Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	194-210 Wardell Road Marrickville
Proposal:	Alterations and additions to an existing educational establishment, and change of use from residential to school for 16 Pine Street Marrickville
Application No.:	PDA/2021/0411
Meeting Date:	16 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Russell Olsson (external member), Jocelyn Jackson (external member) and Vishal Lakhia (internal member) – Chair
Apologies:	None
Council staff:	Matthew Di Maggio
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Leaf Architecture – Architect for the project, and Weir Phillips – Heritage Specialist for the project

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings, 3D views, and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage, and for providing a comprehensive set of architectural drawings with 3D views.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel considers that the proposal intensifies activities and use on the subject site, with a significant increase in the number of students and staff members. The Panel understands that the numbers are proposed to be increased from 549 to 849 students, and from 55 to 75 staff members.
2. While the Panel appreciates that the overall intensification and the site planning are primarily guided by the requirement for car parking, a balance is required to be achieved in terms of the amenity offered to the students and staff, particularly through provision of open space and landscape design. The current proposal is lacking balance and a greater emphasis on open space and overall landscape quality is recommended, within a re-consideration of the built form and landscape design approach.
3. The Panel notes that there is a substantial extent of paving and hardstand areas within the courtyards which could be unfavourable during summer, and recommends that the extent of

deep soil area for the planting of large canopy trees, shrubs and ground cover should be maximised for environmental benefits, given that the proposal is not constrained by a basement carpark.

4. The Panel expressed concern regarding removal of large existing trees and landscaped pockets from the site, particularly to the south of Building F. The applicant should work with a suitably qualified landscape architect/designer and an arborist to consider an appropriate strategy that maximises tree retention. As a balance, the applicant could also consider relocation and/or planting of new trees and shrubs if existing vegetation is required to be removed.
5. The Panel highlighted the need for an appropriate lighting strategy (for evening hours during winter). Additionally, wayfinding and CPTED principles should be incorporated within the proposed landscape design strategy.
6. The Panel queried the applicant about their proposed strategy for managing drop-off and pick-up for 849 students. Similarly, vehicular access and movement for 75 staff members needs to be demonstrated to the Panel. Access for emergency vehicles such as ambulance or a fire brigade to the interior of the site should also be investigated by the applicant. A comprehensive and detailed traffic management plan including swept paths will be required for this DA.
7. The Panel appreciates the allocation of additional carparking spaces and vehicular access through 16 Pine Street, however, the potential amenity impacts on the existing residents on 14 and 18 Pine Street are required to be managed, particularly in terms of noise, car lights and outlook. The Panel considers that provision of 2.1m high lapped and capped timber fences to the side boundaries would only partly alleviate their concern.
8. The Panel queried the applicant whether any community consultation has been considered as part of the overall master planning process in terms of – pedestrian and vehicular access and movement, overshadowing impact, built form and landscaped interface with the adjoining properties and residential amenity impact on the neighbours.
9. In terms of the overall architectural quality, the Panel considers that the expression requires a greater amount of resolution to create a more civic architectural character that is more appropriate to its educational use.
10. The Panel appreciates the use of arches to create colonnades around the building perimeter where corridors are created for transition between the interior and exterior spaces. However, the Panel notes that there is an overall lack of resolution in coordination between the architectural expression, the structure and the internal building configuration. This is most apparent outside the library, however the project would benefit from more regular spacing and dimensioning of arches generally.
11. The Panel considers that the upturned arches with open-ends appear arbitrary, particularly where not capped with a horizontal plane and the overall architectural language for the buildings needs to be simplified and unified.
12. The Panel appreciates the use of bricks as a primary material and recommends that a greater rigour is required in terms of composition and attention to detail. The Panel recommends that the hard building edges are required to be softened by integrating appropriate landscape design measures such as green walls, plantation on structures and other relevant measures to soften the hard building edges.
13. Although the principle of sustainability was not particularly discussed at this meeting, the Panel encourages the applicant to consider a rooftop photovoltaic system. The energy generated could be used to light the corridors and the landscape. Provision of rainwater tank/s is encouraged to allow water collection and in conjunction an appropriate irrigation system could be provide to water the landscaped areas. The use of brickwork may have benefits in terms of minimising embodied energy, however it is recommended that the sourcing of bricks from carbon neutral sources would be desirable. An sustainable approach to embodied energy in material selection generally would benefit the project.

Conclusion:

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage, and for providing a comprehensive set of architectural drawings with 3D views. With consideration given to the recommendations offered in this report, the Panel would appreciate an opportunity to review the revised proposal during the formal DA stage.