# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

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| Site Address: | 62 Jarret Street and 2A-2C Rofe Street, Leichhardt |
| Proposal: | Proposed demolition of existing structures and construction of a 4-storey mixed use development containing shop top housing with 11 residential apartments, ground floor commercial and basement parking. |
| Application No.: | PDA/2021/0354 |
| Meeting Date: | 16 November 2021 |
| Previous Meeting Date: | None |
| Panel Members: | Dr Michael Zanardo – chair<br>Jean Rice<br>Michael Harrison |
| Apologies: | - |
| Council staff: | Niall Macken<br>Eamon Egan |
| Guests: | - |
| Declarations of Interest: | None |
| Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel: | Ihab Shams and Laura Ortegate – Architect<br>Eltin Miletic - Planner<br>Chehab – Owner |

## 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 this is a Pre-DA application and the advice contained in intended as early input into the scheme in anticipation of a formal development application.
4. The Panel appreciated the inclusion of additional site context and analysis information presented at the meeting and found it to be useful in understanding the scheme. The Panel commends the general design consideration and internal planning of this Pre-DA application.

# 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 the application proposes up to 4 storeys which will make it one of the tallest and largest buildings in Jarrett Street (see below Principle 2 – Built form and scale for detailed 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."*

1. The Panel notes that the LDCP building wall height control for this site is 3.6m. The Panel considers that this part of this side of Jarrett Street presents as a predominantly 2-storey scale (equivalent to a 6m building street wall control). The Panel also acknowledges the height of the existing warehouse on the site which appears to be approximately 7m in height. The Panel generally supports the design approach with a 2 storey building wall to Jarrett Street with 3 storey corner to Rofe Street and with upper level setbacks. The Panel is concerned however that the balance of 2 to 3 storey elements is not yet appropriate and does not want the application to set a precedent for a 3 storey building wall in Jarrett Street or create undesirable inconsistencies with compliant desired future character of neighbouring sites. The Panel recommends that further envelope studies be undertaken to demonstrate the amount of breach of envelope proposed based on both a 3.6m and 6m building wall height, and comparison to the existing building, to assist in assessment of the application. The envelope studies should also include massing of neighbouring sites that comply with the envelope control. Views towards the corner and down Rofe Street from Parramatta Road towards the lower scale R1 residential area and from the residential area to the proposed building should also be studied.
2. The Panel considers that the proposed massing of building to the front of the site rather than to the rear could be desirable in order to increase separation to the heritage item to the south and to reduce overshadowing to multiple residential uses. The Panel recommends that further solar studies in the form of 'view from the sun' diagrams should be provided to assist in substantiating this approach and demonstrating the improvement in overshadowing. Further upper level setbacks to the rear may be required.
3. The Panel notes that commercial tenancy 2 has a floor-to-ceiling height of 2.9m. The Panel recommends that the floor-to-ceiling height be increased to a minimum of 3.3m in line with objective ADG 4C-1. The Panel suggests that this could be achieved by lowering the Rofe Street entry point (which appeared to be above the footpath level in the digital model shown) to make this entry level with and accessible from the sloping footpath. The entry to commercial tenancy 2 could be provided from the level surface within the Rofe Street entry area whilst the door to the Rofe Street footpath could be replaced by a corner window to signal entry.
4. The Panel noted that the level of visibility into the ground floor parking area from Jarrett Street was undesirable. The Panel recommends the inclusion of a security door set back from the street to restrict this view. Consideration should also be given to the continuation of the external wall finishes into the car parking area and treatment of the soffit and walls to conceal services. Further, the Panel notes the possible overprovision of car parking of between 3 to 6 spaces. Removal of these spaces at ground floor may allow for the driveway to move over (subject to telegraph pole) and commercial tenancy 1 to widen, or alternatively for the current commercial waste area to become a third commercial small commercial tenancy, both of which would improve the activation of the Jarrett Street frontage which is currently inactive for half its length.

5. The Panel recommends a traffic report be prepared which would include verification of the ramp design and its suitability for passing vehicles as well as 'vision triangles' at the driveway entry.
6. The Panel notes the inclusion of an awning over the footpath. The Panel questions its form particularly as it does not provide cover over the entry area. The Panel also considers that its height may be too low on the higher portion of Rofe Street. Awnings are not typical in the adjacent residential area except on corner shops where they are used to create shelter adjacent shops.

## 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. The Panel notes that the site area should be confirmed as there is a 11.7m2 difference between the area by DP and by calculation. Further, the Panel notes the possible overprovision of car parking of between 3 to 6 spaces which may contribute to the floor space non-compliance. The Panel recommends the reduction of car parking at ground level as this contributes to the bulk and scale of the building and potential associated built form impacts (see also 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 recommends the involvement of registered landscape architect in the design of the communal open spaces. Selection of suitable species for south-facing and under cover areas will be important to the success of the outcome. Communal open space facilities should be provided in line with objective ADG 3D-2.
2. The Panel notes that the proposed principle usable area of the communal open space receives less than 2 hours sunlight to 50% of its area. The Panel recommends that this aspect be given further consideration in the design of the building and its landscape in line with ADG 3D-1 2.

3. The Panel notes the immediate adjacency of the usable portion of the Level 1 communal open space to the bedroom windows of units 0101 and 0104. The Panel recommends further consideration of this relationship to ensure privacy to these habitable rooms.
4. The Panel notes that the structural depth below the Level 1 communal open space area does not appear to anticipate the weight of planting on structure. The Panel recommends increasing the structural depth suitable to accommodate planting on structure.
5. The Panel notes that the deep soil area to the south of the site is not shown as being usable. The Panel recommends that this area has the benefit of landscape advice. Access to this area, from either within the site or from the footpath, both for potential use and for maintenance should be considered.

## 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 Parramatta Road 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 20. 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.
2. The Panel notes that the Level 3 corridor does not have a window. The Panel recommends inclusion of a window or clerestory window to provide for daylight and natural ventilation in line with objective ADG 4F-1.
3. The Panel notes that kitchens are considered habitable spaces under the ADG and that the kitchen of unit 0201 cannot see a window. The Panel recommends reconfiguration of Unit 0201 to ensure the kitchen has a high standard of amenity in line with objective ADG 4D-1.
4. The Panel notes that several living rooms are less than 4m in width and several bedrooms are less than 3m in width. The Panel recommends that bedrooms be a minimum of 3m wide clear of robes in line with objective ADG 4D-3.
5. The Panel recommends that further consideration be given to the windows/openings to the ground floor car park area. The ventilation of the basement car park area should also be demonstrated.

## 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 the inclusion of a security door to the driveway (see above Principle 2 – Built form and scale)

## 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 notes the proposed mix of unit sizes which is predominantly comprised of 2 and 3 bedroom units. The Panel recommends the inclusion of additional smaller units in the mix in line with the diverse housing requirements of LLEP, or alternatively provide justification for the design approach.
2. The Panel recommends the inclusion of bike parking and motorcycle parking to the satisfaction of LDCP.

## 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 generally commends the external appearance of the proposal. The Panel recommends that the fenestration to the ground floor along Rofe Street be calmed and rationalized to step with the topography more gradually. Pairing of windows could be considered. Alignment with upper-level building elements could also be desirable.
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 Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel notes the applicant seeks a variation to the permissible floor space ratio control, to the building wall height control, and to the unit mix.

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.