

Item 4 - DA2023/0987- 35-39 Belgrave Street MANLY**PANEL COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS*****General***

The Panel commends well-considered proposal providing strong urban definition of the street, and a continuous active retail frontage.

Strategic context, urban context: surrounding area character

The orientation of the building, and its relationship to the three street frontages, is well-considered. It provides appropriate definition to the important corner site and bookends the urban form of the block.

The Panel supports the architectural form. It notes Council's heritage advice, which raises concerns about the building's relationship and proximity to nearby heritage items (especially in terms of its height exceedance), but it does not accept that the development compromises the heritage items. It is noted that there is another development proposed across the road with vaulted elements. The Panel still hold some reservations about whether the concrete vaults along the top-most street-edge roof profile of the building are the best way to terminate the building.

As noted at the first DSAP, the concept of the central courtyard space is supported, and while it has undergone some minor adjustment, its scale and resolution of how it interacts with the internal elevation of the neighbouring building at 21 Whistler Street would still benefit from further design attention.

The Panel remains concerned that narrowness of the central courtyard as well as the degree of closure at the lower level will work against its ability to provide effective cross ventilation. Consideration should still be given to the first DSAP recommendation to open the courtyard to the streets (on at least some frontages and variable levels); to improve the draw for cross ventilation and enrich the spatial experience and use of the courtyard.

The Panel acknowledges that the space is being developed (well) as an important feature of the architecture; for circulation, light and ventilation. However, its viability as a usable and amenable communal space requires further consideration. The main concerns in this regard are to do with its size (too small), the tricky conditions of managing acoustic privacy to dwellings, the degree of enclosure at all levels and lack of direct sunlight.

The Panel supports the booster location on Belgrave and is against the suggested relocation to Whistler.

Recommendations

1. Further design consideration given to the amenity and spatial character of the courtyard to better resolve the interface with the neighbouring building at 21 Whistler, increase its size and build upon the communal benefits of it as an element in the overall design.
2. Provide communal open space with solar access either within the courtyard, on the rooftop or on "break-out" spaces to the facade at key vantage points/levels. If on the rooftop, this could be in combination with private courtyards.
3. Retain the booster on the Belgrave Street frontage (consider option for commercial unit 3 to utilise part of the foyer as a sheltered active space as 'shared garden' entry to the building)

Scale, built form and articulation

The Panel is not overly concerned about the proposed variance to height. The building makes a positive contribution to the urban form. However as noted in the previous DSAP comments, compliance with FSR

should not be understood as a right. The building should still achieve all other planning objectives and high design quality. The FSR provision of 3:1 is very high when the height limit is 15m. * see previous DSAP comments for further explanation.

As this is a significant corner site, further consideration could be given to the expression of the corner of the building where Belgrave meets Raglan streets.

Individual apartments are generously proportioned and efficiently planned. The distribution and size of rooms is good. Living rooms and bedrooms benefit from good access to street frontages with well-proportioned windows and balconies.

The Panel strongly supports external circulation particularly in a coastal environment, but notes that although this is not included in GFA the balconies reduce the area available for the courtyard.

Recommendations

4. Consider further adjustment of the central courtyard and external circulation zones to increase the size, variable use, and spatial variety of the courtyard (consideration should be given to 'pulling back' the high balustrade edge on upper floor to allow more direct sunlight penetration into the central core)
5. The courtyard should benefit from direct sunlight (to enhance and maximize landscape viability) and support the cross-ventilation objectives of the building. (This could involve additional roof landscape opportunities along the edge at upper inside lip)

Access, vehicular movement and car parking

The Panel has no issues with this aspect of the proposal.

Landscape

Overall, the landscape design is supported including planting selections, use of tall palms within the central courtyard and soil set down in the courtyard to allow for a flush landscape relationship within the space.

Planters along the sill of L4 appear shallow, which may make sustaining quality planting difficult. Access to these planters and other planters on awnings (that are inaccessible to residents) need to have an in-built plan for maintenance. These form a key part of the design aesthetic and must be adequate to maintain planting to achieve the outcome illustrated.

The roof terraces set back from the edge behind the vaulted elements are supported. These are positioned to create minimal visual impact and the private access stairs which bring light down to apartment entry vestibules are a positive inclusion. It is expected that residents will look to introduce structures for cover in these courtyards and, given they are unlikely to be visible from the street, could well be introduced later if not planned in. To maintain the overall quality of the development the architect may consider designing these in, noting these would further breach the height limit of the site.

The Panel notes that despite good access to public open space and beaches in the area, Communal Open Space is still an important provision for amenity in apartment developments as required under the ADG. This communal open space requires access to sunlight which is not provided within the central courtyard. The design must include some usable communal open space with solar access. This could be provided on the rooftop by reducing some of the private open space, or on lower levels by breaking courtyards through to the street from the central courtyard opening.

It is understood that one of the main reasons to exclude communal open space on the rooftop is the need to bring the lift and stair to the roof for access breaching the height limit. This is considered of concern than lacking quality communal space, particularly given it is unlikely these elements would be visible from the public domain.

Green roof around the PV was noted but is not shown on the drawings. Inclusion of this planting would be strongly supported.

The provision of street trees in the public domain is strongly supported and should be negotiated with Council. The footpath should remain as wide as possible for public access and the introduction of the trees should consider this.

Recommendations

6. Consider the depth and maintenance of all external planters inaccessible to residents to ensure their long-term viability.
7. Provide communal open space with solar access. Given the quality of the apartments and the private open space it is not considered that this would need to be the full 25% of the site area recommended in the ADG. (Consider communal open space on roof as priority, whereby upper-level units have easy stair access and lower floor would still gain access by lift.
8. Consider the incorporation of shelters for the rooftop private courtyards on the proviso they are not visible from the public domain. (This will need to consider the impact these may have on neighbours that have outlook toward Manly Oval / park)
9. Provide planting within the areas of PV to increase efficiency and biodiversity.
10. Maintain the provision of street trees to enhance passive shading of the building.

Amenity

The planning achieves a high level of amenity by giving apartments proper frontage to each dwelling and good sized/proportioned private open space. Apartments are generally generously proportioned and efficiently planned. The distribution and size of rooms is good.

The considered entry experience with the incorporation of landscape and natural light via the stair creates an element of surprise/delight. Demonstrating the benefit of considered design in common areas, even with limited space.

Apts 107, 207, 307 have an uncomfortable relationship to 33 Belgrave, likewise, these and Apt 404 have uncomfortable relationship to 21 Whistler. These apartments also have small balconies.

The apartments facing west show significant glazing without shading. It is noted that street trees are proposed in the public domain to the west which is strongly supported, acknowledging that this will require negotiation and approval from Council. These trees will provide shading in time physical shading should still be considered.

Solar access is excellent however not quite as high as stated as Apts 101, 201, 301, 401 do not receive 2 hours. Cross ventilation is good however it relies on windows to the corridor/light well. The introduction of the vestibules makes this more comfortable in terms of privacy, however, still presents potential acoustic issues. Given this relies on small courtyard adequately venting testing should be undertaken to prove the effectiveness, particularly on the lower levels.

The fire stair/atrium condition is spatially interesting and appears ambitious with respect to compliance. It is noted that SJB stated the fire engineer is comfortable with the design.

Recommendations

11. Consider reconfiguring the stack of apartments Apts 107, 207, 307 into 1 bed to improve the relationship to the adjoining buildings and provide increased area of private open space.
12. Incorporate shading to west facing glazing to reduce glare and solar heat gain.
13. Ensure cross ventilation will be effective and resolve fire, noise and visual privacy issues. Confirm compliance of the fire egress strategy.

14. State correct numbers for solar access.

Façade treatment/Aesthetics

The architectural treatment and material composition of the building is well-considered. The use of brickwork, colouration is positive, and the Panel are supportive of the proposal in this regard.

Sustainability

To ensure these dwellings are future ready and the best they can be for their occupants, the Panel strongly recommend that the energy supply is decarbonised (no gas), EV charging is supplied, and that the passive design and thermal performance of the building fabric is optimised.

It is good to see that cooking is electric. It is strongly recommended that electric heat pump systems or instantaneous heaters for hot water be considered. This will enable savings for the developer and tenants by not installing gas to the site.

Consider as many PV panels as possible for the roof to enable as much onsite power generation as possible, installed on green roofs to be more effective. This will have side benefits of increasing biodiversity and reducing heat island effect. Consider locations for possible battery storage along with EV charging for cars.

The Panel notes that the new building code requires an average of 7 stars NatHERS, with no apartments less than 6 stars. Greater comfort in a changing climate and future disclosure of energy efficiency at point of sale or lease make this a good investment.

- **Recommendations**

15. All services (cooking, hot water and heating) should be electric – gas should not be connected.
16. Include as many PV panels on a lightweight green roof as possible for use in common areas.
17. Provide EV charging points for car parking and allow for future bi-directional (2-way) charging of EV battery for powering the building.
18. Incorporate sun shading devices for western windows.
19. Ensure all apartments have an average 7-star NatHERS score, with no apartment below 6 stars.

Design excellence

The panel considers that the design is capable of achieving design excellence and endorses the comments which are still relevant made in the Pre lodgement meeting held on 25 May 2023

PANEL CONCLUSION

The Panel supports the direction that the proposal has taken since the last DSAP meeting but that further refinements (as outlined above) need to be made before it can support the proposal in full.

The Panel recognises the work and progress in refining the proposal and supports the applicants in their continuing efforts and commitment to refine the design.