

# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	246 Wardell Road Marrickville
Proposal:	A 6 storey shop top housing proposal over a basement carpark
Application No.:	DA/2021/0855
Meeting Date:	30 November 2021
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Jon Johannsen – chair, Diane Jones and Tony Caro
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Urban Link – Architect for the project

### Background:

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

### 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 supports the overall site planning and massing strategy that provides a 12m separation between the 6-storey eastern and the western buildings.
2. In terms of the ground floor interface with the laneway, the Panel advises that there is a compelling need for improvement of the laneway character through:
  - a. Provision of a single, consolidated point of vehicular access for both car and garbage vehicle entries, to reduce vehicular dominance within the public domain;
  - b. Removal of the of the at-grade visitor car spaces along the laneway interface and relocating these within the building;



- c. Reconfiguration of the pedestrian entry and lobby to improve the presentation to the laneway; and
- d. Introduction of street trees and landscaped areas along the laneway interface (Refer *Principle 5 – Landscape* for further details).

## **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 discussed that the applicant should consider further resolution with regards to the vertical alignment of building services within the proposal, including any required mechanical ventilation from the commercial levels to the roof.
2. Potential for improved articulation of the Wardell Road elevation is recommended through incorporation of a vertical recess at the junction with adjacent buildings.

## **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.”*

Given the site location close to good public transport, the Panel recommends that the car parking provision is the minimum required and if possible, reconfigure the basement space for more efficient circulation and amenity, and landscaping potential in the rear lane.

## **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 expects the proposal to be consistent with key targets established within the ADG for solar access and natural cross ventilation. Similarly, the Panel encourages the applicant to consider commitment to further sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.
2. Provision of ceiling fans is strongly encouraged in all habitable areas. Floor-to-floor and floor-to-ceiling heights should be detailed to permit the use of ceiling fans within the proposal.
3. Provision of a rainwater tank should be considered to allow water collection, storage and reuse within the subject site. The applicant should consider some type of irrigation system connected with the rainwater tank to water the plantation areas within the courtyard and the communal roof top garden.

## **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.”*

1. The Panel notes that the current scheme does not offer significant deep soil zones for environmental benefits. The proposal should be consistent with the minimum 7% requirement as per the Part 3E-1 guidance offered within the ADG. Deep soil should be incorporated in the

# INNER WEST

design, preferably within the central courtyard, and supporting new, large canopy trees and shrubs.

2. It is recommended that the design of the central courtyard should create a heavily landscaped buffer between the buildings to improve the residential amenity and outlook for the residents. Therefore, the Panel suggested that the active uses shown on the drawings be relocated to the roof terraces to remove the potential conflicts between private open spaces and the active communal activities proposed. The central courtyard can then be a green, passive space.
3. The Panel recommends provision of a unisex accessible toilet on the rooftop communal open spaces for both buildings.
4. The applicant should consider provision of street trees along the Wardell Road frontage. The outline of building awnings should allow adequate space for the street tree canopies to enable tree growth with a consistent form and be coordinated with the architectural drawings. Scope for tree planting should also be considered along the rear laneway with deep soil or appropriate sized planters integrated with a reconfigured basement noted above.

## 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.”*

1. The Panel discussed the internal amenity within apartments and recommends that the applicant should avoid provision of ‘L’ shaped kitchen layouts as this configuration would offer a limited storage above and below the kitchen counters. A linear wall kitchen with an appropriate length should be considered.
2. The Panel offered suggestions for improving privacy of bedrooms and bathrooms within the apartments, which could be achieved by relocating doors to such private spaces to more discrete locations, so these doors avoid direct opening-up into living areas and corridors of the apartments.

## 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.”*

1. The Panel requires the applicant to consider CPTED principles and a lighting strategy for safety, especially along the Laneway.

## 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.”*

# INNER WEST

1. The Panel recommends introduction of a vertical building indentation as a 'shadow-line' at the junction between the proposed and adjacent buildings along both – Wardell Road and the laneway frontage.
2. The Panel strongly encourages use of self-finished materials (such as bricks, concrete) for the proposal. Rendered and painted surfaces should be avoided in favour of materials with an integral finish.
3. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of AC condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel considers these should not be located within balconies (unless suitably screened visually and acoustically) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain
4. Revised architectural drawings should include details of the proposed design intent for key façade types in form of 1:20 sections indicating façade type, balustrade fixing, balcony edges, junctions, rainwater drainage system including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal.

## **Non SEPP 65 Matters:**

None

## **Conclusion:**

The Panel recommends the proposal should only be supported once it satisfactorily demonstrates improved design quality in-line with the recommendations provided in this Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel Report.