



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

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| Site Address:  | 5 Eliza Street Newtown NSW 2042  |
| Proposal:  | Partial demolition, alterations and additions to the existing entertainment facility and addition of ancillary food and drink premises   |
| Application No.:   | PDA/2923/0283  |
| Meeting Date:  | 5 December 2023  |
| Previous Meeting Date:   | -  |
| Panel Members:   | Vishal Lakhia – chair;<br>Jon Johannsen;<br>Jean Rice;<br>Niall Macken   |
| Apologies:   | -  |
| Council staff:   | Sean Wilson;<br>Kaitlin Zieme;<br>Martin Amy   |
| Guests:  | -  |
| Declarations of Interest:                                      | None   |
| Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel: | Ornella Bucceri (Scott Carver) – Architect for the project;<br>Linda Babic – Heritage specialist;<br>Juliet Suich – Urban planner;<br>Nick Tobin, Greg Koury and Louse Green – Applicant's representatives |

### 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 thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage, and for providing a comprehensive set of architectural drawings and 3D views for this early discussion.

### Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel understands that the laneway (shown as 'Side Laneway' and 'Rear Laneway' on the architectural drawings) to the south and east is not part of the subject site and is not a part of this development application. However, the Panel recommends that the applicant should consider further investigation regarding – ownership, management status and consider possibility of landscape design upgrade since proposal creates access benefits from the laneway.

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2. The Panel was informed at the de-briefing that the proposed floor space ratio significantly exceeds the maximum permissible control, approximately by 60%. The Panel notes that the exceedance is partly because of full site coverage of the existing building, and additional gross floor area created by the new mezzanine areas and the proposed use of most of the ground floor for hospitality and associated service functions. It is the Panel's view that the additional gross floor area should not be achieved at the expense of compromised heritage outcome for the rear buildings, and a balance needs to be achieved in the proposal.
3. The Panel discussed the overshadowing impacts on the habitable areas and private open spaces on the adjoining dwellings to the south in midwinter, and the extent of overshadowing on these dwellings should be reviewed by Council's assessment officer. The Panel prefers as a minimum 2 hour direct solar access should be maintained between 9am to 3pm in mid-winter. If this is not achievable then further additional solar analysis should be considered demonstrating that solar access is achieved between 9am to 3pm at equinox (21 September or 21 March).
4. The Panel discussed that the rationale for significant demolition of the internal building fabric and elimination of original volumes from the rear heritage buildings has not been well-established through physical analysis within the Heritage Impact Statement. In the Panel's view (supported by the CMP), the rear heritage buildings pre-date the front building and are equally significant in terms of heritage contribution. The Panel does not support the level of intervention within the rear buildings and recommends that the extent of retention of the original building elements and volumes should be maximised. The panel notes Policy 1 of the CMP for the building is to conserve all original fabric of the three parts of the building. The proposal also removes other significant fabric such as the upper leg of the 1916 original stair.
5. The Panel notes that the draft SoHI is at a very preliminary stage and needs considerable further development particularly assessment of significant fabric. As an example, The panel notes that possibly significant details, such as the rear hall wall vent shafts (observed on site), are not identified in the CMP or SoHI and are proposed to be removed for the waste room door. The accuracy of the drawings re original fabric also needs to be confirmed. The existing buildings need to be clearly recorded in measured drawings. The Panel notes that the rear walls are proposed to be retained as "façade only" with a new structure built within them to support the upper levels. Facadism is not generally considered an appropriate heritage practice and is not supported by the Panel in this configuration. The structural feasibility is not established.
6. The applicant described at the meeting that the level of intervention to the rear buildings is required to make the project viable, however no financial analysis was provided as part of the Pre DA discussion or submission.
7. The Panel notes the extensive café / restaurant / hospitality offerings proposed requires major interventions in the fabric and generates the need for provision of services, such as waste removal, with further impacts. The area is well serviced by hospitality venues in very close proximity to the site.
8. The Panel supports the applicant's intent of creating new life for these heritage buildings, and would accept some level of compromise through heritage intervention, however, this needs to be well-established through the development application process, and documented within the Heritage Impact Statement and Conservation Management Plan.
9. The Panel appreciates consideration of a barrel vault ceiling to the foyer, and recommends the applicant consider whether the shape will create potential acoustic issues. The Panel notes that the vault expressed in the south elevation has an awkward relationship to the heritage buildings. Other options should be considered that have regard for the original fabric, building forms and spaces and pattern of use of the heritage buildings.
10. Provision of openings in the south elevation within the new structure is supported by the Panel, however, the amenity of the adjoining residential properties should be maintained by minimising potential noise and light spill. The Panel notes the potential to uplift and invigorate an upgraded lane through pedestrian use.
11. The extent of waste storage area in the proposal appears to be constrained in the Panel's view, given the amount of floor area proposed for the café, restaurant, and lounge bar. Furthermore, waste collection seems to be problematic, and further details in form of a waste management plan should be reviewed by Council's specialists. The extent of the proposed café, bar and



restaurant offerings is likely to generate considerable waste and require commercial bins which will clutter the lane. It is likely they would have to be collected from Eliza Street as the lane may be too narrow for waste collection trucks.

12. As part of the next development application stage, the applicant should resolve building services matters such as provision of mechanical ventilation and exhausts from the proposed internalised service areas, particularly from the kitchens, toilets, and amenity areas.
13. Given the extent of internalised spaces within the layouts, the Panel recommends the applicant should engage suitably qualified specialist/certifier as part of the next development application stage, to review the proposal for NCC compliance, particularly in terms of fire egress and accessibility provisions.
14. The Panel encourages the applicant to incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles to create high performance, energy, and resource efficient building. Whether ceiling fans could be used as a low energy alternative/augmentation to A/C mechanical systems should be considered by the applicant. There was a discussion about potential addition of a photovoltaic system and the location should be confirmed on all architectural drawings and 3D views. Consideration should also be given to the embodied carbon of the materials proposed within the new façade.

## **Conclusion:**

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage. The proposal should return for a second review with recommendations of this report incorporated and/or addressed.