



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	97 Marrickville Road Marrickville
Proposal:	A part 3 to 4 storey commercial building above a basement carpark
Application No.:	PDA 2021 0446
Meeting Date:	8 February 2022
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger (external member); Jean Rice (external member); Niall Macken (internal member); and Vishal Lakhia (internal member) – chair
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Glen Hugo, and Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	John Wilkin (Bennet Murada Architects) – Architect for the project; and Alison Davidson (Planning Ingenuity) – Town Planner for the project

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the preliminary drawings and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference. The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage.
2. The site benefits from an existing DA consent for a part 4- and part 5-storey serviced apartment development approved in 2014. With a change in ownership, the applicant is now seeking a commercial use on the subject site, with a new part 3- and part 4-storey commercial building proposal designed to be generally contained within the DA-approved envelope.

3. The Panel understands that the proposed floor space ratio and height of building exceed the maximum LEP controls for the site. The maximum permissible controls for the site include a 14m height and a floor space ratio of 1.75:1. The proposal seeks a maximum 17m height in a portion of the site and a floor space ratio of 2.14 : 1.
4. The Panel is aware that the applicant is seeking the above-mentioned variations for height and floor space ratio based on the proposed sustainability and design excellence merits.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. Built Form & Scale:

- a. The Panel notes that the applicant has provided a comparison of mid-winter shadow diagrams and sun-eye views for both the DA-approved scheme and the revised Pre DA proposal. In order to allow a true comparison of impacts, the overshadowing diagrams and sun-eye views should further incorporate the existing context including the surrounding streets and buildings that are impacted during mid-winter.
- b. The Panel recommends that the ground floor design requires further refinement and resolution to better integrate the proposal within the surrounding public domain. In its current form, the brick base or plinth to the building appears too prominent within the streetscape, particularly along the side street.
- c. The Panel discussed the proposed built form transition from 4- to 3-storeys towards Meeks Lane. A suggested strategy to improve this transition would be to create a narrow planter box (approximately a metre deep) along the edge of the commercial space located in the north western corner (Refer Third Floor Plan) or other detailed refinement of the design. The objective of such an amendment would be to bring greater emphasis to that portion of the proposal addressing the site's most prominent corner.
- d. The Panel encourages the applicant to incorporate the input of a landscape architect to establish suitable soil depths for the roof terraces and rooftop gardens, and to allow appropriate planting without compromising the façade design and ceiling heights. The design of the entry stairs and ramps providing universal access from the surrounding footpaths should be thoughtfully integrated with the landscape design.

2. Architectural Expression:

- a. The potential architectural expression of the proposal was discussed in detail during the meeting. The Panel appreciates and supports the applicant's vision suggesting a departure from the conventional commercial office designs in the Inner West. In particular, the Panel supports the sustainability benefits of the proposed composite timber structure and encourages its refinement and further integration into the proposal.
- b. The Panel is eager to see how the proposal successfully further incorporates design and environmental aspects which were discussed at the meeting.
- c. The Panel identified a need for the integration of an effective strategy for sun control, heat loads and glare and reflection control necessary for a commercial building.
- d. Refinement and resolution of the façade design is encouraged to provide natural ventilation within the work areas. Additionally, the applicant is encouraged to continue the investigation of creating ventilation zones/pockets within the façade (e.g. a trickle vent within the curtain wall assembly).
- e. The Panel supports the potential for a curved glass corner marking this prominent urban location, however the final developed architectural expression should also establish a clear relationship to positive cues within the immediate context to reflect the character of the Marrickville area, and incorporate appropriate scaling devices. The panel also notes potential sustainability and passive solar design inconsistencies with the use of glazing on west facing façade.

- f. The Panel notes the extent of glass currently indicated within the preliminary façade design, and potential impacts on the surrounding streets, buildings and public domain caused by reflectivity. As the architectural design develops further the applicant is encouraged to consider appropriate façade design elements to mitigate against such impacts.
- g. The Panel suggests the closer integration of the proposed structural timber elements with the developed facade expression to create a rich architectural expression with greater visual interest. Further details in terms of selection of the glass type, curtain wall assembly and profile of the mullions and any other facade elements such as for shading will be critical to the success of the project including its sustainability.
- h. The future DA documentation should include details of the proposed design intent for key façade types in the form of 1:20 sections indicating façade type, sun shading devices, curtain walls, any horizontal fins, balustrade fixing, balcony edges, junctions, rainwater drainage systems, including any downpipes and similar details.

Conclusion:

The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage, particularly in the context of proposed floor space ratio and building height that exceed the maximum permissible controls for the site. As a consequence, the Panel is aware the applicant is seeking the Panel's support for the project's sustainability and design excellence merit.

The Panel's view is that the proposal is capable of demonstrating design excellence subject to the comments and recommendations included in this report and is supported in principal.

The impacts established by the existing approved building envelope should form the maximum permissible impacts of this new proposal.

The Panel offers its qualified support to the applicant's vision and would appreciate a second opportunity to review the proposal at formal DA stage. At a second review, the Panel expects the applicant would respond to the recommendations made in this report and to demonstrate the case for design excellence.