

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 6 February 2025

## **4 - DA2024 1835 - 33-35 Fairlight Street and 10-12 Clifford Street, FAIRLIGHT**

### **PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### ***General***

Previously seen in part as DA2022/0688, however proposal now agglomerates an additional two sites.

The application seeks approval for the construction of 15 apartments with parking for 35 cars.

The proposal exceeds the LEP building height control by 63.53% and the LEP FSR by 93.7%. Departures from the DCP controls are also proposed including reduced front setbacks, number of dwellings and wall height.

The panel considers the numerical breaches to be significant and were not convinced that the breaches have been justified in terms of improved amenity outcomes, public benefit or high levels of sustainability performance.

#### ***Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character***

Inadequate site analysis was provided and should include consideration of wider context, particularly with respect to Country, topography, water, trees and urban context.

Whilst the proposal bears some intentional relationship to neighbouring built form, it seeks to include large amounts of floor space by way of significant excavation which the panel consider to be excessive and inefficient. The resulting excavation is 5 storeys equivalent in depth, requires significant backfill which is costly and wasteful.

By agglomerating the two additional lots, the proposal is able to take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate driveway crossings which the panel supports.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Provide adequate response to Country
2. Provide adequate site analysis addressing topography, water, trees, urban context etc.
3. Reduce excavation and disturbance to site considerably
4. Maintain single consolidated driveway crossing serving agglomerated site.

#### ***Scale, built form and articulation***

The built form resulting from the deep excavation includes living environments that are almost entirely subterranean, overlooked and exceedingly deep in plan. This is indicative of overdevelopment.

It is the opinion of the panel that a scheme containing fewer apartments, less parking, considerably less excavation and no subterranean habitable spaces would be more appropriate development for the site.

#### **Recommendations**

5. Do not include subterranean habitable spaces. This may require fewer/smaller dwellings.

## ***Access, vehicular movement and car parking***

By agglomerating the 4 sites, vehicular entries have been consolidated to Clifford Avenue. This is supported.

Two pedestrian entries are provisioned. One from Clifford Avenue and one from Fairlight Avenue. Both offer clear, safe passage and connection to landscaped spaces at their respective street interfaces.

Unfortunately, the access ways are deep and dark. On typical floors, lift lobbies have no access to natural light or air. Long dark corridors also extend into many apartments. This is indicative of overdevelopment.

In the case of the Clifford Avenue entry, the adjacent communal resident's gym is well placed to offer sense of passive surveillance, which partially overcomes some of the potentially furtive space created in and about the substation and bin holding area. Nevertheless, improvements can be made with respect to passive surveillance and may include reconfiguration and or enclosure of substation.

Some apartments include provision of internal stairs including winder stairs. It was noted that given the likely target demographic, these internal stairs should be made safer and more comfortable to use.

### **Recommendations**

6. Re-configure layout so that all common areas can receive natural daylight and ventilation
7. Greatly reduce extent of long corridors without access to daylight within apartments
8. Resolve furtive spaces around bin holding area and substation
9. Provision for ½ or ¼ landings in lieu of winder stairs to increase safety and comfort.

## ***Landscape***

The proposal is an over development with little regard for the required setbacks as outlined in Section 3E of the Apartment Design Guide which specifies a 6-metre setback to the rear and both sides to allow for the establishment of canopy trees.

As the site is very steep, extra thought should be put into landscape and planting response to ensure there is adequate canopy cover replaced on the site.

Section 4P of the Apartment Design Guide specifies the required soil volume for successful tree and shrub planting. The landscape plans do not comply with these metrics, and it is unlikely the intended design would be successful.

### **Recommendations**

10. Compliance with the setbacks as outlined in the ADG and provide appropriate tree planting opportunities within these deep soil zones with consideration for the view corridors of the proposed development and neighbours alike
11. Ensure any planting on structures has adequate soil depth and volume with adequate irrigation and drainage to ensure successful tree and shrub plantings.
12. Explore the option of northern hemisphere deciduous trees where appropriate as trees in the winter landscape still provide aesthetic interest while providing some privacy and allowing for natural to reach habitable rooms in the winter. A strategic selection of trees could also provide a strong vertical element and height which would not be achieved with the Frangipani.
13. Planting on structures can be successful however, the soil volumes and the square meterage as outlined in the ADG Part 4P Planting on structures must be provided as these are proven horticultural best practice statistics that yield the most positive results. With that said the following must be considered:
  - a. Proper drainage
  - b. Proper soil profile for the species of plants proposed
  - c. Automatic irrigation set to climatic conditions and time of year
  - d. Type of mulch to be used at both the time of planting and used as a "top up"

- e. The external colour of the raised planter boxes. These tend to get very hot which in turn heats the soil and becomes a source of stress on the plants
14. The proposal should cover a green roof option with low growing ground covers – (there are several companies specialising in this area) that would go a long way to reducing the heat island effect and reduce the reliance on heating and cooling.

## ***Amenity***

The proposal incorporates high levels of amenity for some apartments, but many are compromised due to being located in subterranean locations and due to the quantum of development on site. Problematic impacts include solar access, privacy/overlooking, access to daylight/air.

The panel does not consider that the site is constrained such that compliance with ADG solar access 4A-1 could be considered unreasonable. Rather that with fewer/smaller apartments and less excavation, development should be able to exceed the control.

It is noted that many apartments rely on skylights to achieve compliant solar access. This is not optimal as horizontal plane glass is subject to extreme solar loads in Summer and a small amount of gain in winter, especially when the extent of solar access is considered as a proportion of the large internal areas of apartments proposed.

Several small, deep courtyards are proposed at about the eastern and western boundary interfaces and serve as the sole access to light and air for several habitable spaces. In each of these instances, problematic privacy relationships are created whereby habitable rooms look into each other, and over private open space. Further, these situations are not consistent with Objective 4A-2 in that bedrooms gain sole access to light/air via a small courtyard, creating potential acoustic and privacy issues.

The majority of common spaces such as lift lobbies do not have access to daylight/natural ventilation.

## **Recommendations**

15. Re-configure to ensure compliance with ADG 4A-1 as a minimum – Fewer/smaller apartments and less excavation may be required
16. Utilise Vertical planes of glass for solar access wherever possible so that solar access can be more passively controlled to optimise performance between seasons
17. Ensure courtyards are not used for sole access to light/air to habitable spaces in accordance with design guidance relating to ADG Objective 4A-2
18. Increase amenity to common spaces such as lift lobbies by providing access to light and air in accordance with design guidance relating to ADG Objective 4F-1

## ***Façade treatment/Aesthetics***

Proposal is thoughtfully composed with clear articulation, formal intent and materiality.

Floor to floor height of 3.2 may require reconsideration due to the extent of terracing.

## **Recommendations**

19. Investigate drainage details about terraced areas and if required, incorporate additional height required to resolve.

## ***Sustainability***

Proposal is an overdevelopment of the site which leads to excessive excavation, compounded by the surplus of parking that has been provided.

That the development is proposed to be 100% electric is supported, however more efficient systems should be selected such as heat pumps for hot water and spa heating.

The lack of solar access is concerning. Although compliance is compensated through the use of skylights, the amount of sunlight reaching apartments with respect to the internal area of the apartments should be increased to have a more meaningful effect on passive thermal management. Solar access

could be improved through reducing the scale of the development, which would allow for re-alignment of the spaces to improve solar access.

### **Recommendations**

20. Reduce the number of units and provide less car parking to reduce the amount of excavation which is required
21. Increase the amount of PV and provide a green roof
22. Change the spa heater to a heat pump
23. Include rainwater recycling connected to some of the toilets/laundries for re-use
24. Change the hot water system from electric storage to heat pump

## **PANEL CONCLUSION**

**The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form. A complete redesign and substantial reduction in the floor area and excavation is required. As noted any breaching of the primary controls would need to be supported by an analysis of the benefits compared to a complying scheme.**

The Panel refer the applicant to the Apartment Design Guide for aspects related to amenity and internal planning of apartments.