

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY PANEL MEETING REPORT

DA2025/0447 - 32 Golf Avenue MONA VALE

PANEL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

A previous Development Application on the site DA2024/0190 was presented to the panel on 18 April 2024. The advice provided the following conclusion:

The Panel is supportive of many aspects of the proposal, however, significant improvements to several aspects of the scheme require refinement as detailed in the recommendations herewith.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The location has good access to transport, shopping and recreational facilities.

The site is zoned R3 Medium Density and the proposed land use is permissible. The site is located in a low and mid rise inner housing area.

The applicant indicates that the site is 392.44m walking distance from Mona Vale town centre, which would invoke Low to Mid-Rise provisions of SEPP Housing involving a 22m (6 storey) maximum building height. This advice is based on the presumed application of these Low to Mid-Rise Housing provisions of the SEPP.

The site is located near the crest of Golf Avenue, opposite Mona Vale Golf Club. The context is comprised of predominantly 2 storey apartment buildings and multi-dwelling housing. The surrounding area character consists of predominantly 2 storey buildings with mid to light coloured masonry finishes. Front setbacks are well landscaped with a range of canopy trees, mid-size trees and low level planting. Landscaping is prevalent along-side boundaries, placing the 2 storey buildings within landscape settings.

Basement car parking is accessed by driveways and ramps. Front fences are a range of low painted timber or taller painted masonry fences, with planters between the fence and the footpath.

The proposed development is 4 storeys in a context of 2 storey buildings. It is noted that many trees adjacent to the south-east fence line near the proposed entry path have been removed due to being undesirable species and specimens. However, these trees provided a landscaped setting at the front of the site and visual separation from the neighbouring property. A eucalyptus is proposed within the front setback, however the amount of landscaping, particularly along the south-eastern boundary, is reduced. This exacerbates the issue of the visibility of 4 storeys being in close proximity to the existing 2 storey dwellings.

Due to the proposed increased building height and reduction in landscaped setting, the proposed development is not compatible with the desirable elements of the character of the local area.

Recommendations

- a. Provide additional landscape along the south-eastern boundary to visually separate the proposed building from the adjoining property.
- b. Ensure that landscaping proposed on the roof of the bin room is able to be maintained by permanent watering systems and an on-site gardener.

- c. Consideration given to selection of substitute face brick which is not starkly white and is a mid to light tone to complement colours in the context.

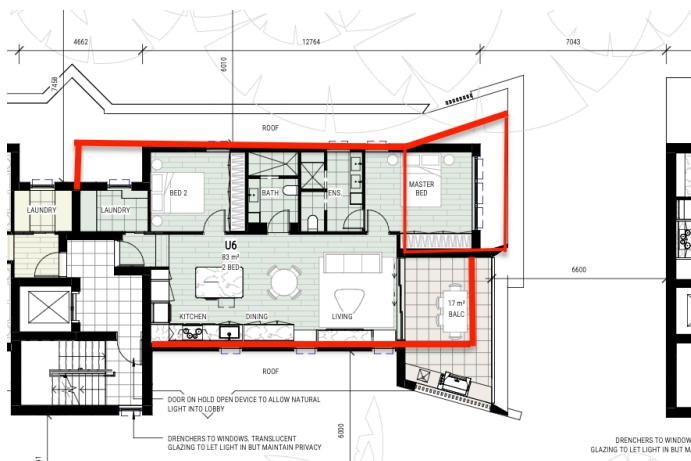
Scale, built form and articulation

The low to mid rise housing uplift has led to the development doubling in height, from 2 storeys to 4 storeys. The proposed design sets back the top 2 floors from the lower floors along the north-western elevation of both proposed buildings and for most of the south-eastern elevation of both buildings. This is a considered response to designing a 4-storey building in an area of 2 storey existing buildings. However, the top storeys along the south-eastern elevation are not as consistently set back as those along the north-western elevation – 2 fire stairs and a balcony stack are not set back above the second floor. The issue of proximity to neighbours is more acute along the south-eastern boundary as the adjoining dwellings are at their closest towards the centre of the site where they are approximately 4m from the side boundary.

Towards the middle of the lot along the eastern boundary two trees have been retained, however they are palm trees which do not offer a great amount of visual separation between properties and should ideally be substituted for something of a higher (preferably Native variety) quality

It is recognised that the fire stairs are well located along the less sunny side of the building, allowing the north-western side to maximise sun access. The fire stairs are also functionally located. The balconies to Units 6 and 8 are visually overbearing on the neighbouring property. It is acknowledged that detail solar access studies have been prepared to provide at least 2 hours sun to the neighbouring windows during mid-winter, however the balcony stack contributes to overshadowing. Relocating the balconies would increase solar access to the neighbour and reduce the effect of overbearing.

It is recommended to re-work the layouts of Units 6 and 8 by “flipping” the bedrooms to the south-eastern side of the plan and the living areas and balcony to the north-western side of the plan in a layout similar to this :



Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:



- I. Further consideration should be given to street interface. Booster assembly should be positioned and enclosed such that appearance does not detract from the quality of the landscape and such that planting along street interface is maximised.
 - *Panel Comment: The booster is located away from the pedestrian entry and has the potential to be set within landscaping.*
- II. Provide well-integrated paved and covered private open space for all dwellings to avoid future piecemeal approach to same.
 - *Panel Comment: Issue resolved with well-integrated paved and covered private open spaces*

Further recommendations for DA:

- d. Re-work the layouts of Units 6 and 8 as described above to reduce impacts on neighbouring property to the south-east and enhance solar access to the proposed apartments (as described above).

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

An additional basement level is provided, including a car lift. It is noted that visitor parking is located on the lower basement level, necessitating visitor to use the lift.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:

- III. Integrate parcel locker and mail boxes into entry structure.
 - *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation.*
- IV. Reduce extent of basement to reduce excavation and increase deep soil.
 - *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation.*
- V. Explore potential to reduce width of driveway and increase landscape area across front setback zone.
 - *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation to the extent that additional cars are accommodated due to greater density and 2-way ramp is minimum width. Landscaping in front setback zone is satisfactory.*

Further recommendations for DA:

- e. The Panel defers to the Council traffic planners regarding the re-allocation of car parking and bicycle spaces. The dimensions of the basement area are satisfactory.

Landscape

The amount of communal open space and its identification is inadequate. The Roof Terrace Plan contains paved and green areas, seating a barbecue and a swimming pool and is labelled "Roof Terrace". The architects design statement nominates the area as Communal Open Space, however there is no caption written on the plan identifying it as Communal Open Space and no

indication as to how the swimming pool will be maintained. As Communal Open Space is a requirement of the ADG, it should be labelled on the plan and a management plan for the pool be provided.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:

- VI. Prepare a tree Protection Plan to manage building construction stage.
 - Panel Comment: Arborist's report updated, however further work required regarding Tree Protection Plan to manage during construction.
- VII. Redesign all outdoor spaces to include at least one outdoor sitting space of adequate size.
 - Panel Comment: Ground level open spaces are satisfactory however further work is required on rooftop.

Further recommendations for DA:

- f. There is potential for Communal Open Space on the roof however further work is required to identify the roof terrace area as communal open space, with a Management Plan submitted for the pool to be managed by a building manager or removed from design.

The general private amenity is good across the site for each apartment and plant selection generally appropriate for the location.

The loss of the existing trees will substantially reduce the tree canopy and landscaped character of the site. This character would not be reinstated with the proposed landscape on the street frontage, which contains only 1 large native canopy tree, in the street front corner of the site. The large paved areas for vehicular access and only 1 canopy tree would lead to an outcome that does not fit into the treed landscaped character of the area.

Consider the potential for planting another large native canopy tree to the LHS of the entry driveway.

In addition; consider the potential for planting other large native canopy trees on the 307m² deep soil provided in replacement of some of the large number of small trees (17) on the site ie. *Melaleuca/banksia*; say 1 per apartment.

Amenity

As noted in Scale, Articulation and Built Form above, the balconies in Units 6 and 8 are in close proximity to the boundary, being 3.6m to 4.8m from the boundary in a splayed wall. Vertical battens visually articulate the wall, however also allow some potential for cross viewing across the side boundary. It is noted that the neighbouring lot also has potential for re-development at a scale of 4 storeys. Under the ADG balconies should be set back 6m from the boundary, creating 12m separation. The proposed balconies in Units 6 and 8 have the potential for some downward viewing into the neighbouring windows and would have an overbearing effect on the neighbouring property.

Proposed ground floor translucent windows to U1 living and rumpus rooms and U2 second living continue to have potential privacy issues when windows are opened for ventilation.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:



- VIII. Consider altering the planning of units No.1 and No.2 so that they are similar in configuration to units No.3 and No.4 respectively, making sure to avoid creating habitable rooms that depend on obscure glazing for privacy.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation to the extent that ground floor bedroom is replaced with rumpus room which may be less sensitive to privacy loss from passing pedestrians. See recommendations below.*
- IX. Remove or relocate Body Corporate Meeting Room to avoid unnecessary excavation.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation to the extent that no Body Corporate meeting room is included in new proposal.*

Further recommendations for DA:

- g. Re-plan Units 6 and 8 as recommended in Scale, Built Form and Articulation above, to relocate bedroom windows 6m from south-eastern side boundary.
- h. Provide batten screening to ground floor translucent windows to U1 living and rumpus rooms and U2 second living to maintain some privacy when windows are opened for ventilation.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

As noted in Surrounding Area Character above, the scale and character of existing apartment buildings and multiple dwelling buildings in the area is generally 2 storeys and the colour palette is mid-tone to light tone walls. The proposed development is 4 storeys and a white brick materiality is proposed. The 4 storey building will be more visible above the landscaped setting than the existing 2 storey buildings and the white colour will be visually very prominent.

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:

- X. Provide more specific detail on finishes and materials.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation.*
- XI. Promote finishes which will have inherent material characteristic and that will stand up to and compliment the marine environment. Avoid 'faux' finishes.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation.*

Further recommendations for DA:

- i. Consider selection of a brick colour which is a light colour, however not a stark white, as is currently proposed, to reduce the visual prominence of the building within its context.

Sustainability

Recommendations

Previous recommendations from DA2024/0190:

- XII. Consider relocating the on-site battery storage. Determine whether a battery could be efficiently located outside the building envelope at much reduced cost, but requiring further design to achieve a good fit with the landscape and surrounds.
- *Panel Comment: Batteries are intended to be installed at each of the carparking spots along with 30 amp charging points – this will need to be added to the drawings for the DA.*
- XIII. Should the installation of the PV array breach the height limit in order to optimise performance it is the Panel's view that this is a justifiable breach although it appears that this is achievable within the height limit.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation.*
- XIV. Provide EV charging points for each unit (Min 15 amp) to suit level 1 charging.
- *Panel Comment: proposal resolves recommendation. See Point 1. Above.*
- XV. The commitment to 5kW of PV per unit needs to be a condition of consent as it is not recognised or formalised on the BASIX certificate due to the inadequacies of the current BASIX online tool.
- *Panel Comment: The proponent noted that there is not enough roof space for 5kW per unit – only 2 units. They aim to optimise the amount of space and allocate to as many units as possible after common area allocation. The minimum amount they will provide needs to be part of the consent, so will need to be clearly identified on the drawings.*

Further recommendations for DA:

- j. While the average NatHERS score is 7.1 stars, Unit 02 (5.6) is below 6 stars which is not allowed. Additional work will be required to get it above 6 stars to increase natural comfort and reduce operational carbon. See next point.
- k. Double glazing in thermally broken aluminium frames to all apartments to increase their thermal and acoustic performance is highly recommended.
- l. Future focused developments to not have any gas. Consider an alternative system for hot water such as electric heat pumps.
- m. Basement carparking is the most intensive embodied carbon in the project – its size should be kept to a minimum. Reconsider excess space such as wine cellar and overly large storage areas.
- n. Consider how materials from the existing homes can be salvaged, upcycled, and/or recycled, starting within the project itself. Circular economy consideration of these assets can create a less damaging outcome from their demolition.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Development Application (DA) was reviewed by the Panel on 18 April 2024. While supportive of many aspects, the Panel identified key issues needing refinement, particularly regarding landscape, built form, privacy, amenity, and compatibility with the surrounding 2-



storey character. The proposed 4-storey design lacks adequate visual separation, particularly on the south-eastern boundary, reducing compatibility with local character. Concerns were raised about overbearing balconies, insufficient communal space, stark material choices, and reduced landscaping. Recommendations include redesigning Units 6 and 8, enhancing boundary planting, refining rooftop communal areas, improving sustainability measures, and using less prominent brickwork to better integrate with the local context. The Panel does not support the development in its current form, therefore. Design modifications to improve solar access and amenity (including to neighbouring properties) are sought.