

THE PANEL'S ADVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Block 4 Section 57 Turner – First Session

Turner Place



Australian Government
National Capital Authority



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NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

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Date issued: Tuesday, 10 January 2023

Project: Turner Place

Review date: Wednesday 14 December 2022

Meeting location: Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams

Site visit: Wednesday 13 December 2022 (Catherine Townsend, Andrew Smith)

Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair and ACT Government Architect Andrew Smith, Co-Chair and Chief Planner and Deputy Chief Executive at the National Capital Authority

Sch 2.2(a)(ii)

Proponent: Amalgamated Property Group

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

Forbes Street/Greenway Street/Northbourne Avenue (Block 4 Section 57 Turner)

Proposal

The proposal is located at Block 4 Section 57 Turner on a rectangular site with a total area of 16,303m². It is an urban infill block situated adjacent a future Build-to-Rent development on Block 3 Section 57 Turner to the north, Northbourne Avenue and the Light Rail corridor to the east, Haig Park is to the south opposite Greenway Street and low to medium density RZ4 zoned residential development to the west of Forbes Street. The site includes a 1.8 metre cross fall and is zoned CZ5: Mixed Use under the Territory Plan (2008) and subject to the Northbourne Avenue Corridor Precinct Code, Multi Unit Housing Code and Commercial Zones Development Code. The provisions of the National Capital Plan and the City and Gateway Urban Design Framework apply.

The proposed residential development comprises six buildings arranged to the block perimeter with a central courtyard. It houses 477 dwellings with approximately 2,000m² of open space. The built form is nine-storeys to Northbourne Avenue stepping down to seven storeys at Forbes Street. The central ground level communal courtyard is intended to provide a landscaped sanctuary and facilities including gym and pool for resident use. Resident vehicular access is proposed from a single driveway on Forbes Street, with a separate waste vehicle access also from Forbes Street. The proposal aims to achieve high levels of solar access and enables cross ventilation through dual aspect apartment layouts and multicore typologies to enhance energy conservation. The proposed landscaping includes retention of some high value existing trees. The inclusion of rooftop gardens also provides additional amenity to residents. An accessible mid-block pedestrian through link is provided between Forbes Street and Northbourne Avenue.

Proponents' representative address to the Panel

The proponent's representative from Amalgamated Property Group, Sch 2.2(a)(ii), commenced the presentation with an overview of the project status, noting the engagement of SJB following an in-house design competition. He confirmed that the Tree Conservator were consulted to determine key specimens on site to ensure established trees are protected and retained. The proponent's architect, Sch 2.2(a)(ii) of SJB, then presented the site context and analysis and identified the sites' locality being of significance as it sits along the Light Rail corridor on the approach route to the city centre and Capital Hill. He also highlighted the constraints of the site including vehicle access points, existing mature trees, proximity to Haig Park, site orientation being slightly off true north and existing service infrastructure within the site requiring rerouting. He explained the design concept is to focus on quality of the street edge and internal green spaces and the intent to provide scale and address to Northbourne Avenue, learning from the simplicity, geometry, and materiality of buildings from grand civic cities around the world.

The architect then spoke to the form of the proposal and explained the stepping form from east to west, allowing green roof spaces. The proponent presented the competition scheme versus the proposed scheme via a series of diagrams covering building separation, tree retention, stepping of building form and street wall. He described that the curved street walls seek to 'slow Northbourne down' by departing from rectilinear form and respond to existing street trees to be retained along Northbourne Avenue. The façade utilises a grid system to provide rhythm and proportion.

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The proponent also noted the retention of an existing central tree has dictated the location of the main through-site link. The concepts were presented in plan, demonstrating the evolution in the form of through site link and walkways with these intended to break down building lengths.

The proposal was described as responding directly to place and local materiality, reflecting the landscape and colours of the Australian bush. The proposition is intended to provide a sense of solidity with the buildings and façade layered to provide a better sense of scale. The architect referred to the use of Canberra red bricks and materials with red tones at the base with lighter colours on higher levels. He noted the desire to avoid curtain glass expression. He then spoke to the challenges of waste management on site, in particular the access points and noted the design team is working to revise the proposal to achieve a better aesthetic outcome. He also noted that current internal balconies require further refinement. The floor plans, location of deep soil planting zones, waste vehicle movements and the mix of unit sizes were described. In relation to apartment units, the proponent noted that 60% of units will achieve cross-ventilation and some three-bedroom apartments feature private gardens.

The dwellings were described as including large balconies, oriented to take advantage of light, ventilation, and views. The incorporation of multiple cores provides optimum natural light and ventilation to common areas and a focus on maximising solar access for all units. He noted the challenge in achieving solar access for east-facing units given off-north orientation of Northbourne. The proponent also highlighted the 1.8 metre fall across the site which is managed via split basement. A swimming pool and gym is to be located within a pavilion in the central courtyard. Landscaping is yet to be developed with an aim for variety of spaces and 26% deep soil planting zones across the site and 20% communal open space including rooftops.

Recommendation

Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review session; a site visit by the Chairs on Tuesday 13 December 2022; and the proponents presentation, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel is pleased that the development proposal has been presented to NCDRP at this early design concept stage. Engaging early with the Panel has provided the opportunity for a meaningful discussion about the key elements of the proposal and to identify how the design concepts could be further enhanced for the benefit of the proponent, future residents and the broader community.

The proponent team is commended by the Panel for providing a well-considered scheme and their recognition of areas that require further development. The proponent is also commended for the proposal's architectural character, materiality and formality, multicore apartments with dual aspects, consideration for amenity through solar access and ventilation studies and retention of existing mature trees albeit these are mostly within the street verge planting. The Panel considers significant design development is required to achieve a cohesive and well-coordinated ground plane landscape strategy.

The Panel considers the proposed residential use and architectural character to be appropriate for this location. The Panel supports the architectural formality on Northbourne Avenue and encourages the proponent team to undertake further design development in response to the varying street typologies of Greenway Street that has high public domain visibility and addresses Haig Park, and Forbes Street where relaxation of the rigid formal character is encouraged to ensure a suitable response to the lower density urban fabric and residential scale street.

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As such, the Panel requests the proponent further refines the western elevation facing Forbes Street and southern elevation facing outward-bound traffic with consideration to Haig Park.

Regarding public domain and the central communal space, the Panel considers the proposal to require further development of the through-site pedestrian links to ensure amenity and provide intuitive wayfinding for residents and visitors. The proponent is encouraged to increase site permeability and the width of walkways to ensure amenity and safety of the central courtyard space. The Panel also encourages alternative locations for the pool amenity, noting the current location results in undesirable impacts on the central communal space and adjacent residential amenity.

In relation to amenity for residents, the Panel remains concerned about adequate solar penetration, natural ventilation, and additional deep soil planting for the proposal, and recommends a reduction of basement car parking extent and the strengthening of street address for pedestrian entries to each building. The Panel also encourages early engagement with Traditional Custodians of the land to realise a meaningful connection to Country.

The Panel acknowledges the early stages of the design and the strategic decisions yet to be made and looks forward to seeing further development of the proposal. The proponent is encouraged to refine the proposition to ensure that the design response is befitting of its significant location along one of the National Capital's main approach routes. The Panel requests that the proponent provides further details on how the proposal will achieve high quality and usable landscape spaces, viable onsite deep soil planting zones, activated and safe pedestrian networks, sustainability and resilience measures, residential amenity, and equitable accessibility and looks forward to viewing the next iteration of the scheme at the next design review session.

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 The Panel commends the proponent for their demonstrated understanding of place derived from site analysis and are encouraged by the aspirations. However, the Panel is concerned that the design proposition does not yet sufficiently celebrate the opportunities offered by this site noting the urban characteristics such as walkability to the city, adjacency to light rail stop and its prominent location on Northbourne Avenue, topography, and natural systems – water and canopy connectivity. The Panel therefore recommends the proponent continues to develop the scheme so that the design proposition delivers the aspirations and grounds itself in the site context and suggest the following:

1.1.1 The Panel supports the overall formality of the scheme but is not convinced it appropriately responds to the significantly differing urban interface characters of each boundary condition. The Panel requests further development of the design response that details how the proposal sensitively interacts with the varying street typologies – Northbourne Avenue; Greenway Street and Haig Park; Forbes Street lower density character; and the northern interface with future neighbouring Built-to-Rent. As such, the Panel recommends softening/relaxing the composition of the

southern and western elevations and reconsidering the street entry strategy for each building core.

- 1.1.2 While the proponent's recognition of First Nations is commended, the Panel considers that a meaningful connection to Country is not yet evident in the design proposition. The proponent is encouraged to engage with Traditional Custodians of the land early in the design process to explore opportunities to ensure a meaningful connection with place, culture and history.

2.0 Landscape

- 2.1 The Panel acknowledges the early landscape design stage of this proposal and appreciates the proponents' ambition for a high-quality ground plane expressed in the presented landscape strategy. In this regard the proponent is commended for their commitment to retain six existing mature trees. The Panel, however, notes that the overall landscape response as presented requires significant development to ensure that it is befitting of the national significance of the site and appropriate to the local Canberra climate. As such, the Panel recommends the proponent considers the following:
 - 2.1.1 The Panel in principle supports the central courtyard, however, questions the quality and amenity of this space including potential overshadowing, accessibility, and programming. The Panel is not convinced that the proposed 19-metre-wide internal courtyard surrounded by 18 to 25-metre-high buildings would provide sufficient solar access and recommends increasing the width of the courtyard or decreasing the bulk and scale of some apartment buildings to increase solar penetration.
 - 2.1.2 Regarding resolution of the ground plane and level changes, the Panel recommends further consideration to ensure equitable accessibility for pedestrians and residents and landscape strategy that maximises the amenity of the northern setback including access and opportunities to be incorporated with communal amenity such as the gym and a relocated pool (accommodated within the building footprint).
 - 2.1.3 Noting that the landscape, communal amenity, and all building entries converge with the central courtyard, the Panel is concerned that this space may be 'overprogrammed' and compromising entry legibility, functionality, and communal and private amenity. As such, the proponent is encouraged to develop a cohesive landscape and movement strategy that transitions the hierarchy of public, communal and private spaces and amenity to achieve the proponent's stated ambitions with a less formal character as befitting the residential uses.
- 2.2 The Panel notes the design evolution of the rooftop garden and appreciates the extent of rooftop amenity proposed in the 'competition scheme' and would support that iteration. The Panel supports extending amenity for residents to rooftop terrace gardens and suggests a reduction in the extent of hard surfacing to align with intent of providing amenity to green spaces.
- 2.3 The Panel considers that the proposed basement extent has limited the availability of deep soil planting zones throughout the site, which may impact amenity and environmental performance of the proposal. The proponent is recommended to reduce the quantity basement car parking to facilitate a greater amount of viable deep soil planting zones distributed throughout the site and within the central courtyard.

- 2.4 The Panel is concerned that the southern interface to Haig Park features an underdeveloped landscape proposition. The Panel notes that the adjacent parkland offers a unique opportunity for a connected landscape proposition and therefore encourages the proponent to further develop the landscape response at this location to ensure a level of continuity with Haig Park, and to ensure the historic parkland and the natural systems (e.g. canopy and water) are considered within the design that communicates a legible narrative.
- 2.5 While supportive of the intent to provide a variety of landscaped environments and experiences within and around the site, the Panel is not convinced that the European landscape and courtyard precedents presented are appropriate to Canberra. The proposition should respond appropriately to Canberra's variable climate (i.e. periods of drought and extreme heat, and cold winter months with sub-zero evenings) to ensure a resilient and healthy landscape. The Panel suggests incorporating a balance of native and exotic species instead of the proposed water and labour-intensive landscaping. In addition, all areas should have winter solar access to support healthy trees. A maintenance strategy for these green spaces should be considered at an early stage to ensure landscape quality is easily maintained for the life of the building.

3.0 Sustainability

- 3.1 The Panel notes that a detailed discussion of sustainability measures was not undertaken during the design review session and as such the Panel is unable to provide substantive commentary at this stage. The Panel encourages the proponent to prepare and present an integrated sustainable design strategy at the next design review session that aspires to more than the minimum standard and supports the sustainability requirements of the Project Delivery Deed. The sustainability strategy should include consideration of: shading strategies to reduce the impacts of western exposure; provisions for full electrification (no gas connections); electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; solar batteries; heat pumps; innovation with waste and water management; appropriate Photovoltaic (PV) panel placement detailing the impacts from north-adjacent future Build-to-Rent development and flexibility with carparking when needs change (e.g., car sharing/bicycle amenities) to support future residents.

4.0 Density and connectivity

- 4.1 The Panel supports in principle the network of pedestrian mid-link pathways proposed though the site, and intent for these pathways to provide connection for residents and the public between Northbourne Avenue such as the light rail and bus stops, and the greater suburb of Turner. However, the Panel recommends further design development to improve connections with surrounding movement networks and to enhance the pedestrian experience that is generous, prioritises the public nature of a through-site link, and is well-coordinated with the ground plane and accommodates and clearly defines building entries from the streets. The current proposition presents more as a series of privately accessed portals than engaging and inviting public entry. The Panel highlights the following elements for further development;
- 4.1.1 The Panel supports the main Northbourne pedestrian link owing to its generous proportions as a legible public link. Conversely, the Panel does not support the series of 5-metre-wide pathways through the site from Forbes and Greenway Street and lack of clear wayfinding with proposed alignments. These narrow proportions do not have the same appeal/impact compared to the main 17-metre-wide mid-link entrance on Northbourne Avenue. To promote public use, the Panel encourages

increasing the permeability through the site by widening some pathways through the reduction of yield, by incorporating elements to relate back to human scale (e.g., use of arbours to provide a sense of comfortable enclosure), and by consideration of provisions for passive surveillance and the introduction of a variety of space on Forbes Street.

4.1.2 The Panel questions the minimal articulation of the proposed southern elevation interface with Haig Park. Noting the southern façade is the first impression of the site when approaching via vehicle along Northbourne Avenue, the Panel suggests further development of the southern elevation to ensure a well-considered and sensitive response (refer 2.4) to the Northbourne Avenue travel route and Haig Park.

4.1.3 The Panel recommends further development of the movement strategy that presents building entries legibly in each street within a clearly defined spatial hierarchy.

5.0 Built form and scale

5.1 The Panel is supportive of the proposal's formal architectural response along the Northbourne Avenue elevation and commends the design team for articulating the building forms to respond to existing trees along this frontage. The Panel however considers that the proposal is yet to respond adequately to the unique interfaces and street typologies of the southern, western and northern elevations/interfaces. The Panel observes the opportunity to relax the formal character along the Forbes Street frontage, allowing for greater diversity of space and dynamic edge along the western site boundary and for further design development to the south.

5.2 The intent to provide amenity via a semi-enclosed swimming pool pavilion is acknowledged, however, the Panel considers that the placement of the proposed pool has reduced the overall functionality and amenity of the central space by limiting sightlines, reducing availability of useable landscape for recreation and obstructing movement through the space. The Panel encourages the proponent to test alternative locations for the swimming pool, including co-location with the gym in the northwest corner of the site and integrated with the landscape. This may also relieve the north-western corner on Forbes Street where waste management access is proposed presenting more a commercial service type. For example, the waste management could be relocated further south with vehicle movement preferably accommodated within the basement rather than impacting the street setback landscape of a residential street type with its lower density urban character.

5.3 The Panel supports the design expression (materials, colours, scale) to Northbourne Avenue and look forward to further design development of the expression of base, middle and entablature.

6.0 Functionality and build quality

6.1 The Panel notes potential overland stormwater management concerns and encourage proponent liaison with the relevant authorities (i.e. TCCS) to ensure appropriate water management solutions across the site from Northbourne Avenue down into the central courtyard and towards Forbes Street.

6.2 The Panel supports the proponent's intention to incorporate adaptable basement car parking. Given the site's proximity to public transport infrastructure and the city centre, the Panel recommends the proponent investigates a further reduction in the extent of basement car park provision such as through increased use of car share.

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- 6.3 While acknowledging the early design development phase of the proposal as presented, the Panel considers that the proposed floor-to-floor height of 3050mm to be inadequate and therefore encourages the proponent provide a minimum of 3100mm, to ensure the proposal achieves appropriate waterproofing and allows for services without the use of bulkheads.
- 6.4 The Panel acknowledges the orientation challenges of the site, however, is concerned that the proposal is yet to demonstrate acceptable solar outcomes for the proposed apartments. In this regard the Panel observes internal corner apartments are unlikely to provide acceptable living environments. The proponent is therefore recommended to undertake detailed solar analysis to ensure appropriate solar access is achieved across the scheme for presenting at next design review.

7.0 Legibility and safety

- 7.1 The proponent's intent to provide activated connections that are integrated with the surrounding public movement network is commended by the Panel. However, the proposed development has multiple buildings on a large site with no urban substructure and clear wayfinding with cues that should be communicated through the building form. This can be both confronting and confusing for residents and visitors and others (e.g. food and parcel delivery) with small doorways within the central courtyard space rather than clear lines of sight to foyers accessed directly from the streets. The Panel notes that the main pedestrian entry for the proposal is located off Northbourne Avenue while other entry points/lobbies are unclear. As such, the Panel sees the opportunity for the entries and foyer lobbies for each apartment to be further developed to improve wayfinding/legibility outcomes. The proponent is encouraged to revise the scheme to ensure intuitive wayfinding, a sense of address and a safe environment aligned to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED).

8.0 Diversity and amenity

- 8.1 The Panel is supportive of the proposed mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom unit types to meet the diversity of the community and is appreciative of the initiative to include multi core buildings averaging one core per six apartment units, and maximising dual aspect apartments. The Panel however is concerned that the amenity outcomes are not yet adequately resolved for the proposed communal areas and therefore encourages further development of the entry lobbies and corridors to include spaces that encourage passive interaction between residents (i.e., seats, ledges, landings, breakout spaces) that promote safety and a sense of community for future residents and present a different character/arrangement defining their ground level entries.
- 8.2 The Panel acknowledges the intent for the proposal to support ageing in place, however, cannot provide further comment due to lack of details at the review session. The Panel notes the lack of adaptable apartment units, accessible carparking and accessibility provisions including paths of travel within the central courtyard in the proposed development and looks forward to the inclusions of equitable accessibility provisions in future iterations of this proposition.

9.0 Community and public domain

- 9.1 The Panel notes the main vehicular access into the development is via Forbes Street and is concerned about the potential for high volume traffic impacts. As such the Panel recommends that the proponent liaises with relevant authorities (i.e. TCCS) to ensure

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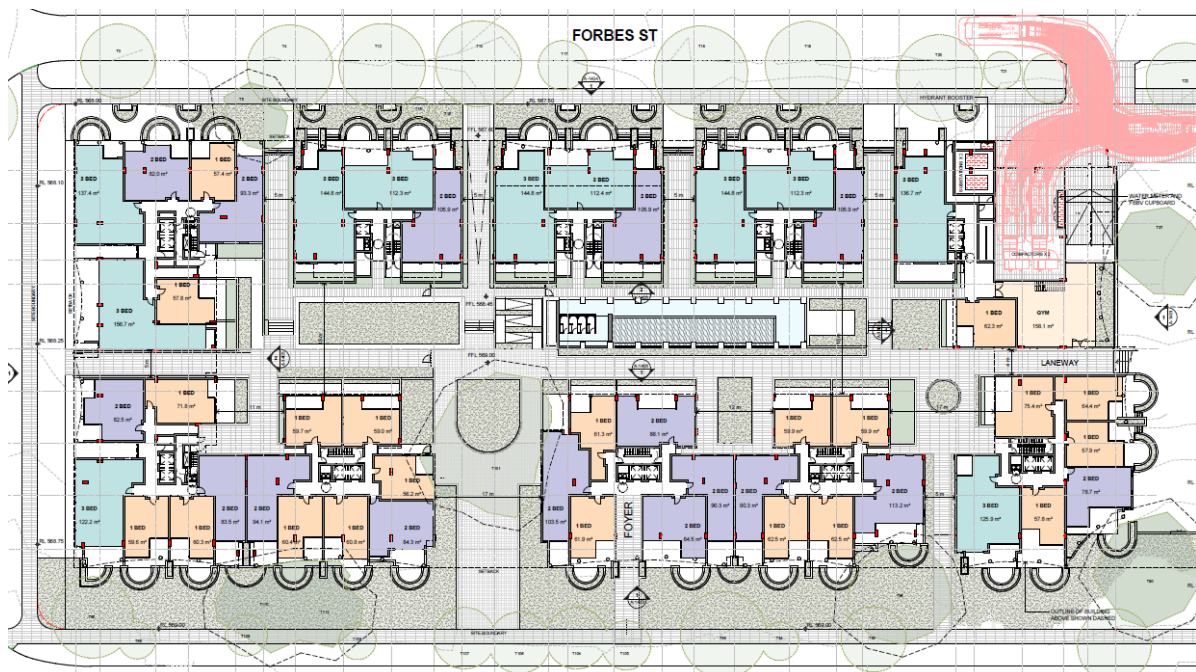
community safety and amenity especially at the north-western corner of the site where waste vehicle movements are proposed is ensured and maintained.

10.0 Visual appearance

- 10.1 The Panel commends the proponent on the use of a tactile materiality palette that is inherently residential. The use of brick as the main material is supported by the Panel as it creates a sense of substance and coherency and is suitably robust over the long-term in a high exposure location.
- 10.2 The Panel also commends the proponent for intentional avoidance of curtain wall glass on facades, particularly to the east, west and north, with this noted to further support a robust residential character for the scheme that considers the composition of ratios of solid-to-opening and for building performance. The Panel encourages retention of the masonry and continued absence of curtain glass through value management and are keen to see the realisation of a high-quality residential character.
- 10.3 The Panel commends the proponent's suggestion that the two storey expressed base and top within the facades from the competition scheme be reintroduced to the current proposal as this results in much more satisfactory proportions.

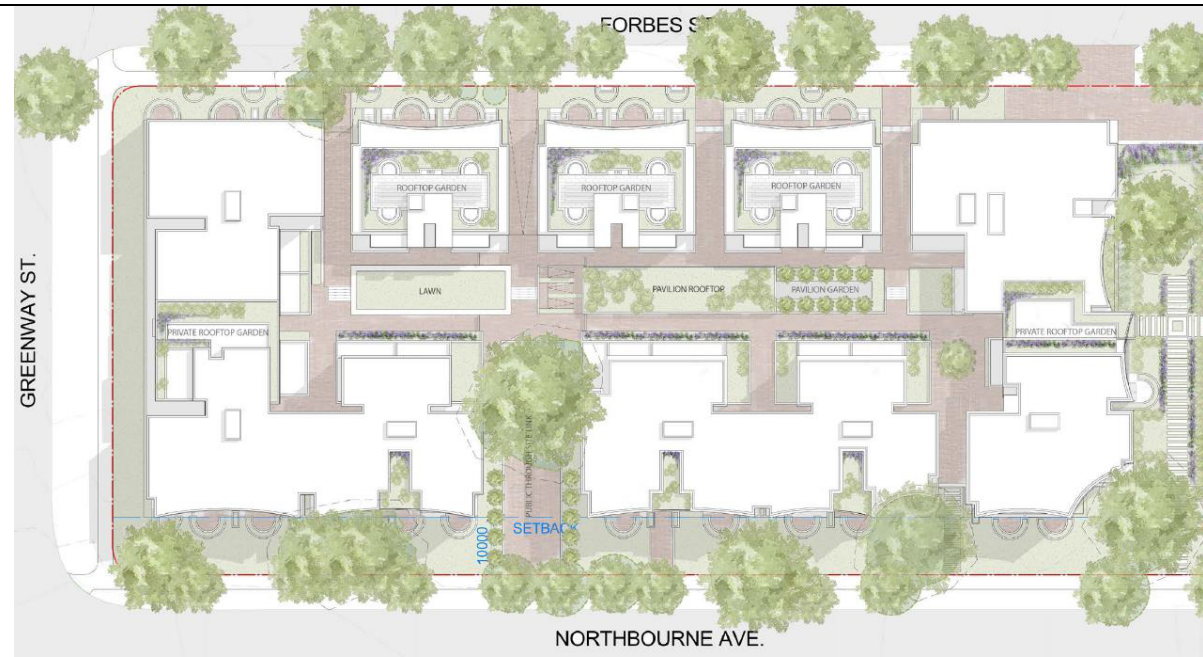
Sample images from presentation

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.



Site Plan

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Landscape Plan



Northbourne Avenue Elevation (East)



North Elevation

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South Elevation



Forbes Street Elevation (West)



Perspective view from Northbourne Avenue towards northeast corner of proposal

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Perspective view along Forbes Street



Perspective view along Northbourne Avenue



Perspective view from Northbourne Avenue into the site via main mid-link



Perspective view from apartment building into central courtyard space



Perspective view within central courtyard along pool pavilion

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NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

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Date issued: 26 April 2023

Project: Turner Place

Review date: Wednesday 12 April 2023

Meeting location: Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams

Site visit: Wednesday 13 December 2022 (Catherine Townsend, Andrew Smith)

Panel members: Catherine Townsend, Chair and ACT Government Architect
Natalie Joy, Vice-Chair and Project Manager at the National Capital Authority

Sch 2.2(a)(ii)

Proponent: Amalgamated Property Group

Observers: Representatives from:
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MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Property address

Forbes Street/Greenway Street/Northbourne Avenue (Block 4 Section 57 Turner)

Proposal

The proposal is located at Block 4 Section 57 Turner on a rectangular site with a total area of 16,303m². It is an urban infill block situated adjacent a future Build-to-Rent development on Block 3 Section 57 Turner to the north, Northbourne Avenue and the Light Rail corridor to the east, Haig Park is to the south opposite Greenway Street and low to medium density RZ4 zoned residential development to the west of Forbes Street. The site includes a 1.8 metre cross fall and is zoned CZ5: Mixed Use under the Territory Plan (2008) and subject to the Northbourne Avenue Corridor Precinct Code, Multi Unit Housing Code and Commercial Zones Development Code. The provisions of the National Capital Plan and the City and Gateway Urban Design Framework apply.

The proposed residential development comprises five buildings arranged to the block perimeter with a central courtyard. It houses 418 dwellings with approximately 3,910m² (24%) communal open space. The built form is nine-storeys to Northbourne Avenue stepping down to seven storeys at Forbes Street. The central ground level communal courtyard is intended to provide a landscaped sanctuary and includes retention of some high value existing trees. Communal facilities including concierge, gym, pool and communal rooms are located on the north-western corner for resident use. Resident vehicular access is proposed from a single driveway on Forbes Street, with a separate waste vehicle access also from Forbes Street. The proposal aims to achieve high levels of solar access and enables cross ventilation through dual aspect apartment layouts and multicore typologies to enhance energy conservation. The inclusion of rooftop gardens also provides additional amenity to residents. An accessible mid-block pedestrian through link is provided between Forbes Street and Northbourne Avenue.

Proponents' representative address to the Panel

The proponent's representative from Amalgamated Property Group, Sch 2.2(a)(ii) commenced the presentation by thanking SJB, the proponent's design team for working through the design issues raised from the previous review session. The proponent's architect, Sch 2.2(a)(ii) of SJB, then presented the site context and rationale behind the design response, highlighting the significance of the sites' locality on the approach route to the city centre. He reiterated the design concept is to focus on quality of the street edge and amenity for residents. The intent is to provide scale and address to Northbourne Avenue, to create a memorable experience, learning from the simplicity, geometry, and materiality of buildings from grand civic cities around the world.

The architect explained the difference between the competition scheme, the previous proposal and the design response in the proposed scheme. This included implementation of wider through-site link to improve resident amenity; changes to perimeter articulations to ensure construction quality and efficiencies; changes to super order of the ground floor; exploring connection with country from a pragmatic and environmental perspective; relocation of swimming pool/gym; and increased permeability through the site via secondary through-links; private entry points into each apartment building; considered building articulation to minimise extensive building lengths; and changes to materiality and material finishes. The constraints of the site including solar access, waste management, substation location and the site orientation being slightly off true north was

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highlighted by the architect. He then presented the proposed quantum of development as a series of detailed solar massing studies and explained the pros and cons of various building reconfigurations/realignments to potentially improve solar access for the proposal. He concluded that none of the options explored significantly improved the design and amenity outcome. The architect then referred to the Green Star and National Construction Code (NCC) definitions for daylight access and confirmed how the design team's solar and daylight analysis has informed the current building form response.

The proponent then referred to a series of 3D renders and highlighted the changes in balcony articulation; building form in response to the main central tree; and relocation and sculptural response of swimming pool/gym. He noted the design team is working to revise the proposal to achieve a better amenity outcome with ongoing discussions with TCCS regarding relocation of substations to the basement and optimised waste management strategies. He also noted the challenges associated with accessing local skilled labour to realise extent of brick materiality proposed for two storeys at street level. There are a good mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartment unit types within the proposed development with 60% achieving natural cross-ventilation. Individual unit plans are being finalised with discussions with the construction team as well as real estate agents to ensure marketability. They are also working closely with the landscape consultant team on further developing the landscape response once there is more certainty around architectural elements.

Recommendation Overview

Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review session and the proponent's presentation; a site visit by the Chairs on Tuesday 13 December 2022; the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel is pleased that the development proposal has returned to NCDRP for further design review. Ongoing engagement with the Panel has provided the opportunity for a meaningful discussion about the key elements of the proposal. The proponent team is congratulated by the Panel for the comprehensive work presented to date and for the considerations made in response to the Panel's Advice from the previous session. The Panel supports the increased width to through-site links; swimming pool relocation; retainment of mature tree within courtyard space; acknowledgement of country and place; continued focus on residential amenity and the proponent team's aspirations to enhance the main avenue route experience into the city centre. The Panel welcomes the proponent to return for subsequent design review following consideration of the key issues and recommendations presented below.

The challenges associated with site orientation along Northbourne Avenue, constrained vehicular access and waste management is acknowledged by the Panel. The Panel also appreciates the extensive solar access investigations undertaken to support liveability and inform building form. The Panel however remains concerned about the monolithic nature of the design proposition; building and street interface with Haig Park and northwest corner facing Forbes Street; solar access provisions across the development for the Canberra climate; the quality and longevity of proposed façade treatment; the lack of additional large canopy trees and the viability of the proposed landscape response. As design development progresses the proponent is encouraged by the Panel to ensure that the proposal considers visual and physical connections to surrounding areas; the reduction of overall building mass; a meaningful response to first nations; high quality and viable landscape spaces; and increased focus on resident and public amenity (including

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increased liveability of apartment units, solar access provisions, additional deep soil planting opportunities and long-term sustainability strategies).

Key Issues and Recommendation

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation overview. To achieve the best possible design outcome and to ensure that design excellence is achieved for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following items through the next stages of the design development:

1.0 Context and character

The proponent's surrounding policy response to First Nations is acknowledged, the Panel continues to encourage a meaningful connection with place, Culture and Ngunnawal history of this important site.

The Panel is encouraged by the proponent's aspirations for how this development contributes to the entry and approach experience into the city centre. The Panel also considers the proposed architectural character and overall site planning to have merit and supports the rationale of the proposed building program that includes widened through-site links. The design considerations made to improve the relationship with Haig Park is noted by the Panel, however the proponent is encouraged to continue the development for the southern interface to enhance both resident and public amenity along this frontage and the form and modulation along the northern boundary interface condition. The Panel recommends the proponent to:

- 1.1 Engage with traditional Ngunnawal custodians of the land early in the design process to explore opportunities for a meaningful Connecting with Country response that can guide design and be interwoven throughout the development. Consider that without direct engagement of Ngunnawal and Ngambri cultural advisors the design may be understood as a Looking after Country response. The Panel encourages the proponent to seek appropriate cultural advice.

| PROPONENT RESPONSE | UPDATED PLAN |
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- 1.2 Consider street level activation by reducing the bulk and scale of the built form on the southern elevation to take advantage of the Haig Park's proximity to the site (e.g., increase visual and physical permeability). Further consider the ground plane and engagement with the street at a pedestrian scale.

| PROPONENT RESPONSE | UPDATED PLAN |
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- 1.3 Consider further design development of the northern building form along the northern boundary interface that further modulates the imposing monolithic form.

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2.0 Landscape

The Panel acknowledges the proponent’s rationale that architectural elements need to be resolved prior to further advancing development of the landscape proposition for the site. Based on the landscape master plan provided at design review the proponent is commended on their commitment to retain six existing mature trees and for the considerations for equitable accessibility and accommodation of differing incidental landscapes. The Panel however considers the landscape offering to require further consideration and development to support landscape viability and optimal amenity for the proposal. The Panel is concerned about the excessive use of hard surfaces within the central communal courtyard; the lack of additional large canopy trees with supporting deep soil planting zones; high numbers of car parking; and the missed opportunity for the internal landscape to connect with Haig Park. The Panel recommends the proponent to:

- 2.1 Strengthen the Northbourne Avenue tree planting appropriate to the Griffin’s Legacy and needed public domain grand avenue character.

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- 2.2 Strengthen the southern interface to Haig Park to increase visual and physical connectivity with the open space. For example, take advantage of the park’s proximity to the site by extending visual and pedestrian links from the central communal courtyard, treating the park as an extension from the site.

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- 2.3 Investigate tree planting viability within the Greenway Street verge by liaising with the relevant authorities (e.g., TCCS) to ensure service offset requirements are maintained.

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- 2.4 Ensure a rich and verdant landscape proposition for the central communal courtyard to support high quality amenity for residents. Ensure the preservation and health of the central mature canopy tree to be retained with adequate deep soil planting zones and solar access (e.g., reduce amount of basement carparking and surrounding building mass).

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2.5 Incorporate additional large canopy trees throughout the site with supporting deep soil planting zones to soften the street edges and encourage street activation usages. Conduct canopy cover calculation to demonstrate the development proposals ability to achieve a minimum 30% tree canopy cover in support of the [ACT Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045](#).

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2.6 Provide a detailed rationale behind plant selection including Indigenous engagement to strengthen connection to place, first nations and to ensure climate resilience.

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2.7 Reduce the amount of high maintenance lawn on street verges in favour of low maintenance alternatives (e.g., indigenous tall grasses, groundcovers, shrubs) to support pollinator corridors and enhance living infrastructure.

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3.0 Sustainability

The Panel notes that a detailed discussion of sustainability measures was not undertaken during the design review session and as such the Panel has not provided comprehensive commentary at this stage. The Panel supports the intention to reduce the extent of glazed façade; an all-electric development; inclusion of multiple building/cores; solar photovoltaic panels (PV) and proposed electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in basement carparks.

The Panel also notes the proposed development is required to meet a minimum of five Green Stars as per the Project Delivery Deed (PDD), however, the proponent team is encouraged to undertake a comprehensive approach to sustainability to ensure that the proposal reaches its potential in meeting high level occupant liveability standards for future residents and users. The Panel considers this proposition an opportunity to exemplar a response to the emerging climate emergency. The Panel recommends the proponent to:

3.1 Develop robust sustainability principles and associated strategy with an emphasis on sustainable residential living. Consider bicycle parking, End-of-Trip (EoT) facilities, waste sorting/separation, rainwater harvesting, composting facilities that would assist the development to reach its true potential and to provide amenity that would meet and assist the occupants of the future.

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- 3.2 Continue to increase the opportunity for solar access into apartments to improve thermal comfort throughout the Canberra seasons and to minimise the need for excessive use of mechanical systems for heating and cooling.

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- 3.3 Provide updated calculations for deep soil planting zones excluding impervious surfaces. The Panel looks forward to this material being presented at next design review.

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4.0 Density and connectivity

The Panel supports in principle the site planning and network of pedestrian pathways proposed throughout the site, entries on Forbes Street frontages and provisions of a generous mid through-link. The Panel however remains concerned about the overall yield impacting adequate solar access and genuine natural cross ventilation for some apartment units and the missed opportunity for the proposition to connect with Haig Park. The Panel recommends the proponent to:

- 4.1 In conjunction with Item 2.2, further refine the southern building interface with Haig Park noting the southern façade is the first impression of the site when approaching via vehicle from the south along Northbourne Avenue. Consider the scale of articulation and building mass on the southern façade that further engages with the interface between the proposed development and the existing park. This is needed to improve the visual permeability into the central courtyard recognising its public function as a through-site link that presents an appropriate spatial and landscape relationship to Haig Park.

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5.0 Built form and scale

The Panel appreciates and supports the design response to include dual aspect apartment units to support meaningful cross flow ventilation and resident amenity. However, adjustments to the built form since the last review session has resulted in an increase to the bulk and scale of the proposed development when viewed from several angles, particularly along Northbourne Avenue and from Haig Park. The Panel is concerned with the Northbourne Avenue elevation now presenting as a continuous street wall with limited articulation along the frontage; the scale of the

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building 'hovering' over proposed waste collection area; and the proposed building mass limiting the opportunity for optimum solar access to some apartment units. The Panel therefore recommends the proponent to:

- 5.1 Consider a decrease in the overall building footprint and yield across the site to reduce the overall bulk and scale of the proposal and to alleviate self-shadowing issues, and to ensure adequate solar access and resident amenity to apartment units.

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- 5.2 Further develop the design response on the northwest corner where the proposed building currently hovers over the proposed waste collection area. Consider dropping the building to the ground level so the built form 'touches the ground' and that the proposal responds to the scale of adjoining residential development on Forbes Street.

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- 5.3 Review the proposed balcony encroachments into the Northbourne Avenue frontage and ensure adherence to the appropriate planning framework requirements by liaising with relevant authorities (e.g., NCA). Further consider the north-eastern corner presentation to Northbourne Avenue to address a large area of wall plane that is at the most prominent visual corner entering the National Capital and leaving it.

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- 5.4 Consider introducing increased articulation and/or setbacks above ground along the Northbourne Avenue frontage to minimise bulk and scale. In doing so the Panel draws the proponent's attention to how the building envelope wraps around the corners and transitions between varying street typologies.

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6.0 Functionality and build quality

The Panel supports in principle the apartment internal layouts, introduction of concierge, communal rooms for resident use and the suggestion for the relocation of substations underground. The Panel however remains concerned about the functionality of the currently proposed concierge/lobby fronting the central communal courtyard. In this regard the Panel recommends the proponent to:

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- 6.1 Continue liaison with the relevant authorities (e.g., TCCS) to resolve site access, traffic, waste collection, parking, substation location issues on the northeast corner to ensure a sensitive response for this proposal and for adjacent residential development.

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- 6.2 Clarify the 'snorkel window' on the northeast corner where its function is unclear to the Panel. If its function is to allow natural light into the access corridor the Panel recommends the corridor be extended to the perimeter of the building.

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- 6.3 Consider the opportunity for the proposed concierge service to address Forbes Street to assist with accessibility and wayfinding throughout the development and potential for an accessible path of travel as the concierge is a public entry point whose function is a public/communal 'face' of the development. In doing so, consider the quality of space for the proposed 'communal rooms' (e.g., solar access) so that the amenity of these spaces is optimised.

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7.0 Legibility and safety

The Panel recognises the design development made to improve legibility to building entries, foyers and lift cores. The Panel however notes that some buildings within the proposal remain difficult to navigate to from the street and the bulk and visual uniformity of building facades may not promote natural wayfinding. The Panel therefore recommends the proponent to:

- 7.1 Consider the pedestrian arrival sequence to the site, particularly for the residential components of the proposal without a street address so that the 'front entrance' is clearly identifiable for each building and that intuitive wayfinding throughout the site is achieved.

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8.0 Diversity and amenity

The Panel is supportive of the proposed mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom unit types to meet the diversity of the community and provisions of dual core apartment buildings to enhance resident amenity. The Panel also commends the number of dual aspect apartments supporting effective natural cross-ventilation, however remains concerned about inadequate solar amenity

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for some apartment units where the minimum three (3) hours solar access has not been achieved. The Panel recommends the proponent to:

- 8.1 In conjunction with Item 6.1, continue to liaise with the relevant authorities (e.g., NCA) to resolve solar access requirements to support the high quality amenity envisioned for the proposed development.

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9.0 Community and public domain

The proponent's ongoing discussions with TCCS to resolve main vehicular access into the development via Forbes Street is noted however the Panel remains concerned about active travel requirements surrounding the site and therefore recommends the proponent to:

- 9.1 Continue to liaise with the relevant authorities (e.g., TCCS) so that active travel requirements are appropriately addressed, particularly on the southern interface. In doing so the Panel recommends further consideration of the hierarchy of pedestrian footpaths (ie. width on Forbes Street compared to Northbourne Avenue) so that active travel standards are met.

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10.0 Visual appearance

The Panel considers the architectural expression for the proposal to be an enticing proposition that supports the formality of the Northbourne Avenue approach route. The Panel is supportive of the design expression (materials, colours, scale) with the proposed materiality gradient that lightens as the building rises, resulting in a high-quality residential character. The Panel however queries the reliance for precast concrete stained finishes for the proposal; the potential for value engineering in future, especially of the complex modelling on the façade which is important for providing detail and shadow on the facades; and the design response to the varying street typology of Greenway Street that has high public domain visibility and addresses Haig Park. The Panel therefore recommends the proponent to:

- 10.1 Reconsider the use of precast concrete stained finishes for the proposal. The Panel previously commended the proponent on the use of a tactile materiality palette that is inherently residential. The use of brick as the main material remains supported by the Panel as it creates a sense of substance and coherency and is suitably robust over the long-term in a high exposure location. Detailing of the brickwork when employed as a podium base is critical to ensure it provides a strong sense of grounding the architecture and allows upper levels to be recessive. If brickwork is not viable at upper levels then the proponent is recommended to ensure high quality of materiality is maintained.

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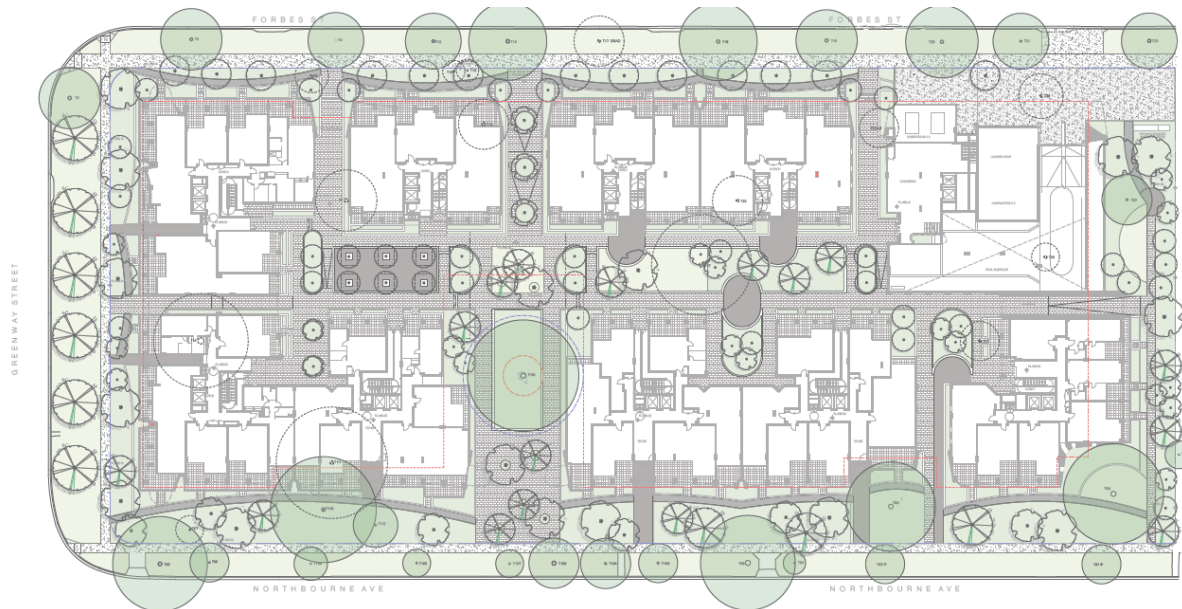
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10.2 In conjunction with item 2.2 and 4.1, consider visual connections with Haig Park on the southern elevation through relief of the currently monumental expression.

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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.



Site Plan and Landscape Masterplan



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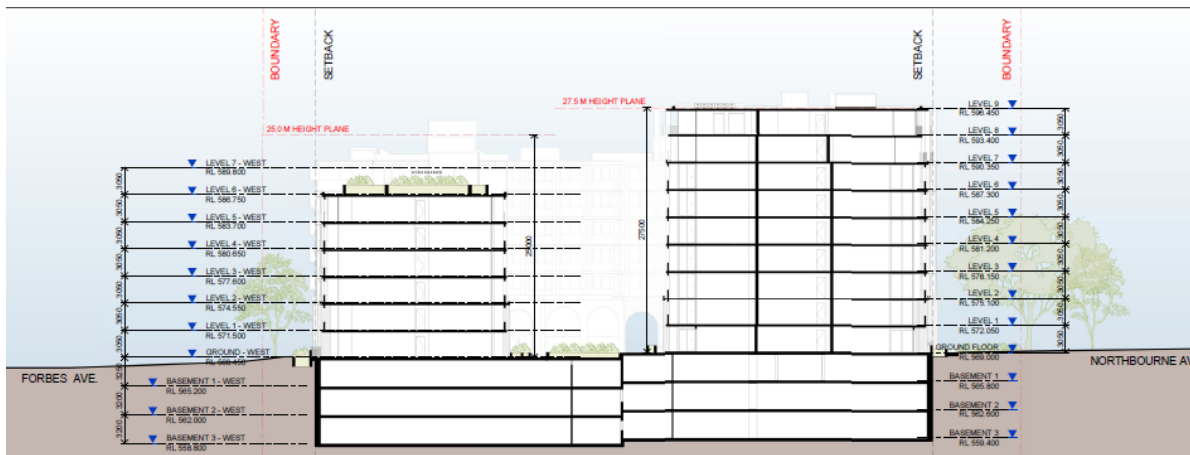
Northbourne Avenue (east) Elevation



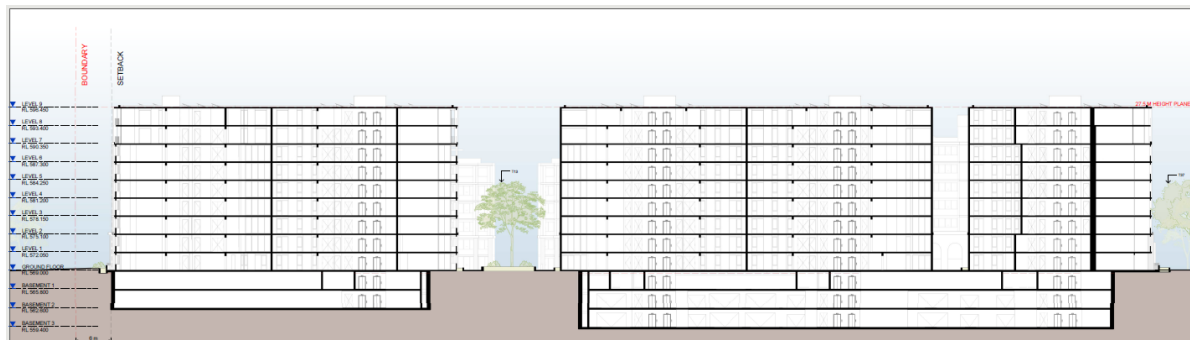
Greenway Street (south) and Condamine Street (north) Elevations



Forbes Street (west) Elevation



Short Cross Section



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Long Cross Section



3D Render - Corner of Northbourne Ave and Condamine Street



3D Render - Northbourne Avenue



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3D Render - Corner of Forbes Street and Greenway Street



3D Render - Forbes Street

