

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	19-23 Hercules Street Ashfield
Proposal:	An 8 storey shop-top housing proposal
Application No.:	PDA/2021/0343
Meeting Date:	2 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland – chair, Jocelyn Jackson, and Garth Paterson
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, and Conor Wilson
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant’s representatives to address the panel:	Tony Owen – Architect for the project

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 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. 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 proposal would result in an inefficient and uncoordinated development with the adjoining property to the south – 23 Hercules Street, left in isolation. The Panel is concerned that 23 Hercules Street may not be developed independently given its constrained site area and lot width, and questions whether a realistic massing, floor area, residential layouts and carpark layouts are achievable if a proposal on this lot is considered in

isolation. It is the Panel's preference that consistency with the guidance offered by the NSW Apartment Design Guide should be achievable for the proposal, as well as for the adjoining property (if the proposal is considered in isolation).

2. The applicant should include streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character and built form pattern along Hercules Street. The Panel notes that there is a Heritage item located at the corner of Hercules Street and Liverpool Road and it should be part of the streetscape analysis and design consideration. It is also the Panel's view that the existing historical shopfronts contribute positively to the streetscape character along Hercules Street, in particular these façades are an important part of the context that anchors the corner heritage building in the streetscape, and should be retained as part of this proposal. Additionally, appropriate consideration should be given to the architectural expression of all facades of the tower element above.
3. The Panel recommends that the applicant should consider provision of retail or commercial frontage to the laneway, to partly activate Fox's Lane interface. The Panel notes that this is already achieved in a recently approved shop top housing proposal on the adjoining property to the north. A similar retail or commercial tenancy could be provided at the north eastern corner of the site, considering the loading/servicing activities could occur from the laneway.

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 understands the proposal exceeds the maximum permissible gross floor area by approximately 98m².

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."

No discussion

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 Panel expects the proposal to be consistent with key targets established within the NSW ADG for solar access and natural cross ventilation. Similarly, the Panel encourages commitment to further sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.
2. Revised set of architectural drawings should include mid-winter sun eye views, to review direct solar access to both balconies and living areas, as encouraged by the ADG Part 4A. These views should incorporate the potential future building envelope on the adjoining property.
3. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider provision of ceiling fans within all habitable areas of the apartments. Floor-to-floor and floor-to-ceiling heights should be resolved and illustrated to demonstrate use of ceiling fans.
4. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow water collection and distribution to landscaped areas.

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 the provision of rooftop communal open space and the applicant should demonstrate consistency with the ADG in terms of guidance offered within Parts 4O and 4P. Additionally, the applicant should refer Council’s Green Roof Policy and Guidelines to develop a detailed design.
2. The rooftop communal open space should ensure provision of planter boxes with appropriate soil depths, outdoor seating, shaded areas, barbecue or outdoor kitchen, sink and unisex accessible toilet.

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 expressed concerns regarding provision of the communal ‘courtyards’ or ‘void’ spaces within the podium levels as these spaces pose potential fire separation, visual and acoustic privacy issues within the proposal. The Panel notes that the applicant’s strategy for the adjoining apartments to rely on these ‘void’ spaces for natural cross ventilation is also problematic. Alternative building configuration strategies avoiding ‘void’s spaces should be considered by the applicant.
2. The Panel also queried the size and need for excessively large ‘Plant Rooms’ located within the podium levels. If they are required further documentation should be supplied. And identifies that there is a need for a greater degree of resolution for the internal planning of the podium levels.
3. The combined living and dining areas of apartments 101, 201, 102, 202, 301, 302, 401, 501, 402, 502, 601, 701, 602 and 702 appears to be constrained, to allow comfortable and intuitive movement around furniture.
4. The Panel raised concern for the availability of natural light and natural ventilation within the master bedrooms of apartments 302, 402, 502, 602 and 702. The ‘snorkel’ arrangement offers only a constrained amenity as evidenced by the suggested furniture layout, which should generally be avoided. This suggests that there is pressure for outlook on the available building perimeter.
5. The Panel notes there are many apartment layouts that have bathrooms opening directly into the main living areas of the apartments. Layouts of these apartments should be reconfigured so bathroom doors could be relocated to more discrete locations.

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 that the proposed recessed pedestrian entry on the ground floor is a potential CPTED issue, and the main entry door should be moved out to the street/boundary alignment to Hercules Street.

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.

Refer recommendations offered in Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

Conclusion

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage.

With consideration given to the recommendations made in this report, the Panel should be given a second opportunity to review the revised proposal that responds to the issues raised in this AEDRP Report.