

Item 1 - DA2025 0024 - 158 Pacific Parade DEE WHY**PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS*****General***

The Panel accepts the constraints imposed by the narrow island shape and planning context of the site, and acknowledges that the proposal provides a convincing architectural strategy to address this. The Panel remains concerned about potential privacy impacts on neighbouring apartment buildings and would recommend that the affects be studied further and workable solutions proposed.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The proposal height exceeds Clause 18 of the SEPP by 100mm due to screening for AC condensers. The Panel is not overly concerned by this minor breach and suggests that it can be satisfactorily resolved through consultation with Council.

The Panel acknowledges that the proposal provides a convincing built-form and architectural strategy to address the island site.

While upper-level setbacks are not mandated for this site, past guidance proposed replacing the top floor northern apartment with communal open space as a way to reflect the rising topography but also to address the absence of COS.

The Panel accepts that recent amendments to the Housing SEPP support the fact that the northern apartment has been retained, complicating objections regarding overall building height.

The Panel recognizes the site's constraints and believes the proposed built form offers a compelling architectural strategy, yet questions the architects' characterization of the existing site as "ugly." The notion the existing buildings are "ugly" however and in need of transformation is subjective, and not agreed by the many objectors to the proposal. Many community members value the site's low-scale character, and a nuanced understanding of what is being lost is necessary. The design should reflect this sentiment while accurately navigating the balance between transformation and preservation. Perhaps there is a lot to be learnt from the ad-hoc nature of these buildings as an important feature of the beach-side character for future projects.

The Panel acknowledges that a number of objections to the proposal have been received by the community. These have been reviewed and considered.

Recommendations

1. The Panel would recommend that further design attention be given to ground floor curtilage of the building and the interface between active uses and the street/public domain. The island shape of site, which is advanced as an argument to allow variation in set-back and height controls (in comparison with say more strict interpretation on other sites), also makes the ground floor of this building more important to resolve in a way that other neighbouring sites may not be required to. For example, it makes it doubly important there be no lesser or blank "rear" elevations and that the building provide an equally attractive and active frontage to the street on all sides and corners.

2. Rationalise /improve treatment of level changes at ground floor corner of shop/restaurant to lessen impact of these changes on useable/habitable outdoor space and landscaping – perhaps by relocating the stairs inside the restaurant.
3. Consider placement and re-design of awning and servicing with respect to sub-station and potential opportunity for mature tree planting (as a substitute) on corner of Pacific Parade and Griffin Road
4. As a further general note the conflicts between awnings and landscape in this area could benefit from further design attention. The Panel remains un-convinced about the interface of the building with the street /landscape and public domain in this corner.
5. Consideration should be given to rationalising or relocating services back beyond the building façade and for the car lift to take up less of the frontage. A better more uniform treatment/interface between building uses at ground floor and the public domain (in much the same way that the shops and restaurant elsewhere are designed) should be considered and arrived at prior to approval

Scale, built form and articulation

The Panel concurs with previous recommendations to increase height on the southern side to better integrate with the topography. It notes that this recommendation has been taken up by the Applicant and it is therefore supported.

However, a call for communal open space at the northern end was not implemented. The current proposal claims a 30% affordable housing uplift, affecting height arguments. As the surrounding area anticipates low to mid-rise developments, the Applicant has positioned the proposed height within the future context. Even though the non-compliance with communal open space and deep soil zones (per the ADG) raises concerns, the rationale for these breaches merits careful consideration and is generally accepted by the Panel.

A recommendation to terminate balconies on southern-side units facing Griffin Road in the same way that the balconies to northern-most units was made. This is at the Applicants discretion.

Recommendations

6. See recommendations stated above in Strategic Context, Urban Context: Surrounding area character.

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

Concerns have been raised by objectors about the car park entry and whether the proposed car-lift solution may create (queuing) delays affecting street traffic. The Panel assumes that the risk of this happening has been considered and discounted by the Applicant and their traffic consultant. However, an explanation for how this issue is to be addressed in the design should be sought.

The Griffin Road frontage features solid, blank walls taken up with servicing (including pump and switch rooms, substation, fire stair egress and carpark), all of which detract from the building's aesthetics and urban contribution. The Panel suggests enhancing the wall's visual character while potentially reconfiguring the car-lift and entry design to optimize ground floor space for commercial use. A well-considered landscape treatment along this side is essential.

The Panel questions whether there is a practical need for such a large vehicle entry and turning area before reaching the car lift. Architects point to layout of carpark below to say not viable to change layout.

Consideration might also be given to rationalising the car-lift and vehicle entry, as currently proposed from The Strand, with a view to providing access from Griffin Road if it can reduce the area given over to vehicle circulation/lift and release more area on the ground floor for other

(retail/commercial) uses. In making this suggestion the Panel acknowledges that there may be other difficulties that prohibit the viability of this solution.

Recommendations

7. Applicant to address potential queuing delays from the car-lift, ensuring traffic flow is optimized.
8. Additionally, enhance the Griffin Road frontage by improving the visual character and reconfiguring the car-lift and vehicle entry for better ground floor utilization, potentially considering access from Griffin Road for efficiency.
9. Should the current carpark road entry be retained, consider paving (or having a more considered surface treatment than roadway-grade concrete) to the vehicle cross-over from the footpath up to the roller door thereby providing a better connection with the public domain of the street but also to differentiating it as a space that connects to neighbouring bike parking.
10. Consider introducing visual porosity to carpark elevation facing Griffin Road and likewise through the roller door.

Landscape

Corner landscape area is under utilised with a stair and could contribute more to the life of the street for outdoor dining.

While the landscaped area is not provided the site occupies a quite unique island location in a local centre zone. This condition could provide reason for a dispensation not to provide landscape area on site and no communal opens space give the access to the beach and small number of units. Contributing to the public domain with streetscape, footpaths and street trees is positive and will enhance the wider context and offsets to an extent the limited provision of landscape within the site.

Consideration should be given to how the awning planting is maintained to ensure its success over time.

Recommendations

11. Reconsider the design of the acute corner space to further contribute to the public domain activation and avoid clutter of handrails etc.
12. Consider the inclusion of gaps in the awnings to allow appropriate tree planting in one, or two locations along the façade.
13. Where possible consider the use of native/endemic species.
14. Consider now how to provide maintenance access to the awning planting.

Amenity

Community objections focus on the perceived “over-development” and loss of the low-rise beach character, with some concerns about view loss and amenity impacts on neighboring units. Privacy issues, particularly from bedroom windows, warrant effective solutions. The analysis of view loss needs to account for impacts above LEP height limits as well.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that the design addresses community concerns regarding perceived over-development and the loss of low-rise beach character. Solutions should be implemented to enhance privacy for neighboring units, especially from bedroom windows. Additionally, a thorough analysis of view loss should consider impacts above LEP height limits.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The architectural presentation suggests distinct facade typologies but would benefit from further coherence. The Panel encourages a unified treatment, potentially merging colour schemes to emphasise the building's horizontal flow instead of treating each section as a separate entity. Improved integration of building uses with the public domain is essential, ensuring service areas occupy less prominence on the street frontage while harmonising with the surrounding landscape.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that the architectural design achieve greater coherence in facade typologies by unifying treatments and merging colour schemes to emphasise the building's longitudinal form, horizontality and topographical condition. Additionally, improving integration with the public domain is essential, ensuring service areas are less prominent on the street frontage and harmonise with the surrounding landscape.

Sustainability

The well-designed shop top housing has the bones of offering many sustainable living opportunities. The following comments are made to help realise that potential.

It is noted:

- Achieving minimum BASIX requirements is required as a bare minimum. This is not leading in sustainability.
- All electric services have been specified for the apartments
- The min 4 stars for all water fixtures and appliances
- All apartments have achieved 6 NatHERS stars or more.

Recommendations

In addition to what has already be achieved, the following aspects of design and servicing can be easily and cost effectively considered for inclusion:

17. Decarbonisation of energy supply
 - **All services should be electric** – in addition to NO gas for cooking, hot water and heating for the residences, ensure this is also the case for retail.
 - Using heat pump hot water systems for hot water instead of instantaneous electric should be considered. They are extremely efficient, and the storage of hot water can be considered a de facto battery if heated by PVs during the day. Additionally, they can reduce the impact on peak electricity times.
 - 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, especially when there is insufficient landscaped area on site.
18. EV charging: Provide EV charging points for each unit (Min 15 amp) to suit level 1 charging. Also consider charging and storage for E Bikes.
19. Passive design and thermal performance of building fabric
 - 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.
 - It would be good to see how the only apartment with 6 stars – the affordable unit U09 on the SW corner of the top floor – can be improved.

- 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.
- Well sealed double glazed windows would be beneficial for both thermal and acoustic reasons, especially in a site surrounded by roads and traffic.

20. Water use minimisation

- All fixtures and appliances should be as water efficient as possible – min 4 stars.
- Landscape design and planting should be water tolerant and suitable for the microclimate – see landscape comments.

21. Materials

- a. A new area of BASIX, it would be good to understand how you are aiming to reduce the impact of materials and their embodied carbon.
- b. Consideration should be given to:
 - i. agreeing to the low emissions options for the concrete noted in the BASIX report,
 - ii. lean design strategies such as optimising structural layout and slab design, posts to support balconies instead of cantilevers etc
 - iii. dematerialisation throughout
 - iv. reducing basement carparking and/or its impacts

22. The inclusion of cantilevered awnings hosting desirable plants presents a number of issues to be resolved. The design will need to consider:

- how to minimise the embodied carbon from the concrete and steel reinforcement required to hold them up in their saturated states
- how to minimise the thermal bridging resulting from the need to connect these to the inside slabs
- how they will be built to last, not cracking after a short time due to weight, failings of waterproofing, issues arising from maintenance of the plants etc.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel acknowledges the proposal's architectural strengths while expressing concerns regarding potential privacy impacts, community objections to over-development, and loss of low-rise beach character. Recommendations include enhancing ground floor integration, addressing view loss, improving facade coherence, and implementing sustainable practices. A balanced approach is essential for community acceptance and design success.

The Panel considers that the development application has merit subject to implementation of the recommendations above.