

11 February 2022

Joshua Brandon
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Organisation
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PROJECT: Carlingford - Aged Care and Seniors Living
RE: State Design Review Panel – 2nd February 2022 – First Review

Dear Joshua

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above project at an early stage. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on 2nd February 2022.

The SDRP process presents an important opportunity to review this development and ensure it progresses, as a whole, from sound first principles, specifically concerning Connecting with Country and the care of the elderly residents and visitors.

The following elements of the design strategy are supported in principle:

- The overall built strategy of perimeter buildings and a central courtyard (although further development of massing is required, see comments below)
- The removal of the southwestern and southern roads and replacement with footpaths
- Ambitions for sustainability
- Achieving a best practice result for Connecting with Country

The following commentary provides advice and recommendations for the project:

Connecting with Country

1. Connecting with Country is first and foremost about early and authentic engagement. Recommend a close review of the Connecting with Country Framework developed by the GANSW and the rapid integration of this process into the project.

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2. A highly nuanced response to environment and microclimate such as access to sunlight at the right time of the year, capturing cooling summer breezes, care for ecologies, and stewardship of land and people are all ways of working with and connecting with Country; evidence these through the development of the design.
3. Responsibility for caring for the aged is a key part of caring for Country. The site has been given an Aboriginal name by the client, Yalambi meaning to rest or remain; this name and associated concepts of respect and nurturing need to be foundational to the thinking of the development.

Site strategy and landscape

4. Present a series of options for the site planning to illustrate why the chosen scenario is deemed the best option and how it will deliver:
 - a. a clear and generous expression of the Baptist Care's social model
 - b. integration with the broader community
 - c. integration with the social and affordable housing on Site A
5. The functional needs of the courtyard, its relationship to the broader programme and its primary character are not clear. Further design development is needed to increase the legibility of the space and the ways in which it supports the underlying principles of the new development, responding to a broad range of situations and programmatic demands.
6. Recommend bringing more of the communal amenity up out of the landscaping (undercroft area) and into the ground floors of the ILUs, to increase the amount of life and activity in this central space.
7. Amend the design of the car parks to support deep soil and larger trees in the courtyard. Ensure there are sufficient, and abundant, green spaces and canopy in the courtyard to fulfil the ecological vision of the project, provide shaded green respite spaces and protect against heat island effect.
8. Evidence the quantity, quality and character of the solar access in the courtyard and how this positively contributes to the experience of the residents and visitors. Include plans, sun eye views, 3d studies as appropriate to illustrate.
9. The distribution of built form and height of the ILUs warrants further examination with regards to openness and solar access to the central courtyard. Consider challenging height controls on the east and west boundaries to enable redistribution of mass/GFA from the northern block.

10. The RACF entirely separates the central courtyard, and its users, from the ecological zone on the southern border. Currently, the view shaft and pedestrian route through the site terminates at the RACF building. Adapt the design to increase the visual and physical connection through, across and under the RACF to give it a strong link to the rest of Site A and Site B.
11. Consider further bridge links higher up the RACF to connect it with the other communal spaces at different levels, to encourage movement and increase the access of the other users to the ecological zone.
12. Following the session, concern was raised regarding concrete paths and paving in the ecological zone on the southern edge of the site. Provide further information to demonstrate appropriate sensitivity of interventions within ecological areas in the south and east of the site.

Connection

13. Accessibility is core to this project. Present diagrams showing not only the functional but also the experiential demands of the different user groups and how their needs are being met to create places in which movement is dignified and efficient for all users.
14. Walking is an important part of many seniors' lives. Being part of the broader community, taking regular short trips to nearby parks and shops, and exercising are all key priorities. Illustrate how this is considered in the design, and how assisted modes of travel such as PT and minibuses are also being integrated into the design.
15. Ensure the safest possible pedestrian movements between site A and site B.
16. Entrances to the site, buildings and central space are currently not clear, lacking in generosity, and don't have a legible hierarchy. Consider the pathways and movements of different users and design entrances that are appropriate for each group, location and space.

Architecture

17. Design the roofspaces of the ILUs to include communal and private green outdoor spaces to complement the central courtyard.
18. Recommend looking at the Senior Housing Guidelines and the recommendation to include different scaled communal spaces to provide a variety of experiences for residents. Including micro-gathering opportunities sprinkled throughout the buildings.
19. Living spaces in the RACF are currently too inward facing. Baptist Care has a model of encouraging less time in private rooms, and yet these are given the priority for views and exterior access.

20. The location and experience of the dementia garden are not ideal and require reconsideration from first principles. This place should illustrate design excellence and show the greatest care for its users.

Sustainability and Climate Change

21. Environmental design, sustainability and carbon zero initiatives were not discussed at the session, these need to be included in first principle strategic thinking about the site so they can be fully integrated and comprehensive.
22. Aiming for a net-zero building is highly encouraged to reach NSW's Net Zero emissions goal by 2050. Refer to 'NSW, DPIE, Net Zero Plan, Stage 1: 2020-2030' for further information.

This project should return to the SDRP. The issues outlined above are to be addressed at the next SDRP session.

List of material to bring to the next session:

- Evidence of progress with Connecting with Country and its impact on the design of the development
- A series of diagrams with options for the overall conceptual strategy of the site and identify why the proposal is the best one
- Plentiful cross-sections to illustrate solar access and how the design addresses level changes, movement, and accessibility
- Drawings clearly illustrating accessibility across the site and into buildings, including from Site A and surrounding community
- A schedule of relevant guides and legislation. Use this to evidence a compliance check. Include consideration of the relevant parts of the DRAFT NSW Design and Place SEPP
- A review of first principle sustainability strategy and its integration into the project

Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, Dr Barnaby Bennett
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Sincerely,

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