



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	351 King Street, Newtown
Proposal:	Alterations and additions to an existing mixed-use development to construct a 3-storey addition at the rear of the site containing 4 co-living units across two levels and a rooftop communal open space.
Application No.:	PDA/2025/0145
Meeting Date:	14 October 2025
Previous Meeting Date:	NA
Panel Members:	Diane Jones (chair) Jocelyn Jackson Tony Caro
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Kaitlin Zieme Sinclair Croft Alexander Cave
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Basil Lim (Applicant) David Johnson, EinV Group Daniel Barber, Town Planner, Paro Consulting Darren Woodman, Woodman Architects, Architect - presenting Wilson Perdigao, Paro Consulting Max Ding, CNPOWER Group Leo Lou



Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference. The drawings shared by the applicant during the meeting were not provided to the Panel before the meeting.
2. The Panel acknowledges that Chapter 4 – State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Housing 2021 - Design of residential apartment development applies to the proposal. Additionally, the Panel reviewed the proposal in terms of design excellence as required by the Inner West Local Environmental Plan 2022 – Clause 6.9.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. Site Planning and Urban Design:

- a. The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form and recommends redevelopment of the site as a whole, rather than the simple addition of new built form to the rear of the existing building. Opportunities for increasing the yield that do not diminish the amenity of existing units should be explored.
- b. The Panel notes that, in effect, the proposal is for a change of use from an existing boarding house to a co-living development.
- c. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider intervention to the existing building to improve the amenity of the existing nine (9) rooms, most of which do not have windows and receive light only through small skylights. This is grossly compliant with contemporary codes and standards for habitable rooms.
- d. While the proposed amenity of the four (4) new units is good in terms of access to natural light, outlook and acoustic privacy, the proposal removes access to natural light and air for three (3) existing units at the rear.
- e. The applicant needs to clearly demonstrate that the proposal meets contemporary compliance requirements in terms of amenity, safety and accessibility. The drawings shown to the Panel during the presentation indicated the provision of a lift, sprinklers, a fire pump room and upgrades to meet current BCA requirements. However, access to the lift did not seem to be possible from the main King Street entry. Upgrading or non-upgrading for other safety and amenity requirements were not defined. Will a fire engineering solution be required for an open stair exceeding three levels?

2. Ground Plane Configuration and Landscape Design:

- a. While the Panel notes that the proposed vehicle and bike parking will be non-compliant with the Housing SEPP & DCP, it recommends use of the rear courtyard for a landscaped communal open space, given the proximity of the site to services and public transport.
- b. The Panel acknowledges the applicant's proposal to meet the requirement for 20% site area as Communal Open Space through the provision of a rooftop terrace. While supported in principle, the design of this element needs to be carefully considered to avoid overlooking of adjoining properties.

The applicant is therefore encouraged to consider alternative ways to provide additional open space in reworking the existing building and the additions through, for example, an internal courtyard. For instance, the site is wide enough to accommodate four 3m+ wide dwelling units across the street frontage, separated by a courtyard from a similar two-storey element at the rear accommodating the bulk of accommodation. A new advanced/large tree species in the courtyard may be an alternative to maintaining the TPZ of the existing camphor laurel.



3. Architectural Resolution:

- a. The revised design and drawings will need to confirm the location of the manager's office and accessibility requirements including an accessible unit.
- b. The revised drawings must also show the existing tree to the rear of the site, its canopy and arborist's advice about protection of the root zone – or an alternative as in point 2(b) above.
- c. Drawings showing the neighbouring properties and the impact on overshadowing and overlooking in plan and section are required.
- d. The Panel encourages the applicant to revisit the dark-coloured finishes and proposed architectural expression in what is a harsh, hot and confined context.

Conclusion:

1. Recognising its independent, expert and advisory role, the matters outlined in this report should be positively addressed by the applicant. The Panel does not support the proposal in its current form given that it severely diminishes the amenity of three existing units through its proposed addition of four additional units.
2. Given the number of more detailed matters requiring further refinement and resolution, particularly in relation to the overall site planning, architectural and landscape design, the Panel recommends that an amended design be submitted for review.