

15th July 2015

Please find below a submission from Southbank Residents Group (SRG) on the Better Apartments discussion paper.

SRG firstly would like to commend the Planning Minister for the release of the discussion paper and seeking feedback from the community.

We are not an organisation which specializes with the understanding of building codes or engineering, but merely users who experience the end result of what is built. Our comments are mainly from a users perspective. We contributed to a forum held by Inner Melbourne Planning Association, of which we are members, where a number of architects are also members. We have left the technical aspect to them to comment on further on our behalf.

We have addressed the issues as outlined in the discussion paper.

1. Daylight

Daylight is considered important for livability. The areas where daylight is necessary is mainly the living areas and bedrooms. Daylight is not necessary for bathrooms or corridors, but desirable. Borrowed light can work well where there is adequate light entering the main space where the light is borrowed from and that the space where the light is travelling through is of adequate size.

2. Sunlight

Sunlight is desirable, but not necessary where there is adequate daylight. For some periods throughout the year sunlight can be a hinderance to livability for some. However where possible sunlight should be maximized in a development and not allow opportunities to be passed. Where there is direct sunlight on windows, ensure energy efficient glass is utilized or double glazing to assist with the impact of energy use from cooling.

3. Space

There needs to be adequate space. We should not allow our apartments to be so small that they are perceived as dog boxes and are not practical. This will only lead to negative livability for the inhabitants but also the immediate community of those apartments/towers. Apartment design should incorporate adequate internal practical storage. Refrigerator and microwave recesses should be of suitable size for a moderate appliance relative to the size of



the apartment. Elevators should also be of adequate size to allow large furniture items to be moved to and from the apartments, such as sofas etc...

There needs to be minimum apartment sizes and minimum lift sizes.

4. Outlook

A good outlook is NOT looking into an opposite apartment. Apartment separation needs to be enforced always. Where there are opportunities through a good aspect of apartment positioning this should be utilized. Where available for the provision of common facilities, such as gyms, outdoor areas etc... then it is desirable the a good outlook is identified so all residents can enjoy.

5. Natural Ventilation

Where available, natural ventilation should always be part of an apartment design. There should be enough windows to provide airflow throughout the apartment.

6. Noise

Noise is one of the main issues that can contribute to a degradation of livability. When apartments are facing main roads, it should be insisted double glazing be installed on windows. There should also be adequate sound proofing between apartment walls so as not to hear noise through the walls to a neighbouring apartment.

7. Outdoor Space

All developments should try to make provision for some outdoor space accessible for all residents. Ideally some landscaping with gardens and trees. This will also contribute to cooling the development and save on energy costs. This space can be sporting facilities and/or gardens. A developer should consider it position and the effects of wind and sun.

8. Adaptability

Good design should be encouraged to allow buildings to be adaptable to future changes and maintain their value.

9. Landscape

It should be a part of all developments to incorporate some landscaping on their perimeters. The amount of landscaping will probably vary according to the density and size of the development. The type of plants chosen should be resilient and relatively low maintenance.



10. Universal Design

Apartments and buildings should consider diversity of households, social equity and accessibility and offer a mix to allow diverse communities. An aging population, families and children need to be considered within the design of apartments.

11. Energy and Resources

Apartments should be as energy efficient as possible. They should be designed in such a way to maximize all resources for this goal. Material selection, orientation, ventilation and natural light usage is critical for this.

12. Waste

All waste options should be explored and utilized where available. Space should be considered for the collection of recyclables and smarter options for organic waste.

13. Car Parking

A mix of apartments with and without car parking should be in most developments. Car parking is not absolutely necessary but the location and demographics need to be considered.

14. Entry and Circulation

Entrances should be easily identifiable and well lit with a high quality monitoring security system. Mail access should be secure and well positioned possibly with the provision of parcel storage/safes. Building frontages should be made to encourage activation on the street. Loading bays for tradesmen and adequate and accessible loading bays for vehicles/trucks for the move in/out without the need to carry goods great lengths.

If you wish to discuss any areas further, I am happy to make myself available.

Kind regards

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