

Date of workshop: 24/10/2019 – 4pm
Location: Australian Institute of Architects
List of Attendees: AIA Victoria Chapter
Breathe Architecture
DKO
Hayball
Jackson Clements Burrows
Kennedy Nolan
McGuaran Gianni Soon
Six Degrees
Woods Bagot

Notes from Design Industry Workshop

Planning Considerations:

- Key areas of concern for architects working in mid-rise are car parking, height limits, third party appeals and the overall prescriptive nature of setbacks & ResCode.
- Most beneficial aspects of planning include deep root planting, restrictions on overshadowing, promotion of street activation, zero setbacks in commercial area and solar access.
- Key planning considerations to test and interrogate in future phases include reduced parking rates and not prescribing stepping back of building forms eg allowing sheer walls.
- Planning considerations to retain in future phases (with possible compliance implications) include a fixed height limit, solar ingress, overshadowing, deep root planting and street activation.
- Planning considerations that are out of scope include third party appeals, height limits, garden area requirements.
- A key planning output for future phases would be to create quality/performance-based assessment that streamlined planning outcomes and reduced planning timelines/holding costs.

Affordability considerations:

- Inclusionary zoning is needed for effective affordability, though challenging at the block sizes contemplated.
- Appropriate apartment sizes should be part of the consideration. There is a need to understand that small is not bad, if well designed. Shared spaces can provide for affordable dwellings.
- Future phases should interrogate dwelling diversity as a means to affordability.
- There is potential to explore replicability/modularity, but prefabrication in general is a significant challenge in Australia, due to smaller economy of scale/smaller factory production lines.
- Setbacks add construction complexity and decrease affordability. Reconsider setbacks/embrace simple straight walls.

ESD considerations:

- Promotion of renewable power, no gas supply, and 8-star NatHERS rating and carbon neutral operation should be set as a clear benchmark objective for future phases.
- Brief should clarify distinction between passive vs active elements.
- Suggestion that the future phase could consider exponential sustainability: Incentives for small while bigger houses should achieve higher benchmarks due to larger operating costs.

Development considerations:

- Needs to provide incentive through an improved planning process.
- Incentivise quality development through minimising developer's biggest risks: planning and sales.
- Incentivise quality development if developers were offered the prospect of planning process savings and/or increased development envelop through the adoption of an approved design/design process?

Intellectual Property considerations:

- General support for clearly defined licencing agreements for exploitation of final design, however there are concerns about how to maintain quality (noting that implementation of designs, without the support of the authoring architects, often has inferior outcomes).
- Licence could be for the core aspects of a design to make it replicable and viable.
- General agreement that 'blueprints' or sets of templated plans only go so far. There is always an important role for the architect to adapt plans to specific site conditions. For this reason, the original author is needed to skilfully assemble 'kit of parts' on sites.

Other best practice considerations:

- Landscape Architects should be mandatory in a team.
- Consider new housing models, and implication for alternative finance models, such as co-operatives and Bau Gruppen.

Future process considerations:

- General agreement from design industry representatives that the process should not be too complex.
- Preference for not having an EOI in stage one.
- Consider simple floor space ratio/site coverage maximums and avoid prescriptive setbacks.
- Deliverables should include: narrative, plans, methodology, site analysis, design in context.