

INNER WEST COUNCIL ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE PANEL (FORMER MARRICKVILLE LGA) - REPORT

Site Address:	245 Marion Street Leichhardt
Proposal:	Planning Proposal Discussion to amend the Leichhardt LEP 2013 to apply a site-specific clause that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporates residential uses while retaining a minimum of 5,200m² of non-residential use;• Allows a maximum 3 : 1 FSR;• Allows a 30m maximum building height; and• Provide 95 new apartments.
File Reference:	Planning Proposal Discussion
DA Officer:	Aleksandar Kresovic (Strategic Planner, Inner West Council)
AEP Members in attendance:	Peter Ireland (Principal, AJ+C Architects); Matthew Pullinger (Director, Matthew Pullinger Architect); Niall Macken (Team Leader, Urban Design & Heritage, Inner West Council – Chair); Vishal Lakhia (Urban Design Advisor, Inner West Council)
Meeting Date:	22 October 2019
Report Date:	4 November 2019
Previous AEP report:	-
TRIM:	-

BACKGROUND:

The Architecture Excellence Panel reviewed the planning proposal, urban design report and concept design, and met with the Inner West Council's strategic planning team. There is a previously rejected planning proposal for the site which sought to amend the Leichhardt LEP 2013 to allow a FSR of 3.3:1, a height of 50m with up to 200 new apartments.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Context and Neighbourhood

- a) The site has a dual frontage with primary address to Marion Street at the south, and a secondary address to Walter Street at the north. Each street has a different character and built context, and would benefit from a built form far more responsive to each of these two addresses and the varied urban contexts. The proposed use of a uniform, podium + paired tower building form across the length of site is not supported. The 8/9 storey proposal is

without precedent with the immediate context and as a result represents an uncomfortable precedent.

- b) The urban design rationale and resultant justification for the primary development controls including – height, setbacks, open space and floor space ratio is not established by the proposal.

2. Built Form and Scale

- a) The built form creates a poor interface along the western boundary adjacent to the light rail corridor and the 'Greenway'. The ground floor includes a blank wall across the entire western edge, which is a very poor presentation to an important open space, ecological and recreational corridor.
- b) Ideally, an accessible through-site link for pedestrians and cyclists should be located along the light rail corridor to augment the 'Greenway'. A more positive built form interface should be created, also addressing the light rail corridor.
- c) The proposal replaces the existing light industrial use on the site with new 'urban services' located primarily in subterranean and basement locations. This space will necessarily rely entirely upon artificial light and ventilation, and the Panel questions the resultant amenity, servicability and utility of such employment space.
- d) It is considered that the existing post 1940s industrial building with its saw tooth roof offers a better physical environment for light industrial uses, when compared with the proposed uses located within basements. Overall, the proposal sets an unconvincing precedent for built form integration of light industrial and residential uses.
- e) Given the site's prominence on Marion Street at the light rail stop, the proposed 8/9 storey built form will create visual impacts within the public domain when viewed from – Marion Street, Walter Street, Hawthorne Street, Daniel Street, Loftus Street and Lambert Park. The visual impacts on the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area No. 42 should also be tested, including views from Hawthorne Parade, the adjacent open space and Tressider Avenue.

3. Ground Floor Configuration

- a) The opportunity of creating a high quality, amenable through-site link for pedestrians and cyclists to augment connections to the 'Greenway' is not evident.
- b) The 'urban services' and the associated vehicle circulation driveway and ramp system results in a car-dominated environment, which is in conflict with the residential use and the desired future character of the area.
- c) Pedestrian access and the safe movement of residents appears to be in conflict with the proposed car-based urban services use, as they have a shared address to the internal street/driveway.
- d) Ground floor activities and uses are ambiguous and it is unclear how an amenable residential address can be established at street level adjacent to ongoing light industrial land uses.

4. Amenity

- a) The 'urban services' spaces provided within the basement will have no natural amenity and no outlook for users.
- b) The impacts of a car-dominated physical environment upon the amenity of residents and neighbours is inappropriate to residential uses.
- c) It appears likely that the basement will be highly serviced spaces requiring extensive mechanical exhaust and ventilation. It also appears that basement exhausts are located along the eastern site boundary, adjacent to the windows of the existing neighbouring retirement home.

5. Landscape Design

- a) The communal open space is provided on the first floor slab that covers car access ramp located below, in a configuration that delivers little amenity and is not supported by the Panel.
- b) There is a lack of meaningful deep soil area for soft landscaping and tree planting. What is provided is limited to a narrow strip along the eastern boundary offering little amenity or utility. A deep soil target of 15% of the site should be provided based on ADG Part 3E-1.

6. Other

- a) The 3D views appear to be inaccurate for the intended purpose of establishing visual impacts.
- b) GFA calculations are not included.
- c) The proposal needs to incorporate flood impact assessments and adopt a flood planning level for the basement, ground floor and residential levels.
- d) Any overshadowing of Lambert Park should be quantified and a justification provided.

7. Conclusion:

- a) The urban design merit of the proposal has not been established. The location of urban services in a basement location - with no natural amenity - is not supported.
- b) No strategic justification for the introduction of higher density residential uses has been made, nor has the compatibility between light industrial uses and residential uses been established.
- c) It is considered that the existing post-1940s industrial building with saw tooth roof offers a better physical environment for light industrial uses, than the proposed 'urban services' use located in the basement. The proposal sets a poor built form precedent for integration of light industrial and residential uses, and is likely to compromise the viability of the light industrial use.
- d) The car-dominated environment on the ground floor is in conflict with the predominant residential use.
- e) Critical urban design opportunities to augment the 'Greenway' and to improve linkages and access to the light rail stop have not been proposed.