



## DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

<b>Application No:</b>	DA/1244/2021	
<b>Proposal:</b>	Residential flat building comprising 29 units	
<b>Property Description:</b>	36A and 38 Park Ave Waitara	
<b>Date:</b>	16 December 2021	
<b>Time:</b>	Commenced: 4pm	Concluded: 4.30pm
<b>Held:</b>	Microsoft Teams Meeting	

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### ATTENDANCE

<i>Chair:</i>	David Epstein
<i>Panel Members:</i>	Marc Deuschle, Ron Edgar
<i>Council Staff:</i>	Ben Jones, Cassandra Williams
<i>Proponents:</i>	Tony Leung (architect), Josh Thompson (client), Glenn Pope (client), Hayden Green (landscape architect), David Waghorn (planner)

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### DECLARATIONS

Nil

### PANEL COMMENTS

#### 1. Desired future character

The subject site comprises of two allotments and is commonly known as No.36A and 38 Park Avenue Waitara. The subject site is rectangular in shape and has a 34.75-metre-wide western frontage to Park Avenue, southern and northern side boundaries of 48 metres in length and a topographical fall of 2.2 metres to the street from the eastern, rear boundary.

The subject site is located within the Waitara R4 High Density Residential zone and is surrounded by a mix of high-density residential developments and as yet undeveloped sites within the precinct.

The proposed residential flat building comprises a total of 29 apartments over 5 residential floors. The unit mix is six one-bedroom apartments, 11 two-bedroom apartments and 12 three-bedroom apartments. Vehicle access to development is from a two-way driveway from Park Avenue.

The project was well-described by the project architect in the meeting. Much of this information was not seen by the Panel prior to the meeting, and if it is not already included, should be submitted with the DA application.

Site context appeared to be well understood at the neighbourhood scale, and analysis also showed an understanding of how the development sits in relation to its direct neighbours.

The project suits the desired future character of the neighbourhood.

With regard to the street character, the applicant should consider changing the entry sequence such that the ground floor is level with the footpath and not elevated even though the adjacent buildings have adopted that approach. This would enhance the street environment by providing level access and street activation making the front setback area private with private entrances. See further details below.

## **2. Height**

The project has minor encroachments into the height plane, due in part to the sloping nature of the site and partly due to the building being positioned approximately halfway between the topographical low and high points of the site. Given this approach, a large flight of stairs and access lift are needed to enter the building from Park Avenue.

The Panel suggests investigating whether the building FFLs could be lowered to better align with Park Avenue; resulting in the following benefits:

- The stairs and access lift could be removed and replaced by an at-grade, or gently sloping entry path
- Ground floor apartments would be created that engage with and better activate the street. The front set-back could form POS for these units if appropriately designed
- The height plane may not be encroached
- The rear lobby exit to the COS could likewise be closer to at-grade (at level one)
- The rear POS and COS would have less privacy issues due to topography.

## **3. Setbacks**

Except for the intrusion of a portion of the Common Open Space into the front setback area, side and rear setbacks comply with those specified in the HDCP for RFBs. Since this has been included in the calculation of COS required, it will be necessary allocate an equivalent area elsewhere on the site.

It is noted, as a positive, that a paved pathway has been provided along the northern boundary for the provision of access to garden areas and maintenance generally.

## **4. Building form and separation**

The building form, detail and articulation as proposed is, generally, superior to that of existing developments in the precinct. Previous comments related to the possibility of arranging FFLs within the building relative to the topography of the site - that would enable the reduction, if not elimination, of the entry stairs - would be regarded as providing an improved relationship to the street and less foreboding, and more accessible, entry statement.

The lobby arrangement has the potential to create a strong visual link between the street and the rear COS, however the dog-leg design currently shown does not allow this. The lobby alignment should be reconsidered. See also 'Privacy and Security'

## **5. Landscaping**

### **5.1 Deep Soil Zone (DSZ)**

The DSZ for this project will need to be re-calculated as it has been measured using a method not compliant with the ADG. For a site of this scale, the minimum width of a DSZ area must be 6m. Likewise, while DSZ can be co-located with communal open space (COS), it can only contain a maximum of 10% permeable paving; that is, it cannot fully overlap with the COS in order to be counted as DSZ.

### **5.2 Communal Open Space**

Generally, the rear COS provides decent amenity and opportunity for residents to use the spaces provided. Several issues do exist and need to be addressed as follows:

- The height differences between, and close proximity of the POS to the COS, creates privacy concerns which are not acceptable
- The sitting area under the pergola is directly adjacent to several bedrooms which again creates privacy concerns
- There is a predominance of seating areas. While these are acceptable, perhaps they could be reduced, or be re-arranged to allow the lawn to be more usable for a kick-around / moderately active space.

The front setback is designated as COS but it has little value to the residents as a usable open space. Given previous comments with regards to lowering the FFLs, it is preferred that this zone be given over to POS or DSZ.

External access to the rear COS is currently proposed along the southern boundary. While it is understood that this may be beneficial for maintenance - yet also considering that a flight of stairs makes pulling equipment into the rear yard quite difficult - perhaps this area could be a landscape buffer with enlarged POS instead.

## **6. Open spaces**

As noted above, the common open space at the rear of the site requires some modification but otherwise generally acceptable. The front area however has less value as COS and could be used as POS instead.

## **7. Privacy and security**

Several privacy issues exist that need to be addressed, these being:

- Some units are currently arranged allowing views directly into bedrooms or living spaces from the communal lobby
- Several areas of COS are in close proximity to the POS without suitable buffers

- Several areas of COS are in close proximity to bedrooms and living spaces without suitable buffers
- The lobby, while it is acknowledged as a secured space, has potential CPTED issues with the dog-leg arrangement allowing concealment around corners.

#### **8. Sunlight and ventilation**

Provision of sunlight and ventilation was discussed and further improvements to ventilation were proposed that will need to be reflected in the revised plans. Otherwise, the proposal provides the required quantum of sunlight to 70% of apartments. It is noted that the general axis of the proposed building is east-west and the north boundary is shared with another RFB development.

#### **9. Housing choice**

The housing choice appears contextual and in keeping with the neighbourhood character. There is a good mix of apartments suitable to a development of this scale and location.

The Panel queried the proposed layouts of a number of units particularly the 3-bedroom units where bedrooms are directly off living areas and bathrooms are on the opposite side of the sleeping areas. The applicant is encouraged to refer to the ADG Part 4D for examples of apartment layouts that separate sleeping and living areas to achieve better amenity within the units.

#### **10. Vehicle Access and Parking**

The parking area comprises 2 basement levels which contain a total of 50 car parking spaces including 46 residential spaces and four visitor spaces. Basement areas also contain waste storage plant equipment rooms and services.

The panel did not raise any concerns regarding Vehicle Access and Parking.

The lack of screen planting along the side of the driveway within the setback area is noted. The applicant may consider moving the interim waste collection area to the north side of the driveway to allow soft landscaping and screen plants to be provided within the setback area.

#### **11. Public Domain and Traffic Management**

The proposed development addresses Mark Taylor Park, a highly used sports oval and recreation area. The proposed architectural treatment of the building recognises that it will have a higher degree of communal visibility than generally anticipated of a RFB development.

Park Street has a higher traffic volume than most streets in the vicinity as it is used as link between Waitara railway and Edgeworth David Avenue. It, also, has a higher visitation rate due to the use of the park for team sports on weekends, training during the week and as a very popular exercise destination for the community. However, the vehicular access to the development would be unlikely to have a negative impact on traffic movements or any communal activities.

#### **12. ESD**

Clarity should be provided to indicate that the cross-ventilation works as diagrammed and will achieve ADG requirements.

Solar access appears to be ADG compliant.

Additional ESD initiatives should be included in the proposal, including:

- Low energy use / low water use appliances and fittings
- Insulation
- Rainwater harvesting to use for greywater and irrigation
- Installation of PV panels to power common facilities or feed back into the grid on behalf of the strata plan

## **CONCLUSION**

The Panel advises that this is a reasonably well considered and presented scheme and that the project has the potential to achieve design excellence however needs to successfully address several issues as outlined in the above report.

Some of the key considerations for the applicant are:

- To delete the stairs at the front and to reconfigure the floor levels in order to provide level access from Park Avenue.
- To improve the design of the lift lobby area.
- To improve the layout and design of the common open space at the rear.
- To improve the internal layout of the units with reference to the ADG part 4D.
- To ensure areas of COS and DSZ are calculated correctly; and
- To use the front setback area as private open space.