



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	43 Fisher Street Petersham
Proposal:	A 4 storey mixed use proposal with 7 apartments above a medical centre on ground floor.
Application No.:	PDA/2021/0232
Meeting Date:	27 July 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger – Chair, Jon Johannsen, and Diane Jones
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Rachel Josey, Andrew Newman, and Ruba Osman
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Leanne Zilka – Architect, and Giovanni Cirillo – Urban Planner

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. As a proposal subject to State Environmental Planning Policy No 65—Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (SEPP 65), the Panel's comments have been structured against the 9 Design Quality Principles set out in SEPP 65.

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 encourages the applicant to document the proposal in its immediate context including plans, elevations, sections and 3D massing. The Panel is keen to see a proposal that successfully resolves its various relationships with the immediate neighbours.
2. The architectural drawings should include a streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character and built form pattern of the adjoining buildings along Audley Street. The Panel notes there is a Heritage Conservation Area on the opposite side of Audley Street, and appropriate design consideration should be given to the primary west elevation addressing Audley Street.
3. The site also occupies a prominent corner site. Hence, the Panel encourages the applicant to consider a stronger urban response to the corner. One suggested strategy might be to bring the top floor built form closer to Fisher Street, to mark or strengthen the corner. Additionally, a higher masonry parapet element might be considered around the street corner and resolve itself with the neighbouring parapet along Fisher Street.

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 development application documentation should provide a detailed shadow analysis, including views-from-the-sun and shadow diagrams to confirm the extent of any overshadowing of the habitable areas and balconies of the apartments on the adjoining property to the south.

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 understands the proposal seeks to comply with the FSR and Height of Building development standards, and this is supported.

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. Sustainability was not specifically discussed, however the Panel would expect that key targets established within the NSW Apartment Design Guide for solar access and cross ventilation should be met. Similarly, the Panel would strongly encourage further sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.

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 discussed the usability and amenity provided within the communal open space on Level 3, which appears to be constrained. The Panel suggests the communal open space might be relocated to the roof top in order to maximise direct solar access and to increase the extent of usable area.
2. The amenity of any rooftop communal open space might also be improved through the provision of landscaped areas, outdoor seating, provision of shaded areas, a barbecue or outdoor kitchen, sink and accessible toilet. Sections should be provided to show how privacy setbacks and adequate planter depths are to be achieved.
3. The Panel suggests that roof space above the car stackers might be provided with a landscaped or green roof. If proposed as a green roof, provision should be made for appropriate access and maintenance.
4. The applicant is encouraged to apply the NSW Apartment Design Guide Parts 4O and 4P, and Inner West Council’s Green Roof Policy and Guidelines to develop a detailed landscape design.

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 notes that a 3.1m floor-to-floor height is proposed for residential floors, and encourages the applicant to confirm if an increased floor-to-floor height will be necessary to achieve compliance with the new provisions of the NSW Design & Building Practitioners Act and Regulations 2020 and forthcoming NCC requirement for minimum 1:80 falls, which in turn will establish tolerances for floor finish, structural depths, acoustic insulation and ceiling finish. The Panel’s objective here is to achieve a minimum 2.7m floor-to-ceiling height within habitable areas.
2. The Panel notes that a 6m setback/separation distance has been provided from the southern boundary based on the NSW Apartment Design Guide 2F Building Separation. And a slight reduction in this setback would be supported by the Panel, if more generous and better-planned layouts for Units 102 and 103 could be achieved.
3. To this end, the Panel recommends the southern wall (with a reduced setback) could be accommodated with high-level windows to eliminate visual privacy issues with the neighbouring apartment building to the south.
4. The Panel considers that living rooms or combined living + dining rooms should have minimum widths of 3.6m for 1 bedroom apartments and 4m for 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, based on the guidance offered in NSW Apartment Design Guide – Part 3D Apartment Layout.
5. While the screens to west facing windows are necessary, details of window sizes and operation should be clearly shown to support indicative through ventilation analysis. The Applicant is also encouraged to consider inclusion of ceiling fans to all living areas and bedrooms as a low energy alternative or supplement to the use of mechanical A/C systems.

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 notes the proposed waste storage area appears problematic for utility and residential amenity given it is adjacent to the main residential entry door and only accessible from the street. The relationship between the waste storage area and the existing bus shelter on Audley Street is also not desirable. The Panel recommends the waste storage area should be relocated to a more discrete part of the ground floor, with some form of direct internal connectivity with the residential foyer. This should also enable reconfiguration of the car parking access that appears to be very constrained close to the street.
2. The Panel encourages development of an alternative ground floor lobby configuration, along with more generous and amenable circulation corridors to upper levels, to allow comfortable and intuitive movement. All apartments should be visitable and provided with accessible entries. Corridor dimensions do not currently appear adequate to permit this and some doors may require wall returns for latch-side access provisions.
3. The Panel recommends that an interconnecting door should be provided between the carpark and the residential and non-residential lobby areas.
4. The applicant should give further consideration to the careful accommodation of all necessary building servicing requirements for development of this scale, and incorporate physical elements such as fire hydrant booster valves, pump room, fire indicator panel, meters, main switch board, communications, mail boxes and other requirements into the ground floor design.
5. Additionally, the achievement of safe emergency egress may require reorganisation of the lobby.

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 notes the mix of unit types appears appropriate and encourages the inclusion of the ground floor commercial tenancy.

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 the residential entry lobby would benefit from better definition and address within the streetscape. One suggested design strategy would be to raise the awning line over the residential entry.
2. The formal DA drawings should confirm proposed locations for A/C condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel notes these should not be located within the balconies (unless appropriately enclosed and screened from view) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.
3. The formal DA architectural drawings should include details of the design intent for key façade types in form of 1:50 (suggest 1:20 might be better detail) sections indicating primary façade types, balustrade fixings, balcony edges, junctions, rainwater drainage, including any downpipes, and similar details within the proposal.
4. Refer also to comments made above in **Principle 1 – Context & Neighbourhood Character**

Non – SEPP 65 matters – General Discussion

1. The Panel considers that the proposed non-residential component on the ground floor (described as a medical centre by the applicant at the meeting) should be provided with an accessible toilet.
2. The Panel notes that fire egress from the basement to ground floor, and from the upper residential levels to ground floor is provided through a common vertical stair shaft (ascending and descending stairs), and needs to be confirmed by/with a suitably qualified certifier.
3. Fire egress from the carpark should also be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified certifier.

Amendments

See **Discussion & Recommendations** for details

Conclusion

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel would like to thank the applicant for seeking early feedback at the pre-DA stage.

With consideration of the recommendations and suggestion made in this report, the Panel considers the proposal - subject to further development - is capable of delivering an acceptable level of design quality.

The Panel would appreciate an opportunity to review the proposal again during the formal DA phase.