



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	106 Crystal Street Petersham
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures and construction of a three storey shop top housing development with basement car parking, a ground floor commercial premises and 22 co-living housing rooms.
Application No.:	DA/2025/0177
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:	Rudy Jasin and Peter Yip (CD Architects) – Architects for the project James Corry (GAT) – Urban Planner for the project Louie Beaini – Applicant's Representative

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings provided by the applicant and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.

2. The proposal is nominated for this AEDRP Review by Council since it meets the minimum threshold and the criteria established within the Terms of Reference.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. Statutory Planning Matters:

- a. The Architectural Excellence and Design Review Panel (AEDRP) provides advice on matters relating to architecture, urban design, landscape design and design excellence. In this instance, there is an overarching statutory planning concern regarding the permissibility of the proposed development on the subject site. The Panel understands that the proposal does not comply with the minimum 800m² lot size requirement stipulated in the Housing SEPP 2021 [Part 3, Clause 69(1)(b)(ii)].
- b. The applicant is advised to seek separate statutory planning advice from Inner West Council's development assessment officers regarding the permissibility of the proposal, noting that the site area of 513.30m² is significantly below the SEPP requirement.
- c. Additionally, the applicant is encouraged to consult with Council's development assessment officers to confirm the methodology used for calculating gross floor area and floor space ratio, particularly in relation to any proposed exclusions.

2. Overall Building Configuration:

- a. The Panel discussed the typical residential floor plan and noted that the western building wing adopts a skewed alignment. According to the applicant, this skew is intended to improve direct solar access to the co-living rooms. However, the Panel is concerned for the impacts this building geometry has on the coherence of the overall building form and for the diminished amenity available within the central courtyard. The Panel notes that although desirable, there is no statutory planning requirement for co-living rooms to receive direct solar access. In contrast, the eastern building wing is more successfully sited with an orthogonal alignment to both the front and rear boundaries.
- b. The Panel recommends that the western building wing adopt an orthogonal alignment consistent with the eastern wing. This adjustment would form a more regular central courtyard, enhancing solar access and increased natural light to both the courtyard and common circulation spaces.
- c. Additionally, the Panel encourages the applicant to explore widening the central courtyard by shifting the western building wing further towards the rear laneway - this should be done judiciously and with close regard to any associated impacts. The Panel acknowledges the zone transition occurring across the laneway and considers that strict application of the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG) Clause 3F.5 may not be appropriate in this context. A balanced approach—one that improves the built form and landscape interface to the laneway—could generate an improved urban design outcome.

The Panel is cautiously optimistic that the amenity currently enjoyed by the existing properties at 1 Brighton Street, 2 Terminus Street, and 1 Crystal Lane will not be adversely impacted by this adjustment. This should be carefully tested and clearly explained in a future submission.

- d. The Panel considers that the amenity of single rooms within the western building (Units 101, 102, 105, and 106) is inadequate due to their constrained dimensions. A reconfiguration of the western wing to create more regularly shaped and proportioned rooms is recommended. Specifically, the Panel suggests mirroring the layout of the eastern wing and limiting the number of double rooms to five per level (rather than six) to improve design quality and residential amenity.
- e. The proposed location of the Communal Room is not supported, as it lacks outlook and is disconnected from the rest of the development. The Panel recommends relocating this facility to either the ground floor courtyard or the top floor (or both), co-located with rooftop communal open space, to ensure it benefits from direct solar access and meets SEPP requirements. Provision should also be made for appropriate amenities and weather protection for any roof terrace facility.

- f. The Panel recommends moving the ground level pedestrian entry door forward to align with the primary street frontage. This change would address potential CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) concerns and improve street activation and presentation.
- g. The Panel recommends relocating the services and plant room currently proposed in the north-eastern corner of the ground floor to the lower ground level. This space could then be repurposed to complement a small café area co-located with a more inviting pedestrian entry, thereby contributing to activation and improved interface with the public domain.

3. Architectural Expression:

- a. The architectural expression proposed for both the street and laneway façades requires greater resolution and refinement. The Panel recommends developing a stronger contextual analysis of positive features in the immediate streetscape and use such an analysis to inform an architectural response. The Panel supports the proposed scale of the Crystal Street facade, but recommends refinement to create a more positive interface with each of the two immediate neighbouring buildings (which have different parapet heights and different architectural expressions). An apparent discrepancy in parapet height between the elevation and CGI views must be resolved in the proposed architectural expression that would also benefit from more depth and richer detailing to enhance visual interest and design quality.
- b. The Panel notes the extensive glazing proposed for the eastern and western elevations and recommends that the applicant investigate the integration of self-shading sun control strategies into the architectural expression that could also improve visual interest.
- c. Revised architectural documentation should clearly indicate the location of any proposed a/c condenser units. These should not be placed within balconies unless they are thoughtfully screened and they must not be visible from the public domain.
- d. Further developed architectural drawings should fully describe the design intent and include comprehensive documentation for all primary façade types. This should take the form of 1:20 sections and elevations—or equivalent detailed 3D representations—demonstrating materials, construction systems, balustrade types and fixings, balcony edge treatments, window operation, any integrated planter beds, material junctions, rainwater and balcony drainage systems, and the placement of downpipes or similar elements.

4. Landscape Design:

- a. The Panel recommends that the applicant develop detailed landscape design documentation, including exploration of additional opportunities for planting on structures such as rooftops, terraces, and building edges.
- b. The current presentation of the open car park to the laneway is not supported. The Panel recommends further resolution of the built form (noted above) and the laneway interface to soften the built edge through effective landscaping strategies—for example, by incorporating small to medium-sized trees and/or shrubs.
- c. The applicant is encouraged to investigate the feasibility of providing a unisex accessible toilet within or close to the rooftop communal open space.

5. Sustainability provisions:

- a. The Panel encourages high levels of sustainability, including exceeding minimum BASIX requirements, not limited to - building electrification, ceiling fans to habitable areas, photovoltaic systems, EV charging facilities, and the like. The proposal does not currently provide adequate information on this aspect of the design.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel recognises that there are fundamental statutory planning matters that need to be addressed to the Council's satisfaction.
- 2. The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form and configuration for the reasons set out in this report.
- 3. The Panel recommends that the applicant redesign the proposal by positively incorporating and/or addressing the recommendations offered in this report.