



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	342 Norton Street, Leichhardt
Proposal:	A 3 storey mixed use proposal with 5 apartments
Application No.:	DA/2021/0784
Meeting Date:	16 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Dr Michael Zanardo – chair Jean Rice Michael Harrison
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Niall Macken Christian Hemsley
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Konstantine Vourtzoumis – Architect Alex Catania – Planner Peter and Marie Likoudis - Owners

### Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings, were briefed by the Council planning officer, 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 nine Design Quality Principles as set out in SEPP 65 Schedule 1 and the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG).
3. The Panel notes that a similar application has been previously approved for the site to the south at 340 Norton Street. The Panel notes that the site is effectively isolated between existing and future strata-titled developments.
4. The Panel commends the high quality of architectural documentation provided and the general design resolution for this application. The Panel notes that some small corrections should be made to amend inaccuracies in the planning report.

## 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 notes that the site area is less than 600m<sup>2</sup>. The Panel supports the development of the site along the general lines proposed on the basis that existing and approved buildings to either side effectively isolate the site and that the retention of the ‘grain’ of the streetscape in line with narrower historic ‘shop top’ development along Norton Street is positive.
2. The Panel support the general height and presentation to the streetscape
3. The Panel notes that the existing ‘shop top’ developments nearby along Norton Street have ‘decorative’ parapet lines. The Panel encourages an interpretation of the proposed Level 1 parapet line to add interest to the streetscape rather than a plain brick upturn and glazed balustrade.

### 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 notes that the site to the south at 340 Norton Street has an approval which utilises a similar approach to lightwells on the shared boundary. The Panel considers that the possibility of enclosure of the neighbouring lightwells by a proposal on the subject site must have been considered acceptable in the assessment of that application. The Panel is concerned that this outcome for the subject site is suboptimal and considers it need not be repeated.
2. The Panel recommends that a full-height, open-to-the-sky, passage be provided to the southern rear portion of the site connecting the entry lobby to the rear yard (as explored in the meeting). Such a passage would assist with maintenance access to the rear garden, provide the possibility of access to a shared communal open space at the rear of the site, and provide improved outlook for the bedroom of unit 101. The Panel notes that ADG 4A-2 1 and 4B-1 4 suggest that lightwells should not be utilised as the primary source of light and air.
3. The Panel notes that the bedroom of unit 102 benefits from the setback of the neighbouring development which does not enclose the lightwell on this side, however the Panel recommends the use of light colour walls (and/or other techniques) to improve daylight and ventilation within this lightwell.

### 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.”*

1. The Panel notes that the application seeks to vary the permissible floor space ratio. This may be resolved through reduction of the built form to accommodate a southern side passage (see above Principle 2 – Built form and scale).

## 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 encourages that ceiling fans and natural ventilation should be provided to all habitable rooms.
2. The Panel encourages the inclusion of an appropriate rooftop photovoltaic system.
3. The Panel encourages the inclusion of a rainwater tank to allow collection, storage and reuse within the subject site.
4. The Panel encourages the salvage of materials from the existing building for reuse on site or for other projects.
5. The Panel recommends the inclusion of well-located screened outdoor areas for clothes drying in line with ADG 4U-1 2.

## 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 that the rear garden area does not have access except through Unit G01. The Panel recommends inclusion of a side passage (see above Principle 2 – Built form and scale).
2. The Panel recommends the removal, or redesign as a terrace or similar, of the portion of garden to the southern side of the building that is beneath building over as this space will be under cover and unsuitable for planting.
3. The Panel notes that no communal open space has been provided. The Panel considers there is possibility of including communal open space to the rear of the site to provide shared amenity and to accommodate canopy trees in deep soil in communal ownership. A 3m wide area along the rear of the site would be in line with objective ADG 3E-1. Alternatively the central area of the ground floor might include communal space. Should no communal open space be provided, further justification should be provided for the design approach.

## 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 notes that the building runs almost due east-west and that 3 of 5 units (those on Level 1) may not achieve a full two hours solar access to living room windows in line with ADG 4A-1 1. The Panel recommends that minor adjustments to the building façade may assist to increase solar access hours. The Panel commends the use of the clerestory roof to the top floor apartment.
2. The Panel notes that City West Link is mapped by TfNSW as a busy road having a traffic volume > 40,000 vehicles per day. The site is also located within an ANEF contour of 25. The Panel notes that SEPP Infrastructure 102 requires that certain sound levels must not be exceeded in residential accommodation. The Panel also notes that objective ADG 4B-1 requires that all habitable rooms are naturally ventilated. The Panel recommends that consideration be given to appropriate noise shielding or attenuation techniques as suggested by objective ADG 4J-2.

3. The Panel notes that the head height to unit G01 beneath the common stair may be compromised. The Panel suggests that 'flipping' of the robe to the other wall will allow for additional head height and also allow the bedroom onto the lightwell to have more window. Alternatively, this area may be replanned with the general adjustment to Unit G01 to incorporate a southern passage (see above Principle 2 – Built form and scale). The Panel considers the current amenity of bedroom 2 of unit G01 to be suboptimal in its current configuration.

## 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 recommends that a separate waste area be provided for the retail tenancy.

## 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 supports the provision of no vehicular parking on this narrow frontage site with no rear lane, that is close to the light rail and bus routes. The Panel notes a similar solution has been previously approved for the site to the south at 340 Norton Street. The Panel commends the inclusion of bicycle parking within the entry area.

## 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 notes that the balustrades to Norton Street appear to be clear glazed. The Panel recommends that some solidity to the balustrades will assist with visual privacy from the street and enable concealment of the contents of the balcony.
2. The Panel notes that air conditioning has not been included on the plans. The Panel recommends that, if they are used, any air conditioning units should be screened from public view and integrated with the built form in line objective ADG 4E-3.

## Conclusion:

The Panel recommends the proposal should only be supported once it satisfactorily demonstrates improved design quality in line with the recommendations provided in this AEDRP Report.