

# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	211 Liverpool Road Ashfield
Proposal:	Partial demolition and construction of a 8-storey mixed-use building with a commercial use and boarding house components.
Application No.:	PDA-2024-0094
Meeting Date:	16 July 2024
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Tony Caro (chair) Russell Olsson Jon Johannsen
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia Annalise Ifield Tom Irons Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Paul Oreshkin (Dickson Rothschild) – 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.

### Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The AEDRP typically advises on matters related to architecture, urban design, landscape design and design excellence, however at this instance, the Panel identified an overarching statutory planning issue with the permissibility of the proposed development at the subject site. The Panel understands that the proposal does not comply with the minimum 800m<sup>2</sup> lot size requirement within the Housing SEPP 2021 legislation [Part 3, Clause 69(1)(b)(ii)], and recommends the applicant seeks separate statutory planning advice from the Inner West Council's development assessment officers regarding the permissibility of the proposal at the subject site with an area of 234.9m<sup>2</sup>, which is significantly below the SEPP requirement.

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2. Furthermore, the Panel has been informed that the proposal exceeds the maximum allowable floor space ratio and height provisions (including the 30% bonus) within Housing SEPP 2021 (Clause 24 Non-discretionary development standards). The proposed floor space ratio is 4.15:1 whilst the maximum permissible including the bonus is FSR 3.9:1.
3. In the Panel's view, the site width and area are severely constrained, and this limits the proposal's capacity to achieve acceptable architectural, urban design and amenity outcomes. In this context the Panel therefore elected not to comment on the detail provided, as it does not support the broad proposition. It does however provide the following comments as part of the Pre DA review process.
4. The proposal relies on an existing narrow portion of adjoining land along its eastern boundary that serves as access to a larger existing residential apartment development to the north (the lot addressing Orchard Place, Amy Place and Brown Street). The Panel has also been informed that the lot located to the north also owns the narrow strip adjacent to the subject site.
5. The scheme relies on a number of critical factors that depend on this sliver of land, including pedestrian access, fire egress and cantilevered habitable space above. The applicant must determine the practicality and legality of this proposition, including whether any part of the building could be projected over land not on its site or in its ownership.
6. Based on the limited documentation provided by the applicant, it is not clear how the internal spaces will be planned and used by residents. The rooms are irregular in shape, reducing their ability to be easily furnished. Furthermore, the quality of outlook, daylight and natural ventilation within these rooms is questionable, given the size and orientation of the windows. In the Panel's view, the proposal is assertively built to its boundaries as a way to maximise floor space, without due consideration of its legal feasibility and internal amenity, or likely impacts on adjacent sites.
7. The proposed communal open space and communal living rooms appear to be undersized and do not meet the minimum SEPP targets. Additionally, there are other non-discretionary provisions for carparking, motorcycle and bicycle parking, which should be separately discussed with Council's assessment team.
8. The Panel also raised concern about the blank side walls addressing the right of way and the western side boundary since these will be highly visible from the surrounding public domain.
9. The recent uplift in allowable bulk and scale of built form within this precinct is challenging, and the transitional impacts will be evident for some time. New development on small/micro sites of up to eight storeys presents visually prominent blank side walls and exaggerated differences in scale between old and new building fabric that is difficult for architects to reconcile easily.
10. There are fundamental statutory planning and urban design concerns and non-compliances that have not been appropriately considered in this pre DA submission to Council and the Panel. Consequently this proposal in its current form and configuration is not supported by the Panel, as it does not achieve the quality and design excellence (Inner West LEP 2022, Clause 6.9) for architectural design, urban design and landscape design, as expected for a boarding house proposal within the Inner West local government area. A preferable outcome for development of this site would be amalgamation with adjacent property to the west, which would help overcome many of the issues raised above.