

Rev:A

16th May, 2019

Job no 18.48

Horizon, Lee 5 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle

SEPP 65 DESIGN QUALITY STATEMENT

1.0 CONTEXT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

- The site is dramatically located on Newcastle Harbour's waterfront edge, in the centre of the Honeysuckle redevelopment lands. The area is part of the ambitious new urban district planned at the long-neglected western end of central Newcastle, which has been identified for higher density development near the new Wickham Interchange. Its position is ideal to take full advantage of the transport, shopping, public places and civic open spaces in central Newcastle, both currently available and those in train (see context and site analysis drawings ref DA-002, DA-003);
- The project's site is a generous allotment with an area of 5,600m², currently occupied by a paved hardstand, a remnant of its former port-related industrial use. Its primary street frontage is to Honeysuckle Drive to the south. The design has been developed with extensive consultation with the Government Architect's appointed State Design Panel and is a considered response to the scale and character of site, the planning intent and the area's evolving urbanity;
- Consistent with the area's rezoning, the urban block will, over time, come to house a series of high-quality mid-rise residential buildings with retail uses to the major frontages at ground floor. Building heights along the waterfront generally will be 6-8 storeys, with taller buildings allowed further to the west. To Honeysuckle Drive, the built, approved and intended buildings will create a robust street wall, punctuated by regular gaps between buildings to allow views through to the harbour;
- The northern frontage is to the new continuous harbourfront promenade. The width of the promenade is to be supplemented by the detailed landscape design which creates quieter seating bays integrated with raingardens. Retail frontages will activate the site's key corners;
- The eastern part of the site is to be dedicated to Newcastle City Council to allow for the extension of Steel Street through to the waterfront promenade. This is a major public benefit, allowing the hinterland back to Hunter Street to have a direct physical

and visual connection to the Harbour, with views across to the industrial city-scape of the northern banks. Retail frontages will address this new city space;

- The site's north-west boundary adjoins Cottage Creek which is in the process of becoming an important new public connection, which is consistent with the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy. Cottage Creek bisects the urban blocks to the south on the diagonal to make the entire area more walkable with an amenable new landscaped public space to cater for the hugely increased population who will presently come to call this area their neighbourhood;
- The layout responds appropriately to the site's various conditions. The project is articulated as a series of three related but distinct building forms that create landscape spaces in between. The site planning and architectural form is based a well-considered urban design rationale that efficiently uses its the available area to create a rich urban composition;
- In discussions with the State Design Review Panel, the building heights have been varied to create a more distinctive silhouette and to transition to the higher buildings planned to the west. Therefore the 8th storey elements are setback from the main body of the buildings and the western most building is a storey taller.
- The primary orientation to the north-east has multiple advantages in terms of access to sun and sea breeze, views and privacy, and address to the harbourfront;

2.0 BUILT FORM AND SCALE

- Consistent with the pattern of buildings proposed in the vicinity, the range of new buildings are set out orthogonally to the address the strong alignment of Newcastle harbour's waterfront edge.
- The scheme is configured as three independent urban buildings, united by their waterfront alignment, scale, design and material palette. The buildings form a pair of landscape courtyards that extend from Honeysuckle Drive right through to the waterfront, allowing views between the buildings from both the public and private domain behind. So rather than wall off the city from the harbour, the design is an exemplar of equitable view sharing;
- The building has to be raised on a podium due to flood considerations. The podium is made in brick as a characterful plinth that unites the three buildings and the landscape courtyards between. Four ramps at the site's corners and a number of stairways give access to the gardens and the various building entry points that are

distributed around the site. The public can access the plinth to visit the retail spaces, which are arranged around the site's edges;

- At the outside edges of the site, the eastern and western faces of the fan-shaped buildings address the Steel Street alignment and angled creek frontage respectively. The small footprint of the three buildings, the splayed balconies and the articulation of the base means that the majority of the apartments will enjoy corner positions, with extended sunshine and extensive views;
- The three residential buildings have small floor plates compared to the norm for such types. The eastern and western buildings have total floor plates (including balconies, common, and service areas) of just 843.3 m² & 827.3 m² respectively, with 5 apartments on the typical floors and only 2 per floor on the topmost level. The middle building has a slightly larger floor plate of 941.35 m², with 6 apartments per typical floor and only 2 per floor on the upper most level. The east and west buildings are served by a single lift core and the middle building served by two lift cores;
- The site planning is based around creating generous public and communal landscape spaces. This means that 90% of the apartments will have an outlook to at least one new landscape space;
- As discussed at length with the State Design Review Panel during design development, the proposed setbacks, massing, solid wall panels, external vertical louvres, indentations, fin walls, screening and internal planning are all configured to protect the amenity and privacy between the buildings;
- The separation between the buildings is slightly less than that set out in the ADG, being between 14.8 and 16.5 metres along the harbour front. However, this is mitigated by a number of factors: the buildings' major orientation is north-east to the harbour, resulting in the side elevations facing each other. These side elevations have secondary living room windows, kitchen, bedroom and study windows – in all cases the secondary frontage for the apartments. are also provided for privacy and solar control;
- The considered site planning ensures excellent surveillance of the waterfront, Honeysuckle Drive, the Scott Street extension and canal frontage by all apartments. The design respects the amenity and privacy of neighbours when they in time come to redevelop.

3.0 DENSITY

- The proposal is generally consistent with the LEP height and floor space controls. Any deviations outside these controls have been discussed at length with the State Design Review Panel during design development.
- The proposed density of 2.48:1 is below the maximum 2.5:1 allocated for the majority of the site. The density is deployed to best address the specific site conditions and constitutes an efficient use of precious urban land. The proposed density and dwelling mix will be appropriate in the local context, and the development provides a suitable mix of accommodation to support the shifting needs of the population over the next century (a minimum lifespan for such an apartment project);
- The proposal contains 110 new apartments that provide a mix of accommodation to cater for contemporary requirements and comply with current standards. The overall breakdown of the mix includes 14 x 1 bed, (12.73%), 51 x 2 bed (46.36%), 39 x 3 bed (35.45%), many with studies. There are 6 large penthouse apartments which are all 3 bed plus study (5.45%);
- The following accommodation is proposed;

Eastern Building

- 6 x 1 bedroom apartments with south-west facing balconies
- 6 x 2 bedroom + study apartments, each with wrap-around balconies
- 12 x 3 bedroom apartments, each with 2 balconies
- 6 x 3 bedroom + study apartments, each with wrap-around balconies
- 2 x 3 bedroom plus study large penthouse apartments with generous roof terraces
- 273m² Retail Spaces plus extensive terraces

Middle Building

- 2 x 2 bedroom ground floor apartments with direct access from the podium and private terrace
- 1 x 1 bedroom ground floor apartment with private terrace
- 12 x 2 bedroom plus study through apartments with 2 balconies
- 12 x 2 bedroom corner apartments with balconies
- 12 x 2 bedroom plus study corner apartments with wrap-around balconies
- 2 x 3 bedroom plus study large penthouse apartments with generous roof terraces
- Communal lounge with roof terrace located at Level 07 and generous common landscaped areas at ground level

Western Building

- 7 x 1 bedroom apartments with south-west facing balconies
 - 7 x 2 bedroom + study apartments, each with wrap-around balconies
 - 14 x 3 bedroom apartments, each with 2 balconies
 - 7 x 3 bedroom + study apartments, each with wrap-around balconies
 - 2 x 3 bedroom plus study large penthouse apartments with generous roof terraces
 - 255m² Retail Spaces plus extensive terraces
- Each apartment is designed to fit its specific situation within the overall site plan, providing light, air, amenity, privacy, and a panoramic, green or screened outlook;
 - The proposed density and mix will be appropriate in the evolving urban context in such a well-served context, and acknowledge the site's existing urban qualities and urban potential. Given the proximity to transport, schools, the harbourfront, parks, and shopping centres along Hunter Street, this site is ideal for such a positive contemporary apartment proposal.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY

- The intensive development of this well-located site within easy walk to the new station interchange promotes Compact City planning principles and is consistent with a raft of planning policies and best planning practices;
- In addition to the substantial residential accommodation, the proposal has a mix of retail and communal spaces addressing the waterfront, the streets and new canal frontage, that will add diversity to the area and promote live / work and recreational opportunities;
- Beyond compliance with BASIX's numerical standards, the site planning and building design maximise the benefits of passive solar design to the dwellings, exceeding ADG minimum standards;
- 79 of the 110 dwellings (71.8%) are north facing and receive mid-winter sun between 9am and 3pm on 22 June. 18 of the remaining 31 dwellings (16.4%) are north-east facing and will receive 1-1.5 hours from 9, but will also receive more than 1 hour prior to 9am. Only 13 units (11.8%) face south-west and will receive late summer afternoon sun – this is less than the 15% south-facing ratio allowed in the ADG. The scheme performs well in terms of the 2 hour 70% target in the ADG;

The site planning and building design ensure excellent environmental performance;

- 97 of the 110 dwellings (88.2%) have balconies, courtyards or roof terraces open to northern, north-eastern or western orientation;
- There are only 13 (11.8%) single orientation south apartments;
- All living rooms (100%) open directly to courtyards or balconies, which offer protection from direct sun to interiors in summer;
- 44 dwellings (40%) have three orientations for prolonged access to daylight;
- Sun control is achieved by balconies, vertical louvres, overhangs and the like provided to most windows, appropriate to orientation. This strategy provides passive winter heating, better insulation, and reduces exposure to southerly winds while optimising privacy;

The buildings are designed to maximise natural ventilation as a high percentage of dwellings have excellent cross ventilation;

- 84 dwellings (76.4%) have openable windows in at least two orientations for excellent cross ventilation, which is well in excess of the 60% cross ventilation requirement in the ADG;
- In many recent buildings of this type and density, kitchens are frequently internalised, whereas here almost all kitchens are close to the perimeter wall. Internalised kitchens unnecessarily increase reliance on artificial lighting and mechanical ventilation at all times in such spaces. Some bathrooms and laundries also have openable windows. Even on such a medium density site, this proposal is designed to maximise daylight and fresh air to service spaces;
- 98 of the 110 kitchens (89.1%) are close to openable windows and doors, whereas the ADG proposes only 25%;
- All apartments have a range of openable windows, doors and toplights, which will allow future occupants control of their internal environment. Allied to the cross ventilation provided by the high percentage of perimeter to most apartments, there is no need to rely on air-conditioning for the dwellings;
- All common areas on all levels in each building (100%) are day-lit and naturally ventilated.

5.0 LANDSCAPE

- Even such highly urban sites can have evocative landscapes – this site's landscape strategy is a centrepiece of the site planning, with significant public domain and communal landscape initiatives;
- The landscape design is by one of Australia's leading landscape design practices, Jane Irwin Landscape Architects, who have already carried out award-winning projects for Newcastle Council. In addition to this statement, JILA have supplied a detailed landscape design description as part of the application;
- Major public domain initiatives are embodied in the proposal that will have benefits well beyond the site, with landscape at their core;
 - Supplementing the waterfront promenade, the landscape architect has proposed additional areas of planting, coordinated with WSUD initiatives, to soften the hard, paved nature of the pedestrian environment;
 - The eastern part of the site is proposed as the Steel Street extension – a generous landscaped pedestrian space for the benefit of all Novocastrians. The street works can be coordinated with HCCDC and Council during the DA assessment stage;
 - On the western side a landscaped setback is proposed to Cottage Creek, which has the potential to be reopened and remediated. This opens further possibilities to rethink the environment of the canal as a more positive element for Newcastle. This space would be able to readily accommodate pedestrian and cycle use in a shareway configuration, set in new landscape planted in deep soil;
- Two major landscaped communal courtyards are formed between the buildings that will significantly enhance living in this highly urban site. On the podium above the basement car park are proposed expansive communal spaces. Due to the available depth of the car park structure there will be a minimum of 350mm depth of soil, rising to more than a metre depth in places. This pair of green oases in the heart of the site are readily accessed from all residential cores and will be an integral part of movement through the site for residents. Many units will overlook these spaces, providing a treasured green foreground to the harbour views;
- The scheme significantly increases the area available for deep soil landscape on the site over the current hardstand condition. The proposal creates 525m² (9.3%) of deep soil landscape space along the waterfront and the Steel Street extension, both envisaged to become additions to the new public domain.

6.0 AMENITY

- All dwellings have well-proportioned internal living spaces that open directly to private courtyards, balconies and terraces. Most (88.2%) dwellings benefit from north sun for internal and external living spaces;
- All dwellings have generous private outdoor spaces in the form of courtyards or balconies. All balcony and terrace areas are well in excess of ADG minima;
- In addition to the balconies off all living rooms, all 110 (100%) main bedrooms benefit from a direct opening to a balcony, roof terrace or courtyard. This arrangement also allows a loop of circulation within many apartments, increasing their sense of spaciousness, openness to the outside, and sunlight;
- Conforming with the SEPP 65 Design Code, all habitable spaces have 2.7 metre high ceilings resulting from a 3.1 metre floor to floor separation. The 6 penthouse units will each benefit from 3.0m ceilings;
- A thin cross section is adopted throughout, maximising the buildings' perimeter and therefore windows and available orientations. The cores effectively break each building into front and rear parts, effectively reducing the building depth of all units. In contrast, SEPP 65 Design Code allows a maximum of 18 metres depth of glass to glass;
- All the common lobbies have natural light and ventilation at all levels. Particular care has been taken with the section and detailed design of the communal spaces;
- 26 (23.6%) silver level adaptable dwellings are provided to allow choices for people with disabilities, in excess of the minimum stipulated by the ADG;
- In addition to the generous storage within the apartments, many have additional storage cages in the car parking levels;
- Common garbage rooms have been provided in the car park convenient to the cores. The rooms are discreetly located and are to be mechanically ventilated. A central garbage collection area is located on the street side of the Eastern Building, with the garbage able to be brought up the adjacent vehicle ramp from the basement.

7.0 SAFETY

- The apartments and retail spaces will provide excellent animation and passive surveillance of the waterfront, street and canal frontages, whereas currently there is minimal activation or passive surveillance along this long street frontage;
- The main street entry to the site is clearly denoted at the centre of the Middle Building, providing a welcoming and secure access with full height doors linked to intercom access at the street. This grand entry leads to an architectural promenade of the common circulation on the east-west access which links the three buildings via the landscaped courtyard spaces;
- There are a range of secondary pedestrian access points. From the waterfront promenade there are gates to each courtyard, which connect to all the cores. The Eastern and Western buildings also have direct side entries from the Steel Street extension and the future canal-side park;
- The compact open ended cores on all levels provide high-amenity entrances to all apartments. Each apartment's entry door is clearly legible to the common space;
- Lighting to the common lobbies and to the street entries to the building will animate the façade at night;
- The services and escapes are discreetly handled to minimise their impact on the common areas and footpath environment and to maximise landscape and residential space.

8.0 HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

- The intended creation of the Cottage Creek waterfront park, connecting both back into the city centre and along the waterfront promenade would become one of the major public domain initiatives in recent decades in central Newcastle. This strategic connection will become a key part of the new greenway link between National Park to the south and the harbourfront to the north, and will be of lasting benefit to all residents, workers and visitors to the central districts of Newcastle;
- The proposed development is extremely well located in relation to major public transport, shopping centres, parks, schools and existing services. The new Wickham Station interchange is located nearby, the new light rail route is conveniently close and there are existing bus services in the streets. Ample bike parking is provided, and the site is within easy walk of many destinations. This well-serviced location should minimise reliance on the use of private motor vehicles;

- In contrast to many new developments in the LGA that comprise standard units, the proposal an extraordinarily wide range of apartment types, sizes and configurations to encourage a diversity of housing options to attract future residents. The smallest 1 bedroom apartment is 53.5m², whereas the largest penthouse is 171.8m², with a plethora of types and sizes in between;
- The generous communal garden spaces can become a great asset for future residents and their visitors, and should engender a sense of community, provide recreational opportunities and the chance for easy socialisation. There is a gym and common room at ground floor in the Middle Building, while on its rooftop is a Residents' Lounge and roof terrace facing the harbour. This gives all residents the opportunity to enjoy a great view of Newcastle's dramatic harbour, with long views north along Stockton Beach to Port Stephens;
- Particular care has been taken with the detailed design of all common spaces. The entries are clearly denoted, expressed as breezeways forming open-ended slots;
- In addition to the apartments above, retail spaces at ground floor will diversify the use of the site, and offer potential live / work and shopping opportunities;
- The building will be served by discretely placed common facilities, including large landscaped courtyards at podium level, garbage and service rooms, storage, and dedicated bicycle rooms. A common WC and gardener's areas are provided where they would be of most convenience;

9.0 AESTHETICS

- The architectural design will bring a distinguished presence to the Newcastle harbourfront, streetscape and skyline, as it has been subject to extensive external design review. The scheme has a considered material palette that considers aesthetics, durability and maintenance. Refer to detail design drawings DA-501 to DA-504;
- The design has been developed with extensive consultation with the NSW Government Architect's appointed State Design Review Panel and is a considered response to the scale and character of site and the area's evolving urbanity;
- The Honeysuckle Drive frontage is a sequence of well-scaled face brick façades, punctuated by garden spaces. The articulated design is in the tradition of street wall buildings that define and reinforce the undulating alignment of the street. The façades have a calm arrangement of horizontal banding, which are calibrated by a range of

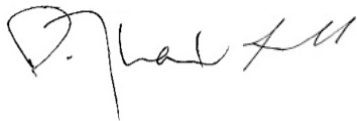
minor and major vertical elements. The largest frames, which are full height, signify the main entry and urban corners of the complex;

- The broad north-east facades that face the harbour waters have a striking expression of framed balconies, with full height off-form concrete angled blade columns and concrete and glass balustrades. The balconies provide deeply-modelled areas of shade in contrast to the flatter side elevations. The Western Building's additional height is emphasised by a portal frame at roof level, providing a scale transition to the taller buildings planned to the west;
- The buildings' side facades have a horizontal architectural expression that integrates overhangs, screening and shading into the balconies and windows along these façades. Full-height window assemblies, vertical louvres and panels of brickwork sit between the expressed slab edges of the buildings;
- The palette of materials is carefully selected and arranged. Off form concrete blade columns hold all the outboard corners of the three buildings, and stand from the modelled brick plinth to the expressed roof forms. The various brick walls stand free of the concrete elements, while the louvred screens sit between the expressed balcony edges. On the harbourside all windows are full height with open corners, while those to Honeysuckle Drive (all bedroom windows) have sills in the face brick facades on that side;
- The proposed architectural character expresses in a positive way the environmental and amenity objectives embodied in the design.

CONCLUSION

- The design achieves a high quality architectural, urban design and landscape resolution, and signals the revitalisation of the central areas in Newcastle;
- The design has been developed with extensive consultation with the State Design Review Panel and is a considered response to the scale and character of site and the area's evolving urbanity.
- The site is the ideal setting for a coordinated residential project, and the project provides a **model for the envisaged redevelopment along the Newcastle waterfront**.
- The site is well situated adjacent the transport, recreational, civic and shopping centres and is thus **ideally located for urban consolidation**.
- With Council's involvement, the project can well relate to **important new public spaces along Cottage Creek and the Steel Street extension**, to better integrate the city with harbour.
- The **scale mediates between** that of the envisaged taller buildings to the west and the approved run of buildings to the east, reinforcing the continuity of the waterfront promenade.
- The project has a **distinctive architectural character, scale and silhouette** that will be an appropriate addition to Newcastle's urban landscape.
- The combination of articulated midrise buildings framing landscaped courtyards provides an **appropriate model** for matching higher density housing with high amenity locations.
- The retail uses have **direct address and activation** to the waterfront promenade, street and canal frontages.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)** issues have been holistically incorporated into the project.
- The **landscape design is fully integrated** with the site planning, and embellishes the new public spaces along the waterfront promenade, the Steel Street extension and proposed Cottage Creek park.

- The proposal **consolidates communal courtyard spaces** in the heart of the block, for the shared enjoyment of residents and those on the waterfront or in the city behind.
- The project incorporates **a diversity of residential accommodation**, incorporating the principles of adaptability, to increase the housing choices available in Newcastle.
- The proposal satisfactorily considers the privacy and amenity of the neighbouring properties, and **respects their redevelopment potential**.
- The project will create a **high quality residential environment** for future residents, with very good amenity well above ADG requirements.
- The resolution of urban, architectural, environmental and social design considerations demonstrates that the proposal is an **appropriate fit to its site and context**.



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