



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	110-114 Norton Street & 113 Renwick Street Leichhardt
Proposal:	Demolition of all structures and erect 15 residential units in 4 levels above 4 ground level commercial units over 3 levels of basement parking.
Application No.:	PDA/2022/0340
Meeting Date:	13 December 2022
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Russell Olsson – chair; Diane Jones; and Jean Rice
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; Kaitlin Zieme; Bismark Opoku-Ware; Ferdinand Dickel; Sinclair Croft; Martin Amy; and Rachel Josey
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	AG Projects Pty Ltd – Project Manager

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. The applicant 'AG Projects Pty Ltd' described at the commencement of the meeting that their role is as a 'designer' and 'project manager' for the proposal. It appears to the Panel that the proposal has been prepared without the direct involvement of a 'qualified designer' – defined as a NSW registered architect, as required by the NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2021 and NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 65.
3. The Panel therefore notes its concern for the validity of any future Development Application lodged under such arrangement, which would potentially fail the jurisdictional thresholds that apply to the development of a residential apartment building.



4. The Panel recommends that Inner West Council determine whether a consultancy-type or a contract agreement between an 'architect' (PSI Architects) and a 'non-architect corporation' (AG Projects Pty Ltd) is a suitable arrangement for the provision of architectural services.
5. The Panel recommends that Inner West Council ensures that any future Development Application provide the necessary architectural documentation and design verification statement, both demonstrating that a registered architect has designed or directed the design of the project, in order to validate the status of any future DA.
6. The Panel considers that as a pre-DA discussion only high level comments will be offered as part of this early review.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel notes that the subject site is located within a heritage conservation area and consists of 4 lots – 110, 112, 114 Norton Street and 113 Renwick Street. There are contributory items located at 112 Norton Street, 114 Norton Street and 113 Renwick Street. The Panel is not convinced by the applicant's strategy for substantial demolition of the contributory items on 112 and 114 Norton Street. Only the street wall is proposed to be retained, considered 'facadism', with no substantial retention of the contributory buildings. Furthermore, no justification is offered by the applicant for complete demolition of the contributory item at 113 Renwick Street.
2. The Panel notes that a maximum floor space ratio of 1.5:1 applies to the site without a height control. Nevertheless, the Panel finds it difficult to offer support for the proposed height of 17m as it appears excessive within the streetscape. Furthermore, the applicant's strategy of adding a large vertical indentation addressing Norton Street creates a built form out-of-character with the conservation area. The Panel discussed the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy in relation to the site and considers that it cannot be relied upon as a valid basis to justify the proposed built form.
3. The design proposal should be informed by (and the documentation should include) urban design and streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character, height/s, open space, built form and pattern of development of the surrounding context, particularly as the subject site is located in a heritage conservation area. The Panel also recommends that the proposed built form, height and resultant architectural expression should be established through positive cues evident within the immediate context in order to reflect the character of the area and study of the streetscape as a whole, including both sides of the street and the heritage corner buildings and towers in the vicinity. The urban design analysis should consider existing prominent buildings in the locality including – Leichhardt Town Hall, Leichhardt Public School, Post Office and Church buildings.
4. The Panel considers the applicant's strategy of providing access from Renwick Street creates potential traffic issues for this local street. The vehicular driveway located under the proposed detached dwelling house is not supported owing to adverse residential quality and amenity impacts.. The Panel also queried the applicant about residential and non-residential waste collection, loading/unloading and services provisions for both residential and non-residential uses, which appear to be unresolved.
5. The applicant needs to apply the primary controls from the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG) including but not limited to –
 - a. 3D Communal open space: Provision of a communal open space with a minimum area equal to 25% of the site area should be considered and its location should ensure that at least 50% of the communal open space receives a minimum of 2 hours of direct sunlight between 9am to 3pm during mid-winter.
 - b. 3E Deep soil zones: A deep soil zone equivalent to 7% of the site area provided for environmental benefits and to support meaningful landscape design including large canopy trees and shrubs within the site area. A suitably qualified landscape architect/designer should be engaged to develop the landscape design concept.

INNER WEST

- c. Part 4A Solar and daylight access: Both living rooms and private open spaces of at least 70% of apartments should receive a minimum 2 hours direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm at mid-winter. Mid-winter sun eye views should be provided for detailed review.
 - d. Part 4D Apartment size and layout: 2 bedroom apartments with 2 bathrooms should have minimum internal area of 75m².
6. The proposed 3.0 metre floor-to-floor height may not achieve the requirement of the ADG Part 4C Ceiling heights given NCC acoustic, energy and waterproofing requirements. The Panel expects the proposal to achieve a minimum 2.7m floor-to-ceiling heights within all habitable areas, compliant with the ADG. The Panel understands that a floor-to-floor height between 3.1 to 3.2m will be required to achieve compliance with the NCC and result in ceiling heights compliant with the ADG. Additionally, floor-to-ceiling heights should allow provision of ceiling fans as a low-energy alternative for the proposal.
 7. The Panel notes that the common areas on ground floor spaces appear to be poorly planned and lack integration of building services elements (such as fire hydrant booster valves, mail boxes, pump room, fire indicator panel, meters panel, main switch board, communications, exhaust risers, etc).
 8. Fire egress from the basement and residential levels need to be certified by a suitably qualified specialist. The vehicular access ramps and basement layouts need much greater level of resolution to comply with the relevant Australian Standards.

Conclusion:

It is the Panel's view that, in its current state, the proposal cannot be supported due to the reasons listed above. The Panel expects a revised proposal to be developed in accordance with the recommendations offered in this report and the applicant should demonstrate compliance with targets established by the ADG.

Furthermore, a revised and formalised Pre-Development Application should be considered by the applicant, where the proposal is developed with direct involvement of a 'qualified designer' – defined as a NSW registered architect, as required by the NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2021 and NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 65.