

Design Excellence Advisory Panel Report

Address: 94 Bettington Road, Oatlands

Date: 1 August 2023

Application Summary

Application Number	DA/1001/2022
Assessing Officer	Bianca Lewis, Executive Planner, City of Parramatta Council
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	Kristy Hodgkinson, Hamptons Property Services
Others in attendance	Adrian Checchin, Mirvac Steven De Pasquale, Mirvac Bohan Jones, Mirvac
DEAP Members	David Epstein, Andrew Stanic, Oi Choong (Apologies Andrew Stanic for 1 August 2023 briefing)
Chair	David Epstein
Other Persons in attendance	Emma Paling, Senior Landscape Officer, City of Parramatta Liz Lester, City Design, City of Parramatta
Item No.	1 of 1
DEAP Meeting Number	3rd Referral – previously considered 14 March 2023

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

AMENDED PLANS: 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 (2 to 7 storeys) containing 140 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 390 car parking spaces over 2 basement levels (200 club and 190 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 lot 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.

Following the DEAP meeting in March, Parramatta Council sent a request for information (RFI dated 29/3/23) to the applicant with a number of matters to be addressed including items raised by The Panel.

The applicant subsequently resubmitted revised plans to Parramatta Council. The plans along with a video flythrough were presented to DEAP on 1 August 2023.

Panel Comments

1. The revised scheme has provided a number of improvements to the overall built form and open space network with changes made in response to the previous comments by the Panel including the following;
 - a. The pedestrian access in line with Ellis Street is more legible and now aligns with an opening on the ground floor of building C and reinforced by the articulation of the façade above the opening.
 - b. Reconfiguration of the vehicular entry avenue, porte cochere and carpark entry to the clubhouse
 - c. Buildings A1 and A2 are retained as per the previous scheme as two separate apartment blocks up to 4 storeys high. The gap between A1 and A2 has been slightly increased although not fully compliant with the ADG.
 - d. Building B has been modified with increased setbacks, permeability and articulation.
 - e. Building C has been lowered from 8 storey to 7 storeys and further articulated to reduce bulk and scale.
 - f. Townhouse 14 has been deleted to reduce the impact of the development on the residential properties to the south of the development.
 - g. Townhouse 1 has been lowered from three storeys to two storeys.

2. Despite these improvements, the Panel is concerned that the some of the key issues raised in the past three Panel meetings have not been fully addressed to achieve design excellence. The Panel is of the opinion that the following issues in the revised proposal require further design consideration and amendments.

a. Site context (bulk and scale) –

- i. The proposed lowering of building C from 8 to 7 storeys does not address the issues raised previously by the Panel. The building is not in-keeping with the scale of surrounding development and will have a significant impact on the heritage significance of Oatlands House. The Panel recommends 4 storeys with a full break in the building to align with Ellis Street.
- ii. The proposed single storey opening on the ground floor of building C is only visible from a close range and does not achieve the desired effect. A complete break in the building would be more effective as it would be visible from Bettington Road and beyond and would also assist in reducing the bulk and scale of the building. Alternatively, the link should be at least two stories high and be recessive in detail to allow both halves of the building to read as separate elements.
- iii. The Panel notes that building B has been modified with increased permeability and articulation of the facades however the height remains 7 storeys. The Panel reiterates its previous advice to lower Building B to 6 storeys, inclusive of a recessed top floor. This will achieve a reasonable modulation of the overall built form and scale of the development from 3-4 storeys (Buildings A1 -A2 and Townhouses on Bettington Road) to 6 storeys (Building B in the centre of the site) and back down to 4 storeys (Building C at the rear of the site and in proximity to Oatlands House).
- iv. The gap between buildings A1 and A2 is only slightly improved and continues to rely on screens for privacy. The separation of all the buildings including A1-A2, A2-B and B-C should fully comply with the ADG.
- v. Building A1 and A2 both have corridors that do not provide access to natural light and ventilation. The layouts should be revised to make this provision.

b. The public domain –

- i. The Panel notes the improvements to the public domain including the reconfiguration of the entry avenue, car park entry and porte cochere to the clubhouse, improvements to footpath connections and adjustments to the Ellis Street axis.

- ii. The Panel is of the opinion that the location and extent of the raised planter beds on the Ellis Street axis unnecessarily restrict pedestrian movement and a sense of connectivity with the surrounding environment. It is recommended that island planter beds in the middle of pathways be removed or reconfigured and the pathways widened. This would allow more trees to be planted along the sides of the pathways for shade and privacy to the adjacent units. A wider shared path would also more readily accommodate seating, disabled access and small service vehicles and would be safer and more inviting for residents and visitors.
 - iii. Part of the raised planter bed adjacent to the footpath leading to the porte cochere may have to be reconfigured and/or removed to allow for pedestrians to safely cross the road at the intersection with the boulevard.
 - iv. Whilst the revised entry to the porte cochere and car park is supported, the Panel recommends further landscape and public domain improvements to the design. A widened footpath or roundabout with a canopy tree in the middle is recommended to terminate the vista and further visually separate the driveways to the porte cochere and car park. Retaining walls to the car park should be softened by climbers. The design should also take into consideration how signage will be integrated within the landscape.
 - v. The loop road on the south side of the development has been designed as a driveway with no entrances to any of the adjacent townhouses. As well, the winding pathway to the east of townhouses 10-13 is not considered appropriate as the primary access to the townhouses. The loop road should include footpaths or be clearly designed as a shared road for pedestrian and vehicles use with entrances to townhouses 10-13.
 - vi. As it is some distance to the larger communal open spaces to the north, the Panel also recommends a parklet or quiet seating area be incorporated in the open space buffer to the south.
 - vii. Buildings A1 and A2 should have their own main pedestrian entrances in Bettington Road complete with letterboxes etc.
- c. Open space and landscaping –
- i. The Panel acknowledges the improvements to the landscaping however further consideration is necessary regarding the design of the raised planter beds as discussed above.
 - ii. The common open space on the northern side is directly above the basement parking level. This limits the opportunity for large

canopy trees. The same issue arises with the proposed street trees lining the boulevard. Where possible, introduce mounding in the open spaces over slab to allow the planting of larger trees.

- iii. Although the proposed basement footprint has been reduced in size and townhouse 14 deleted, the deep soil is still substantially less than 30%. Given the site context and the fact that this is a new development, there seems to be no reason not to comply with this requirement.
- 3. As noted previously, the existing ground line and the outline of the basement needs to be drawn on the relevant plans and sections.
 - 4. With regard to Club activities and any potential impacts on the residential amenity the applicant provided no further details or changes other than a reference to the acoustic report and measures to be undertaken at the construction stage. Compliance with the ADG separation requirements would assist in this regard.

Panel Recommendation

Although improvements have been made to the site planning and public domain the Panel considers that design excellence has not yet been achieved and does not support the current proposal. Further changes are recommended to respond to the issues noted above, including;

- a. Building C to be lowered to 4 storeys.
- b. Building B to be lowered to 6 storeys inclusive of a recessed top floor.
- c. Provide a larger break in building C in line with the Ellis Street axis.
- d. Provide entrances to the main lobbies of buildings A1 and A2 in Bettington Road.
- e. Widen the gap between buildings A1 and A2 to comply with the ADG.
- f. Provide individual entrances to townhouses 10-13 directly from a street.
- g. Adjust the design of the townhouses so that there is no additional overshadowing of the adjacent childcare centre in winter.