

ITEM 3 – DA2023/1869 - 54, 56 & 58 Beaconsfield Street NEWPORT

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This proposal has been previously reviewed by the Panel at a pre-lodgement meeting.

The application is for a 2-3 storey residential flat building with a level of basement parking and a roof-top communal open space.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

Attention is drawn to comments and recommendations listed in the previous DSAP Panel report. The Panel is not convinced that these have been adequately addressed; in particular the concerns regarding landscape and the R2 residential zone transition.

Generally, the applicant has addressed the concern regarding the eastern boundary by predominantly setting back the façade, with a smaller incursion into the setback, with windows facing north-south.

See comments below regarding landscaping and removal of trees.

Recommendations

1. Surrounding landscape context to be considered with a view to providing a more appropriate level of tree retention and canopy cover.

Scale, built form and articulation

In the pre-lodgement DSAP panel, the applicant was asked to set back the eastern portion of the building 9m from the side boundary to provide for the zone transition, as well as provide habitable windows and rooms to the façade. While not meeting the 9m, the proposed 6m setback with habitable windows is generally acceptable. A portion of this façade is pushed toward the boundary approximately 8.75m long. While an improvement on the previous design, this wall still presents as a large unarticulated mass to a low density residential area, and should be set back further to provide an appropriate transition to the low density zoning. This is particularly relevant as this is the only area on site which would provide 6m for deep soil planting without any structures (noting the large amount of retaining walls to the front setback required for the lowered POS areas).

Additionally, the western wall is only 4.5m from the boundary with large operable windows to the southern apartment's living spaces. The ADG requires 6m, and it is the Panel's view that an incursion on this setback would affect the privacy of the neighbouring property. This is particularly of concern as the neighbouring 4 storey building is only 4.1m from the boundary, providing only 8.6m between habitable rooms rather than the required 12m.

The applicant has provided only 3100mm floor-to-floor heights. This has become increasingly difficult to do due to changes to the NCC, including 1:80 falls to drains, screed thickness, and fireproofing requirements.

Recommendations

2. Provide short sections north-south through ground floor units and basement, and update all sections to show neighbouring property interfaces to demonstrate privacy impacts. Alternatively, increase setbacks to minimum 6m.
3. Provide 1:20 detail through wall to ensure 3100mm floor to floor is sufficient to meet NCC requirements.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The previous Panel was concerned with the location of the driveway and design of the basement parking to incorporate two levels. The applicant has addressed by relocating the driveway and bin storage and reducing the basement to a single level. The Panel is generally supportive of these changes.

While the inclusion of open stairs is generally supported for development up to 3 storeys, the introduction of the rooftop communal open space now requires that the stairwells be fire isolated.

The communal open space is broken into 3 levels, connected via a series of stairs. This does not provide equitable access to spaces, and ramping would need to be provided within the proposed configuration. Alternatively, two distinct COS areas, each associated with a lift core, may be more appropriate.

Recommendations

4. Provide fire isolated stairs from the rooftop to ground floor to meet NCC requirements.
5. Provide equitable access to all areas of the communal open space

Landscape

Although the proposed basement plan is primarily within the nominated setbacks for this type of development, 2 x AA1 rated, highly significant trees are proposed for removal, that being T28 – Eucalyptus paniculata and T29 – Syncarpia golumulifera. This is not supported, and an alternate building design should be considered that has less than 10% incursion into the Tree Protection Zones of these trees. Root mapping by non-destructive means should be conducted by the Project Arborist.

The landscape response does propose 7 replacement canopy trees which is a positive element of the revegetation of the site however, the most valuable tree on any site is an existing tree in good health and of good form and vigour with a long useful life expectancy such as T28 & T29. The Panel does not support the removal of these trees.

The reduced setback of 4.5 meters along the western side needs to be maintained as an unencumbered planting trench with species appropriate soil profile to ensure the specified Paper Bark trees will grow to their full potential. The proposed *Melaleuca quinquenervia* adjacent to the north east unit should be planted at grade and not within the retained area as this limits the available room for proper development of the root plate of this tree.

The planting areas need to contribute to the management of stormwater, and stormwater plans must be developed to ensure they do not conflict with the any existing trees to be retained or proposed. A revised landscape documentation package will need to be in accordance with the submission requirements of Council.

The proposal is not supported in its current form by the Panel Landscape Architect.

Recommendations

6. Consider retention of the AA1 rated trees (T28 and T29) through a redesign of the built form and basement.
7. Ensure minimum 4.5m planting to the western boundary, rather than the 4m setback shown on basement plans.
8. The roof top communal open space should have
 - a. 1 x unisex DDA compliant toilet

- b. Retractable shade awning
 - c. Utility sink and power point
 - d. Shade from natural planting in raised garden beds
 - e. Planter boxes need to be 3.5m x 3.5m with a soil depth of not less than 800mm
9. A variety of small, medium, and large trees should be considered to help revegetate the site.

Amenity

The applicant has created more connected north-south living areas which is supported. While it may be appropriate to face primary living areas towards the views, secondary living spaces should meet minimum dimensions for living rooms if they are to be considered as the primary source of solar access. Additionally, insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate solar access compliance. Sun eye view diagrams only show the proposed site, and not the neighbouring buildings to the north. These are likely to have an impact on solar access for the first storey units to the rear of the site, as it appears neighbouring properties sit 3m above the proposal's communal open space as shown in elevations. These sun eye view diagrams may demonstrate a 4.5m rear setback is insufficient to achieve solar access to residents.

While improved, the Panel still has concerns regarding the amenity of ground floor units. All are south facing with no ventilation and are likely to be prone to damp and mould, with a reliance of mechanical heating, cooling, and ventilation. Additionally, unit G01 has over 9m to the back of the kitchen and G02 is over 11m. This is unacceptable in terms of light and ventilation of units which are already constrained. Finally, the third eastern bedroom of Unit G03 is fully subterranean, requiring excessive excavation and retaining walls to provide habitable windows to the space. This bedroom should be removed.

While the entry lobbies have improved from the previous scheme, the Panel believes there is still the opportunity for improvement. Movement through the eastern lobby is still convoluted with no sight lines to the lift, and is relatively narrow in width. This is likely to create pinch points in accessing the lifts, particularly for those with prams or mobility assistant devices such as walkers or wheelchairs. Noting the requirement above to include fire isolated stairs, it is suggested these lobby spaces could be better designed to provide clear open spaces.

The introduction of communal open space on the roof provides more amenity for residents, despite the encroachment on the height plane. However, in its current form the COS requires some refinement to ensure access as outlined above and shade for those using the space. Further consideration for rear small spaces labelled as COS is required. These should provide a specific function and be designed as such. To be counted towards COS calculations they also require a minimum width of 3m.

The proposed development does not support housing diversity, and would benefit of the introduction of one or two bedroom units to support more affordable and diverse housing choices.

Recommendations

10. Ensure secondary living spaces meet ADG minimum dimensions for living areas.
11. Include neighbouring properties in sun-eye diagrams to demonstrate solar access compliance.
12. Remove the third subterranean bedroom to the east in unit G03.
13. Ensure open plan living spaces are no deeper than 8m to the back of kitchens.
14. Increase the amenity of lobby spaces to ensure clear site line to lifts.
15. Provide shade for communal open space having regard to building height and view impacts

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

As noted in the previous DSAP report:

The southern elevation is well articulated and goes some way to reducing the appearance of overall building bulk. However, some of the proposed architectural and landscape features may not achieve their potential when built. The proposed planter boxes are unlikely to allow for luxuriant plant growth due to

being permanently in shade and relying upon private apartment owners to plant species that would grow. Consultation with your landscape architect is recommended to establish whether planter boxes are a realistic feature. The proposed screens to balconies seem to have no real benefit, as they would not screen the sun and would create a visually enclosed and barred appearance when closed. The proposed bi-fold leaves conflict with planter box vegetation.

It appears that many of the issues arising from these comments remain, with the exception of bifold windows being replaced with awning windows. Awning windows also likely to conflict with planting and provide very little to no ventilation with planters blocking the flow of air to openings. These should be replaced with sliding or top hung windows if planters are not removed.

Additionally, concern was raised regarding the detail of the façade treatment around the balcony “frames.” Further consideration and detailing is recommended.

Recommendations

16. Remove planter boxes along the southern elevation in consultation with landscape architect;
17. Reconsider the cladding details around the balconies to ensure buildability and longevity of the façade.

Sustainability

Generally, comments from the previous Panel have been addressed. The applicant is commended for the inclusion of a central heat pump hot water system, rainwater recycling, PV on the western roof, and the reduction in basement levels.

However, there are still items missing from the proposed plans which would increase the amenity and sustainability of the proposal including removal of all gas appliances, introduction of clerestory windows, inclusion of EV parking, and increased bicycle parking. As noted above, the lower level units as receive no solar access or ventilation, and are likely to have a strong reliance on mechanical heating, cooling, and ventilation which is not supported.

Recommendations

18. Replace gas cooktops with induction
19. Introduce clerestory windows to increase northern light to south facing top floor apartments
20. Include EV charging bays within basement parking
21. Provide 1 space bicycle parking per unit

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel is broadly supportive of the scheme, and the changes that have been made since it last came to the Panel. However it recommends that several outstanding items, as listed above, be addressed to ensure optimal amenity for all residents and an appropriate landscape and architectural fit to the local context.

If these issues can be resolved to Council’s satisfaction the Panel does not need to review the proposal again.