



Our Reference: D03376933
Contact: Robert Cologna
Telephone: 9806 5155

NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

7 November 2014

Attention: Josephine Wing

Dear Ms Wing,

Proposed Amendments - State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 (SEPP 65) and Associated Design Guidelines

I refer to the recent exhibition of the abovementioned SEPP and associated design guidelines and thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

The attached submission has been formulated by Council staff and has not been endorsed by Council. It therefore does not present the formal position of the Council.

Council staff consider that SEPP 65 has been a successful policy contributing greatly to the quality of residential flat building development across New South Wales. The proposal to review the policy framework to make sure it continues to achieve the best quality outcomes is supported. In this regard the following comments are provided as potential further improvements to the proposed policy framework.

If you have any questions or require clarification of any of the matters referred to above please contact Council's Service Manager Land Use Planning, Robert Cologna on 9806 5144.

Yours sincerely


Sue Weatherley
DIRECTOR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES AND DEVELOPMENT

Reference Pg 21 of the Apartment Design Guide (APG)

More direction/guidance should be provided for tower apartments in the APG. Specifically with respect to inter-building separation, maximum plate floor- sizes, communal open space, bulk, scale, proportioning and the manner in which it relates to streetscape and context. Further detail is provided below.

Floor Space Ratio (reference Pg 35 of APG)

Council staff accept that the gross floor area (GFA) should be approximately 70-75% of the building envelope to account for floor space that is not included in the GFA definition and to allow for building articulation.

Parramatta City Council places a significant role on the floor plate size in preparing planning controls and assessing development proposals particularly for tower forms of development. It is recommended that consideration be given to include guidance on floor plate controls in the APG. It should also be noted that taking a floor plate approach in the controls assists in testing appropriate FSRs as $GFA = \text{Efficiency (70-75\%)} \times \text{Floor-plate area for residential uses}$. In mixed use development non-residential ground floor efficiencies must be based on the extent of services, circulation and parking requirements.

Building Depth (reference Pg 36-37 of APG)

This is a particular area where floor plate controls should support the controls for tower building forms. Parramatta City Council has controls on the floor plates (measured to the external facade of the building, including balconies, external walls and internal voids) of residential towers as follows:

- 800sqm for residential buildings up to 75m high (approx. 25 storeys)
- 950sqm for residential buildings which are 75-105m high (approx. 25-35 storeys).
- 1100sqm for residential buildings greater than 105m high (approx. 35 storeys).

Consideration should be given to including similar guidelines in the APG.

Building Separation (reference Pg 38-39 of APG)

There is an inconsistency between the 12-18m building separation highlighted in the graphic (Fig 2F.4) and text (12-24m) for buildings nine storeys and above. It is assumed it's a typographical error and should read 12-24m in the graphic as well.

The inter-building building separation guidelines imply a 3 tier building form which is not conducive for efficient structural systems and vertical services like plumbing. Guidelines to minimise the 'wedding cake/ ziggurat' effect must be included.

Side and Rear Setbacks (reference Pg 42-43 of APG)

Side setbacks must address privacy separations as per the ADG as a minimum. When this is not feasible due to inconsistent setbacks on adjacent development from an earlier planning regimen (unlikely to change in the near future) alternate guidelines should be provided in the ADG. In this case the placement and use of windows becomes a critical design element as well as other features such as screens.

Site Analysis (reference Pg 46-49 and Appendix 1 of APG)

These guidelines are strongly supported. It is recommended they be retained and reinforced in the final iteration of the ADG. Given site analysis is critical in underpinning all design processes anything the guidelines can do to reinforce the necessity to undertake and present a site analysis as part of this process is supported. Anything that can reinforce in the industry the importance of this step in the design process is supported.

Public Domain interface (reference Pg 52-55 of APG)

The proposed guidelines limit level change of ground floor residential to no more than 1m above adjacent public domain/ natural ground. For sloping sites it is also important to limit the same to no more than 0.5m below natural ground to ensure resident amenity. Any residential apartment with habitable areas up to 0.5m below natural ground must ensure overlooking is minimised and privacy maintained.

In relation to Criterion 3C-2.4

"Substations, pumps rooms, garbage storage areas and other service requirements are located in basement car parks or out of view."

Some electricity providers require substations to be located at ground level preferably along street frontages. This makes it difficult to achieve this performance criterion. It is recommended that alternate solutions are included.

Apartment mix (reference Pg 77 of APG)

The controls suggest dwelling mixes, which exist in the current Residential Flat design code, should be removed outright. This is not supported, it is agreed that a detailed analysis of housing mix taking into account distance to transport, employment etc., future demographic trends and the demand for social and affordable housing etc. should underpin the mix of apartments provided in any development. The guide should promote a detailed analysis of these factors by Council to underpin these controls. However, in cases where an applicant disputes the appropriateness of Council's controls, or where an analysis is not complete because apartment building development is moving into an area not previously developed, it would be useful to retain an underlying industry standard in the controls.

Solar and Daylight Access (reference Pg 97 of APG)

The maximum number of apartments with no direct sunlight between 9am-3pm midwinter has been increased to 15%. It is strongly recommended that it is retained at the existing 10% to ensure amenity of future building stock is not minimised. Should this be unachievable, the affected apartment building must have roof top communal areas with 3hrs or more of midwinter solar access.

The amount of artificially lit and ventilated areas within an apartment should not be more than 25%. This includes non-habitable areas like media rooms, stores, baths and laundries.

Common Circulation (reference Pg 101 of APG)

Corridor widths/ ceiling widths of common areas – a numeric guideline is preferred rather than 'should be maximised'. While the BCA for Class 2- 9 buildings sets a functional minimum standard for exits at 1m this is not considered appropriate to achieve a high level of amenity when it comes to safety and movement of furniture etc. Consideration should be given to increasing this standard and if necessary this process would be the beginning of a debate to amend the BCA standard.

Apartment Layout (reference Pg 102-105 of APG)

The ADG primarily assists designers and architects to increase residential amenity. The changes however create increased assessment for approval authorities. To address this, it is recommended that the DA checklist include a compliance table with aspects like building depth, height to depth ratio, room sizes and widths verified by the responsible architect.

The following additional controls are strongly supported to maximise the amenity and useability of apartments:

- Living rooms widths -3.6m for studios and one bedroom apartments and 4m for 2 bedrooms and above.
- Minimum bedroom area -10sqm for master bedroom and 9sqm for other bedrooms (not inclusive of storage).

In terms of the apartment layout in relation to window placement it is recommended that the primary window in a bedroom should have a conventional sill level (no more than 1m above floor level) that allows reasonable outlook by a seated occupant. This outlook should not be curtailed by a fixed or inoperable privacy screen. Any room should have at least one window with an unobstructed view outside.