

Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

Site Address:	307-315 Parramatta Road LEICHHARDT
Proposal:	State Significant Development Application (SSDA) - Construction of a 16 storey building with a total of 154 residential units including the provision for 21 affordable living units (for 15 years), ground floor retail premises, basement parking, associated site works and concurrent rezoning at 307-315 Parramatta Road, Leichhardt.
Application No.:	EXTERNAL/2025/0009
Meeting Date:	20 January 2026
Previous Meeting Date:	-
Panel Members:	Diane Jones (Chair) Jocelyn Jackson Jean Rice
Apologies:	-
Council staff:	Gunika Singh- Strategic Planning Hadi Nurhadi- Strategic Planning Katerina Lianos Iain Betts Minna Kilpelainen Helen Wan Sinclair Croft
Guests:	-
Declarations of Interest:	None
Applicant or applicant's representatives to address the panel:	N/A

Background:

1. The Architectural Excellence & Design Review Panel reviewed and discussed the proposal through an online conference.
2. The Panel acknowledges that the proposal is subject to Chapter 4 – State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Housing 2021 - Design of residential apartment development - and the NSW Apartment Design Guide (ADG) applies to the proposal.

Discussion & Recommendations:

1. Site Planning and Urban Design:

- a. The Panel understands that a Strategic Design Study was prepared by Hassell for the subject site as part of the background work for Council's Our Fairer Futures. The Study determined a 10-storey height is appropriate for the site. The Study also noted that future development of the site should comply with ADG requirements.
- b. The Panel notes that the proposal, while providing housing on the subject site, will limit the potential of neighbouring properties to provide housing and other uses. It would particularly isolate and limit development on the adjoining properties on each side and to the rear.
- c. Therefore, the proposal should comply with ADG setback requirements.
- d. The overshadowing impacts to future residential developments on the southern side of Parramatta Road should not inhibit the development of those sites in terms of density, layout and amenity.
- e. Similarly, the proposal will have an adverse impact on the amenity of the northern neighbours to the site
- f. Further, the separation distances between the buildings within the site should comply with the ADG requirements.
- g. The consideration of the impact on the development of the adjoining sites is critical as it will affect future development along the whole Parramatta Road corridor.
- h. The Panel agrees that the proposal does not adequately address the heritage qualities of the site, which is located within the Parramatta Road Heritage Conservation Area and opposite the Parramatta Road Commercial Precinct Heritage Conservation Area. The site is within the vicinity of a number of several heritage items, notably the Albert Palais.
- a. The potential civic interfaces and nodes are not taken into account and the urban design possibilities are not acknowledged by the proposal, especially the proposed east-west linkages along the northern boundary of the site.
- j. The Panel highlighted that this proposal will set a precedent for new high-rise development along Parramatta Road. Compliance with the ADG setback and building separation requirements requires the complete redesign of the proposal including height, setbacks and materials with a considered urban design at the ground plane. Moreover, the proposed architectural language of the twin towers is lacking in the appropriate level of articulation, materiality and response to different edge conditions and orientations.
- k. The Panel noted that the design of the residential entry lobbies and lift cores to the towers provide little amenity and would be significantly improved by the provision of natural light and outlook.

2. Ground Plane Configuration and Landscape Design:

- a. The Panel highlighted the poor-quality sequence of movement to the entry, formal expression and lack of amenity and safety of the residential address. The residential pedestrian access is at the rear of the site via a laneway shared with vehicles, with inadequate space outside the entry doors. The proposal does not acknowledge that this will be an important node in the development of the future east-west link proposed by Council. The applicant should also consider the benefit of a street address with access from Parramatta Road.
- b. The Panel notes that a 1.7m setback for a shared laneway needs to be dedicated to Council for the east-west cycleway link.
- c. The Panel encourages improved landscaping and urban design treatment on the edges of the site and to Parramatta Road.

3. Architectural Resolution:

- a. The Panel recommends the applicant consider this site as a major node, given its close proximity to the corner of the intersection of Parramatta Road and Hay Street.

- b. At street level, the large fire stairs and services proposed to the southern, front facade alienate a large part of the facade to Parramatta Road. It is not clear how this area will be serviced given the location of fire-rated horizontal exit passageways. The façade does not complement the level of articulation found in the significant buildings along Parramatta Road.
- c. The architectural expression of the building is without an appropriate level of modelling and articulation for large built form which will be visible from all parts of the suburb. The façade requires a higher and more refined level of detail and considered response to edge conditions (such as view lines and orientation). Different height towers should be considered.
- d. Reservations were expressed about glazed balustrading without any solid areas to shield some areas of the balconies from view.
- e. The materials and colours proposed for the towers should be complementary to the heritage items in the vicinity, including the Albert Palais and to the Heritage Conservation Area.

Conclusion:

1. Recognising its independent, expert and advisory role, the Panel does not support the proposal in its current form at this State Significant Development Application stage. The proposal should be redesigned to address the matters listed above.
2. If this was a DA to IWC, given the number of more detailed matters requiring further refinement and resolution, particularly in relation to the overall architectural and landscape design expression and character, the Panel would request that a complete redesigned proposal be submitted for further review as part of a new application.
3. The Panel draws attention to the relevance of the NSW Government Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy, the Strategic Design Study covering the site by Hassell, IWC's Our Fairer Futures strategy and the Apartment Design Guide.