



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	80-82 Ramsay Street Haberfield
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures and construction of a 3-storey shop top housing development including ground level commercial tenancy, car parking and 8 apartments on the upper levels.
Application No.:	DA/202/0165
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; Annalise Ifield; Iain Betts; and Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Stefan Lombardo and Rocky Zappia – Architects 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. 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:

#### Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

1. The Panel notes the proposed floor space ratio (1.73:1 as confirmed by Council) significantly exceeds the maximum permissible floor space ratio control of 1:1 within the Inner West LEP. It is the Panel's understanding that a 1:1 FSR control applies to the site given its location within the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area.

2. The Panel discussed about the architectural expression of the proposal to a considerable length at the meeting. The Panel supports the approach of 3 vertical bays to the street elevation, however the overall presentation is not consistent with the character of the area.
3. The Panel recommends the applicant should consider a detailed streetscape and local character analysis of the existing adjoining buildings within the vicinity. The extent of open/void spaces within the street elevation should be reduced and as a balance, solid/masonry surfaces should be increased. The architectural expression should have more solid surfaces with 'punched' openings, similar to other adjoining buildings within the Haberfield HCA.
4. A much greater degree of resolution and refinement is also required for the architectural treatment to the laneway. The rear expression should also include a greater extent of solid/masonry surfaces and less voids/open spaces. Greater structural resolution is also expected as part of the car park layout. Open-type balconies should be avoided as these create a form that is not consistent with the existing character of the area.

## **Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale**

1. There are potential residential amenity issues for the proposed apartments due to the constrained courtyard spaces which are more like 'light wells'. Reliance on such light wells as a primary source of natural light and natural ventilation for habitable rooms is not supported as it is contrary to the NSW Apartment Design Guide.
2. The Panel discussed that due to the FSR exceedance, the impact of the proposed built form is greater than that anticipated by the current Inner West planning controls. The overall built form strategy is problematic as the proposal relies on the adjoining properties for its amenity, and creates potential built form and amenity impacts on its neighbours.
3. The overall building configuration needs significant reconfiguration. The small 'light wells' are not adequate as the primary source for natural light and natural ventilation. Alternative built form and massing strategies should be considered by the applicant to improve the residential amenity and to establish compliance with the controls within the NSW Apartment Design Guide. The Panel therefore recommends a reduction in the overall number of apartments.
4. A suggested strategy is to consider a 'T' shaped envelope with greater side setbacks for the rear building wing. Alternatively, an 'I' shaped envelope could be considered by pulling the rear building wing out towards the laneway and creating proper ADG-compliant and generously planned central courtyards around the central circulation core. Possibly 1 large 3 bedroom or 2 x studio apartments could be included within the rear building, rather than 2 x 2 bedroom apartments. The applicant should ensure all building separation distances comply with Parts 2F and 3F of the ADG.
5. The Panel further discussed that a Pre DA meeting would have helped at this instance as such early built form and massing alternatives should have been explored and presented by the applicant as part of an early discussion.
6. The architectural quality and treatment of the residential entry from Ramsay Street should be given a further consideration. The entry door should be pulled-out to the street alignment to avoid potential CPTED issues.
7. The Panel understands that in its current ground floor configuration, the applicant may be trying to maximise the flexibility of retail uses, however 2 retail spaces should be explored as a finer grain alternative. The Panel further discussed an alternative where 2 retail spaces could be located on either side of a central residential corridor provided access from Ramsay Street. The panel considers the amenity of the residential entry could be improved to create a welcoming entry amenable to incidental social interactions between residents.

## **Principle 3 – Density**

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

### **Principle 4 – Sustainability**

1. The applicant should provide sun eye views at hourly interval between 9am to 3pm at mid-winter., confirming that living rooms and balconies of at least 70% of apartments receive a minimum 2 hours direct sunlight.
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. The Panel notes that lack of deep soil area and a communal open space within the proposal is contrary to the guidance offered within Parts 3D and 3E of the proposal. Any revised scheme should consider provision of communal areas as these are important resource as 'breathing space' and for providing recreation and social interaction opportunities for the residents.
2. 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.
3. 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. As discussed in earlier parts of this report, the Panel considers the small light wells to be problematic and reliance on the adjoining properties for amenity is not supported. Any revised scheme should incorporate guidance offered within Parts 2F Building separation and 3F Visual privacy.
2. Combined living + dining widths should achieve a minimum 4m for all 2 bedroom apartments (ADG 4D-3 Apartment layouts) and it appears none of the apartments currently meet the ADG.
3. Revised scheme should demonstrate consistency with the internal and external storage volume requirements within ADG Part 4G Storage.
4. The Panel recommends all common corridor areas should be provided with an operable window to benefit from natural light and natural ventilation.

### **Principle 7 – Safety**

No discussion except as mentioned under principle 2.

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

No discussion except as mentioned under principles 2 and 6.

### **Principle 9 – Aesthetics**

1. The Panel recommends the applicant should study patterns of traditional 2 storey building forms (as noted in the applicants design verification statement) along the shopping streets in the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area and respond to these more directly in the proposal. The applicant should consider further refinement of the street and the laneway elevations and

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expression to create a stronger emphasis on the solid/masonry elements, vertical divisions and maintain an appropriate level of solid to void ratio within the architectural expression. The panel considers the proposal is not consistent with the existing pattern of development and built forms of the shop top housing in the group of shops on Ramsay Street.

2. The Panel notes that there appears to be significant survival of the original fabric of the south wall of the c1914 bank and possibly other walls. Also the north wall, first floor and roof forms of the shop. (Note that the red outline on the 1943 image on page 12 of the Heritage Impact Statement is missing and page 13 is incorrect) The proposal demolishes all buildings on the site and does not indicate if options to conserve and adapt original fabric have been considered. If conservation of original fabric proves not to be feasible the former bank and shop should be recorded and interpreted.
3. 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.
4. Also refer recommendations offered in *Principle 2 – Built Form & Scale*

## Conclusion:

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel notes that the applicant seeks a significant variation to the permissible floor space ratio control.

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 the development application stage, particularly since no Pre DA discussion was considered by the applicant.