

# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	11-17 Hutchinson Street, St Peters
Proposal:	Demolition of existing structures and construction of a new commercial building and site remediation
Application No.:	DA/2021/1167
Meeting Date:	22 February 2022
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Jon Johannsen, Diane Jones Niall Macken Vishal Lakhia – chair,
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Keeley Samways, Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Mostaghim – 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. While this is a commercial project, the Panel comments are based on the principles of the ADG as a reporting framework for design excellence.

### 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 proposal is not sufficiently developed in terms of the context analysis and recommends that further investigation of future built form relationship is carried out with

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regard to how that might impact the design, particularly on the rear adjacent sites to the north, east and west.

2. The proposition for creative studios in this B7 Business zone is well considered, but there is more potential for street activation that should be addressed as per comments below.
3. The outdoor terrace areas would likely be well used but their interface with surrounding residential and other commercial uses should be further investigated to assess potential privacy and amenity issues.

## 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 expressed concern that the presentation material differed from the drawings submitted and showed a change to the building core that was considered an improvement. While it was understood there was a rationale for this, it was of concern that updated documentation has caused changes to the circulation on all levels that must be clearly communicated in the finalized DA.
2. Further review of the building core may also enable the resolution of issues around equitable access and the predominance of blank services treatment to the street elevation.
3. A height plane breach was noted for which a CI 4.6 variation had been submitted. However, it was understood that there were no significant environmental impacts resulting from this, and subject to other related issues and setbacks some adjustment to the north-east corner this may be supportable.
4. The built form should to demonstrate clearer floor-to-ceiling and floor-to-floor heights, with realistic depths for structure, wet area and balcony setbacks, floor and ceiling finishes, acoustic insulation and building services.
5. Provision of 1:20 sections is recommended to clarify the built form intent and how various issues raised below can be addressed. It was noted that several balustrade details were not very legible (or missing) on sections and elevations both externally and internally, and these should be clarified so that real impacts can be assessed.
6. The Panel raised the issue of building separation distances on the rear built form interface related to visual impact, privacy and amenity concerns with the current and potential future buildings adjacent.
7. The Panel recommends that indicative internal layouts of the studio fitout subdivisions should be shown to demonstrate access to natural light from direct solar access in mid-winter, that does not depend on skylights for all possible tenancies.

## 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 – the commercial use is compatible with zoning.

## 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.”*

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1. The Panel was impressed by the Applicant's strategy for passive energy solutions with extensive p/v solar panels on the roof, but recommended further analysis for solar access and natural cross ventilation to ensure optimum building ESD performance.
2. Similarly, the Panel encourages the applicant to consider commitment to achieving sustainability targets for water, energy and waste efficiency that could include ceiling fans, and rain-water capture for planters.

## 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. Potential for landscaped planters and biophilic design strategies was encouraged for the balconies and terraces to create more pleasant outlooks from workspaces and help mitigate any possible privacy issues with neighbours.
2. It would be expected that a landscape architect is involved at an early stage to prepare the design strategy and plans required.

## 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 expressed concern that equitable access to the ground floor foyer from the carpark requires entry through the garage door and through the street due to the stairs within the carpark entry to the foyer.
2. In addition to the above, extension of the proposed awning is also recommended to provide continuous protection along Hutchison Street, and this could also include some enhancement at the entry to give more legibility to the main access.

## 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 expressed concern on the recesses to foyer entry and adjacent tenancy that may have CPTED issues due to sightlines at night. It was also of concern that the lift entry was not visible from the front door, and the circulation area could also be more open to mitigate potential safety and amenity concerns.
2. The applicant should consider provision for lighting on the street front at night to improve the quality of the street and improve visibility within recesses.

## 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."*

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*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."*

1. The Panel discussed the overall street presentation of the proposal in terms of the proportions and expression of structural elements and was satisfied that a predominantly masonry façade would be robust and appropriate along with the use of self-finished materials.
2. Revised architectural drawings should confirm location of all services and appropriate screening details including mechanical equipment so they are not visible from the public domain.
3. Scope could be considered for inclusion of public art to the street level service elements such as the garage door and meter screens.
4. Revised architectural drawings should include details of the proposed design intent for key façade types in the 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 supports the proposal in its intent, subject to amendments as set out in this Report.

The Panel does not need to review a revised proposal that responds to the issues raised in this report and that may be dealt with by Conditions of Approval.