

Design Verification Statement Pursuant to  
State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 –

Design Quality of  
Residential Apartment Development for  
Shop-top housing at:

**63-67 the Corso, Manly**

Prepared by:  
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**Principle 1: Context**

*'Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.'*

The site is located in the heart of Manly, only a couple of hundred metres from Manly Wharf and Manly Beach. The Corso and Market Lane to the rear are both pedestrianised streets and therefore the site is inaccessible by car. The Corso is bustling with life and is a very attractive location for businesses and residents alike.

The development in the central business area of Manly is varied in shape and size with buildings ranging from two storeys up to 17 storeys. The site sits within the Corso Conservation area where several buildings are also individually listed heritage items. For example, the immediate neighbour to the north is the 'New Brighton Hotel' which is a heritage item.

In general, all the buildings in the business district are built to the boundaries on all sides and comprise retail or commercial spaces on the ground floor. The building on the subject site conforms to this pattern with 3 retail shops on the ground floor and a Backpackers' accommodation above. This configuration was established about 20 years ago when the original building was gutted and redeveloped with an additional floor. At this stage, both the front and the rear facades were substantially altered, with both parapets raised and windows altered and added.



Fig 1. The existing streetscape of The Corso showcase a variety of architectural styles in different scales.

Despite the heritage character of Manly CBD, the area is undergoing significant change. Lane-ways are being activated and buildings extended and redeveloped, all in line with the future character of the area. Examples of recent developments can also be found on the Corso and in the vicinity of the site. In fact, the adjacent ANZ building is a modern building and the New Brighton Hotel's recent refurbishment included a rooftop extension.

The proposed development seeks to convert the Backpacker's component of the building to shop top housing. Shop top housing is common in the vicinity and conforms with the desired outcome for the area. The development is proposed as an adaptive reuse of the existing building. Thus, the character of the area is maintained whilst it responds to the need for housing.

**Principle 2: Built Form & Scale**

*'Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings. Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.'*

The existing building has a recent additional floor set back above when viewed from the Corso. The proposal seeks to keep the existing roof of this extension but alter the glass line below it. As such, the changes to the existing fabric are minimal and will not be visually obvious to any passers-by. The scale and bulk of the building will remain largely the same as existing.

**Principle 3: Density**

*'Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.'*

The proposal fits within the existing envelope, reusing the existing roof and roof terrace. The existing GFA is only increased marginally by 21sqm as a result of changes to the floor plan within the existing envelope. The variation from existing FSR is less than 1.5% and is therefore negligible and consistent with the existing and desired future density for the area. The location of the site is well suited to accommodate future residents with great access to public amenities and transport within walking distance.

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## **Principle 4: Sustainability**

*'Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.*

*Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.'*

The reuse of existing fabric works to improve the sustainability of the project, both in terms of retaining social and historical values and in an environmental sense. As much as possible of the existing fabric is proposed to be retained in order to minimise waste and make use of what is already built.

The north-south facing orientation of the site means that the living rooms facing the Corso cannot receive any direct solar access in mid-winter. Therefore, skylights have been introduced to the units on level 2 to improve day light access where possible. Thus, 10 out of 12 units will receive a minimum of 2hrs sunlight in mid-winter. This is considered very good considering the adaptive reuse and the orientation of the existing building. 8 of the 12 units will also achieve cross ventilation. To some units, cross ventilation is achieved by the use of two storey apartments.

Living areas have been located as far as possible on level 2 to maximise access to day light and ventilation. Large glass doors are proposed to allow ample levels of natural daylight where not restricted by the heritage considerations of the original building fabric. This way the need for artificial lighting is reduced. The windows in the courtyards are angled towards the sky to maximise natural light.

## **Principle 5: Landscaping**

*'Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood.*

*Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values and preserving green networks.*

*Good landscape design optimises useability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity and provides for practical establishment and long term management.'*

The existing building covers the whole site as is common in Manly CBD. Therefore, deep soil and extensive planting is difficult to provide. However, despite the extensive footprint of the building, attention has been paid to provide greenery on site where possible. Pot plants are proposed in the elevated courtyards and a large planter bed is proposed around the perimeter of the existing roof terrace. They provide a softer green edge to the building and a green outlook for residents. Climbing plants are proposed to the courtyards and the pergolas as green screens as well as improving acoustics and providing shade in summer.

## **Principle 6: Amenity**

*'Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being.*

*Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.'*

An adaptive reuse of a building might pose challenges to some aspects of the Apartment Design Guide. This is recognised under the guide but is encouraged in view of other social and historical benefits of such reuse. In this case, any possible shortcomings due to the adaptive reuse are considered more than compensated for by the high level of planning and the outstanding location.

The attractive location and the amenity provided by the variety of recreational and public open spaces on offer nearby, compensate for any shortfall in private outdoor space caused by the reuse of existing building fabric. In fact, all units will practically have Manly Beach and at their doorstep and this will greatly influence the perceived amenity of residences. All living areas have been oriented towards the Corso or Sydney Road to ensure a pleasant outlook and some will even enjoy views towards the sea.

When not restricted by the existing fabric, the units have ample private open space or winter gardens. Some enjoy French doors with Juliette balconies, and all units have access to a communal roof garden. The existing roof terrace is given a facelift with new planters built-in seating and BBQ areas for communal use by the residents.

Further, the apartments all achieve high amenity due to the well-planned layouts and generous sizes. Solar access and cross ventilation are maximised through a mixed use of large sliding doors, skylights, Juliette balconies and pop-out windows. Glass roofs and pergolas have been added to the existing courtyards to provide visual and acoustic privacy between units facing the courtyards. Careful consideration has been given to the design of the windows facing the courtyards to further improve privacy, angling them away from any sightline to the courtyards below.

Landscaping and pot plants to the courtyards and roof terrace brings greenery to the development. Decking and pebbles adds texture and natural elements to the courtyards. The pebbles also demarcates the inaccessible part of the courtyards. The glass roof over the pergola ensures acoustic separation to rooms above. The spatial planning ensures only habitable rooms from two units face each courtyard. Further, the courtyards are not the primary outdoor space for any unit. Indeed, both unit 4 & 5 have winter gardens facing the Corso as their primary open space.

## **Principle 7: Safety**

*Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.*

*A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.*

All living rooms face the Corso or the rear Market Lane, thus adding to the passive surveillance of the streets. The current entry point to the Backpackers' will be reused as the residential lobby. The residential lobby will have two doors, one allowing access to the mailboxes and the existing retail space. The second door will be protected by a video intercom system, only allowing access to residents or their visitors. Both doors and side panels will be glazed to allow a clear view through to the lobby within and allowing enough circulation space for people in wheelchairs.

## **Principle 8: Housing diversity and Social Interaction**

*Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.*

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*Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people and providing opportunities for social interaction among residents.*

As the location does not permit off-street car parking, 1 and 2 bedroom units are the preferred typologies for this site. Smaller units are in general more affordable than larger ones and thus provides an opportunity for first home buyers to enter the attractive Manly market. However, the proposal offers housing to a range of budgets by providing a variety of unit types and sizes, some over two storeys. This promotes social interaction and a sustainable demographic.

Three of the units are adaptable, providing a choice for people with disabilities. All common corridors and the like have been designed to be accessible and provide ample circulation spaces.

## **Principle 10: Aesthetics**

*Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.*

*The visual appearance of a well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.*

The proposal is an adaptive reuse and as such the building will look largely the same as existing. The existing roof will stay and the glass line directly under towards the Corso will be replaced to suit the new apartment layout. The new glass line is symmetric as befitting the largely symmetrical existing Art Deco façade below

The pergola and the access structures to the existing roof terrace is set back from the streets to either side and will hardly be discernible from the public domain.

Some amendments are proposed to the rear façade to Sydney Road and Market Lane. This includes enlarging the windows on level 2 to allow for more light into these apartments. The new Juliette balconies will look the same as the ones to level 1, and will thus blend in with the surroundings.

Yours faithfully,



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