STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY NO. 65 – DESIGN QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL FLAT DEVELOPMENT

This State Policy aims to improve the design quality of residential flat buildings of three or more storeys, incorporating four or more dwellings.

The policy sets out a series of design principles for Local Council or other consent authorities to consider when assessing development proposals for flats.

The SEPP 65 underwent a comprehensive review and the changes were notified on the NSW legislation website on 19 June 2015 and will commence on 17 July 2015. For applications lodged after 19 June 2015 and determined after 17 July 2015, the Apartment Design Guide, along with the changes to SEPP 65 will apply.

Although the layout and configuration of the proposed apartments has not been prepared for this Planning Proposal, they are however capable of being designed in accordance with the design principles as stipulated in this State Environmental Planning Policy.

State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 specifies nine design quality principles for residential flat buildings. These principles are as follows:

Principle 1	Context and Neighbourhood Character
Principle 2	Built Form and Scale
Principle 3	Density
Principle 4	Sustainability
Principle 5	Landscape
Principle 6	Amenity
Principle 7	Safety
Principle 8	Housing Diversity and Social Interaction
Principle 9	Aesthetics

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

> *(1) "This policy aims to improve the design quality of residential apartment development in New South Wales.*
>
> *(2) This policy recognises that the design quality of residential apartment development is of significance for environmental planning for the state due to the economic, environmental, cultural and social benefits of high quality design.*
>
> *(3) Improving the design quality of residential apartment buildings aims:*
> - *(a) to ensure that they contribute to the sustainable development of New South Wales;*
    - *(i) by providing sustainable housing in social and environmental terms; and*
    - *(ii) by being a long term asset to their neighbourhood; and*
    - *(iii) by achieving the urban planning policies for their regional and local contexts; and*
- *(b) to achieve better built form and aesthetics of buildings and the streetscapes and the public places they define; and*
- *(c) to better satisfy the increasing demand, the changing social and demographic profile of the community, and the needs of the widest range of people from childhood to old age, including those with disabilities; and*
- *(d) to maximise amenity, safety and security for the benefit of their occupants and the wider community; and*
- *(e) to minimise the consumption of energy from non-renewable resources, to conserve the environment and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and*
- *(f) to contribute to the provision of a variety of dwelling types to meet population growth, and*
- *(g) to support housing affordability, and*

(h) to facilitate the timely and efficient assessment of applications for development to which this Policy applies.

(4) This Policy aims to provide:
(a) consistency of policy and mechanisms across the State; and
(b) a framework for local and regional planning to achieve identified outcomes for specific places."

The SEPP notes that good design is a creative process which, when applied to towns and cities, results in the development of great urban places, buildings, streets, square and parks.

Good design is inextricably linked to its site and locality, responding to the landscape, existing built form, culture and attitudes. It provides sustainable living environments, both in private and public areas.

Furthermore, good design serves the public interest and includes appropriate innovation to respond to technical, social, aesthetic, economic, and environmental challenges.

These nine design quality principles do not generate design solutions, but provide a guide to achieving good design and the means of evaluating the merit of proposed solutions.

The following comments are provided to address the 9 Design Principles:

Principle 1 Context and Neighbourhood Character

Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions.

Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well-designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.

Comment:
The site is located along New Canterbury Road, opposite the intersection with Wardell Road. It is located in close proximity to a variety of building types and uses including light industrial, medium density residential and mixed use developments.
The subject property consists of older style industrial buildings presently comprising warehouse uses for the sale of confectionery and rugs. Other uses adjoining the site include Officeworks, car repair workshop, pub and service station.
New Canterbury Road is a classified multi-lane road with a general built character of the area with 1-2 storey buildings lining both sides of the road, albeit buildings of varying height and articulation. The immediate streetscape doesn't enjoy the same quality of the Petersham Commercial Precinct located further east of the site.

Vegetation and pedestrian activity along the street is sparse.

Vehicular access to the site is via New Canterbury Road and Frazer Lane (to the east). An existing two (2) storey residential flat building is located north of the rear lane.

Although the existing buildings presently occupying the subject site do not have any heritage significance, the 'Georgiou Chocolate Factory' has been an iconic business in the area for many decades. In also considering building's promiant location at the intersection of New Canterbury and Wardell Road, the existing two (2) storey masonry facades are proposed to be retained.

The proposal will not create any unreasonable impacts to adjoining developments and has been designed within the controls of Council, as will be examined in this Statement of Environmental Effects.

The proposal is considered a favourable contemporary 'infill' development that responds positively to the desire future character of the immediate area. Where possible, the proposal has made considerable effort to achieve the objectives and controls of State Environmental Planning Policy No.65.

Principle 2 Built Form and Scale

Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.

Comment:

The scale of existing development in the area is characterised by a mixture of low scale adapted light industrial, mixed-use and residential uses. Newer developments in the area are of mixed use in nature but occur east of the site in the Petersham Commercial Precinct.

The proposal endeavours to represent a scale appropriate to the desired future character of the area. The proposed maximum building height and building setbacks are more modest than those stipulated in the Petersham Commercial Precinct but will appropriately define the future streetscape characteristics of this area of New Canterbury Road.

The scale of the proposal has also been carefully considered to provide a balance between the amenity for the future occupants and that of existing properties adjoining the site.

Principle 3 Density

Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context.

Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.

Comment:

The building has been designed to ensure that it fits within the future desired character of the area. Its strategic proximity to public transport options and main roads enables the proposed development on the site to ensure that appropriate density is achieved. The development is of mixed use, providing for new residential accommodation in a location where there is a demand for such accommodation.

The proposed density on the site is considered to be suitable, given the site is well located to public transport, shops, services and amenities and is consistent with Council's planning instruments.

Principle 4 Sustainability

Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials, and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.

Comment:
The proposed development has been sympathetic in its design to ensure natural cross ventilation and sunlight for all units. The void in the middle of the building ensures that private open space and sunlight is considered for all residential units. The design and materials will be assessed by ABSA/BASIX requirements and will be within the recommended thermal and cooling requirements for each residential unit.

Energy efficiency parameters and water saving fixtures will also be adopted. This will be demonstrated by the fact that the proposed development must and will comply with State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004.

Where possible, the principles of energy efficient and environmental sensitive design and these have been incorporated into the development.

Its proximity to buses and Lewisham and Petersham Train Stations encourages sustainable forms of transportation for the future tenants and occupiers of the units. The reduced visitor parking spaces provided within the development and the active street frontage to New Canterbury Road further encourages visitors to take up sustainable forms of transport.

The existing two (2) storey masonry facades facing New Canterbury Road are being retained and as such recycled as the future face of development upon the site.

Principle 5 Landscape

Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well-designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values, and preserving green networks. Good landscape design optimises usability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity, provides for practical establishment and long term management.

Comment:
Landscaping is not present along street frontages or within the subject site. Notwithstanding this, dense vegetation is located within the setback areas of the neighbouring residential flat building located to the north.

The proposed landscaped areas of the site are located to the rear of the subject site to enhance the transition of the future development with the residential zone to the north. The generous setback of future basement excavation adjacent to the rear boundary allows deep planting zones that will support future planting of large trees in this zone.

Principle 6 Amenity

Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident wellbeing.

Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.

Comment:
Careful consideration has been given to the orientation and positioning of the development and the design and layout of units to ensure a high level of visual and acoustic privacy is maintained between neighbouring properties.

The proposal provides future occupants with a high level of amenity in terms of solar access to habitable areas, as well as to balconies and private open space.

Living areas will be designed to address the frontage and appropriately recessed balconies and external shading devices prevent excessive heat load on apartments during the summer period, particularly those apartments on the north elevation.

All apartments have a private outdoor area (balcony) adjacent to living areas with a minimum depth of two meters. Areas provided as private outdoor space are consistent with this policy.

All dwellings can achieve 2700mm ceiling heights habitable rooms. The planning and orientation of primary living areas within individual units have been determined to provide optimal amenity for residents, whilst maintaining visual and acoustic amenity between units.

Other amenity issues include access for disabled visitors in accordance with AS4299, with lift access provided, including the car parking level where adaptable/visitor car spaces will be provided.

Private storage will be provided for each dwelling, both inside the dwellings and separately located at ground level. SEPP65 requires storage volume for a building of this building type and the proposal satisfies this requirement.

Principle 7 Safety

Good design optimises safety and security, within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.

A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.

Comment:
The proposed development has had regard to the principles of ‘Safer by Design'. Aspects such as natural surveillance and controlled access have all been taken into consideration. The central core access to the building is provided as an open area, allowing casual surveillance within the development.

The proposed development has made provisions for natural surveillance for both communal and public areas. The common areas will be appropriately lit to ensure safety and visibility after dark.

The entrance to the development is clearly visible from New Canterbury Road. The entrances to all units are clearly visible from the common areas and will be illuminated at night for the safety of residents.

Access to the building will be through a controlled security system. An intercom system will be provided for visitor access.

The street numbering and the identification of the building will be clear to prevent unintended access and to assist persons trying to find the building.

Principle 8 Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.

Well-designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people, providing opportunities for social interaction amongst residents.

Comment:
Housing affordability in Sydney is becoming increasingly difficult. The Planning Proposal allows residential accommodation upon the site with a higher density to meet demand in the area for shop-top housing. The proposed development provides residential accommodation within an established area, which is located near public infrastructure. The area can support an increase in density and this is encouraged by Council.

A mix of units will be determined through a Development Application (DA but a mix of one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units will ensure a varied social mix in the development.

Principle 9 Aesthetics

Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.

The visual appearance of well-designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.

Comment:
The aesthetics of the future building planned for the site are not the subject of this Planning Proposal but it is envisaged a well-articulated contemporary design is proposed to contrast with the retained masonry facades to New Canterbury Road.

The building will have an active frontage with a commercial unit fronting New Canterbury Road to encourage interactivity along the footpath.

Design Verification Statement:

A Design Verification Statement has been prepared by a qualified architect, and is submitted with this development application in accordance with State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65.

Residential Flat Design Code

Further to the above design quality principles, Clause 30(2) of State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 also requires residential apartment development to be designed in accordance with the Department of Planning's publication entitled Apartment Design Guide. The following table outlines compliance with the Apartment Design Guide, where numerical requirements are specified.