NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

PROPONENT RESPONSE TO PANEL'S ADVICE

PROJECT DETAILS

Project name:	Sky Terrace
Property address:	Bentley Place, Casey (Block 9 Section 132 Casey)
Date of response:	November 2022
Date of design review panel session:	Wednesday 22 June 2022
Proponent:	Worth Street Pty Ltd

PANEL'S 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 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 proposal for a high density mixed use development in this location is supported by the Panel, noting the potential to achieve good amenity for residents and to provide additional vitality and activity to the Case Group Centre. Acknowledging the potential benefits, the Panel however considers that further design development is required to provide a robust justification for the proposal's density and height, including further development of the internal atrium, vehicle and servicing access arrangements and a sustainability strategy.

The proponent is encouraged to enhance residential amenity through consideration and refinement of visual and acoustic privacy, increased diversity of dwelling types, inclusion of resident-operable external shading and a revised landscape proposition that includes ample deep soil zones to support a healthy and enduring internal landscape offering.

The Panel thanks the proponent for their positive engagement with the design review process and recommends that the proposal return for further design review.

PROPONENT RESPONSE

Please provide written response to each item raised by the National Capital Design Review Panel and list any relevant plans, images or diagrams that supports each response.

1.0 Context and character

PANEL ADVICE 1.1
The Panel considers that some increase in height could be supportable in this location (e.g. 4 to 8 storeys), given the site conditions and location within the existing Casey Group Centre, however caveats that any such proposal must demonstrate design excellence and clear public benefit that is not yet evident in the current design proposition. To provide a compelling case for the proposal, the Panel encourages the proponent to refine the design proposition to achieve exemplar quality residential amenity, thorough integration with the Casey Group Centre (i.e. current and future context), through proportionate increase in affordable unit yield and best practice sustainable development in both construction and operation. In assisting the proponent in determining a suitable height for the site, the Panel observes that there are a number of scale-dependant design thresholds including fire safety measures (e.g. sprinkler requirements) that could inform height considerations.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
It is noted that an increase in height is supported subject to the development demonstrating design excellence and public benefit. The key items identified are:	Drawings DA-01-03 Location Plan

Integration with the Group Centre – The proponents of this development also developed the Casey Group Centre and remain the owners of the adjoining car park (Block 10). A concept master plan (refer to public consultation documentation) illustrates the long term opportunities for the Casey Group Centre. It is noted that there are already 3 and 4 storey buildings in the group centre on sites that are at a considerably higher elevation. The proposal is considered to integrate appropriately with the long term aspirations for the centre. Increase in the affordable unit yield – The Casey Group Centre area was purchased with a deed of requirement that included 20% of the dwellings to be affordable. This project will deliver the remaining obligations for affordable housing associated with the deed. The provision of additional dwellings to the market will also help with the supply of housing in general to meet the underlying demand. Best practice sustainable development in construction and operation – The proponent has a track record of delivering high quality dwellings with initiatives to improve sustainability outcomes. Refer to response to Panel Advice 3.1 for the sustainability initiatives currently under consideration. The panel suggest that scale dependent design thresholds (such as fire sprinkler requirements) could help to determine the appropriate overall height, however the new BCA requirements have recently changed these thresholds. It is suggested that the most appropriate way to determine the upper limit of height for a building on this block is an assessment against the criteria in the Territory Plan which is addressed in the application. Notably, taller development on this block will not result in overshadowing of other development.	and DA-11-01 Site Plan

PANEL ADVICE 1.2

It is observed by the Panel that the significant upscaling of height when compared to the existing built form in the centre should be made as part of an integrated urban design and development plan for the whole precinct, taking into account the planning framework, a wide range of public infrastructure contributions and community benefits, as well as land use, movement networks and landscape considerations. The Panel notes its in-principle support for a proposal of increased density and scale on this site is conditional that it forms a component of a comprehensive, high quality urban design strategy for the Casey Group Centre. Such an urban design strategy should demonstrate generous contributions to public domain including high quality landscape with canopy trees.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The presentation included images showing the proposal in context with the group centre. The proponents have already delivered the Casey Market Town and all the associated infrastructure. The concept master plan provides an integrated outcome for the remaining development sites within the group centre and illustrates how the proposed height on Block 9 fits in this context.	DA-11-01 Site Plan.

In accordance with the requirements of the development deed for Casey, the developers have handed back 2.4 hectares of serviced land to the ACT Government that is to be released for the purpose of delivering community facilities.

The increased height and hence increased development yield will also result in a substantial contribution to the ACT Government in the form of payment for development rights (equivalent to LVC).

This development proposes upgrades to the public domain in the immediate vicinity of the site including improvements to the Casey Pond landscape and provision of paths along desire lines through the trees to the south.

The developers are also proposing to install improved public facilities and play equipment in the public space near the market town (subject to TCCS approval).

PANEL ADVICE 1.3

The Panel is concerned that the proposal is yet to demonstrate an appropriate contextual response particularly the interface on the eastern boundary with the existing Casey Pond that presents a sheer wall of development of 11 storeys. This boundary condition is considered out of scale with the small pond, creating a tight landscape corridor for public access and potentially impinging on the public experience of community landscape spaces. The Panel considers that the monolithic bulk of the slab apartment form (with flat uniform-height parapets) may be improved by graduated height planes (e.g. 4 storeys at the pond, 6 storeys to the south, and 8 storeys on the western edge that may adjoin a denser village core in the future).

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The development is built to the boundary to optimise the use of the site which has green space to the north east and to the south. The building design on the north eastern side (facing the pond) has three different façade treatments at different levels to avoid it presenting as a monolithic structure. The details of the façade have been updated since the presentation to the design review panel. The building will not materially overshadow the pond and the height of the building is less than half the width of the pond keeping it at a reasonable relative scale. It is noted that the panel supports an 8 storey building facing the carpark to the west (the current building is 9 storeys with the top two storeys set back), carrying this height across the site results in the height of the proposed building.	Refer to Perspective Plan DA-82-02

2.0 Landscape

PANEL ADVICE 2.1

The Panel notes that the proposal as presented has not demonstrated a positive contribution to the ACT Government's aspirations for tree canopy and permeable surfaces in response to the potential for

urban heat and anticipated climate change risks. The Panel is generally not supportive of proposals that do not address their social and environmental responsibility to provide canopy cover and therefore seeks clarity and certainty about the proponent's intentions in this regard and encourages further incorporation of meaningful landscape within the site area (e.g. green roofs, use of permeable materials, deep soil zones).

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The Living Infrastructure Plan sets a goal of 30% tree canopy and 30% permeable surfaces across Canberra's urban footprint. This is not a target that is intended to be applied on a block by block basis. Recent changes to the Territory Plan acknowledge that the majority of the urban area is zoned for residential development so tree planting requirements have been introduced in those zones. This site is zoned CZ1 Commercial Core and the Territory has recognised that in these core commercial areas development is likely to be more intense but is appropriately balanced by increased tree canopy within adjoining green spaces. Two thirds of the boundary of this site faces towards green space that contains good canopy cover and/or standing water that will mitigate urban heat effects. Within the site the requirements for landscaping and site open space, as set out in the multi unit housing code are met.	Plans DA-21-04, DA-21-05 and DA-21-06

3.0 Sustainability

PANEL ADVICE 3.1

The Panel commends the proponent's intention to provide extensive solar integration (i.e. roof, façade system, canopy) and recommends that these be retained through design development and construction. The Panel requests that further details of the solar integration be provided as part of a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the proposal.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The design has evolved since the presentation to the NCDRP. The sustainability measures currently proposed include: - Rooftop solar & all electric appliances - Electric vehicle charging provision - Heat pumps - Active (moveable) facades to control solar gain - Passive ventilation - Thermal insulation and thermal breaks - Using low VOC paints - Energy and Water efficient appliances	DA-53-01 Environmental Sustainability

PANEL ADVICE 3.2

The early stage of the design is acknowledged however the Panel highlights the need to ensure a climate-responsive design including adequate solar control for the extensive east and west-facing facades. The proponent is encouraged to incorporate operable external shading to ensure the thermal comfort of residents and improve energy efficiency of the proposal.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The orientation of the site affords exceptional solar access to the proposed dwellings, however it is acknowledged that this may be too much during summer, so fixed (and operable) shading devices are incorporated into the façade design. This variable shading will allow the occupants of the building to choose the amount of sunlight and heat gain they desire.	Refer to Elevation Plans DA-30-01 & DA-30-02

4.0 Built form and scale

PANEL ADVICE 4.1

Acknowledging the early stage of design development, the Panel commends the proponent for the clear expression of a base, middle and top and the modulation of long facades that provides a legible urban character to the proposal. The Panel encourages further development of the expression and material palette to provide a richness appropriate to the proposal's location within the Casey Group Centre and the broader context.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The proponent has continued to ensure that the building expresses as a base, middle and top through the façade design. This is also relevant to the response to Panel Advice 1.3 which relates to the presentation of the building to the Casey Pond. The development application drawings illustrate the further development that has been made in the material palette and design features of the building.	Refer to Perspective Plans DA-82-01 and DA-82-02

PANEL ADVICE 4.2

While the proponent's intention to provide an efficient scheme that includes pleasant journeys to each dwelling entry is acknowledged, the Panel considers that the current arrangement including the central skybridge has served to compromise solar access to the atrium and has may give rise to overlooking issues. The proponent is encouraged to explore incorporation of multiple cores to allow for an open atrium and to allow a proportion of dwellings to achieve full depth. The Panel also observes that an alternative core arrangement may also facilitate improved landscaping within the atrium, including potential for connected deep soil zones to support an enduring landscape for the proposal.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The proponent has explored options for the building with multiple cores, but for a building of this scale this outcome is inefficient and leaves the occupants with a less frequent lift service. By consolidating the lifts, the occupants will have a choice of lift and the lift lobbies will become a place of social interaction. The central skybridge that services the lift core overlooks the central atrium shared spaces and will provide a level of passive surveillance. Apartments that back onto the internal walkways have screening and high level windows to maintain privacy. The proponent has experience delivering buildings using these principles at the Kingsborough development in Kingston Foreshore and it has proved to be quite successful. The additional natural light and cross flow ventilation that the apartments enjoy outweigh the potential negatives identified by the panel. The shadow analysis indicates that the skybridge is not the main limiting factor in relation to solar access to the atrium space. Landscaping plans for the internal area provide for a combination of grass, planting beds and trees to provide amenity to the spaces.	DA-21-04 to DA-21-07 Plans

PANEL ADVICE 4.3

In relation to the central courtyard, the Panel is concerned that this presents as under-scaled relative to the vertical scale of the proposal. The Panel is also concerned that the space may not yield a high-quality, healthy landscape owing to the absence of demonstrated deep soil zones and low levels of solar access. In addition to the recommendation for a reconfiguration of the core(s) and external accessways (see 4.2) the Panel encourages the proponent to explore provision of deep soil zones within the courtyard that are connected to natural systems, as well as other means to increase solar access to this space to support residential amenity and a healthy landscape.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The proponent has demonstrated the ability to achieve healthy tree growth in raised beds on a podium at the Kingsborough development in Kingston Foreshore. Similar planting is proposed within the atrium space at Casey. Careful selection of species will ensure that the plants are appropriate for the growing conditions. The atrium space is sufficient to provide an enclosed, semi-private space for the residents as part of their communal area. The Casey Pond area provides a much large green space for residents to enjoy directly on their doorstep.	Landscape Drawings 101 to 501

PANEL ADVICE 4.4

The Panel considers that issues of potential visual and acoustic privacy to the second bedroom adjacent to the walkway have not yet been demonstrably resolved and encourages the proponent to refine the design to address these concerns.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The provision of small courtyard areas provides some separation between people on the walkways and the second bedroom walls/windows. Visual privacy is addressed through screening of the courtyard areas, window levels, and the optional use of curtains by residents. Acoustic privacy will be achieved by closing the (double glazed) window.	DA-30-01 to DA-30-02, DA-21-03 to DA-21-09

PANEL ADVICE 4.5

The proposed vehicle and service access arrangement is observed by the Panel to compromise the presented master plan vision that includes a curved road abutting the north-western site boundary, as the basement ramp and utilities (e.g. gas, water meters) occupy the proposed location of this future road. The Panel therefore encourages the proponent to explore incorporation of the vehicle access/basement ramp generally within the building footprint in a manner that enables the master plan vision.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The design has been evolved as recommended by the panel to include the vehicle access ramps within the footprint of the building to enable the aspirational master plan to be achieved in the future. At that time block boundary and service relocations will be required, so the presence of the utility connections at the end of Bently Place are not considered a barrier to the future plans.	Refer to updated Upper Ground Floor Plan DA-21-04

PANEL ADVICE 4.6

The Panel found the design expression as presented lacks richness in materiality and detail. The early stage of design development is acknowledged, with the Panel looking forward to further development of this aspect of the proposal as the design proposition progresses.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
The materiality and detail of the design are now presented as part of the development application.	DA-31-01 Materiality

5.0 Diversity and amenity

PANEL ADVICE 5.1

The Panel observes that the amenity and communal vibrancy potential of the proposal is compromised by the low relative diversity of dwelling sizes and types, with the proposal predominantly comprised of two bed units that are unlikely to support a diverse community of residents for the site. The proponent is therefore encouraged to incorporate a greater diversity of dwelling types and to distribute these throughout the proposal.

PROPONENT RESPONSE	UPDATED PLAN
Dwelling diversity should be considered at a neighbourhood scale rather than block by block. At the time of the 2021 Census 76% of dwellings in the suburb of Casey were separate houses and a further 23% were townhouses. Only 2% were apartments. This compares with 19% of dwellings in Canberra being apartments, so Casey is well below the average. In terms of bedrooms, 44% of dwellings in Casey had 4 or more bedrooms and a further 38% had 3 bedrooms. Only 17% of dwellings in Casey had 1 or 2 bedrooms. Approximately 25% of dwellings in Canberra have 1 or 2 bedrooms, suggesting that Casey is below average. This suggests that a development providing for predominantly 1 & 2 bedroom apartments in Casey is likely to meet an existing demand. The proposal provides seven different unit types as identified in the yield Calculation table. While this is dominated by 2 bedroom units (61%) the other unit typologies will allow for a mix of family structures. The proposal includes 10 four bedroom units.	DA-01-02 Development Statistics

End of document