



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:	7 September 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	13 July 2021 A previous development application for an alterations and additions proposal was reviewed by the AEDRP at the 24 March 2020, 26 May 2020 and 17 February 2021 meetings.
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland – chair, Jocelyn Jackson, and Jon Johannsen
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, and Conor Wilson
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	The applicant was not invited considering this review on 7 September 2021 is a follow-up review since the recommendations made at the 13 July 2021 meeting.

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and 3D views through an online conference.
2. The Panel notes the following amendments adopted by the applicant following the latest recommendations made at the previous 13 July 2021 AEDRP meeting:
 - a. Amendments in the external finishes to the southern and western elevations;
 - b. Reconfiguration of internal layouts for apartments 1.02, 2.02, 4.02 and 5.02;
 - c. Amendments to the fenestrations of the 3 lower levels addressing Murrell Street; and
 - d. Reduction in the extent of glazing within the balustrades
3. The Panel notes there are positive improvements offered by the applicant since the 13 July 2021 AEDRP meeting, and since the previous development application reviewed in March 2020, however, it is the Panel's view that these improvements have been incremental. Consequently, none of the substantive recommendations made by the Panel have been addressed.
4. The fundamental issues from the previous AEDRP **Discussion and Recommendations** remain relevant and are restated in this report.

Discussion & Recommendations:

<p>Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character</p>
<p><i>“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.</i></p> <p><i>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.”</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel restates its view that the proposal would potentially overshadow the school playground between 1pm and 3pm in mid-winter. The details of the extent of overshadowing should be confirmed through <u>both</u> shadow diagrams and views from the sun angle provided at an hourly interval between 9am to 3pm in mid-winter. 2. The Panel previously indicated 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.
<p>Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale</p>
<p><i>“Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.</i></p> <p><i>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. “</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel restates that the “void space” along the western boundary would pose potential fire separation, odour, air trapping, visual and acoustic privacy issues within the proposal, and also with the existing and future adjoining buildings. 2. The Panel has previously identified 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.
<p>Principle 3 – Density</p>
<p><i>“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.</i></p> <p><i>Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.”</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Panel notes that the applicant seeks a significant variation (43%) for the maximum permissible floor space ratio control based on the Inner West LEP.
<p>Principle 4 – Sustainability</p>
<p><i>“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.”</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 restates 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 restates its concern for a lack of 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).
2. It is indicated that adaptable Unit 7.02 receives 2 hrs of solar access in mid-winter but analysis of the sun’s eye graphics shows this is not possible so the 70% ADG target would not be possible.
3. It is the Panel’s preference that key targets established by the NSW ADG for solar access and natural cross ventilation should be met by the proposal.

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 the 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 Panel previously discussed the location of the garbage room and its access door in relation to the pedestrian entry foyer. The Panel previously suggested that the street presentation and amenity of the ground floor entry area could be improved by providing a 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 restates its previous recommendation 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 restates its view that the overall architectural expression requires a much greater level of refinement, to create a more civic architectural character appropriate to its urban situation, particularly at the lower levels. One suggested strategy at the previous meeting (and still unaddressed) was 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 that better can relate to the streetscapes in either direction.
2. At the previous AEDRP meeting, the Panel also encouraged 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. There is an opportunity for the corner to match the basement plan at the street corner.
3. The Panel considers the design response provided through the latest set of amendments in the external finishes and the fenestration design do not sufficiently address the above mentioned recommendations, and the proposal does not achieve the expected outcome for design excellence.
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 restates its concern for high visibility of the western side boundary wall from the Orchard Crescent public domain and the railway corridor, until the adjoining sites are redeveloped. The revised proposal includes addition of etched 'bronze' concrete panels, and is not supported, as the Panel, at its previous meeting recommended greater degree of resolution and refinement of this side boundary wall, in terms of the overall design treatment, composition and material selection.
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. The Panel notes the revised set of architectural drawings did not provide the previously requested photomontage views with photo-realistic images at eye-level from prominent locations in the surrounding public domain. In particular an eye level view of the corner aspect.
8. The Panel restates that 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 Panel understands that technically by a matter of millimetres only one lift is required, however as previously identified a proposal with 9 residential levels and 4 basement levels (total 13 levels) should be provided with 2 lifts rather than a single lift. Provision of a second lift should be considered by the applicant to give residential amenity to all users. There is a compelling need for an alternative lift, 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.
2. The Panel considers that the proposal should be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified certifier, to confirm whether 2 points of fire egress (2 stair cases, or possibly a ‘scissor’ stairs) are required to be provided based on the proposed height (over the BCA ‘effective height’ requirements).

Amendments

See **Discussion & Recommendations** for details

Conclusion

The Panel restates its view that the proposal should only be supported if a greater consistency is achieved with principal controls within the NSW ADG (solar access, natural cross ventilation, deep soil and communal open space) and consistency with the recommendations offered by the AEDRP.

It is the Panel’s view that the below fundamental concerns previously identified by the Panel still remain unaddressed:

1. Potential overshadowing of the school playground from 1-3pm in mid-winter;
2. Building configuration, fire safety and amenity issues associated with the “void space”;
3. A lack of an appropriate number of lifts and fire-egress provisions for a residential flat building with a total of 13 levels (including 9 residential and 4 basement floors);
4. A significant floor space ratio variation (43%) based on the Inner West LEP control; and
5. Lack of an appropriate urban design response and architectural expression required for a corner site with high visibility from the surrounding public domain and the rail corridor.