

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	19-23 Hercules Street Ashfield
Proposal:	Mixed use building with basement car parking, ground floor retail and shop top housing with 16 apartments including one affordable housing unit
Application No.:	DA/2022/0832
Meeting Date:	6 April 2023
Previous Meeting Date:	15 November 2022 and 2 November 2021
Panel Members:	Jocelyn Jackson – chair; Tony Caro; and Matthew Pullinger
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, Niall Macken, Annalise Ifield, Martin Amy, Kaitlin Zieme
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Tony Owen – architect for the project

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 Panel has had the opportunity to review the proposal at 2 previous meetings - at the Pre-DA and DA stages - and thanks the applicant for providing the revised documentation with majority of previous recommendations addressed, primarily including:
 - a. Reconfiguration of the ground floor to allow a direct and legible pedestrian connection to the lift.
 - b. Removal of the 'voids' or 'internal courtyards' from the layouts and subsequent reconfiguration of the internal layouts of all apartments, to maximise consistency with the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG). The Panel further expects that compliance with ADG requirements for solar access and natural cross ventilation will be confirmed by Council's assessment officer.
 - c. Addition of building services within the middle portion of the residential layouts. The new building services spaces labelled – Main Switch Room, Fire Equipment, Suspended Rain Water Tank, Storage, Plant Rooms, and Bicycle Parking.

- d. Retention of the existing facades of the subject proposal and revising the corresponding unit layouts, to create a positive relationship with the local streetscape character.
 - e. Refinement of the southern boundary side wall (nil setback) in terms of its design composition, fenestration and material selection.
 - f. Reconfiguration of bathroom layouts to provide bathroom doors in more discrete locations.
 - g. Designation of the affordable housing apartment/s within the scheme along with the affordable housing provider in perpetuity (Details to be confirmed by Council's assessment officer).
 - h. Confirmation of true North on all architectural drawings.
3. The remaining recommendations and comments from 2 previous Panel meetings are therefore restated in the next part of this report.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel restates that the applicant should undertake separate discussions with Council on statutory planning matters related to potential site isolation of 25 Hercules Street. The Panel also notes that the narrow width of 25 Hercules St and its location adjacent a heritage item to its south (corner of Liverpool Rd) could preclude a future viable development of that site in isolation. Based on the 'benchmark design' for 25 Hercules Road as an isolated site, the Panel does not consider this would be a viable development with compromised access via a shared basement that already appears very tight.
2. The Panel restates that nil lot setbacks will require confirmation of the structural integrity of adjoining properties. Further details should be provided with required input from a structural engineer.
3. With the intention of maximising active retail frontage, the Panel recommends the relocation of the Booster assembly to the rear laneway should be confirmed with a suitably qualified specialist.
4. The Panel suggests the communal open space slab edge (on Level 3) could be pulled back to improve outlook, natural light and ventilation into the apartments (102 and 103) located in the building base behind the existing shopfront facades.
5. The Panel restates that minimum internal storage volumes within all apartments should be confirmed on the architectural drawings for compliance with the guidance offered within Part 4G Storage of the ADG. At least 6, 8 and 10m³ storage volumes are required for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, with minimum 50% volume located within the apartment.
6. The Panel discussed the proposed architectural expression for the tower element (Levels 3 and above). The vertical grouping of 2 storeys expressed with taller-proportioned glazing makes the proposal appear more commercial-like. The Panel recommends further resolution and refinement of the street elevation and return party walls and the tower form will be perceived in the round, visible from the surrounding public domain. A more unified and three-dimensional treatment is recommended to unite both elevation treatments. A suggested strategy is to introduce a series of horizontal elements within these elevations. Whilst not discussed in the meeting, it is noted that the deep recess shown on the plans to the north of the lift is not expressed in the Hercules St façade design. Integration of this space into the adjoining northern unit as internal floor space or balcony could be investigated.
7. The Panel restates that provision of ceiling fans to all habitable areas is encouraged as a low energy alternative to any A/C system.
8. 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.
9. Consideration should also be given to provision of an 'all electric' power service with no gas appliances.

INNER WEST

10. 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 is of the view that the proposal is capable of delivering an acceptable level of design quality after the recommendations made in this report are incorporated.