



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	62 Constitution Road Dulwich Hill
Proposal:	A 7 storey mixed use proposal with 14 apartments proposed above ground floor commercial tenancies.
Application No.:	DA/2021/0571
Meeting Date:	7 September 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland – chair; Jocelyn Jackson; and Jon Johannsen
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, and Asher Richardson.
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	The applicant was invited but did not attend the AEDRP meeting.

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and discussed the proposal through an online conference.
2. The Panel notes that the subject site has a previous 7 storey shop top housing proposal approved at the NSW Land & Environment Court. The top storey of the NSW L&EC-approved scheme includes a communal room co-located with a rooftop communal open space.
3. The Panel understands that the current proposal exceeds the Inner West LEP and DCP controls for the maximum permissible height and floor space ratio. The proposed height exceeds the 17m control by approximately 3.4m, and the proposed gross floor area exceeds by approximately 49.65m². The proposal does not provide any carparking due to its constrained size.
4. As a proposal subject to the 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 the SEPP 65 NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG).

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.

INNER WEST

Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change."

1. The Panel considers that the applicant should document the proposal using 3D views, photomontages and streetscape views, given the proposal is at a prominent street junction and a highly visible location along the light rail corridor.
2. From the documents supplied to the panel the impression gained is that this building is not of a high design quality both in the internal planning of the apartments and the resultant external character.

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."

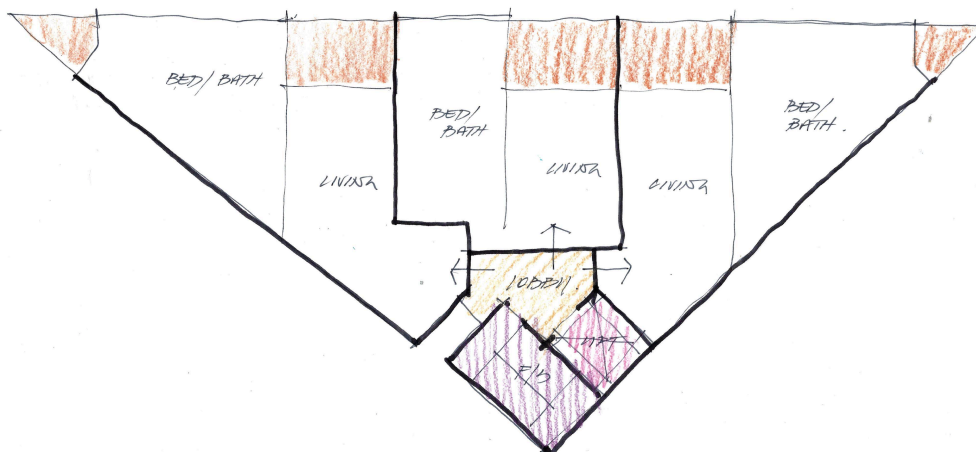
1. The Panel expressed concern regarding the openings proposed along the western boundary adjoining the light rail corridor, and the potential BCA fire separation issues should be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified certifier. The Panel considers that the proposal should also be reviewed by the relevant light rail authority (TfNSW) to ensure viability of the openings proposed to the western boundary along the light rail corridor.

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 considers that the typical residential levels require further refinement in terms of spatial planning of the apartments. The entry foyers, living, dining and kitchen areas in a majority of apartments (E.g. apartments G01, 102, 103 on a typical level) seem constrained and it appears not possible to furnish these spaces and maintain adequate circulation or amenity.
2. The Panel suggested a strategy to address the density and residential amenity concern would be to re-distribute floor area from the 3 constrained apartments to 2 generously planned apartments per floor. Or to reconsider the arrangement of living and bedroom spaces as indicated in the attached sketch provided for clarity.



Sketched suggestion for clarity.

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. Notwithstanding a BCA assessment of the side boundary adjoining the Light rail Corridor, the Panel expects that key targets established within the NSW ADG for solar access and cross ventilations should be met by the proposal. Similarly, the Panel would encourage further sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.
2. The Panel also notes that mid-winter sun eye views are lacking from the architectural set of drawings, to review direct solar access to both balconies and living areas, as required by the NSW Apartment Design Guide Part 4A.
3. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider provision of ceiling fans within all habitable areas of the apartments, for environmental benefits. The floor-to-ceiling and floor-to-floor heights should be resolved, to allow use of ceiling fans for effective cooling and heat distribution within the apartments.
4. The applicant is encouraged to include an appropriate rooftop photovoltaic system for environmental benefits, and for power/lighting to communal areas.
5. Provision of rainwater tank for should be considered to allow collection, storage and reuse within the subject site.

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 proposal lacks deep soil provision as required by the NSW ADG Part 3E-1.
2. The Panel recommends removal of Unit 501 from the top floor (Level 05) and it should revert entirely to a rooftop landscaped communal open space. The amenity of rooftop communal open space should be improved through the provision of diverse and appropriate planting methods through raised planters, gardens and green roofs. The design should also provide shaded areas, outdoor seating, a barbecue or outdoor kitchen, a sink and an accessible toilet.
3. The applicant is encouraged to use Council’s Green Roof Policy and Guidelines, the NSW ADG Parts 4O and 4P to develop further details.

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. In addition to Recommendation 1 in Principle 3, the Panel notes that the 2 bedroom apartments have undersized balconies below the minimum NSW ADG Part 4E requirements. The minimum balcony sizes and depths should be provided to ensure that the balcony areas are useable and can accommodate appropriate outdoor sitting arrangement (e.g. a table with 4 chairs)
2. The Panel notes that a floor-to-floor height of 3.0m is inadequate to achieve a minimum clear floor-to-ceiling height of 2.7m for habitable areas, as required by the NSW ADG. The Panel suggests that a minimum total of 400mm thickness is required to achieve appropriate structure and acoustic insulation within the slabs required by the BCA, and the floor-to-floor height should be at least 3.1m. The LEP non-compliance with the 17m height control will be further exacerbated if an ADG compliant floor-to-floor height of 3.1m is considered for all residential floor levels.

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 raised concern with the constrained size and amenity of the residential entry on ground floor, and recommends the proposal needs to establish a stronger, a more generous and a more amenable pedestrian entry for the apartments.
2. The applicant should also consider provision of a continuous awning around the commercial uses and over the residential entry on ground floor, to improve pedestrian amenity along the streets. These awnings should be designed as an integral design element of the building, and incorporate lighting for night-time safety.
3. The Panel questioned the requirement for a staircase for the commercial space 02 when on-grade access is provided from the corner, and alternatively, this space could be used as a bicycle storage or to house building services.

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.”

No discussion

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 DA drawings should include details of the design intent for key façade types in form of 1:20 sections indicating primary façade types, balustrade fixings, balcony edges, balcony soffits, junctions, rainwater drainage including any downpipes, and similar details within the proposal.
2. The Panel considers that the overall architectural expression requires further refinement to create an architectural character more appropriate to its urban situation. See point 2 Principle 1
3. The applicant should provide with photorealistic photomontages for the site for a review of the architectural expression.
4. The DA drawings should confirm proposed locations for AC condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel notes these should not be located within balconies (unless appropriately designed to be enclosed and screened from view) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.

Conclusion

The Inner West Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel notes that the applicant seeks a variation to the maximum permissible height and floor space ratio controls based on the Inner West LEP. Additionally, the proposal lacks provision of suitable amount of carparking and deep soil requirements.

The Panel considers the proposal should only be supported if it demonstrates that consistency is achieved with the guidance offered by the NSW Apartment Design Guide and a higher quality design is achieved in line with the recommendations offered in this AEDRP Report.