



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	613-615 Darling Street Rozelle
Proposal:	Alterations and additions to existing building to provide a mixed-use development comprising ground floor retail, six residential units on the first and second floor levels and rooftop communal open space with loggia, and associated parking.
Application No.:	PDA/2023/0309
Meeting Date:	13 February 2024
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger (chair); Diane Jones; and Jean Rice
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; Niall Macken; Eric Wong
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Jennifer Hill (Architectural Projects) – Architect for the project

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and discussed the proposal with the architect (on behalf of the applicant) through an online conference.
2. The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the pre-DA stage.
3. As a proposal subject to *Chapter 4 – Design of residential apartment* of the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Housing 2021, the Panel's review and comments have been structured against the 9 Design principles set out in the SEPP (Housing) 2021 – Schedule 9 and the Apartment Design Guide (ADG).

Discussion & Recommendations:

Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character



1. The Panel discussed the overall site planning strategy proposed by the applicant. In the Panel's view, this strategy - with 3 apartments per floor - is problematic since the rear apartments derive their outlook and amenity across site boundaries and create potential built form and amenity impacts on the adjoining properties to the north, south and west of the subject site. Furthermore, the Panel notes potential fire safety and National Construction Code compliance issues in instances where windows are proposed within 3 metres distance from the side and rear boundaries.
2. The Panel does not support the applicant's proposed site planning strategy as it represents an overdevelopment of the site and tends to 'borrow' outlook and amenity from adjoining properties. The proposal would also constrain amenity of any future development on the adjoining properties to the north, south and west of the subject site.
3. The Panel recommends the applicant consider alternative site planning strategies that provide for two thoughtfully planned apartments per floor separated by a generously planned central landscaped courtyard. Additionally, a rear setback from the adjoining property to the west should be incorporated to mitigate against built form and privacy impacts upon neighbours. Such a site planning diagram would consist of two compact building elements separated by a central courtyard and connected by a central staircase and lift shaft.
4. The applicant should ensure consistency with the guidance provided by the ADG, particularly for the principle design criteria including building separation distances, solar access, natural cross ventilation, communal open space, visual and acoustic privacy.
5. As part of the proposal's compatibility with the local character, the Panel discussed the proposed awning and balcony structure extending over the public footpath and notes it potentially impacts the existing street tree. The proposed awning and balcony form over Council-owned land is considered inconsistent with the existing character of the Rozelle heritage conservation area and the Panel notes no historical evidence was presented to indicate there was an awning or balcony over the footpath at this property. In the Panel's view, should the applicant wish to persist with an awning/balcony, then any developed proposal should be informed by detailed heritage and urban design analysis of the area.

Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

1. The Panel discussed the existing structures on the site identified within the preliminary Heritage Impact Statement. The Heritage Impact Statement should provide a detailed historical and physical assessment of the existing structures including the early house which appears to be evident on the subject site, and the subsequent shopfront added to the front. It is also the Panel's preference that the existing wall addressing Darling Street should be retained, conserved and adapted sensitively without extensive modification unless to reinstate original details.
2. The proposed scale of building frontage to Darling Street should be limited to 3 levels and any loggia or shade structure proposed as part of a rooftop level should have a greater street setback to reduce any visual impacts on the streetscape.
3. The Panel encourages the applicant to incorporate building services and waste management strategies as part of the early design stages and resolve practical aspects such as location of any building services, fire indicator panel, fire hydrant booster valve, mail and parcel delivery boxes and residential and non-residential storage areas.

Principle 3 – Density

1. The Panel recommends an alternative building envelope be developed, which will likely result in a reduction to the proposed density at the subject site, potentially with two apartments per floor described above. The Panel also notes that fewer units with better amenity would improve



opportunities to maximise retention of the structures and spaces within the original building, creating both environmental and heritage benefits.

Principle 4 – Sustainability

1. The Panel expects the revised proposal to comply with the minimum targets set out in the ADG for solar access (part 4A-1, design criteria 1, 2 and 3) and natural cross ventilation (Part 4B-3, design criteria 1).
2. Use of ceiling fans within all living areas and bedrooms is encouraged as a low energy alternative or as augmentation to mechanical A/C systems.
3. Provision of rainwater harvesting should be considered to allow collection, storage, and reuse within the subject site.
4. The applicant is strongly encouraged to incorporate an appropriate photovoltaic system, and confirm the relevant details on all architectural drawings and 3D views.
5. Full building electrification is encouraged along with the provision of EV charging points within the carpark.

Principle 5 – Landscape

1. The applicant should work with a suitably qualified landscape architect/designer to develop the details of the communal open spaces and any other proposed planting.
2. The applicant is further encouraged to apply the ADG (Parts 4O and 4P) and Council's Green Roof Policy & Guidelines document to develop a detailed landscape design.

Principle 6 – Amenity

Refer comments and recommendations offered in Principle 1 and 2 of this report.

Principle 7 – Safety

1. The ground floor should be reconfigured to allow more direct, safe, amenable and accessible pedestrian entry from Darling Street. The Panel expects a direct line-of-sight to be established from the pedestrian entry door to the lift core, to avoid potential CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) issues.

Principle 8 – Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

1. The applicant should review the lift size in terms of compliance with the National Construction Code and other accessibility provisions.
2. Details of the pre and post adaptable apartments should be provided as part of the revised architectural drawings.

Principle 9 – Aesthetics

1. At the point of formal DA lodgement, the Panel requests the applicant provide a clear expression of architectural design intent illustrated within the street elevation and immediate context. This may take the form of 3D diagrams, 1:20 sections and details of each primary facade type to clearly show materials, balustrade types and fixing, balcony edges, junctions, integration of rainwater drainage including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal. Sections



should also confirm whether a 3.1m floor to-floor height will be adequate in achieving compliance with the relevant NCC provisions, whilst also achieving minimum 2.7m floor-to-ceiling heights within all habitable spaces of the apartments.

2. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of A/C condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel advises these should not be located within balconies unless thoughtfully designed and screened, or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.

Conclusion:

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback as part of the pre-DA discussion. The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form and recommends the fundamental building configuration and design strategies be amended in line with the recommendations offered in this report.