



**SEPP 65 DESIGN VERIFICATION STATEMENT**  
643-651 HUNTER STREET NEWCASTLE  
09 MAY 2022

**STEWART  
ARCHITECTURE**

**SEPP 65 DESIGN VERIFICATION STATEMENT**

09 May 2022

**Overview**

Prepared to accompany the Development Application submitted to Newcastle City Council.

Project Address:

643-651 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW  
LOT 1, DP 1166015

**Contact**

Sasha Lesiuk

Stewart Architecture

2 / 181 Harris Street Pyrmont NSW 2009

T: +61 2 9061 4760

E: [s.lesiuk@stewartarchitecture.com.au](mailto:s.lesiuk@stewartarchitecture.com.au)

**Note**

The SEPP 65 Design Verification Statement prepared for the Development Application of 643 – 651 Hunter Street, Newcastle and is to be read in conjunction with all architectural documentation, and all supporting consultant documentation and reports.

# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SEPP DESIGN COMPLIANCE REPORT

*Principle 1: Context & Neighbourhood Character*

*Principle 2: Built Form and Scale*

*Principle 3: Density*

*Principle 4: Sustainability*

*Principle 5: Landscape*

*Principle 6: Amenity*

*Principle 7: Safety*

*Principle 8: Housing Diversity and Social Interaction*

*Principle 9: Aesthetics*

## Acronyms & Notes:

|      |   |                                     |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| SEPP | – | State Environmental Planning Policy |
| DCP  | – | Development Control Plan            |
| LEP  | – | Local Environmental Plan            |
| FSR  | – | Floor Space Ratio                   |
| ADG  | – | Apartment Design Guide              |
| NC   | – | City of Newcastle Council           |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Design Verification Statement has been prepared by Stewart Architecture on behalf of BLOC and Miller Property Corp for 643 Hunter Street, Newcastle.

This statement is submitted as part of the Development Application for the above site and should be considered alongside the other documents prepared by the applicant team.

This Design Statement has been prepared to demonstrate that the proposed multi-unit residential development has been designed to be consistent with the nine principles outlined in the SEPP 65 – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development.



## 2. SEPP DESIGN COMPLIANCE REPORT

### PRINCIPLE 1: CONTECT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

“Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions.

Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area’s existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood.

Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.”

The subject site is located within the city centre character area of City of Newcastle Council, specifically the Newcastle West End area. The site is bounded by Hunter Street to the north, Steel Street to the east and adjoining occupied commercial sites to the west and south. It is currently an undeveloped land plot.

The area is experiencing redevelopment resulting in a mix of old and new building stock of varying typology. The surrounding development includes retail, hospitality, commercial, offices and hotel accommodation that vary between 2 and 7 stories, and residential towers that have a height up to 66m. Future nearby development includes towers of up to 90m tall.

The proposal therefore seeks to reference the City of Newcastle’s strategy for this area to evolve into a “smart, livable and sustainable city” reflecting the area’s sense of identity and character. The proposed development is in keeping with current neighbouring developments, as well as future permissible developments.

Importantly, the proposal fulfils the planning principle of the West End area to provide inviting building entries with active frontages that allow visual permeability from the street to within the building.

The proposed development is consistent with the aims and objectives of the B3 Commercial Core zoning as it incorporates a mix of uses supporting both the Newcastle West Commercial Core and maximising public transport use given its location close to the Newcastle transport interchange.

## **PRINCIPLE 2: BUILT FORM AND SCALE**

“Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building’s purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation 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.”

The proposed development has been derived from extensive site analysis and through multiple design reviews with the Newcastle Urban Design Review Panel and through pre-DA meetings with Newcastle Council. The built form of the proposed development – a four storey podium with a residential tower above - has been scaled and sited to respond to the surrounding context and current and future development. The form of the tower is consistent on each floor above the building podium, with only the penthouse level and rooftop services setback to avoid a ‘wedding cake’ design solution.

The proposal responds the desired street characteristics of the West End area by providing a street wall that contributes to the character of the surrounding streetscape. The proposed development references the development strategy for Newcastle City Centre’s West End by providing active street frontages that allow for visual permeability from the street to within the building. The active four-storey podium has a zero setback which is encouraged in the Newcastle DCP. Landscaped zones are strategically implemented to the streetscape and building entrances to define the public domain and formalise the primary commercial and residential entries to the building.

The residential development above the street wall provides a generous setback to Steel Street ensuring views and vistas from the public domain are retained and enhanced. The siting of the tower also responds to feasibility studies and an approved DA on the western neighbouring site which proposes an 8-storey commercial development built directly on the boundary. The resultant siting of the residential tower forms two distinct landscape podium spaces; a generous eastern terrace and a more intimate western terrace with community gardens.

The form of the residential development above the street wall and podium is punctuated by distinct and angled concrete corners with all dwellings having views and vistas external to the site. The slender tower is orientated east/west in order to minimise the building width, making up less than 50% of the southern boundary length. Additionally, the slender tower form aims to minimise overshadowing of the street and other surrounding developments, whilst also optimising the natural light and ventilation amenity of the proposed dwellings.

The site is identified as having a maximum building height of 60m and the proposed development seeks to obtain an additional 10% in height and FSR as per the Newcastle LEP Design Excellence Clause.

The proposed development has a primary building height of 64.95m above the existing natural ground level. The proposed height is considered appropriate in this context because of the following:

- There are no parks or community places in the immediate vicinity that would be adversely impacted by the development.
- The setback of the residential tower enhances the street vista down Steel Street.
- The proposed 20 storey height fits comfortably within the rapidly developing context and streetscape and will be of an appropriate scale as the West End area of the Newcastle City Centre develops in the future.
- The proposed development is unlikely to diminish views to or from the harbour.

## **PRINCIPLE 3: DENSITY**

“Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context.

Appropriate densities are consistent with the area’s existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.”

The site is zoned B3 Commercial Core under the City of Newcastle Council's Local Environmental Plan 2012. The FSR of the subject site is identified on the Floor Space Ratio Map as 6:1, however, the LEP local provisions for the Newcastle City Centre restrict the FSR of development identified in Area A to 5:1.

The proposed development has an FSR of 5.49:1 and seeks to obtain the additional 10% through the Newcastle LEP Design Excellence Clause.

The density of the proposed development, 106 apartments and four ground floor commercial tenancies is consistent and appropriate to the surrounding future development in the area. Additionally existing infrastructure and the light rail public transport corridor located in close proximity to the site ensures that the proposed density is sustainable.



## **PRINCIPLE 4: SUSTAINABILITY**

“Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.”

An important element of the proposal is the carefully conceived floor plate which orientates all living rooms and private open spaces to the north and east providing 81% of the dwellings with more than 2 hours of direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm on the winter solstice. This exceeds the minimum standard under the ADG.

The proposed development ensures all habitable rooms are naturally ventilated with operable windows greater than 5% of the floor area served. The design of the floorplate results in three ‘single aspect apartments per floor. The design of these apartment ensures that the apartment depth is limited to maximise natural ventilation and airflow. Large, recessed balconies are also provided to these apartments to maximise the extent of operable glazing to ensure effective air circulation. The small number of apartments per floor results in the majority of the apartments being corner dwellings (or that with three aspects). The resulting number of dwellings that achieve natural cross ventilation is 58%.

The materiality of the proposed development has been selected both to ensure robustness and longevity, as well as the potential of material recycling. Material selection has also been considered to minimise maintenance requirements.

The proposal will exceed the minimum BASIX requirements.



## PRINCIPLE 5: LANDSCAPE

“Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Good landscape design enhances the development’s environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values and preserving green networks.

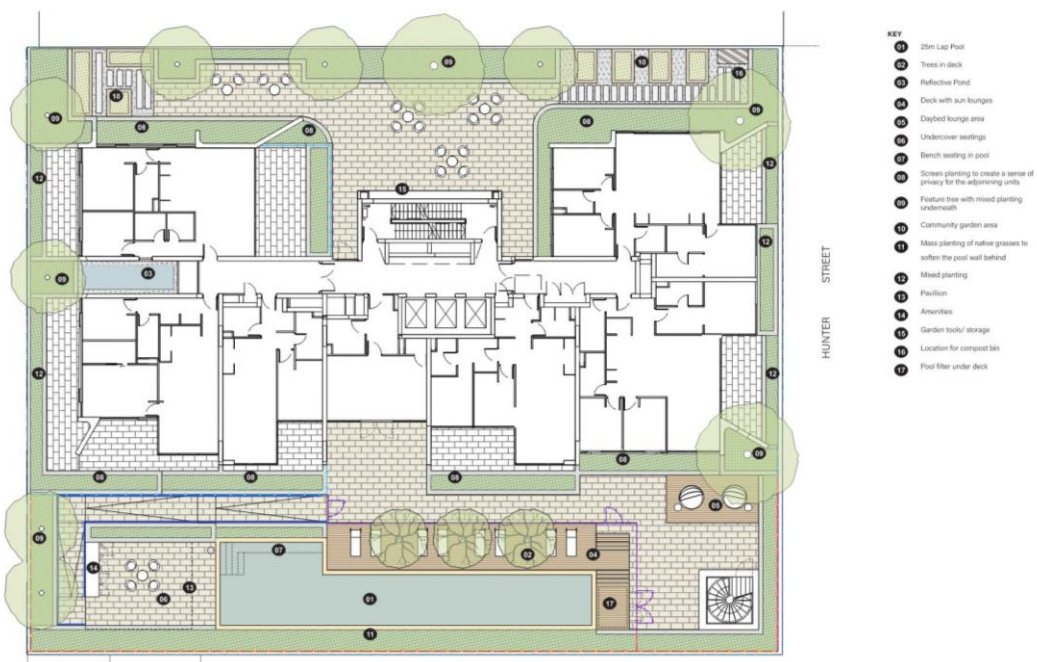
Good landscape design optimises useability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours’ amenity and provides for practical establishment and long term management.”

The landscape has been designed to create communal spaces that complement the architecture while creating beautiful and usable areas for the residents to enjoy.

The pool area is proposed on the eastern side of the landscape podium as this area affords solar access throughout the year. A community garden has been proposed to enable residents to socialise and grow their own fruits and vegetables. As part of this space storage for tools and a compost area have also been proposed to ensure usability as well as general environmental sustainability.

Pockets of landscaping are provided along the ground floor terrace where possible, to soften and define entry zones to the building.

The proposal is located in proximity to a range of recreational landscaped areas including Birdwood Park, nearby sportsgrounds and courts, Newcastle Civic Park, Newcastle beach, and the harbour foreshore.



Proposed podium landscape plan  
Prepared by Context Landscape Architecture

## **PRINCIPLE 6: AMENITY**

“Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident wellbeing.

Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.”

The proposal has been designed to provide the maximum amenity to future residents and its neighbours.

Each dwelling exceeds the minimum private open space area requirements and dwellings on the podium are afforded courtyards with opportunities for landscaping that increase privacy and minimise overlooking concerns. Dwellings within the proposed development all have balconies greater than the minimum area requirements, off living areas, and receive direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm on the winter solstice. The majority of the dwellings have views either to the waterfront and harbour or high-level views to the Pacific Ocean.

The dwellings have been designed and orientated in such a way as to ensure all dwellings receive the minimum 2 hours of direct sunlight on the winter solstice and 58% of dwellings are naturally ventilated with cross ventilation.

All apartments have been designed with the habitable room depth being less than 8m. Apartment layouts are well planned to avoid corridors and provide spacious well-proportioned rooms.

Communal amenity is provided with both internal lounges and a variety of external garden spaces for year-round use. These amenities include the following:

- Eastern terrace with pool and pool deck
- Large western terrace with small seating zones situated within the landscape
- Communal garden with associated garden storage and compost bins
- A residential business lounge / workspaces has been provided in the north-eastern corner of the development. It is directly accessible from the podium and provides an additional space for residents to work or study

## **PRINCIPLE 7: SAFETY**

“Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.

A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.”

A range of strategies have been implemented within the proposed development in order to optimise its safety and security. These include:

- The principle building entries from the streets are clearly identifiable. Each entrance is clearly defined and is anticipated to be clearly signed to aid identification.
- Access to the podium garden is clearly identifiable from the internal communal lounge. It has passive surveillance from the podium dwellings and the definition between the public and private realms will be clearly identified.
- Double height commercial tenancies on both Hunter and Steel Streets facilitates passive surveillance
- The resident's business lounge located in a prominent position along the podium façade also allows for passive surveillance of both Hunter and Steel Streets.
- Carparking for residents is located in a secure carpark accessed off Steel Street. The carpark has been designed in such a way as to allow clear lines of sight without entrapment zones.
- Secure access to carparks, lobbies and residential zones will be provided in the form of keys, swipe cards or remote controllers. Residents will have direct access to their residential floors via lift access.

## **PRINCIPLE 8: HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION**

“Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.

Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix.

Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people and providing opportunities for social interaction among residents.”

The proposed development incorporates a broad mix of unit typologies. One, two and three-bedroom apartments have been designed in order to respond to different market desires and enable diversity within the proposal. Within this mix, nine unique apartment types have been developed. Dwellings have been designed efficiently with access and amenity in mind, providing for a variety of lifestyles.

The unit mix is:

- One-bedroom apartments - 27.5%
- Two-bedroom apartments - 42.5%
- Three-bedroom apartments - 30%

The proposed development encourages market diversity and will cater to the changing population dynamics as the Newcastle City Centre West End develops. Dwellings have been designed to provide open-plan living and dining spaces for the occupants. These spaces flow onto large balconies to provide flexible living arrangements.

The podium level communal garden, lounge and associated facilities encourages social interaction. A range of landscape strategies have been implemented to encourage residents' use of and interaction within the space.

## PRINCIPLE 9: AESTHETICS

“Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.

The visual appearance of a well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.”

The proposal has been designed as a high-quality architectural contribution to the local built environment. The look and feel of the proposed development within the streetscape can be seen in the visualisations that accompany this report.

The proposal addresses both Hunter and Steel Street with a language that is sympathetic with the local Newcastle City Centre West End character and consistent throughout the whole development. The use of strong angled concrete blade walls along with the landscaped elements along the street front bring a human scale to the development. In addition, the double height commercial use on the ground floor creates an active and engaging street frontage. Entrances to both the commercial and residential zones of the development are landscaped and textured softening the street interface.

The elegant and slender tower form follows the architectural language of the podium. Deep balcony recesses and articulated corners create a balanced composition of ‘solid’ and ‘void’ reflecting the internal layout and structure of the tower. The proposed development has a refined and timeless aesthetic.



View of the proposed development from Hunter Street  
Prepared by Stewart Architecture