

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 21 March 2024

DA20240044 - 25 Kevin Avenue AVALON BEACH

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This project has been presented to DSAP on two previous occasions and was generally supported at the last Panel meeting. The applicant team has amended the design generally in response to previous Panel comments. This includes the following improvements: reduction in bulk of the rear building; changes to setbacks, articulation of the rear building, retention of trees and a reduction in excavation. However, and in light of some issues that have still to be satisfactorily resolved, the Panel would propose that further design refinements be undertaken.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The proposed scale complements the surrounding area character. The proposed front street setback is appropriate to the streetscape. The proposal generally relates well to the existing character of the area. The most recent design amendments moved the rear building further from the S-W rear boundary to minimise visual impact, however it is unclear from the drawing set the relationship between the houses at 20 and 22 Park Avenue and the proposed rear building.

Recommendations

1. A sectional study showing the topography and locations of the surrounding dwellings would be useful to illustrate the scale in context and the visibility from dwellings at 20 and 22 Park Avenue.

Scale, built form and articulation

The site slopes down substantially from the rear to the front of the site. The site and surrounding properties have significant tree canopy cover.

The built form complies with the Development Control Plan building envelopes, however within these envelopes the opportunity exists to create built forms that complement the topography and landscape. The proposed built form is comprised of flat and pitched roof forms. The flat and pitched roof forms in the rear building are appropriate as the flat roofs reduce the scale of the building when viewed from the neighbouring properties, and they are barely visible from Kevin Avenue. The two buildings addressing Kevin Avenue are distinctly different to each other, with one having a pitched roof and the other a flat roof. The flat roofed building is more visually prominent than the pitched roof building and does not complement the topography and landscaped setting as well as the pitched roof building. A more cohesive visual character when viewed from the street would be achieved by both buildings having a pitched roof to complement the sloping site and landscaped setting.

Recommendations

2. Amend roof form of building containing Apartments 02 and 07 to be similar to the building containing Apartments 01 and 06

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The arrival and entry sequence from the street to all apartments (especially those at the rear) is compromised by the steepness and depth of the site and the decision (one that is also endorsed) to retain as many existing trees as possible. This results in an unfortunate dog-leg path from the porte cochere around the root ball of a tree to lift 1 in the front building. In this instance it would seem unavoidable. Some improvement to sightlines from the porte cochere through to the rear building would be encouraged. This is to make the entry more legible to visitors and residents alike. It is noted that the upper levels of common circulation from lift 1 are open however it is unclear from the elevations how direct and easy it will be to see through. The presence of glass (eg. balustrades) may hinder this by providing glare and reflection. Steel balustrades might provide a better alternative and should therefore be considered.

The basement level foyer is important in the experience of the development for residents and visitors. Consider how to make this experience pleasant as the most likely/easy entry given the levels. Space restrictions are noted however the treatment, materiality and detail of these areas could enhance the area.

Runs of stairs are significant for access around the site, particularly the front entrance stair. Acknowledging stairs are inevitable given the slope of the site, consider shorter runs to allow rest points at landings which would be more suitable for a Seniors Living development.

Recommendations

3. Consider the detailed design of the basement level entry to make this the best possible entry experience for residents and visitors. This could include creating a triangular bin room to allow for a wider glazed wall where the currently proposed bin room door is located.
4. Where possible reduce the runs of stairs and integrate more landings to reduce the difficulty of stair access for senior residents. Could be more generous at the junction of the ramped path and stair access to the front entrance. Encouraging the use of the external paths and stairs would be positive for the health and wellbeing of residents.

Landscape

Deep soil area of 53% is currently insufficient. Increase deep soil area where possible.

The proposed updates to the basement to better allow for the retention of more of the existing trees is a positive adjustment.

The provision of the landscape plan with native palette is positive as are the amendments to the front setback area and the extent and design of the private courtyards.

The front fencing remains very dominant and appears somewhat 'defensive'. Better integration of the fencing and landscape would improve the site presence in the character of the street and make a more inviting development to residents and visitors.

The introduction of some extent of green roof is positive. However, the remaining extensive concrete roofs are a missed opportunity to reduce urban heat, increase sustainability and efficiency of the PV, enhance insulation, membrane longevity, biodiversity and provide better visual amenity to neighbours.

Recommendations

5. Extend deep soil in areas such as the Drying Yards to Apartments 03/05. Provide permeable or gravel paving, ground covers etc. Also to terraces of Apartments 03/05. Reconfigure to not encroach into the 3m landscaped setback and locate more over basement areas.

6. Provide non trafficable green roofs with irrigation system to proposed flat roofs in rear building in combination with the PV panels to mitigate heat Island effect of roofs and ecological outcomes and stormwater detention.
7. Better integrate the front fencing and landscape.

Amenity

Enhance the amenity of the basement level entry with more natural light, internal materiality and lighting.

Access to the bin room is an amenity issue for the occupants of Seniors Living housing. The current location of the bin room is supported, although its geometry could be reconsidered to enhance the amenity of the basement level entry. An alternative location within 6.5 metres of the front boundary would negatively impact existing trees and the streetscape character of Kevin Avenue.

Recommendations

8. Reconfigure and provide further design detail to the basement level entry to enhance amenity, including a more generously sized skylight.
9. Retain bin room in currently proposed location and consider re-configuration.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The roof form of the building containing Apartments 02 and 07 does not complement the topography and landscape setting.

Recommendations

10. Amend roof form of building containing Apartments 02 and 07 to be similar to the building containing Apartments 01 and 06

Sustainability

With the regulatory environment changing now – for efficiency, electrification, zero emissions and mandatory disclosure – these investments at this time will be worthwhile both for future residents and the developers' reputation, market position and marketability of the project.

With regards to induction cooktops, this healthier and more sustainable approach to cooking will very quickly become the norm as the negative health, cost and sustainability consequences of gas become better understood. Good marketing people should be able to promote this asset.

Recommendations

The following aspects of design and servicing can be easily and cost effectively considered for inclusion:

11. Decarbonisation of energy supply
 - **All services should be electric** – gas for cooking, hot water and heating should be avoided. See note above re cooking.
 - Heat pump systems or instantaneous electric systems for providing electric hot water should be considered.
 - The storage of hot water can be considered a de facto battery if heated by PVs during the day.
 - As much onsite power generation as possible should be included. Additionally, on site battery storage has benefits for the grid and may be a highly desirable back-up during the transition to a de-carbonised grid.

- Unshaded roof space is a valuable resource for PV installations. Their efficacy can be greatly enhanced when placed over a green roof, which has additional visual, thermal and ecological benefits. The concrete roof slabs should be designed to include low profile green roofs.
12. EV charging: Provide EV charging points for each unit (Min 15 amp) to suit level 1 charging. Also consider charging and storage for E Bikes and E Mobility Scooters.
 13. Passive design and thermal performance of building fabric
 - Higher BASIX thermal performance standards that commenced on 1 October 2023 require an **average 7 stars NatHERS, with no unit below 6 stars**. Given the coastal location a very comfortable indoor environment should be achievable.
 - Particular attention is required for the south facing sections of apartments to ensure they meet this requirement.
 - The inclusion of ceiling fans to all bedrooms and living rooms will provide comfort with minimal energy while reducing the need and energy required for air-conditioning.
 14. Water use minimisation
 - All fixtures and appliances should be water (and energy) efficient
 - Water storage for rainwater from the roofs should be included and plumbed to at least the landscaping and toilets
 - Landscape design and planting should be water tolerant and suitable for the microclimate

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel welcomes and endorses the modifications that have been made to the proposal. However further design refinement is recommended. The Panel would be inclined to support the proposal following the completion of the recommended amendments.

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