

Design Excellence Advisory Panel Report

Address: 94 Bettington Road, Oatlands

Date: 14 March 2023

Application Summary

Application Number	DA/1001/2022
Assessing Officer	Bianca Lewis
Applicant/Proponent	Hamptons Property Services on Behalf of Mirvac Residential Developments NSW Pty Ltd
Architect and Registration Number	David Hirst, Reg. No. 8298 (Mircvac Design)
Landscape Architect	Sturt Noble Associates
Planner	Hamptons Property Services
Others in attendance	Nigel Dickson, Bohan Jones, James Phillips et al

DEAP Members	David Epstein, Andrew Stanic, Oi Choong
Chair	David Epstein
Other Persons in attendance	Elizabeth Lester – Project Officer, City Projects & Precincts Jay Ahmed – Snr Project Officer, Design Excellence
Item No.	1 of 1
DEAP Meeting Number	2nd Referral – previously considered via PL/72/2022

General Information

The City of Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (DEAP) provides independent expert advice on applications relating to a diverse range of developments within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area.

The DEAP comments are provided to assist both the applicant in improving the design quality of the proposal and the City of Parramatta in its consideration of the application.

Proposal

Demolition of existing buildings and structures, tree removal and remediation works and construction of a temporary club house and associated temporary car parking spaces. Construction of seven (7) buildings (3 to 8 storeys) containing 155 independent living units for the purposes of seniors housing (including people with a disability); construction and operation of a new registered club (Oatlands Golf Club); and 405 car parking spaces over 2 basement levels (200 club and 205 residential spaces); and landscaping and ancillary facilities. Torrens title subdivision into 2 lots (to separate the site from the golf course land) and further, subdivision of one of the subject lots into 17 lots in a community scheme and strata subdivision of the independent living units.

Preamble

A proposal for the site was previously reviewed by the DEAP on 11 August 2022 via PL/72/2022, and the comments made therein have been taken into account in this report.

The advice given by the DEAP at the meeting in August 2022 was to reduce the bulk and scale of the development to 2-3 storeys along Bettington Road and up to a maximum of 4 storeys in the middle of the site. The proposal at that stage proposed buildings ranging from 3-6 storeys in height.

In a Certificate of Compatibility issued by the SCCPP in March 2022, it was noted that; "While the Panel agreed the site is suitable for a seniors housing development it considers the final built form needs to be refined to respect the scale of and minimise impacts on the adjoining residential land; to minimise impacts on Oatland House and its curtilage and to ensure deep soil planting and communal open space requirements are met."

Whilst the current proposal has increased in height with buildings along Bettington Road up to 4 storeys and buildings B and C, 7 and 8 storeys respectively, the number of ILU's has been reduced from 168 in the Pre-DA submission to 155. The reduction in unit numbers is partly due to layout and

typology changes within the development. The Pre-DA scheme had proposed 5 x unit blocks whereas the current proposal comprises 7 buildings; 4 x unit blocks and 3 x townhouse blocks.

The Panel notes that the Clubhouse, although ancillary to the golf course, is proposed to be located on a separate allotment and hence required to comply with all relevant planning controls applicable to individual lots including setbacks, deep soil and other requirements.

The proposed subdivision, part of the DA, is an awkward shape particularly on the north east and north west corners where the site extends into the golf course.

These two protrusions appear too narrow for the proposed development considering setback and building program requirements, particularly for Building C.

Zero setbacks along with the proposed height of buildings B and C results in overdevelopment, view impacts from the adjacent Oatlands House heritage site and surrounds and a built form not in-keeping with the local context. This approach differs from both SCPP and previous DEAP recommendations.

Panel Comments

Further to the above, the Panel makes the following comments;

1. On a positive note, the scheme now includes;
 - a. Secondary entrance in line with Ellis Street, providing a visual and physical connection to the adjacent neighbourhood and potential for views through the site.
 - b. Finer grained development with 2 x blocks facing Bettington Road in-lieu of one in the previous scheme and the introduction of townhouses.
 - c. Increased number of buildings from 5 to 7. This should result in smaller footprints and more common open space. See comments below regarding the layout and design of the common open space.
2. The axis from Ellis St along with visual connections are a positive development in the design. The relocation of the common open space in line with Ellis Street and on the northern side of the developments provides opportunities for high quality common open space.
3. Despite the previous advice by DEAP and the SCCPP to reduce the bulk and scale of the development, the current proposal has instead increased the height and footprint of the development with buildings up to 4 storeys adjacent to Bettington Rd, 7 storeys in the centre of the site and 8 storeys at the rear, in close proximity to Oatland House.

4. Having reviewed the applicants detailed site and visual impact analysis, as well as the Council's own visual assessment, the Panel recommends the following;
- a. Buildings A1 and A2 - maximum 4 storeys – (Reason; DEAP previously recommended 2-3 storeys. 4 storeys (with 4th level recessed back from the street) with the proposed street setback and substantial street tree planting along with the building break and suggested widening and changes elsewhere in this report, the proposed height of 3 storeys with 4th level recessed is now considered acceptable).
 - b. Building B – maximum 6 storeys - (Reason; DEAP previously recommended 4 storeys. 6 storeys with recessed top floor should provide an acceptable outcome with the current layout and suggested changes elsewhere in this report including slightly reduce footprint to achieve compliant separation, landscaping and footpath/pathway continuity around the building)
 - c. Building C – maximum 4 storeys - (Reason; DEAP previously recommended 4 storeys. The impact on the golf course and Oatland House, visibility from surround neighbourhood and not in-keeping with the character, lack of deep soil landscaping due to zero setbacks, lack of permeability through the site largely due to building C bulk and scale, as well as overshadowing to the south of the site suggests a substantial re-think of Building C is necessary)
 - d. Townhouses – maximum 3 storeys (excluding parking level) - (Reason; No townhouses previously. These are generally acceptable in the Panel's view, subject to re-orientating townhouse 10-14 to provide direct street addresses and to increase the setback from Niblick St properties and minimise the height of retaining walls along this edge by responding to the topography)
5. Other related concerns raised by the Panel are;
- a. Building separation - The Panel recommend widening the gap between buildings A1 and A2 to comply with the ADG. Privacy screens are not supported to compensate for non-complying separation in new developments. Separation distances between A2 and B and between B and C are to also comply to provide the required amenity and visual connections to the golf course.
 - b. Ellis Street Axis – Whilst the link to Ellis St is supported, the claimed view through the site looking east from Ellis Street is not apparent from the material submitted and further visual impact analysis. The Panel recommends a full break in building C to align with Ellis Street to allow views through the site. The benefits of this axis will also be further realised by the recommended increase in separation distances.

- c. Setbacks - Buildings A1 and C have zero setbacks. Basement parking levels extend beyond the footprint of the buildings and within close proximity to the side boundaries impacting the deep soil for the site. The setbacks need to comply with the relevant planning requirements for all boundaries and should provide deep soil planting and screening. Much of the planting demonstrated in the proposal is on the adjoining golf course property.
 - d. Deep soil - Less than half of the common open space comprises deep soil. Any reduction in unit numbers should translate to a reduction in the basement footprint thereby increasing deep soil. Council is looking for 30% deep soil under its DCP and not 15% as proposed.
 - e. Circulation - The pedestrian network comprising a series of narrow pathways throughout the development is convoluted and disconnected. The Panel raised concerns with regard to the following;
 - i. The circulation is not continuous as suggested by the UD diagrams.
 - ii. Access to the common open space from the Bettington Road is convoluted and does not adequately reinforce the connection from the street through to the eastern side of the development as suggested by the diagrams;
 - iii. There is no pedestrian access at the eastern end of the common open space to building C or through the gap between building B and C;
 - iv. The carpark ramp conflicts with the pedestrian network. Instead of the ramp going down to the basement in the space between buildings B and C the Panel suggests relocating the ramp to enter under a building and freeing up the space between the buildings for landscaping and for pedestrian circulation.
 - v. Pedestrian access to townhouses 10-14 is via a zig-zag path adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. The Panel suggests re-orientating the townhouses to face the new street in line with the proposed townhouses to the west.
6. The proposed networks of streets, lanes and pathways need to look and feel like public areas as an extension of the surrounding streets and paths and not like a gated development.
7. Footpaths need to be continuous to provide safe and legible circulation for public use throughout the site.

8. The proposed ramp to the basement should be integrated within the footprint of either Building C or B and the footpath on the south east corner of Building B is to be setback to allow for continuous footpath access to Building C.
9. The Panel queried the discrete address, entry and arrival experience to the Clubhouse with entry via the side of the residential lobby of building C, reinforcing the idea of a gated development. Instead, all buildings and major facilities such as the Clubhouse should have a clearly visible and legible address from a public street.
10. Providing individual street addresses would enhance the public domain and pedestrian experience and make the development more desirable to potential owners.
11. Furthermore, Buildings A1 and A2 should have entrances to the lobbies from Bettington Road and townhouses 10-14 should have their front entrances directly accessible and visible from a public road. The individual entries for the ground floor apartments from Bettington Road currently read as secondary entries with circulation leading to bedroom window walls in some instances. These layouts should be designed to allow the street addresses to have priority.
12. The Panel is of the opinion that this should be an exemplary development with a high quality landscape setting, responding to the golf course, the unique character and identity of the existing landscape and heritage context.
13. The proponent has suggested that this is a development "nestled in the landscape". The landscape plans show a 'seamless' landscape transition between the development and the golf course, which is supported by the Panel. However, it is not clear how circulation will be managed around the perimeter of the development for the safety of residents, and if and what type of fencing will be used to manage this.
14. Although some of the northern common open spaces have been carefully resolved, the Panel's opinion is that landscape opportunities for the site have not been fully realised - primarily due to the constraints imposed by the site planning, minimal setbacks between buildings and the extent of the underground car park. Impacts on the landscape and public domain resolution include the design of the entry avenue and the compromised tree planting opportunities along its length; the footpath interruptions and lack of a substantial north south 'green link' between buildings B and C; the design of the Clubhouse arrival sequence and the lack of substantial trees at the

junction between the town houses, Clubhouse entry and roundabout; the limitations on lawn areas and recreation amenity resulting from the steep embankments of the communal open space along the southern boundary.

The Panel recommends the landscape architect continue to liaise with the architectural team to increase the number of trees along the central avenue and roundabout , and to improve the landscape areas highlighted above.

15. The visual and pedestrian permeability suggested in the urban design diagrams have not been realised in the development of the scheme.
Widening the setbacks between buildings to their required distances would strengthen the visual connections, landscape and circulation experience. Street tree locations should frame rather than block such vistas.
16. Aside from bulk and scale and other concerns raised in this report, the Panel considers the response to the architectural treatment and materiality may be appropriate for the site.
17. Oatlands House is a significant building in close proximity to the development. The presentation touched on the desire for compatibility with the materiality and architectural language of the heritage building and this was supported by the Panel. However, the Panel was less convinced by the discussion of the development impacts on the curtilage and setting and the visual impact images presented. The Panel is of the opinion that it is not sufficient to rely solely on the existing tree planting on the heritage site to minimise the potential impacts of the proposed development. In addition, more information on Oatlands House is required in any resubmission to allow for a considered review.
18. The Panel suggests a site wide 'fly through' incorporating public eye level perspectives would be useful to demonstrate the design and suitability of the public domain in addressing the issues raised in this report such as permeability, views, scale, landscape response and access.
19. The existing ground line should be dotted in on drawings to understand the extent and impacts of proposed cut and fill across the site; and the outline of the basement should be shown on the ground floor plan to demonstrate deep soil areas relative to ground floor uses and landscape opportunities.
20. The Panel queried the Club activities that may have potential conflicts with residential enjoyment of the site including overlooking, noise impacts and consideration of the hours of operation. This may require the residential

component to be set back from any proposed Club related balconies given the hours of operation proposed.

Panel Recommendation

The Panel conditionally supports the proposal, subject to further design development being incorporated in a revised proposal that adequately responds to the issues noted above.