



Design + Sustainability Advisory Panel Meeting 24 June 2021

N0119/14 Mod2021/0203 1102 Barrenjoey Road Palm Beach

PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Site Area: 1141.5m²

Proposal: Modification of development consent N0119/14 for a shop top housing development.

Proposed modification to increase number of units from 4 to 6 units, various architectural changes, widen vehicular access and changes to ground floor retail tenancies with an overall increase of floor space both in the retail component (327sqm to 410sqm) and the shop top residential (approximately 755sqm to 1100 sqm).

Council's advice at the Pre Lodgment meeting was that the modifications are to such a degree that the development is not 'substantially the same development' and should be lodged as a development application and not a Section 4.55 Modification application for the following reasons:

- The increase in apartments from 4 to 6 (50% increase in unit yield);
- The increased side setbacks to the north and south boundaries; and
- The significant extent to which the western (front) elevation of the proposed building will be modified.

Rationale from the applicant:

The applicant submits the rationale behind increasing the height was to provide improved floor to floor heights in line with the current ADG standards improve car park access and provide retail parking.

Strategic context

The site is zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre and adjoins land zoned E4 Environmental Living to the east and south. Immediately to the south of the site is a two storey residential dwelling. To the east of the site are two residential allotments (sitting elevated above the subject land) and are currently subject to development applications for residential dwellings (one is under construction, one currently being considered by Council under DA2021/0200).

Urban context: surrounding area character.

The subject site is not identified as a heritage item of local or other significance. However, immediately to the north of the site is the locally listed heritage item, "Barrenjoey House" at 1108 Barrenjoey Road and is recognised as item 2270076 in the Pittwater Local Environmental Plan 2014.



To the west of the site (across Barrenjoey Road) is a public carpark and reserve, along with Palm Beach Ferry. The subject site is both prominent and significant in that it will be highly visible for people utilising Palm Beach Ferry and the surrounding public reserve.

Although there is a wide range of architectural 'styles' present in Palm Beach, the Panel suggests that there are a few prominent places and groups of buildings that are memorable and contribute to this overall impression.

This site is in the middle of one such group. Although the 'Barrenjoey House' has been modified with a pitched roof and dormers to create a faux-Georgian appearance, it in combination with the informal dining area to its north, the outdoor seating area on the subject site, and the 'archetypal' weatherboard weekender to the south make a memorable ensemble.

The Panel does not believe the concrete forms, solid balustrades, strong horizontality and hanging gardens/planter style of development is in keeping with 'seaside village feel' or aesthetic expected by the Palm Beach Locality Statement.

The Panel would have made the same comments in relation to the approved scheme, which is also out of character and does not contribute to the amenity of the public domain or to the desired future character.

This is not a matter of aesthetics or opinion, but deduced from the way surrounding buildings have responded to the western orientation and older buildings in the area.

The public domain flows into the site and the internal floor levels are close to on grade with the adjoining footpath. This allows for a seamless transition and generous informal public domain shades by a variety of canopies and umbrellas. The Panel recognizes that this arrangement cannot be retained in totality, however, could provide the basis for an approach to the design of the building at ground level.

To that end, although the entry to the car park will need to have a threshold above the flood level and freeboard, the potential to have the commercial area on split level should be explored to allow the seating area to remain on grade with the adjoining footpath and kitchens on a raised area towards the rear of the building. This is possible whether the function remains a café/restaurant or some other type of retail.

Recommendations

1. Investigate a redistribution of the original floor area towards the rear of the site could allow for the retention of a more generous small publicly accessible court between the proposed building and Barrenjoey House.
2. Lower the internal floor areas to allow the deletion of ramps and stairs to create a continuous, generous shaded colonnade. The Panel can see no reason why the ground floor could not be built to within 1 meter of the rear boundary
3. Retain a generous courtyard between the development and Barrenjoey House (currently approximately 6m x 15m that could be reduced)

Scale, built form and articulation,

The Panel has no concerns regarding:

- the 800mm increase in height,



- increases the amount units from 4 to 6,
- increase to the building envelope in the amended rear setback
- various changes to setbacks on each elevation of the building and changes to the architectural design and street presentation.

As noted above there is an overall increase of floor space both in the retail component (327sqm to 410sqm) and the shop top residential (approximately 755sqm to 1100 sqm).

Although the Panel is not preoccupied with floor space per-se, it is interested in the impact and arrangement of the floor space on the site.

The increase in the building footprint at the north-western corner of the building adjacent to Barrenjoey House replaces the current plaza area which is a considerable asset to the community. This open area is important in retaining views corridors to the heritage Barrenjoey House as well as providing desirable open space.

Recommendations

4. The increase in building height and intensity will add bulk and scale. Set back the top level to provide a softening to the street frontage.
5. Consider establishing a datum related to close to the eave line of Barrenjoey House as the uppermost part of the 'solid' part of the building with open lightweight balustrades, lightweight framed shade structures, pergolas or trellises above as is common in many building in the area.
6. Set back from the north to retain some of the plaza space and enable some northern light into the apartments on that façade.
7. Consider shifting entire (reduced) floor plate towards the south to increase northern exposure.

Landscape context, Façade treatment

The changes are a great departure from the approved plans and the proposed landscape design is of poor quality. The horizontal planter boxes do not contribute to the character of the area and plant selections are not suitable for the location – more endemic species should be selected.

The Panel is not supportive of the previously approved landscape plan and considers the planters unnecessary and likely to require balustrades that would completely sever the relationship to the street.

Recommendations

8. Plant selection to reflect endemic estuarine/ woodland character.
9. Replace Palm planting at streetscape with large endemic canopy trees to shade western façade and break up large scale of the proposed building.
10. Increase landscape screening treatments to the conspicuous entry to underground parking
11. Eliminate planter boxes to street and create a landscape more in sympathy with the Palm Beach locality and endemic ecologies.



12. Provide a revised landscape design by a qualified Landscape Architect that respects the site's unique heritage and location in a significant visual corridor of the main route to Palm Beach and across from the Ferry wharf.

Public domain: relationship to public domain, safety/security.

Flood levels creates a poor urban design outcome. The steps and ramps to the retail space disconnect the building from the public domain.

Recommendations

13. Remove equal access ramps and planters breaking up private space from streetscape at commercial ground level.
14. Establish a stronger connection to Barrenjoey House
15. Eliminate planter boxes to street and elevated balconies
16. Avoid “commercial” appearance of front by reconsidering the scale of fenestration and spacing and size of columns. Part of the “Palm Beach” Character is that it is generally comprise of ‘scaled-up’ domestic buildings, not ‘scaled down’ commercial offices that would be found in a CBD.
17. Relocate fire booster and services to the south.

Amenity

Use of the lightwell for ventilation and light to the bedroom is not allowed under the current ADG. If it is to be used, the roof of the lightwell needs to be open to ventilation.

Even if open to the sky, the amenity of bedroom 3 in unit A2 is not adequate. Light, air and visual and acoustic privacy are all issues.

Unit A5 bedroom 3 may benefit from a skylight but this will still not achieve the required amenity.

Levels 1 and 2 should be a minimum of 3m from the rear boundary

Otherwise the proposal has high amenity

Recommendations

18. Reconfigure access and either delete A2 and A5 br3 or improve amenity.

Sustainability

The amount of skylights appears excessive, it is likely that the very onerous façade glazing is compensating for the large area of skylights. The façade glazing proposed is more alike to the glazing expected in curtain wall glazing of commercial office towers. The glazing will be very dark with an SHGC of 0.25, reducing daylight access into the apartments, therefore creating dim spaces. Removing some of the skylights, or using more efficient tubular skylights, will relax the performance requirements of the façade glazing.

Perhaps more importantly, and related to the aesthetics of the building, it is not clear why a vocabulary of louvres, fabric awnings, external shutter or blinds have not been adopted as is



common in the area. In other words, setting the building back from the northern façade will enable northern windows to be included in some of the apartments to improve amenity.

Practical sustainability initiatives could be incorporated, such as increasing the rainwater tank size, significantly increasing the PV and potentially connecting it to some of the apartments directly, bicycle parking, electric hot water and induction cooking.

Recommendations

19. Increase the PV provision
20. Provide heat pump hot water and induction cooktops – remove gas
21. Provide the bike parking
22. Reconsider the amount of skylights to enable clearer glass to be used on the façade.
23. Panel suggests that a response to the environmental conditions of the building that faces due west could provide the basis for the form and architectonics of the building.

PANEL CONCLUSION

The proposed changes are a great departure from the current approved drawings, but the current approval is also of very poor design quality.

The residential area is increased by 45% therefore this is a significant change and should be submitted as a new DA and not a modification.

The following points are suggested as a set of principles to establish a brief to move forward.

Recommendations:

1. The entire character of the building needs to be redesigned to provide a building which relates to the location including addressing the heritage building next door. Suggestion to consider a modern interpretation of traditional architecture which fits within the character of the area
2. Realign ground level to provide level entry to the retail, potential to address the flood levels by raising the kitchen zone
3. Change the massing of the building to set back from the heritage building, enabling retention of views and maintaining a public plaza space. This will also enable northern access to the building via windows to the apartments. The massing could shift towards the rear where it has minimal impact on the rear neighbor.
4. Readdressing the massing will allow redesign of the layouts to potentially remove the need to ventilate some of the bedrooms through the light well.
5. Redesign the landscape to fit use more endemic species to reflect endemic estuarine/ woodland character. Replace planting at streetscape with large endemic canopy trees to shade western façade and break up large scale of the proposed building