



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	1A Orchard Crescent Ashfield
Proposal:	A new 8 storey residential flat building with 20 apartments and a rooftop communal open space above a 4 level basement carpark
Application No.:	DA/2021/0374
Meeting Date:	13 July 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	Previously reviewed for an alterations and additions DA
Panel Members:	Jocelyn Jackson – Chair, Tony Caro, and Garth Paterson
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Rachel Josey, Conor Wilson, and Jai Reid
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Architect for the proposal – Axel Richter

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and landscape drawings, and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. It is noted that a previous proposal for alterations and additions was reviewed by the Panel at the 24 March 2020, 26 May 2020 and 17 February 2021 AEP meetings. The previous proposal retained the existing 4 storey residential flat building and added 5 storeys above. The current DA/2021/0374 reviewed by the Panel considers demolition of the existing 4 storey residential building and construction of a new 8 storey residential flat building above a 4-level basement carpark. A communal open space is provided at the rooftop.

Discussion & Recommendations:

Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

“Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions.

Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.”

1. The Panel notes that the proposal could potentially overshadow the school playground between 1pm and 3pm in mid-winter. The details of the extent of overshadowing should be confirmed through both shadow diagrams and views from the sun angle provided at an hourly interval between 9am to 3pm in mid-winter.
2. The Panel considers that revised architectural drawings submitted as a response to the recommendations should show the proposal with parts of the adjoining residential flat buildings on Orchard Crescent and Murrell Street, in all plans, elevations, sections and 3D views.
3. Refer to Principle 9 – Aesthetics for Panels comments regarding the response to the urban streetscape and architectural character of the building.

Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

“Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building’s purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook. “

1. The Panel discussed the “void space” along the western boundary, and noted that it appears too constrained in size to offer effective natural cross ventilation within the proposed adjacent apartments. The void space would require openings to work as a ventilation stack, which would pose issues with acoustics and fire separation. The Panel suggested that use of this shaft be restricted to the provision of indirect light through fixed glass to the Lobby.
2. The Panel raised potential environmental concerns with the void space, with issues such as odour, air trapping, and visual and acoustic privacy with the existing or future adjoining buildings.
3. The Panel considers that the proposed “void space” heavily relies on the assumption that the neighbouring property (1-2 Orchard Crescent) will not be redeveloped in future. The amenity offered through the void space would be highly constrained, if the neighbouring property is redeveloped in future with a height and built form similar to the proposal on the subject site.
4. The Panel raised a potential BCA fire protection concern for any new openings addressing this void space. Details of such openings (as described by the applicant at the meeting) should be confirmed on the architectural drawings, and should also be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified certifier.

Principle 3 – Density

“Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area’s existing or projected population.

Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.”

1. The Panel notes that the applicant seeks a 43% variation for the maximum permissible floor space ratio control based on the Inner West LEP.

Principle 4 – Sustainability

“Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials, and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.”

1. The applicant is encouraged to include an appropriate rooftop photovoltaic system over the light-weight roof structure, for environmental benefits.

Principle 5 – Landscape

“Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood

Good landscape design enhances the development’s environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values, and preserving green networks. Good landscape design optimises usability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours’ amenity, provides for practical establishment and long term management.”

1. The Panel notes that the existing Bangalow Palms within the sites surface carpark boundary are proposed to be removed due to the basement car park excavation on the Southern property boundary. The Panel notes that these endemic species have a vertical character and have potential to enhance the Orchard Crescent streetscape. The panel suggests the proponent review opportunities to relocate these palms to the proposed deep soil zone at the corner of Orchard Crescent and Murrell Street.
2. The Panel recommends that the amenity of the roof top communal open space should be improved through provision of a unisex universal accessible toilet. An outdoor clothes drying area should also be added to the roof top open space.
3. The landscape architecture drawings should confirm the heights, top of walls of planters, and depths of soil proposed on the rooftop communal open space and comply with the ADG on soil depths and Councils specific LEP requirements for over structure planting.
4. The current landscape plan should explore the use of small shade trees in the larger planter areas proposed on the plans where the soil volume allows for sustainable growth.

Principle 6 – Amenity

“Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being.

Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.”

1. The Panel discussed the internal configuration within the 2 bedroom corner apartments (1.02, 2.02, 3.02, 4.02 and 5.02). The kitchen area overlaps with the circulation corridor connecting with the living area. The Panel recommends that the applicant considers reconfiguration of internal spaces, to provide more efficient planning and circulation within the apartment. The Panel also suggests that a better integration of the living, dining and kitchen spaces should be considered, as the kitchen is isolated from the living and dining areas in the current layout.
2. The Panel discussed effective natural cross ventilation within the north-eastern mid-block apartments addressing Orchard Crescent (1.01, 2.01, 3.01, 4.01, 5.01 and 6.01). The applicant should seek independent technical advice from an expert, to confirm if compliant natural cross ventilation can be achieved for these six apartments.

Principle 7 – Safety

“Good design optimises safety and security, within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.

A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.”

1. The Panel considers that long recessed ground floor pedestrian entry to the foyer does not provide a safe entry for residents. The street presence from the public domain of the pedestrian entry should be improved by relocating the entry door closer to the front building line.
2. The current design of the ground floor entry and the configuration of the fire booster pump and bin store / fire egress creates potential CPTED issues and should be reviewed.
3. The Panel discussed the location of the garbage room and its access door in relation to the pedestrian entry foyer. The Panel suggested that the street presentation and amenity of the

ground floor entry area could be improved by providing a timber or metal screen to visually separate the entry foyer from the garbage room.

Principle 8 – Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.

Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people, providing opportunities for social interaction amongst residents.

1. The Panel considers that the ground floor apartment G.01 should be the nominated accessible apartment for the proposal, considering its potential ease of access from the foyer. Further, the accessible car spaces proposed in the last basement level 4 should be relocated to basement level 1.

Principle 9 - Aesthetics

Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.

The visual appearance of well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.

1. The Panel considers that the buildings overall expression should be further refined to create a more civic architectural character appropriate to its urban situation, particularly at the lower levels. One suggested strategy is to articulate a 2 or 3 storey building base element, perhaps fenestrated with a vertical rhythm that removes the current domestic character and provides this corner with a more suitable urban expression and scale.
2. The Panel also encourages the applicant to consider an alternative urban response to the prominent street corner which is visible from the surrounding public domain and the rail corridor.
3. The architectural expression of the levels above the base element would benefit from a further refinement and simplification, perhaps through a simple curve on the corner to unify the two facades into one element. The Panel suggested that the balustrade details need further refinement. One strategy is to reduce the extent of glazed balconies by adding solid balustrade features (up to 750mm height) to improve privacy of the balconies whilst maintaining outlook and good natural lighting for occupants.
4. Provision of operable screens or shutters in appropriate locations should also be considered for effective sun and wind control in order to maximise environmental benefits, and to offer a further layer of architectural refinement.
5. The Panel notes that the western side boundary wall will be highly visible from the Orchard Crescent public domain and the railway corridor, until the adjoining sites are redeveloped. The Panel recommends further resolution and refinement of this side boundary wall in terms of design treatment, composition and material selection. The present proposal of a random pattern of paintwork is not supported, and the Panel encourages use of low maintenance integral-finish materials (e.g. bricks, concrete), considering the anticipated longevity and life-cycle costs.
6. The proposal should ensure any side boundary walls to western or southern boundaries are capable of being built, cleaned and maintained from within the subject site, without relying on access from the adjacent properties.
7. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of AC condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel considers these should not be located within balconies or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.
8. Revised architectural drawings should include details of the proposed design intent for key façade types in form of 1:20 sections indicating façade type, balustrade fixing, balcony edges, junctions, rainwater drainage system including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal.

Non – SEPP 65 matters – General Discussion

1. The applicant should confirm the registration details of the nominated architect for their firm on all architectural drawings, as required by the NSW Architects Registration Board, and the NSW Architects Act.
2. The Panel discussed the constrained size of the site, and its impact on the efficiency of the basement. The Panel suggested the applicant should review an option for car stackers, if supported by Council's engineering team. The capital costs could be offset by reducing the number of basement levels and the construction program.
3. The Panel considers the proposal with 9 residential levels and 4 basement levels (total 13 levels) should ideally be provided with 2 lifts rather than a single lift. Provision of a second lift should be considered by the applicant for improving residential amenity for all users, assuming a scenario where one of the lifts could be out-of-order or is being used by service providers eg. by removalists or for deliveries). The Panel also considers that a proposal of this scale should be provided with stretcher-compliant lifts.
4. The Panel considers that the proposal should be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified certifier, to confirm whether 2 points of fire egress are required to be provided.

Amendments

See **Discussion & Recommendations** for details

Conclusion

The Inner West Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel notes that the applicant seeks a 43% variation for the maximum permissible floor space ratio based on the Inner West LEP.

The Panel considers that a variation (such as a clause 4.6 variation) could only be supported if the proposal demonstrates that a greater consistency is achieved with the recommendations offered in this AEDRP Report. Additionally, Panel's earlier concern regarding potential overshadowing of the school playground from 1-3pm at mid-winter is required to be sufficiently addressed by the applicant.