

MINUTES OF NSROC DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MEETING

LANE COVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 11th May 2021

DEP PANEL MEMBERS:

Peter St Clair (PSC)	Chairperson	Architect
Brendan Randles	Panel Member	Urban Designer
Digby Hall	Panel Member	Sustainability consultant
Aldo Raadik	Panel Member	Architect

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Adam Haddow (AH)	Architect	SJB
Lishi Li	Architect	SJB
Jonanthan Tondii	Architect	SJB
Ross Shepherd (RS)	Landscape Architect	Site Image
Stephen Abolakian	Applicant	Hyecorp Property Group
Simon Truong	Applicant	Hyecorp Property Group

COUNCIL STAFF:

Mark Brisby	Executive Manager, Environmental Services
Rajiv Shankar (RS)	Manager Development Assessment
Greg Samardzic	Senior Town Planner
Lara Fusco	Strategic Planner

COUNCIL OBSERVERS:

None

APOLOGIES:

Angela Panich	Panel Secretary
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ITEM DETAILS:

Property Address: 13-19 Canberra Avenue St Leonards NSW 2065 (Area 5)

Council's Planning Officer: Greg Samardzic

Owner: Hyecorp Property Group

Applicant: Hyecorp Property Group

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings, construction of a 15-storey residential flat building comprising approximately 91 apartments, 4-6 storey basement car parking, provision of east-west pedestrian link and associated stairways and landscaping and green spine/communal open space on ground level and other associated landscaping.

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

RS and PSC welcomed the Applicants and Design Team. All Panel members, Council staff and Applicant's representatives introduced themselves and described their respective project roles. PSC provided an acknowledgement of country.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Panel members had separately indicated that there were no conflicts of interest.

3.0 PRESENTATION

The applicant was invited to present a pre-DA proposal for the subject site at 13-19 Canberra Avenue St Leonards South, also known as Area 5. AH presented the architectural proposal contained in SJB's Design Review Report dated 11th May 2021.

AH noted the current design proposal is still conceptual and does not represent a finished design. The site is situated within an R4 zoning and opposite Newland Park, which forms a major public and environmental asset. AH noted the maximum permitted FSR of 3.7:1 cannot be fully accommodated within the DCP and ADG envelope controls.

Ground level facilities will contribute positively to the overall public domain. This includes a child play area, which is intended to be entirely accommodated on the site and a cafe to the south-east corner. A publicly accessible lift has been provided within the east-west pedestrian link (land to be dedicated to Council) as part of an overall south facing civic edge.

The approach to the facade design is to provide a 'woven texture' with a high degree of solidity and a 'reverse Gothic' approach with more enclosed upper levels and a more open podium. AH noted the squat proportions of the permitted building envelope. The proposal seeks to achieve a more vertical built form through the use of vertical elements with corner balconies located to further "erode" the edges of the built form. Open corners also take advantage of the views to the south-west and south-east.

The building form is articulated as a base, middle and top through the use of varying setbacks, facade treatments and materials. The podium to Canberra Avenue is clad in stone to provide a textured finish to the street and the upper levels are clad in GRC or precast concrete. All materials are selected to provide high quality, a long life span and low maintenance. A variety of concrete finishes are being explored including honed and bush hammered surfaces.

High level planting defines ground level private courtyards to Canberra Avenue as a response to the surrounding residential character. The podium slab to slab heights are typically 3.3 m. The existing large trees to the north-west corner of the site may be kept, subject to further arborists advice.

RS presented the landscape concept design contained in Site Image's Landscape and Public Domain Concept dated 7th May 2021 Issue A. The overall strategy includes the provision of large connected social spaces, the creation of a sense of place consistent with the precinct and the use of public art. The Applicant and design team are considering holding a workshop with Council to further advance the design of the east-west pedestrian link.

There are 4 existing Camphor laurel trees approximately 18 m in diameter that given their location relative to the proposed building could be retained. However RS noted that as they are considered weeds it may be more suitable to remove these. The Applicant intends to discuss the best strategy with Council.

Outdoor childcare play space is proposed to occupy the majority of the communal open space with "blurred" landscape edges to the neighbouring communal open space and east-west pedestrian link.

The overall intent is to contribute to a fresh new precinct and an enhanced streetscape to Canberra Avenue.

4.0 DRP PANEL COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This design review forms part of the St Leonards South pre-DA process. The Panel is engaged by Council to provide independent and impartial advice on the design of development proposals and applications to lift the design quality of projects. The Panel's comments and recommendations are intended to assist Council in their design consideration of an application against SEPP 65 principles and where relevant the requirements of the St Leonards South Landscape Masterplan (the Masterplan) dated October 2020, Lane Cove LEP 2009 and Lane Cove DCP Locality 8 (Parts A & B), dated 22nd October 2020. The absence of a comment under a particular heading does not imply that particular matter to be satisfactorily addressed, more likely the changes are suggested under other principles to generate a desirable change.

Your attention is drawn to the following;

- SEPP 65, including the 9 Design Quality Principles and the requirements for a Qualified Designer (a Registered Architect) to provide Design Verification Statements throughout the design, documentation and construction phases of the project.
- The Apartment Design Guide, as published by Planning NSW (July 2015), which provides guidance on all the issues addressed below.

Both documents are available from the NSW Department of Planning.

1. To address the Panel's comments, the applicant may need to submit amended plans. **Prior to preparing any amended plans or attending additional Panel presentations, the applicant must discuss the Panel's comments and any other matter that may require amendment with Council's assessing Planning Officer.**
2. When addressing the Panel's comments by way of amendments, if the applicant does not propose to address all or the bulk of the Panel's comments and wishes to make minor amendments only, then it should be taken that the Panel considers the proposal does not meet the SEPP 65 requirements. In these instances it is unlikely the scheme will be referred back to the Panel for further review.

4.2 Panel comments and recommendations

The Design Review Panel makes the following comments and recommendations in relation to the project. These are primarily based on the submitted Design Review Report by SJB dated 11th May 2021 and Landscape and Public Domain Concept by Site Image dated 7th May 2021. The Panel appreciates the early presentation of the design proposal by the Applicant and recognises that elements of the design are still being developed.

4.3 Principle 1 Context and Neighbourhood Character

This principle requires that good design responds and contributes to its context, in this case the existing residential neighbourhood and the St Leonards South Masterplan.

The Panel noted that as a high level document, the Masterplan contains some ambiguities which require further exploration and articulation as each project is designed. In this case, the Applicant is asked to clearly articulate their proposed site strategies regarding the level of public access being proposed to the green spine; privacy and security between the child play area and south facing civic edge and lift; and the coordination of the east-west pedestrian link landscape design with like spaces to the West. In addition, the Master plan shows considerably larger building separation to the north of the proposal than is being

proposed currently as well as access from the street up to the green spine. In this space especially, issues such as spatial hierarchy, amenity, privacy and ADG compliance need to be addressed.

The Panel is not clear how the design proposal has been informed by existing and likely future development, as little contextual information has been shown in the drawings and although urban diagrams appear responsive to existing and future context the plans, sections and elevations have almost no reference to adjacent sites or future built form.

The Panel would therefore recommend that the Applicant:

- Provide a comprehensive site strategy and plan that responds to and develops in greater detail the St Leonards South Masterplan that:
 - a. includes likely future adjacent buildings and outdoor spaces
 - b. clearly identifies which areas of the site are proposed to be used by the public, precinct residents, site residents and other users such as those of the child care centre and community room
 - c. clarifies how these spaces are accessed and made secure where necessary

4.4 Principle 2 Built Form and Scale

The Panel supports the general approach to the building form, including the expressed podium with townhouses to Canberra Avenue and the articulated civic edge to the southern elevation. However, as identified by the design team, further development is required to the building form and facades as described below.

Building height and separation

The building height appears to comply with the maximum incentivised building height. Although the thirteen (13) storey massing exceeds the twelve (12) storey maximum prescribed in the St Leonards South DCP, the Panel is comfortable that this does not impact on the intention of the height controls.

The Panel also notes that the setbacks to the northern and southern boundaries are not consistent with the DCP nor the 6, 9 and 12 m setback requirements of Parts 2F and 3F of the ADG. While the Panel can accept these outcomes, it must be demonstrated that reduced setbacks can work without impacting on privacy, amenity and urban design quality between neighbouring properties.

Furthermore some parts of the building and structural grid intrude into the required 4000 mm setback to Canberra Avenue and the podium is considered one level higher than the prescribed 6 storeys as per St Leonards South DCP 13/10/20 Section 6.2.1. Again, the Applicant should demonstrate that the setbacks proposed are acceptable and align with the intentions and desired outcomes of the DCP controls.

The Panel is generally supportive of the public lift structure and associated circulation space. While this is located wholly within the Council dedicated east-west pedestrian link, the Panel can support this measure due to the lifts structure's public access, contribution to the legibility of this pedestrian spine and its public activation to the south facing podium facade.

The Panel would therefore recommend that the Applicant:

- Revise the design to achieve the required building separation at the northern and southern boundaries or demonstrate that there will be no additional visual privacy impacts as a result of this non-conformance; this may for example be achieved by developing a more 'defensive' design approach to the northern elevation that

incorporates building design elements to control visual and acoustic privacy to the neighbouring property such as:

- a. limiting habitable rooms with a single aspect towards the north
 - b. providing recessed balconies/loggias
 - c. using solid or semi-solid balustrades to balconies
 - d. integrating louvres or screen panels to windows and/or balconies
 - e. providing planter boxes into walls or balustrades
 - f. utilising pergolas or shading devices to limit overlooking of lower dwellings or private open space.
 - g. using angled blade walls with offset windows
- Provide additional design development to verify that the north facing apartment types proposed can work without adverse amenity and urban design impacts
 - Provide additional design development to clarify the apartment types and roof profile to Levels 12 and 13 to verify the building sits wholly within the height control
 - Explore solutions with Council for the proposed location of the public lift within the east-west pedestrian spine

Building form and elevations

It is recognised that the design drawings are not yet fully developed and therefore it is understood the elevations require additional design development, including further consideration of materials, window types, sun-shading and balcony treatments. However, the concept diagrams indicate significant facade differentiation between the podium, middle and top of the building, which is not yet evident in the elevation designs.

A key aspect of the St Leonards South Masterplan is the provision of continuous yet varied communal open spaces (green spines) connecting adjacent sites from north to south. The Panel does not believe a sheer west elevation and built form is an appropriate response to this space and may adversely impact on the scale and character of communal open spaces throughout the precinct. When seen in conjunction with the future buildings to the North and South, a canyon like space could result, quite out of scale with the landscapes and residents at ground level, which would be a poor outcome.

The Panel notes the interface between the building podium, the public space at the south east corner and Canberra Avenue is not yet resolved. The proposed position of the carpark ramp may create visual and acoustic conflicts, thereby diminishing the quality of the adjacent public space. The 2 level townhouse to the north-east corner is located below existing street level and therefore outlook and access to light and air will be constrained. The Panel notes that services such as sprinkler valve boosters, statutory signage, exhaust louvres and egress doors are not yet shown; yet all of these items will have a significant impact on the amenity of the driveway, streetscape, entry and surrounding public space.

The Panel is not clear if the proposed sub-station is an external kiosk or enclosed chamber type; if it is the former it must satisfy all required building and side boundary setbacks.

The Panel considers the size and extension of the Level 1/2 awning roof above the child play areas in the communal open space to be appropriate and necessary in providing sun-shading and rain protection and therefore consistent with the Masterplan.

The Panel would therefore recommend that the Applicant:

- Develop the design of the Canberra Avenue podium corners to further benefit from the corner address and landscape amenity and to achieve the best public domain outcome. This could include:

- a. further development of the retail space including tenant viability with the proposed floor area, service access and a constructive use of the second floor volume,
 - b. consideration of services such as sprinkler booster valves, electrical plant rooms, doorways and louvres which may conflict with the public domain space,
 - c. possible relocation of the carpark entrance to the north-east corner adjacent to the sub-station, allowing a duplex unit and larger retail offering to be located to the more desirable south-east corner (subject to achieving suitable street to carpark ramp levels and avoiding traffic conflicts to the corner of Canberra Avenue and Duntroon Avenue)
 - d. provide greater separation between the child care lobby and drop-off from the waste collection point
- Investigate greater variation to the elevational treatment of the west elevation by for example introducing other apartment typologies such as 2 storey apartments above the child care, stepping the building along its length, introducing setbacks at higher levels, continuing the 'grid' concept, protruding some balconies and introducing varied sun shading strategies and green walls, etc. If better urban form design and an improved interface can be demonstrated, the Panel may support some minor encroachments into the 24 m building separation.
 - Review the position and design of the kiosk and demonstrate visual amenity and minimized impacts with more detailed drawings. Include any detail of servicing, amenities, storage provisions or the like.

4.5 Principle 3 Density

The data presented to the Panel indicates that the density of the development is consistent with the maximum permitted FSR of 3.7:1. It would appear however that the proposed GFA exceeds what can be accommodated within a fully compliant building envelope and may be contributing to some non-conformances as described within this report.

Refer to Section 4.4 for comments and recommendations related to building envelope non-conformances

4.6 Principle 4 Sustainability

While the scheme presented is still in early stages of design, the Panel would recommend that the Applicant develop the design further to demonstrate achievement of the following ESD requirements:

- a. Apartment Design Guide; provide compliance schedules to demonstrate how each item under sections 4A and 4B are achieved. Plan and elevation detail should show openable windows and external sun shading devices
- b. St Leonards South DCP Part B, Section 8.0 Environmental / Sustainability,
- c. Lane Cove DCP Section 6.3 Energy and Water Efficiency for Buildings,
- d. Lane Cove LEP 2009, 7.6 (vii) environmental impacts, and (viii) achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

As it stands, the proposal demonstrates good foundations in passive design such that a high level of sustainability could be achieved. The Panel therefore recommends that the Applicant develop the design further to also demonstrate achievement of the following ESD considerations:

- a. the applicant is encouraged to describe how Connecting with Country is being approached, particularly in terms of landscape design, place making, materiality and plant species selections,
- b. consider how embodied carbon might be reduced through selection of materials,
- c. noting that achieving ecologically sustainable development involves not only the built form and completed project but also how the future community interact with the building, consider 'how does the proposal enable the future community to live a sustainable lifestyle that is comfortable, resilient and connected'. Whilst this is neither mandatory nor prescriptive, the applicant might consider the following in designing for this outcome;
 - how is water managed throughout the proposal, from rainwater and stormwater harvesting through to use and re-use
 - what role does green infrastructure play in creating shade, managing water, creating habitat, and place making
 - how would future residents be able to easily access fossil-fuel free energy, and to what extent is that energy source safe during potential grid failure
 - how has the proposal considered our changing climate, and what has been done to ensure residents are safe from extended heat events, particularly during times of grid failure. Also demonstrate how severe storm events and flooding have been addressed.
 - how might the residents manage waste and particularly organic waste
 - how does the proposal connect residents with nature throughout the development
- d. The applicant is also encouraged to present sustainability-related material under the following headings:
 - *Design* - addressing passive design features and inclusions, building services and infrastructure,
 - *Procurement* – delivery phase sustainability initiatives,
 - *Operational* – how has the proposal provided the backdrop to enable the future community to achieve a sustainable lifestyle, e.g. waste management, place making, community gardens & organic waste management, fossil-fuel free energy , etc.

4.7 Principle 5 Landscape

Street planting

The Panel identified the importance of the existing street trees to the landscape qualities of the precinct, the benefits to local wildlife and value of the precincts tree canopy to reducing the urban heat island effect. Council and the applicant are encouraged to preserve tree planting wherever possible through the strategic location of new underground services, street parking and driveway crossings. New street tree planting is encouraged to enable a continuous planting zone to the full perimeter of the site.

Any proposed removal of the Camphor laurels to the north-west corner of the site should be discussed with Council officers noting that the proposed extent of basement car parking is unlikely to permit these trees to be retained.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Provide additional street trees to ensure a continuous planted site perimeter,
- Provide an arborists report and plan that clearly identify all trees proposed to be removed for consideration by Council and the DRP.

East-west pedestrian link and communal open space (green spine)

The Panel generally supports the proposed landscape strategy to the east-west pedestrian link consisting of amphitheatre seating and perimeter public stairs although additional detail is requested particularly in relation to the potential treatments and amenities offered at the street and retail interface.

The proposed landscape design suggests the communal open space to the rear of Area 6 could be accessible to the public and the child play area on the subject site (Area 5) is planned accordingly. The Panel notes a number of different approaches are being taken by Applicants to other sites including the designation of communal open spaces as private 'back yard' spaces while the Masterplan and St Leonards South DCP identify these spaces as "green spine connections (restricted access)" implying a continuous mews type space available only to residents of adjacent buildings.

The Panel stresses the importance of a co-ordinated inter-site approach to the landscape design of both the east-west pedestrian links and communal open spaces in relation to public and/or private access, configuration, planting, levels and the extent of deep soil. This is essential to achieving the objectives of the Masterplan.

A major concern of the Panel is the limited deep soil zone within the communal open space due to the extent of the basement car parking. This is not considered adequate or consistent with the Lane Cove DCP (amended 2016) nor the Masterplan. This will negatively impact the extent of existing tree retention, the potential for new large tree planting and ground water recharge. The Panel also notes that childcare fencing can be quite solid and enclosing which may be contrary to the visually continuous space sought by the Masterplan.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Meet with Council and adjacent land-owners/design teams to develop a coordinated response to the Masterplan,
- Provide for continuity of access along the green spine within the applicants property if required by the Masterplan,
- Develop the landscape design further to clearly define the extent of public and private domain and the visual privacy and security strategies for the child play area,
- Review the extent and depth of basement parking below the communal open space, this may require a different approach such as a spit level slab parking arrangement with, greater spatial efficiency and a reduced volume intruding into the communal open space,
- Maximise contiguous deep soil zones within the communal open space to improve tree health, provide new large tree planting, maximise ground water percolation and increase subsoil aeration.

4.8 Principle 6 Amenity

Internal spatial amenity

The Panel requests further resolution of a number of internal and external items to form positive living environments and resident well being.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant further study and develop the:

- Circulation systems in the basement such as child drop-off and waste removal,
- Bike circulation paths and basement parking,
- Waste storage and waste collection separation – operational issue if these areas are unconnected,
- Proposed adjacency of the waste removal and child drop off,
- Ability to separate child drop-off, parking for visitors and residents,
- Retail space servicing and amenities – how to design manage or discourage a harsh 24/7 convenience offer,
- Fire escape locations and fire doors to facade,
- External lift access and security at street level and at Level 1 lift landing,
- Disability access absent to entry foyer,
- Garbage chute strategy to cores,
- Perception of the community room - currently shown with direct access from Level 1 pedestrian link,
- Visual exposure of child care from east-west pedestrian link,
- Arrival sequence between child care and community room,
- Access to Level 13 apartments currently shown as external through uncovered gardens,
- Potential need for outdoor roofs and sun shading devices above child care to screen sight lines from directly above and effects on units over,
- Effects of noise transfer to apartments above child care, within and adjacent to the site.

Natural light and ventilation to the lobbies & circulation space

The Panel considers that parts of the corridors to Levels 01-11 have limited opportunity for daylighting, natural ventilation and outlook. The ADG Part 4F identifies the need for higher quality and less energy intensive solutions that include daylight and natural ventilation to common lobbies and circulation spaces. In the absence of a perceived higher quality, these spaces may appear uninviting, disconnected, not supportive of social interactions, and not in keeping with the assumed high-end finish of each apartment.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Replan the building to provide additional daylight, natural ventilation and outlook to the common circulation spaces to Levels 0-11 inclusive, options may include removing the cranked corridor, a second window to the northern end of the corridor or a repositioned and wider building recess, window area and seating space in front of the lifts facing towards the street.

Cross ventilation and natural light to apartments

While no apartment floor plans were provided to the DRP, it appears that less than 60% of apartments in the first 9 storeys would be capable of achieving natural cross ventilation and therefore would not comply with the objectives of Part 2E and the design criteria of Part 4B of the ADG.

The Panel notes that the capacity of the proposed north facing units to cross ventilate will be highly constrained by reduced building separation. It is also noted that the North facing 1 bedroom unit is unlikely to be considered cross ventilated; while this will be subject to future assessment, a demonstration of its capacity to cross ventilate is required to verify the current layout.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Revise the floor planning to provide additional corner and/or dual aspect apartments or other strategy sufficient to achieve a minimum of 60% of apartments with natural cross ventilation within the first 9 storeys,

- Provide sufficient openable window area and open balcony perimeter to apartments above 9 levels to be deemed cross ventilated.

Solar access and shading

The Panel considers that the building is well orientated and apartments well distributed to maximise solar access and daylighting in the colder seasons. However specific solar access to apartment rooms cannot be assessed as no apartment plans have been provided to the DRP.

It appears that solar access to lower level northern apartments is significantly impacted by the future building envelope to Area 3. This may be worsened by the subject site's proposed reduced setbacks to the northern boundary. The external facade 'grid' appears to reduce solar access to some east facing apartments mid-morning in winter.

The extent and operation of window shading devices necessary for the warmer seasons is not yet identified on the drawings. The West elevation in particular would be subject to high radiant heat loads and should be provided with sun-shading to all flush windows (ie. those not set back into a balcony).

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Provide more detailed solar analysis and a summary of findings in a tabulated format referring to the relevant ADG guidelines for levels of solar access required and nominating which apartments and habitable windows are counted as receiving solar access to meet the ADG definitions,
- Develop and clarify the extent of sun shading devices such as shutters and screens and how these are operated to ensure maximum summer shading consistent with Part 4C of the ADG.

4.9 Principle 7 Safety

This principle requires that public and private spaces be clearly defined and fit for their intended purpose. While the submitted floor plans were limited in their detail a number of potential safety issues were noted by the Panel.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Address the potential conflict of the child care drop off with the garage vehicle entrance and waste removal,
- Provide suitable disabled access to the entry foyer from the public street,
- Address the potential lack of visual surveillance to the Level 1 pedestrian area between the lift landing, the child care facility and the east-west pedestrian link.

4.10 Principle 8 Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

The Panel generally supports the proposed mixture of apartment types and sizes subject to development of the apartment planning and resolution of the natural ventilation requirements. The principle of social interaction is addressed by other recommendations within this Report.

4.11 Principle 9 Aesthetics

The Panel commends the design for the overall building form, facade textures and colours and the podium level treatments and varied housing typologies that will contribute to a legible pedestrian gateway to the St Leonards South Precinct from Newland Park.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant:

- Provide additional context and material analysis to support the proposed finishes and colours while also considering the suitability of face brickwork in some areas,
- Further develop the facade design including material selections and sun shading,
- Prepare and present additional detailed building elevations, 3d renderings and sample boards,
- Review the west and north facing façades as described above.

4.12 Other comments

The Panel commends the Applicant and Design Team on their well considered design concept presentations and their engagement with the Panel.

The Panel recommends that the Applicant and Design Team provide the following additional material for the next Panel meeting:

- More developed site plan including anticipated adjacent buildings,
- Finalised floor plans, elevations and cross sections,
- Apartment layout plans (dimensioned),
- Examples of detailed facade elevations and sections including sun-shading types,
- Materials and finishes board or imagery,
- Sustainable design strategy,
- Arborists report and summary plan showing trees proposed to be removed,
- Further developed landscape design concepts showing public and private domain, circulation and security,
- 3D renderings from Canberra Avenue and from the east west pedestrian link showing the visual extension of the Area 5 and 6 communal open space into Area 1,2,3 and 4 communal open spaces to the north,
- SEE.

5.0 OUTCOME

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

- The Panel recommends that the pre-DA submission including drawings, reports and schedules be further developed in accordance with the above recommendations and returned to Council and the Panel for consideration at the next Design Excellence meeting.