



architecture + interior design

Design Excellence Statement

DOMA Group

'eighteen honeysuckle drive' + 'Edition' Apartments

18 Honeysuckle Drive + 10 Worth Place, Honeysuckle NSW



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1 Introduction

The mixed use proposal for 18 Honeysuckle Drive, will be a vibrant new addition to Newcastle's CBD; a prominent development within the broader Honeysuckle precinct and; a landmark building for this linchpin site.

Situated within the Newcastle harbour side precinct of Honeysuckle, on an important corner lot at the junction of Worth Place and Honeysuckle Drive, the proposed commercial and residential development presents an identifiable bookend building element to the existing row of recently developed commercial buildings.

'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' has been designed to complement the adjacent developments by following the established architectural language of the precinct both in height, bulk and scale as well as for the mix of uses with Retail, Commercial and Residential functions.

Whilst zoned as B3 Commercial Core land, 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' sits at the very eastern end of the transition to a B4 Mixed Use zone and the incorporation of residential into the development at this junction is characteristic of the limits in the local property market, representative of the diversity of the Honeysuckle precinct and reflective of the linchpin nature of the site.

Following the intent of the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, the proposed development offers the city a mix of commercial and residential spaces providing for employment generation and population growth and activation beyond standard business hours.

Consistent with the Design Excellence aspirations of the Newcastle LEP 2012 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' will provide a superior design outcome of distinctive architectural integrity. It will combine a dynamic commercial use that will provide both workplace and public rewards, with a quality residential model for inner city living which together will set the benchmark for the design of Newcastle's mixed use urban communities.

The proposed Floor Space Ratio for 'Eighteen Honeysuckle' is 3.0:1.0 as a mixed used development, which is below the permissible 4.0:1.0 FSR for commercial use in accordance with the Newcastle LEP 2012 Part 7 CLAUSE 7.10 FSR for development in Area A.

The architectural outcome for 'Eighteen Honeysuckle' has a built form, bulk and scale consistent with the anticipated building envelope of an entirely commercial use in its zone, that is similar to its immediate completed neighbours and which aspires to Design Excellence for the project outcome.

The proposal for 'Eighteen Honeysuckle' was presented to Newcastle City Council's Urban Design Consultative Group (UDCG) in June 2014. The group gave support for the project and their feedback from that meeting has been incorporated into the development of the design excellence strategy for the building concept.

The following analysis outlines the design approach for the development of 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' to confirm its consistency for the Design Excellence criteria under the Newcastle LEP 2012.

2 Architectural Design, Materials and Detailing

Located on a highly visible corner at the junction of Worth Place and Honeysuckle Drive adjacent to the existing rail corridor, 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' addresses its prominent position with a bold architectural design framework reflecting its mixture of uses and the character of its inner city urban setting.

The location of the commercial tower at the western end of 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' echoes the position and profile of the neighbouring office buildings housing key organisations including NIB, GHD and Sparke Helmore.

A series of vertical 'voids' provide separation to the commercial tower from NIB to the west and the 'Edition' residential tower to the east. The glazed facade of the office floors also project beyond the podium to align with its western neighbours along both Honeysuckle Drive and the existing rail corridor.

The simple building envelope combines with sophisticated glazing details that incorporate horizontal shading elements to add interest to the facade and provide solar shading to the north.

Setback along the western face, across its top and returning over the east facade, the 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' commercial tower is wrapped by a precast concrete veil which responds to the articulated profile of the adjoining buildings and offers a controlled variety of finishes to the tower elements. The veil is softened with punctuated openings for the height of the tower on its east and west facades and appears suspended by starting and finishing one level above the podium.

The residential tower known as 'Edition', folds back to Worth Place from the commercial tower alignment providing a stepped building profile and emphasising the end junction of the site. Separated by the large vertical void between it and the commercial tower, the 'Edition' residential tower has an articulated recessive built form to its north and south facades, with predominantly solid angular balustrade elements terminating on the eastern end of the building's strong vertical corner 'pier'. These strong horizontal components compliment the simple building details of the commercial tower yet provide a distinction between the two uses.

A similarly detailed precast concrete veil wraps from the western face of the residential tower, across and down its eastern facade. The vertical brick corner 'pier' completes the building profile, grounds the full height of the structure and offers a gateway element at the junction of Worth Place and Honeysuckle Drive.

Set back from the north eastern boundary, a deep soil public forecourt is created adjacent Honeysuckle Drive and Worth Place at its roundabout, permitting landscaping and a gradual transition from the lower street level to the ground floor raised concourse. The two storey concourse comprises integrated commercial/retail space and concealed carparking behind, presenting a high open street facade for the building's Honeysuckle Drive frontage. An angled perforated projecting brick podium bridges the concourse and supports the two separate towers over.

Facing the existing rail corridor, the podium has a sculptural treatment to its precast concrete detail providing a dynamic elevation and sufficient ventilation and screening to the carpark concealed behind. This podium element anchors the structure at the ground level, providing a solid base for the building aesthetic, while linking the two distinct towers (commercial to the west and residential to the east) that 'float' above this foundation.

Three simple building material finishes define the coordinated appearance of the buildings: glass; precast concrete; and brick:

- The glass façade of the upper level commercial tower, the recessed glass panels and sporadic glass balustrades to the residential tower and the glass frontage to the ground floor retail concourse level.
- A precast concrete veil wraps the upper level towers and responds to the articulated profile of the adjoining buildings, while solid angular precast concrete balustrades to the residential balconies and sculptured precast concrete panels to the rear podium create a 'kinetic form' to the facade and introduce a dynamic element to the building elevation.
- A perforated projecting brick podium on the Honeysuckle Drive street front bridges the concourse and anchors the structure at street level, whilst providing texture, tactility and human scale at the pedestrian level.

Metal window frames, projecting hoods, balustrade standards and louvred frames and screens provide material variation and consistent detail mix to all components of the building.

3 Form and External Appearance (Public Domain)

The design of 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' follows the intent of the planning guidelines for built form and external appearance for the Honeysuckle Precinct. The Newcastle City Council Urban Design Consultative Group (UDCG) concluded the massing and scale of the building to be acceptable and in keeping with other buildings within the precinct, with particular reference to the neighbouring commercial buildings to the west.

The solid building design re-enforces the nodal point at the Worth Place/Honeysuckle Drive junction by providing a landmark corner element within the Honeysuckle Precinct and future connection to Hunter Street.

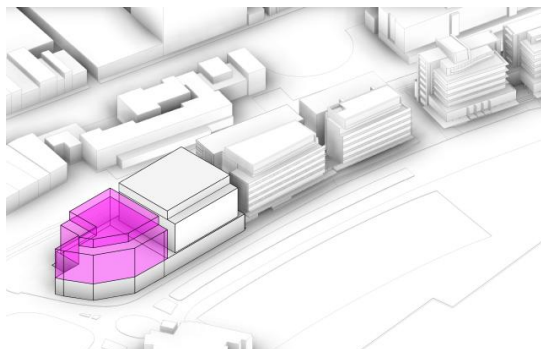


Figure 1 – Corner Element, North Aspect

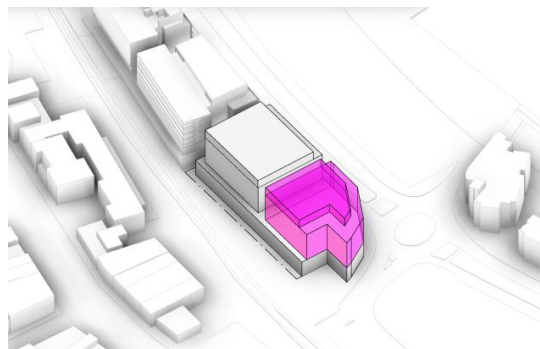


Figure 2 – Corner Element, South Aspect

The urban design solution for the proposed building symbolises the importance of the site as a potential link between Harbour and City. The proposed development does not turn its back on the city, but encourages linkages along Honeysuckle Drive and Worth Place and acknowledges the potential future pedestrian movement along the existing rail corridor. This is achieved by providing an articulated podium and ground level landscape treatments with private outdoor decks overlooking city to the south.

The building design addresses its three open frontages extending to the street alignment on Honeysuckle Drive and Worth Place, defining the street edge and heralding the entry to each building: 'Eighteen Honeysuckle' and 'Edition' from contextually relevant positions.

The deep soil green landscaped public open space at the junction of the two street frontages, entices pedestrians from the footpath, encouraging public use of the landscaped terraced area, whilst the ground floor commercial concourse increases the public amenity of the precinct.

In addition, the landscaped setback adjacent the existing rail corridor will provide a green connection to this future publicly accessible open space.

4 View Corridors

The development site resides at the juncture of Honeysuckle Drive and Worth Place, both roads offer varying site lines to the harbour and foreshore. Honeysuckle Drive gently curves west of Worth Place to form a view corridor alignment to Nobbys and the harbour, east of the roundabout at Worth Place. A 20 metre wide view corridor from Hunter Street looking northward along Worth Place to the harbour is identified in the Newcastle DCP 2012.

The proposed development has been designed to define and enhance the existing view corridors, by following the established street alignments and stepping the built form back above the podium at the street corner to open up the vista to the sky.

The configuration and setback of the building along the existing rail corridor will strengthen the view corridor along this future public space and support its significance as a nodal intersection.

Above the street podium of 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive', the two towers are separated from each other to form a clearly articulated gap, following the rhythm of building forms between the western end of the commercial tower and the existing commercial buildings immediately to the west of the site.

These articulated breaks in built form offer relief from what would otherwise be a 'wall of development' and offer sky views from both Honeysuckle Drive, the future light rail corridor and future development from within Honeysuckle and across the rail corridor on Hunter Street.

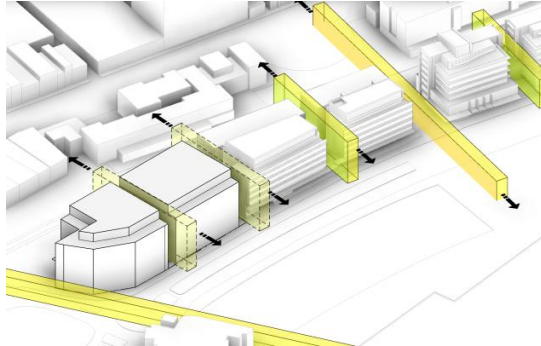


Figure 3 - View Corridor, North Aspect

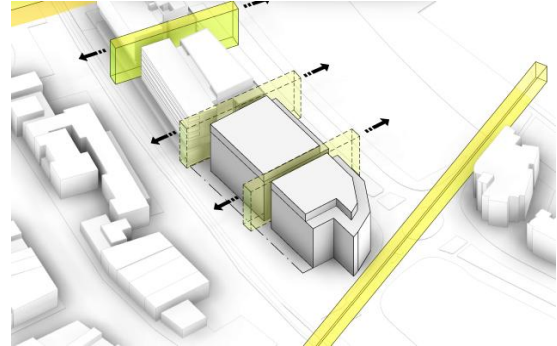


Figure 4 - View Corridor, South Aspect

5 Heritage Issues and Streetscape Constraints

The site is situated adjacent to the Newcastle City Centre Heritage Conservation Area which ends on the southern boundary, divided from the site by the rail corridor. Materials such as brickwork and articulated pre-cast panels offer a contextual reference to the brick buildings that characterise Hunter Street and surrounds, coupled with the existing contemporary building forms along Honeysuckle Drive. Angled panel joints in the pre-cast panels offer an abstracted pattern of the railway sidings characteristic of the former uses of the site.

The footprint of the site recedes in width along its length from the western boundary to the Honeysuckle Drive/Worth Place junction.

At the south east corner of the property a significant portion of the site frontage to Worth Place is restricted by land owned and occupied by infrastructure providers such as Hunter Water Corporation and Ausgrid. The southern boundary is also burdened for almost half its length by a 3.0 metre wide drainage easement in favour of the rail corridor.

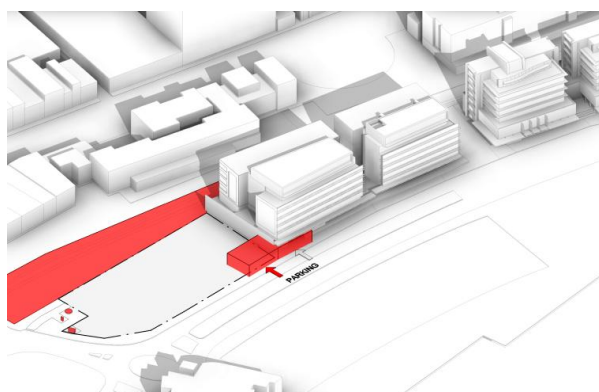


Figure 5 - Identified site constraints

Minimum flood refuge levels have been identified for the site, posing challenges in relation to ground level accessibility and connection with the existing footpath levels and public realm.

The western end of the Honeysuckle Drive frontage has been identified as the most appropriate location to provide driveway access to the building car park. This location is also designated for the street accessible service cupboards and plant rooms servicing the total project.

Despite these site imposts the proposed project has been designed to establish an engaging street frontage and continue the active ground plane of the neighbouring buildings, with particular emphasis on the north facing aspect to Honeysuckle Drive and pedestrian connections at the junction with Worth Place.

6 Building Relationship

The urban form established for 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' and 'Edition' Apartments has been derived from an analysis of the existing built context to the west and the future connections at Worth Place.

Set back from the north eastern boundary, a public forecourt is created adjacent Honeysuckle Drive and Worth Place at its roundabout, permitting landscaping and a gradual transition from the lower street level to the ground floor raised concourse. The two storey concourse comprises integrated commercial/retail space and concealed car parking behind, presenting a high open street facade for the building's Honeysuckle Drive frontage. A perforated projecting brick podium bridges the concourse and supports the two separate towers above. This podium element anchors the structure at street level, providing a solid base for the building aesthetic, while linking the two distinct towers (commercial to the west and residential to the east) that 'float' above this foundation.

An articulated gap provides the necessary separation between the two towers while also introducing the opportunity to establish a discrete yet common architectural language for each tower element. The distinctive architecture for the towers above the podium is enhanced through the introduction of separate entrances and addresses at the ground plain for each of the commercial and residential uses along with independent names for each building: 'Edition' at 10 Worth Place for the residential and 'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' at 18 Honeysuckle Drive for the commercial.

'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' has a profiled facade over its entire height and length, responding to the character of the historic buildings of the Newcastle CBD. The introduction of detail elements such as sunshade blades to the northern facade and the materiality of the perforated masonry podium further reinforce the spirit of Newcastle's built heritage.

The projecting sun hoods and solid/glazed balustrade panels provide fenestration and fine details, while the masonry is a visual cue to the existing heritage buildings along Hunter Street and within the Honeysuckle cultural precinct; a contemporary reference to the area's industrial past. Brick elements are also cleverly used in the landscaping treatments, entry ramps and stairs, defining the residential address to Worth Place and the terraced ramps from street level to the ground floor concourse.

7 Bulk, Massing and Modulation

'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' has an articulated form along its length and height. It has varying ground level setbacks to its north from Honeysuckle Drive, east from Worth Place and south from the existing Rail corridor respond to the surrounding context and add interest to the building line.

Building elements are stepped forward at the upper levels to match its western neighbours and stepped back to herald its prominent corner position at the east of the site.

Angled balconies to the residential building break down the mass of the built form and provide a sense of movement and modulation of the facade. The commercial building is expressed as a smooth glass box, referencing the adjoining buildings. Both tower elements are unified by a wrapped 'hood' element that acts to unify the buildings and provide a continuation of the street alignment of the neighbouring development, juxtaposed with the podium alignment below.

8 Street Frontage Heights

The building design encourages the physical connection with the existing streetscape without providing a monolithic 'extruded' site outcome. Street alignment is maintained by the 3 storey brick podium structure facing Honeysuckle Drive. The lower two storeys are 'carved' out to create a double height covered forecourt and retail frontage.

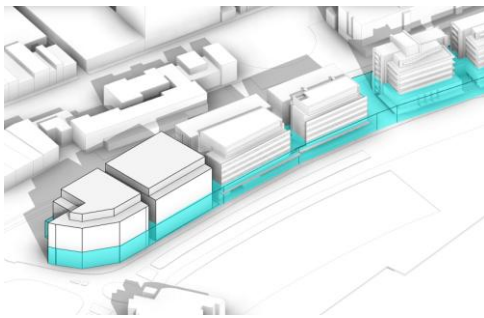


Figure 8 – Predominant Street Wall Height

The brick podium structure is further articulated by the varied alignments of the two towers that sit above the street wall height. The commercial tower projects forward to align with the neighbouring buildings, whilst the residential steps back to offer large private outdoor spaces and emphasise the corner at Worth Place.

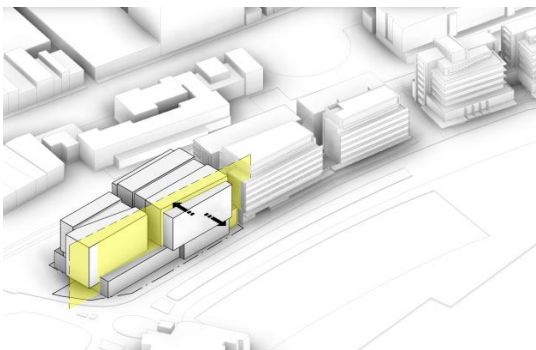


Figure 9 – Building Alignment, North Aspect

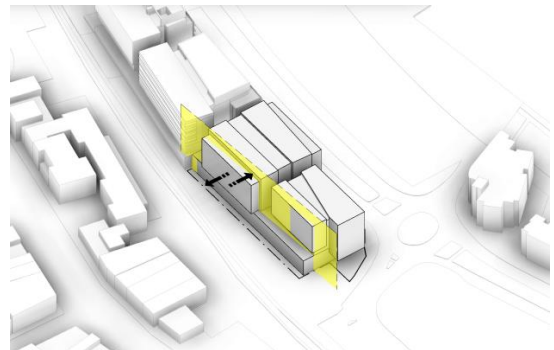


Figure 10 - Building Alignment, South Aspect

9 Environmental Impacts & ESD Principles

The proposed development is a functional building which incorporates environmentally sustainable development principles without detracting from its contemporary appearance.

The detailing and material choices have been selected to suit the location and respond to the environment and are chosen to echo the importance of the site's location.

Environmental initiatives have been set by the design team with a target of 4.5 NABERS and 5 Star Green Star Office As Built rating for the commercial component. The residential component satisfies the criteria outlined in the BASIX assessment.

The commercial tower incorporates 'winter gardens' which provide break-out areas for office users. Energy efficient glazing, lighting and mechanical services will be integrated to improve overall energy efficiency.

The detailing and material choices have been selected to suit the location and respond to the environment, with the inclusion of high performance glazing to all facades with lower external reflectivity levels.

The car parking levels have been designed to achieve natural ventilation with minimal mechanical assistance where required to achieve external built forms appropriate for the public domain.

Each façade is detailed to meet the demands of its orientation. Detailed modelling and analysis has been undertaken by the ESD consultants to ensure façade performance reduces heat loads throughout the year.

Predominant glazed facades are oriented north and south for maximum daylight levels to the commercial floor plates. East and West facades are designed to reduce low angle sun penetration and heat build up from morning and afternoon sun.

All residential apartments have been designed to meet the requirements of BASIX and offers a high level of amenity to the end users.

It is acknowledged that Windy conditions can cause discomfort and danger to pedestrians, and downdrafts from buildings can hinder the growth of street trees. Moderate breezes that penetrate open spaces can enhance pedestrian comfort and disperse vehicle emissions.

The office components of the development are well spaced from each to ensure breezes to penetrate the landscaped open spaces. Furthermore, the thoroughfares through the car park spine and site permeability ensure that through site breezes are possible.

The relatively low height of the buildings (30m) and protection offered to pedestrians by the lower podium form are designed to satisfy wind criteria for public safety and comfort at ground level.

End of Trip Facilities are provided for commercial office commuters at the Ground Floor level and include a generous secure bicycle storage area, lockers and showers.

Pedestrian access to the raised forecourt is encouraged through the integration of ramps and stairs with landscaped elements. Various points of access have been included to promote intuitive way finding and visibility from the existing road crossings and surrounding footpaths.

Vehicular access is confined to the western end of the site to ensure there is no conflict with existing traffic flow from the Worth Place intersection and reduce potential loss of on-street car parking.

10 Public Domain

The development of 18 Honeysuckle Drive will provide a continuation of the vibrant ground plane of its western neighbours. Combined commercial and onsite residents will contribute to the activation of the ground plane and filter to the greater public domain established in the Honeysuckle Precinct.

Integrated ramps, stairs and terraced landings have been designed to reduce the visual barrier often associated with the need to satisfy flooding requirements. This is achieved by breaking down the perceived level change in a subtle and gradual way, in scale with the double height retail forecourt and integrated landscape elements.

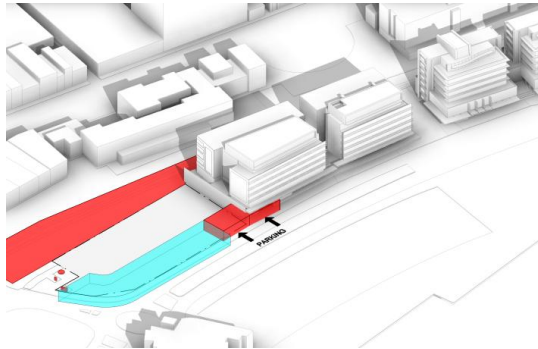


Figure 10 – Active Street Frontage & Public Domain (Blue)

Unlike many of the ground plane retail spaces along Honeysuckle Drive, the proposed cafe has been pushed forward to interact with passing pedestrian traffic, providing a prominent and active frontage to the street.

‘Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive’ and ‘Edition’ Apartments will be a vibrant new addition to the Newcastle City’s CBD: a prominent development for this established block within

The development will have a dynamic commercial use that will provide both workplace and public benefits, attract further businesses, workers, residents and visitors to this part of the city.

Public footpaths and feature paving have been designed to extend into the site, blurring the edge between the public and private domain. The paving design follows the established pattern to the west of the site with the exception of featured paving at the street intersections. This treatment is intended to further enhance the corner treatment of the site and place visual importance within the public domain.

Conclusion

'Eighteen Honeysuckle Drive' and 'Edition' will provide a quality mixed use development within the emerging Honeysuckle Precinct by:

- Introducing a materiality at the ground plane that is tactile, appropriate to human scale and references Newcastle's historic building stock in a contemporary way.
- Articulating a built form that turns the corner and forms a visual cue to the potential future connection with Hunter Street via Worth Place.
- Continuing the commercial building form to the western end whilst heralding the conclusion of the residential zone.
- Presenting a simple, unified palette of materials which respects the surrounding urban context by combining elements to provide a cohesive built form with clearly defined uses.
- Making the most of a compact site by capitalizing on the northern aspect and established view corridors to increase the amenity of the end users and make a positive contribution to the public domain.

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