

# Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

## Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	Leichhardt Park 66-68 Mary Street LILYFIELD NSW 2040
Proposal:	Integrated development for construction of a two-storey para-rowing boatshed, boat launching pontoon, kiosk and ancillary spaces.
Application No.:	DA/2023/1125
Meeting Date:	22 May 2024
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Peter Ireland Jean Rice Niall Macken Vishal Lakhia (chair)
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Annalise Ifield Tom Irons Martin Amy
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	Philip Thalís (Hill Thalís) – Architect for the project Bret Sperling (Hill Thalís) – Architect for the project Liam James – Applicant's representative Philip Bull (Civic Assessments) – Urban planner for the project

### Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Panel reviewed the architectural drawings and DA documentation, and discussed the proposal with the applicant through an online conference.
2. The proposal is categorised as a regionally significant development located on Crown-land, and with cost of works over \$5 million, additionally as a private infrastructure and community facility over \$5 million. The Panel understands that the Regional Planning Panel has recommended the proposal to be reviewed by the Inner West Council's Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel.
3. The AEDRP recognises its independent and advisory-role on matters related to – architecture, urban design, landscape design and design excellence, and understands that subsequent to this review, the determination will be made by the Regional Planning Panel.

## Discussion & Recommendations:

4. The Panel commends the applicant for providing high-quality drawings, reports, and documentation as part of the development application including the – contextual plans, architectural drawings, heritage impact statement, landscape assessment, views analysis, and shadow analysis. As part of the discussion, there were two fundamental aspects discussed at the meeting:
  - i. Access to site and its connectivity with the nearest Maliyawul Street carpark; and
  - ii. The proposal of a two-storey boatshed building.
5. The Panel extensively discussed vehicular and pedestrian access challenges for the project which need to be resolved by the applicant in order for the project to be successful.
  - a. The site connects with the Maliyawul Street carpark located to the south via a concrete pedestrian path. The path intersects - the existing Bay Run path with rowing club access creating a potential pinch point within the public domain.
  - b. The Panel considers that vehicular access and manoeuvring issues for vehicles and trailers expected within the carpark need to be tested as part of the development application. The Panel understands that the applicant is already testing reconfiguration scenarios for the carpark, the Bay Run pathway and the new concrete pathway as part of their further investigation, however a preferred access configuration option has not been formalised at this stage.
  - c. The Panel notes that retention of the existing trees located north of the carpark exacerbate the configuration challenges for the project, and the applicant should consider a strategy that removes some of the existing trees provided the applicant plants new native trees at other locations as a balance. Selective tree removal/replacement may offer greater flexibility in terms of the reconfiguration options and loading/unloading strategy for the applicant.
  - d. Furthermore, the Panel would support reconfiguration of the Bay Run to improve access and connectivity to the carpark and to avoid potential movement conflicts within the pinch point, as this would improve outcomes for the overall community and provide local area benefits.
  - e. There was discussion on how loading/unloading will occur at the site as the current carpark configuration does not allow for trailer turning. The Panel is concerned about the practicality of moving rowing boats, kayaks, and other equipment to the site from the vehicles and trailers parked in the carpark. The applicant should further investigate strategies of making this process efficient and practical for the patrons and the public.
6. As part of further consideration of the application, there was presentation and discussion with the Panel regarding the proposed two-storey boatshed building and its extensive ramping.
  - a. The applicant presented the project to the Panel with a very strong emphasis on the inclusive nature of the club and its history of working and engaging with people with disabilities. The building was presented to the Panel as a testament to their commitment to people with disabilities' involvement in the sport. It was said that the access ramp between levels, that occupies 3 of the 4 faces of the building, is a symbol, visually and practically of this commitment.
  - b. The Panel discussed that the building is configured over two levels, with boat storage, a kiosk and a single shared accessible WC/change room on the lower level. The upper level has both male and female change rooms with accessible WC/shower in each, a rowing exercise space, a community room, and two offices. The upper level floor area is approximately 100 square metres (25% smaller than the lower level). This difference is made up for by an open deck over part of the boat storage.
  - c. The Panel had a number of questions regarding the proposal as a two-storey building given the emphasis in the presentation on accessibility.
    - i. Did the applicant consider lift/lifts in lieu of the extensive ramping required to effect the change in level? The applicant noted that a lift was considered, but rejected because of

the expense, the corrosive nature of the environment, and the loss of accessibility during routine maintenance or breakdown scenarios. This further led to more extensive discussion of whether the proposed ramping is the only solution.

- ii. The 1:14 ramp occupies approximately 20% of the building footprint and requires approx. 55m of travel to change levels. This is a considerable amount of building when, to quote, the Heritage Impact Statement – *“The design of the building seeks to reduce perceived bulk and scale and is sympathetic to the surrounds”*
  - iii. There is one accessible shared WC/change room on the lower level. The main change rooms are on the upper level. This then requires the 55m of ramp travel for a person with disabilities should the lower level change room be occupied.
  - iv. The ramp is 2.150 metres wide and is cantilevered from the perimeter wall with no back span. This will require substantial structure. There is a considerable building cost to create this for means of disabled access. The probability of the need for a steel structure raises the question of the corrosive environment and maintenance as per the applicant’s issue with a lift also the comparative cost of this structure vs lift/lifts
  - v. The ramp appears to have been envisioned by the applicant as a ‘scenic’ route between levels and its steel filigree enclosing screen as important element in the building’s expression. The Panel questions whether the ramp will see the frequency of use anticipated, when there are two stairs for the able to connect directly to the upper level.
- d. The applicant noted that, as part of the concept process, a single storey option was investigated, but this was not presented to the Panel.
  - e. Based on the applicant’s presentations with its strong emphasis on accessibility, it is the Panel’s view that a single storey building would be a more suitable option and based on the material presented recommends it should be pursued further (instead of the two-storey form). The Panel also notes that if the upper level functions, with the exception of the deck, were incorporated into the lower level then the resulting single level clubhouse would achieve:
    - a full and simplified accessibility;
    - a reduction in footprint of approximately 20% (a single level would eliminate: the ramps, two stairs, and the ground level accessible WC/change room)
    - a simplified structural system, perhaps enabling a timber structure analogous with the boatshed typology, and non-corrosive in nature.
  - f. It appears to the Panel that the project zone or site outline, as described in the presentation, would accommodate a single level footprint and ancillary boat deck.
7. The Panel supports the proposed small scale kiosk at the subject site (subject to resolution of statutory planning permissibility issues) and recommends it should serve the community as well as club members.
  8. ‘Heritage Red’ is not the Panel’s preference for a whole of building colour , especially for external wall cladding, and suggest other natural materials and colours should be considered for the project.

## Conclusion:

1. The Panel would like to thank the applicant for providing high-quality documentation as part of the development application submission.
2. The Panel recognises their independent and advisory-only role, and notes it is being asked to review the proposal, at the Regional Planning Panel’s request, at an advanced stage in the DA process.
3. While the Panel does not object to a two-storey building per se, it does not support the current proposal for the issues raised. The Panel recommends a single storey option be considered.
4. As well, the matters of vehicle and trailer access, manoeuvring, parking, loading/unloading, and potential clash points with existing pedestrian infrastructure should be tested and resolved prior to DA submission in order to avoid potential pedestrian and vehicular movement conflicts.