

MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

Tuesday 27th April 2021

DEP PANEL MEMBERS:

Alf Lester	Chairperson	Architect/Urban Designer	LFA (Pacific)
Alex Halliburton	Panel Member	Landscape Architect	HVH Group
Digby Hall	Panel Member	Sustainability/Architect	Climatewise Design

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Jeff Curnow	PDS Group
Shaun Farren	Top Spring Australia
Sam Sirdah	Top Spring Australia
Josh Milston	JMT Consulting
Michael Barnett	Arcadia
Ian Cady	Mecone
Matthew Allen	Bates Smart Architects

COUNCIL STAFF:

Mark Brisby	Executive Manager, Environmental Services
Rajiv Shankar	Manager, Development Assessment
Greg Samardzic	Senior Town Planner
Christopher Pelcz	Strategic Coordinator
Angela Panich	Panel Secretary

APOLOGIES:

NIL

ITEM DETAILS:

Application Reference Number: Pre-DA

Property Address: Area 7 to 11 – 21 to 41 Canberra Avenue and 18 to 32 Holdsworth Avenue, St Leonards

Council's Planning Officer: Greg Samardzic

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.

The revised documentation reviewed by the Panel included:

- DRP / Pre-DA Response
- Architectural Design Report Part 1
- Architectural Design Report Part 2
- Architectural Plans
- Landscape Plans

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

Rajiv Shankar opened the Panel meeting by introducing the Council staff and inviting the Applicant to introduce the relevant attendees to the Panel. The Chairperson welcomed the Applicant to the Panel meeting and introduced the Panel members. Attendees signed the Attendance Registration Sheet.

The NSROC Design Excellence Panel's comments are to assist the Lane Cove Council in its consideration of the pre-DA proposal.

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 revised pre-DA proposal for the subject site following their detailed review of the issues raised by the Panel and the Panel's Report following the initial meeting on 9 February 2021.

4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Introduction

As previously noted, 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 are clearly defined in the LEP/DCP documentation.

The Panel commended the Applicant for the detailed design and development processes that had been undertaken following the first Panel meeting and the responses that had been introduced to address design issues flagged by the Panel.

The Panel also appreciated the substantial professional effort that had been directed toward addressing the structural and design intent of the LEP/DCP to achieve design excellence.

The nine design principles considered by the panel in the review of the revised pre-DA proposal include:

- **Context**
- **Built Form + Scale**
- **Density**
- **Sustainability**
- **Landscape**
- **Amenity**
- **Safety**
- **Housing Diversity + Social Interaction**
- **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.

4.2.Context

As part of the Panel's review of the initial pre-DA documentation for the project, a number of issues were identified. It is noted that the majority have been addressed in some detail as part of the revised pre-DA submission, including:

- Detailed east-west and north south cross sections were clearly identified relationships between existing street levels, ground floor apartments, communal open spine activities and levels together with street edge conditions
- A detailed assessment of access provision to the site / buildings including pedestrian, bike, vehicle and servicing. Access to and from street level as well as to the communal open space spine was also examined. To achieve design excellence and ADG criteria, the Panel encouraged the applicant to explore the potential of securing enhanced natural light to the subterranean lobbies (which are the principal points of entry) to the Canberra Avenue apartments.
- The Panel supported the modified set back relationship between the townhouses and apartments above.
- The Panel noted the work that had been undertaken to secure as far as possible solar access to the south-western sector of the development site as well as the interrelationship between cross ventilation and the views to Newlands Park and to the south.
- The Panel supported the revised planning for the basement car parking, the reduction of the extent of site excavation for underground car parking and the resultant provision of an effective deep soil open space spine.
- The Panel noted the applicant's arguments for retaining a single point of vehicle access from Canberra Avenue for both parking and servicing.
- The Panel remains concerned about the need to provide for convenient vehicular drop off for all residents / visitors within the 332-dwelling complex. In accordance with CPTED principles, the Panel again recommends that Canberra Avenue access be maintained for the full frontage of the development and that the pocket park in Holdsworth Avenue be limited to maximise ready and safe access.
- The building 11 setback to River Road exceeds the requirements of the DCP. This is supported as it allows the retention of the significant Eucalypt within the subject site.

4.3. Built Form + Scale

The Panel supported the proposed built form and scale, including:

- The revised massing to the Canberra Avenue / Newlands Park interface.
- The treatment of the built form in the 9-metre set back between apartment buildings facing both Canberra Avenue and Holdsworth Avenue to secure ADG visual and acoustic privacy criteria coupled with the fern tree gully landscape approach.
- Retention of the above 9-metre separation in preference to a 12-metre separation which would only be possible if the current 6-metre DCP set back from the northern boundary / east-west public cross-site link was modified.
- The revised massing, materiality, setback of the upper levels and expression of the two storey townhouses located along Canberra Avenue has dramatically improved the overall built form and massing. When viewed from the park and street level, this will help provide human scale to the development.
- The Panel considered the presentation and rationale for the 9-metre separation between the buildings facing Canberra Avenue, which it had previously challenged, and accepts the 9 metres. The possibility of decreasing the setback of buildings 7 and 8 from 6 metres to 3 metres adjacent to the future pedestrian link was discussed

with the Council and the applicant. This principle would have meant that additional space would have been provided buildings 10 and 8, 9 and 7 and would result in an overall increase from 9 to 12 metres. Given the proposal that the 9-metre separation zone is to be treated with landscape, with no pedestrian access, the Panel considered that there is little merit in increasing the 9-metre separation zone. In the Panel's view, maintaining the 6-metre set back to buildings 7 and 8 provides enhanced opportunity for increased amenity.

- the inclusion of high level operable windows and opaque glazing to allow light into apartments where buildings 8/10 and 7/9 face each other.

4.4. Density

The Panel understands that the density of the development is consistent with the FSR of 2.6:1.

4.5. Sustainability

The Panel noted that the revised scheme includes measurable improvements in relation to ESD, as follows;

- The proposed landscape scheme provides a good diversity of uses including active and passive spaces, places of refuge and solitude, and places for play and recreation. The scheme also provides a high-quality response to diversity of planting, treatments and materials and in particular includes planted zones that are purely focused on vegetation rather than spaces for activity.
- The applicant described the intention to treat the individual building roof terraces to an equivalent level of consideration and resolution, with particular reference to sheltered spaces for individual residents, landscape treatment and shared amenities. The Panel supports this approach.
- The Panel recognises the site-specific constraints that generate a considerably low number of dwellings that achieve the direct solar access design guidance from the ADG, particularly for Area 11. The Panel supports the applicant's approach of offsetting this via the provision of high-quality landscaped roof terraces to each affected building.
- The Panel supports the approach to natural cross ventilation in accordance with the ADG and would expect to see the detailed façade design and fenestration as part of the DA Submission, demonstrating how cross ventilation will be achieved.

In addition to the above there are a number of issues that are yet to be addressed as the scheme moves toward DA status.;

- What is the stormwater harvesting and flood protection strategy, and how are stormwater and rainwater being harvested, treated and reticulated. It was noted by the applicant during the review meeting that these items were still under consideration and design development, which the Panel accepts and will expect to see resolved detail as part of the DA submission;
- What is the strategy for heat events, building systems failure, grid failure and the like as noted by the Panel during the previous review. The Panel will expect to see a detailed response to this issue as part of the DA submission. The response may be a description of how these issues were considered during the design process and how the proposed design addresses these concerns, or allows these concerns to be viably addressed in future.
- The DA submission will also be expected to address waste management and recycling.
- Sustainable transport has been partially addressed via a note that electric vehicle (EV) recharge points are to be provided. Given that the plans submitted are yet to indicate such points, the Panel recommends that the DA submission clearly notes where EV parking spaces and recharge infrastructure are located. The Panel also recommends that the quantum of EV spaces is considered against the time of

practical completion and provides a solution that might be expected under the market conditions of that time (in terms of EV uptake).

The Panel discussed a number of suggestions or recommendations that would support Design Excellence related to ESD;

- 'Ecologically Sustainable Development' by definition implies outcomes such as zero waste, zero ecological footprint, zero Greenhouse Gas emissions, zero water waste, etc. While ambitious outcomes are not typically adopted by industry under the accepted industry standards of 'ESD', the Panel recommends that the applicant describe as part of the DA submission how the proposal has 'designed in' the potential for the future community to achieve true Ecological Sustainability. This may reflect the siting, passive and active design features of the proposal and any longer-term operational initiatives.
- To reflect this objective, the Panel recommends that the applicant identifies specific project performance targets relating to water, waste, energy and carbon emissions applicable at the time of practical completion, then describe potential (and realistic) strategies of how the project and its community might advance from those targets to 'Ecologically Sustainable' in the future.
- The Panel also requested that the applicant organise sustainability information in the DA submission under the headings 'built attributes', 'operational / management attributes' and 'procurement initiatives', to help clearly identify designed attributes.
- The Panel also provided some feedback or guidance on the following ESD items that were specifically noted by the applicant;
 - For roof planting and balcony planting, describe how that planting will be maintained into the future, noting that the overall design relies to some extent on the health of the edge plantings;
 - Design with Country – include in the DA submission a description of how this has been embedded in the design and in particular the landscape design.
 - Sustainable materials – provide discussion on how sustainability has been considered in the selection of materials. Specifically address sustainable sourcing, embodied carbon and long-term durability;
 - Building fabric improvements – this was noted in the review documentation however not described or quantified. For the DA submission please quantify what these improvements are. The applicant might also consider how this contributes to the building performance targets noted above;
 - Building User's Guide – if a Guide is to be provided, please also provide a description of how the Guide will be issued, used and maintained over time.

4.6. Landscape

The detailed Landscape concept plan is supported. The plan presented reflects and adapts the principles of the Landscape Masterplan to the subject site. The Panel's initial concerns regarding the usefulness, functionality and amenity of these spaces have been allayed, through clear delineation of the public through site linkages, Communal Open Space, well-defined circulation and a range of amenity facilities. The redesign of the underground car parking within the development has delivered significant areas of deep soil to the Central Spine and aligns with the Landscape Masterplan. The retention of significant street trees and two specimen eucalypts (one on River Road frontage and the other within the Central Spine) is of environmental benefit, helps provide a sense of scale and will soften the architectural form.

Materials, ground plane treatments, screening, planting and level transitions have been well thought out. Indicative typical sections were provided for ground floor apartments abutting

the COS, indicating a landscape buffer with fencing / screening hidden within the landscape. The design approach is supported by the Panel.

It is noted that the pocket park, located at the end of Holdsworth Avenue is not within the subject site. Accordingly, the extent and form of the park are not addressed although the linkages are noted.

4.7. Amenity

Although the Landscape Masterplan indicates a possible closure of Canberra Avenue, the Panel again recommends that this street remains open and the option of creating a share way 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, assisting with passive surveillance and providing convenient access for all residents and visitors including the elderly or handicapped.

Each apartment block has a proposed accessible roof terrace. Although the detail design of these roof terraces was not shown in the presentation to the panel, as per the Panels previous comments these should provide functional amenity, including shade, appropriate solar access (to compensate for apartments that will have minimal solar access), seating, planting etc. Where possible sustainability initiatives should be integrated into the design, i.e. operable shade structures, minimizing the need for extensive irrigation, appropriate materials to a roof environment, reducing maintenance needs etc. The panel also supports the approach that each residential block will have exclusive access to their own Communal roof terrace. This provides a better security outcome.

The previous concerns of the Panel with the dwellings on either side of the carpark entry were not addressed in the presentation. The Panel recommends that detailed elevations and landscape plans be provided to help ensure that appropriate visual and acoustic privacy issues are addressed.

The Panel noted that the applicant had addressed a number of other amenity issues raised by the Panel following the initial pre-DA meeting including:

- An indication that future development on the adjoining site to the west was not burdened by insufficient set back being provided on the subject site.
- Enhanced accessibility to the COS spine.

Amenity issues related to solar access, cross-ventilation and environmental qualities within apartments are identified in 4.5 Sustainability.

4.8. Safety

Nil

4.9. Housing Diversity + Social Interaction

The Panel supports 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 reviewed the revised and additional 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 further inform elevational treatment by reflecting the subtleties associated with achieving identifiable environmental amenity relating to building orientation and aspect.

A lot of attention has been given to the aesthetics of the development and the Panel notes that this is ongoing. The Panel supports the proposed materials palette and notes that façade treatments are being further developed. Significant thought has been given to sensitive landscape design of the communal areas and through site links and the design approach is supported. The CGI images indicate extensive use of sandstone block retaining walls. There is the potential to reclaim sandstone blocks from the site during the bulk excavation process.

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 revised pre-DA design be further refined in accordance with the above recommendations and returned to the Council for DA consideration. Subject to a review of the Design Excellence Provisions under the LEP / DCP, the DA process may include a review and sign-off by the Panel.