

Port Stephens Urban Design Review Panel

Item No: 1

Date of Panel Assessment:	12 June 2025
Address of Project:	4 Fleet Street, Salamander Bay
DA No:	16-2024-542-1
No. of Buildings:	30 multi-dwelling/townhouse
No. of Units:	-
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	Nil
Attendees:	Erin Daniel – Perception Planning Barney Collins – EJE Architecture + Other EJE architect (name not on agenda) Stephen Lambourne – Applicant/Owner
Council:	Courtney Sargent Mathew Egan
Panel:	Philip Pollard – Chair Kristy Cianci Kelly O'Connell

Background

13 February 2025:

The Site 'Wanda Beach Estate' was previously the subject of a proposal for a substantially greater-scaled seniors living development (DA's 16-2018-131-1, 16-2018-433-1, and 16-2018-547-1). The applicant advised that the proponent of the earlier development was not involved with the current proposal, and the two have very little similarity.

The applicant indicated that he had acquired many of the cabins in the community title, and that some cabins remained under individual ownership. Furthermore, he indicated that remaining owners in addition to himself were in support of the proposal.

Renovation of a group of existing cabins towards the Fleet Street entry in the south-east corner of the site has already occurred, and these Lots have been sold to new owners.

The site is a community title development that appears to have been originally constructed around 40 years ago. The extensive community facilities previously occupied the most elevated area of the site. Other existing community facilities include tennis courts, which are located towards the north-west corner of the site adjacent to bushland. All community facilities over time apparently fell into very poor repair, and are now proposed to be replaced with other non-community development. The hilltop facilities have already been demolished.

While an updated plan was tabled which post-dated the DA design, and which had apparently been prepared in response to Requests for Information, the Panel understood that further work

was being undertaken with additional changes proposed. The Panel consequently did not have finalised documentation available which would allow it to make a fully informed comment on the overall development proposal at this stage. Therefore the following comments will need further consideration once any amendments to the design are finalised and lodged.

Context

13 June 2024

The Wanda Beach Estate is located in Salamander Bay, a locality in the Port Stephens region of New South Wales. The area is characterised by a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational areas.

The site has a frontage to Fleet Street, which is accessed from Soldiers Point Road, the primary movement through the peninsula to Soldiers Point in the north. Fleet Street is a cul-de-sac that wraps around Sandy Shores, an over 50 lifestyle village composed of demountable cabins situated to the south. To the east of the site are single residential lots, including No.2 Fleet Street with a single dwelling to the northeast. No. 2 is a battle-axe block with access from Fleet Street via a long driveway.

The subject site is a former tourist resort that comprised a reception, clubhouse, cabins, pool, tennis courts, and parking area. The current owners have ceased operating the site as tourist accommodation and have converted it into a residential community, providing some more affordable housing resulting from the smaller scale of the cabins being renovated.

The site was until recently surrounded on two sides by dense bushland vegetation, including a lot to the west owned by the Applicant. Recently a continuous section of land adjacent to the western boundary that is 50 metres in width has been cleared of vegetation. The Panel was advised that this clearing beyond the subject site's western boundary was undertaken to create an Asset Protection Zone (APZ).

It was acknowledged that the plans were provided to the Panel on a pre-DA basis, and that they were therefore not part of a full application package. However, a considerable change in density of use is proposed, in addition to an apparently significant reduction in community facilities. This proposal needs to be supported by a clear and well-considered analysis of the physical and social contexts of the area.

It was noted that in the documentation provided, there was an absence of a contextual examination of the site, and a clearly articulated response to the site and its context that informs any development that is proposed is an essential component that should precede the design process. This analysis is needed as part of the design package to inform how the proposal was formulated. This process should also be informed by Designing with Country principles.

13 February 2025 and 12 June 2025

The context of the Site remains largely unchanged.

Built Form

13 June 2024

The Proposal:

The proposed development includes the construction of multi-dwelling housing and a gated community title subdivision, encompassing several key components:

- **New Townhouses:** The proposal includes the construction of 33 new townhouses comprising mainly three-bedroom units and 2 two-bedroom units. An included alternative design may be pursued, that would include up to 5 four-bedroom dwellings, within a total number of 33 townhouses.
- **Conversion of Existing Units:** All 36 existing units are proposed be converted to dwellings. Eleven units are intended to undergo minor alterations, such as internal modifications and the addition of decks with awnings, while 25 units will remain unchanged.
- **Internal Road Network:** A new section of internal road, tentatively named Angel Close, is proposed to be constructed to connect with the existing road infrastructure, which enables access to the new larger townhouses proposed within the development.
- **Tennis Court Conversion:** The existing tennis court is proposed to be converted into a visitor and private car parking area, increasing parking facilities.

The development is intended to provide a mix of housing options and improved infrastructure, contributing to the community's growth.

Built Form Recommendations – 13 June 2024

- The Panel notes one of the main proposed areas of change is the central portion of the site, formerly the community clubhouse and pool precinct. This area is proposed to contain 33 new townhouses.
- This is a substantial increase in the number of dwellings on the site, as well as a significant proportion of the new dwellings to be considerably larger in floor area and scale. The Panel is concerned at the very substantial increase of residential built area, as compared to individual lot sizes. In the Panel's view there are too many townhouses proposed, and symptoms of this include:
 - There are tight setbacks between most dwellings, for example:
 - TH 15 and TH25, as well as the dominance of the higher new dwellings above the proposed-to-be renovated cabins to the south.
 - The almost zero setback between TH26 – TH33 on the western boundary and corresponding very narrow balconies.
 - Narrow setbacks between the townhouses.
 - Lack of landscape areas that can reduce urban heat around the roadways and the driveways.
 - Limited outdoor spaces for each townhouse and in most instances, steep stairs connect the townhouses to their respective outdoor spaces.
 - Lack of pedestrian connectivity throughout the site, and reliance on roadways for pedestrian access – particularly in areas that are steep and with poor sight lines.
 - Lack of area for communal landscape treatment near dwellings.

- The Panel also recommends reconsidering the proposed garages that front Fleet Street – which are not supported. The garages are proposed on the Fleet Street boundary and present largely blank facades with some high windows intended for articulation. They are proposed above a 'feature' retaining wall, which exacerbates the dominance of the street by these structures, and largely alienates the existing relationship between the cabins and the street.
- As this is the street presentation, the Panel strongly recommends a significant reduction of built form in this area, as well as a landscape setback and further articulation and treatment of any new structure proposed between the existing cabins and the street boundary. The proposed garages include cabin parking for five existing cabins that are without parking, and this could possibly be in the form of carports, which would be preferable. The second, larger garage is proposed for boats and caravans of residents. This garage should be removed, and the recreational vehicles, which are less frequently accessed, possibly relocated to the tennis court area, which is also proposed for visitor parking, thereby providing more room for landscaping at the street front. A streetscape plan of the Fleet Street frontage is needed to assist in developing an attractive street presentation, and an appropriate interface with the street. Fencing should be in the form of a quality palisade style open dowelled fence.
- Further information about waste management will also be required. While the Applicant indicated that each townhouse would have its own bins stored in the individual lot's front setback, this requires further clarification due to the tight arrangement and the bins' likely taking up already very limited landscaping space.
- Generally, the documentation needs to clearly demonstrate the level changes and their relationship to the buildings, roads, and driveways. Significantly more through-site sections are required, with retaining indicated.

13 February 2025

While it is understood that design changes are currently being investigated that may address some of the above concerns, the documentation provided to the Panel remained largely consistent with the previously reviewed scheme and as such previous comments still apply.

Additional documentation is still required to adequately illustrate the proposal. This includes site sections demonstrating the relationship between proposed dwellings, existing dwellings, roadways and boundary conditions. Detailed floor plans, elevations and sections of each grouping of dwellings are required that illustrate proposed levels, relationship between dwellings, their courtyard designs, neighbours and any proposed retaining.

Co-ordination of landscape, civil and architectural plans is required, for example conflict exists between architectural elevations and landscape plans for rear yards of T1-3 and it is unclear where retaining is proposed or how courtyards are to be accessed.

Garages are not supported on the front streetscape as per previous comments. Refer also comments under Aesthetics.

Many dwellings remain with inadequate building separation - suggesting a reduction in density is required. Detailed plans should dimension minimum separation distances proposed and relative heights between dwellings.

Issues of overlooking and inter-dwelling privacy – including overlooking between existing residences and proposed, need to be considered and demonstrated to be satisfactory.

While typical unit designs are generally of high quality, additional unique designs are now required to best respond to each group's specific site conditions. For example end units present opportunities for additional light and ventilation that may be better utilised through an alternate plan. These end units are typically the locations where building separation conflicts are also arising. Unique or adapted end unit designs may better address the specific geometry of the adjoining roadways and increase building separation to adjoining built form.

The two-storey Western dwellings on the plans submitted remain as per the previous design, with the largest balcony off the bedroom and a narrow balcony off the living area. These should be redesigned to improve amenity and achieve adequate PPOS from living areas. Refer also comments under Amenity.

Many of the exceedances in height above the LEP envelope appear largely due to the replication of typical units with clerestory roof forms across the site. While this roof form can be positive for light and ventilation and supported in principle, it is suggested that customisation in appropriate locations could dramatically reduce the number of exceedances without compromising amenity of the units. This could include a reduction in roof pitch in certain locations or an alternative roof form. In many cases redesign of the roof form would be beneficial for amenity for example T1-3 where clerestory windows currently have undesirable western aspect and are contributing to height variations of up to 15%.

Unit 33 should be removed or reconsidered as a unique 2 storey design that better responds to the falling topography and the geometry of its location.

Existing infrastructure – such as retaining walls – should be evaluated for longevity, and if near the end of its functional life, should be replaced as part of the major works proposed. Later replacement would inevitably be considerably more disruptive and expensive.

12 June 2025

The Panel noted the 2 unit reduction of the number of townhouses proposed, and a reduction of the height of their roof elements which brings all built form on the site within the plane of the height control+10%. This, along with some massaging of the siting of the proposed townhouses in relation to the retained cabins, has improved on the previously noted awkward inter-dwelling spatial relationships. Exceedance of the height control in the revised scheme is now limited to less than the 10% in all instances, and is considered reasonable given the topography of the site.

Documentation for the project has been amended and expanded as suggested by the Panel, and includes cross-site sections which assist in illustrating what is a complex site.

The garaging remains fairly close to the Fleet Street front boundary, but has been broken down into three elements, and it impacts further reduced by creating some car-

port style spaces within the overall building forms. Of the three, the western-most garage remains quite bulky – largely due to the design brief to accommodate caravans and larger boats within it. This structure does not benefit from the modest setback (approximately 1.5m) that permits some limited landscape screening within the property for the two smaller garage structures. While noting an improvement to the relationship of these two smaller garages to the street, the Panel remains concerned by the scale of the largest structure, and its minimal setback from the street boundary. Its location atop a retaining wall further increases its apparent size. Further design development – which is likely to require a greater setback and reduction in the scale of this garage – is considered to be required. While landscape screening within the footpath of the road reserve would assist this relationship and is supported in principle, it is noted that this would require the concurrence of Council as it is outside of the site.

While acknowledging that repeated design can have capacity for some construction-cost savings, the Panel previously noted that site-specific adjustments need not incur significant additional costs and can considerably improve amenity and functionality of dwellings. The revised design reflects the Panel's recommended adoption of some variation to suit specific sites and orientations. Some simple further simple customization can be provided to the standard designs that will be of benefit. That relates to providing some solid (non-transparent) elements to what are currently all-glass balustrades – particularly in locations where there is close overlooking between dwellings or where privacy in dwellings is reduced by direct visual access from the roadways and paths. Another minor adjustment that can be made relates to units on the ends of rows, which have side gardens. This was suggested to include direct access from the interior circulation spaces to the outdoor private open spaces – where levels permit. Unshaded windows – particularly those with western orientation – will benefit from inclusion of exterior sun shading.

Density

13 June 2024

The Panel believes there are too many townhouses within the site, particularly the central portion of the it, and recommends reducing the number of townhouses to improve amenity, separation, privacy, and landscape opportunities.

13 February 2025

A reduction in density is recommended in the centre of the site as well as to the Western boundary to improve building separation and amenity.

Preliminary plans were tabled at the meeting indicating a possible reduction of density in the centre of the site to allow additional communal space and a pedestrian link. This has the potential to considerably improve the proposal, but as proposed, would also require an amendment to the existing V-shaped Cabin 19 (formerly Manager / reception use), to ensure legibility and visual connection to the new open space. It was recommended that, given its visual prominence at the entry, and its current partial obstruction to the proposed pedestrian accessway, this building be demolished in favour of a site-specific design for a new dwelling.

If retained, which is considered the poorer option, the western section of the building should be removed for at least the width of the landscaped walkway to its north.

12 June 2025

The Panel noted the 2 unit reduction of the number of townhouses proposed, and the reduction in some of the bulk of the garaging proposed near the Fleet Street front boundary.

The modest reduction in the number of townhouses and the additional reduction of internal floor area in several units, has assisted in providing an improved master plan for the development. While remaining relatively “tight”, the compromised spatial relationships that the Panel had previously identified have been incrementally improved, with an overall positive outcome to the development overall.

Sustainability

13 June 2024

As the proposal is Pre-DA and as the overall design brief and site planning formed the focus of discussion at this stage, there was generally little discussion about sustainability specifically during the meeting.

The prime sustainability focus at this stage went to the recommending that the number, and possibly footprints of townhouses be reduced to provide more space for landscape and inter-dwelling separation, as well as the provision of canopy from shade trees to reduce urban heat and provide a landscape setting and profile.

Other consideration of sustainability factors will require appropriate addressing in design development. This goes to a broad range of considerations, including energy (all electric dwellings are strongly recommended), EV charging, provision of PV solar generation all new and refurbished dwellings, consideration of including batteries in dwellings, or at a minimum, provision for their later installation without excessive costs. This should include identifying a location for batteries in each new dwelling (even if provided at a later date), considering major wiring needs (for EV charging, inverter etc) and installation of conduits during construction to facilitate cabling without disruptive and expensive changes to building fabric at a later date.

13 February 2025

The above comments were reiterated. As noted elsewhere, the longevity of existing infrastructure on site should be evaluated, and as identified as being in need of replacement in the short to medium term, would be prudently replaced at the time of undertaking other major works.

12 June 2025

The Applicant indicated that it is proposed to provide for electric vehicle charging on site, as recommended.

PV generation is also proposed on new roof areas. The installation of domestic batteries was again strongly encouraged – particularly in the light of the recent Federal Government subsidies announcement. Battery locations and wiring should be designed to permit the safe and convenient installation of batteries at completion or in the future.

Landscape

13 June 2024

The Panel is concerned about the lack of amenity and opportunities for canopy planting across the site due to density. The majority of units have quite limited open space and, those provided with open space, are on steep sites with several metres between the living space floor levels.

The Panel recommends that in addition to addressing the proposed excess in density, the applicant involve the project Landscape Architects in developing the site master plan for the entire site to ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved between the number of residences and the provision of amenity across the site. This should include a quality landscape setting for existing cabins, and the removal of Cocos Palms, which are a weed species. The Panel recommends that the proponent consider the principles of Designing with Country in future iterations of the site plan to ensure a more considered outcome across the site.

If it can be achieved in terms of permissibility, the Panel would support low-key utilisation of limited parts of the APZ area to the west as an area for passive recreation and the provision of non-intrusive amenity for residents. This would need to be discussed with Council. The Panel requests that connections to these recreation areas are accessible, legible, of appropriate width, and consider the principles of CPTED.

It is noted that the Applicant made reference to utilising the APZ on this adjacent lot to create construction access to the higher areas of the site. Particular care will need to be taken with such a proposal, and if pursued, it should be appropriately documented in terms of temporary works, as well as post-construction making good, and landscaping of the area to ensure ongoing viability and maintenance capability. The junction between the maintained APZ and the bushland should also be addressed, with avoidance of vegetation that will potentially be invasive into the bushland. A plan of management for this adjacent lot would appear to be warranted.

Considering the extent of level changes across the site the Panel recommends that an appropriate number of site sections are provided to clearly demonstrate the relationship between the built form, internal access roads and pathways, retaining walls and the Fleet Street address.

13 February 2025

The Panel supported the introduction of a landscaped pedestrian accessway from a logical location near the main entry to the site from the street. The topography is quite hilly, and a series of landscaped stairs is included. The topography is such that an accessible route could not practically be provided, given the steep natural rise involved. Other provisions for wheel chair users should be spelled out, including recommended provision of an accessible parking space or spaces, on the elevated area that can be used by visitors.

As noted under other headings, the angled former Manager's residence/ reception building (Villa 19) should be replaced by a new residence to a site-specific design, or otherwise modified to allow the full width of the proposed landscaped stairway to be visible from the entry point.

There has been some improvement indicated in the tabled design, in the extent of landscape area provided in common spaces. However, the Panel considered that further improvements to both the areas' extent, and the character of soft landscape provision in both private and communal areas within the Site.

General comments in the Panel's 13 June response are reiterated.

12 June 2025

The Panel noted the need to optimise the planting of canopy trees within the development where ever they can be located in compliance with Bushfire and other practical constraints. This is important to the internal streetscapes, and to the appearance of the development from outside the site. It can also assist in reducing the heat-island effect that unshaded hard-paved surfaces contribute to.

Landscape trees listed by the landscape architect appear well suited to the site, but with the exception of the many proposed *Livingstonia australis* (Cabbage Tree Palms) it is not very clear from the plans where specific species are placed. While this species is supported, it is naturally found in fairly dense clumpings in valleys. For good aesthetic outcomes, these palms should not be planted in isolation, and will appear more appropriate if supported by some adjacent canopy trees where possible.

Use of low growing ground covers such as *Dichondra repens* in areas suited to them is encouraged in lieu of small areas of turf that are difficult to mow or maintain. Landscape beds should not be laid out in the format of narrow lineal "fringes" defined by boundaries, but should be generous in area and naturalistic in form. Trees should be placed such that their canopy does not heavily overhang neighbouring properties, as this can lead to disputes. While the utilization of cellulose based mulch is limited by bushfire considerations, consider utilizing crushed rock as mulch.

While noting the essential RFS requirements for maintaining the western APZ easement, to the extent (if any) permissible, it is desirable that locally endemic trees should be planted as freestanding specimen trees in the APZ to retain and reinforce the skyline of the ridge as seen from the surrounding areas.

Given the sensitive location of the site, use of locally endemic variants is encouraged - possibly involving the collection of seeds from the area for germination as tube stock. Consultation with Council's expert ecologists in this respect is encouraged.

Safety

13 June 2024

Further consideration of pedestrian safety is needed. Access between the proposed visitor parking and the cabins and townhouses is challenging. It was suggested during the presentation that the new development and renovation process could improve site connectivity and access, and such an improvement is warranted. At present there is no indication that the proposal can avoid worsening existing vehicle / pedestrian conflict and access challenges.

The proposal is for the site to become a “gated community”. These are relatively uncommon in NSW, and it is noted for this typology to function positively, it requires detailed planning and appropriate infrastructure in respect to gate security – pedestrian and vehicular. Deliveries and visitor access need to be facilitated, as well as access for service people to individual dwellings. While technology can assist with this endeavour, it alone will not achieve a workable outcome – and this can only be achieved via an on-site residential presence of a facility manager or security officer, that can ensure that gates are not propped open and the like. A development that is stated to be “gated” but which frequently has the gates left open, can be counter-effective to achieving good casual surveillance and can create a false sense of security.

13 February 2025

The Applicant tabled a revised design which considered feedback from the Regional Planning Panel, Council’s RFI, and this Panel’s previous comments. The plans issued to the Panel were different to the plans presented in which there were minimal changes in response to the Panel’s earlier recommendations.

The tabled plans included a pedestrian pathway network through parts of the site - which is supported.

As discussed previously, the Applicants proposed ‘gated community’ if pursued, needs to be well thought out and must consider how the development will be accessed by visitors and delivery personnel. The submitted DA and the tabled plans did not expand upon this.

The CPTED report on page 16 states:

“Through this, clear pathway links within the proposed pathway network are provided to the communal landscaped areas and community gardens, which introduces publicly accessible components and places. The public spaces lead to consistent surveillance opportunities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

This statement suggests that the development is intended to be open to the public. The Applicant clarified by saying it was referring to residents. This should be clarified in the report and the design.

A Plan of Management is recommended to be developed concurrently to the design process to ensure that what is proposed is capable of being easily managed and will be safe.

The pedestrian link between Dwelling C3 and Angel Close narrows between Dwellings C3 and C4, creating a pinch point that restricts sightlines and introduces concealment and entrapment risks. To mitigate these risks, widening the southern entry, as outlined under Built Form and Landscape, is strongly recommended.

12 June 2025

Design for safety has been improved by the inclusion of pedestrian pathways and landscaped links – which are supported.

A plan of management will need to be provided that reinforces CPTED intent, and informs access to the site and which outlines measures for delivery of parcels etc.

Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

13 June 2024

The development does not offer communal areas for residents to meet and entertain. This is of particular importance due to the limited size of many of the cabins, which do not have large living spaces or private outdoor spaces. The required spaces are places to host a party or family gathering with BBQ facilities, amenities, seating and shelter. The Applicant indicated his opinion that the location has ample opportunities. However, these are not identified, and are not all-weather or guaranteed - as they are public spaces. This remains an important consideration, as the former site use did provide extensive communal activities and spaces.

13 February 2025

The development now includes a community garden in the northeast corner, replacing the former tennis courts. Providing some additional parking in this location would improve accessibility for less mobile residents and their visitors, particularly given the topography. This would help maintain their connection with the community, especially in cases of injury or illness.

12 June 2025

The inclusion of a landscaped communal area, and associated car parking on the site of the former tennis courts is supported. The extent of provision for a community vegetable garden needs not be excessive in area. It will ideally offer a degree of flexibility in terms of its extent – which may vary over time according to resident uptake for making use of this facility. Landscaping for aesthetics and shade canopy (away from vegetable gardens) in this area is also important.

The central stair from near the street entry to Angel Place is considered a positive inclusion, and the proposal for some built-in seating on each landing level is supported.

Amenity

13 June 2024

The cabin renovations will likely provide residents with a comfortable and potentially affordable new home or holiday dwelling. The new townhouses are of a higher standard and are much less likely to be 'affordable' in the same way. The Panel appreciates the importance of affordability; however, amenity is of equal importance.

Concerns about the overdevelopment of the site, especially the townhouse precinct, have been raised under Built Form and Density. In summary, the number of townhouses is recommended to be reduced to increase the setbacks between dwellings, increase the setbacks between townhouses and cabins, and increase the area for landscaping to provide shade.

It was noted that TH26 is Type 1B and has a very small living room for its townhouse size. The living room balcony is also very small and unusable. The larger and more usable balcony on that level is off the bedroom. On the lower level, the wine cellar and store room are at risk of being used as bedrooms, which is a concern. In summary, this townhouse in particular needs a review across all levels.

13 February 2025

The Panel remains concerned about overdevelopment on the site and its impacts upon the amenity of new and existing residences. Areas such as near the western boundary, where townhouse balconies have been reduced in size to fit within the boundary are one example of this. This issue is evident in both the lodged DA plans the tabled plans presented at the meeting.

The Applicant suggested shifting the wall between the living spaces and balconies to address the issue; however, the Panel is concerned that this could negatively impact the amenity of the living areas. The Applicant also noted that the eastern views are impressive, suggesting that a revised design with a slightly reduced yield and *specifically designed* for the location may be more appropriate. Such a design could better capitalise on the views, provide functional balconies directly off the living spaces, and reorient these spaces away from the western sun, which is likely to limit usability due to intense heat.

12 June 2025

Modifications to the designs, as discussed under built form, have produced incremental but worthwhile improvements to the amenity of dwellings and their surroundings. As noted under Built Form above, there is an opportunity for some further site-specific "fine tuning" of designs – while maintaining overall typology consistency – which has capacity to further enhance amenity within the dwellings and their private open spaces. This goes to access to POS, shading of openings, solidity of balustrades and the like – which are informed by location and orientation of the individual dwelling.

Aesthetics

13 June 2024

The appearance of the overall site from the surrounding public spaces and streets needs to be integrated with the surroundings via a better provision of landscaped areas, and for ensuring a good landscape outcome can be achieved. The townhouse design itself is in most instances attractive and well-considered; however the built form appears crowded and almost devoid of suitable areas for contributory landscape treatment. Hard pavement prevails. Greater deep soil landscape areas around both new and refurbished dwellings and an appropriate high quality landscape design are essential to achieving an acceptable outcome. The garages on the street frontage are inappropriate, and the area requires further thought.

Rather than extensive areas of painted masonry, it was suggested that a face brick would be more visually appealing, and would reduce maintenance requirements significantly.

12 February 2025

The Panel reiterates its previous comments and continues to emphasise the importance of adequate areas of deep soil and high-quality landscape. Both the DA and the tabled plans retain extensive hard-scape, limiting opportunities for landscaping. While the introduction of a path network is a positive and necessary addition, it further reduces landscaping potential, reinforcing the recommendation to reduce yield and increase setbacks.

Additionally, the repetitive built form, particularly the roof design, does not appear to work in the development's favour. The buildings are not optimising their orientation, leading in some instances to excessive height exceedances across the development. Greater diversity in built form could help reduce visual bulk while enhancing the overall appearance of the development.

The Panel remains concerned about the prominence of garages along the street frontage at minimal setback, as discussed under Built Form. The proposed murals are not considered an effective solution, as they may instead increase the visibility and perceived bulk of the garages.

Additionally, if murals are used on site as part of the Connecting with Country approach, greater thought is needed to ensure they are meaningful - rather than a tokenistic solution intended to reduce a built form issue. As previously recommended, a much less extensive, open car park with limited lightweight pergola-like structures and integrated landscaping is encouraged.

12 June 2025

The appearance of the development and its internal streets will be considerably assisted by good landscape treatment. While acknowledging the constraints for bushfire considerations, and the limited space available, large shrubs and trees should be provided wherever reasonable opportunity exists. This should be actively explored.

Earlier comments in respect to preference for durable, low maintenance materials such as face brick- which provides a consistency between dwellings and a reasonable assurance of durability and a corresponding lack of visual deterioration of building components over time.

Summary Recommendation

13 June 2024

The Panel recognises potential benefits of providing affordable housing, but emphasises that this should not come at the expense of amenity or an insertion of inappropriately dense development on a very prominent site. These dwellings are expected to last at least 40 years, as stipulated by the Office of the Building Commissioner. Addressing affordability issues today should not lead to future problems, such as urban heat, which is exacerbated by dense development, extensive roofing, and limited landscaping and tree cover. Therefore, the Panel strongly recommends reducing the density of the development to help create an attractive and desirable living environment.

13 February 2025

While acknowledging incremental improvements in the most recent design in response to a range of points raised at the June 24 presentation, and reflected in the tabled documents, as noted under the headings above, the design responses to date do not go sufficiently far in a number of respects, to enable the Panel's support.

12 June 2025

The design development that has occurred since the February presentation, coupled with a reduction in the number of proposed units, has permitted a beneficial overall progression of the proposal. The Panel considers that with some relatively simple further design development as outlined under the headings above, the proposal can be expected to warrant its support.

It was again noted that a meaningful response to *Connecting to Country* is an important component of the design for the site, including materials used and landscape. This should involve consultation with the local First Nations representatives.

The Panel anticipates that, subject to the addressing of the few remaining areas for design development (as outlined above) that were discussed and agreed at the June 12 meeting, can be considered by the Assessing Officers, and if acceptable to them, it will not be necessary for a further presentation to be made to the Panel.