

DESIGN EXCELLENCE STRATEGY

1. OVERVIEW

This Design Excellence Strategy (Strategy) outlines an alternative pathway to waiver a competitive design process, in favour of an alternative Design Excellence process and framework.

Given the unique nature of the site and special circumstance of the proposal, this strategy is put forth as a way of achieving design excellence and is to operate in lieu of the formal State Design Review Panel (SDRP). This Design Excellence Strategy will somewhat replicate SDRP process but present a more robust approach that addresses the specifics of the site and the broader objectives.

The approach and parts of the Strategy are detailed in the sections below.

2. AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

This Design Excellence Strategy aims to guide the realisation of the adaptive re-use of the Grafton bond and development of a new building adjacent for a hotel development. This Strategy is aimed at achieving an enhanced urban outcome with buildings and public realm of high design quality.

The Design Excellence Strategy is to define:

- a) A project specific design excellence approach commensurate with the unique nature of the site and proposal
- b) The creation and composition of a Design Excellence Panel (separate from the State Design Review Panel by in consultation with the GANSW)
- c) The objectives of the panel and design outcome for the site to ensure the best architectural design and outcome for the site is achieved

3. ARCHITECT AND DESIGN INTEGRITY

The Strategy is built on the premise that one architectural firm will prepare the design from conception to completion (and no competitive process is undertaken).

The role of the Architect will include the following:

- Attend all meetings with GANSW, the Design Excellence Panel (see Section 4) and favourably receive feedback into the concept design, design development and final design.
- Prepare the Development Application for the preferred design including all required information to lodge a DA.
- Represent the project in meetings with the community, authorities and stakeholders, as required.
- Provide a lead role in ensuring design integrity is maintained throughout the development process

- Providing any documentation required to the Consent Authority verifying the original design intent has been achieved at completion.

4. DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL

A key component of the Strategy is the creation and ongoing engagement with a project Design Excellence Panel (the Panel). The Strategy is built around the establishment of a project-specific external Panel whose role is to provide independent, expert, and impartial design advice and quality review.

4.1 Role of the panel

The Panel has a guiding and advisory role commencing pre-lodgement and continuing through the assessment process.

The Panel will assess and advise on the extent to which design excellence is realised at each stage of the process. The panel will ensure better-informed assessment and support better outcomes.

The Panel will also ensure the design integrity is not eroded by having input into any substantial modification post consent, for example a Section 4.55(2) application.

4.2 Composition of the Panel Members

The Panel will be established by up to six (6) Panel members. The Panel membership will be devised in consultation with the Government Architect NSW to ensure an appropriate mix of members and equivalent qualifications. It is envisaged that the members will include:

- A nominee from the office of the Government Architect NSW (GANSW)
- A representative from The City of Sydney (the City)
- 1-3 established and reputable registered design professionals (architectural and urban design). It is recommended that one of these would be a heritage architect or consultant with heritage expertise or equivalent qualifications.
- A proponent's representative of suitable qualifications or background

A nominated Panel member would also perform the function of the Panel Chair.

Although not forming part of the Panel, a Panel administrator will also be appointed.

Key stakeholders (such as Office of Environment and Heritage or technical consultants) would also be invited to attend relevant review sessions, to brief the Panel on specific issues relating to their respective agencies or disciplines.

4.3 Governance and Panel Administration

To ensure transparency and credibility in the Panel discussions, the following will occur:

- A Panel administrator is appointed
- The administration of the Panel, including the organisation of meetings, recording, documenting and distribution of meeting minutes, will be undertaken by an independent entity that is not associated with the Panel members.
- The Administrator will document minutes and issue to all members to ensure accuracy of the minutes.
- The minutes from pre-lodgement Panel meetings will be compiled and submitted with the State Significant Development Application.

4.4 Scheduling of meetings

A schedule of meetings is established based on the following:

- Determine a framework for the Panel meetings, including duration of the Panel, schedule of dates for the Panel meetings and agenda for each meeting.
- Suggested programming of the meetings to occur at project milestone, as follows:
 - Confirm and agreement on the design approach and objectives
 - Formal pre-lodgement meeting
 - Post lodgement of the State Significant Development Application
 - Any amendments to the Approval

4.5 Funding and Resourcing

The cost of Panel membership is to be funded by the proponent. The proponent is also to fund the necessary resources required to administer the Panel.

5. DESIGN OBJECTIVES

A key component of the Strategy is the preparation and establishment of the Design Objectives (akin to a design brief). To ensure Panel members are in alignment, the objectives will establish clear, consistent and rigorous objectives and principles to achieve design excellence outcomes for the project, referencing the following key documents:

- NSW Government's 'Better Placed' – Design Objectives (2017)
- NSW Government's 'Better Placed' – Design Guide for Heritage (Issue no. 02-30.01.2019)
- NSW Government's 'Local Character and Place Guideline' (26.02.2019)
- Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012) - Clause 6.21 Design Excellence

6. PROCESS

The design process would be iterative – in a cyclic way, and each iteration of an idea informs the next. Each step in the process would be revisited at key stages of a project's development, working towards a better resolved solution with every iteration.

The Design Excellence Strategy is to broadly operate in the following key steps:

1. Design Excellence Strategy agreed to by GANSW
2. Panel members and format established
3. Undertake an inception meeting where the following is undertaken:
 - Design objectives, key principles articulated and agreed to by panel members
 - Terms of Reference of Panel outlined to ensure a common set of objectives are understood
 - Agreed principles, SJB to present the journey to date, design principles, urban strategy and studies.
4. Pre design process (potential 2 meetings convened)
5. Preparation of a design excellence report for the DA submission demonstrating how the proposal has achieved the Design Excellence Strategy
6. Post lodgement – Panel reconvene to provide input prior to determination
7. Panel to reconvene and provide design feedback on any significant modification to the approved development (e.g. S4.55(2))