

Design Excellence Advisory Panel Report

Address: 15A-15B Moseley St & 25-31 Donald St Carlingford

Date: 23 May 2024

Application Summary

Application Number	DA/222/2024
Assessing Officer	Eamon Murphy
Applicant/Proponent	Capio Property Group
Architect and Registration Number	David Randerson 8542 DKO Architects
Landscape Architect	Concept Landscape Architecture
Planner	Adam Coburn - Mecone
Others in attendance	Dennis Wimmer et al

DEAP Members	Brendan Randles, David Epstein, Jon Johannsen
Chair	Brendan Randles
Other Persons in attendance	Alecia Hunter – Team Leader, Development Assessment Jan McCredie – Team Leader, Design Excellence
Item No.	1 of 2
DEAP Meeting Number	1 st referral for current DA

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

Staged Development comprising Stage 1 – Demolition of existing buildings, tree removal and construction of a part 4 storey and part 7 storey residential flat building comprising 46 units and a shared basement carpark; Stage 2 construction of a 6 storey mixed use development comprising an 80 place centre based child care centre and 45 residential units. A total of 22 residential units will be allocated for affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021.

Panel Comments

1. The Panel notes that the subject site is dominated by a number of challenging constraints, such as a complex topography, sloping street frontages, a substantial number of large trees, an irregular shape (with large radial interface to its western frontage), etc. The site also has a long eastern boundary (which must transition to adjacent properties), a DCP required 10m Mosley Street front setback, a 6m Donald Street setback, solar access and overshadowing challenges and desired future character requirements as defined in PDGP 2023. However, apart from a very general analysis, the physical and planning constraints on the site appear not to have been examined or described sufficiently to support a series of legible design strategies – which again, appear too general to address the site's complexities. Valuable trees (including many trees well established healthy recommended by the Arborist for retention) are not shown, nor are required setbacks, key desire lines, potential links and likely future built form; existing site sections are not provided, adjacent built form not referred to and likely future character all but ignored.
2. With its provision of affordable housing units, the proposal includes a height and density bonus of up to 30% bonus, which further increases the challenges in resolving complex site issues, while achieving high quality built form, internal and external amenity. In addition, the [Housing SEPP 2021](#), requires that a development should be compatible with:

- i. the desirable elements of the character of the local area, or
- ii. for precincts undergoing transition—the desired future character of the precinct.

The subject site is within the Carlingford Central Precinct (Northern Precinct) pursuant to Figure 8.2.8.1 and Figure 8.2.8.1.1 of the PDCP. Section 8.2.8.1.1 of the PDCP articulates the precinct's desired future character. However, without a comprehensive site analysis – identifying the aims of the DCP - and a clear urban design strategy, there is no demonstration that this inflated density can be accommodated on the site without compromising the quality of streetscape, access, communal open space, landscape, building layout and other key indicator of developmental quality. Therefore, a comprehensive detailed site and context analysis is required in any future iterations of the proposal - not only to demonstrate an understanding of the site's physical and planning constraints, but also to create an argument – based on well considered design principles – to support the proposal's urban design and amenity merits at its inflated scale.

3. Given the complexities of the site, the proposal would have greatly benefitted from a pre DA meeting to discuss topography, trees, site strategies, layout options, DCP issues, streetscape, urban design, landscape, access, etc
4. Apart from being difficult to understand (especially how it relates to the site's complex topography), the currently proposed built form includes a number of significant design flaws :
 - an excessive sized basement footprint almost fills the site, with excessive carriageway, ramping and odd geometries contributing to highly inefficient car parking layouts;
 - a vast number of valuable trees recommended by the Applicant's own Arborist for retention are therefore removed; this results in the scale and character of the existing Donald Street streetscape – in particular its large trees (as referred to in the PDCP 2023) - is therefore lost
 - the Donald St built form is inconsistent with the orthogonal pattern of adjacent blocks and preferred layouts described in the PDCP 2023
 - a 10m front setback to the Mosley St frontage has not been provided; therefore the landscape quality intended by the PDCP 2023 is compromised
 - at 65m in length, Building B is excessively long
 - to optimise height potential, the southern most block is confined to an existing narrow lot, thereby compromising the efficiency, amenity and even yield of its internal layout
 - Building A's layout appears highly compromised and inefficient, with an extensive and costly perimeter façade

- the childcare facility is proposed at a subterranean level, thereby adversely impacting on its solar access, outlook and streetscape quality
- apart from some portions of the scheme being buried, the length of built form and set out levels result in ground levels being raised out of the ground
- the central communal open space is located on basement and is highly compromised by ramps, planters, walls and embankments; therefore its landscape quality, communal capacity, open space amenity and formal aesthetics are all highly compromised
- the western entry from Mosely St and main entry from Donald St include large ramps which compromise the privacy of adjacent dwellings
- Streets, kerbs and adjacent built form are not shown on elevation and/or sections; therefore it is not clear how the proposal relates to adjacent public domain and existing and likely future built form around the evolving precinct.

5. To address these layout and built form issues, it is recommended that :

- a comprehensive site and context analysis be undertaken (refer to ADG Part 3 and Appendix 1 for all required inclusions); a series of sections of the existing context must address key levels, adjacent existing and future built form; all valuable trees must be mapped; the 10m Mosely Street front setback must be included as well as other DCP requirements
- a well considered design strategy – in plan and section – be prepared, demonstrably supported by the findings of a revised analysis
- an alternative built form strategy should better reflect the 2023 PDCP's orthogonal built form and Donald Street streetscape strategy; a simplified L shaped scheme for example (with increased eastern setback) may provide a large Donald St facing garden on deep soil with retained large trees
- overshadowed communal open space at grade should be complemented with landscaped roof level communal terrace with high solar access
- stepping of built form would allow ground levels and (well marked) entries to be better aligned with existing terrain and for ground level units along Moseley Street, thereby allowing for front gardens and private entries
- increased efficiency of built form should substantially reduce building footprint, thereby allowing for DCP compliant deep soil provision
- the basement layout should be refined to decrease carriageway and ramping; ideally, basement should only be located under built form
- childcare may need to be relocated to provide improved indoor and outdoor amenity, better streetscape and interface with the public domain
- the driveway location should be reviewed to avoid a very long underground vehicular route that increases building footprint
- a less circuitous pedestrian circulation layout be prepared that provides clearly defined access to ground and upper level common open spaces, that is linked to the surrounding streets, with clearly defined communal and private

- entrances and that achieves necessary street activation, surveillance, accessibility, casual meeting spaces and simple wayfinding.
- a stair link be provided from Moseley to Donald Street in line with the north/south arm of Donald Street.
6. The proposal also includes a large number of amenity issues that must be resolved in future iterations :
- bathrooms cannot be accessed directly off living rooms, as currently proposed in some apartments
 - ideally, bedrooms too would not be located directly off living spaces
 - see notes above regarding ground floor levels and natural grade, entries, entry paths and privacy and the potential for directly accessible private gardens
 - see notes above about the amenity failings of the communal open space
 - ceiling fans should be provided to living areas and bedrooms
7. Sustainability was not discussed at the meeting. However, the proposal should further consider solar shading, passive ventilation, solar panels, EV charging and other sustainable construction approaches. Clearly defined commitments to sustainable development and building electrification should be embedded within the project and outlined as part of the design development strategy.

Panel Recommendation

The Panel does not support the proposal, significant re-design is recommended to respond to the issues noted above.