



URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING

ITEM No. 3

Date of Panel Assessment:	18 th July 2018
Address of Project:	50 (35) Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle
Name of Project (if applicable):	N/A
UDCG	UDCG 2018/00023
DA Number	NA
No. of Buildings:	Two
No. of Units:	92 Units 190 car spaces in two basement levels Retail/Commercial tenancies
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	Nil.
Attendees:	<u>Applicant</u> Patrick Quinlan - KDC Emily Wombwell - SJB June Domazet – Doma Group Gavin Edgar – Doma Group <u>Council</u> Mellissa Thomas

This report addresses the nine Design Quality Principles set out in the Apartment Design Guide (2015) under State Environmental Planning Policy No.65. It is also an appropriate format for applications which do not include residential flats.

Background Summary

The project has been involved with a design excellence process where by UDCG members Philip Pollard and Michael Ostwald have participated in a design review panel commissioned by HDC to advise on this project. Council's manager, Building and Development was also an observer on this DRP. This is the first time this project has been formally presented to the entire panel for comment.

1. Context and Neighbourhood Character

The site is located in the waterfront urban renewal corridor of Newcastle's Honeysuckle Precinct. Located on the north side of Honeysuckle Drive, which is a major east west boulevard servicing the city, the site is in the centre of the last remaining area of old port land to be redeveloped. On the southern side of the road predominantly commercial buildings of a similar height and bulk prevail, with two sets of 'twins' adding to the uniformity of the built forms. On the north side of Honeysuckle Drive the site to the east has a large predominantly residential development of a similar bulk and scale currently under construction. This development is proposed to be of two similar sized buildings and one small-scale structure, consistent with the forms which characterise this end of the Honeysuckle Precinct. To the west of the site vacant land lies ready for future development with similar controls to the subject site. To the north the harbour provides a lovely and sometimes dynamic outlook and at the same time allows the development site to be seen from a long distance from on and around the harbour.

Retail outlets and restaurants occupy the ground floor of the commercial and residential buildings creating some pleasant outdoor spaces. A park located to the north of the adjacent site to the east provides one of the few open areas particularly aimed specifically to cater for families.

The proposed buildings sit comfortably with the existing buildings in function, and overall massing. Appropriate connections north-south across the site allow pedestrian movement to flow easily around the buildings and connect to adjacent sites. Subtle changes of level are well handled and help to differentiate the public open space from the public domain. There are also some welcome differences in these two buildings which help overcome the sameness in the architectural massing imposed by the controls for the area.

2. Built Form and Scale

The development proposed has tested and manipulated the brief with the controls for the site to achieve the proposed massing. It is a considered response that takes the LEP envelope and redistributes the bulk to widen the public thoroughfare. The insertion of the 'jewel' building separate from the two residential towers is clever and importantly, to really make it stand apart from the rest of the development, it is designed by a separate Architect. The curved forms reminiscent of the silos across the harbour combined by the extensive use of brickwork allow this development to read somewhat differently from those nearby. However, when viewed from a distance this careful differentiation would be less obvious and even further differentiation could be desirable.

3. Density

The LEP 2012 establishes two FSR controls for the site, with a maximum of 2:1 applicable to the northern portion of the site and a maximum of 2.5:1 on the southern portion of the site. The development has an FSR of 2.17:1 which is considered acceptable.

While the report states that the number of car spaces exceeds that required by the control, it does not state by how much. A rough count suggests that around

17 additional car spaces are available for residential units. Given the location and standard of apartment achieved this is reasonable, and any impacts are negligible, given the location of all car parks being at basement level. It is not clear if the additional carparking provided is included in the FSR.

4.Sustainability

The development appears to be able to achieve a level of sustainability above the ADG requirements with a combination of passive and active inclusions. While many apartments have louvres to protect the windows there are some units on the east and west sides of the buildings with large areas of glass where the measures to reduce heat gain are unclear.

5. Landscape

The landscaping proposed for this development is of a very high standard with well-handled level change articulating the boundary of the open public space on the site to that of the public domain on the boardwalk to the north. Coordination of the public domain and the open space on site is needed to ensure the best outcome. The eastern cross site link is well designed with a good mix of spaces. The landscaped roof of the retail pavilion on the north side of Building 1 is a an attractive idea to improve the look from above.

The landscaped communal space on top of Building 1 is a well-designed with a variety of smaller intimate gathering spaces. See comments below under 'Amenity' regarding the rooftop area in Building 2.

The issue of wind impacts for both people and vegetation at roof level was raised. Even the generally desirable summer north-easterly winds can be unpleasantly strong on the foreshore, and it was recommended that protection from strong winds should be included in the planning of the rooftop space(s).

6. Amenity

The buildings have a high level of amenity for the residents both within the apartments and in the common areas, and for the public interacting with the spaces around the building. The only concern relates to the inconvenient access for residents of the western building (Building 2), to the common open space on the upper level of Building 1. Currently Building 2 has no common open space on the upper level, meaning that for anyone wanting to use this space they would have to go down to ground level and walk across to the adjacent building. A more equitable outcome would be to move one (perhaps the middle unit) of the three penthouse units on Building 2 across to Building 1 and locate it on the western end leaving a common open space central to both buildings. It may also improve the efficiency of the servicing of Building 2 by providing some plant areas on the roof similar to Building 1.

Due to the single-lift cores it would also be very desirable to allow 'cross-over' between the two elevator cores at roof-top level, so that at times when an

elevator is out-of-service due to breakdown or servicing, residents at upper levels in particular would have alternative lift access.

7. Safety

No safety issues are evident in the design with an abundance of passive surveillance and secure access points.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

The design responds well to the social context with an appropriate range of apartment types and with 10% Adaptable Housing. The variety of retail spaces will complement the nearby commercial buildings and this combined with the built-in flexibility in the apartments should provide a positive contribution to the area.

9. Aesthetics

The aesthetics are well-considered with robust materials which are said to be expressive of nearby heritage buildings. The buildings are articulated with curved corners reminiscent of the silos across the harbour and there is a clever differentiation in the north and south facades. The use of landscaping in and on the buildings is also thoughtful. However, one potential issue is when the buildings are viewed from a distance, there could be insufficient differentiation in these facades, although it is appreciated that there will be considerable articulation in their silhouettes. Some further emphasis on colour and materials expressed at the appropriate locations could assist.

.Amendments Required to Achieve Design Quality

No significant amendments are required, however refinement in relation to two issues is recommended, -development of the roof areas to provide equitable access to communal facilities, and consideration to how the development will be seen from a distance.

.Summary Recommendation

This proposal has the support in principle of the Panel pending the finalization of the design.