

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 25 November 2021

5 - DA2021/1766 - 18 Alexander Street COLLAROY

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The proposal is for the demolition of a detached house and construction of two x two-storey buildings over a single level of basement car parking accommodating five self-contained apartments pursuant to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The site is in a low-density residential zone that is close to Pittwater Road. There are several current proposals for redevelopment in the area. The site is in the moderately sloped section of Alexander Street before it rises steeply towards the west.

The site also rises steeply towards the south at the rear of the lot.

At approximately 13m, Alexander Street has a very narrow street reserve.

The Panel commends the quality of the documentation and representation of adjoining properties.

Scale, built form and articulation

The bulk of the building has been set back 12m from the street that is well in excess of the setback required by the DCP. The upper level is set back further still with a very large roof terrace facing north.

The Panel was not provided with any analysis of the impact on views from properties to the west of the site, however most properties appear to face the street with very limited views towards the east. No 20 does appear to have a large east facing window on the third level but the Panel was not able to determine the impact on views from this property.

The Panel considers the bulk and scale of the building appropriate, however the wide driveway has a significant impact on the continuity of the street scape and appears unnecessarily wide given that it will only serve ten vehicles. The arrangement also results in a very large void above the car park that has no apparent use. This is discussed further in the car parking and access section.

The overall planning strategy is the creation of two blocks separated by a 'breezeway', while this provides some articulation the arrangement of the stairs and windows is an inefficient use of the building envelope without providing amenity.

Recommendations

1. Alternative massing should be explored. It is not clear why units 1 and 2 are not narrower (E-W) and longer (N-S) that would be possible with the deletion of the breezeway.
2. Relocating the stairwell and lift towards the centre of the building would provide a significant increase in the northern exposure of units 3 and 4 and by relocating bedrooms to the south and living to the NE and NW it should be possible to have good solar access to both units.
3. Units 1 and 2 and carpark could be raised by 1.5m, and units 3 and 4 dropped by a 1.5m. This would allow an additional unit to be created by repeating units 3 and 4 on the second level while reducing the overall height of the building, reducing the excavation, eliminating the void above the car park and providing less steep access to the car park.
4. Investigate the potential to have a relatively level narrower car park entry along the eastern boundary of the site.



Amenity, privacy

Units 1 and 2

Outlook from Unit 1 over the driveway is poor and the terrace opens from the bedroom not the living area, the balcony is not of a useable dimension adjoining the living area

It is not clear what purpose the double wall with the large circular cut-out performs- this is valuable external wall area that could provide cross ventilation and natural light and air to the ensuite.

Unit 3 and 4

Units 3 and 4 have no northern orientation and even the bedrooms that could have northern windows do not.

The skylight above unit 3 is inadequate for solar access to the living area.

Living areas and private open spaces face south and given the rise towards the back would have very little natural light

Unit 5

Access to the unit is by an unsheltered stair or uncovered lifts

The very large roof terrace is un-shaded.

The roof terrace would require significant cross falls and insulation resulting in an increased floor to floor clearance than that indicated to ensure 2.7m ceilings in Unit 2 below.

Generally

Bathrooms would benefit from natural light and air.

The 'breezeways' take up a large volume within the building envelope but do not provide high amenity and in their current form, provide little amenity or spatial interest and without openings do not provide natural ventilation.

The location of the external staircase compromises the privacy of the adjoining property at No.20 Alexander Street now and in the future.

Recommendations.

5. Ensure the living rooms of all units receive 2 hours of sun mid-winter
6. Provide cross ventilation to all units
7. Internalise main stair to improve privacy
8. Investigate deletion of breezeway and replacement by a conventional lobby that provide weather protection while still allowing for natural light and ventilation.
9. Rearrange ensuite and WIR in Unit 1 to provide natural light and ventilation to ensuite.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The car park entry dominates the street presence and could be reduce to a single lane given the low numbers of cars.

Recommendations

10. Redesign the car parking layout, stairs and relocate stairs and lift to the centre of building to maximise the northern aspect of units
11. Investigate the potential of relocating the parking and access to the eastern boundary
12. Investigate the potential of 'jockey' or stacked parking



Landscape

The Panel commends the consideration and concern for trees on neighbouring properties.

The extensive planters, particularly around the roof terrace of Unit 5 should be part of the common property to ensure an adequate maintenance regime.

Recommendations.

13. Substitute non-endemic species like *Corymbia citriodora* and *Brachychiton populneus* with large endemic canopy tree species suitable for the coastal location.
14. Provide greater percentage of coastal endemic plant species especially in front setbacks.
15. Provide common on grade open space to boundary areas for screen planting. Do not rely solely on private gardens to achieve necessary screening.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The range of façade compositions, materials and colours is supported.

Sustainability

No sustainability measures beyond compliance have been indicated at this stage.

Recommendations

16. Include electric heat pump hot water and induction cooktops to replace the use of gas.
17. The Panel recommends inclusion of a substantial amount of rooftop PV (1.5kW/unit) with direct feed 'behind the meter' to each apartment as well as to common areas.
18. Add external windows to bathrooms and utility rooms wherever possible.
19. Include EV charging points for all car spaces

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form.

A re-design that achieves improvements in solar access, amenity and privacy as indicated in the recommendations is required.

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