



Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date 22<sup>ND</sup> August 2024

## **ITEM 3 – DA2024 0882 – 23 Bassett Street, MONA VALE**

### **PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### ***General***

The application proposes alterations and additions to a Residential Aged Care Facility, approved under consent DA2020/0816, as such it is an Amending Development Application.

#### ***Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character***

The development has been designed to respond to the existing residential streetscape character of the area which includes an existing residential aged care facility by retaining existing setbacks, having a two-storey scale and by the retention of significant street trees.

Whilst there is slightly reduced articulation in the front and rear facade due to the extension of the building envelope and the infill of voids, the development character and scale remains generally consistent with the approved development and recognises the functional requirements of residential care facilities and the intention to provide larger resident suites.

The setback to the rear boundary has been reduced to 10.37m (measured from the external wall) but retains appropriate visual and acoustic privacy is through the provision of adequate spatial separation and the intervening landscaping.

#### ***Scale, built form and articulation***

The Panel is of the view that the amended building design articulates the form, scale, façade colour and materials to satisfactorily provide diverse facades to the repetitive room modules. In some areas such as between grids 8 and 9 the street façade articulation has been increased. Where recesses in the façade have been reduced such as between grids 3 and 4, recesses have been retained, colour and materials contrasted and window arrangements changed. At the entry transparent glazing will express the double height entry void.

The amended design will not substantially change the character relationship of the approved design to the street context or have a more institutionalised presentation.

In terms of changes to the rear façade the change in bulk will not increase to an extent it would overpower the low-density development it faces.

#### ***Access, vehicular movement and car parking***

No changes proposed externally to approved development.

#### ***Landscape***

A significant amount of deep soil and landscaped area has been eliminated from the approved DA.

The amended Architectural plans show a total of 4 x large trees in the front setback however the landscape plans nominate only three. The species selection should ensure that future root invasion into areas of the foundation or infrastructure should be considered.

The reduction in setback to the rear now presents a significant incursion into trees #5 and #6 to be retained with T6 the Chinese Elm also requiring pruning. The total disturbance is to be calculated which has the potential to be considered a major incursion and needs to be addressed in detail as the tree



protection measures as outlined by the Arborist prescribe a tree protection zone of 8.1m from the trunk of the tree which in my experience is not achievable on a development of this size.

The neighbourhood consists of one and two storey dwellings setback from the street an average of 12 metres from the footpath with mostly low-level plantings with a council verge in the middle of the street which is some of the only canopy cover in this area of Bassett Street.

For clarification SEPP (Housing), Part 5 requires 15% of the site to be retained as landscape open space with a minimum dimension of 6m and at least 65% of the deep zone area located to the rear. The only area of deep soil with a minimum dimension of 6m is located within the south-east corner of the site and equates to 290m<sup>2</sup>.

**In addition,** Deep soil zones ordinarily exclude basement car parks, services, swimming pools, tennis courts and impervious surfaces including car parks, driveways and roof areas. The western, internal courtyard area is labelled as deep soil however, it does not wholly comply as there are elements that are not allowed when calculating deep soil areas.

### Recommendations

1. The internal courtyard that is labelled and presumably counted as deep soil landscaping however, it contains many hard scape elements that should not be counted in the calculations.
2. The open lawn area beneath T5&T6 should consider the amount of sunlight it will receive as it is on the south side and under significant tree canopy to be retained.
3. More medium to large trees should be added to the plant schedule with up to 5 street trees also proposed with the species for these reflective of what is already growing along the street.
4. The plant species along the eastern boundary should be capable of withstanding a hard pruning and will need to be formative pruned until they reach such a height that the first branching is at a height of not less than 2.1m for pedestrian clearance.
5. A more generous and well thought out landscape response to the front setback should be considered which would further enhance the front façade and help to blend the building into the existing streetscape.
6. The project arborist should reconsider whether it may be better to remove T6 and replace it with one or even two super-advance trees which may yield a better result.
7. The area to the south should reduce the number of elements that do not qualify as deep soil / landscaped area.

### Amenity

Windows to the west-facing residents rooms on the first floor present an overlooking and visual privacy impact to current and more importantly to likely future development on the adjoining site to the west.

The dining space of the Lounge + Dining 1 on the ground floor has poor amenity and no outlook to external garden spaces. The shared kitchen core serving the separate 'houses' is poorly located and should not be located in a way that it reduces access to windows and gardens from dining and lounge spaces. It is noted that Design Principles 3 in SEPP (Housing) requires the best practicable use of natural ventilation, solar heating and lighting by locating the windows of living and dining areas in a northerly direction. The proposal is inconsistent with this design principle.

### Recommendations

8. Provide privacy screening to west-facing residents' rooms. The screening needs to be carefully designed to integrate with shading design and to enable views of outside without compromising neighbour privacy. Consider mounting privacy screens well off the facades so that lateral outlooks can be retained.
9. Reconfigure the lounge and dining rooms so that they all enjoy access to external windows. The first floor plan arrangement (Lounge+Dining 3 /4) is superior and consideration should be given to replicating that arrangement on the ground floor.



10. Re-consideration of the deletion of the central glazed atrium and the modified layout with internal and centralised dining rooms at ground level.

### ***Façade treatment/Aesthetics***

Façade treatment is generally acceptable. It is not clear that sun hoods are provided to north facing windows in the recessed panels of the street elevation.

#### **Recommendations**

11. Provide appropriate sun control hoods to all north facing and west facing windows including to habitable rooms facing courtyard spaces. 12. Ensure north facing glazed curtain walls at the Entry have appropriate sun protection.

### ***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 current and future residents, and the developers' reputation, market position and marketability of the project.

#### **Recommendations**

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

13. Decarbonisation of energy supply

- **All services should be electric** – gas for cooking, hot water and heating should be avoided.
- Heat pump 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.
- 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 ecological benefits.

14. EV charging: Provide EV charging points in the carpark (Min 15 amp) to suit level 1 charging should be considered.

15. Passive design and thermal performance of building fabric

- Since 1 October 2023 an **average 7 stars NatHERS, with no unit below 6 stars** has been required. This is consistent with the National Construction Code for 2022. There is great wisdom in aiming high with this to ensure passive comfort for residents spending a lot of time in their rooms. Given the coastal location a very comfortable indoor environment should be achievable.
- Particular attention is required for the south facing rooms 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.

16. Water use minimisation

- All fixtures and appliances should be water 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 micro-climate

## **PANEL CONCLUSION**

The Panel is generally supportive of the proposal subject to the recommendations above being implemented.