



# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	38-48 Parramatta Road Stanmore
Proposal:	Integrated development under Water Management Act 2000, works include demolition of existing structures, site remediation works and construction of a five (5) storey mixed use development with ground floor commercial premises, basement parking, and 112 co-living housing rooms.
Application No.:	DA/2025/0229
Meeting Date:	29 April 2025
Previous Meeting Date:	A previous DA was approved on 03/05/2019 by the Land and Environment Court for the demolition of the existing premises and construction of a 5 storey mixed use development comprising 2 commercial tenancies on the ground floor, 30 residential dwellings above and associated basement car parking, landscaping and strata subdivision. The previous DA was reviewed by the (former) Architectural Excellence Panel in 2017. The previous proposal partly retained the character buildings on the site.
Panel Members:	Matthew Pullinger Tony Caro Jon Johannsen Vishal Lakhia (chair)
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Camille Guyot Kaitlin Zieme Sinclair Croft
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Kim Jones – Architect for the project

## Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed the architectural drawings provided by the applicant and discussed the proposal with them through an online conference.
2. The proposal was nominated for this AEDRP Review by Council as it meets the minimum threshold and the criteria established within the Terms of Reference. The Panel also addressed the proposal in terms of design excellence as required by the Inner West Local Environmental Plan 2022 – Clause 6.9.
3. The Panel notes that the applicant elected not to undertake a Pre-DA meeting. As a result, this review occurs at the Development Application stage, where the principal site planning, urban design, architectural and heritage decisions have already been resolved by the applicant, without engaging with the Panel's advice on design excellence matters.

## Discussion & Recommendations:

### 1. Statutory Planning Matters:

- a. The AEDRP typically advises on matters related to architecture, urban design, landscape design and design excellence. In this instance, the Panel also acknowledges significant departures from key planning controls and recommends that the applicant seeks statutory planning advice from Council's Development Assessment section. The Panel was briefed at the meeting on the following issues:
  - i. The maximum permissible FSR of 1.5:1 (1,895.4m<sup>2</sup> GFA) applies to the site and the applicant proposes 2.39:1 (3,024m<sup>2</sup> GFA), resulting in a 59% variation. Furthermore, the applicant should also confirm their GFA calculation method with Council as potential discrepancies may understate the final GFA.
  - ii. A 14m height limit applies to the site and the proposed height of 16.1m represents an approximately 15% variation.
  - iii. The applicant proposes the demolition of the 2 character/period buildings currently located on the site. The Panel was informed at the meeting that these buildings are retained in the existing LEC-approved proposal for a 5 storey mixed use development with 30 residential apartments.
- b. The Panel notes that, under the Inner West planning framework, these character/period buildings are expected to be retained and adaptively reused. Furthermore, any new additions should adopt a 6m upper-level setback from the Parramatta Road frontage. The applicant has not provided any investigation into alternative site planning strategies or design concepts that explore the retention and/or adaptive reuse of these character/period buildings. Rather, demolition is proposed on the basis that the buildings have no formal heritage status under the LEP.

### 2. Site Planning Diagram:

- a. The Panel is concerned that the overall site planning and urban design 'diagram' proposed by the applicant presents flaws, as it raises significant amenity (privacy and cross viewing) and fire separation (open gallery access) concerns with adjoining neighbours to the east and west. Due to these issues, it appears the proposed density exceeds the site's acceptable development capacity. Further details on these concerns are discussed in the following sections of this report.
- b. The Panel is not convinced by the applicant's strategy of building open access galleries in close proximity to both side boundaries due to potential impacts on the built form and

amenity of existing and future neighbouring properties. Additionally, the proposed gallery access corridors adjacent to the side boundaries raise fundamental fire separation and egress concerns that do not appear to have been sufficiently investigated.

- c. The Panel notes a further issue with the site planning diagram, which is the minimum required building separation distances from the side boundaries. Applying the relevant provisions of Housing SEPP 2021, the applicant needs to demonstrate consistency with Parts 2F and 3F of the NSW Apartment Design Guide. If the applicant intends to rely on gallery access corridors along the side boundaries, a minimum 6 to 9m separation distance should be proposed between gallery access corridors and the side boundaries.

[The ADG 2F Building Separation criteria mentions that – ‘Gallery access circulation areas should be treated as habitable space, with separation measured from the exterior of the circulation space’].

- d. Contrary to the above ADG criteria, the applicant proposes to build open gallery access corridors approximately 1m from the side boundaries. The Panel does not support this configuration as it effectively borrows amenity from the neighbouring properties to the east and west in order to benefit the subject site (and maximise density beyond the relevant FSR controls).
- e. Additionally, the Panel is not convinced that building separation from the existing low-density residential dwellings located to the south across the laneway is acceptable in this instance, particularly in terms of its compliance with the NSW ADG Part 3F criteria.

### 3. Unsatisfactory Ground Floor Configuration:

- a. The Panel does not support the proposed colonnade treatment at ground level, which is inconsistent with the character of the Parramatta Road corridor. This design results in an unsafe and potentially hostile pedestrian environment, detracting from both amenity and street engagement. To enhance street level activation and mitigate against potential Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concerns, the ground floor layout should be reconfigured to incorporate retail or other active uses that directly align with the street boundary.
- b. The Panel discussed the laundry’s presentation to the street, located adjacent to the entry lobby, and this is considered problematic. If units do not have laundry facilities an alternative location should be provided such as adjacent the roof terrace where open air drying and social interaction would be possible (eg. Nightingale model in Brunswick, VIC).
- c. The ground floor presentation to the rear laneway is not supported since it raises potential CPTED concerns.

### 4. Internal Amenity:

- a. The Panel expressed concerns regarding the amenity of rooms facing Parramatta Road, particularly how these rooms can attenuate road noise while still achieving natural ventilation. Furthermore, the highly glazed façade design, featuring louvers, does not align with the character of the area.
- b. The Panel questions whether the proposed co-living rooms provide adequate facilities, including wardrobe, storage and desk areas, for 2 residents, as all rooms are indicated as double rooms.
- c. The limited outlook likely to be achieved from the Accessible Rooms 118 and 119, and Upper Level Rooms 219 and 220 is not supported by the Panel.
- d. The proposed floor-to-floor height of 2.9m is not supported as this dimension can not also achieve the minimum 2.7m ceiling heights expected in co-living proposals and required by the Inner West DCP.

### 5. Architectural and Landscape Design Matters:

- a. The Panel notes the fundamental statutory planning and urban design issues as set out in this report, which must be resolved to the Council’s satisfaction. As such, the Panel does not intend to provide detailed commentary on architectural and landscape design matters at this stage.

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- b. The Panel notes that Parramatta Road has historically been characterised by a finer grain of vertically proportioned buildings with a stronger emphasis on solid wall elements with smaller, vertically proportioned windows. In contrast, the proposal features largely undifferentiated, broad horizontal proportions with an over-reliance on the use of glass louvres, contributing to an expression that appears long, monotonous, lacking in visual interest and at odds with the traditional subdivision pattern which creates a finer vertically-proportioned grain of buildings.
- c. When compared with the positive character and period buildings in the area, the proposed architectural expression appears too singular, monotonous and horizontal, resulting in a substandard outcome.
- d. The Panel questions the viability of planters proposed over structures and raises concerns whether trees within the courtyard will be able to achieve optimal growth under the currently proposed design conditions.
- e. There must be a comprehensive strategy included for ESD initiatives and how these are to be sensitively integrated within the proposed built form.

## Conclusion:

1. The Architectural Excellence and Design Review Panel notes that there are a number of fundamental statutory planning and urban design issues that must be resolved to the satisfaction of Council. Accordingly, the Panel has not provided detailed commentary on the proposed architectural and landscape design solution at this stage, as these are considered to be best addressed when the significant planning and amenity issues outlined in this report are satisfactorily resolved.
2. The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form and configuration as it proposes too many rooms with inadequate amenity and creates too great a range of impacts on neighbouring sites and the context, effectively representing an overdevelopment of the site. The proposal in its present form does not achieve an acceptable standard of urban design, architectural and landscape quality expected of a co-living development.