

Welcome to this third session of the National Capital Design Review Panel to present the development proposal for **70 Allara** at Block 16 Section 10 City.

Acknowledgement of Country:

I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands that we are each meeting on today, for those here in Canberra we acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and for those based elsewhere in Australia I also wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of those lands.

I wish to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging; to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

I encourage all present to remain cognisant of these historical, current and future connections between aboriginal Nations and their country as we discuss, design and interact with these lands through our professional endeavours.

My name is Catherine Townsend, I am the ACT Government Architect and will Chair this session.

I extend apologies on behalf of [REDACTED] **the National Capital Authority** who is unable to attend today's session

[REDACTED] Project Manager, Capital Works at the National Capital Authority will represent the NCA on the Panel for this session.

The panel for this presentation and any subsequent presentations for this proposal are:

We welcome:

The **applicant** for this proposal is – **GEOCON** represented by [REDACTED]

Their **Lead Consultant** presenting today is **Fender Katsalidis** represented by [REDACTED]

I also welcome proponent consultants from

- **Purdon Planning,** [REDACTED]

- **Oculus,** [REDACTED]

I also introduce key officers from

- **The National Capital Authority**
- **Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)**
- **City Renewal Authority (CRA)**
- **Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS)**

In preparation for this session the panel has **studied the documents provided** and have been **fully briefed on the planning context**.

The format for this session is in 4 main parts:

1. **Presentation by the design team** (20 minutes)
2. **Q and A session** (10 mins)
3. **Panel discussion and review** (20 minutes)
4. **Summary of key issues** (5 minutes)

The intention is that this is a discussion between peers and I encourage you to take the panel on the journey of the analysis, design options and concepts that has informed the proposal.

Housekeeping for Virtual Meetings:

1. For anyone attending the meeting as an observer, please mute your camera and microphone during today's session.

2. For all others please mute your microphone whilst you are not speaking.
 3. If you have a question but do not get the opportunity to ask, please note it down and I will round up any outstanding questions at the end.
 4. Please switch phones to silent and turn off any notification sounds on your computer, such as emails and reminders.
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After today's session:

We will provide you with a written advice within 10 working days.

I will also ask that if you have any queries following the session or wish to discuss the advice you receive, please contact the Design Review Panel Secretariat directly and not the panel members or Chairs.

Queries to designreview@act.gov.au

Project Name	70 Allara
Site	70 Allara Street, City (Block 16 Section 10 City)
Session	Third session Wednesday, 15 September 20201

Please find the following images taken from 3D Canberra



Above: Aerial view looking west across the Forum apartments
Below: Aerial view of the east-west building form looking north





Above: Aerial view of the southern building form, looking north
Below: View from London Circuit, approaching the site from south-west





Above: View from London Circuit, looking south east towards commercial entry
Below: Contextual view of the proposal to London Circuit



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CITY RENEWAL AUTHORITY COMMENTS/KEY ISSUES

Please find the CRA's comments for inclusion the Panel's Project Brief for this project. These comments will form part of the CRA's verbal advice in the Pre-session briefing on the 15th of September 2021.

Project Name	70 Allara Street
Site Address	Block 16 Section 10 City
Project Description	Mixed-use development
Panel Members	To be advised
NCDRP Date	15 September 2021

The Authority appreciates the effort made by the proponent team in responding to panel feedback with a series of design improvements. There remain matters for resolution, particularly given the prominence of the site, the limitations and opportunities associated with its location and the impact that the development would have, both on the city and on approach road networks, which also form an important part of the character of the inner city.

The Authority offers the following comments on the proposal:

Context and Character

The urban and architectural design response for this development must be appropriate to its context and strengthen the pre-existing city form and CBD character. This is particularly important given the site's prominent corner location and adjacency to Commonwealth Avenue and Parkes Way.

The proposed open courtyards ('Respite' and 'Orthogonal') require more rationale in terms of their siting and configuration to demonstrate they will function as intended. Also, the colonnade space adjacent to the Jewel building appears to lack street level activation or to contribute to civic life. This needs to be addressed.

The Authority acknowledges that the pedestrian spine connecting Allara Street with London Circuit has improved in response to previous feedback, however the public use and amenity of this space as a mid-block connection requires further resolution if it is to be safe and convenient for 24/7 public use. This is discussed further below.

Landscape

The Authority acknowledges the proponent's design revisions in providing detailed landscaping plans and responses to matters raised at the previous review. Additional work is still required to achieve a more 'civic' landscape design solution to support street level use and activation. It is also important that landscaping does not encroach on the built form interfaces, and that the through-site access link is direct and barrier-free in accordance with DDA requirements. This includes landscape elements (such as the raised garden beds).

Sustainability

The Authority is committed to design excellence and innovation in all new developments with a focus on social and environmental sustainability that creates buildings and places that are popular, regenerative and nurture social activity.

The Authority believes that development at such a prominent site must exemplify green building design. Design, construction, and operational practices should significantly reduce or mitigate for any negative impact on the environment and its occupants. The Authority encourages the application of water sensitive urban design, landscaping, solar control, and use of materials that mitigate extremes in temperature. The proponent needs to better demonstrate how these objectives and practices can be applied to the project.

Density and Connectivity

The Authority acknowledges the changes made to the siting and configuration of buildings to facilitate through-site connectivity and more sympathetic massing. Whilst through-site connectivity has improved it should be accessible to all persons, including persons of limited mobility. There appears to be public stairs however public stair(s) need further resolution in conjunction with (single) lift access. Community use of this major through link will be diminished unless this is resolved. The visual and wayfinding access of this link needs to also be better addressed.

Built Form and Scale

The Authority recognises the efforts made through design revision to create more publicly useable space, particularly adjacent to the Jewel building and internal through-site access link. There remain a range of opportunities to increase visual permeability within the site. Further review of the bulk and scale of the development (particularly at upper floor levels) would assist in achieving this outcome.

Functionality and Build Quality

The Authority strongly recommends that the ground / lower ground levels of the proposed development are designed to encourage active, adaptable uses for retail, hospitality, and commercial activities. These could also be positioned along the internal through-site link / central spine to encourage maximum interaction and passive surveillance at ground level.

The Authority reiterates the importance of creating a legible, quality interface with London Circuit that balances aesthetics with safety and function. At present, the ground floor lobby, setback from its London Circuit frontage, does not appear to show any details of the intended use(s). It will be important to maximise both activity and functionality at this location to give the buildings a social focus rather than a series of private lobbies.

Legibility and Safety

The Authority is supportive of the proponent's efforts to improve the legibility of the through-site link between Allara Street and London Circuit. Sightlines along the centre spine can be improved by repositioning landscaping elements to ensure clear, unobstructed and accessible pedestrian access.

This is also particularly important in the shared use driveway/access off Allara Street where additional pedestrian safety measures are recommended. These could be incorporated into the landscaping plan in the form of raised solid structures / plantings / planters that will prevent users of the site from being at risk from a collision with vehicles. The Authority also suggests that the proponent consider the use of bollards in delineating a protected pedestrian pathzone.

Diversity and Amenity

The Authority acknowledges that design improvements have been made, including apartment reconfiguration, solar access and cross ventilation.

The Authority strongly encourages a mix of hospitality, commercial / retail and communal open spaces for the use and enjoyment of residents and site users. A mix of complementary uses and activation of the ground and lower ground floor levels should provide services and offerings for a diverse range of people accessing the site. The ground floor lobby requires further consideration, and the Authority encourages the proponent to consider activating this area with hospitality and / or retail tenancies.

Visual Appearance

The revised elevational treatment still presents a visually dominant massing and façade repetition when viewed from Parkes Way, Commonwealth Avenue and London Circuit. Further façade articulation and material/finishes variation are recommended to ensure the new buildings complement the pre-existing built form of Civic and are consistent with the urban design requirements of the National Capital Authority's *City and Gateway Urban Design Framework* (the Framework).

Project Name	70 Allara
Site	70 Allara Street, City (Block 16 Section 10 City)
Session	Third session Wednesday, 15 September 2021

MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA LIGHT RAIL COMMENTS/KEY ISSUES

Major Projects Canberra Light Rail (MPC LR) provided the following information to GEOCON and has been included in Proponents Response Presentation July 2021:

- Proposed (*work in progress*) RLs of raised London Circuit at the property boundary of 70 Allara Street City (Block 16 Section 10)
- Alignment of future east Road
- Proposed street planting locations on outer verge of raised London Circuit.

The National Capital Plan and the City Plan both identify the desired future character area of City Hill precinct as the pre-eminent civic and cultural core of the city.

The design of the raising London Circuit will reinforce the planned geometry of London Circuit and ensure symmetry about the Commonwealth Avenue intersection. The design of the verges will be generous, providing a consistent, wide, shaded pedestrian paths abutting existing and future development and include kerbside, separated cycleways. Coordination of the design of the interface of the verge and property boundaries is essential to ensure development on London Circuit, noted by The Panel *as the city's premier business address*, reflects the desired future character of the City Hill Precinct *through high quality architectural and public domain outcomes.*

MPC LR notes the following in review of the Proponent's Response comments and presentation.

- The proposal does not appear to address the future East Road and the opportunity of the additional street frontage. Noting the existing 70 Allara St western site boundary may not be parallel to a future *East Road* alignment, resulting in a somewhat triangular road reserve/verge.
- The future provision and character of East Road should inform the development proposal and is a matter for consideration by the CRA/NCA
- Further coordination is needed between LR and Geocon to resolve the design of the property interface to ensure the objectives and principles of the NCP and City Plan are met.

MPC together with the Technical Advisor are progressing the raising London Circuit (RLC) Preliminary Sketch Plans. The design is being refined, including verge treatments, the tree master plan and coordination of utilities and services works.

The LR team are happy to continue meaningful discussions with Geocon to provide updated PSP design showing proposed levels and public domain treatments that reflect current LR thinking.

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EPSSD'S STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMENTS/KEY ISSUES

Please find EPSSD's Strategic Planning comments for inclusion in the Panel's Project Brief for this project. These comments will form part of the EPSSD verbal advice in the Pre-session briefing on the 15th of September 2021.

EPSSD's Major Projects - City team is in the process of updating the City Plan, which is a strategic planning document that guides the future growth of the city. The update to the City Plan will also include an Urban Design Framework that will provide strategic Urban Design guidance for the City.

Public Realm

The site is located within proximity of the future light rail stop on London Circuit and Commonwealth Ave, which will see large volumes of pedestrian activity in the vicinity of the site, particularly along London Circuit.

London Circuit is identified as a key community route, where strategically, active building frontages are encouraged through ground floor uses that interact with the street. At ground level, the proposed building does not interact with London Circuit but is rather divided from it via landscaping. While challenges will be presented by the future levels along London Circuit (raising of London Circuit for light rail), the building interface could be improved via additional connections through the landscaping to the ground floor commercial uses, and consideration of a retail services (such as food and beverage) at ground level, to create a better interface with the street.

The through site link provides opportunity to facilitate access for pedestrians to the south east of the city, including the possible future stadium site. As such, this link should be legible from London Circuit and Allara St, and be of generous proportion. To support this outcome, the proponent could consider:

- Widening the space between the two building where the stair is currently located. This would provide opportunity for better alignment with Allara Street, and therefore improved legibility of the public link. It may also provide opportunity to continue elements of the landscaping through this section of the site to support wayfinding.
- Simplifying the building articulation beside the stair to assist in legibility.
- Arrangement of planters to improve the connection through the site, particularly at the connection with London Circuit where the planters obstruct clear access.

Elevation

The Parkes Way elevation is improved through the revised building articulation, however the fenestration could be simplified to improve the presentation of this façade.

Solar access

The sections provided do not convincingly demonstrate sufficient solar access to all units as the diagrams do not account for the shadow created by the balconies over. Example p37.

CONFIDENTIAL

THE PANEL'S ADVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Block 16 Section 10 City – Third Session
70 Allara Street



Australian Government
National Capital Authority



ACT
Government

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

THE PANEL'S ADVICE

Date issued: Thursday 30 September 2021

Project: 70 Allara Street

Review date: Wednesday 15 September 2021

Meeting location: Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams

Site visit: No site visit conducted due to COVID-19 social distancing measures

Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair and ACT
Government Architect



Apology 
the National Capital Authority

Proponent: GEOCON

Observers: Representatives from:
Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)
City Renewal Authority (CRA)
National Capital Authority (NCA)
Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS)

Conflicts of interest: None

Confidentiality of the Panel's Advice: Design review considers concept proposals at various stages throughout the design process that are frequently subject to change and improvement in relation to feedback from the NCDRP. Throughout this time a commercial in confidence status is maintained for proposals that engage with the NCDRP.

In accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act (2007) (the Act), prescribed development proposals are required to provide a copy of the 'Panels Advice' and the proponent's 'Response to the Panels Advice' in writing when the Development Application is submitted. Section 30 of the Act identifies the design advice and the proponent's written response to that advice as associated documents, therefore the most recent Panel's Advice and the proponent's response become publicly available once a Development Application is publicly notified for community comment.

MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Property address: 70 Allara Street (Block 16 Section 10 City)

Proposal: The 70 Allara Street site is located at the south-east quadrant of London Circuit with a street frontage to London Circuit. The site is connected to, but setback from the Allara Street main road reserve by a perpendicular road reserve 27m long and 13m wide. The site is zoned DES: Designated Land and is subject to development conditions of the Constitution Avenue and Anzac Parade Precinct Code of the National Capital Plan, is located at the City apex of the National Triangle and fronts the City Hill Precinct.

The site occupies the south east 'knuckle' of London Circuit and is adjoined by four (4) Designated Land sites within Section 10 including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) building (Block 20) to the north east, The Forum apartment building (Block 4) to the east, disused Department of Defence compound (Block 19) and an access road to Block 19 (Block 22) to the south and south west. Additionally, the Parkes Way exit ramp onto Commonwealth Avenue is located to the west of the site. Sites to the south and west are noted as possible future redevelopment sites. Furthermore, potential modification to the level of London Circuit, associated with the future Light Rail intentions is also noted by the Secretariat and is likely to have implications for development of the subject site.

The amended proposal is a predominantly residential development including approximately 380 dwellings (reduced from 420) across three building forms up to 8 storeys/25m as well as two (2) levels of basement car parking and three commercial /co-working spaces fronting London Circuit and the proposed London Circuit plaza (approx. 1,500m²). Onsite resident facilities including a games room and gym have been added to the lower ground floor fronting the Allara Street plaza. The site level change (approx. 4 metres from north west to south east) is proposed to be accommodated in the open central lobby zone which provides a pedestrian connection between Allara Street to London Circuit and provides access to residential lobbies and commercial tenancies. A drop off zone is proposed to be located adjacent Allara Street which provides vehicle access to basement car parking as well as waste/ deliver/ loading facility.

The proposal also includes areas for some deep soil zones for tree planting to London Circuit as well as buffer planting to the south east boundary. Private courtyards have been proposed at ground level to the south-east of the northern apartment building (Building 1) and to the south-west of the southern apartment building (Building 2). A communal open space area with deep soil zones for tree planting, seating and sculptural elements is proposed along the south-east boundary between Building 1 and the Forum apartment building (Block 4) while a landscaped rooftop is proposed to the to the southern rooftop of Building 2.

Proponents' representative address to the Panel:

The proponent's design team, represented by [REDACTED] of Fender Katsalidis, commenced the presentation by noting that the presentation had been structured to respond to the previous Panel's Advice. Starting with context and character, a summary of design changes was

provided including alterations to the London Circuit and 'Jewel' building forms, opening of the link stair and courtyard to the west and functional building use changes addressing the potential future western road.

The project's landscape architect, represented by [REDACTED] of Oculus, presented the revised landscape proposition. This was described to include increased lower-level amenity through the provision of a variety of landscape rooms providing for groups and intimate gatherings with landscape walls providing informal seating. The 'Landscape Axis' was presented as practical and activated with landscaping elements supporting the architectural framing of views and pathways. Deep root soil zones are intended to provide a soft planting edge / buffer to the existing Forum apartments with additional tree planting to the public domain interface (London Circuit) also providing a buffer for the level transition.

The design team went on to present the revised architectural proposal including patterned effect façade (mesh) elements to increase sustainability, and increased built form and facade articulation to London Circuit and Parkes Way elevations, all of which are intended for the proposal to present as a series of building forms. Amendments to the commercial/co-working frontage were also presented including increased point of entry locations and commercial frontage to both London Circuit and the proposed laneway. These changes were presented to contribute to the revised 'heart' of the proposal, with central open stair connection and focused pedestrian, resident and visitor activity through provision of centralised resident facilities (lower level) and entry lobbies.

Amendments to increase amenity included provision of daylighting to the internal corridors, design change to maximise natural daylighting penetration to apartments, a greater building setback to the Forum apartments, more communal and public space with sunlight was also highlighted. Overall, the design changes were presented to provide increased solar access and natural ventilation to apartments and reduction of visual and overshadowing impact on the Forum apartments. Finally, architectural renders were presented demonstrating the cumulative effect of the proposed design changes.

Recommendation: Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review session; and the proponents presentation, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel thanks and acknowledges the willingness with which the proponent team has engaged with the Design Review process and responded to the Panel's Advice over the three (3) sessions. Furthermore, the Panel appreciates the presentation content and structure provided in response to the previous Panel Advice.

Acknowledging the positive design development undertaken by the proponent design team to date in response to the Panel's Advice, the Panel is however disappointed that the previous recommendations made by the Panel have not been thoroughly perused to the extent that is needed for the proposal to achieve an acceptable outcome. The scheme is considered to require bold design development in several fundamental areas, including response to the existing and future urban context of the site, sustainability, and amenity. As such, the Panel maintains significant concerns in relation to

the proposal and therefore cannot support the scheme as presented at this stage.

The Panel considers that the current yield as presented is impacting the proposals' ability to provide an appropriate proposition for this significant site. The Panel recommends that the proponent team critically considers how to best achieve a development which is not only liveable for occupants but also provides a desirable development for the city in the current and future context. Prior to returning to design review, the proponent team is requested by the Panel to demonstrate that the scheme can express an appropriate architectural language and provide adequate onsite amenity to the public domain and apartments.

Key Issues and Recommendations:

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation.

To achieve the best possible design outcome for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following issues through the next stages of the design development:

1.0 Context and character

1.1 Acknowledging that the site is subject to a number of future changes to the existing context (i.e. impending changes in levels to London Circuit), the Panel considers that there remains an opportunity for the current proposal to provide an adequate urban response. The Panel considers that:

- 1.1.1 the proposal presents as an edge-to-edge development with unconvincing resolution provided to the east and west boundary relationships.
- 1.1.2 the scale and proportion of proposed public domain to be difficult to identify and limits opportunities for people to congregate or linger.
- 1.1.3 the proposal lacks clarity in the transition between formality on London Circuit to community and residential spaces.
- 1.1.4 the proposal lacks appropriate residential amenity and identity.
- 1.1.5 the alignment and design of the 'Jewel' building does not sufficiently respond to the existing London Circuit geometry (the hexagon).
- 1.1.6 the proposal does not sufficiently address the potential future street environment to the west, or the increased density of development anticipated in this area of the city.

As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent team rigorously interrogates opportunities to create a positive contribution to the existing and future street frontages as well as facilitate the community and lifestyle desired for city living through design. This may include reconsideration of the proposed density, building arrangement, footprint and scale in response to anticipated introduction of a new street to the west replacing the 'cloverleaf', and potential development facing on to this street.

- 1.2 The proposal is considered by the Panel to provide the potential for two 'Place making' opportunities; to London Circuit and to the Allara Street 'Plaza'. The proponent team are encouraged by the Panel to expand the range of experience these spaces can delivery for the future community as high amenity destinations, to support function and promote community. This may include opportunities for outdoor dining.

2.0 Landscape

- 2.1 The overall landscape component of the proposal is considered by the Panel to be detached from the architectural proposition. The Panel recommends that the design team seeks to implement a stronger contiguous proposition by re-evaluating the delineation between landscape, built form and use to create greater focus and amenity. In particular, the Panel encourages the design team to explore opportunities to strengthen the relationship between the proposed indoor and outdoor 'community spaces' within the ground floor areas to deliver a seamless sequence of community spaces. This may require reconsideration of the attached nature of the current built form as well as the basement design to introduce genuine and meaningful deep root planting zones within pedestrian pathway.
- 2.2 The Panel considered the landscape provision of raised planter beds does not provide an adequate response to the potential for Urban Heat Island effect for the proposal. Furthermore, the proposed natural deep root planting zones are noted by the Panel to occur in residual space at the periphery of the site. As such, the Panel remains unconvinced that the proposal demonstrates an appropriate level of environmental comfort or amenity for future occupants. The Panel suggests that the proponent investigate a reduced or alternative basement strategy (such as an additional basement level) to ensure sufficient deep root planting areas and provide a sustainable long-term landscape with sufficient canopy cover to meet the 30% canopy target being sought for central Canberra.

3.0 Sustainability

- 3.1 The current proposal for a predominantly glazed façade is not supported by the Panel. Buildings in Canberra are considered by the Panel to require light, shade and depth to provide adequate amenity in its unique climate. Furthermore, the Panel considers that refinement of the apartment configuration and design is also required to promote the passive design performance in the Canberra climate (Refer also 8.1). As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent team more thoughtfully considers how appropriate design elements can be introduced to facilitate the desired level of amenity and sustainability for the development.

4.0 Density and connectivity

- 4.1 The Panel acknowledges a reduction in overall apartment yield in the current proposal however remains concerned that the current density continues to generate a high site coverage with compromised building and apartment amenity. Furthermore, the Panel considers that aspiration for high quality, usable common and public spaces are
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unachievable with the current yield. The Panel recommends that the proponent team explore opportunities to create connected and usable public and private open spaces that deliver the required experiential qualities and encourage a sense of community. This may include considerations of climate, function, destination and movement opportunities between separate and identifiable building forms.

5.0 Built form and scale

- 5.1 The work undertaken by the proponent team to increase the built form articulation, particularly to London Circuit, is acknowledged by the Panel. The Panel however considers that a more robust response is yet required. Furthermore, the Panel considers that opportunities to provide appropriate civic scale and proportion of the public domain still exist. As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent team vigorously investigate opportunities to provide greater generosity for activated and occupiable public spaces throughout the development. This may include modification of the building form and scale to provide three (3) or four (4) clearly separated building forms and relaxing the apartment yield to aid a more suitable response to the urban context and civic amenity required for this significant site. (Also see 2.1, 4.1 and 9.1)

6.0 Functionality and build quality

- 6.1 The Panel considers the proposed single lift lobby arrangement for a predominantly residential development of this size, continues to provide an unpleasant experience for occupants. Acknowledging the inclusion of some daylighting opportunities, the Panel considers that the overall corridor length and arrangement presents as a hotel or serviced apartments, with little opportunity for community interaction. As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent team implements quality functional requirements appropriate for a residential development of this scale. This includes consideration of corridor length, lighting, access to view, number of lift cores, lobby areas and social interaction spaces.

7.0 Legibility and safety

- 7.1 The Panel supports in principle, the proposed sleeving of service zones fronting the Allara Street 'Plaza' with community spaces. The Panel however considers further opportunities exist for the creation of quality forecourt spaces which would facilitate visitors and residents to congregate or linger in conjunction with the pedestrian movement corridor and adjacent common open space. The proponent team is encouraged by the Panel to provide high amenity destinations for a variety of uses as well as explore opportunities to provide clear accessible pathways and site lines to and between destinations. This may include realignment of the pedestrian accessways and replacing raised planter beds with alternate landscaping solutions such as natural deep soil zones for large canopy trees, particularly where the principal pedestrian route from Allara Street passes the access points for service areas.
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8.0 Diversity and amenity

- 8.1 Acknowledging that the design team has increased apartment amenity such as natural cross ventilation and access to direct daylight to habitable rooms as well as removing some internalised rooms and reducing floor plate depths, the Panel considers that the proposal is yet to present an appropriate proposition that achieves an adequate level of amenity for all dwellings. The Panel:
- 8.1.1 considers 50% of apartments achieving appropriate solar access to be unsatisfactory noting a development of this nature should achieve no less than standard practice.
 - 8.1.2 considers opportunities exist for a greater percentage of apartments to achieve natural cross flow ventilation.
 - 8.1.3 questions the proposal for 'subterranean' apartments and courtyards as an appropriate response to the western boundary / future frontage.
 - 8.1.4 considers that the corridor arrangement required to service the proposal from one lift lobby does not provide an appropriate level of amenity for a residential development.

As such, the Panel therefore recommends that the proponent team continues to explore opportunities to further increase apartment amenity to an appropriate level for this proposition. This may require a reduction of yield, increasing the number of lift lobbies and separation of building forms.

- 8.2 The Panel does not object to smaller apartment's per say, however small apartment sizes are considered by the Panel to require innovative and a clever design and greater adaptability of space to support changing use and liveability and a balance of more generous provision within the shared spaces of buildings. Such amenity is not currently considered by the Panel to be achieve in the current proposal. As such, the Panel recommends that the proponent team continues to investigate opportunities for implementing innovative design solutions to achieve the required level of internal amenity for each dwelling. This may require reconsideration of adaptable small footprint solutions to allow for multiple uses of a single room, yield, building form, corridor arrangements, spaces around key points of circulation (lift lobbies) and floor plate proportions.
- 8.3 The current proposal for an 'edge to edge' development is considered by the Panel to constitute a significant loss of amenity to the existing adjacent Forum apartments such as reduced solar access and outlook. The proponent team is therefore encouraged by the Panel to consider how the proposed building form to London Circuit could be reimagined to reduce the impact on the adjacent development.

9.0 Community and public domain

- 9.1 The Panel continues to support the through-site connection from London Circuit to Allara Street. Furthermore, the Panel supports the proposed design changes in the current scheme which has provided
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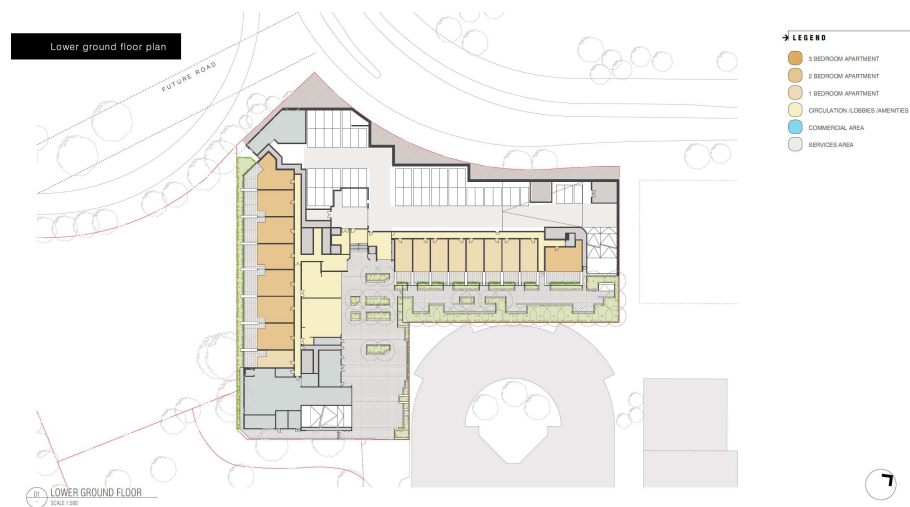
the connection as an open accessway which is activated by new communal spaces fronting the 'lane' at the lower ground floor. The Panel however considers further improvements to elevate this connection as an occupiable public space should be considered. The Panel therefore recommends that the proponent team explore opportunities to increase the generosity and prestige of the link space in conjunction with the two forecourts as well as strengthening the visual connectivity between forecourts and facilities. This may include increased volume and scale at the central stair and the 'lake' connection. (Also see 2.1, 4.1 and 5.1)

10.0 Visual appearance

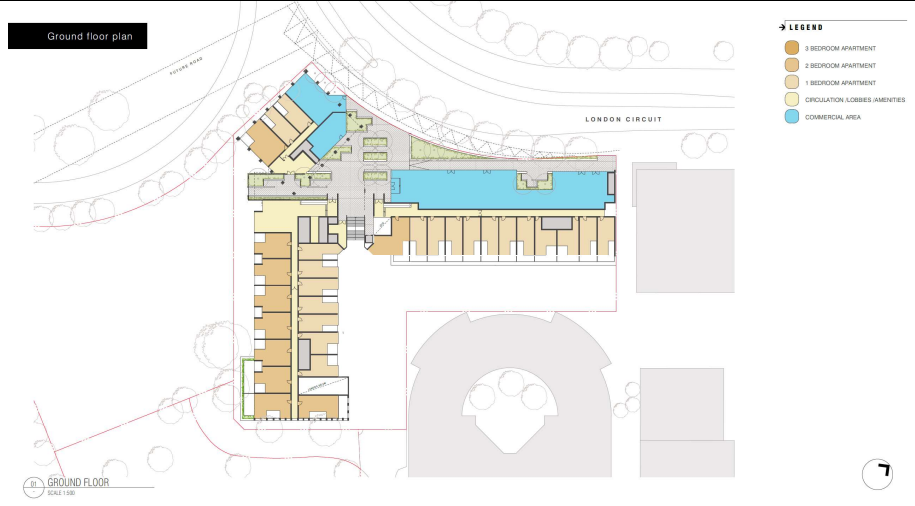
10.1 The visual appearance of the proposal was not discussed in detail; however the Panel continue to advocate for the introduction of shade and depth in the architectural expression of the proposal which support passive design and amenity for the Canberra climate. The Panel recommends the proponent team re-evaluates the architectural language for the development to provide a character and a sense of identity which will bring a positive contribution the city.

Sample images from presentation:

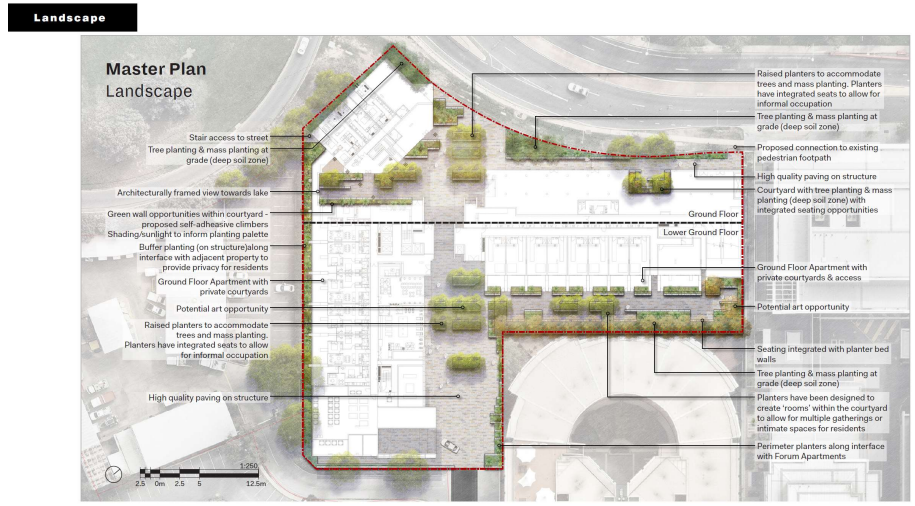
The following images have been extracted by the NCDRP Secretariat from the proponent's presentation to the Panel during the session. The images have been selected as an indicative sample of the proposal at the time of design review. It is noted that the provided images may not be representative of the proposal as lodged for development assessment.



Lower Ground Floor Plan



Upper Ground Floor Plan



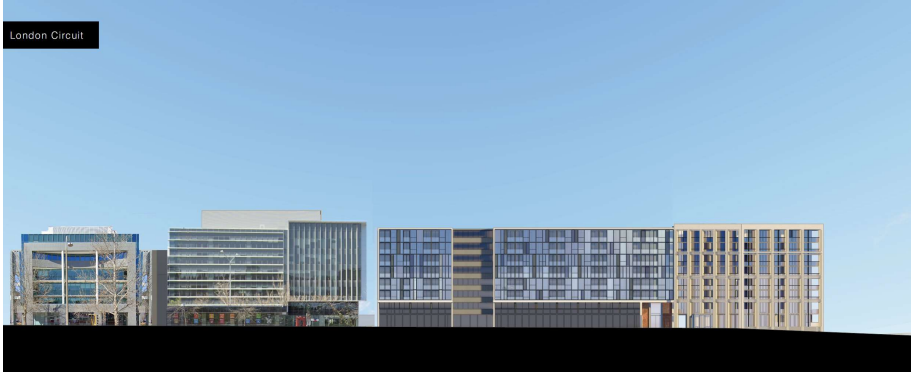
Landscape Plan



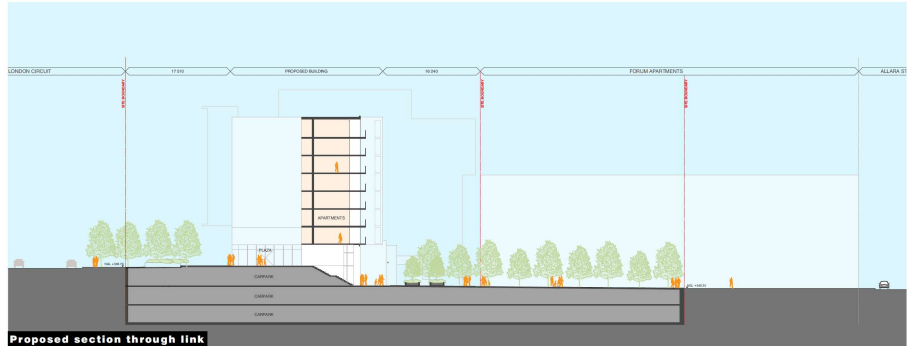
Allara Street Elevation



Parks Way Elevation



London Circuit Elevation



Section

PROPERTY

EARN UP TO 30% HIGHER
RETURNS WITH SHORT-STAY.

PROPERTY

New Geocon project to add hundreds more apartments to Civic

Ian Bushnell - 17 January 2022

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An artist's impression of the Allara Street project. Image: Geocon.

Canberra property giant Geocon has unveiled plans for another big mixed-use development in Civic, this time at the fast-developing southern end.

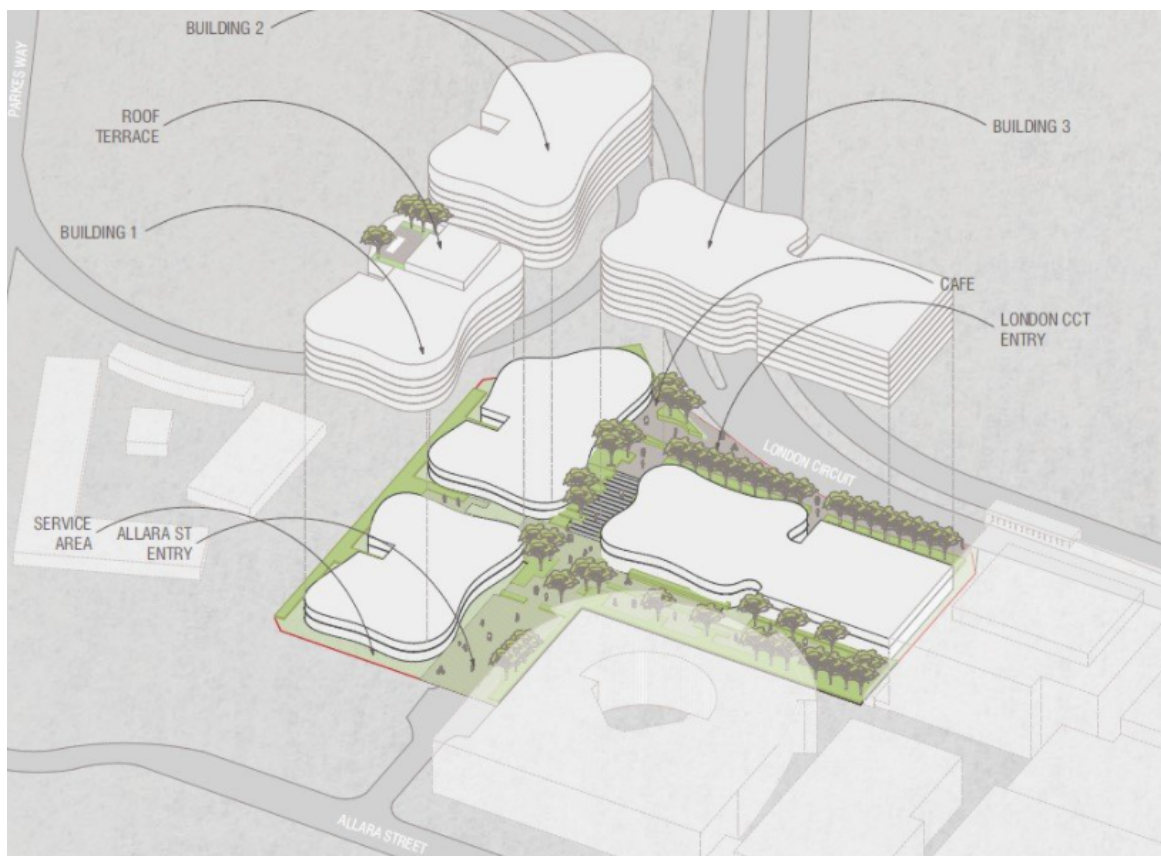
It is undertaking consultation on the three-building project on Allara Street before lodging a Works Approval with the National Capital Authority.

The 7641-square-metre irregularly shaped site (Block 16, Section 10 City) is on national land within the southeast corner of the city and bound by London Circuit and Parkes Way to the northwest.

The exact number of dwellings proposed is not known yet, but the project will add hundreds of apartments to the city centre.

The site is to be cleared to make way for three buildings up to nine storeys, with two levels of basement parking and also a mezzanine level for parking.

The ground level will be for commercial use, with residential units above, as well as rooftop communal gardens and amenities.



An early design for Geocon's Allara Street project showing landscaped areas. Image: Geocon.

A landscaped plaza fronting London Circuit is intended to create a shared connection between London Circuit and Allara Street, including a communal garden and deep-rooted trees.

An internal driveway off Allara Street will provide vehicle access while pedestrians will be able enter from both London Circuit and Allara Street.

Setback to at least 15 metres is proposed to the east to provide generous separation between the project and the adjoining residential development on Block 4 to enhance privacy for residents in both developments.

This will also maximise the amount of sunshine available, and minimise overshadowing while providing spaces for generous landscaping, according to Geocon.

The proposal has been presented to the National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP) three times and will continue to be guided by its feedback.

A lease variation will be sought separately to permit the number of residential units proposed on the site.

Geocon managing director Nick Georgalis said the project presents an increasingly rare opportunity to buy a new apartment in Canberra's city centre.

"The block is in a blue-chip position within the city precinct close to the lake, the theatre precinct, shops, restaurants and light rail," he said.

"Vacancy rates are already at an all-time low across Canberra. With international students returning to Canberra during the next two years, pressure on the rental market is only going to increase.

“The pipeline of residential work in planning or approved is very thin and we expect Allara Street to appeal to both live-in owner occupiers as well as investors.”

The development’s three buildings would cater for both ends of the market, he said.

A virtual consultation session via Zoom with members of the project team will be held on Thursday, 20 January, at 5:30 pm.

To register and learn more, visit Purdon Planning.

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