

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	37-47 Farr Street, Marrickville
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures on site, and construction of a residential flat building consisting of 51 apartments, a two storey basement carpark, and a publicly accessible open space.
Application No.:	DA/2022/1164
Meeting Date:	17 January 2023
Previous Meeting Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 August 2022 – Pre DA meeting with the AEDRP, and • 15 November 2022 – DA meeting for a separate development application (DA/2022/0751) for 41-47 Farr Street, excluding No. 37 Farr Street (the park site)
Panel Members:	Tony Caro – chair Jocelyn Jackson, and Diane Jones
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Annalise Ifield, and Kaitlin Zieme
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant’s representatives to address the panel:	Paul Buljevic (PBD Architects) – Architect, Yvette Carr (Ethos Urban) – Town Planner, Scott Jackson (Arcadia) – Landscape Architect, and John Fitzgerald – client’s representative

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and landscape 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).

Discussion & Recommendations:

Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

1. The proposal is within the Victoria Road Precinct, and the vision and controls are set out in Section 9.47 of the Marrickville DCP 2011. To support the DCP vision, a master plan has been prepared by the applicant for this precinct which identifies the desired future land uses for each site and provides indicative layouts for built form and open space.
2. The site is identified on the master plan to include a residential flat building and a public accessible open space in form of a pocket park. The open space is identified on the master plan as part of lot no. 37 Farr Street.
3. The Panel, at a previous meeting in November 2022 reviewed a separate development application (DA/2022/0751) for the subject site. This previous separate development application excluded lot no. 37 Farr Street (the park site) from the proposal and included a roof top communal open space.
4. The proposal reviewed by the Panel at this January 2023 meeting has been lodged concurrently by the applicant. It removes the rooftop communal open space (when compared with the previous separate DA/2022/0751) and adds an open space as part of lot no. 37 Farr Street to match with the DCP vision and master plan. The open space is intended to have a dual function – to serve as both a ‘communal open space’ for residents and to provide a ‘through-site public connection’.
5. The Panel is not convinced about the applicant’s strategy for the proposed open space as there are potential conflicts between shared ‘communal’ and ‘public’ uses with regard to its management, maintenance and safety/security for user groups. The Panel suggested an alternative strategy could be to introduce open palisade fencing between a ‘publicly accessible through-site walkway’ along the western edge of Lot 37, to clearly delineate the required ‘communal open space’ component of the subject development dedicated to the residents.

Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

1. A floor space ratio of 2.3:1 is proposed across the site, which exceeds the maximum FSR control of 2.0:1 by 10.6%. The Panel supports the proposed height for this proposal, which appears to be within the 20m LEP height limit. It is noted however that the reduction in building height for this alternative scheme when compared to concurrent November scheme has been achieved by simply deleting the recessed upper communal facilities. This results in a six storey form without any upper level setback/s and although height has been reduced, horizontal mass and bulk is visually increased.
2. The Panel recommends that the proposal should comply with the maximum FSR control, 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. A suggested strategy is to consider reconfiguration of the basement levels to eliminate the proposed gym and any excess car parking spaces within the basement. It is the Panel’s understanding that these contribute to the FSR exceedance. The Panel considers that the gym location within the basement is problematic due to lack of natural light and ventilation.
3. The Panel notes that there are 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 regard to the loading dock size and location if a basement collection option cannot be demonstrated to be practically viable. It is the Panel’s general recommendation that width of vehicular crossings should be minimised and the crossings 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 in this instance.
4. The Panel notes that the south-western corner of the building will be highly visible from the Mitchell Street public domain as in this alternative scheme it protrudes beyond the existing predominant building line along the eastern side of Mitchell Street. The Panel recommends that an architectural corner treatment similar to the north-western corner should be considered for this

south-western corner, and further that the north-western façade facing the proposed open space on Lot 37 be considered as a primary façade rather than a side boundary facing facade.

5. The Panel does not support the excessive floor-to-floor heights proposed within the basement as this creates unnecessary excavation volumes. The Panel recommends significant reconfiguration of the basement layouts to create more compact and efficiently planned layouts. The Panel also strongly recommends that the extent of basement should be restricted to within the main building footprint and the new open space on Lot 37 to the south-west of the building retained as a deep soil zone for large tree plantings.
6. The Panel suggested introducing a dedicated hoist to transport the bins and waste from storage to ground level collection areas.

Principle 3 – Density

1. The Panel considers that the proposal can deliver acceptable design quality if revised to comply with the maximum FSR 2:1.

Principle 4 – Sustainability

1. The Panel notes that ADG-compliant solar access to the communal open space may not be achievable as the building appears to overshadow it. The applicant should provide sun angle views at mid-winter confirming the extent of direct solar access to the proposed open space.
2. 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.
3. The applicant is encouraged to include a rooftop photovoltaic system for environmental benefits and for use in power/lighting of common areas. This could be integrated into a pergola structure to provide shade at the roof terrace level.
4. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow water collection, storage and reuse for irrigation within the site.

Principle 5 – Landscape

1. In terms of deep soil area requirements, the applicant should confirm compliance with the minimum 15% of the site area as per the NSW ADG Objective 3E-1. The Panel recommends additional deep soil zone within the 'open space' (south of the building) which should be provided with a variety of shrubs and large canopy trees.
2. The Panel recommends provision of a deep soil area within the front boundary, which should be provided with large canopy trees addressing the Farr Street public domain.
3. 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.
4. 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 adjacent to the 'communal open space'. The applicant should ensure that units have internal oversight of this area. (Also refer comments offered in Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character)

Principle 6 – Amenity

1. The Panel considers that the internal apartment layouts are generally 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 by relocating the services cupboard.
3. The Panel recommends further refinement of the internal apartment layouts to resolve the following:
 - a. The entry doors to apartments G07, 109, 209, 309, 409 and 508 should be reconfigured to avoid direct entry opposite the lift door.
 - b. The entry door to the ground floor apartment G03 is located directly across the common pedestrian entry door. It is recommended that the entry door to G03 should be relocated to a more discrete location.
 - c. Consider addition of operable windows to bathrooms within Units G02, G03, G04, 101, 102, 106, 201, 202, 206, 301, 302, 306, 401, 402, 406 and 502 to allow daylight and natural ventilation.

Principle 7 – Safety

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

No discussion

Principle 9 – Aesthetics

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:

The Panel notes there are presently two concurrent applications for this development. The Panel has a preference for this version as it includes the allotment at 37 Farr St as beneficial open space for residents and the community.

With acceptable resolution of the recommendations made in this report, the Panel is of the view that the proposal is capable of delivering an acceptable level of design quality. The Panel understands that a further review this proposal will be required as part of a full Development Application.