Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report – Date: 25 August 2022

DA2022/1176 – 27 Gulliver Street BROOKVALE

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This is a development application, and the Applicant has had a Pre-lodgement meeting with Council's Development Advisory Services team.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The site is zoned R3 and is the last lot to be developed in this western end of the R3 zone.

The 12m site width is relatively narrow compared to lots to the east, which are 36m and 24m wide. The adjoining site to the west is 12m wide, however this is a corner lot that gains the advantage of addressing Consul Street with habitable windows.

The topography falls diagonally across the site, from a highpoint in the south-west corner to a low point in the north-east corner. The cross fall on the site creates issues of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing built form in relation to neighbouring properties.

To the west of the site, the development on the corner of Consul Street and Gulliver Street is set back 3.6m from the side boundary, with upper-level stairwell windows allowing a degree of overlooking of the proposal. The retaining wall height along the boundary separating the 2 properties ranges from 1050mm to 1375mm, with fence above.

To the east of the site, existing living room and bedroom windows are located approximately 5m from the side boundary and private open spaces occupy the area between the existing building and the boundary separating the 2 properties.

This is a remnant site that suffers from a challenging topography and interface issues with neighbours that include privacy, overshadowing and overbearing retaining walls and fences.

Recommendations

1. The design needs to respond to the specific characteristics of each part of the site and the interface with each neighbour;
2. The development yield of this site is to be generated by the design approach to the various site characteristics and may be substantially less than other sites with similar zoning and site dimensions.

Scale, built form and articulation

The proposal has a 2-storey scale, however the building is raised more than 1m in places above the existing ground level. This places the boundary fences and building well above the scale of a 2-storey building when viewed from the property to the east. The proposal has an overbearing presence in relation to the private open spaces and windows of the existing building to the east.

The proposed building has minimal articulation along its eastern elevation. The proposed roof form is unconvincing, as it changes from a mono-pitch over Units 2 and 3 to a weakly articulated gable form over Unit 1. The roof could be more strongly articulated forms whilst complying with the height limit if floor levels were dropped in a future design.

Recommendations

3. Consider different apartment types and orientation to resolve conflicts with neighbouring properties;
4. Reduce the scale of the building and the private open spaces and fences in relation to the eastern neighbour;
5. Create more built form articulation along the eastern elevation;
6. Create more consistent roof forms, with possibly greater articulation.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The proposal aims to provide safe car exit from the basement whilst having a roof above the car ramp. Further work with ground floor levels, private open space levels and structure, in consultation with a traffic consultant may optimise the design at this point whilst maintaining safety and reducing impacts on the neighbour to the east.

Recommendations

7. Prepare detailed design of the car entry, ground floor levels and private open space to optimise the design and reduce impacts on the neighbour to the east.

Landscape

The excessive boundary to boundary (East and West) basement will potentially adversely affect the existing trees located on 21-25 Gulliver Street and reduce the resident's amenity associated with this neighbour.

The landscape plans do not demonstrate the extent, drainage nor depth of soil over structure associated with the basement below.

Recommendations

8. Engage an arborist to assess the impact of the basement on existing trees;
9. Provide landscape plans that demonstrate the extent, drainage and depth of soil over structure associated with the basement below;
10. Consider a green roof and additional sustainability initiatives to off set non-compliances with landscaped open space.

Amenity

Amenity is in important issue for the property to the east of the subject site and the proposed development. The proposal currently impacts on the amenity of the property to the east through cross viewing at the upper level. due to the proposed large bedroom windows and intermittent external screening. Orienting the bedroom windows to the north would minimise cross viewing, gain northern sun and articulate the eastern side facades.

The proposal currently impacts on the amenity of the property to the east through the overlooking, over shadowing and visual overbearing form of the proposed ground floor open spaces and fences in relation to the existing private open spaces to the east. The proposed ground floor levels of Units 1 and 2, and to a lesser extent, Unit 3, are excessively high in relation to the property to the east. The proposed 1m deep soil on private open spaces should be re-considered and any loss of soft landscape should be offset by

substantial amounts of other sustainability initiatives, such green roofs, solar panels and heat pumps. One approach to resolving floor levels and maintaining reasonable amenity along the western site boundary would be to drop the ground floor levels by at least 1m and provide steps on the ground floor between the western pedestrian path and the ground floor living areas.

Recommendations

11. Resolve amenity issues of cross viewing, overlooking, over shadowing and visual overbearing by revised apartment types, layouts and forms;
12. Consider lowering the ground floor and private open space levels to minimise impacts on the eastern neighbour.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

Facade treatments include light coloured brick, timber-look aluminium cladding, painted concrete, concrete block, FC sheeting, metal cladding and aluminium vertical screening. These are relatively small surface areas and the number of different materials could be reduced. Painted surfaces should be avoided if possible to reduce long term maintenance issues. The roof form and use of metal clad framing elements on Unit 1 is awkward and simpler forms would enhance the street elevation.

Recommendations

13. Façade treatments should be in materials that age gracefully, with detailing that avoids staining and requires low maintenance;
14. Simplify roof forms and reduce the number of different materials.

Sustainability

The proposed orientation of windows east / west does not maximise the benefits of sun control. North facing windows would allow for better sun control and would minimise energy use. No solar panels are provided and no initiatives greater than BASIX requirements.

Recommendations

15. Consider a redesign of the dwellings to achieve northern aspect;
16. Decarbonise energy supply by providing all electric services – gas for cooking, hot water and heating should be avoided;
17. Consider heat pump systems for apartments or other ways of providing electric hot water. This is typically more efficient than having solar hot water systems;
18. Provide EV charging points for each unit;
19. Allow for bi-directional (2-way) charging of EV battery for powering the building;
20. Provide an appropriate size of photo-voltaic electricity system;
21. Increase size of the PV system. Consider three separate systems connected direct to the units. It is noted that BASIX does not account for separate provision of PV to each dwelling, this can be entered as a central system but in practice, connected directly to each dwelling's switch board

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form. A complete redesign, with consideration of different apartment types and a possible reduction in the floor area is required to achieve reasonable amenity for the proposal and adjoining properties.

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