



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	409-415 Parramatta Road Leichhardt
Proposal:	Construction of a six-storey mixed use development including ground floor commercial space with co-living housing above
Application No.:	PDA/2025/0013
Meeting Date:	29 April 2025
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger Tony Caro Jon Johannsen Vishal Lakhia (chair)
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Kuepper Weir Sinclair Croft
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Karla Castellanos – Urban Designer for the project Joe Vescio – Urban Planner for the project Enrique Blanco – Designer for the project Alex Deacon – Design Manager Alan Chen and Alex Lekovski (Develotek) – Applicant's representatives

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. **Design Excellence:** The Panel reviewed the pre-DA proposal in terms of design excellence, as required by the Inner West Local Environmental Plan 2022 – Clause 6.9. Additionally, the

proposal meets the threshold established within the AEDRP Terms of Reference to be nominated for this review.

2. Reliance on Draft Planning Provisions (Draft PRCUTS):

- a. The Panel appreciates the early engagement to discuss the urban design strategy for this site and thanks the applicant for providing high-level concept diagrams and sketches at the meeting. The Panel acknowledges the suitability of amalgamating 5 smaller lots to create a larger, well-proportioned site with 3 street frontages, which is likely to enable a more successful redevelopment outcome.
- b. The Panel notes that the current statutory planning provisions for the site anticipate a maximum floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.5:1, subject to the consent authority being satisfied with the proposal's contribution to street activation and its alignment with the desired future character of the area. The applicant's preliminary design strategy seeks to rely on more generous provisions set out in the Draft Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS), which are yet to be formalised, but which propose a 3:1 FSR and a 23.5m (six-storey) height limit.
- c. Given the significant increase in proposed building height and density, and given that the PRCUTS remains in draft form with no specified timeframe for its gazettal, the Panel offers the following advice with a clear caveat that the scheme is not able to be supported until such time as the PRCUTS controls are finalised and implemented by the state government. In the interim, the applicant is encouraged to engage further with Council to clarify the status and indicative timeframe for implementation of PRCUTS and the likely associated statutory planning controls.
- d. Should the applicant wish to proceed with a formal development proposal prior to the finalisation of PRCUTS, the Panel recommends that a revised scheme be developed in accordance with the existing statutory controls, with a maximum FSR of 1.5:1, for further review and discussion.
- e. While the applicant noted during the meeting that a scheme compliant with the current planning provisions is not considered financially viable, the Panel notes only that its role as a design excellence forum calls only for a focus on the architectural and urban design merits of a proposal, rather than its financial feasibility.

3. Urban Design Considerations:

- a. Any developed pre-DA submission should be prefaced with a thorough urban design and heritage character analysis as a foundation. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed massing responds to both the existing heritage character and the potential future development on neighbouring properties within the vicinity.
- b. The Panel recommends that the proposal strongly reinforces the significance of the existing two- and three-storey datum along Parramatta Road, particularly in terms of enhancing the site's corner presentation. Additionally, the proposed massing relationship along Renwick Street appears abrupt and requires careful consideration and resolution to ensure a more harmonious transition.
- c. The Panel consistently recommends a minimum setback of 3m for new development above the two- and three-storey datum along the Parramatta Road frontage, particularly within a Heritage Conservation Area. This requirement, based on the Inner West DCP, should be properly addressed in any revised building massing. As currently proposed, the building massing appears to crowd and overpower the retained existing character buildings, particularly as viewed from the corner. Some reconfiguration of the proposed built form and open terraces on upper levels should be considered to address these concerns.
- d. The Panel supports the notion of a thoughtful intervention within the existing fabric of the character/period buildings, provided this is considered carefully from a heritage character, urban design and resultant amenity perspective. The applicant should ensure that any proposed architectural interventions create suitably proportioned openings (consistent with solid-to-void ratios evident in the locality) which align with retained internal spaces and are consistent with the surrounding streetscape character. Additionally, the Panel recommends the meaningful retention of key architectural elements (e.g. fenestration, chimneys, roof



forms, party walls, and joinery) be explored in conjunction with heritage consultant input for the preparation of any revised building massing.

- e. The Panel notes potential residential amenity concerns related to the constrained size and configuration of the proposed central atrium space and recommends that these issues be addressed through refinement of the layout to improve functionality and liveability.
- f. In accordance with the Housing SEPP 2021, the applicant should demonstrate how proposed co-living uses are capable of compliance with the building separation distance criteria outlined in Parts 3F-1 and 3F.5 of the NSW Apartment Design Guide, specifically for the northern interface of the proposal.
- g. The applicant should ensure that the minimum targets for communal open space and common living areas, as specified by the SEPP are met.
- h. For the DA submission there must be a comprehensive strategy for ESD initiatives and how these are to be sensitively integrated within the proposed built form.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback. Acknowledging its independent and advisory role, the Panel encourages the applicant to develop a detailed massing proposal to facilitate further discussion during any future Pre-Development Application meeting.
- 2. Until the PRCUTS is finalised and development controls gazetted, the Panel supports only a scheme that responds to existing controls. Advice offered in this report is intended only to guide the applicant in the preliminary, pre-DA environment until such time as the building height and FSR controls change.