



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	314-322 Darling Street Balmain
Proposal:	Demolition of all existing structures onsite and construction of a 1-3 storey mixed-use development comprising retail /commercial uses and residential apartments.
Application No.:	PDA/2023/0120
Meeting Date:	13 June 2023
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger (chair); Russell Olsson; and Jon Johannsen
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; and Sinclair Croft
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Glenn McCormack (Benson McCormack Architects) – Architect for the project

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the pre-DA 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 and the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG).

Discussion & Recommendations:

Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

1. The Panel offers in-principle support for the proposed fundamental site planning diagram and is keen to see a developed proposal that successfully introduces an architectural expression suitable to the Heritage Conservation Area. The Panel recommends design consideration should be given to the primary street elevations addressing Darling Street and Little Darling Street. The architectural drawings should include streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character and built form pattern of the adjoining buildings along Darling Street.
2. The Panel recommends that the proportions and composition of the proposal relate to the traditional Victorian context of Darling Street. Considerations may include the introduction of vertical elements to better reflect the rhythm of the prevalent subdivision pattern within the area. Furthermore, if brickwork is proposed, patterned panels could be considered within the architectural composition above the street awning.
3. Further liaison with Council should be undertaken to determine how public domain improvements might be integrated around all of the site perimeter to foster improved street activation and a coherent landscape setting.

Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

1. The Panel discussed the proposal for a 3m building separation distance to be provided between the adjoining property at 1 Llewellyn Street and the commercial offices and residential terrace along the western boundary. This close proximity has the potential to impair privacy and increase crowding onto 1 Llewellyn Street. The proposed separation is less than the guidance offered within NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG) – Part 3F Visual privacy. Therefore, impacts associated with building separation should be addressed, ideally by an amended built form that achieves adequate privacy between 1 Llewellyn Street and the commercial offices. Similarly, the internal layout of the 1 bedroom corner apartment should be given careful consideration in terms of its spatial planning. The Panel recommends that primary habitable areas such as living rooms and bedrooms should be located and oriented away from the existing dwelling house on the adjoining property, to maximise visual and acoustic privacy between the proposal and the neighbouring dwelling. Direct lines of sight between any existing windows and balconies or habitable areas of the proposed dwelling should also be eliminated. Further, the Panel recommends use of screening devices in appropriate locations to eliminate potential cross viewing from the balcony.
2. The Panel recommends that the alignment of the single storey rear building wing (extending towards the Council carpark) should match the current alignment of the existing dwellings located at 1 and 3 Llewellyn Street. The Panel expects appropriate design consideration should be given to elevations addressing Llewellyn Street (to the west), the existing right of way (to the east) and the Council carpark (to the south). The Panel recognises and encourages the opportunity to maximise passive surveillance and activation of these adjoining public spaces.
3. The applicant should inquire with the relevant energy supply authorities whether a substation is required within the proposal. All building services elements (for example water meter, fire hydrant booster valve, pump room, fire indicator panel, meters, panels and main switch board) and waste storage and collection areas should be thoughtfully located to ensure that a desirable amenity is achievable within the ground plane.
4. Design consideration is required to achieve adequate privacy and security between adjacent residential unit terraces, potentially incorporating landscaping to avoid solid built elements that may be visible from Darling Street.

Principle 3 – Density

1. The Panel supports the density currently proposed for the site, understanding that the maximum permissible FSR has not yet been reached. As the proposal develops, and potentially faces pressure to achieve the maximum permissible FSR, the Panel will be keen to ensure that the positive aspects of the proposal described in this report are not diminished.

Principle 4 – Sustainability

1. The Panel expects that key ADG targets for solar access and natural cross ventilation are met by the proposal, as well as sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.
2. The Panel encourages provision of ceiling fans for habitable areas. Floor-to-floor and floor-to-ceiling heights should be ADG compliant to allow the use of ceiling fans and fit for purpose to allow for waterproofing and balcony drainage.
3. The applicant is encouraged to consider full building electrification and include a rooftop photovoltaic system for environmental benefits and power/lighting to common areas.
4. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow collection, storage and reuse within the site.
5. The Panel supports the provision of charging points for electric vehicles within the basement.

Principle 5 – Landscape

1. The applicant should develop a detailed landscape design with a suitably qualified landscape architect, to confirm provision of planters, green walls and other greening initiatives, particularly to any rooftop gardens.
2. The Panel supports the approach to tree retention along the through site link and would seek specialist input to ensure these trees will thrive in close proximity to basement structures.
3. The Panel recommends that the applicant should discuss opportunities for public domain improvements within Darling Street and Little Darling Street with Council's Landscape Design section. The Panel supports the addition of a landscaped pocket within Little Darling Street.
4. Deep soil areas should be further consolidated and maximised to establish consistency with the guidance offered within Part 3E Deep soil zones of the ADG. The Panel recommends deep soil areas along the western setback provided with large canopy trees and shrubs. The objective is to increase the landscape buffer, to improve privacy and enhance outlook for the residents on the subject site and the existing dwelling house on the adjoining property.

Principle 6 – Amenity

1. The Panel acknowledges that the applicant provided indicative layouts for the apartments and expects that these will develop further in line with the guidance offered within Part 4 – Designing the building of the ADG.

Principle 7 – Safety

1. The Panel offers in principle support for the site planning strategies that seek to activate the primary street frontages and improve safety and security within the through site link.

Principle 8 – Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

1. The Panel supports the proposed mix of dwellings and the principle of mixed use retail, commercial and residential development on this site.

Principle 9 – Aesthetics

1. Revised architectural drawings should confirm the location of and A/C condenser units and other mechanical plant equipment. The Panel recommends that these should not be located within

INNER WEST

balconies (unless thoughtfully designed with screens) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.

2. As noted above the street elevations must be further developed to show greater consideration of the traditional retail tenancy subdivision pattern, proportions, composition, detailing and materiality suited to this HCA.
3. Developed architectural drawings should fully describe the proposed design intent and include details of each primary façade type in form of 1:20 sections and elevations (or using appropriately detailed 3D design material) indicating materials, construction systems, balustrade types and fixings, balcony edges, window operation, integrated landscape planter beds, junctions, rainwater drainage, including any downpipes and similar details, within the proposal.

Non SEPP 65 Matters:

None

Conclusion:

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre-DA stage. The Panel would like a second opportunity to review the proposal again during the formal development application stage.