastern corner of the driveway;
 - However, sight lines would be limited by the square corner of the medical centre which is proposed at the south-western corner of the driveway.
 - ii In terms of urban design considerations which relate to safety and security, the following design amendments are recommended:
 - The south-eastern corner of the medical centre should be quarter-rounded to match tenancy BR06 - which would satisfy sight-line requirements of AS2890.1; and
 - The driveway shutter should be moved northwards to align with 'tangent points' of the quarter rounded tenancy corners; and
 - Footpaths should incorporate wide 'rumble strips' of cobbles or tactile markers along flanks of the driveway crossing in order to alert approaching pedestrians.
- 9 The main pedestrian entry from Glenmore Ridge Drive:
- i In terms of urban design principles, the primary purposes for that entrance are to provide access and maximise visibility of the main pedestrian concourse where outdoor dining is proposed:
 - In that regard, a direct line-of-sight is proposed from the street footpath via a short flight of stairs, and that line-of-sight would not be obstructed by location of the proposed ramp which allows for disabled and pram access;
 - Although there is no indication that balustrades are proposed along that ramp, balustrades would not be necessary for safety reasons: the proposed stairs accommodate a rise of 600mm from the street footpath, and consequently the northern edge of the proposed ramp would be elevated above the street footpath by a maximum of 300mm.
 - ii An alternative design solution with ramped access only would, in terms of urban design, be undesirable:
 - Length of the ramp would interrupt the level pedestrian forecourt which surrounds proposed tenancy AR01 and, by preventing outdoor activities

such as dining, would compromise potential activation of this prominent corner tenancy.

- iii Therefore, in terms of urban design considerations, although amendment of the proposed pedestrian entrance is neither necessary nor desirable, conditions should limit balustrading of the proposed ramp to an open handrail.

10 Pad-mounted substations:

- i An exposed location for proposed substations adjacent the carpark entrance from Glenmore Ridge Drive would be visually-intrusive and, therefore, undesirable.
- ii However, there appear to be few logical alternative locations for substations along street frontages:
 - For example, location adjacent to the loading dock could not be accommodated without significant reconfiguration for back-of-house areas and further-reduction of the proposed liquor store tenancy (which already has been reduced to accommodate back-of-house garbage stores).
- iii Consequently, the recommended urban design solution for the proposed substation is:
 - Retain substations in the location as currently-proposed, and
 - Partly-enclose the units with masonry walls and screened gates that reflect 'dynamic' architectural qualities of the proposed retail podium.

D Amenity in general

11 Residential entrances

- i In general, ground floor lobbies provide satisfactory visibility and safety:
 - All lobbies have minimum widths of 2m to 2.5m, and provide direct lines-of-sight from publicly-accessible pedestrian areas to lift waiting areas;
 - With the exception of lobby A2, all lifts are located within 5m of entrance doors;
 - Nevertheless, for lobby A2, sight lines would not be compromised by cranked alignment of the corridor or a distance of almost 10m from the pedestrian arcade-way.
- ii In terms of urban design considerations, no further amendments are recommended for lobby locations, dimensions or configurations.
- iii However, safety and security should be confirmed by general details of proposed lighting and intercom access.

12 Corridors and lifts

- i Proposed lifts are distributed across residential floorplates:

- In block A, this would compensate for the substantial length of proposed common corridors by creating smaller 'residential territories' that are more-likely to encourage social interaction between residents.
 - In blocks B and C, lift cores provide access to short but separated corridors that serve clusters of less than eight dwellings per storey.
 - ii 'Clustering' or 'pairing' of lift cores would offer no benefits in terms of amenity, residential territory and the potential to encourage for social interaction:
 - In fact, benefits that are most-likely to be achieved by the current proposal would be compromised or lost.
 - iii In terms of urban design considerations, amendment of lift cores is not recommended.
- 13 Basement travelator lobby
- i A lobby, together with a play area and retail tenancy, are proposed at the foot of travellers.
 - ii Due to the diagonal orientation of travelators, the basement lobby would not provide sufficient manoeuvring space for pedestrians and trolleys:
 - The proposed travelators would be separated from a lobby curtain wall by distances of 1.5m to 2m which would not be sufficient.
 - iii Insufficiency of manoeuvring space would be further-compromised by the proposed children's area:
 - Presumably, the children's area would require space for supervising parents within the lobby area which would encroach upon the lobby's primary circulation function.
 - iv The proposed lobby is entered directly from the carpark aisles:
 - Due to the absence of transition zones, pedestrians and shoppers would be likely to emerge from the lobby without sufficient warning for motorists.
 - v Comprehensive redesign of this area is recommended, paying close regard to the concerns which have been noted.
- 14 Basement storage
- i Basement storage cages do not appear to promote visibility from surrounding corridors and lobbies – consequently safety and security would be compromised in the context of a substantial basement area.
 - ii Design amendments are recommended:
 - Storage rooms and individual cages should be surrounded by screen walls which allow filtered sight lines from common corridors and lift lobbies;
 - Sight lines would allow surveillance and provide reasonable security for residents when accessing storage areas.

E Built form and facades

15 Detailing of facades

- i Architectural character of the proposed development relies extensively upon off-form concrete surfaces, but details of the proposed off-form finishes have not been specified:
 - Design quality would be compromised by a basic-standard of formwork which typically includes visible misalignment of horizontal and vertical elements, together with visible seams and pour-breaks.
- ii Low quality concrete construction cannot be masked by applied finishes such as soffit lining:
 - Soffit lining would not disguise visible misalignment or blemishes in slab edges, balustrades or poured in-situ walls;
 - Consequently, applied surface treatments or panelling are not recommended to ensure satisfactory aesthetic quality for facades.
- iii In order to ensure that facades achieve satisfactory aesthetic quality, architectural plans should be amended to include detailed design sections at a scale of 1:50 for each façade-type:
 - Note that the requirement for design sections is specified by Schedule One in the EP and A Regulation.
- iv In relation to concrete elements, design sections should illustrate and / or specify the following:
 - Smooth finishes are preferred to strongly-textured finishes which are likely to weather appreciably;
 - Visible elements should incorporate a Class 1 finish as specified by AS3610;
 - Joins between formwork panels should be fully-concealed by taping, or visible joins should be aligned with the composition of underlying architectural elements, or surfaces should be honed or finely acid-etched post-pour;
 - Sections should illustrate fillets and drip grooves where necessary to achieve fine construction tolerances or avoid weather-staining of off-form surfaces.

16 The carwash and cafe

- i As noted previously, the proposed carwash has potential to add a modest but positive level of activity to a prominent street corner.
 - In terms of urban design considerations, relocation of the carwash and cafe to the basement is neither desirable nor recommended.
- ii However, architectural design of the proposed carwash structure does not match the main building, and is not yet appropriate for such a prominent location:

- In general, the carwash and associated cafe do not sufficiently-reflect design qualities that are displayed by the main retail podium.
- iii Consequently, further design development is recommended for the carwash building form and facades:
 - Ends of walls at corners of the building should be inclined to reflect splayed colonnade elements of the retail podium (for example, per DA 7043 view 3); and
 - Blank walls should be disguised by projecting blades, screen elements and / or by splaying or tapering (as recommended above); and
 - The roof and awnings should display a 'vertically-layered' composition (for example, per DA 7043 view 2 at centre), and supporting elements should comprise 'heavy weight' masonry as well as slender pipe columns (per DA 7043 view 2 at left); and
 - Centre signage above the carwash should be mounted on a backing panel which more-closely reflects design qualities of the main retail podium.

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