



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	301-305 Liverpool Road Ashfield
Proposal:	A 10 storey mixed use development with 67 boarding room over a basement carpark
Application No.:	DA/2021/0776
Meeting Date:	21 September 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Russell Olsson (external member); Matthew Pullinger (external member); Niall Macken (internal member); and Vishal Lakhia (internal member) – Chair
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Andrew Newman
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Joseph Panetta – Architect for the project; and Andrew Martin – Urban Planner.

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and 3D views, and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. The Panel notes that the applicant is seeking floor space ratio and height bonuses offered to affordable housing proposals within the Ashfield Town Centre through the current Inner West LEP and DCP provisions. The Panel understands that Council's assessment team will review and identify whether such bonuses apply to privately-managed commercial boarding houses, such as the proposal.
3. The Panel notes that the applicant, architect and urban planner for the subject site – 301-305 Liverpool Road Ashfield — have also lodged a development application for a similar 10 storey boarding house proposal at 1 The Esplanade Ashfield (DA/2021/0651). Both proposals are in close proximity to each other and present similar urban challenges. The AEDRP has reviewed both development applications at the 21 September 2021 meeting.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. **Urban Design Strategy:**

- a. The Panel notes the proposal is largely documented and presented in isolation from its context. The Panel encourages the applicant to further elaborate on the overarching urban design rationale and justification for the proposed site planning, massing, setbacks and separation distances. Associated analysis is required to be established through an urban design and contextual study.
- b. The proposal should establish an appropriate built form relationship with the potential future development on the adjoining properties to the east (No. 297 and 299 Liverpool Road) and to the west (No. 307 to 315 Liverpool Road) of the subject site. An urban design and contextual analysis should include testing of future development scenarios for these neighbouring properties, to ensure that future development will not be compromised in terms of solar access, residential amenity, visual impact and privacy.
- c. The Panel expressed concern with the current building massing of the eastern building, as the upper levels (Level 1 to 8) cantilever over the 2 storey building base, which is recessed from The Esplanade street alignment. The Panel considers this not to be a suitable built form response for the subject site, given the pedestrian-friendly scale and character of The Esplanade, as the projected upper levels will create an overbearing visual impact on The Esplanade.
- d. The Panel recommends the exploration of alternative massing strategies to better resolve the relationship between the lower levels of the building (and the 3m DCP setback control at street level) and the remainder of the proposed building form. The Panel is keen to mitigate against the cantilevered form described above, and better resolve to form and articulation of the proposed tower element. Cues for an appropriate built form response should draw on a comprehensive urban and contextual analysis, including recent approvals in the vicinity.
- e. The urban design study and contextual analysis should include views from the angle of sun at mid-winter, to confirm consistency with the 3 hour direct solar access requirements (SEPP Affordable Rental Housing 2009) to the common room and the central communal open space. The Panel recommends the applicant incorporate overshadowing impacts of the existing surrounding buildings into this analysis.
- f. It appears there is an inconsistency with the 'True North' marked on the architectural drawings in comparison to the registered surveyor's drawing. In addition to Recommendation 1.e, revised architectural drawings should be provided with accurately marked 'True North' for a further review of direct solar access to both common room and the communal open space.

2. Ground Floor Configuration:

- a. The Panel recommends the extent of ground floor activation along The Esplanade should be maximised and further refinement considered in terms of spatial planning of the 'service room' and waste storage areas.
- b. The Panel recommends the residential lobby offer a stronger presence within The Esplanade, and requires a more generous address, given the number of lodgers (67 rooms and 134 lodgers) within the residential component.
- c. The Panel queried the amenity of the ground floor café as it lacks a kitchen, a back-office area and toilets.

3. Building Configuration:

- a. The Panel expressed concern that a proposal with 8 residential floors, 2 commercial floors and 1 basement level (total 11 levels) is served by only 1 lift. The residential component of the proposal has 134 lodgers within 67 rooms, and should be provided with a minimum of 2 lifts in order to establish some level of redundancy in the level of service. There is a compelling need for a minimum 2 lifts for the residential component to accommodate a scenario where one of the lift could be out-of-order or is being used by service providers (E.g. removalists or for deliveries). The Panel also recommends that a separate lift should

be provided for the non-residential component, given its scale and more public use, with a non-commercial gross floor area of 328m².

- b. The Panel notes that in its current configuration, the boarding rooms within the western building addressing Liverpool Road are disconnected from the basement carpark.
- c. The accessible rooms No. 1, 2 and 3 proposed within the western building lack any lift provision or barrier-free connection from Liverpool Road, since they rely on Stair 3 for access.
- d. The proposed 6m separation between the 2 buildings is minimal. In any reconfiguration of the residential tower and base addressing The Esplanade, the building separation should not be reduced further and the depth of the Liverpool Road building may need to be re-considered.
- e. The residential balconies to The Esplanade and Liverpool Road should align with the property boundary if built close to the property boundary and should not overhang the property boundary.
- f. The Panel notes that the eastern building with a 10 storey height is above the BCA 'Effective height' requirement and a deemed to satisfy solution would require 2 points of fire egress (2 stairs cases, or possibly a 'scissor' stairs), considering safety of future residents.
- g. The Panel questioned the provision of the narrow 'void' or building indentation on typical residential levels of the eastern building, in terms of its functionality and buildability. The width-to-depth ratio for the building indentation appears to be highly constrained to achieve effective air circulation or day light. The Panel considers this indentation should be eliminated and the floor area be added to the typical floor plan.
- h. The applicant is encouraged to consider inclusion of ceiling fans to all boarding rooms, as a low energy alternative or supplement to the use of mechanical A/C systems. The Panel considers that the floor-to-ceiling and floor-to-floor heights should be increased to a minimum 2.7m and 3.1m, to allow provision of ceiling fans.

4. Architectural Expression:

- a. The Panel notes an inconsistency within the architectural documentation as the vertical duct along the southern end of the eastern building is not documented in the 3D views. The applicant should ensure building services elements such as ducts or risers are well-planned and thoughtfully integrated within the building layouts and concealed from the public domain.
- b. Revised architectural drawings should also provide internal courtyard-facing elevations and internal 3D views of both buildings.
- c. The applicant should provide a streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character and built form pattern of the adjoining traditional buildings along Liverpool Road. The design of the western building facade addressing Liverpool Road should relate to the existing character attributes and prevailing pattern of buildings in the streetscape, particularly in terms of the solid to void ratios. The architectural expression of the balconies should be carefully considered to mitigate noise and pollution issues from the busy Liverpool Road interface.
- d. The Panel notes that the side walls of the 10 storey eastern building will be highly visible from the surrounding public domain 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 proposal should ensure any side boundary walls are capable of being built, cleaned and maintained from within the subject site, without relying on access from the adjoining properties.
- e. The Panel notes the predominant use of rendered and painted surfaces within the proposal, and encourages use of integral and self-finished materials such as brick. Rendered and painted surfaces should be avoided considering the longevity and associated long-term costs.
- f. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of AC condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel considers these should not be located within balconies



(unless thoughtfully designed to be enclosed and screened from view) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.

- g. Revised architectural drawings should include details of the design intent for key façade types in form of 1:50 or 1:20 sections indicating primary façade types, balustrade fixings, balcony edges, balcony soffits, junctions, rainwater drainage, downpipes and similar details.

Conclusion

With consideration given to the recommendations made in this report regarding the overarching urban design and architectural aspects, the Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel would like a second opportunity to review this proposal again as part of this DA stage.

At a second review, the Panel would consider whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of its site planning, massing, setbacks, separation distances, architectural expression and built form relationship with the potential future buildings within the vicinity.

The Panel encourages that the applicant should present the proposal at the subject site 301-305 Liverpool Road Ashfield and their similar proposal at 1 The Esplanade Ashfield (DA/2021/0651) together as part of a comprehensive 2D and 3D urban design study and context analysis.