

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 22 April 2021

DA2021/0166 532 Pittwater Road, MANLY

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The site is zoned R2 Low Density Residential under the Warringah LEP 2011, and the proposed boarding house is permissible with consent in the zone. The application is to be submitted under the provisions of Division 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009.

The application proposes demolition of the existing structures on site and construction of a new 10 room (unit) boarding house, with parking provided at ground level, and units generally located above. One of the units and a common room is to be located at ground level to the rear of the parking area. Each of the upstairs units will contain two levels, with the upper levels being further 'split' between living and bedding areas.

The site comprises grass coverage with no significant trees located on the property which require removal.

This site is located within a low-density residential area of North Manly comprising a mixture of single and two storey detached dwellings on similar sized lots to the subject site. More recent developments comprise larger two storey dwellings of contemporary appearance. Adjacent to the site immediately to the east is an established childcare centre in a single storey building. The site is opposite Warringah Golf Club and therefore has an outlook across the golf. The site is adjacent a main road (Pittwater Rd), with regular bus services available with easy walking distance to Warringah Mall.

This application had been reviewed by DSAP on 17.12.2020 (PLM 2020-0294) and a number of design concerns were raised, and DSAP were supportive of a design in so far as improved landscaping, streetscape, and residential amenity outcomes could be provided.

Strategic context

As in the PLM the Panel remains of the view the application is to be commended for proposing a typology that will meet local social needs, complies with controls and displays innovation and sensitivity to its context

Urban context: surrounding area character

A site analysis describes the context including opportunities and constraints.
The analysis provides an explanation of the design response.
The immediate area is characterised by low rise development.

Where properties have a large tree in the front setback the streetscape is significantly enhanced. (properties to the west). To the east, properties have large hardstand areas which detrimentally impact the street character. The third storey is setback to align with existing buildings on adjacent lots and the first two storeys are setback 6.8m with an open pergola to a private terrace. The setback will enable the provision of an appropriate large tree in the setback area and is considered acceptable (refer *Landscape area and parking* below)

Scale, built form and articulation

The plans indicate that the proposal will comply in full with the relevant built form controls in the Warringah DCP.

The built form of the dwellings is articulated and uses pitched roof forms which relate to the character of the area. The pavilion building with the common room at ground level appears quite blocky in the CGI's rather than a slender form.

The access balcony is a very long and has a solid balustrade noted as a 'rendered concrete plinth' that lacks articulation. At the same time the steps in the form at the stairs act to increase its apparent bulk by reducing its horizontal slenderness. It is assumed the sightline to the street when using the ground floor access will be interrupted by a 'step' in the soffit impacting the visual experience using the covered way.

The Panel has concerns that a rendered and painted balustrade is highly susceptible to poor detailing in the commercial construction market without careful design. This element dominates the street view and will result in a poor outcome if not carefully detailed.

Recommendations

1. Consider a pitched roof form to the brick building to reduce the apparent bulk
2. Consider removing the step in the access soffit and providing a flowing profile generated by an angled stair soffit and letting the rendered balustrade forms follow this profile.
3. Careful detailing of the 'rendered concrete plinth' that takes into account construction joints, concealed rainwater drainage pipes, how overflows are arranged, and horizontal pour joints are critical to the success of otherwise of this building element and the ground floor covered way. Do not use paint finishes. Provide coating systems with integral colour and long performance warranties.
4. Consider lowering the balustrade upturn to a minimum 760mm above the balcony (NCC) and providing a simple expressed handrail at 1 m.

Landscape area and car parking

Generally, the design does not seem to have adopted or responded to many of the comments sent previously. The Panel notes there is no use of rear (northern) landscaped area as recommended in the pre-lodgement meeting report. Changing to driveway to permeable grass paving is a positive.

The common room has poor connections and visual obstructions to the common open space and landscaping to the north.

The development proposes excavating the site to facilitate an accessible unit L01. The terrace has a 1m retaining wall with a steep cut embankment above that. The cuts, banks and garden retaining walls are not shown on the Landscape Concept plan D-S-02 and if done poorly will result in an unsatisfactory outcome.

The landscape plan needs to get the balance right between landscaping and access to sunlight in Unit L01 and the proposed outdoor common area. The landscape concept plan suggests this area will only have 2-3m shrubs/screen planting which has the potential to result in poor solar amenity to outdoor spaces.

The Ginkgo trees proposed are very slow growing so that the desired landscaped character will be slow to develop.

Recommendations

5. Consider increasing the useable landscape area in the north of the site.
6. Consider replanning the common room and common open space arrangement. Refer to *Amenity* below
7. The landscape concept should be developed to a more detailed landscape plan which
 - Carefully considers ground cover and low planting options in the planting mix to the northern garden, and
 - Provides more detailed profiles of the embankment design at the north end and in the side boundary areas of the site and how the soil will be retained and integrated with the planting scheme.



- Ensures appropriate landscape treatments that provide privacy and vegetative screening are provided to adjacent properties, the landscape concept needs to be design developed to give Council's landscape architect confidence that the densities and scale of planting will be suitable.
- 8. Consider replacing the Ginkgo trees with a native deciduous tree that will deliver the desired landscaped character sooner.
- 9. Provide an endemic native canopy tree in front setback area that would have been part of the original local ecosystem.

Façade treatment

Refer Scale, built form and articulation above

Refer Landscape area and parking above

Refer Amenity below

Amenity

The private terrace to Unit L01 appears to be 1.75m below the ground line and facilitated by steep banks to natural ground levels at the boundary. Given that these banks appear to 45 degrees in slope and 2-3m shrubs are proposed there is concern the terrace will feel like it is in a gully environment with little access to winter sun.

The Panel notes the seating recesses provided in the access balcony but feel as though the spatial variation and detail design could be further enhanced to humanise the accessway.

As noted in the meeting, the accessway has the potential to be a common meeting place and the applicant is encouraged to explore this.

The living spaces are very small and would benefit from the provision of a generous window to provide a connection to the outdoors.

Ceiling heights do not appear to comply with the NCC.

The amenity of the Common Terrace and the entry to Unit L01 are adversely affected by the access stairway. One communal living room is required which receives a minimum 3 hours direct sunlight (9am - 3pm mid-winter)

The access to the robes from winder stairways remain awkward.

Recommendations

10. Provide more detailed profiles of the embankment design at the north end of the site and how the soil will be retained and integrated with the planting scheme. (Refer *Landscape area and parking* below)
11. Consider making the embankments a gentler landscaped slope, or stepped retaining dwarf walls or natural dry sandstone retaining walls with suitable native planting
12. The panel recommends the provision of canopy structures to provide weather protection at all entries, possibly utilising the post and beam language of the pergolas over the private balconies.
13. The Panel strongly recommends the provision of an eastern window to provide an outlook, daylight and natural cross ventilation to the living area.
14. Provide minimum 2.1m ceiling heights in the main living space and demonstrate compliance with the NCC 3.8.22.
15. Relocate the access stair in front of the common room and delete the blade column which impinges on sightlines to the garden and functionality of the space. Consider the location and arrangement shown in the plans from the pre-lodgement meeting
16. Relocate wardrobes to a location not accessed from stairs. Storage on stairs should be for infrequently used storage.



Sustainability

Heat pump hot water systems are supported and recommended as a good sustainability outcome. Unfortunately, including heat pumps may reduce the energy score, but this can be compensated for with additional PV. There is only a very small PV system, so increasing the PV would be a positive and practical outcome.

Refer *Amenity* above regarding small window sizes impacting natural cross ventilation in Living/Sleeping areas.

Recommendations

17. Consider utilising electric heat pump hot water and induction cooktops to replace the use of gas.
18. Update the BASIX Certificate to reflect the provision of PV cells. The Panel recommends increasing the capacity above 3kW.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel is general very supportive of the proposal and the overall approach to the site planning and building massing, however the Panel does not support the Proposal in its current form due to the range of issues identified.

The recommended amendments to the design are relatively minor and should be incorporated in any revision to the design.