

**MINUTES OF NSROC DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MEETING  
LANE COVE COUNCIL  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**DRP PANEL MEMBERS**

Peter St Clair (PSC)	Chairperson	Architect
Michael Harrison (MH)	Panel Member	Urban Designer/Architect
Brendan Randles	Panel Member	Architect
Digby Hall	Panel Member	Architect/Sustainability

**APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES**

Nick Byrne	DKO	Architect
<b>Xiaoran</b> Ding	DKO	Architect
Asier Celaya	DKO	Designer
Han Chen	Turf	Landscape Architect
Samip Shah	AT & L	Civil Engineer
Tim Michel	AT & L	Civil Engineer
Stephen White	Urbis	Town planner
Jessica Ford	Urbis	Town planner
Matt Cogan (MC)	Turf	Landscape Architect
Michael Lee		Traffic
Jeremy Hung	JQZ	Owner & developer

**COUNCIL STAFF**

Mark Brisby	Executive Manager, Environmental Services
Rajiv Shankar	Manager Development Assessment
Chris Shortt	Senior Town Planner
Terry Tredrea	Strategic Planner
Christopher Pelcz	Strategic Planner
Angela Panich	Panel Secretary

**APOLOGIES**

None

**ITEM DETAILS**

Property Address: 26-50 Park Rd, 27-47 Berry Rd, 48-54 River Rd NSW 2065 (Areas 22 and 23).

Council's Planning Officer: Chris Shortt

Owner: JQZ

Applicant: JQZ

Proposal: Demolition of existing houses and related structures and the construction of a mixed-use development featuring approximately 323 residential apartments and town houses and associated landscaping, pool and parking.

**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. MH was not available to attend however had reviewed the documents before the meeting and provided detailed comments to the other Panel Members.

## **2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **3.0 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 dated October 2020, Lane Cove LEP 2009 (including Clause 7.6 Design Excellence) 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.

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.

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 to the Panel for further review.

## **4.0 DESIGN REVIEW**

### **4.1 Presentation**

The Applicant and Design Team were invited to present the pre-DA proposal for the subject sites. The DKO team and MC presented the architectural and landscape proposal document titled *Area 22 & 23 St Leonards South Design Review Panel June 2022*.

### **4.2 Panel comments and recommendations**

The Panel commends the Applicant and Design Team on the contextual form studies of the surrounding streets and aspects of the building massing such as the podiums addressing Park Street are well considered. However the overall building forms are excessively long with inadequate site permeability between the streets and communal open spaces, particularly within Area 23. This and the small number of building cores results in an excessive number of apartments per core and poor overall amenity to common areas and some apartments. The apartments consequently appear to be of a lower quality and possibly not suited to the market expectation for this location demonstrated by other projects within the St Leonards South Precinct.

Some aspects of the proposal are not sufficiently resolved to allow detail comments and recommendations to be provided. This includes the internal/courtyard building elevations and the floor plans where only one typical level has been provided.

The proposal assumes an averaging of amenity requirements such as deep soil and solar access, across the entire project site. This is not supported by the Panel.

The Panel makes the following specific comments and recommendations in relation to the project.

#### **4.2.1 Principle 1 Context and Neighbourhood Character**

Park Rd presents a distinct character as a shaded tree lined street containing early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century brickwork bungalows stepping down to the south with the topography. The Applicant intends for the western and southern boundaries of the project site to act as a transition to the surrounding precinct. This includes the introduction of podium level masonry buildings with vertical recesses. This approach is supported by the Panel.

The Applicant is encouraged to engage an Indigenous design consultant to work collaboratively with the design team to develop the overall Connection to Country approach and design outcome for presentation at the next DRP meeting. The Applicant could also consider contacting the Aboriginal Heritage Office to obtain further advice.

The Panel notes the proximity of the site to Wollstonecraft train station. The Design Team are encouraged to consider this in their overall approach to urban design, site planning and wayfinding.

#### **4.2.2 Principle 2 Built Form and Scale**

The proposed buildings to Area 22 have a distinctive character and are generally supported. However the buildings to Area 23 are considered too monolithic with the same architectural treatments applied to the long elevations. The balcony balustrades and spandrels all appear to be the same and solid and include little colour differentiation. The roofline could be provided with greater variation. The designs in the precedent images are very different and appear to be of a higher quality than the proposal.

The building massing to Area 23 is excessive in scale and does not provide sufficient site permeability. Given the scale of this site and number of apartments being proposed per level, a minimum of 3 to 4 buildings should be considered to Area 23, each with individual street and courtyard entrances and cores. Connections could be maintained between buildings through the use of naturally ventilated breezeways at core locations, which may also provide the opportunity for additional cross ventilated corner apartments and improved amenity to common circulation areas.

The proposed Eastern building to Area 23 does not provide a sufficiently graduated height and scale transition down to River Road consistent with the DCP. The Applicant is encouraged to introduce a greater number of graduated terraces with the added benefit of outdoor roof gardens facing towards the Harbour.

The provision of multiple vertical façade recesses achieves an effective layering of the built form when viewed from the streets. This is supported.

The internal elevations facing the communal open spaces are not sufficiently developed. The massing however appears to indicate almost sheer facades with little modulation or recesses. A variety of materials and articulation should be provided to alleviate the tunnel like nature of this space to Areas 22 and 23. The Panel would support the extension of balconies by up to 1 m and the extension of living and bedroom windows up to 1 m into the building separation zone, subject to their windows facing primarily north or south.

The Panel noted that a significant number of below ground apartments are proposed throughout the development. Whilst level differences of up to 1 m can generally be supported in high amenity locations, below ground south facing dwellings including the townhouses facing River Road are not supported. The below ground living areas and private open spaces only exacerbate the already compromised amenity caused by the proximity to high traffic areas and the lack of solar access.

The Panel has no objection to the minor setback non-compliance to Park Road Area 22 on the basis that this zone is only occupied by private outdoor spaces and balconies and limited to the podium levels (Ground to Level 2).

#### **4.2.3 Principle 3 Density**

The proposed density and FSR is supported subject to improvements to the height transition (additional terracing) to the south-east corner and reduction to the extent of below ground dwellings.

#### **4.2.4 Principle 4 Sustainability**

A clear sustainability narrative is not yet evident in the design. The Applicant should provide a sustainability report to address the building and landscape design initiatives including the site's unique position relative to the broader landscape context. This could include:

- Consideration of sustainability as an opportunity to drive a bigger site wide narrative responding to the National Climate Emergency
- Development of apartment NatHERS ratings in excess of 6 stars combined with design strategies that go beyond minimum compliance and represent the required design excellence
- External solar shading to west facades
- Consideration of full site electrification without any gas cooking
- Provision of adequate sub-station capacity for future electric vehicle expansion
- Development of a water eco-system, with rainwater harvesting and re-use

#### **4.2.5 Principle 5 Landscape**

The relationship between the Area 22 and Area 23 communal open spaces should be further developed with regard to visual access, security and landscape continuity across the road. All residents of both Areas should have equal access to all communal open spaces.

The majority of deep soil areas and existing mature planting is located solely to Area 22. The Panel does not consider this to be consistent with the landscape master plan or DCP. Deep soil should be more evenly distributed between the two sites. While the swimming pool is supported in principle, solar studies should be provided to demonstrate the extent of solar access to the pool and surrounding recreation areas.

It appears that a number of existing significant trees are being removed from the communal open space. Further details of this are required together with supportive arguments from an arborist. Every attempt should be made to preserve the maximum number of existing trees that will support wildlife and enhance site amenity.

It appears that no communal open space is being provided to the building roofs which is at odds with other developments within the St Leonards South precinct. This appears a significant opportunity to enhance sustainability outcomes and provide greater amenity and marketing value. As a minimum the Panel would recommend that the roof of the lower south facing building to Area 23 be developed as communal open space. This would provide different opportunities for outdoor recreation such as for smaller communal groups.

Additional details of the new east-west street and associated pedestrian entrances to Areas 22 and 23 are requested, which was described by the Applicant as a shared street character.

Overland stormwater flow does not appear to have yet been considered. Openings are encouraged between buildings to the southern zone of the Area 23 courtyard, which would otherwise be at significant risk of flooding of adjacent buildings in the event of stormwater pipe failure.

The diagrammatic elevations indicate extensive areas of building integrated planting in particular to the west elevation. Whilst this concept is supported by the Panel, additional details are requested describing the location, extent, details and maintenance for this planting.

#### **4.2.6 Principle 6 Amenity**

##### **Levels B1-B4**

The basement level car parking appears generally functional however many car spaces do not have storage attached. It may also be better to Level B3 if cars peeled off before the loading area to avoid conflicts between cars and trucks. In regard to Level B2 the Park Rd pedestrian entrance is too narrow and should have a direct sight line between the street entrance and the courtyard.

The south facing townhouses to River Road are not supported in their current form as they are isolated from the remainder of the development and the communal open space. The lower townhouse floors levels to Areas 22 and 23 should be raised to match or be situated above street level with suitable visual privacy and acoustic buffers.

The internal corner apartment arrangements (SE and SW corners of communal open space Area 23) are not supported as they will lead to compromised internal arrangements and amenity. It is recommended that only one apartment occupy each corner. The location of communal rooms is supported.

The Berry Rd pedestrian entrance should align with the lifts which currently compromises wayfinding and causes excessive walking distances. The lift lobbies should generally be wider.

Common corridors to Levels B1 and B2 are excessively long and without relief with up to 17 apartments per core. Together with dead end corridors this would contribute to poor quality apartments with complex way finding. The number of apartments per core and the common corridor lengths should be reduced, to comply with the ADG. Additional windows should be introduced to common corridors. Further to item 4.2.2 it is recommended that Area 23 be redesigned to provide 3 - 4 buildings with individual cores. The current proposal is not compliant with the ADG nor supported by the Panel and requires considerable rework prior to the next DRP.

### **Ground**

Similar to the basement levels common corridors are excessively long with up to 15 units being provided per core. They should be redesigned to be compliant with the ADG. The pedestrian entry from Park Road to Area 22 should align with the lifts and the lift lobby should be wider and above ground to provide daylighting and outlook to the courtyard. The current proposal would result in compromised entrance experience and wayfinding.

### **Level 1 & 2**

Lift lobbies should be wider. The Panel is concerned the internal/courtyard facing facades will have little modulation being exactly 24m apart. Refer to section 4.2.2 for recommendations.

### **Generally**

Consider providing greater variety to individual apartment entrances through the use of door sidelights, wider recesses and offset entrances to avoid visual privacy concerns from corridors. Consider widening long common corridors to provide relief and variety.

Balconies appear to be minimum ADG sizes. Given the high quality of the precinct and precedents set by other projects, it would be anticipated that larger balconies would be provided that encourage indoor and outdoor living. The Panel would support larger balconies that could project beyond the façade line (and into the street and communal open space setback lines) by up to 1 m.

A greater variety of apartment sizes is also encouraged as these appear to have mostly minimum dimensions. The majority of apartments have balconies in front of bedrooms and it is recommended that a variety of plan types be provided which may in some cases include balconies in front of living rooms in order to visually extend these spaces. Provide developed floor plans/apartment layouts to all levels.

The number of lifts provided relative to the number of apartments appears to be low and further details are requested. This could be improved by the provision of additional cores as recommended earlier in this report.

The Panel noted potential difficulties with building address and wayfinding given the scale of the combined Areas 22 and 23 and their being serviced by a single driveway, car park entrance and service dock.

### **Visual and acoustic privacy**

Many apartments addressing Berry and Park Rd feature vertical building recesses shared by pairs of apartments. Whilst these are generally supported as they assist with solar access, natural ventilation, views and daylighting as well as built form articulation, care should be taken with regards to visual and acoustic privacy between living rooms of adjacent apartments looking across these recesses. Strategies that may be considered include offsetting windows and the provision of privacy screens in accordance with Parts 3F and 4H of the ADG.

### **Cross ventilation**

The cross-ventilation count appears to incorporate apartments with narrow façade recesses approximately 2-3m (for example Levels 1-3 east facing apartments to Area 23). These are not supported by the Panel nor compliant with Part 4B of the ADG. The overall number of cross-ventilated apartment should be corrected and if necessary the floor plans amended. More detailed apartment plans are required indicating window types and locations in order to further assess the cross-ventilation compliance.

### **Solar access**

Few details have been provided in regard to the proposed solar shading. This is particularly important in respect to long west facing elevations. Further details are requested prior to the next DRP. The development schedule suggests that 82% of apartments are provided with two hours of solar access which is higher than most other developments have achieved in the precinct. More detailed solar analysis is required including views from the sun, in order to demonstrate the level of compliance.

### **Distribution of amenity**

The averaging of amenity such as solar access, cross ventilation, communal open space and deep soil across the entire project is not supported due to significant scale of development and the separation of Areas 22 and 23 by a public road. The Applicant should provide measurements of amenity per Area and per building.

#### **4.2.7 Principle 7 Safety**

Few details are provided with respect to the lobby entrances and associated visibility and way finding. This is requested for the next DRP together with details of the security provided to communal open spaces and ground level apartments and townhouses.

#### **4.2.8 Principle 8 Housing Diversity and Social Interaction**

Opportunities for social interaction could be improved by adopting previous recommendations including the alignment of street entrance locations with lifts and courtyard entrances.

The unit mix is generally supported however consideration could be given to some larger 4 bedroom apartments and dual key apartments.

#### **4.2.9 Principle 9 Aesthetics**

The design report includes good analysis of surrounding built form and streetscapes, providing a sound starting point for the building envelope designs. However the building elevations could also be informed by a broader range of issues including orientation and solar control, varying street scales, topography, views and street setbacks. Consider developing the individual façade designs further to respond to these conditions and to provide more variety and articulation.

Provide additional details of the façade products, materials and finishes consistent with the precedent images provided and that respond to the overall precinct character. Consider the re-use of any existing on-site sandstone.

Provide further details of air conditioning plant. The Applicant indicated that individual plant rooms would be provided to each floor (rather than balcony mounted units).

Provide details of vertical external drainpipes and drainage to balconies to demonstrate their integration into the design.

Provide all elevations and sections capturing both street and internal elevations. Overall building dimensions should also be provided.

## **5.0 OUTCOME**

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

The Panel does not support the proposed development in its current form. An amended and more developed proposal should be prepared, satisfactorily addressing the identified issues as detailed under each Principle and returned to Council and the Panel for consideration.