



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	307-315 Parramatta Road Leichhardt
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a part six (6) and part seven (7) storey development comprising 63 residential apartments over ground floor commercial with basement car parking, including rooftop communal open space, site through link, and to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Council for road widening
Application No.:	PDA/2023/0071
Meeting Date:	16 May 2023
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Jon Johannsen – chair; Russell Olsson; and Jean Rice
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; Niall Macken; Katerina Lianos; Iain Betts; and Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Paul Buljevic and Wendy Tong (PBD Architects) – Architects for the project; Daniel McNamara – Urban Planner; Edward Doueih, Andrew Doueih, Mitchell Favaloro (Ceerose) – Applicants

### 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 understands a previous (2018) NSW Land & Environment Court approval applies to part of the subject site for properties 305-313 Parramatta Road Leichhardt. The Court approval is for demolition of existing buildings and construction of a 4 storey mixed use building.
3. The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback as part of this Pre DA discussion.
4. 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 Apartment Design Guide (ADG).

## Discussion & Recommendations:

The Applicant made a presentation to the Panel with material that was not part of the pre DA package and this was made available to the panel after the meeting. This consisted of a Pre-lodgment Planning Summary and streetscape elevations, more detailed than was available in the PL documentation. This material and the Architectus Urban Design Review will be useful in consideration of the matters raised below and for the Applicant to assess how concerns raised might be better addressed with regard to the built environment context in any subsequent DA.

As a Site 1 that is located in a key location within Opportunity Site 2 of an area zoned B2 Local Centre, it is critical that a high quality precedent is set that can be a positive catalyst for future development in this precinct that is long overdue for renewal. The Panel appreciates the effort in preparation of initial urban form modelling for the site and believes that this should inform a fundamental reappraisal of the design approach for this DA based on Panel commentary below.

### Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

1. The Panel notes the proposed floor space ratio (3.06:1 as confirmed by Council) significantly exceeds the maximum permissible floor space ratio control of 1:1 within the Inner West LEP.
2. The Panel expressed concerns regarding the overall bulk, scale, form and density outcomes of the proposal as they are significantly greater than those anticipated by the current Inner West planning controls.
3. The Panel considers the proposal is not consistent with the character of the area, which is comprised predominantly of perimeter block forms that align with streets. The proposal consists of 2 vertical 6 storey forms perpendicular to Parramatta Road above a 2 storey street wall. These 6 storey forms will be highly visible in the local area and could set an undesirable precedent for built forms within the Inner West Heritage Conservation Area along the Parramatta Road corridor.
4. The Panel notes that as well as the built form and character suitability issues, there are statutory planning considerations accompanying the proposed development, which directly relate to the planning pathway currently being pursued by the applicant. The applicant should have a separate discussion with Inner West Council as to whether a development application or a planning proposal would be a more suitable pathway.

### Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

1. The Panel appreciates that a comprehensive set of floor plans are provided for an early Pre DA discussion. However, the applicant did not provide any detailed contextual analysis, particularly built form and streetscape analysis of the Parramatta Road Heritage Conservation Area to support the significant change in scale and built form prominence proposed on the site.
2. The Panel recommends that a detailed local character analysis be prepared and that the proposal be presented through a detailed visual impact assessment, to understand its scale and prominence from key vantage points along Parramatta Road and within the immediate context.
3. The Panel recommends the applicant considers an adjustment in building height to 4 storeys along the Parramatta Road frontage. Furthermore, the applicant should consider alternative building massing strategies to establish an appropriate urban and environmental design response for the site.
4. One possible strategy (but one of several) is to consider two or three slender buildings, with one of those buildings built to the Parramatta Road frontage. This building configuration should aim to minimize or eliminate noise and air pollution to habitable rooms, and introduce a more compatible ground plane activation and potential for improved communal open space above.

### **Principle 3 – Density**

1. The Panel notes that the FSR development standard is significantly exceeded and does not support the higher FSR. The Panel expects that recommendations in this report are accommodated and any associated impacts resulting from increased density and FSR are carefully examined and justified.

### **Principle 4 – Sustainability**

1. The Panel notes that in its current building configuration, direct solar access to the living areas and balconies of south-facing apartments addressing Parramatta Road will be significantly compromised and the solar access targets within the NSW Apartment Design Guide Part 4A may not be achievable. The drawings presented to the Panel did not demonstrate compliance. The applicant's intent is to orient living rooms towards the laneway addressing north and the busy Parramatta Road frontage addressing south. However, the Panel recommends the applicant should consider alternative massing and site planning strategies that maximise direct solar access to living rooms and balconies at mid-winter, and the number of south facing apartments without mid-winter solar access should be minimised or eliminated.
2. Revised architectural drawings should be provided confirming location of the A/C condensers.
3. The Panel encourages use of ceiling fans within all habitable areas of the apartments as a low energy alternative.
4. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow collection, storage and reuse within the subject site.
5. The applicant should include an appropriate rooftop photovoltaic system.

### **Principle 5 – Landscape**

1. Detailed landscape architectural drawings were not provided to the Panel as part of the Pre DA documentation. The Panel encourages the involvement of a suitably qualified landscape architect.
2. It is noted that the deep soil area nominated is beneath the paved E-W through site link, and it is difficult to see how this can achieve an expected high quality tree canopy.
3. Rooftop communal open space should achieve consistency with the ADG in terms of solar access during mid-winter. Similarly, it should be demonstrated that the size of the rooftop communal open space is consistent with the guidance offered by the ADG Part 3D-1.
4. The applicant is encouraged to apply the ADG (Parts 4O and 4P), and Inner West Council's Green Roof Policy and Guidelines to develop a detailed landscape design.

### **Principle 6 – Amenity**

1. Parramatta Road is a major road carrying very high traffic volumes that create high levels of noise and air pollution. The location of this site on the northern side of Parramatta Road offers the opportunity to shield the development from the Parramatta Road pollution while opening up the development to northern solar orientation. The proposal does not sufficiently minimise the Parramatta Road pollution, as the 2 six storey buildings, including balconies and living rooms, are set back only 6m from the road above a low podium. The first floor of the podium is an open frame, also allowing pollution into the open space and apartments.
2. The proposed form creates potential visual and acoustic privacy issues between the proposed buildings at the re-entrant building corners. Furthermore, outlook and amenity to the habitable areas planned around these corners are likely to be compromised. The Panel considers use of screening devices is unlikely to resolve their concerns, and alternative planning strategies are required.

3. The common lobby areas appear constrained given the scale of the development and may generate CPTED issues unless a more legible and amenable entry access is provided that should also offer bump spaces for social interaction.
4. The Panel recommends 2 lifts should be provided per circulation core. The provision of a second lift per circulation core is required considering a redundancy in scenario where any single lift per core is out-of-service or is used for removalists, deliveries or any non-residential use.

## **Principle 7 – Safety**

No discussion, but potential CPTED issues may arise as noted above.

## **Principle 8 – Housing Diversity and Social Interaction**

No discussion, but inclusion of some studio units would be recommended.

## **Principle 9 – Aesthetics**

1. The Panel recommends the applicant should study patterns of traditional building forms along the Parramatta Road Heritage Conservation Area and consider further refinement of the Parramatta Road elevation and expression to create a stronger emphasis on the horizontal elements, vertical divisions and maintain an appropriate level of solid to void ratio within the architectural expression.
2. The Panel also recommends a finer grain of shopfronts for the ground floor along Parramatta Road, and a closer correlation between those parts of the architectural composition above and below the awning line.
3. As previously noted, the proposal will be highly visible along the Parramatta Road corridor and from surrounding areas. The applicant should develop a comprehensive view analysis from several prominent vantage points to demonstrate if the building form and its architectural expression sits positively within the local area.
4. Developed architectural documentation for the revised scheme 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.
5. Also refer recommendations offered in *Principle 2 – Built Form & Scale*

## **Conclusion:**

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage. The applicant seeks a significant variation to the permissible floor space ratio control and there are statutory planning considerations accompanying the proposed development, which directly relate to the planning pathway currently being pursued by the applicant. The Panel has not fully commented on the architectural, internal amenity and landscape design issues considering these will be lower-order issues in comparison.

The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form and configuration and expects a revised proposal to return for a further review as part of another formalised Pre DA or a development application.