

MINUTES OF NSROC DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MEETING

LANE COVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 9th February 2021

DEP PANEL MEMBERS:

Alf Lester	Chairperson	Architect/Urban Designer	LFA
Alex Halliburton	Panel Member	Landscape Architect	HVH Group
Elina Braunstein	Panel Member	Urban Designer	GMU
Digby Hall	Panel Member	Sustainability/Architect	Climatewise Design

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Jeff Curnow	PDS
Helen Cooper	Bates Smart
Shaun Farren	Top Spring
Sam Sirdah	Top Spring
Michael Barnett	Arcadia
Ian Cady	Mecone

COUNCIL STAFF:

Mark Brisby	Executive Manager
Rajiv Shankar	Manager Development Assessment
Christopher Pelcz	Strategic Co-ordinator
Henry Burnett	Senior Town Planner
Angela Panich	Panel Secretary

COUNCIL OBSERVERS:

Greg Samardzic	Senior Town Planner
Christopher Shortt	Senior Town Planner
Ted Webster	Manager Open Space

APOLOGIES:

Panel Member Digby Hall was not present but had conducted a site visit and also participated in the review process.

ITEM DETAILS:

Application Reference Number: Pre-DA

Property Address: 21-41 Canberra Avenue and 18-32 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards

Council's Planning Officer: Christopher Pelcz

Owner: Silver Pond Unit Trust Pty Ltd

Applicant: Mecone

Proposal: Construction and use of five (5) residential flat buildings ranging in height from 4 to 10 storeys. The development consists of:

- A total of 319 residential apartments
- A total of 13 terraces fronting Canberra Avenue
- Two (2) shared basements with a total of 144 parking spaces
- Vehicular access provided from Canberra Avenue via two separate ingress/egress points
- Tree removal and replacement planting
- Associated landscape works including the provision of through-site links
- Public benefits including the extension of Newlands Park and the Pocket Park.

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

The Chairperson introduced the Panel members. Council staff were introduced and the Applicant's Representatives invited to identify their respective roles in the project. Attendees signed the Attendance Registration Sheet.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Panel members had separately indicated that there was no conflict of interest.

3.0 PRESENTATION

The applicant was invited to present the pre-DA proposal for the subject site at 21-41 Canberra Avenue and 18-32 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards.

4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The development framework for the project is established by the Lane Cove Local Environmental Plan 2009 (2010 EPI 49) and supporting DCP for St Leonards South. The broad scale and form of future buildings and future communal open space as well as cross site linkages and relationships to Newlands Park are clearly defined in the LEP/DCP documentation.

While the material presented to the Panel is in a pre-DA form it clearly demonstrated that substantial professional effort had been directed toward interpreting the structural and design intent of the LEP/DCP.

As acknowledged at the Panel meeting, the Applicant is in the process of refining and developing the design. Accordingly, it is anticipated that as part of that process the Applicant will address many of the issues identified by the Panel which are set out below to ensure that the Design Excellence mandate, which is identified as a critical requirement of the approval criteria under the LEP/DCP, can be met.

The nine design principles considered by the panel in the review of the Pre DA include 1] **Context**, 2] **Built Form + Scale**, 3] **Density**, 4] **Sustainability**, 5] **Landscape**, 6] **Amenity**, 7] **Safety**, 8] **Housing Diversity + Social Interaction**, 9] **Aesthetics**.

The absence of a comment under any of the principles does not necessarily imply that the Panel considers the particular matter has been satisfactorily addressed, as it may be that changes suggested under other principles will generate a desirable change.

The Design Review Panel makes the following comments and recommendations in relation to the project:

4.2. Context

The Panel expressed concern about the limited level of information and detail associated with cross-sectional information extending both east-west (from Holdsworth Avenue to Canberra Avenue/Newlands Park) as well as north-south (from Marshall Avenue in the north to River Road in the south). It was clear that cross-sectional schematic data presented to the Panel was not consistent with CGI data. Accordingly, the Panel requests a series of east-west cross-sections through each building group and a north-south section so that the inter-relationships between existing street levels, ground floor apartments, communal open spine activities and levels and street edges can be readily understood and assessed together with existing ground levels and proposed building heights.

The Panel supports the principle of terrace forms to Canberra Avenue which will enhance the street/park interface and address surveillance/safety/CPTED issues. However the Panel considers that there is a need for more detailed investigation of the multiple access links and fire escape links from the residential apartment buildings as well as the provision for disabled access to all lift lobbies, the provision of light to 'subterranean' lobbies and privacy for town house courtyards.

The Panel remains concerned that the CGIs indicated a morphing of the terrace forms into apartments above rather than the indicative cross-section which demonstrated terraces edging Canberra Avenue with apartment buildings set well back from the terrace forms.

The Panel identified concerns with the indicative level of solar access to the Building 11 complex and noted that the ADG requires that each building achieve a 70 percent two-hour solar access to living areas (and balconies). The Panel does not support a performance assessment based on a sitewide calculation of solar access provision where one building clearly does not comply with the ADG requirement. Given the mandate for Design Excellence, the Panel is not supportive of an offset argument which implies that extensive park views compensate for a poor level of solar access.

The Panel considers that the current vehicular access provision for all 332 apartments from a single point on Canberra Avenue is neither desirable nor reflects equity of accessibility. Thirty-five per cent of the total apartments (areas 10 and 8) have direct frontage to Holdsworth Avenue. In the Panel's view vehicular access should be provided to basement carparking under both buildings via driveway access from Holdsworth Avenue. The Panel acknowledges the need to provide access to basement carparking for buildings that address Canberra Avenue as well as the need to provide for waste management functions within the site. There is potential to link basements associated with the Holdsworth Avenue buildings to a single waste storage/management facility accessed from Canberra Avenue.

The Panel does not support the proposed excavation of a significant part of the total site followed by the construction of basement carparking levels and then placement of soil above as a substitute for the deep soil principle that has been identified in the LEP/DCP documentation for the linear, linked communal open space spine.

The alternative massing strategy is generally supported by the Panel. This includes the decision to vary the DCP block envelopes for Area 11 by relocating the small pocket park to the western interface, connecting to Holdsworth Avenue. By relocating the park to Holdsworth Avenue, an extension of the RE2 zoned land is provided, connecting the open space network within the site to the public domain. The alternative location of the small park improves visual connectivity to the Green Spine and provides a more usable space with improved solar access. Nevertheless, further details should be provided in relation to the intended use of the park and whether it will be publicly accessible. Floor plans indicate the area spans across three levels so cross sections are required to determine how much of the area will remain trafficable.

The massing provided at the southern part of Area 11 provides a variation to the DCP envelopes with a continuous 9-storey form provided to River Road. Subject to further design documentation, some level of built form transition to River Road may provide an improved response to future development along River Road and the R2 zoned land to the south. Sections and elevational studies would be helpful.

To the south of the site, Building 11 provides a generous setback to River road, exceeding the setback nominated by the DCP (10m) by 14m. It is understood that the setback enables the retention of the large eucalypt located at the southern end of the site. Tree retention is strongly encouraged. Nevertheless, the large setback presents a variation to the outcomes envisaged by the DCP, and the streetscape impacts caused by the abrupt change in building

alignment has not yet been demonstrated. Diagrammatic streetscape analysis should be provided to demonstrate how the large setback in this location may impact the future development pattern further west, along the northern side of River Road, where a three-storey streetwall scale fronting River Road is sought for Areas 20 and 23.

4.3 Built Form + Scale

The Panel noted the apparent discrepancy between the stepped building forms to Canberra Avenue shown in the LEP/DCP and the CGIs which implied a zero setback at the upper levels. The Panel remains concerned about the apparent scale and impact of the built form as perceived from Newlands Park. Based on the indicative / illustrative material, it appears that the impact on Newlands Park has not been adjusted at the upper levels to provide for a 'stepping back' of the built form to reflect the initial design criteria. Impacts appear to be further exacerbated by the introduction of roof top gardens / open space which will require balconies and other vertical elements and potentially increase both visual and shadow impacts associated with the development. While the staggered alignment of the building footprints fronting the southern part of Canberra Avenue (Areas 9 and 11) responds to the changing road alignment, there does not appear to be an adequate scale transition to the park.

Conversely it is noted that the Holdsworth Avenue buildings reflect the indicative setbacks at the upper levels as set out in the LEP/DCP.

The Panel remains concerned about the limited 9m setback between apartment buildings facing Canberra Avenue. The Panel notes, but does not support, the Applicant's suggestion that the DCP dimensions validates such a limited separation given that it would prove difficult to achieve the dimensional, visual and acoustic privacy required under ADG criteria. The Applicant's suggestion that a series of screens would need to be provided to both buildings does not, in the Panel's view, provide the level of Design Excellence required for the project. It is recommended that alternative ways of addressing this issue need to be explored which could include angled windows and/or increased separation between buildings.

Given the commonality of entrance links to terraces and apartment building lobbies it will be important to ensure privacy for the terrace courtyards without compromising surveillance/CEPTED issues.

As noted above (4.2 Context), the Panel seeks accurate cross-sectional data to assess the relationship between built form, building heights, street setbacks and relationships to Newlands Park.

4.4. Density

The data presented to the Panel indicated that the density of the development is consistent with the FSR of 2.6:1.

4.5. Sustainability

The Panel expressed concern that the submitted documentation lacks any detail regarding Design Excellence terms of "ecologically sustainable development" and accordingly seeks more information / evidence before the scheme can be supported. Issues to be addressed are set out below:

- How have urban heat island and shade been addressed?
- What is the stormwater harvesting and flood protection strategy, and how are stormwater and rainwater being harvested, treated and reticulated?
- What is the strategy for extreme heat events in light of a warming climate, including resilience of building services and systems, provision of thermal comfort during grid failures, provision of potable and irrigation water during water restrictions?

- How have energy security and equity been addressed?
- What renewable energy systems are being embedded, how are structures and roof areas designed to cater for this, is on-site energy storage included?
- Is there a longer term strategy for the project meeting a net zero carbon footprint
- How is waste being managed on site, including treatment and reuse of organic waste?
- Provide information on whether sustainable transport has been addressed, e.g. reduced car parking numbers, small car spaces, spaces equipped for EV charging and spaces dedicated to car share parking

4.6. Landscape

The Panel acknowledges a late presentation (at the Panel hearing) of more detailed schematic landscape Communal Open Space (COS) information. The Panel supports the principles identified and the range of activities proposed.

As indicated above (4.2 Context), the Panel seeks further clarification of the activity elements and indicative details. There is also a need to demonstrate how privacy for ground floor apartments on both sides of the COS can be achieved.

The Panel remains concerned about the 1m spatial width limit on such terrace spaces identified in the DCP. In that context, the Panel notes that the schematic landscape material indicated private terraces to ground-level apartments that were of a more appropriate scale.

Clear definition / delineation needs to be provided between public and private open space. Currently it is unclear if the pocket park proposed at the end of Holdsworth Street is either public or private domain. The Panel considers that the pocket park is there for the benefit of the wider community (not dedicated COS) as it provides a pedestrian link from Holdsworth Street, across River Road and down the valley. Delineation between the COS and public space should be clearly defined.

The option of extending the pocket park further north into Holdsworth Street is not supported. The Panel considers that it is important to provide a legible street address to the area 10 building to reinforce wayfinding and urban design principles.

As indicated above (4.2 Context) the Panel strongly recommends that the approach to basement car parking is reviewed to enable substantial deep soil areas to be provided within the Green (communal) spine as intended under the Landscape Master Plan. The current proposal would see almost the entire site excavated, with a reliance on landscape on podium for the green spine with only limited pockets of deep soil.

The plans provided show a number of trees across the site, however the proposal has identified four significant or important trees with one to be removed. It is recommended that the landscape plans and site grading plans provide detailed level information that demonstrates that it is possible for these trees to be retained, given the proposed scale of site regrading and levels of excavation.

Council's Landscape Master Plan proposes that the majority of the trees within the green spine be retained. If it is not possible to retain these trees, then there should be provision in the documentation for planting advanced or well-established trees to compensate for this loss.

The Panel seeks further advice on the impact of increased shade on the ecology of Newlands Park. It is clear that the park is overshadowed in early morning by development to the east but the proposed development on the subject site will lead to significant additional overshadowing in the afternoon.

4.7. Amenity

Area 11 building COS is separated from the remainder of the green spine by the through site link. It was indicated that the COS across the site would be accessible to all residents. It is recommended that detail is provided demonstrating how this will occur, while providing equity of access.

It is understood that generally roof terrace areas would only be accessible to those residents within that building. It also appears that area 11 is heavily reliant on the roof terrace as COS, given the lack of communal accessible open space provided at ground level.

Where terraces have been provided to units that adjoin COS, it is recommended that direct access is provided to the COS as this helps activate the space, by providing ease of access for residents and assists with passive surveillance.

Although the Landscape Masterplan indicates a possible closure of Canberra Avenue, the Panel recommends that this street remains open and the option of creating a shareway explored. Canberra Ave provides valuable access to the entire precinct and provides a better transition from the private to the public domain of the adjoining Newlands Park. Also of importance is the retention of a trafficable street which provides a legible street address to the 'terrace/townhouse' units and residential apartments in this part of the development, by providing activation along the street frontage and assisting with passive surveillance.

Currently the development is reliant on vehicle access from Canberra Avenue only, including any service vehicles, visitor vehicles, waste and removal vehicles etc. In the Panel's view, this is not an optimal solution and recommend that private vehicular access is provided from Holdsworth Street to the area 8 and 10 buildings.

The Panel notes that the Canberra Avenue vehicular access results in two ground level terraces sandwiched between access driveways resulting in poor amenity, particularly as one of these entrances will be utilised by service vehicles and is a double height space.

To Holdsworth Avenue, primary and secondary setbacks are provided in accordance with the precinct DCP. To the south of Holdsworth Avenue, a 4.5m setback is provided to the western boundary of Area 11. Further information should demonstrate the capacity to meet ADG guidelines for minimum building separation, to ensure that future development on the adjoining site to the west (Area 20) is not burdened by insufficient setback being provided on the subject site.

This issue also applies to the northern interface where Buildings 7 and 8 adjoin the future pedestrian east-west link. Design development should consider how Buildings 7 and 8 may contribute positively to passive surveillance and activation of the public link.

Roof terraces indicated, show areas of lawn, it is recommended that roof terraces provide meaningful COS, including shade, seating etc, however consider maintenance and cleaning requirements given the absence of a goods lift in these buildings, i.e. lawn areas requiring access via passenger lifts seem impractical. These spaces should also include shade and shelter.

The Panel recommends that the solar access criteria identified in the ADG are met for each building (4.2 Context). It appears that the Applicant's solar assessment is weighted towards east and west facing apartments and relies on direct solar access closer to the 'edges' of compliance, i.e. 9am or 3pm, both times at which apartments will be exposed to higher heat

gain. With Building 11, detailed design will need to address residents' abilities to enjoy direct sunlight, air-dry washing, grow plants etc.

Detailed design should demonstrate how cross ventilation is achieved in single-orientation apartments (including those with corner aspect).

4.8. Safety

As indicated above (4.7 Amenity) the Panel has reservations about the proposed dual access/service driveways in Canberra Avenue.

4.9. Housing Diversity + Social Interaction

The Panel notes the proposed diversity of dwelling mix in the development and the potential level of social interaction associated with the Green Spine, COS and rooftop terraces.

4.10. Aesthetics

The Panel notes the initial CGI material which provides an indication of the range and subtlety of design images and proposed materials. The Panel is generally supportive of the adopted approach but understands, as indicated at the Panel hearing, that further resolution and refinement of the design is currently being undertaken by the Applicant.

The Panel anticipates that the design refinement process will inform elevational treatment by reflecting the subtleties associated with achieving environmental amenity related to building orientation and aspect.

5.0 OUTCOME

The Panel has determined the outcome of the DEP review and provides final direction to the applicant as follows:

The Panel recommends that the pre-DA concept design be further refined in accordance with the above recommendations and returned to the Panel for consideration.