



Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	525 King Street Newtown
Proposal:	A 26 room boarding house proposal provided within 2 four storey buildings constructed above the existing shopfront
Application No.:	PDA/2021/0426
Meeting Date:	16 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	None
Panel Members:	Russell Olsson (external member), Jocelyn Jackson (external member), and Vishal Lakhia (internal member) – Chair
Apologies:	None
Council staff:	Andrew Newman
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Place Studio – Architect for the project, and DMPS – Urban Planner for the project

Background:

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

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. The Panel thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback, considering the opportunities and challenges presented by the proposal. The Panel notes that the proposal, as presented by the applicant lacked urban design analysis and did not include details of the architectural design. The Panel realises that the proposal is at its preliminary stage, and it requires greater resolution in terms of – the site planning, building massing, retention of the contributory buildings, open space allocation, ground floor configuration, internal building configuration, architectural expression, pedestrian and vehicular access, and overall an appropriate response to its surrounding context.
2. The Panel understands the proposal exceeds the maximum floor space ratio and has a significant shortfall in terms of Council's car parking requirements. The proposed 2m upper level setback is not consistent with the Inner West DCP controls which requires a minimum 6m setback from the contributory buildings located within a Heritage Conservation Area. The Panel discussed that the Inner West AEDRP is an independent advisory only panel, and the applicant needs to separately engage with Council through a more formalised Pre DA process to resolve these site planning and statutory planning matters discussed at the meeting.

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3. The Panel considers that revised documentation should present the proposal within its surrounding context, mainly by identifying the contributory shopfronts within the King Street Heritage Conservation Area, Peace Reserve to the north, and any significant trees and vegetation that affect the site. The documentation should be considered in both 2D and 3D, given the scale of the proposal. The revised documentation should include streetscape analysis identifying the predominant character and built form pattern of the contributory buildings along King Street, in terms of vertical rhythm, solid to void ratio and richness in the fine grain detailing, as this would assist the applicant in developing an appropriate architectural expression for the proposal.
4. The applicant needs to work with a Heritage Architect to develop appropriate strategy that maximises retention of the contributory buildings within the King Street Heritage Conservation Area.
5. The Panel encourages the applicant to investigate the possibility of enabling a through-site landscaped connection to Peace Reserve via the adjoining properties located to the north.
6. In terms of building massing, the applicant should consider provision of 6m upper level setback from King Street (consistent with the Inner West DCP), and a minimum 12m internal separation between the proposed buildings. It is the Panel's view that the internal building separation distance may be required to be increased, in order to maximise direct solar access to any potential future development on the adjoining property to the south.
7. The building massing should include testing of future development scenarios for the neighbouring properties to the north and south of the site. Potential site amalgamations to the north and south of the site should be proposed. Testing should ensure that future development on the neighbouring properties will achieve the floor space ratio and height anticipated by the LEP, without compromising residential amenity, visual impact, privacy and solar access. Similarly, these tests should demonstrate that the amenity experienced on the subject site will be maintained in scenarios where the neighbouring properties are redeveloped. The Panel expects that these tests should establish consistency with the principal controls of the NSW Apartment Design Guide (solar access and natural cross ventilation) for the adjoining properties, and compliance with the SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 for the subject site in terms of the 3 hour direct solar access requirement to the common room/s and the communal open space/s at mid-winter.
8. The Panel raised the issue with the applicant that the ground floor should entirely offer a non-residential use to meet the LEP objective. The possibility of a café or other publicly accessible ground floor use oriented toward a landscaped courtyard would be an appealing potential use.
9. The Panel discussed that the proposal would be subject to large tree protection zones, considering that there is a significant tree cover within the site and on the adjoining properties. The applicant should engage an arborist to consider further investigation.
10. The Panel notes that the buildings lack provision of lifts for vertical circulation and this could be problematic for the residential amenity, given the proposal has a 14m or a 4 storey height.
11. The Panel expressed concern regarding high visibility of 14m high buildings (particularly the blank side walls). The proposal may be highly visible from the King Street corridor, Alice Street (to the north), King Lane and Alice Lane (to the south), Peace Park Reserve and from surrounding areas. The applicant should develop a comprehensive view analysis from several prominent vantage points to demonstrate if the building form and its architectural expression can sit positively within the local area. It is the Panel's intention to avoid formation of an undesirable precedent within Inner West Heritage Conservation Areas.

Conclusion:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel understands that the proposal is only at a preliminary stage and therefore appreciates that the applicant is seeking early feedback, given the complexity of the project due to its constrained width and location within the King Street Heritage Conservation Area.

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2. The Panel considers that the proposal requires a further review at a second more formalised Pre-DA meeting, to assess the design development in-line with the recommendations offered in this Report.