

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	143-149 Norton Street Leichhardt
Proposal:	Provide an additional storey to a DA-approved 3 storey shop top housing proposal
Application No.:	DA/2021/1067
Meeting Date:	30 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Jon Johannsen – chair, Diane Jones and Jocelyn Jackson
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia, and Eric Wong
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant’s representatives to address the panel:	Metropoint Group Architects – Architect for the project, and KN Planning – 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 understands that the development application proposes to add a third storey or a fourth level above a DA that is already approved. There is an addition of approximately 190m² of new gross floor area distributed across 8 apartments provided as ‘home-office’ or bedroom spaces.
3. The architectural drawings provided by the applicant do not clearly explain the extent of the development application that has been previously approved through the earlier DA proposal.
4. The Panel expressed several concerns related to the spatial quality and residential amenity within the bottom three levels of the proposal. However, the Panel did not raise these concerns or offer their recommendations to the applicant at this meeting, considering the configuration within the bottom three levels was already approved as part of a former development application. Below is a high-level summary of the Panel’s concerns with the previously approved DA:
 - a. Limited activation of the ground floor;
 - b. Spatial quality of the residential entry lobby;
 - c. A lack of an accessible entry from the carpark to the ground floor retail;

- d. Constrained living and dining room widths, and constrained bedroom sizes in all apartments. The sizes are below the minimum requirements within Part 4D of the NSW Apartment Design Guide (4m for the combined living and dining area widths within 2 bedroom apartments; a minimum 3m dimension for all bedrooms);
 - e. Lack of an appropriate building separation distance between the eastern and the western buildings. The Panel notes that a constrained 9m separation is provided, despite 12m separation required by Part 2F of the NSW ADG;
 - f. Lack of a deep soil zone and amenity of communal open space;
 - g. Inadequate storage areas for all apartments. The proposal is not consistent with the Part 4G guidance within the NSW ADG;
 - h. Potential CPTED issues within the laneway, additionally potential issues for vehicular access and egress from the basement into the laneway;
 - i. Concern regarding a lack of compliance with the accessibility provisions within the entire proposal; and
 - j. Concern that none of the apartments appear to be 'visitable' (front doors to all apartments need to be provided with wheelchair access)
5. The Panel identifies that there is a compelling need for the applicant to seek independent statutory planning advice, and additionally liaise with the Council's assessment section to clarify whether the above-mentioned concerns raised by the Panel need to be addressed by this particular development application, given the applicant has proposed an entirely new development application instead of seeking a 'Modification' to the previous approval.

Discussion & Recommendations:

Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character

"Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions.

Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change."

1. The Panel notes that the applicant's rationale for the 3rd storey addition is heavily based on height of the recently approved shop-top housing proposal at 160 Norton Street (located opposite the subject site). However, it is the Panel's understanding that the height for the DA-approved building at 160 Norton Street was established through site-specific DCP and LEP provisions, which is not the case for this proposal.
2. Provision of the 3rd storey on both buildings on this site takes a quasi-mansard roof form that is of concern. The Panel notes that buildings with such forms are not consistent with the typical built form character of the area, and this would be visible from a range of locations.

Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale

"Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook."

1. The Panel considers that the 3rd storey addition over the western building addressing Norton Street is problematic, as these additions will be highly visible from the surrounding public domain, particularly within the main streetscape. In the Panel's view, the top floor additions are not of a 'recessive nature' (as described by the applicant at the meeting).

2. It is also the Panel's view that the 3rd storey addition to the eastern building addressing the laneway should only be supported if the proposal establishes consistency with the guidance offered within Parts 2F – building separation and 3F.5 zone transition of the ADG. The Panel notes that there are low density dwelling houses on properties located further to the east of the laneway within the General Residential zone that have a floor space ratio of 0.5:1. Therefore, a suitable built form transition is required. It is further noted that a 9m building separation distance will be required for the proposal measured from the centre of the lane.
3. The extent of large west-facing glazed openings are problematic due to potential thermal loading issues, given the lack of sun protection for these windows.

Principle 3 – Density

“Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population.”

Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.”

No discussion

Principle 4 – Sustainability

“Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials, and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.”

1. The Panel recommends the applicant should avoid use of 'Monument' coloured metal sheet cladding and select a material with lighter colour and a solar absorptance (SA rating) equal to or below 0.69.
2. The Panel recommends review of the use of awning windows that restrict air flow for cross ventilation.
3. The Panel was advised by the applicant that all apartments would be air-conditioned and that the condensers would be located on balconies and screened. Location of this plant and screening is not shown on the drawings and cannot be assessed in this design review.
4. To help minimize energy consumption the Panel would also recommend inclusion of ceiling fans to all living areas and bedrooms, and integration of solar p/v panels for electricity use in communal areas.

Principle 5 – Landscape

“Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood

Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values, and preserving green networks. Good landscape design optimises usability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity, provides for practical establishment and long term management.”

No discussion

Principle 6 – Amenity

“Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being.

Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.”

Refer comments offered within the *Background* section of this Report.

Principle 7 – Safety

“Good design optimises safety and security, within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety.

A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.”

No discussion

Principle 8 – Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

“Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets.

Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people, providing opportunities for social interaction amongst residents.”

No discussion

Principle 9 – Aesthetics

“Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures.

The visual appearance of well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.”

Refer comments and recommendations within *Principle 2 – Built Form and Scale*

Conclusion:

The Panel does not support the proposal and recommends that the design be amended in-line with the recommendations offered within this Report. Moreover, the proposal also needs to establish consistency with the guidance offered by the NSW Apartment Design Guide, particularly given the likelihood of this being considered as a new DA.

The Panel needs a second opportunity to review a revised DA proposal that responds to the concerns raised in this Report.