

# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	73 & 67 Mary Street, 50 & 52 Edith Street & 43 Roberts Street St Peters
Proposal:	Alterations and additions to an existing commercial building to create a 4 storey mixed use proposal with 4 apartments
Application No.:	DA/2021/0800
Meeting Date:	2 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	13 July 2021 – Pre DA, 20 April 2021 – Pre DA, and Planning Proposal stages in 2015 and 2017
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland – chair, Jocelyn Jackson, and Garth Paterson
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Kaitlin Zieme, and Ruba Osman
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Ramin Jahroumi (Cox) – 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."*

No discussion

## 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. “*

The Panel discussed comments by previous panels on form, scale and building articulation. Note that two panel members had participated in previous reports.

## 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 Apartment Design Guide for solar access and natural cross ventilation. The solar access and natural cross ventilation should be considered on individual building basis rather than an overall precinct basis, to ensure consistency with the NSW ADG.

## 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. It is the Panel’s view that the deep soil within the site should be maximised for environmental benefits, and the proposal should achieve greater consistency with the NSW ADG Objective 3E-1. The Panel notes that 7% deep soil is required by the ADG, however a 15% deep soil area is required for larger sites (greater than 1,500m<sup>2</sup>), based on the guidance offered by the ADG. The Applicant needs to demonstrate compliance to these defined metric requirements. The Panel is not satisfied that the applicants have explored increasing the extent of deep soil provision in the central green space in order to achieve ADG compliance and a sustainable public realm outcome.
2. The Panel also queried the applicant about the extent of tree canopy cover, and recommended it should be further maximised, particularly along the Makers Way. The applicant needs to demonstrate how the current tree canopy calculation is benchmarked against Councils and relevant State Government Urban Canopy metrics.
3. The Panel noted that the applicant needs to demonstrate that Tree No. 8 should be preserved and not removed as noted in the drawings.

4. The Panel recommends that all roof gardens should be accessible for maintenance and encourages addition of PVs for sustainability benefits.

## 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 that the second bedrooms of approximately 93 apartments located within Buildings A and B primarily rely on frontage to gallery access/common circulation corridors for outlook, natural light and natural ventilation, which creates potential outlook, visual and acoustic privacy concerns within the proposal.
2. The Panel restates that the NSW Apartment Design Guide offers guidance for establishing separation distances from any gallery access circulation areas. The guidance offered is that the gallery access circulation spaces be considered as a habitable space, and the separation distances be measured from the exterior edge of the circulation space to the adjacent bedroom.
3. The Panel appreciates provision of screens and blinds to the bedrooms, however, it is the Panel's view that such provisions are unlikely to resolve their concern. The Panel restates that the proposed configuration is problematic, and the applicant should consider alternative building planning and configuration strategies to avoid such issues.
4. The Panel expressed concern over the configuration and compliance of the post adaptable units and recommends that the extent of amendments required from pre to post adaptation should be minimised, particularly with regards to structural and building services elements. Additionally, all apartments within the proposal should be 'visitable' and demonstrate compliance with the relevant Australian Standards.
5. The Panel points to 4F.1 of the ADG regarding the number of apartments served by a lift core being 8 or fewer. There are currently 12. In the case of 8 not being achievable the ADG offers suggestions in terms of the amenity of the corridor serving the apartments. The Panel feels this has not been adequately addressed. Further if the apartment mix were addressed the number of apartments per floor may be reduced.
6. The Panel points to the objectives of natural and cross ventilation in the ADG and has concerns that Apartments 1, 10 and particularly 2 do not meet those objectives. Further Apartments 1,2,5,6,7,8,10,11,12 are indicated with a door being the primary room opening to the outside. The panel is concerned as to how this would function to adjust/control airflow?

## 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.”*

No discussion

## 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 discussed the applicant's proposition of connecting studio and 2 bedrooms to form 3 bedroom apartments at some time in the future. The Panel does not believe this proposal meets the current applications compliance for apartment mix.

## 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 noticed some discrepancies between 3D views and floor plans of Building 8. The DA documentation lacks a cross section through this building. The floor plans lack details within the amenity level of this building. The Panel considers that appropriate depth should be provided for the swimming pool.
2. In terms of its architectural expression, the Panel notes that Building 8 is a very large building offering minimum amount of articulation, particularly the upper volumes. The overall architectural quality is not consistent with the remaining buildings within the precinct. The building's presentation is monotonous and the overall spatial planning requires greater development. This may address the issue of articulation.
3. The Panel remains concerned by the "singular" character of building C. The proponents explanation of "simplicity" means that once above the retained portion of brickwork all floors appear identical and with the exception of the set back to the northern façade, there is very little articulation. This is a very large form within the building mix, and while the other buildings are more of a collage of characters Building C's "simplicity" leaves it lacking character.

## Conclusion

In order to achieve the support from the Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel, the proposal should establish greater consistency with the NSW Apartment Design Guide, particularly in terms of deep soil provisions. The Panel also notes that the previously raised concern for residential amenity within the second bedrooms of approximately 93 apartments within Buildings A and B and also apartments in Building C still remains unresolved (since the Pre DA meetings on 20 April and 13 July 2021). Additionally, the overall architectural expression and spatial planning of Buildings C and 8 should be improved to establish consistency with the architectural quality and character of the remaining buildings within the precinct.