



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	45 Arthur Street Marrickville
Proposal:	Demolition of the existing structures and the construction of a seven (7) storey co-living housing development of 42 rooms, with basement parking and associated works.
Application No.:	PDA/2025/0097
Meeting Date:	17 June 2025
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Russell Olsson Matthew Pullinger Vishal Lakhia (chair)
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Alexander Cave
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	David Benson, Daniel Martins (Benson McCormack) – Architects for the project Joe Vescio – Urban planner 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.
2. The Panel reviewed the 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.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel acknowledges that statutory planning constraints may apply to the proposed use of the site, currently zoned R2 Low Density Residential, where co-living is prohibited. The Panel also notes that boarding houses — ie. co-living buildings managed by a registered community housing provider — are permissible in the R2 zone but limited to a maximum of 12 rooms.
2. The Applicant should consult with Council's development assessment team to identify a suitable planning pathway that allows the proposed yield. In the context of this review, the Panel's design guidance is offered provisionally, with its discussion and recommendations focused on design excellence, architectural form and expression separate to the matter of permissibility.
3. During the briefing session, the Panel was advised that the properties currently zoned R2 Low Density Residential, including the site, are under Council's investigation and may result in significant uplift under future planning controls. The Applicant is encouraged to seek further clarification from Council regarding the timing and details of potential future FSR, height and zoning controls. The Panel understands the site is likely to be rezoned R4 High Density Residential.
4. The Panel generally supports the overall site planning and approach to building massing, and recommends that the Applicant include a thorough urban design analysis in any future submission. As a minimum, the Applicant should test how the proposed built form responds to the potential future redevelopment of the adjoining properties at 41 and 43 Arthur Street Marrickville. The Panel recommends including an indicative building envelope and floor plan diagrams for these properties as part of the requested analysis.
5. The Applicant should confirm whether a fire hydrant booster assembly is required and ensure all building services are effectively integrated into the ground floor layout, optimising both street frontage and user amenity.
6. The proposed lift overrun (typically 4.5m beyond the upper-most floor served) should be shown in 3D views, elevations, and sections. The Panel appreciates the design strategy adopted to incorporate the lift overrun into the primary building form. Visibility of the lift overrun from the public realm may be taken into consideration in assessment with regard to the 22m building height control.
7. The Panel encourages further refinement of the street elevation. It was queried whether a wider and more prominent vertical division would better separate and express the two building forms. More pronounced framing of the two resultant forms may also benefit the composition of the scheme.
8. The architectural design should address visual privacy at the lower levels, particularly across the rear boundary. In particular, open balustrades at all levels may not be suitable. A composite balustrade – solid upturns with partial openings – may create a better balance between privacy and outlook.
9. The Panel recommends that the north-eastern (rear) corner of the building would benefit from further modulation. It currently presents a large, singular building element. As a suggested strategy, the Panel noted that the brick frame used to delineate the building base from the top in the street elevation, may extend to the rear elevation. The Applicant is encouraged to investigate whether a similar horizontal datum could continue at the base of the rear elevation. The objective would be to break down the full 8-storey presentation to rear neighbours. Alternatively, a stronger vertical indentation could be incorporated next to the fire stairs to break the solid corner treatment.
10. The Applicant is encouraged to investigate and develop the proposed floor-to-floor heights (whether 3.15m or greater) required to achieve a minimum 2.7m floor-to-ceiling height nominated within the Inner West DCP, whilst also achieving structural, services integration, drainage, waterproofing and insulation requirements of the NSW Design & Building Practitioners Act 2020 and relevant NCC provisions.
11. The Panel appreciates the generous deep soil area towards the rear of the site co-located with the communal open space and communal living room on ground floor. The Applicant is encouraged to collaborate with a landscape architect to further develop the landscape design



strategy. The objective would be to better relate indoor and outdoor spaces and minimise difficult level changes.

12. The Panel encourages the achievement of a high standard of sustainability, ideally exceeding minimum BASIX requirements. This may include full building electrification, the provision of ceiling fans in habitable rooms, solar photovoltaic systems, EV charging infrastructure and strategies to reduce embodied and operational carbon.
13. Updated architectural drawings—including floor plans, elevations, and 3D views—should clearly indicate the location of any air conditioning condensers. These should not be placed on balconies unless properly screened and integrated into the architectural expression, and must be concealed from view within the public domain.
14. Developed architectural documentation should clearly articulate the anticipated design intent. Each primary façade type should be detailed with 1:20 sections and elevations (or equivalent 3D representation) describing materials, construction systems, balustrades, balcony edges, window operation, planter beds, material junctions, balcony drainage and downpipes. Particular attention should be given to the design and execution of brick patterns, hit-and-miss brickwork and other fine-grain detailing.

Conclusion:

1. The Panel acknowledges the design potential of the proposal and thanks the Applicant for engaging in the Pre-Development Application forum, enabling early dialogue. Noting the site falls within an area that is expected to undergo significant change and uplift, the Panel restates the limits of its advice while key statutory planning matters remain unresolved – particularly in relation to the proposed co-living use, which appears to be prohibited under the existing R2 zoning.
2. Subject to appropriate resolution of the planning pathway, further design development and the Applicant's constructive response to the recommendations outlined in this report, the proposal has the potential to contribute positively to the emerging character and urban quality of the area.