

MINUTES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL MEETING

Tuesday 14th December 2021

DEP PANEL MEMBERS:

Alf Lester	Chairperson	Architect/Urban Designer	LFA
Sam Crawford	Panel Member	Architect	Sam Crawford Architects
Brendan Randles	Panel Member	Architect/Urban Designer	Brendan Randles Architect

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES:

Colin Rockliff	Greaton
Helena Miller	MG Planning
Georgia Wilson	Koichi Takada Architects
Andrew Chung	Koichi Takada Architects
Sacha Coles	Aspect Studios
Effy Ge	Aspect Studios

COUNCIL STAFF:

Mark Brisby	Executive Manager, Environmental Services
Rajiv Shankar	Manager Development Assessment
Henry Burnett	Senior Town Planner
Angela Panich	Panel Secretary

APOLOGIES:

Lucinda Varley	Panel Member	Landscape Architect	Play By Design
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ITEM DETAILS:

Application Reference Number: Pre-DA

Property Address: 24-34 Berry Road, 23-31 Holdsworth Avenue and 42-46 River Road, St Leonards

Council's Planning Officer: Greg Samardzic

Owner: Greaton St Leonards Holdings Pty Ltd

Applicant: MG Planning

Proposal: Construction and use of four (4) stepped residential apartment buildings ranging in height from 3 to 10 storeys. The development consists of:

- A total of 228 residential apartments
- Three-four (3-4) levels of basement carparking with provision for 396 car parking spaces, 15 motorcycle spaces, storage and 57 bicycles
- Vehicular access provided from Holdsworth Avenue
- A 24m east-west "green spine"

1.0 WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND OPENING

The Chairperson introduced the Panel to the Applicant Representatives and extended Lucinda Varley's apologies due to the meeting date change.

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

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NIL.

3.0 PRESENTATION

The applicant presented their revised Concept for Area 18-20: The initial site included 24-34 Berry Road, 23-31 Holdsworth Avenue and 42-46 River Road, St Leonards. The expanded site includes additional land to the north and provides a subject site totalling 8757.8m².

4.0 DEP PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The development framework for this project is set 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 appreciated that substantial professional effort had been directed toward reviewing the Panel's recommendations following the initial concept presentation on 9 March 2021.

The key design elements had been revisited and the initial concept substantially modified.

Key changes included the provision of a 24m wide "green spine", the introduction of a three-storey townhouse boulevard form to River Road, the introduction of major communal facilities into the linear spine, vehicular access from Holdsworth Avenue rather than Berry Road and the introduction of clear address points to buildings within the subject site.

As part of the review process, the Panel noted the environmental amenity of the existing high-quality streetscapes, including the significant street trees in both Holdsworth Avenue and Berry Road. The Panel recommends that Council gives detailed consideration to the way in which the infrastructure upgrading is implemented to ensure the retention and protection of these important elements.

The Panel also questioned the proposed expansion of the southern pocket parks in Holdsworth Avenue and Berry Road, noting the difficulties imposed on providing direct disabled access from both streets to the entry points of Buildings A and D.

The nine design principles considered by the panel in the review of the Concept 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.

4.1. Context

The well-established street trees as well as the clear visual and physical links to the south mean that Berry Road and Holdsworth Avenue are significant public domain corridors.

The Panel again recommends that the proposed changes to the public streets and pocket parks west and east of the site be modified to enable direct access to southern lobbies within the complex. The proposed expansion of the existing pocket parks will mean that some lobbies (especially Building D) are located at a considerable distance from the nearest vehicular drop off point. As a consequence, universal access would prove difficult and would impact on and diminish the building's address function.

Within the complex, the Panel recommends that provision for clear physical connection be considered to allow for universal access to apartments within the complex. Apart from increasing flexibility and permeability, this measure will also allow for universal access throughout the green spine.

It was noted that the proposed green spine levels are at some variation to the levels set in the precinct landscape masterplan and as a consequence, there is a height differential between the subject site and the development site to the north. While each component of the wider green spine will form part of the communal open space for each separate development precinct, the Panel recommends that the design of the differing relevant levels be resolved.

The Panel acknowledges the proposed single vehicular access point to the site from Holdsworth Avenue, the location of parking within the outline of the built form and the resultant allocation of a significant area of deep soil to the green spine.

4.2. Built Form + Scale

The increased width of the linear green spine from 19m to 24m and the introduction of a three-storey townhouse boulevard form to the southern boundary of the subject site as well as the provision of community facilities within the green spine that extended across the top of the boulevard element is supported.

The Panel indicated the need to ensure that the articulation of the built form, demonstrated in the concept proposal for Holdsworth Avenue, will continue to be developed for the built form that addressed both edges of the linear green spine.

The applicant indicated that the proposed detailed design work would refine and develop the buildings (particularly facades) that face the green spine. It was also indicated that the location of green elements and balconies would provide a level of articulation that would reflect the more detailed computer-generated images (CGIs) that formed part of the presentation documentation.

While the proposed built form is consistent with the LEP 31m height limit, the Panel was advised by Council about a discrepancy between the permissible number of storeys set out in the DCP and the number of storeys in the submission. The Panel suggests that the applicant review the objectives of the storey controls and consider articulating and modulating the proposed building form to more closely reflect the DCP objectives.

The Panel noted that a number of proposed access corridors are excessively long (especially in Building D) and would not comply with the requirements of the BCA and ADG. If long corridors are contained within the development then there is a need to carefully

consider and incorporate light and outlook at one or both ends to secure an appropriate level of environmental amenity.

4.3. Density

The proposed development appears to be consistent with the permissible FSR of 2.6:1.

4.4. Sustainability

The Panel supported the proposed sustainability measures and noted that ongoing design refinement would form part of the process leading to a DA submission.

The Applicant provided advice on the design of screens and façade treatment. The objective is to mitigate the impacts of summer morning and afternoon sun as well as options to provide for solar screening and the provision of ambient light to apartments.

The Panel supports the proposed green roof approach combined with solar panels to mitigate the heat island effect and to offset energy use.

The Panel encourages the use of low embodied carbon concrete through the structure and the careful selection of materials with low embodied carbon.

The Panel noted that the submitted pre-DA documentation indicated that the deep soil requirements of the DCP and ADG have been met. Any numerical non-compliance with the Landscape Masterplan for the precinct, should be addressed on a merit basis.

4.5. Landscape

The Panel supports the proposed landscape approach for the central green spine and the introduction of a range of facilities within the communal area. It will be important to ensure that the facilities are readily accessible from all buildings within the subject site.

The Panel raised concern about the limited disabled access to key communal facilities from all buildings within the complex as well as disabled access within the total communal open space area and recommends that this issue be fully examined. The Panel also suggested the need for an enhanced level of disabled access within the overall complex.

As indicated in '4.4 Sustainability', the Panel supports the provision of green roofs, the introduction of horizontal green elements to mark the 'street wall' within the facades and the proposed landscaping associated with recessed balconies.

4.6. Amenity

The Panel recommends that visual access to the green spine is provided from each of the primary lobbies. This may well require a two-storey void where lobbies are set below the level of the green spine. The objective will be to ensure visual integration between lobby and communal green spine, as well as accessibility, despite RL differentials between lobby and

green spine. This will not only improve amenity, but will also provide residents and visitors with ease of orientation within the precinct.

There is a need to provide for disabled access to all areas and facilities within the communal open space.

4.7. Safety

The Panel remains concerned that the southern lobby entry points will be located at a significant distance from drop-off points on the street system and will involve access through proposed pocket parks. It will be important that such access patterns meet CPTED criteria.

The Panel has previously noted the importance of existing streets in providing direct access to proposed lobbies. This should be carefully considered in defining the final form of pocket parks to both Berry Road and Holdsworth Avenue.

The proposed visual links between street entry and green spine will enhance overall safety.

4.8. Housing Diversity + Social Interaction

The provision of a high level of accessibility to communal open spaces and facilities will be important to meet this requirement.

Subject to the above issues, the Panel supports the proposed diversity of dwelling mix in the development and the potential level of social interaction associated with the green spine communal open space.

4.9. Aesthetics

The Panel supports the modified design approach identified in the limited CGI material submitted and appreciates that the ongoing design refinement process will lead to further articulation of the built form.

The Panel noted the introduction of vertical and horizontal articulation together with the greening in the submitted documentation of the Holdsworth Avenue façade. It will be important that the built form facing toward the green spine and toward Berry Road is developed and refined as part of the DA documentation process. In particular, additional articulation of the internal facades is required to reduce perceived scale and bulk from the green spine.

The visual linking of entry lobbies to the green spine will also be important.

While the proposed building language is supported in principle, further refinement will be required to identify the measures required to screen western and eastern summer sun.

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 is further refined in terms of enhancing the built form modulation to the streets and green spine, increased equity of access to communal open space and facilities, clarification of landscape elements (both vertical and horizontal) to reflect the 'street walls' and the visual linking of entry lobbies to the green spine.

Subject to addressing the issues raised by the Panel, the subsequent DA documentation should be submitted to Council.