## SEPP 65 Design Assessment

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| **Address of project :**<br>78-90 Old Canterbury Road Lewisham | **Application Type:**<br>Part 3(a) |
| **Developer:**<br>Demian Constructions | **Architect :**<br>Tony Owen Ptnrs |
| **Reviewer :**<br>Russell Olsson, SEPP 65 Design Review Panellist, Parramatta City Council & North Sydney Council Design Excellence Panellist | **Date of Assessment :**<br>November 2010 |

## 1.0 Design Review

## Principle 1 : Context

SEPP 65 : *Good design responds and contributes to its context……Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's current character, or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character as stated in planning and design policies.*

*Comment :*

The context for this proposal consists of the existing built context and the existing planning context for the area.

The existing built context is diverse, with one and two storey detached house to the east of Old Canterbury Road and the silos and buildings of the Summer Hill Flour Mills (Allied Mills or Mungo Scott) to the west of the site. The railway line to the north and existing industrial buildings and houses to the south of the site give no indication of what would be a desirable future built form. This is a precinct undergoing transition, therefore the planning policies for the area and the site are most relevant.

Marrickville Council draft LEP and DCP built form controls for Lewisham Town Centre contain building envelope controls that are based on the principle that the public domain of the street or park is defined by contiguous buildings aligned to the street. Private or communal courtyards are created in the centres of blocks, with few breaks in the perimeter blocks around the courtyard.

The Marrickville Council Masterplan for the McGill Street Precinct (which includes the subject site), prepared by Hassell, is based on the same principle of distinguishing the public domain of the street or New Local Park from the central communal courtyard spaces using perimeter block buildings.

The New Local Park is defined by buildings of a consistent height (4 storeys).

The southern extension of Brown Street is created by a shaft of space the same width as the space of the existing street – consistent building alignments create the shaft of space.

The proposed DA for the site north of the New Local Park only partially defines the New Local Park with buildings, as it proposes a substantial gap between Blocks A and C. This allows the space of the park to "leak" into the courtyard. The space of the park is poorly defined along its northern edge. This design also allows wide views of the rear of Block A from the park. It would be preferable to see the major facade of a 4 storey building, rather than the rear facade of a 9 storey building.

The shaft of space of Brown Street in the McGill Street Masterplan is compromised by Block E projecting into the space. with half an apartment and a projecting fire stair. The street space would be much more successful if these projections were cut back and the building aligned with Block F.

The desired future character of Lewisham Town Centre and The McGill Street Precinct has been consistently established in Marrickville Council's planning documents as having consistently aligned buildings addressing streets and parks. The proposed DA for this site is less consistent in its alignments and perimeter block forms, and in this respect is out of character with Council's planning documents and the future character of the area.

## 2 : Scale

SEPP 65 : *Good design provides an appropriate scale in terms of the bulk and height that suits the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings. Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to the scale of existing development. In precincts undergoing transition proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the desired future character of the area.*

Comment :

Marrickville Council draft LEP and DCP built form controls for Lewisham Town Centre have heights generally of 4 storeys from Old Canterbury Road to Lewisham Station.

The Marrickville Council Masterplan for the McGill Street Precinct (which includes the subject site), prepared by Hassell, has a building height of 4 storeys along Old Canterbury Road on this site, and a range of heights from 6 to 9 storeys. It shows a New Local Park on the south portion of this site and the adjoining site to the south.

The McGill Street Precinct Masterplan locates the tallest buildings (9 storeys) along the Greenway Light Rail corridor. This is appropriate due to its distance from surrounding streets, its proximity to the Flour Mills and the width of the Greenway.

The McGill Street Precinct Masterplan locates lower (4 and 6 storey) buildings along Old Canterbury Road and Longport Street. The 4 storeys relates to the proposed 4 storeys on the eastern side of Old Canterbury Road. The 6 storeys on Longport Street relates to the low rise character along Longport Street, to the east along Railway Terrace and to the west along Carlton crescent and Smith Street Sumer Hill. This 6 storey would be the tallest building for hundreds of metres to the east and west, and a taller 8 storey building, as proposed in the current DA, is not supported. An 8 storey building would be too much out of scale with the relatively low scale on the southern side of the streets between Summer Hill Station and Lewisham Station. A 6 storey building would locate a lower scale building on Longport Street in the foreground of the 9 storey buildings set further back from Longport Street, along the Greenway corridor.

## Principle 3 : Built Form

SEPP 65 : *Good design achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the buildings purpose, in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type and the manipulation of building elements……*

Comment :

The built form of the project differs from the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan in the following respects

1. The spatial definition of the New Local Park
2. The building alignment along the New Local Park is between 27m and 6m forward of the building alignment in the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan (Fig. 1)
3. The traffic and truck servicing pattern
4. The building heights are increased in Block A from 4 storeys to 8/9 storeys; In Block D from 6 storeys to 8 storeys; in Block C, from 4 to 6 storeys in the southern end and the northern end (remaining the same in the middle) (Figs. 2 and 3)
5. Gaps are introduced between buildings at corners of blocks (Figs. 2 and 3)
6. A supermarket and 18 specialty shops are added underground.
7. Encroachments are made into the southern extension of the Browne Street view shaft and Block F is too close to Block E. In terms of built form and solar access to and outlook from Block E, Block F should be a minimum of 12m from Block E
8. Residential building depths are increased in Blocks D and F from max. 20m to 23m and in Block C from max. 20m to 24m.

1. The general built form principle of the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan is to define the public spaces with contiguous built form. Buildings clearly define the difference between public open space and private/communal courtyards.

The proposed DA creates a relatively wide gap between buildings A and C, that opens onto the public space of the New Local Park. This reduces the visual quality of the public space in the New Local Park. It diminishes the perceived difference between public and private, with the courtyard space being easily seen from the New Local Park. The 9 storey building is more visually prominent, than a 4 storey building fronting the park would be, as proposed in the Mcgill Street Masterplan.

The DA proponents also propose the same approach, to open up the central courtyard, of the site to the south of the New Local Park (see Detailed Master Plan Options - Option 3B and Option 2). The open space of the New Local Park extends in to the two large courtyard. This would diminish, rather than improve, the quality of the open space of the New Local Park.

Also, whilst the Master Plan Options drawings give the impression that there are to be substantial areas of green open space, the reality would be quite different, as the courtyard north of the New Local Park is above a supermarket, and there is no guarantee that substantial trees or landscape would be provided above the supermarket. Also, the sites to the south of the New Local Park have been shown with large landscaped courtyards, which also may not eventuate.

Therefore, the proposed courtyard space between Block A and Block C would reduce the quality of the New Local Park in terms of spatial definition and the quality of the landscape that it contains.

It is recommended that the southern end of Block C is splayed on the same angle as Block A, and separated from Block A by 12m for the lower levels, and by 18m for the upper levels, as is done at the northern end of Block C. This splayed end at the southern end of the courtyard should be 6 storeys, to visually conceal the 9 storey building when viewed from the New Local Park. In this way the park would be better addressed by Block C and Block A would be concealed (It should be noted that it is also recommended below that the top storey is set back 6m and that the whole of Block A and Block C should be set back 6m further away northwards from the park).

2. The southern building alignment along the New Local Park is between 27m and 6m forward of the building alignment in the Marrickville Council Masterplan. This has substantial implications for the provision of deep soil on the site (see Principle 5 Resource , Energy and Water efficiency).

The current DA shows, in the Master Plan attached to the DA, more deep soil open space on the site to the south of the southern site boundary, than on the current DA site. This is disingenuous, as it will be much harder for the consent authorities to require more deep soil south of the boundary, when the precedent has been set by this DA to have minimal deep soil north of the boundary. The probable outcome would be that the New Local Park would be reduced to a narrow strip of grass, 10m wide at most, between two urban streets. It is important that the width of the deep soil is increased in this DA so that, at least the same amount can be required in the future on the site to the south.

It is recommended that the amount of deep soil in the New Local Park is doubled, to achieve 25% of the total open space on site. It is recommended that its width is doubled, to an average of 12m. If the access street along the northern side of the New Local Park is retained in its current form and width, the building alignment north of that street should be set back a minimum of 6m to the north from the alignment proposed in the current DA. This new alignment will not reduce below ground car parking, as the parking can extend under the street, which it does not do in the current proposal.

3. The permeability and legibility of the site has been compromised by the blocking of the southern extension of Browne Street with a shopping mall galleria. This blocks what is potentially an extension of the street through to the New Local Park. The levels of the

shops are proposed to be maintained at the level of the supermarket, necessitating stair access from the shopping mall to the new street at the southern end of the site. The street could be extended with shops and awnings at the street level giving continuity to Browne Street. Calmed traffic access could be allowed, to give greater permeability to traffic movements whilst restrictions could be placed on through traffic to maintain a calmed and comfortable balance of pedestrians and slow moving traffic.

Alternatively, if traffic is blocked and the Galleria is maintained with its glass roof at natural ground level of Browne Street, pedestrian access must also be maintained past the skylight. A similar outcome can bee seen (on a larger scale) at Greenwood Plaza North Sydney.

4. Building height increases are proposed in Blocks A, C and D. The proposed 8 storeys on the southern end of Block A is excessive, in particular because the steep ramp of the truck turning circle at the base of the building will expose the supermarket wall, effectively making the building 9 storeys when viewed from the Light Rail station. The 8 storeys overshadows the New Local Park. The building should be reduced to 6 storeys, to reduce overshadowing of the New Local Park, and to create a consistent 6 storey building height along the northern edge of the park. This consistent height of 6 storeys is greater than the 4 storeys proposed in the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan, however the width of the space would be great enough (if the buildings were set back 6m as described above) to make this an acceptable built form to open space proportion. A 6 storey building would further overshadow the space, and for that reason it is strongly recommended that the 6$^{th}$ floor should be set back a minimum of 6m to reduce the overshadowing and to create a roof scape design to this row of buildings.

The height increase of 6 to 8 storeys in Block D is excessive, as this part of the site is most visible from the surrounding area, along Longport Street and generally along Railway Terrace and Carlton Crescent, to the east and west of the site. An 8 storey building on this site would create an undesirable precedent for the development of the corner site at the intersection of Longport and Old Canterbury Road, which is currently 4 and 6 storeys. It is recommended that the height remain at 6 storeys above the basement retail below ground.

5. Gaps are introduced between buildings at corners of blocks (Figs. 2 and 3). These gaps decrease the FSR, however they create a better internal environment for buildings at corners, particularly acutely angled corners. The McGill Street Precinct Masterplan avoided acutely angled internal corners by having a rectangular courtyard and splayed buildings. This approach would have been acceptable if the residential buildings were multi-lift cored buildings. Due to the extensive retail below ground, multiple cores were impractical. Fewer cores linked by straight corridors in residential buildings were proposed. Those buildings are most efficient when rectangular in shape, hence the (generally) rectangular buildings and irregular courtyard. Acutely angled corners are avoided with gaps between buildings. This is acceptable practice.

6. A major difference between the 2 Masterplans (the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan and the proposed DA), is the below ground retail. Its need for large uninterrupted floor areas has led to the different residential built form outcome as described above. The retail space is internalised and artificial in a mall form. The supermarket and “Piazza” are both roofed, due to the existence of Block C above the “Piazza”. The “galleria” extension of Browne Street has a glazed roof, and therefore will provide better natural light.

7. Encroachments are made into the southern extension of the Browne Street view shaft. Block E should align with the western façade of Block F to maintain a consistent view shaft to and from Browne Street to the Park. Block F is too close to Block E in terms of built form separations in the RFDC. To improve built form, solar access to, and outlook from, Block E, Block F should be 18m from Block E. Alternatively, the lowest 4 floors should be 12m apart and the top two floors should be 18m apart.

8. Residential building depths are increased in Blocks D and F from max. 20m to 23m and in Block C from max. 20m to 24m. These increased depths increase energy use in apartments by reducing ventilation and solar access to the centres of apartments. They also reduce the amenity of the apartments (see Principles 5 and 7 below)

## Principle 4 : Density

SEPP 65 : *Good design has a density appropriate to its site and its context, in terms of floor space yields ( or numbers of units or residents)……..*

Comment:

The McGill Street Precinct Masterplan shows an FSR for this subject site of 1.7 : 1 including the New Local Park. The proposed FSR of the proponents DA is 3.5 : 1.

The proponent's DA documents calculate that the floor area contained in the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan for this site, is 24,282 sqm. The proponents DA has a floor area of 45,902 sqm.

The above increase in floor area by the DA proponent has been achieved in part by :

- The encroachment by buildings into the area of the New Local Park by up to 28m (Fig. 1)
- The 2800 sqm underground supermarket and specialty shops, totalling 5914 sqm, which the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan does not contain.
- The increased building heights of 8 storeys instead of 6 storeys on Block D; 9 storeys instead of 4 storeys on the southern end of Block A; 6 storeys instead of 4 storeys on the southern and northern ends of Block C
- The increased building depths in Blocks D and F from max. 20m to 23m and in Block C from max. 20m to 24m

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- The encroachment of Block E into the view shaft of the south extension of Browne Street
- The close proximity of the southern end of Block F to Block E. In terms of built form and solar access to and outlook from Block E, Block F should be a minimum of 12m from Block E

This increase in FSR and floor area is not warranted with respect to the encroachments into the area of the New Local Park and the Browne Street view shaft. In addition, the

additional two storeys (from 6 storeys to 8 storeys) on Block D is not supported. The proposed 8 storeys on the southern end of Block A should be reduced to 6 storeys, to reduce overshadowing of the New Local Park, and to create a consistent 6 storey building height along the northern edge of the park. In addition, the 23m wide Blocks C, D and F are not supported, as the 2 storey apartment type that they are based upon have poor residential amenity (see Principle 7 Amenity).

The retail floor area is acceptable insofar as it is located below ground and does not add to building bulk. The lack of deep soil on the site in the proposed DA, largely due to the extent of the retail, should be provided by setting back the residential buildings a minimum of 6m from their current southern alignment, to provide 25% of the on site open space as deep soil, in accordance with the RFDC.

The floor space ratio that would result from these reductions in built form would make the FSR substantially less than 3:1 and closer to the 1.7:1 FSR of the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan.

## Principle 5 : Resource, energy and water efficiency

SEPP 65: *Sustainability is integral to the design process. Aspects include…..layouts and built form, passive solar design principles,…… soil zones for vegetation and re-use of water.*

Comment:

The southern building alignment along the New Local Park is between 27m and 6m forward of the building alignment in the Marrickville Council Masterplan. This has substantial implications for the provision of deep soil on the site (see Principle 5 Resource , Energy and Water efficiency). It also reduces the proposed space of the New Local Park on this site (not including streets around the New Local Park open space) from 2272 sqm in the Council Masterplan to 816 sqm. The proposed deep soil open space in the New Local Park is only 35% of the amount of deep soil open space in the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan New Local Park. (Note: The Current DA shows a wider street along the northern side of the New Local Park than the McGill Street Precinct Masterplan. The above calculations are based on an equal area - the wider area - for each street so that the comparison is accurate).

The principle that it is important to apply with this DA, is that the amount of deep soil open space in the New Local Park on this site should be 25% of the total open space on this site, in accordance with the Residential Flat Design Code recommendations for deep soil (P.44 RFDC). The current DA shows a deep soil area which is 13% of the total open space on the site (Fig. 4). Therefore the amount of deep soil in the New Local Park should be approximately doubled, compared to the current DA.

The current DA shows, in the Master Plan attached to the DA, more deep soil open space on the site to the south of the southern site boundary, than on the current DA site. This is disingenuous, as it will be much harder for the consent authorities to require more deep soil south of the boundary, when the precedent has been set by this DA to have

minimal deep soil north of the boundary. The probable outcome would be that the New Local Park would be reduced to a narrow strip of grass, 10m wide at most, between two urban streets. It is important that the width of the deep soil is increased in this DA so that, at least the same amount can be required in the future on the site to the south.

It is recommended that the amount of deep soil in the New Local Park be doubled, to achieve 25% of the total open space on site. It is recommended that its width be doubled, to an average of 12m. If the access street along the northern side of the New Local Park is retained in its current form and width, the building alignment north of that street should be set back a minimum of 6m to the north from the alignment proposed in the current DA. This new alignment will not reduce below ground car parking, as the parking can extend under the street, which it does not do in the current proposal.

Solar access to the development is overall acceptable when the 2 hour between 9am and 3pm in midwinter is applied in accordance with the RFDC. However, the excessive depth of Blocks D, F and part C, and their two storey apartment types do not provide good solar access or ventilation to the interiors of the buildings. Also, Block E has 25% of its apartments facing south (the RFDC recommends 10% maximum) and Block E has poor solar access to its living rooms due to the close proximity of Block F. Solar access to these two buildings could be improved with different apartment types (Block D) and greater building separation (Block E).

Cross ventilation is compromised by the excessive building depths of Block D, F and part C. Also, the 2 storey apartment types of Block D and F, with bedrooms in the centres of the buildings and single orientation of the apartments, would compromise the possibility of natural ventilation in the apartments.

## Principle 6 : Landscape

SEPP 65 *: Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in greater aesthetic quality and amenity for both occupants and the adjoining public domain.*

Comment :

The landscape design of this DA is lacking in detail, and cannot be assessed in detail. The principle should be that 25% of the open space should be deep soil. Due to the topography, the opportunity exists on this site to collect run-off from paved areas in the deep soil of the New Local Park to promote water penetration of the soil to the water table. Large areas of planting over the habitable space of the supermarket should not be relied upon to provide canopy tree planting.

## Principle 7 : Amenity

SEPP 65 : *Optimising amenity requires appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts, and service areas, outlook and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.*

Comment:

This development contains a high percentage of 2 storey apartment types and corridor access, with a minimum number of lift cores penetrating the retail floor. This layout results in a range of 2 storey apartment types. Some of these apartment types in Block D and F have poor amenity due to the building depth, the apartment width and the single orientation of the apartments. The 23m building depth has 10m deep x 4.5m wide 2 storey, 2 bedroom apartments. To locate 2 bedrooms on one level, one of the bedrooms must be located deep in the floor plate well away from the external wall. This is poor amenity. The natural ventilation of these single orientation apartments will be poor and daylight to the back of the apartment minimal. Block D has 25% of apartments south facing, which exceeds the RFDC recommendation of 10% maximum.

Block E has north facing living areas 9m from the adjacent 6 storey Block F. solar access to the living areas and views out would be improved with a greater building separation.

## Principle 8 : Safety and Security

SEPP 65 : *good design optimises safety and security, both internal to the development and for the public domain. This is achieved by maximising activity on the streets, providing clear, safe access points, providing quality public spaces that cater for desired recreational uses, providing lighting appropriate to the location and desired activities, and clear definition between public and private spaces.*

The project contains few building entries, due to the wide spacing of the lift cores and long internal corridors. These few entries will not provide much activation of the street, so active retail and commercial uses at ground level should be provided wherever possible. It is essential elsewhere that the ground level relationship between residential buildings and any adjoining footpath is resolved to provide privacy to the dwelling whilst promoting surveillance of the footpath from the residential units.

## Principle 9 : Social Dimensions

SEPP 65 : *Good design responds to the social context and needs of the local community in terms of lifestyles, affordability and access to social facilities.*

*New developments should optimise the provision of housing to suit the social mix and needs in the neighbourhood, or, in the case of precincts undergoing transition, provide for the desired future community.*

The high percentage of 2 storey apartments will be occupied by a particular market segment. It is important to provide, wherever possible, other single storey apartment types and a range of sizes to provide diversity on the site.

## Principle 10 : Aesthetics

SEPP 65 : *Quality aesthetics require the appropriate composition of building elements, textures, materials and colours and reflect the use, internal design and structure of the development. Aesthetics should respond to the environment and context, particularly to desirable elements if the existing streetscape or, in precincts undergoing transition, contribute to the desired future character of the area.*

Comments:

The architectural character of these buildings has not been developed at this stage. This is a large site and staging of the development is proposed. It is recommended that a number of architects be engaged to design different buildings, so that a diversity of architectural character and visual richness permeates the development. This would assist in reducing the visual scale of the development as a whole and would assist in integrating it into its surrounding context.

NOTES:
- ALL OPENINGS WITHIN 3m OF THE SIDE BOUNDARY ARE TO BE PROTECTED IN ACCORDANCE TO BCA CLAUSE C3.4.

LONGPORT STREET

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO SEPERATE APPROVAL

RAILWAY PEDESTRIAN LINK SUBJECT TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH COUNCIL AND LAND OWNERS

BOUNDARY

RAMP

9000

12000

6000

2000

9500

LOBBY

RETAIL

SOHO

S

OLD CANTERBURY ROAD

Building outline in the McGill St Precinct Masterplan

LEWISHAM ESTATE PTY LTD

LEWISHAM INDICATIVE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

McGILL STREET PRECINCT

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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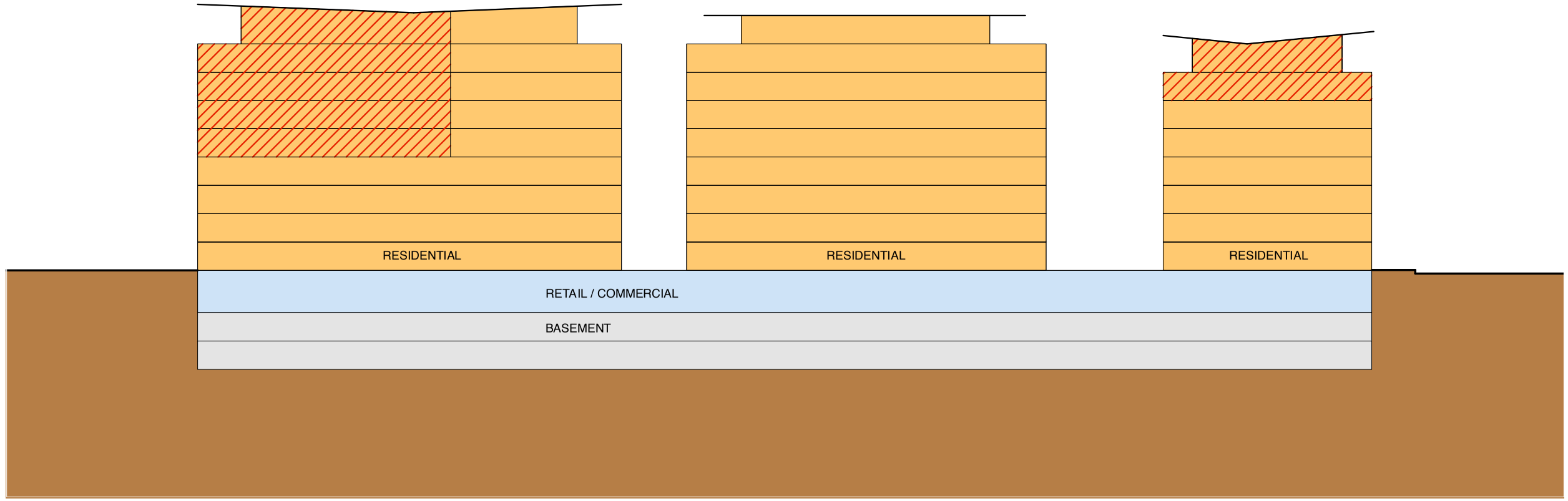
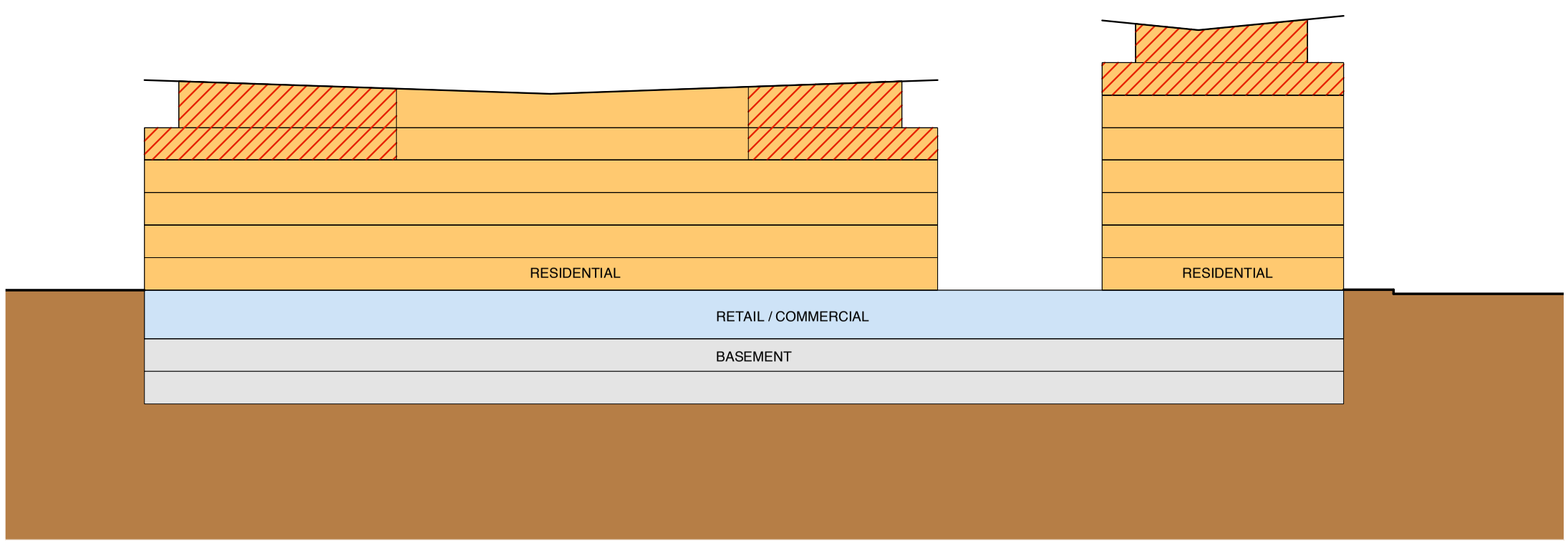
B

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

FIGURE 1




Additional height of DA proposal

FIGURES 2 & 3

NOTES:
- ALL OPENINGS WITHIN 3m OF THE SIDE BOUNDARY ARE TO BE PROTECTED IN ACCORDANCE TO BCA CLAUSE C3.4.

LONGPORT STREET

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO SEPERATE APPROVAL

RAILWAY PEDESTRIAN LINK SUBJECT TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH COUNCIL AND LAND OWNERS

BOUNDARY

OLD CANTERBURY ROAD

RAMP

LOBBY

RETAIL

SOHO

9000

12000

6000

9500

17000

2000

Open space

Deep soil

Proposed deep soil 13% of total open space

LEWISHAM ESTATE PTY LTD

LEWISHAM INDICATIVE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

McGILL STREET PRECINCT

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

FIGURE 4