northern beaches council

Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting Report 24th April 2025

Item 3 - DA2025/0173 140-142 Ocean St NARRABEEN

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The Panel is generally supportive of the proposed development.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

Comments

Response to Country – wider urban analysis would also be good. Site is out of the flood zones to east & west. Potential story to be articulated around water, soils and landscape.

Recommendations

1. Consider wider urban analysis and Response to Country.

Scale, built form and articulation

Comments

The Panel is generally supportive of the proposed development.

The non-compliance with the (2-storey) height restriction in the DCP is noted. The proposed development does however comply with the LEP height control and the Panel therefore consider this to be the more important factor in determining the impact of the development. The Panel also notes that the 3rd storey is located centrally, extends for approximately 1/3 the length of the building only and is partially accommodated within the natural fall of the site with the proposed ground floor being partly below NGL. The proposed RFB conforms with the 2-storey height restriction at the front and rear of the property. For the above-mentioned reasons the Panel supports the development as proposed.

The Panel also notes that floor-to-floor heights of 3.2m are proposed. This is supported and commended. Furthermore, it is good to see that realistic structural (slab) depths and drained cavity separating external and internal walls of the basement (all needed for NCC 2025 changes) have been accommodated.

Council has drawn attention to ADG (2F) non-compliance regarding side-setbacks of habitable rooms and POS. The ADG calls for 6m from side and rear boundaries. With the exception of the mid-building south-facing APT02, the living rooms of all apartments are located on the building's corners. This ensures that there is a minimum 6m setback provided to at least one orientation to all apartments except APT02. The glazing line of APT02 does however appear to be setback further than the side boundary 4.5m. No dimension is provided but it does appear to be in the order of 6m. As a result, the only habitable rooms affected by the reduced side setback of 4.5m are bedrooms. Given the low-scale and height of the building, as well as its location adjacent to apartment buildings of a similar height and scale, the Panel considers that this is an acceptable response to site and amenity considerations.

Bin storage projection into side setback not of concern. Note: Bin Storage Areas are permitted to be located within the 6.5m front setback area under Section B7 of the WDCP 2011.

The Panel notes that there is no provision for communal open space (COS). The justification for this absence is the building's proximity to the beach and larger-than-minimum POS provision. There is available space on the roof to accommodate COS but this area has been forfeited to APT06 & 07 as additional POS. The Panel is aware that access to a possible COS in this location (above APT06 & 07) is compromised by the half-level stair separation. To make it fully accessible the lift would need to run to the higher level and this would mean the lift overrun would exceed the height restriction. Due to the fact that there are 2 apartments which do not receive sunlight to their living rooms and POS, it would be preferable that at least part of the roof be allocated to accessible COS. The Panel would suggest that the applicant and Council look at the implications of varying the height control to achieve this. Given the lift's central location in the building, it is assumed that there would no major/negative impacts associated.

The Panel notes that there is an ADF (4F) solar-access non-compliance of approximately 3.8% (with the 15% guide). 18.8% of apartments do not comply. Attempts to mitigate this solar loss by the provision of a large skylight into one of the central south-facing apartments is supported but certain other factors limit its effectiveness (including the eastern orientation). Further design amendments to achieve full compliance with the ADG in this regard would be recommended.

Recommendations

2. Consider re-design of roof to provide accessible communal open space.
3. Further design amendments to achieve full compliance with the ADG 4F would be recommended.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

Comments

The Panel is generally supportive of the proposed development.

Recommendations

Nil

Landscape

The proposed development provides a good quality landscape solution with large private open space areas for dwellings particularly on the ground level and apartments 6 and 7. It is well integrated into the site and carefully planned to provide amenity despite the challenges of the existing conditions.

There is no communal open space provided and while it is a relatively small development in terms of number of units, it would be positive to provide some CoS area. This is particularly important as the maximum percentage of south facing units is exceeded.

Given stair access already exists, and the lift is well back from the street it is considered the small additional height could be supported to allow for to access to a CoS on the rooftop. It may be possible to retain the private areas and provide a modest communal area. Shelter should be provided for the communal open space.

While the deep soil area appears to be met, the main purpose of deep soil is to allow large canopy trees. As shown the deep soil is compromised in places with the stormwater infiltration system and planter walls. Reconfiguration of the absorption pit under the turf area would allow for a larger canopy tree in the northwest corner and adjustment of the built planter at Unit 1 would also allow a tree to be planted in the deep soil.

There are extensive gravel rooftops shown which are visible from the rooftop spaces and by neighbours. These areas could provide a positive contribution visually but and for building insulation, membrane life and biodiversity by incorporating a low profile planted green roof.

Recommendations

4. Consider reconfiguration of the rooftop to provide communal open space.
5. Consider how to optimise the quality of the deep soil and allow for canopy tree planting.
6. Consider low profile green roof in lieu of gravel finish.
7. Consider opportunities for meaningful deep soil along north & south sides by tweaking/relocating retaining walls.

Amenity

Comments

Refer to previous notes above.

Re-summarised below:

- COS – needs to be provided on the roof – lift over-run can be supported.
- Privacy and building separation issues generally acceptable despite minor non-compliances.
- Poor daylight and ventilation for Bed 1 windows APTS02 & 07. Localised internal planning amendments could potentially improve this.
- Solar – 18% 'no solar' is not great but likely acceptable – neighbouring block exceeds current permitted height by 2-storeys & the development has achieved adequate solar to the neighbouring block to the south. Makes the need for rooftop COS more important.
- Acoustic privacy - rooftop spa Unit 11 – source of many resident objections. Might consider deletion.

Recommendations

8. Consider re-design of roof to provide accessible communal open space.
9. Consider undertaking design amendments to achieve full compliance with the ADG 4F.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

Comments

The façade materiality and aesthetic treatment is generally supported. The inclusion of high-quality materials including face brick, natural sandstone, metal balustrading and off-form concrete (carbon intense aspects notwithstanding) as well as the expectation that the application will deliver a high-quality build are all positive aspects. The Panel is of the opinion that the development will help improve the quality of the surrounding urban environment. The Panel would however encourage the applicant to re-consider and potentially substitute some of the materials (and construction methods) for more sustainable and lower carbon-intensive options. The inclusion of faux-timber ("timber-look") is disappointing given the overall attention to detail otherwise shown. There is also the risk that faux-finishes to metal cladding will break down over time due to their reliance on surface films. The use of rendered masonry can also be problematic and expensive to maintain especially in coastal locations where flaking can occur.

Recommendations

10. Consider substituting faux look materials for more authentic longer-lasting options
11. Consider ways in which materiality in general can help achieve a more sustainable architectural outcome. For example, with the use of re-cycled materials (brick) and low-carbon concrete.

Sustainability

Comments

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.

The Panel notes and commends the inclusion of electric only services and comprehensive attention to EV charging for cars in the garage space.

It is noted that the NatHERS scores average 6.3 stars, with many below 6 stars. This is not allowed and needs to be addressed to enable a fabric first approach to natural comfort and reduced operational carbon.

Recommendations

1. Decarbonisation of energy supply
    a. Consider the inclusion of additional PV panels located on the unshaded east and west flat roofs. Their efficacy can be greatly enhanced when placed over a green roof, which has additional ecological benefits.
2. Passive design and thermal performance of building fabric
    a. Higher BASIX thermal performance standards that commenced on 1 October 2023 require an **average 7 stars NatHERS, with no unit below 6 stars**. This is consistent with the National Construction Code for 2022. Given the coastal location a very comfortable indoor environment should be achievable.
    b. Particular attention is required for the south facing apartments to ensure they meet this requirement. Consider double glazing, reduced glazing areas, better insulation and other methods to improve the scores.
    c. 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.
3. Consider introduction of shading for un-protected east and west exposed glazing. Retractable louvres/other devices should be clearly annotated on all drawings.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel is supportive of the development subject to the minor amendments as outlined above being made to the proposal.