

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	504 Darling Street Rozelle
Proposal:	A 4 storey residential flat building
Application No.:	PDA 2021 0463
Meeting Date:	25 January 2022
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland – chair; Russell Olsson; and Garth Paterson
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Vishal Lakhia; Niall Macken; and Eric Wong
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant’s representatives to address the panel:	Marchese Partners – Architect 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 thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage considering the challenges presented by the proposal, particularly with regards to extent of the proposed floor space ratio that significantly exceeds the maximum permissible LEP control for the site.
3. As a proposal subject to the State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development (SEPP 65), the Panel’s comments have been structured against the 9 Design Quality Principles set out in the SEPP 65 NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG).

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.

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Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change."

1. The immediate context was discussed to a considerable length during the meeting. The Panel notes that the subject site is located within a Heritage Conservation Area. There are existing single storey cottages denoting a finer urban grain towards the east of the subject site.
2. The Panel is aware that a maximum permissible floor space ratio of 0.5:1 (0.7:1 including the bonus provision) applies to the subject site, and the applicant has considered a 1.67:1 floor space ratio. Due to the significant exceedance, the Panel notes that there are statutory planning considerations concerning the proposed development which will impact both the planning pathway (e.g. – whether a concept development application or a planning proposal) and the development outcome.
3. Regardless of the appropriate planning pathway, the Panel recommends reduction in the overall height of the proposal from 4 storeys to 3 storeys. Furthermore, the Panel recommends a 9m setback from the eastern boundary based on Parts 2F, 3F and 3F.5 of the ADG . The recommended 9m include 6m (required for a 3 storey apartment building) + an additional 3m required to facilitate appropriate transition to the existing single storey low density dwelling houses located to the east. The additional 3m is necessary in the Panel's opinion, to resolve potential amenity impacts between the residential flat building on the subject site and the existing low density residential dwelling houses to the east.
4. The revised proposal should provide a landscaped interface within the 9m eastern setback between the proposed building and the eastern boundary to the adjoining dwelling house. A vehicular ramp could be allocated within the 9m (and not necessarily within the building envelope) provided that the ramp is well-integrated with the landscape design, possibly with a pergola and vine over the ramp. The Panel recommends a single lane ramp with a wider car waiting bay near the footpath and an approximately 3m wide landscaped edge along the eastern interface of the site. The objective is to create a heavily landscaped buffer with a variety of new large canopy trees and shrubs to assist built form transition from 3 storey apartments to a single storey low density dwelling house to the east.
5. It is the Panel's view that the recommendations offered in Paragraphs 3 and 4 should be supported on urban design grounds, subject to consistency established by the proposal with the ADG, consistency with the recommendations offered within this AEDRP Report, and determination of a suitable planning pathway.

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 appreciates that a reference is made to the Darling Street terraces within the architectural documentation. However, in the case of this proposal the apartment layouts are entirely driving the built form and articulation along the Darling Street frontage. It is the Panel's view that there is need for a more rigorous approach to the Darling Street elevation in terms of formation of a regular and consistent vertical rhythm using the structural bays (similar to built form of the historical terraces). The Panel also notes that apartment layouts will require to be adjusted to achieve consistency with this recommendation.
2. The Panel notes that study areas within some apartments lack provision of windows. The proposed configuration is problematic as these study areas are capable of being enclosed, and could potentially qualify as bedrooms. The Panel considers a lack of window provision to such habitable areas is not consistent with the guidance offered within Part 4D-1.2 of the ADG, and raises potential issues with NCC compliance. It is the Panel's recommendation that enclosable study areas provided without windows should be avoided.
3. In addition to the height and setback recommendations made in *Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character*, the applicant should consider a relevant roof form for the proposal.

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The Panel suggested that built form of the second floor or the third level (top floor) could be contained within a mansard form, to manage visual impact on the surrounding public domain.

4. The development applicant documentation should provide 3D views of the proposal from various locations within the public domain, including:
 - a. A view from the corner of Darling Street and Wisbeach Street,
 - b. A view from Wisbeach Street further east, to review relationship of the proposal with the existing single storey dwelling houses; and
 - c. A view from Darling Street, further north of the subject site, to review the extent of blank parti wall to the northern boundary.
5. The Panel recommends the north western corner currently offered as unuseable deep soil area should be utilised for carparking, given that the basement layout may required to be reconfigured as a consequence of the recommendations made regarding location of the dive structure providing access to the basement (Refer *Principle 1 – Context and Neighbourhood Character*)

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.”

1. The Panel is aware that the proposal significantly exceeds the maximum floor space ratio control, and would offer support, provided that the applicant considers reduction in the overall height to 3 storeys, adopts a 9m setback from the eastern boundary, and establishes consistency with the ADG and the recommendations offered within this AEDRP Report.

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 that key targets established within the ADG for solar access and natural cross ventilation should be met by the proposal. Similarly, the Panel encourages commitment to further sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency.
2. The Panel notes that the proposal benefits from a north-south orientation which would be able to maximise direct mid-winter solar access through the morning and afternoon sun. The DA set of architectural drawings should include mid-winter sun eye views, to confirm minimum 2 hour direct solar access to both balconies and living areas, as per the guidance within Part 4A of ADG.
3. Natural cross ventilation was discussed to a considerable extent at the meeting. The Panel notes that the applicant currently relies on the vertical slot for natural cross ventilation, which in the Panel’s opinion is not consistent with the guidance offered within Part 4B-2 of the ADG. The vertical slot or indentation does not achieve a 2:1 to 3:1 proportion recognised to achieve natural cross ventilation within the ADG.
4. The Panel considers reliance on such vertical slots for natural cross ventilation should be avoided. Alternatively, a cross through apartment should be provided at the northern end, and 2 apartments with natural cross ventilation should be provided at the southern end (one apartment addressing Darling Street and Wisbeach Street and second apartment addressing Wisbeach Street and the rear boundary). In addition to these 3 apartments with natural cross ventilation, 2 single aspect apartments could be considered in the middle of the building around a central common corridor. According to the Panel’s recommended strategy, the proposal, on a typical residential level would achieve 3/5 apartments with natural cross ventilation, establishing consistency with the ADG Part 4B-3 – 60% requirement.
5. The Panel strongly encourages provision of ceiling fans to all habitable areas. Floor-to-floor and floor-to-ceiling heights should be adjusted to allow the use of ceiling fans within all apartments.

6. The applicant is encouraged to include an appropriate rooftop photovoltaic system for environmental benefits, and for power/lighting to communal areas.
7. Provision of rainwater tank for should be considered to allow collection, storage and reuse within the subject site.

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 recommends that the applicant should maximise provision of deep soil areas within the north eastern corner and possibly along the eastern setback, with appropriate soil volume to allow large canopy trees and shrubs and to improve the interface with the existing low density dwelling. The second set of fire egress escaping the basement should be reconfigured to achieve this recommendation.
2. The Panel recommends the communal open space should be enhanced through provision of planter boxes, outdoor seating, shaded areas, a barbeque or outdoor kitchen, sink and a unisex accessible toilet.

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 DA drawings should demonstrate consistency with Part 4G internal and external storage requirements within the ADG.
2. The Panel notes that the applicant’s strategy of storing the bins along the eastern boundary is problematic, considering potential odour and amenity impacts on the neighbouring dwelling house and on Wisbeach Street public domain. Revised architectural drawings should consider provision of bin storage areas provided with airlocks and mechanical ventilation, and a bulky storage area integrated within design of the building.

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 notes that the fire egress escaping past the apartments windows appears problematic, and needs to be reviewed by/with a suitably qualified specialist.

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.”

1. Although the Panel does not have a particular preference for an apartment mix, the Panel is aware that there is a DCP standard for 25% provision of 1 bedroom apartments. It is noted that

the proposal only provides 18% 1 bedroom apartments. The Panel further notes that the non-compliance with the DCP would be further exacerbated if 1 bedroom + study apartments potentially qualify as 2 bedroom apartments. The Panel discussed that the car parking numerical standards directly relate to the number of bedrooms within the apartment. Consistency with the car parking requirements should be confirmed with Council during the development application stage.

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.”

1. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of A/C condenser units and other mechanical equipment. The Panel advises that these should not be located within balconies (unless thoughtfully designed with screens) or anywhere visually apparent from the surrounding public domain.
2. Revised architectural drawings should include details of the proposed design intent for key façade types in the form of 1:20 sections indicating materials, 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 thanks the applicant for seeking early feedback at the Pre DA stage considering the challenges presented by the proposal, particularly with regards to the extent of proposed floor space ratio that significantly exceeds the maximum permissible LEP control for the site. As a consequence, the Panel is aware that there are statutory planning considerations concerning the proposed development which will impact both the planning pathway and the development outcome.

Irrespective of the applicant’s preferred planning pathway, the Panel does not support the proposal in its current state and recommends that the design be amended to be in-line with the recommendations offered within this Report, mainly including – reduction in the overall height to 3 storeys, consideration of a 9m setback from the eastern boundary, and establishing consistency with the NSW Apartment Design Guide.

The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel needs a second opportunity to review this proposal at the DA stage.