

URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING MINUTES



ITEM No: 1

Date of Panel Assessment:	20 November 2019
Address of Project:	43 Station Street, Wickham
Name of Project (if applicable):	Compass Station Development
DA Number of Pre-DA?	2019/00663
No. of Buildings:	One
No. of Units:	16 Affordable Housing Units and one commercial space.
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	Nil.
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u> Emily Allen – Town Planner Joel Chamberlain – Architect Tim Blakeway – Architect Scott Eftomovski – Applicant <u>Council</u> Damian 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 a resubmission of a design on which the Panel previously made comments.

These are reiterated below in italics, followed by comments on the current design which is supported.

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

The site is located on the north side of Station Street which runs along the side of Newcastle's main train station connecting to Charles Street in the east and Railway Street in the west. The site is centrally located on the block which currently comprises mainly small-scale residential development. A single level warehouse is immediately to the east. Directly over the road are the lengthy train station platforms. The surrounding area currently is a mixture of automotive businesses, commercial uses and residential lots and has recently been transitioning into higher density residential buildings with small scale retail at ground level.

The site is relatively flat and is listed as flood prone.

20/11/19 – Nothing new to add.

2. Built Form and Scale

The applicant has analyzed the redevelopment potential of the surrounding sites assuming that some are going to be amalgamated. Using the controls of the DCP 2012 a block model was formed to support deviations from the controls.

The DCP calls for a 12-metre street wall with a 2-metre front setback which changes on the eastern boundary to a 14 metre street wall with zero setback. The applicant has opted to incorporate this change into their site providing certainty to this transition in the streetscape. Part of the front façade of the proposed building is setback the required 2-metres and part of the site has no setback with the 14-metre street wall expressed in the building which allows the adjacent building to sit comfortable next door when redeveloped.

The side setbacks do not provide the 3-metre width by 6-metre depth to comply with the Landscape requirements of Section 6.03 of the DCP, however these controls were in anticipation of much larger blocks being consolidated and the need to break up the mass by inserting landscaping. Here only two small lots are consolidated making such a gesture impractical to include.

The DCP calls for a 6-metre setback above the 12-metre street wall. The proposal only sets the upper levels back 2-metres. The setback as proposed appear reasonable, however this is because this is the first redevelopment on this block. The 2-metre setback above 12-metres may look out of place if the adjacent sites maintain the 6-metre setback when they are redeveloped.

The DCP calls for a 24-metre height limit. The proposal exceeds the height limit by 2.7-metres. This height exceedance cannot be supported. The Panel recommends that the roof top communal space be moved to the centre third of the building. The remainder of this level should be deleted, allowing the 2.7-metre exceedance to be centrally located and only for communal living, reducing the visual bulk of the building as seen from the east.

The upper levels above 12-metres should be setback 9-metres from the rear boundary to allow adequate distances for visual and acoustic privacy from any future development to the north.

20-11-19

The applicant has removed the unit from the upper level and maintained the roof top communal space as recommended by the panel.

A minor encroachment into the 9-metre setback for the upper two levels remains but is considered acceptable.

3. Density

The maximum FSR under the Newcastle LEP controls is 3:1 with an allowable height of 24-metres. With a bonus of 0.6:1 for providing affordable rental housing an FSR of 3.6:1 is allowable. With an FSR of 3.1:1 the development complies with the FSR but exceeds the height limit by 2.7metres. While the applicant is providing Social Housing the exceedance of the height limit cannot be supported except if just the communal open space on the roof.

20-11-19

The removal of the unit from the top level makes the exceedance of the height limit acceptable to the Panel.

4. Sustainability

The apartments have been well laid out with all of the apartments having good solar access and 65% of apartments with good cross ventilation.

The building proposes to have solar hot water and photovoltaics for energy production. The development should consider the inclusion of other energy saving initiatives including water reuse.

20-11-19

With the small number of cars accessing the site, consideration could be given to reducing the width of the driveway for a portion of its length to allow for bicycle parking to be included in the development which would be appropriate given the affordable nature of the development.

5. Landscape

While there is little opportunity for landscaping the Panel suggested having trees to shade the carparking as well as additional shrubs and climbing plants planted in the areas not needed for parking. A pergola over the parking was considered to be a cost-effective way to soften the development and create some shading for the cars and create an attractive feature to look down on from the apartments above.

20-11-19

The applicant has cleverly pulled back the hard paving in the carpark to the wheel stops to allow for additional vegetation along the northern boundary. This may now support small trees which will provide shade to the carpark area.

The Panel also suggested additional landscaping incorporating climbing species could be included beside the carpark driveway in between the angled blade walls. This would visually soften the development for the adjoining property.

6. Amenity

All apartments are likely to achieve a good standard of amenity with orientation and layout. Where some apartments have bathrooms on external walls but no windows, the amenity of the space could be improved by providing natural light into these spaces using glass blocks or similar. The roof top communal space is a good size and contains a laundry with drying area.

Common area such as lobbies have natural light and ventilation and the café downstairs could act as a meeting place for residents. The amenity could be improved by dropping the floor level to ground level to facilitate easier access to the café and carpark.

20-11-19

Whilst it is acknowledged that the site is tight some minor suggested amendments were recommended by the panel.

- Some units could benefit from a slight increase in area for the main bedroom.
- Additional distance in front of the lift would be desirable to allow easier maneuvering of furniture in and out of the lift.
- Ramped access to the lift from the carpark would be preferable rather than having to go around to the front of the building. This may be a DDA issue.

7. Safety

No issues at this stage.

20-11-19

The Panel expressed concern over the openness of the carpark area. Securing the western boundary with a fence or mesh, along with a roller shutter located halfway along the driveway, allowing cars to queue either side, would secure the carpark providing a safer environment for residents.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

The mix of one, two- and three-bedroom apartments is acceptable. It would be highly desirable to provide an enclosed space fitted with basic kitchenette facilities for the communal area, so it can be enjoyed at all times, - windy weather, cool evenings etc.

20-11-19

The communal area at rooftop level 7 should be designed to provide screening from winds, and desirably a small fully enclosed room for use in all weathers should be provided.

9. Aesthetics

The treatment of the street wall and setbacks provides an attractive transition. The breakdown in scale as the building rises is carefully crafted to lighten the bulk and form. While acknowledging the drawings are very preliminary, the proposal has been skillfully articulated in form and carefully broken down with a combination of materials which would be an attractive and sculptural addition to the streetscape.

20-11-19

Nothing further to add.

Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality:

In order to support the proposal, the following should be addressed:

- The height of the building should be reduced with the exception of the communal open space which should be repositioned to be in the central third of the building.*
- Consideration should be given to a pergola over the carparking at the rear with a climber to help soften the building for residents and neighbours.*
- Consideration to dropping the floor level of the carpark and café to be at ground level, improving accessibility and the relationship to the neighbouring buildings.*

20-11-19

- All of the above recommendations have been duly addressed.*

The additional minor items listed above in Sustainability, Amenity, and Safety should be incorporated to complete an affordable housing project of high quality.

Summary Recommendation:

Subject to addressing the additional above issues, the Group remains very supportive of the quality of the design for the development, which has good potential to provide high quality, amenable accommodation.