



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	172-174 Marrickville Road Marrickville
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures and construction of a 6 storey shop top housing development comprising a commercial tenancy on the ground floor and 12 residential apartments on the levels above and basement carparking.
Application No.:	DA/2023/0614
Meeting Date:	17 October 2023
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger (chair); Tony Caro; and Peter Ireland
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; Niall Macken; Sean Wilson; Kaitlin Zieme; Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Theo Loucas – 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. As a proposal subject to the State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 (SEPP 65) – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development, the Panel’s review and 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 Panel discussed the built form relationship between the proposed 3-storey building base and the existing 4-storey street wall evident at the adjoining property to the west (176 Marrickville Road) and recommends the scale of the proposed building base should be increased to more closely align with the horizontal datum of the existing neighbouring building, primarily its parapet wall defining the street frontage. The Panel notes that the proposed floor-to-floor heights may need to be adjusted to meet this recommendation.
2. In terms of the suitability of the proposed building form, the Panel considers a 5-storey (ground + 4 levels above) to be a more contextually appropriate response for the subject site and recommends a 1-storey reduction in the number of storeys and a corresponding redistribution of building mass. Redistributed built form above the 4-storey building base should be provided with an upper level setback to the street and to the eastern boundary.
3. The Panel notes that the proposed floor space ratio (FSR) complies with the maximum permissible LEP control and the Panel offers in principle support for a penthouse/upper-storey apartment at Level 5, provided that the visual and overshadowing impacts of this level are successfully managed as part of the redesign. Revised architectural drawings should include long site sections showing the immediate context and 3D views looking west along Marrickville Road for the Panel’s review.
4. In addition, rooftop communal open space should continue to be provided at the northern portion of Level 5, accessible from the lift and the fire stairs. The Panel appreciates this suggested location for the rooftop communal open space may not achieve numerical compliance with Part 3D-1 of the Apartment Design Guide (ADG), and the Panel offers conditional support in this instance if the landscape design achieves a high level of amenity for the residents, including shade, vegetation, toilet and kitchen facilities. *Refer Principle 5 – Landscape for further details.*

### Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

1. The Panel notes that the eastern site boundary wall will be highly visible until such time that the adjoining property might be redeveloped. Further, the western boundary wall will be apparent to the neighbouring residents within the existing apartments on 176 Marrickville Road. The Panel recommends a closer relationship between adjacent boundary walls to the west and greater resolution and refinement for the architectural expression of both boundary walls in terms of design, composition and materials selection.
2. The ground level residential entry door and the retail glass-line should be re-positioned to more closely meet the street alignment, designing out potential Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) issues and to better activate the street. The Panel also notes the proposed planter boxes in the ground floor residential foyer are unlikely to achieve viable growth and should be eliminated as part of the recommended reconfiguration of the foyer.
3. The Panel recommends resolution of essential building services on the ground floor as part of the development application stage, including thoughtful locations for hydrant booster valve, fire indicator panels, meters, mailboxes and other elements, which can otherwise compromise building address and public domain interface.

4. The Panel notes that one lift only is provided within a potentially 8-9 level building (including basements). The Panel is concerned for the lack of redundancy in a scenario where a lift is out-of-service or being used for deliveries. As a compromise, the Panel suggests the fire stairs be designed as a more inviting communicating stair, encouraging day-to-day use for residents, particularly within the lower level apartments.
5. A more generous lift size should be considered to accommodate comfortable daily movement for residents, deliveries, and removalists.

## Principle 3 – Density

1. Although not specifically discussed, the proposed density appears to be consistent with the FSR control and the Panel offers in-principle support for the density proposed subject to the recommendations made in this report.

## Principle 4 – Sustainability

1. The Panel expects Council's assessment officers to review the extent of solar access, adjacent site overshadowing impacts, and natural cross ventilation achieved by the proposal, in terms of its consistency with the ADG *Part 4A Solar access* and *Part 4B Natural ventilation*.
2. The Panel notes the number of apartments receiving no solar access exceeds the maximum of 15% within the ADG *4A-1 design criteria 3*. The Panel recommends reconfiguration of the apartment layout to achieve greater consistency with the ADG.
3. The Panel encourages use of ceiling fans within all bedrooms and living areas as a low energy alternative/augmentation to mechanical A/C systems.
4. Provision of a rainwater tank should be allowed for collection, storage, and reuse within the subject site.
5. The applicant should include details of an appropriate photovoltaic system on all architectural drawings and 3D views.
6. Full building electrification is encouraged along with the inclusion of EV charging points within the basement carpark.

## Principle 5 – Landscape

1. The Panel recommends the involvement of a suitably qualified landscape architect to develop the landscape design proposal and in particular any revised rooftop communal open space design.
2. Given the constrained area available for rooftop communal open space, greater emphasis on quality is expected over numerical compliance in this instance. The Panel expects that amenity created by the rooftop communal open space should be maximised through addition of a unisex accessible toilet, shaded seating areas, outdoor kitchen/barbecue and planting.
3. The proposal should adopt the guidance offered within ADG *Part 4O Landscape design* and *4P Planting on structures* and develop further details.

## Principle 6 – Amenity

1. The Panel notes a number of issues apparent within the proposal and encourages the following refinements:
  - A. Balcony sizes and areas should be consistent with guidance offered within 4E-1 of the ADG.
  - B. All apartments should be provided with both internal and external storage spaces, with volumes consistent with 4D of the ADG.
  - C. Bedrooms with 'snorkel' plans or any windows associated with large indents (for example apartment 102) should be eliminated from the proposal. As guided by the ADG, a window

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should be visible from any point in a habitable room to allow maximise daylight, natural ventilation and outlook.

- D. There are instances in the proposal where two adjoining balcony terraces create potential visual and acoustic privacy issues which should be resolved.
- E. Kitchens within the 2 bedroom apartments (302, 402, 502) have awkward layouts and would benefit from further resolution.

## **Principle 7 – Safety**

- 1. The Panel recommends a number of CPTED improvements at the ground floor within *Principle 2 - Built Form and Scale* of this report.

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

- 1. The Panel recommends that pre- and post-adaptation apartment plans should be refined so that the extent of amendments necessary for services, plumbing and structural elements are minimised.

## **Principle 9 – Aesthetics**

- 1. The Panel notes the prominent location of the subject site within the Marrickville Road streetscape and recommends that emphasis should be given on the quality and detailing of the proposed brickwork to achieve an appropriate facade design. The applicant should give further consideration to the proposed brick coursing, details and fenestration. The openings within the façade need to be thoughtfully articulated in terms of the overall sizes, opening type, and proportions. A review of brickwork types, quality, colour and detail in the vicinity of the site may offer helpful guidance to the architects in achieving this.
- 2. The applicant is encouraged to fully describe the proposed design intent through 1:20 sections and details of each primary facade type to clearly show materials, balustrade design, balcony edges, junctions, integration of rainwater drainage including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal.
- 3. Locations of A/C condenser units and other mechanical equipment should be confirmed on drawings and 3D views. These should not be located within balconies (unless thoughtfully screened and acoustically treated), rooftops or anywhere apparent from the public domain.

## **Conclusion:**

- 1. The Panel recommends that any amended proposal return to the Panel for further review.
- 2. The Panel understands that a pre-Development Application discussion was not sought by the applicant. Consequently, the recommendations offered in this report should be considered by the applicant as a preliminary review (similar to a pre-DA AEDRP review).
- 3. The Panel encourages the refinement of the proposal within the development application stage with the recommendations of this report incorporated into an amended DA.