

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 23 May 2024

ITEM 1 – DA2024/0460 – 1-3 Gondola Road, North Narrabeen

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The proposal is for a 4-5 storey shop top housing development on a consolidated site. The 2 separate lots at 1 and 3 Gondola Road each has an existing development consent gained through the NSW LEC. The proposal was reviewed by the DSAP, consisting of different panel members, on 1 February 2024. Advice has generally not been integrated within the new design documents.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

As noted in the previous report, the site is flood prone and there is an approval for the neighbouring site at 2-8 Rickard Road (of which it is uncertain whether the consent has lapsed or commenced) and which currently has a modification in for assessment with Council.

While further detail has been provided regarding the neighbouring developments, the Panel is not of the opinion that the information provided supports the proposed layout of the proposal (further discussed below in *Scale, Built form and articulation*). In fact, the proposal for 1-3 Gondola Road appears to provide significantly more bulk and scale than neighbouring developments.

The Panel recommendation of not exceeding the proposed height of 17.75 m R.L. to top of the lift overrun appears to be met in this proposal.

Recommendations

1. Provide further information regarding how the proposal interfaces with neighbouring developments in a sympathetic manner.

Scale, built form and articulation

The previous Panel noted that the height exceedance may be appropriate within this context due to the constrained nature of the site. However, the site coverage still remains excessive at residential levels with depths exceeding 22m, and multiple units with depths exceeding 8m to the back of kitchen (further discussed below in *Amenity*). Additionally, the building bulk is pushed to all edges with little meaningful articulation, beyond applied elements which are tokenistic in nature and impact solar access. As such, the Panel is not supportive of the bulk produced by the built form.

As noted above, the Panel is not of the opinion that the development appropriately responds to the neighbouring development potential. The proposed deep corner form extends along the northern and eastern boundaries to meet both side boundaries with long blank walls. While it is unclear whether the development 2-8 Rickard Road will proceed as currently designed, the proposed blank wall to the southern boundary on 1-3 Gondola Road significantly impacts the development potential of the site including solar access and visual privacy for units. The Panel does not support this outcome, and while it may be appropriate to meet the site along Gondola Road in this manner, an ADG compliant setback should be provided to the southern boundary to allow appropriate development of this site.

The previous Panel provided the recommendation that the ground floor be designed to create an active street frontage, with a direction to provide a 5m strip internally at grade before raising the floor level. This suggestion has not been incorporated and the proposal retains the small indentation with a platform lift, stairs and small amount of landscaping. The Panel does not consider this small area to meaningfully address the issue of street activation. For this approach to be considered appropriate, the indentation

would need to be enlarged by at least 5m to provide a larger courtyard which could be activated through seating, ramp and more landscaping. This redesign should also incorporate comments below in *Access* regarding the entry sequence and residential/commercial access.

Recommendations

1. Reduce upper level building bulk by reducing depth of building and depth of open plan living room/kitchens to comply with ADG (as per previous Panel report).
2. Remove the blank wall to the southern boundary by providing an ADG compliant setback which allows appropriate development of 2-8 Rickard Road without encroaching on solar access or visual privacy of this development.
3. Further resolve the “indent” within the Gondola Road frontage to provide a larger and more active courtyard space which contributes to the entry sequence for the building as well as the streetscape.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

As noted by the previous Panel, generally vehicular access is acceptable, however may need to be reallocated to address comments above regarding the courtyard entrance.

Additionally, the Panel recommends that the entry sequence for the building be redesigned to allow a clear line of site from the courtyard through to the lifts. Separation between the lift lobby and car park should be provided to prevent exhaust fumes and smells from the bin holding area entering the shared residential/commercial lobby. Location of letterboxes should also be considered as part of this design.

Recommendations

1. Rationalise the commercial space to the west with a straight wall from the edge of the lift, to provide clear line of sight to the residential lift as well as a clear connection with the external courtyard space.
2. Include the location of letterboxes in the design of the residential lobby and/or courtyard.

Landscape

The application proposes the removal of 2 x prominent Pheonix canariensis Canary Island Date Palm which are exempt species according to Northern Beaches Council and replacement endemic Cabbage Tree Palms have been proposed yet more than 2 in number should be considered.

There is a significant planter with a depth of 1 metre at the rear of the proposed building but the detailed planting plan omits this area so it cannot be assessed for the suitability of plant species.

The Statement of Environmental Effects avoids addressing the future character of the North Narrabeen Locality with regard to landscaping which states: *The North Narrabeen locality will remain primarily a low-density residential area with dwelling houses a maximum of two storeys in any one place in a landscaped setting, integrated with the landform and landscape.*

The landscape and deep soil controls within the ADG are only applicable where a council control does not already exist, as such the landscaped percentage of 20% under P21 DCP C1.1 is still “*of effect.*”

Recommendations

1. The landscape calculations need to be prepared by the landscape architect for assessment by Council and need to demonstrate compliance with the applicable planning controls.
2. A deeper setback to Gondola Road would allow for a more robust planting response to the building facade and be in line with the requirements of the DCP which outlines that developments should be integrated with the landform and landscape.
3. Raised planter boxes need to provide adequate soil volumes for the proposed trees and shrubs and to be compliant with the applicable planning controls.

4. The 2 x *Livistona australis* Cabbage Tree Palms that have been proposed as replacements are grouped together on the north-eastern corner which would appear to obstruct the views of the corner units(s) and should be reconsidered. It is unclear on the landscape plans exactly which palms are to be transplanted as indicated on sheet 4.
5. The ADG specifies soil volumes, depths and squared metres required for planter boxes which should be complied with and demonstrated by way of a dimension plan and sections/elevations in the revised landscape package.
6. The neighbouring privacy will need to be addressed in the form of better planting scenarios with plants that achieve the ideal height to both provide privacy and eliminate overlooking between properties. Plants that create audible privacy through their movement should be utilised.
7. The eastern facade along Minarto Lane should be compliant with the minimum 1.75m setback and some significant articulation to create at grade planting areas that can support the growth of medium sized trees to help address the human scale and activate and properly address the laneway should be considered.

Amenity

The previous Panel's recommendations regarding the amenity of units have generally not been adopted within the proposal, and a number of issues remain.

Solar access should not be obtained primarily through clerestory windows, and the information provided does not support the proposal's compliance with 70% of units receiving 2 hours of solar access. The eastern facing units are severely compromised due to their hard alignment with the boundary, as well as being overshadowed by articulation elements. The Panel recommends this façade be redesigned to reorient the building line to capture morning sun, potentially in a similar manner to the neighbouring development at 2-8 Rickard Road. Additionally, living rooms along this facade should be pushed forward with balconies to the side to maximise solar access to living spaces, rather than bedrooms. Notably, if units 1.05 and 2.05 were to propose a corner balcony, instead of the large expanse of glass, it would improve amenity and comfort – this would also help to provide articulation to enable removal the blades which are blocking solar access.

As raised previously, snorkel bedrooms are not supported by the Panel and the proposed snorkels do not meet requirements under the ADG. These are to be removed.

Multiple units still have excessive depths to the back of kitchens including Units 101, 105, 106, 201, 205, and 206. These units should be reduced in depth to provide light and ventilation to the back of the kitchen areas as well as reduce building depth and bulk.

As noted by the previous DSAP, there are a number of conflicts between units and their visual and acoustic separation around the courtyard. This is yet to be resolved satisfactorily.

Recommendations

1. Demonstrate compliance with solar access through primary windows, not clerestory windows, through the reorientation of windows along the eastern boundary, as well as pushing living spaces toward the boundary.
2. Remove snorkel bedrooms.
3. Reduce depth of all units to a maximum of 8m to the back of kitchens.
4. Pull Units 101 and 201 back to reduce overlooking and privacy issues. This is likely to require the removal of one bedroom (Bed 02) as a minimum.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

Generally, the façade is acceptable however the applied articulation impacts the ability for eastern facing units to gain solar access. As noted above these units would be better oriented to capture the morning sun, with a reduction in protruding articulation which further reduces the eastern facing units' solar access.

Recommendations

1. Provide meaningful articulation to the built form along street frontages to provide visual interest as well as maximise solar access outcomes for residential units.

Sustainability

The applicant has responded to previous comments by electrifying the building, however it does not seem to be well thought through. The specified cooktops are electric, but induction would be better and would give them more points in the BASIX certificate

The dryers are 6.5 Stars which means the selection of appliances will be limited, expensive and heavy. The high star rating on the dryer could be reduced if the solar panel array was bigger and some apartments had solar connected directly to their power – potential for this to occur and would be a selling point

Centralised Electric instantaneous hot water is nominated on the BASIX certificate. Given there is a lot of roof space, its recommended a centralised heat pump system is used instead as it will significantly reduce emissions.

As noted above, an increase in solar access will also increase the sustainability and amenity of units.

Recommendations

1. Specify induction cooktops.
2. Reduce the dryer star rating and include more solar panels to offset the electrical load.
3. Change the hot water system to a centralised heat pump system.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form. Amendments in response to the above recommendations are required.

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