

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	41-47 Farr Street, Marrickville
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures on site. Construction of a residential flat building with basement parking, landscaping and associated works
Application No.:	DA/2022/0751
Meeting Date:	15 November 2022
Previous Meeting Date:	9 August 2022
Panel Members:	Tony Caro – chair; Jon Johannsen; and Jean Rice
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Kaitlin Zieme, and Annalise Ifield
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant’s representatives to address the panel:	Paul Buljevic – Architect for the proposal, and Ben Craig – Town Planner for the proposal

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).
3. The Panel understands that the proposal is within the Victoria Road Precinct, and the vision and controls are set out in Section 9.47 of the Marrickville Development Control Plan 2011. To support this vision being achieved, a Masterplan has been prepared for the precinct which identifies the desired future land uses for each site and provides guidance on future site layout and built form configuration.
4. The site is identified on the masterplan to include a residential flat building. Land to the south (37 Farr Street) of the site is identified on the masterplan to provide a publicly accessible open space in the form of a pocket park. 37 Farr Street is currently privately owned, as such its conversion to a park is only possible through its inclusion as part of this development application or as part of any future redevelopment of the adjoining land (e.g. a development application that includes lots – 33, 35 and 37 Farr Street).

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 at the previous Pre DA review, the applicant presented 2 design options – Option A including a six-storey building at 41-47 Farr Street and Option B including a seven storey building at 37-47 Farr Street, where 37 Farr Street was considered to be a public park amalgamated as part of the subject site to deliver the 7 storey option.
2. The proposal reviewed at this subsequent DA review excludes 37 Farr Street, which was expected to include a public park. Notwithstanding the exclusion of the park site, the applicant has continued with a proposed 7 storey built form (which previously was 6 storeys) as part of this development application. This grossly exceeds the maximum permissible LEP controls for both building height as well as the floor space ratio. A footpath with some side landscaping is now proposed as a through-site pedestrian link between Farr Street and the cul-de-sac on Mitchell Street. This is acceptable as a through site link but would be of much greater amenity if it was integrated with a new public park at 37 Farr St in the future.
3. However, given the exclusion of 37 Farr Street from this revised development application there is no assurance to the Council that a public park and associated high quality public benefits as discussed at the Pre DA meeting and as envisaged by the master plan will be delivered as part of this or a future development application.
4. The Panel restates that the applicant should demonstrate with urban design and contextual analysis how the proposal can manage adverse impacts on the adjoining properties and the public domain. This analysis should consider the potential development of adjoining properties within the urban block based on the Inner West LEP and DCP controls.

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. An FSR 2.2:1 floor space ratio is now proposed, which exceeds the maximum FSR 2.0:1 that applies to the site by 10%. A proposed building height of 23.9m exceeds the maximum permissible height of 20m by 20%. The Panel recommends that the proposal should comply with the LEP controls for FSR and height, particularly because this is the first development to be assessed under the new controls for the precinct and if approved would establish an undesirable precedent for non-compliance.
2. With regards to the building height, the Panel considers that the proposal should be restricted to a height of six 3.2m residential storeys. Any built form exceeding the LEP height plane should be limited to access and amenity infrastructure supporting rooftop communal open space, with a landscaped setback to avoid visual impacts on the public domain or overlooking of adjacent development. The Panel also recommends that no private internal space or enclosed areas should be provided on the rooftop with the exception of one unisex accessible toilet.
3. The Panel discussed the challenges related to waste collection and consequent impacts on the quality of street presentation at ground floor level. The applicant should resolve the ground floor configuration with Council’s engineers with regards to the loading dock size and location if a basement collection option can be demonstrated to not be viable. It is the Panel’s general

recommendation that width of vehicular crossings should be minimised and ideally separated to improve street presentation and avoid overly wide aggregated crossings. However given the site is located at the eastern dead-end of Farr Street (and not used by school children), the proposed collection from ground floor may be acceptable.

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 considers that the proposal is capable of delivering acceptable design quality if revised to comply with the maximum FSR 2:1.

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 restates that provision of ceiling fans to all habitable areas is encouraged as a low energy alternative to any A/C system, with floor-to-floor and floor-to-ceiling heights to be both ADG compliant and suitable for the use of ceiling fans.
2. The applicant is encouraged to include a rooftop photovoltaic system for environmental benefits and for use in power/lighting to common areas. This could be integrated into a pergola structure to provide shade at the roof terrace level.
3. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow water collection, storage and reuse for irrigation within the site.

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 rooftop communal open space must deliver ADG compliant residential amenity for the proposal since the ground floor communal open space will not achieve required solar access in winter, and creates adverse amenity issues for the adjacent units. The Panel is unconvinced by the proposed rooftop pool area, and recommends the roof top should be entirely dedicated to larger usable landscaped ‘open space’ suitable to a wider diversity of resident needs.
2. The rooftop communal open space should be provided with barbecue/outdoor kitchen, a sink, outdoor seating areas and appropriate shading. The applicant should refer to ADG Parts 4O and 4P to develop the detailed landscape design.
3. In terms of deep soil area requirements, the proposal should comply with the minimum 15% of the site area as per the NSW ADG Objective 3E-1. The Panel recommends addition of a deep soil zone along the rear boundary (as previously proposed) to allow planting of a variety of shrubs and larger canopy trees, to enhance the interface with the adjoining property.
4. The Panel supports provision of a deep soil area within the front boundary, which should be provided with large canopy trees addressing the Farr Street public domain.
5. The applicant should review the proposed location for the substation to comply with any clearance requirements from permanent structures and trees and if possible to allow views to and appreciation of the landscaped area along the north of the site from Farr St.

6. A CPTED strategy and a night-time lighting strategy should be considered as part of the development application for success of the pedestrian 'publicly accessible open space' pathway, and ensure that units have internal oversight of this area.

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 considers that the internal apartment layouts are well resolved and the proposal will achieve an acceptable, ADG compliant level of residential amenity.
2. The ground floor entry foyer should be reconfigured to improve the sense of arrival with relocation of the services cupboard and revision of Unit G03 layout to provide a more discrete front door entry.

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 ground floor pedestrian entry door should be moved forward to align with the building line, to avoid potential CPTED issues at the entry.
2. Fire egress strategy for ground floor level should be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified specialist to ensure NCC compliance.

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.”

No discussion

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. Revised architectural drawings should identify location of A/C condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel recommends that these should not be located within balconies unless thoughtfully integrated into the building fabric with screens to address any visual or acoustic impacts on nearby units or the surrounding public domain.
2. Developed architectural documentation should include details of the proposed design intent with 1:20 sections indicating materials, balustrade types and fixing, balcony edges, junctions, rainwater drainage including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal.

Conclusion:

Provided the Applicant addresses the recommendations of this Report, the proposal can satisfy the IWC standards for design excellence and does not require further review by the Panel.