

18 September 2020

**PROJECT:** Communities Plus, Eden St, Arncliffe  
**RE:** SDRP SESSION 62 – 09.09.2020 (first review)

Saul Moran  
 Development Manager

Billbergia  
 Locked Bag 1400,  
 Meadowbank, NSW, 2114

By email:  
[saul.moran@billbergia.com.au](mailto:saul.moran@billbergia.com.au)

Dear Saul,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above project. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on 09.09.20. Please note this letter will be distributed to the panel and all attendees listed below

## Project Background

This project was granted an architectural design competition waiver under Rockdale LEP 2011 Cl. 6.14(6) on condition that a design review panel should instead review the development. In accordance with the LEP, feedback from the design review panel must be carefully considered and incorporated into the development at the relevant stages of the process.

The consent authority is required to take into account the findings of the panel during assessment of the development.

This project is engaging with SDRP as an alternative Design Excellence process (replacing an architectural design competition) and, as such, it is expected the design process will demonstrate rigorous options testing and analysis. This should include presentation of a variety of tested approaches to site planning and massing with opportunities and constraints thoroughly interrogated and explained in relation to site analysis and relevant planning controls.

## Information Required at future SDRP Meetings:

At the next SDRP session please provide the following information:

- summary of GFA distribution and clarification of how the 20% floor space bonus (additional 0.8:1 FSR) has been calculated
- precise drawings to explain open space extent and type (define how compliance with requirements is achieved or exceeded, location of undercrofts, paths, level changes, stairs, edges, proposed planting, public versus private ownership, fully versus partially open spaces)
- deep soil location and extent
- location and type of existing and proposed trees
- clarification of scope of Michael Hromek's engagement to provide advice on Aboriginal Culture and Heritage to the project team
- further explanation of proposed community spaces in relation to needs identified through consultation with Council
- clear explanation of solar access and wind impacts to the public domain and proposed community spaces

- information on the type and mix of social and affordable housing proposed within the development
- projected population of social and affordable housing on the site in relation to present numbers; provide current and proposed GFA

### **General Observations**

The scheme presented is a comprehensive response to the site and brief and has engaged with the challenge in many ways, however, some re-examination of first principles is called for to achieve an optimal public realm and civic response balanced with the commercial and housing requirements dictated by the brief.

The design team's argument that the site demands a more nuanced approach to context than that described in the LEP and RDCP is acknowledged, however, clear justification and explanation of benefit is needed where the proposal departs from RDCP 2011 Amendment 7. The decision to distribute the GFA in four towers as opposed to a longer, lower built form, for example, is questioned by the panel.

The inclusion of a big box retail tenant driving the design of retail and food and beverage offerings needs further explanation and justification. The panel seeks further evidence of the demand for a supermarket in this location.

### **Aboriginal Culture and Heritage**

The site's historical context along with its physical prominence and significance in determining the future character of the locality demands a rigorous response to First Nations habitation and the continuing narrative of Aboriginal and Post Colonial occupation of the region. The development of these strategies is strongly encouraged and outcomes of proposed engagement with Michael Hromek through design development should be presented in any future SDRP session.

### **Open Space and Through Site Links**

The RDCP for Mixed Use Development includes an objective: 'to create an active interface between ground floor retail and commercial uses and the street'. The proposal in its current form does not meet this objective, particularly with regards Eden Street. A closed retail loop through a covered arcade terminating in a big box supermarket is currently proposed. More fine-grained and outward facing activation should be incorporated, addressing well defined public spaces. Retail and large floor space community uses should not be driving the overall urban design proposition.

The inclusion of public open space and through site links is supported but potential conflicts exist between retail objectives within the development and the provision of more free flowing open space promoting casual occupation and undirected movement. Strong diagonal desire lines are reinforced in the landscape design presented where a more meandering and 'on contour' journey addressing level changes might also be explored within the site. This may also support the creation of more defined pockets of useable open space where currently large undefined areas are shown.

Strong connection to the arcade as a principle is understood but genuine activation (as opposed to serving retail imperatives) is critical to a successful public open space outcome, particularly when a significant proportion of residents are social housing tenants.

Opportunities to better integrate the northern through site link with the proposed public park should also be investigated.

The likelihood of council resuming ownership of open space that is mostly above privately owned basements is questioned by the panel – the demarcation between truly public and privately owned/publicly accessible space needs to be clarified.

#### **Traffic Circulation**

The proposed concentration of all vehicle movements directly below the social housing block is of significant concern to the panel. Traffic using the one proposed driveway will include supermarket deliveries and services, retail and resident parking. Clear explanation of traffic modelling including options tested, peak vehicle movements, noise mitigation and projected impacts of the proposal (visual, acoustic, physical) on Eden Street and surrounds must be provided.

#### **Building Form and Architectural Expression**

The architecture of the social housing and the market housing towers should be indistinguishable, as presented. The treatment of built form, entries, landscaping, detailing and finishes should all be of high quality appropriate to the catalytic nature of the project contributing to the remaking of Arncliffe's town centre. The panel looks forward to further detail in future presentations.

#### **Sustainability**

A comprehensive ESD strategy incorporating passive and active design principles is called for in a project of this size and local significance: a precinct wide approach incorporating multiple, interdependent strategies (eg. WSUD, active transport, street planting and landscaping).

We look forward to learning more about the project's integrated approach to sustainability in future presentations.

Please contact GANSW Principal Design Excellence Rory Toomey (rory.toomey@planning.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice and to schedule the next meeting.

Sincerely,



Olivia Hyde  
Director Design Excellence GANSW  
Chair, Communities Plus Arncliffe SDRP

Distribution to SDRP and DPIE participants:

NSW SDRP Panel members	Angela Koepp, Michael Tawa, Matthew Bennett
GANSW Chair	Olivia Hyde
GANSW Design Advisor	Rory Toomey
GANSW SDRP Coordinator	Gail Fletcher
DPIE Key Sites	Brendon Roberts (debrief only)
Bilbergia Group	Saul Moran John Kinsella Paul Addison Thomas Nader
Group GSA Architects	Lisa-Maree Carrigan Jenna Keyes Steven Hammond Paul De Saily

21 November 2020

**PROJECT:** Communities Plus, Eden St, Arncliffe  
**RE:** SDRP SESSION 65 – 21.10.2020 (second review)

Saul Moran  
Development Manager

Billbergia  
Locked Bag 1400,  
Meadowbank, NSW, 2114

By email:  
saul.moran@billbergia.com.au

Dear Saul,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further design review for the above project. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the second design review session held on 21.10.20. Please note this letter will be distributed to the panel and all attendees listed below

### **Project Background**

This project was granted an architectural design competition waiver and, in accordance with the LEP, feedback from this design review panel must be carefully considered and incorporated into the development at the relevant stages of the process.

The consent authority must take into account the findings of the panel during assessment of the development. As a substitute for a design competition process, it is expected the design process will demonstrate rigorous options testing and analysis.

### **General Observations**

Many of the concerns raised by the panel in SDRP 01 have been meaningfully interrogated by the project team and strong improvements to the proposed design were noted in SDRP 02.

Clearer definition between public and private space is improving legibility overall within the site and clarity around the park is emerging through more refined circulation and less cluttered edge conditions.

The size and location of space dedicated to the possible future community centre is of concern and possible alternative uses for the space allocated should be presented at SDRP 03.

The Meeting Place and a Welcome Space for community are strongly encouraged as ideas but are not yet reaching their potential in execution. Access to the community centre at ground level facing away from the meeting place, for example, reads as a missed opportunity for connectivity and activation at the interface between public, private and community uses.

The design team's updated approach to the immediate context was explained (as distinct from that described in the LEP and RDCP) and changes since SDRP 01 were illustrated presented. The decision to distribute the GFA in four towers

remains unaltered but amendments at podium and ground plane were generally supported as contributing to a richer and more contextual spatial outcome at ground and street level.

The redistribution of retail and the introduction of a network of smaller, undercover 'alleys' and finer grain tenancies within the podia has resulted in improved perimeter activation facing outwards to the through site links, the park and Eden Street which is supported.

The northern through site link still presents a challenge with regards CPTED principles and, given it affords the most direct connection between Arncliffe Station and the Princes Highway, should be carefully considered in these terms in future iterations.

### **Aboriginal Culture and Heritage**

The presentation from Michael Hromek and accompanying documents all promise a rigorous response to First Nations habitation and the continuing narrative of Aboriginal and Post Colonial occupation.

The strategies discussed, however, still appear as surface or overlay - aesthetic embellishments to a large commercial development. The opportunity exists to engage deeply with the Dharawal heritage and culture to deliver a ground plane, a welcome space and a place that truly speaks to community.

The proposed 'Meeting Place' is strongly supported as an idea but needs more genuine community activation, an idea possibly assisted by flipping the community centre access to face towards the circle.

Deeper integration of First Nation ideas could also occur through a richer weaving of the ground plane into and through the buildings to the core of the architecture. Shadows, water, texture, light, reflections, materials can all borrow from stories of this place to inform physical and experiential qualities integral to the architecture.

The idea of four complementary buildings in a family, four characters in a landscape, similar but different, presents a rich opportunity to define the development within the locality and engage with a unique cultural, historical and environmental lineage.

### **Open Space and Through Site Links**

The distribution of communal open space for residents throughout the development is encouraging and use of rooftops will ensure high amenity, year round solar access and privacy. The location of the Social and Affordable Housing COS at podium level in an overshadowed location is not supported – if it cannot be moved to the rooftop due to LAHC policy, an alternative location at ground or podium level must be allocated.

In terms of circulation and movement, as detailed planning develops a hierarchy of movements for different journey types is emerging – the commuter, the park sitter, the retail customer, the resident coming home, the community worker, the diner, the grocery shopper. This is a positive development from SDRP 01.

The 4000 square metre park is now entirely open to sky and excludes the northern through site link in the area calculation. This consolidated publicly accessible open space is supported and should remain through design development.

More defined pockets of useable open space in the overall ground and upper ground level planning are supported and further development of the detail and character should be presented by the landscape design team in the next meeting. This should cover the character and amenity of the meeting place in detail.



While we understand discussions with Council have commenced, the demarcation between truly public and privately owned/publicly accessible space still needs to be clarified. A comprehensive update on this matter is requested for SDRP 03.

### **Traffic Circulation**

The proposed separation of vehicle movements to remove commercial traffic from Eden Street is supported in principle but the potential impact on pedestrians using the Princes Highway and, in particular, the upper ground approach to the community centre and residential lobbies needs further clarification. Diagrammatic sections clearly explaining levels and the relationship of cars to pedestrians should be provided in future presentations.

The parking provision, overall, seems excessive and further discussions with council are required to ascertain a needs based proposal based on future occupancy, dwelling types, and available transport alternatives.

### **Building Form and Architectural Expression**

The development of built form at podium level has resulted in improvements where the buildings meet the ground. The definition of each tower above podium level, the distinction and identity of each within the family of forms could further develop through geometry and materiality.

### **Sustainability**

While the proposed approach to sustainability was briefly covered in the meeting, further development is anticipated for SDRP 03. Current targets to comply with BASIX and NatHERS are baseline requirements. A higher aspiration for a development of this scale and significance is expected.

### **For the Next Meeting**

A clear development of ideas within the site boundary was evident in SDRP 02. For SDRP 03 an explanation of the development within its broader civic context is requested. Considerations including:

- How does the proposal relate to the existing Arncliffe town centre, physically, socially, in terms of anticipated community activity patterns?
- How does the proposal relate to the existing and projected future character of its locality and neighbourhood in terms of bulk, scale, density, height, built form?
- What does the proposal contribute and how will it relate to the existing neighbourhood and streetscape character of Arncliffe?

Please contact GANSW Principal Design Excellence Rory Toomey (rory.toomey@planning.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice and to schedule the next meeting.

Sincerely,



Rory Toomey  
Principal Design Excellence GANSW  
Acting Chair, Communities Plus Arncliffe SDRP

Distribution to SDRP and DPIE participants:

NSW SDRP Panel members	Angela Koepp, Michael Tawa, Matthew Bennett
GANSW Chair	Olivia Hyde
GANSW Chair (SDRP 02)	Rory Toomey
GANSW Design Advisor	Rory Toomey
GANSW SDRP Coordinator	Gail Fletcher
DPIE Key Sites	Marcus Jennejohn
Bilbergia Group	Saul Moran John Kinsella Paul Addison Thomas Nader
Group GSA Architects	Lisa-Maree Carrigan Jenna Keyes Steven Hammond Paul De Saily
Bayside Council	Clare Harley



20 April 2021

PROJECT: Communities Plus, Eden St, Arncliffe  
RE: SDRP SESSION 73 – 31.03.2021 (third review)

Saul Moran  
Development Manager

Billbergia  
Locked Bag 1400,  
Meadowbank, NSW, 2114

By email:  
saul.moran@billbergia.com.au

Dear Saul,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further design review for the above project. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the second design review session held on 31.03.21. Advice also relates to supplementary material supplied by Group GSA following the panel session. Please note this letter will be distributed to the panel and all attendees listed below

#### Project Background

This project was granted an architectural design competition waiver and, in accordance with the LEP, feedback from this design review panel must be carefully considered and incorporated into the development at the relevant stages of the process.

DPIE, as the consent authority, must take into account the findings of the panel during assessment of the development. As a substitute for a design competition process, it is expected the design process will demonstrate rigorous options testing and analysis.

#### General Observations

Engagement to date with the SDRP process and advice provided by the panel has been sincere and positive. Numerous aspects of the project continue to develop and improve through a collaborative discussion.

The following advice and recommendations are based both on material presented and discussed in SDRP 03 and in supplementary material provided on request after the meeting.

Since SDRP 02 there has been meaningful and positive development in the landscape scheme and this is commended. The coastal banksia scrub offers a compelling opportunity for connecting with place while promoting a local character and identity.

Definition between public and private space is improving overall with further resolution of entrances and a clarity of movement through the site developing, particularly in relation to the relocated library entrance and enhancements to the northern through site link. It's understood formal agreements with Council are still in discussion and will be the subject of a future Council Meeting. We look forward to further updates in future SDRP meetings.

The Meeting Place and a Welcome Space for community remain strong as ideas and reoriented access to the community centre at ground level facing the meeting place represents an improved opportunity for connectivity and activation at this key interface between public, private and community uses.

The decision to distribute the GFA in four towers remains unaltered but amendments at podium and ground plane were generally supported as contributing to a richer and more contextual spatial and built form outcome at ground and street level. Please see further comments on the architecture below.

Confirmation of the full line supermarket agreed since SDRP 02 was provided and it is understood additional retail GFA is being sought as part of a VPA with Council.

#### Aboriginal Culture and Heritage

Further consultation with the local Aboriginal Community has been undertaken since SDRP 02 and development of strategies around indigenous landscape, in particular, are emerging as key ideas for the site along with a planned collaboration with Indigi-Grow.

Connecting with Country ideas are also beginning to inform material and formal design decision making at an architectural surface level but it is critical that any allegorical or figurative references to traditional narratives are embedded in a clear and rational response to climate and site considerations. Sunshading, for example, offers an opportunity for formal expression while providing essential relief for east and west facing facades.

The opportunity still also exists to engage deeply with Dharawal heritage and culture to deliver a ground plane, a welcome space and a place more broadly that truly speaks to community. Scope for Indigenous ownership and management within the precinct should be explored in any management strategy to ensure agency through use and tenure, beyond landscape and formal place making.

#### Open Space and Through Site Links

The overall massing and open space proposition is supported. Relocation of the affordable housing communal open space to ensure solar access is noted and supported.

Relocation of the library entrance to the north east corner of Block A will help further activate and engage the northern through site link and is a positive development promoting identity and presence to the Princes Highway.

We understand discussions with Council have commenced around the future ownership and management of the library and community centre and look forward to further updates in future meetings.

#### Traffic Circulation

The reduction in overall car parking by 150 spaces is supported and continued interrogation and revision of parking need is required through design development to ensure a needs based proposal based on future occupancy, dwelling types, and available transport alternatives.

The proposed trellis structures of the car park entry and exit on the Princes Highway (as shown in the supplementary renders provided) are questioned in terms of their practicality, given the hostile traffic environment. A design proposition reliant for its success on thriving greenery in this location is questioned and should be revisited.

### **Building Form and Architectural Expression**

The supplementary design pack provided including rendered views, schematic sections and elevations (dated April 13, 2021) has afforded the first opportunity for informed comments on the proposed architectural expression and façade designs throughout the scheme.

The development of 2 consolidated podia (Blocks A + B and C + D) separated by landscaped open spaces offers a strong opportunity for a streetscape architecture that is quiet, solid and contextual in form and scale. The podium expression of Block C is currently closest to this quality demonstrating a balance between solid and glazing and a material expression that both responds to and expands on the local typology of brick walk-up flats.

In general, the documentation presented, shows multiple material treatments and façade approaches in every podium and tower. In the east and west elevations, all facades appear grossly overglazed – both from a thermal comfort and from a privacy and amenity point of view – and podium facades and tower facades are not reading as complementary at present. Devices such as sun-shading design, fenestration details, structural articulation and balcony/balustrade expression should all be explored in a general process of calming and simplifying the overall effect through a more unified and complementary palette.

Distinction and identity of Blocks will be achieved through subtle and refined difference as opposed to bold statements of contrast.

Allegorical and sculptural elements in the architecture, such as the whale tale in Block A, should be carefully interrogated against a range of critical criteria, including the projected quality of finish required to successfully pull off such a formal flourish.

### **Sustainability**

While the overall site planning strategy and open space provision are performing well in terms of solar access to communal spaces, there are concerns around the proposal's ability, in its current form, to deliver comfortable and energy efficient dwellings in the tower blocks and podia. The amount of east and west facing glazing is a significant concern, especially given the nature of proposed sun-shading currently presented. A rigorous assessment of building performance is required to determine an appropriate amount and type of glazing and inform the development of effective sun control strategies. This will also naturally generate a rich and rational, place based façade expression for each orientation and building form.

### **For the Next Meeting**

Following further design development in response to the above comments, the project is supported to proceed to EIS stage. It is requested the project return to SDRP during the Response to Submissions stage of the assessment process.

At this next meeting a response to the above and any issues emerging from the EIS exhibition process is requested.

We thank you again for your engagement with the SDRP process to date and look forward to seeing future design development of this significant proposal.

Please contact GANSW Principal Design Excellence Rory Toomey (rory.toomey@planning.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice and to schedule the next meeting.

Sincerely,



Rory Toomey  
Principal Design Excellence GANSW  
Acting Chair, Communities Plus Arncliffe SDRP

Distribution to SDRP and DPIE participants:

NSW SDRP Panel members	Michael Tawa, Matthew Bennett
GANSW Chair	Rory Toomey
GANSW Design Advisor	Rory Toomey
GANSW SDRP Coordinator	Gail Fletcher
DPIE Key Sites	Marcus Jennejohn
Bilbergia Group	Saul Moran
	John Kinsella
	Paul Addison
	Thomas Nader
Group GSA Architects	Lisa-Maree Carrigan
	Jenna Keyes
	Steven Hammond
	Paul De Saily
Bayside Council	Clare Harley