

Melrose Park South- East – Block B4

Architectural Design Competition Report

On behalf of Wharf and Hughes
Developments Pty Ltd

10 December 2024

The Planning Studio acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands + waters of Australia, particularly the Gadigal People on whose traditional lands our office is located, and pay our respects to Elders past, present + emerging. We deeply respect the enduring Connection to Country + culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are committed to walk alongside, listen + learn with community as we plan for equitable, sustainable, generous, and connected places. Always was, Always will be.

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* This document is for discussion purposes only unless signed and dated by the persons identified. This document has been reviewed by the Project Director.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Architectural Design Competition Report (Report) has been prepared by The Planning Studio on behalf of Wharf and Hughes Developments Pty Ltd (the Proponent) for the competitive design process (Competition) undertaken at Melrose Park South-East – Block B4 (the site) on land at 32 Waratah Street, Melrose Park NSW 2114. This report outlines the process, providing a summary of each of the schemes and the Jury’s recommendations.

The Proponent invited three competitors to participate in the Competition and prepare design proposals for the site. The three architectural firms (in order of presentation) that participated in the Competition were:

1. Plus Architecture
2. Fuse Architects
3. Silvester Fuller

All three competitors participated in the Competition and produced a final submission for consideration and assessment by the Jury.

The Competition was undertaken in accordance with the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP2023) and the *Design Competition Guidelines*, prepared by Government Architect NSW.

Clause 3.4 of the Guidelines sets out the requirements for an Architectural Design Competition Report, as follows:

- The competition report contains a summary of the competition process and documents the Jury’s decision including determination of the winner and the Jury’s recommendations.
- The competition report has been prepared by the competition manager and reviewed and endorsed by all Jury members.

The competition report includes:

- a summary of the competition process and a copy of the competition brief
- feedback on each of the design responses, outlining the merits and the weaknesses
- nomination of a design response as the winner of the competition and the winning design team for the purposes of design integrity
- a statement that the winning design response has the potential to achieve design excellence
- the rationale for the choice of the winning design and the qualities and attributes that must be retained to achieve design excellence
- areas that require further design development to achieve design excellence
- any ongoing requirements of the design integrity process; see ‘3.5 Design integrity’ and ‘4.2 Role of competition reports and design integrity panels’
- a statement confirming the competition process has been carried out in accordance with requirements of the relevant EPI.



Competition feedback sessions: unsuccessful design teams may request further feedback on their design response in addition to the competition report. This may take the form of a meeting with the jury chair and competition manager.

The competitive process was conducted in accordance with the Architectural Design Competition Brief (Brief), which is included at **Appendix A**. As required by the *Design Competition Guidelines*, GANSW, Council and DPHI provided feedback throughout the development of the Brief. GANSW provided written endorsement of the Brief on 18 October 2024.

The purpose of this Report is to inform DPHI/GANSW of the competitive process undertaken for the site, the outcomes, and the rationale for the selection of the preferred architectural design for the site.

This Report is accompanied by the following appendices:

Appendix A: Architectural Design Competition Brief

1.2 Site Description

The subject site of 32 Waratah Street Melrose Park NSW 2114 forms part of the greater site Melrose Park South-East (30 Waratah Street, 32 Waratah Street and 112 Wharf Road Melrose Park NSW 2114) and is identified as Block B4.

The site is located within the City of Parramatta LGA and is bounded by Mary Street to the north, Waratah Street to the south and west, and existing industrial buildings to the east. The industrial buildings to the east will be demolished and replaced with new residential flat buildings as part of the broader project.

The site is predominantly characterised by industrial development with warehouse like buildings proposed to be demolished under this application. The surrounding area is a mix of industrial, recreational, educational infrastructure and low-density residential. There are a number of green spaces within a 1km radius of the site, including Archer Park, George Kendall Riverside Park which is currently undergoing a comprehensive upgrade, and Meadowbank Park, which has several sporting facilities.

The closest train station is Meadowbank, which lies approximately 2km to the east. Buses operate along Hope Street and provide connections to Parramatta, and West Ryde. Victoria Road is less than 1km to the north of the site, where several bus services operate. Current plans for the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 include a station at Atkins Road and Waratah Street which would substantially increase transport connectivity and capacity for the area.

The Proponent:

The proponent, Wharf and Developments Pty Ltd, is the owner of the site and has invited 3 competitors to prepare proposals for the site.

Consent Authority:

The site is located within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA), however the proposal will be subject to State Significant Development under housing uplift under Chapter 2, Part 2, Division 1 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP). Subject to submissions received, the consent authority will be either DPHI or the Independent Planning Commission.



The outcome of this design competition does not fetter the decision of the consent authority in the determination of any subsequent DA applications for this project. The consent authority will not form part of the jury, however representatives from the GANSW, DPHI and Council will act as impartial observer(s) to the design competition.

1.3 Regulatory Framework

The following key planning instruments apply to the site:

- Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP 2023) and Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023 (PDCP 2023). Key sections of these documents are:
 - Part 9 Additional Local Provisions - Melrose Park Precinct of the PLEP 2023
 - Section 8.2.6 Melrose Park Urban Renewal Precinct of the PDCP 2023
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021; and
- Other relevant City of Parramatta Council and applicable State plans and policies.

Under the Division 1 In-fill affordable housing of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021, proposals which provide a total of 15% affordable housing GFA are able to access a 30% uplift to FSR and Building Height. This 30% uplift has been considered in the reference schemes prepared by the proponent and Council which were included in the Design Competition Brief.

The schemes will also need to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Chapter 4 Design of residential apartment development of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021, including the appropriate consideration of the Apartment Design Guide and the Design Principles for Residential Apartment Development.

Under the PLEP 2023, the site is within the MU1 and RE1 Zones, which allows for a wide range of uses including residential, retail, and commercial. Key built form related controls for the subject site include:

- Building Height: 77m + 30% uplift proposed under Housing SEPP equivalent to 100.1m.
- Floor Space Ratio: 2.74:1 + 30% uplift proposed under Housing SEPP equivalent to 3.562:1.

The planning objectives for this design competition are to provide a design that has the potential to achieve design excellence, satisfies the relevant planning controls and is consistent with the design and built form controls for the site. The Design Competition Brief included two separate reference designs prepared by Council and the proponent which informed the competitors response to the site.



1.4 Winning Design

An analysis and assessment of the three submitted designs was undertaken in accordance with the assessment criteria contained within the Brief. This included the design, planning and commercial objectives of the Brief, compliance with the relevant planning controls (SEPPs, LEPs, DCPs) and key aspects of the infrastructure DA (DA/75/2024) currently being assessed.

The Competition has resulted in a winning scheme that was identified by the Jury as demonstrating a high quality of design as required by GANSW's *Design Competition Guidelines* and the Architectural Design Competition Brief.

Fuse Architects scheme has been unanimously selected as the winner of the Architectural Design Competition. Details of the competitors' schemes and Jury's deliberations are discussed in the following sections.



2 Competitive Process

On 21 October 2024, the Proponent commenced the Competition process to select the most appropriate design solution that best demonstrated the ability to achieve design excellence in accordance with GANSW's *Design Competition Guidelines*.

The selected competitive process comprised an 'invited' architectural design competition. The Proponent invited three (3) competitors to participate in the process.

The competitive process was undertaken in accordance with the Design Excellence Strategy for the site and the Brief. The competitive process sought a range of designs that responded to the applicable planning instruments, design / commercial objectives and requirements outlined in the Brief and also the Proponent's Reference Scheme and Council's Reference Scheme

A five-person Jury reviewed and assessed the three architectural designs, all of which reflected the likely building form and impacts anticipated by the site's multiple constraints.

2.1 Design Competition Manager

The Proponent's independent Competition Manager was Adrian Melo of The Planning Studio. Technical advice was provided to competitors throughout the Competition and an assessment of the final submissions was undertaken. Technical advice and a briefing were also provided to the Jury. The technical advisors involved in the Competition are outlined below:

- The Planning Studio / Adrian Melo (Town Planning)
- Altus Group (QS)
- Arcadia (Landscape)
- Northrop (Structural)
- Intrax (ESD / Services)

The Technical Advisors presented their technical findings for all three schemes to the Jury prior to the architectural presentations on 3 December 2024.

2.2 Jury

The five-member Jury comprised the following members:

- Rory Toomey (Chair & GANSW nominee)
- Brendan Randles (City of Parramatta nominee)
- Esther Dickins (DPHI nominee)
- Chris Johnson (Proponent nominee)
- Bob Nation (Proponent nominee)

Two Jury members were nominated by the Proponent, one Jury member was selected by City of Parramatta Council, one Jury member was selected by GANSW and one Jury member was selected by DPHI.

All members of the Jury have extensive experience and expertise in the design professions and industry.



2.3 Observers

There were a number of observers from multiple local and state departments that were present during presentations and Jury deliberations:

- Jan McCredie (City of Parramatta Council)
- Andy Nixey (Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure)
- Charbel Touma (Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure)

2.4 Key Dates of Architectural Design Competition

Date	Milestone / Design Competition
Monday 21 October 2024	Commencement Date
Monday 21 October 2024	Competitors Briefing Session
Monday 28 October 2024	Walk on Country
Friday 1 November 2024	Mid-Point Review
6 – 7 November 2024	Quantity Surveyor Meetings
Friday 15 November 2024	Final Submission Lodgement Date
18 – 21 November 2024	Review of final submissions and technical reporting Cost estimate by proponent’s quantity surveyor
Thursday 21 November 2024	Lodgement of presentation date material
Tuesday 3 December 2024	Presentation date
Tuesday 3 December 2024	Decision Date
Within 21 days of Decision Date	Notification to competitors
Tuesday 17 December 2024	Design Competition Report



2.5 Competition Architects (in order of presentation)

The Architectural Design Competition comprised three competitors as outlined below.

1. Plus Architecture
2. Fuse Architects
3. Silvester Fuller

2.6 Selection Process

The selection process was based on the written and drawn material supplied by competitors, and in-person presentations given to the Jury.

Following a thorough assessment of each scheme, the Jury concluded that the scheme by Fuse Architects presented the most successful response to the Brief and is recommended as the winning design to emerge from the competitive process.



3 Part 1: Assessment of Final Submissions

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Competition for Melrose Park South-East – Block B4 (the site) is to select the highest quality architectural, landscape and urban design solution based on the comparative evaluation of three schemes submitted by competing architects.

This is to meet the design excellence requirements in accordance with the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP2023), the Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023 (PDCP2023), and the *Design Competition Guidelines*, prepared by GANSW.

The overall design objectives for the design competition are to stimulate imaginative architectural and urban design proposals that:

- Achieve design excellence as defined in Clause 6.13 and 9.3 of the PLEP 2023;
- Are of exceptional design merit and quality that complements the immediate vicinity of the site;
- Deliver ecological sustainable design prioritising passive environmental design and best practice environmental performance;
- Ensure that future development is sufficiently protected from stormwater inundation and flood impacts;
- Provide a high degree of activation to the frontages of Southern Parklands East OS3;
- Achieve a high quality articulated built form that employs appropriate materials, finishes and facades appropriate for the locality;
- Provide appropriate wind mitigation measures for the protection of pedestrian amenity at the ground plane;
- Provide appropriate acoustic treatment to ensure amenity for future residential uses;
- Ensure that residential design achieves the highest quality outcomes with respect to layout, materials, amenity and functionality;
- Create a positive and legible relationship between the building and surrounding public domain; and
- Address the built form relationship between the subject site and adjoining sites.

The project vision is to create a development which:

- Reflects and celebrates the unique location along the Parramatta River;
- Recognises and capitalises on its prominent position in defining the future waterfront parks, streets and pedestrian connections;
- Establishes a consistent approach to built form massing across the precinct and defining a human scale at the ground plane
- Demonstrates a connection with Country through consideration of materials, landscaping, and other relevant opportunities.



- Responds to site topography by stepping building forms and defining the streets and spaces through a balanced approach to height and slope;
- Delivers an integrated mixed-use contemporary development that:
 - Exhibits design excellence within its important context; and
 - Responds sympathetically to the surrounds in choice of architectural variety, materials, façade, planning and scale; and
- Exhibits best practice design with environmental performance.
- Delivers 15% of the total residential floor space as affordable housing which is integrated seamlessly into the development.

Future development as SSDAs under the Housing SEPP will seek to achieve a 30% uplift to both FSR and Height permitted under the PLEP 2023 as a result of the delivery of 15% of the residential floor space as affordable housing.

3.2 Overview

Following the submission of the final architectural schemes, a technical assessment and compliance review of the competitors' submissions was undertaken by the technical advisors. This review was provided to the Jury prior to the Final Presentation date on 3 December 2024.

Each competitor presented their scheme to the Jury explaining their design philosophy, approach to the site, design concept, compliance with planning controls and the design, planning and commercial objectives of the Brief, as well as the broader public benefits of their respective schemes.

In accordance with the assessment criteria within the Brief, the design schemes were analysed and assessed by the Jury with a focus on design quality, planning compliance and alignment with commercial objectives of the Brief. Based on this method of comparative assessment, a winning scheme was identified by the Jury. The key assessment areas are identified below:

- 1) Response to planning objectives and requirements
- 2) Response to design objectives and requirements
- 3) Response to commercial objectives and requirements

An assessment of the schemes' design merits and areas for further development were also identified and discussed during the deliberation process. The Jury noted that each of the schemes demonstrated a clear understanding of the Design Brief, site and context, and achieved a high level of compliance with the relevant planning controls. All schemes were accepted as fulfilling the submission requirements.

The following section of the report outlines each of the three design schemes in more detail and provides the Jury's assessment of each.



3.3 Plus Architecture

Plus Architecture's approach was to design a development that exemplifies the benefits of high density living, underpinned by a consideration of public and private amenity, connection to Country and the creation of community. Three fundamental design principles have informed their response: new from old, marking place and a new space for community.

The ground plane will create dynamic spaces that encourage interaction and movement. These diverse areas are connected through carefully designed links that ensure seamless connectivity to the surrounding precinct and the light rail. Elevated platforms have been incorporated into the design to address the natural level changes across the site. These platforms not only resolve the site's topography but also create visually interesting spaces that provide a new perspective of the surrounding landscape however privacy from the ramp to the lower apartments would require consideration.

Tower 1 at 31 storeys is envisioned to be the marker tower for the development. The towers permissible height gives it a strong presence over the Parramatta River skyline. Conceptually, the facade design is intended to recall notions of marking place through the patterned scarring of tree trunks, the indigenous practice of signifying local landmarks, places of significance.

Slab edges protrude so as to provide shading to the apartment units inside and serve as a framework to introduce subtle rhythms of vertical aluminium shading fins that can be either off-formed concrete or powder-coated metal. Vertical fins are attached to every other mullion of the window-wall system with a pattern of three tones, which alternate at every level. The fins are intended to provide façade expression, visual privacy and solar shading, especially to the western facade.

Tower 2 at 18 storeys uses earthen terracotta brick as a response to the domestic vernacular character of Melrose Park's post European settlement, providing it with a strong presence. With its materiality intended to mediate the 'middle' scale transition between the tallest Tower 1 Marker and Tower 3, the proposed facade presents a clean vertical expression that alludes to indigenous gestures of 'earth' and 'sky'. Horizontal lines of 'earth' intersect vertical fingers of 'sky', expressed in the contrasting materialities of brick and glass. Brick slips are proposed for their durability and high performance in addition to their thematic choice. Expressed vertical and horizontal elements provide shading to the east and north elevations.

With Tower 1 serving as the marker of place, **Tower 3** serves as the proposals physical address to place. The smallest of the three towers, it completes the scale transition from 'Sky Country' to 'Earth Country', in the immediate context of the Mangrove landscapes of the Parramatta River foreshore.

In response to the waters of Parramatta River, Tower 3's typical levels comprise subtly scalloped floorplates and angled balcony glazing. Full height window-walls to each apartment are provided with thin metal balustrades at the balcony to maximise each units' aspect to the water. At the ground level, a sculptural concrete colonnade at ground level and provides shelter to the retail space near the Waratah Street light rail.

Overall, the proposal achieves 568 apartments across 48,612m² of GFA, which includes 509m² of non-residential GFA.



3.3.1 Jury Feedback

- Plus achieved a solid response to the commercial brief and delivered the required yield with high efficiency.
- The Jury recognised Plus's efforts to increase the site permeability, with strong sky views.
- Plus effectively separated public and communal open space.
- Plus's comparative analysis of the two masterplans was considered positive and highly beneficial.
- The integration of Country and incorporation of scar trees into the design was viewed favourably.
- The Jury commended the distinctive narrative for the appearance and external design of each of the three buildings.
- The formal response to the ripples in water was seen as a positive element.
- The adopted strategy for allocating the quantum of affordable housing was considered to be a strong approach.
- The Jury felt that the range of integrated rooftop spaces throughout the development provided good amenity for residents.
- The design had a clear and rational response to building services. The centralisation of the AC and plant equipment was viewed favourably.
- However, the ground plane was poorly resolved with limited street level interaction achieved by Tower 3.
- The proposed raised public domain did not have a strong connection with the street and included significant amounts of impervious surfaces over the identified deep soil area.
- The encroachment of basement areas into the street setbacks would significantly compromise any substantial street tree planting within the setback.
- The Jury was also concerned that the towers' extensive glazing would require significant design changes - ie. reduction and screening - to mitigate heat gain.
- The lack of direct and accessible connection from the Light Rail stop to the Retail would need resolution





Figure 1: Photomontage of proposed design from Waratah Street (Plus Architecture)



Figure 2: Photomontage of community space and surrounding buildings (Plus Architecture)





Figure 3: Photomontage of northern perspective overlooking Parramatta River (Plus Architecture)



Figure 4: Photomontage of proposed design from Waratah Street (Plus Architecture)



3.4 Fuse Architects

Fuse Architects design approach is shaped by the following themes; architecture as a living connection, the Architecture of flow and light, people and place: a community in harmony and an architecture that breathes with the environment. These themes have influenced Fuse's approach to key design elements, which are summarised below.

Base form: the base form is derived from the proponent's reference scheme, featuring 30 and 18-storey towers on a layered podium of 9, 8, 6, and 4 storeys around a central courtyard. While this massing provides the necessary density, the placement of podium breaks along Mary Street and NSR6 creates a boundary that could feel more defined than desired, potentially limiting connectivity with future neighbouring developments.

Mangrove Sun: the building height along the southern podium has been reduced from 9/8 to 6 stories, significantly minimising shadows cast on the critical mangrove foreshore, fostering solar access and a healthier ecosystem. This height reduction also enhances view sharing with neighbouring future buildings, opening-up sightlines toward the mangroves and riverfront. Additionally, reallocating height to a 5-storey podium along Mary Street defines the street's edge more consistently with adjacent future forms, balancing visual access and ecological sensitivity.

Sky Vistas: are essential to the design, opening-up views from neighbouring sites and key pedestrian paths. The southern podium massing is removed, enhancing sky views from the EWR 9 view corridor and the courtyard, while the relocation of built form creates an opening toward the river. This repositioning introduces a dynamic interplay of built and open space, reflecting the southern site's potential as a significant public space node at ground level, inviting a stronger connection between the riverfront and the urban environment.

Terracing: edges of the podium and tower are terraced, providing a cascading sequence of private outdoor spaces that connect residents to the sky while further maximising solar access for the mangroves. This stepped approach creates the potential for diverse housing typologies, with larger apartments anchoring the podium as terrace sky homes, fostering a unique residential character.

Tower massing: the towers are divided along their long axes, creating a slim vertical expression, with dynamic plates that shift off-grid, reducing the bulk and scale of each tower. This split aligns with the central circulation spaces, providing an opportunity to improve amenity by bringing natural light and airflow into the foyers on each level.

Tower sub-communities: each tower segment forms sub-communities, with varied shifts and ledges further reducing the visual bulk and fostering identity within the broader massing. Vertical splits within the inner courtyard tower volumes add depth and character, breaking the towers down into distinct yet unified parts.

Tower sun: the western edge of the tower facing Waratah Street does not strictly follow the street alignment, but is staggered to, ensuring that each apartment maximises solar access potential. Vertical slots are introduced along this edge, accentuating the staggered expression while refining the overall scale for a harmonious street presence.

Social spaces: small, medium, and large communal spaces are thoughtfully distributed throughout the design to support diverse levels of social interaction and foster a sense of community among residents. Small sky gardens within the towers provide intimate



gathering spots, while medium active spaces on the podium gardens encourage interaction among tower residents. The large central courtyard serves as a communal hub, allowing for larger gatherings and activities that bring together not only the building's residents but also members of the wider community, strengthening social bonds across the entire precinct.

Permeability: ground-level pathways link people, water, and landscape, creating site-wide connections that invite the community to traverse and interact. These permeable routes support natural rainwater flow from the site's highest points, filtering it through bioretention systems before reaching the Parramatta River, symbolising a regenerative "slow water" design.

Retail hub: retail is concentrated on the southern corner near the proposed Waratah Street light rail stop, ferry car park, and public plaza, forming a vibrant node to capitalise on the synergy between transit access, shopping, and community gathering. This hub is designed to foster a lively streetscape, with the potential for a smaller neighbourhood shop at the Mary and Waratah intersection to serve local needs.

Green landscape: a continuous green system flows from the tower terraces, through the podium, and into the courtyard, linking the landscape with the mangrove shoreline. Rain gardens and bioretention veins permeate this green framework, nurturing native plants that attract local wildlife and act as living expressions of the area's ecological and cultural history.

Dual façade expression: the façade embodies a dual expression that is responsive to orientation, sunlight, and views. While the inner surfaces of the tower embody solid, earthy tones, outer facades—exposed to the sun—are wrapped in a metallic, kinetic veil reflecting the river. Each façade detail responds to its solar orientation, fostering a symbiotic relationship with the environment.

Overall, the proposal achieves 551 apartments across 49,340m² of GFA, which includes 876m² of non-residential GFA.

3.4.1 Jury Feedback

- The Jury applauded the richness practicality and complexity that emerged from Fuse's approach to planning, massing and detailing.
- The diversity of open spaces sprinkled throughout the buildings was viewed favourably.
- The Jury appreciated Fuse's focus on the high-quality experience for residents and people visiting the building.
- The clear explanation of how the massing was, definition of the towers, materiality and articulation of elements was highly commended by the Jury.
- The reduced height of the podium to reduce the impact on the mangroves was also viewed favourably.
- Fuse had a clear analysis of the DCP and reference scheme, which was evidenced in their design response.
- The response to solar heat gain from the west was well considered.



- The Jury considered the entry points, circulation to lobbies, apartment layouts and floor plates to be a strong response while noting that the public/private definition, privacy of ground level units and extent of undercroft landscape needs refinement.
- The intention to incorporate water, drainage and the poetic movement of rain water through site and ground floor plane was viewed very favourably.
- The integrally coloured concrete cladding systems were viewed very favourably, which together with the varying tower expressions created a positive assembly of forms.
- The articulation of each tower through having one side glazed and the other side with a more solid and complex form is positive.
- Individual dwellings were elegantly designed to best respond to their respective positions within the complex.
- The Jury felt that the scheme was sufficiently robust to respond to its various concerns (and future client requirements) without losing its essential design qualities.
-



Figure 5: View of proposed design from Waratah Street (Fuse Architects)





Figures 6 and 7: Photomontages of proposed design (Fuse Architects)



Figure 8: Photomontage of proposed ground floor plane (Fuse Architects)

3.5 Silvester Fuller

Silvester Fuller's concept proposes two sibling buildings, planted side by side and growing together. Drawing inspiration from the native vegetation established for thousands of years along the Parramatta River, these two new buildings are of the ground, emerging from it rather than placed upon it. They share a large communal park ("Central Park") between



them and define a public plaza fronting the soon to be created light rail stop to the South of the site. The proposed massing strategy departs from both the reference schemes to create a landscaped court of a significant scale between the two buildings. This “park” provides increased amenity to adjacent dwellings, drawing northern light deep into the site and increasing overall building separation. The configuration also optimises street address, eliminates internal corner apartments and minimises purely south facing homes.

Within the two primary buildings are contained a collection of communities separated horizontally and vertically. The lower communities contain two storey townhouses and community spaces at grade and apartments above, with well detailed masonry achieving a distinctive grainy texture. Above the lower levels are apartment and sky homes clustered into smaller communities with subtle variations in building form, colour and materiality. The result is a diversity of dwelling types to house, a diverse community of residents with a focus on natural amenity.

The building massing is intentionally subdivided into a cluster of smaller masses, with permeable voids cut through the massing from one elevation to the other. The ground level dwellings are wrapped in vertical masonry threads that emerge from the ground to anchor the building to place. The sky homes are expressed as a collection of discrete pitched elements, which energise the buildings distinctive roof profile, while elegantly integrating rooftop services, plant and photovoltaic cells

Arrival lobbies for each building are located on Waratah Street and the new mid block street (to be established), enabling efficient drop-off and delivery, with secondary access activating the Central Park. The “park” is accessed at its southern water end by a public plaza and community gathering space. Conceived as a large, shared backyard within the heart of the site for passive communal use. This densely planted landscape is supported by extensive deep soil and prioritises taller trees towards the centre of the green spine and lower trees and bushes on the edges. This strategy ensures that larger trees have space to grow in the future and reduces overshadowing from tall trees to the lower apartments. It also increases visual permeability across the courtyard while maintaining a good amount of privacy and buffer between communal and private spaces. Plant species, geometries, patterning and materiality are all driven by the indigenous history of the site.

The non-residential retail spaces are focused around a new community plaza space, thereby providing amenity and activation for the residents and local neighbourhood community. The solid brickwork base foundation is punctuated with colourful awnings so as to indicate public use.

The building forms frame the space and allow views through to the raised communal central park beyond. The generous park planting and northern sunlight spill between the building forms and provide a through site north south porosity.

The primary building form is divided into four colour groupings to identify the individual neighbourhood groupings within the primary mass. The base mass defined by brickwork in a collection of tones to define individual buildings, and the upper mass in more reflective silvery tones. The Community Plaza and communal rooms are proposed to be more saturated in colour in recognition of their importance within the village.

Overall, the proposal achieves 517 apartments across 48,615m² of GFA, which includes 505m² of non-residential GFA. Silvester Fuller also identified another option that would achieve 572 apartments, however this would increase the percentage of 1-bedroom apartments from the proposed 26% to 49%.



3.5.1 Jury Feedback

- The Jury applauded the very clear and singular response to the masterplan massing, the clear delineation between public and private spaces and the creation of a distinctive central north facing landscaped space (“the park”) within the development.
- The well defined community plaza was commended, especially given its adjacency to the light rail, its concentrated arrangement of retail offerings and strategic location at the termination of both the east west street connection and internal “park” space
- The strong materiality and definition of the podium, which was further reinforced on the landscape floor between the podium and tower buildings was viewed favourably.
- The apartment plans showed a high level of diversity and amenity, and were accessed by well resolved light filled lobbies and circulation corridors
- Apart from allowing natural light, air and outlook, the expression of the open egress stairs provided a positive rhythm to the façades.
- The stair expression also presented a cost saving on stair pressurisation and stair enclosure while also affording residents on lower levels the use of stairs instead of lift.
- The articulation of the tops of the buildings to accommodate two-storey roof homes was also viewed favourably.
- The jury was concerned about the usability of the “park” common garden as a wild forest
- While the potential for reorganising residential GFA was discussed, the proposal resulted in significantly fewer apartments than required by the brief. While the units themselves were well designed and larger than Apartment Design Guide minimums, it did not appear to the Jury that an improved alignment with the required yield could be achieved without significantly impacting on key qualities of the proposal.
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Figure 9: Photomontage of proposed design from Waratah Street (Silvester Fuller)



Figure 10: Photomontage of retail activation near light rail stop (Silvester Fuller)





Figure 11: Photomontage of communal outdoor space "Central Park" (Silvester Fuller)



4 Part 2: Jury Recommendations

The Jury commends and appreciates the significant skill, effort and resources that were evident in the three submissions, particularly considering the complexities of the site and the requirements of the Competition Brief. The Jury was also impressed with the quality of the presentation material submitted and presentations delivered by all Competitors.

Following Jury deliberations, the Jury unanimously selected Fuse Architects proposal as the winning scheme. In the opinion of the Jury, this scheme is the most capable of achieving design excellence for the following reasons:

- The richness and certain natural complexity that emerged from Fuse's approach to planning, massing and detailing.
- The diversity of open spaces sprinkled throughout the buildings.
- Fuse's focus on the high-quality experience for residents and people visiting the building.
- The clear explanation of the building development massing, definition of the towers, materiality and articulation of elements.
- The reduced height of the podium to reduce the impact on the mangroves.
- The response to solar heat gain from the west was well considered.
- The entry points, circulation to lobbies, apartment layouts and floor plates were well executed.
- The intention to incorporate water, drainage and the poetic movement of rain water through site and ground floor plane.

4.1 Key principles of the design to be retained and strengthened

Understanding that the scheme will be more fully refined and developed through subsequent design stages, the Jury identified the following elements that contributed to its success and should be retained or strengthened throughout this process:

- The diversity of open spaces sprinkled throughout the buildings is an attribute to be retained in design development in consultation with the Design Review Panel (DRP).
- The clear explanation of the building development massing leading to definition of the towers, different materiality and articulation of elements is commended and to be maintained.
- The external expression of sun shading elements to the western façade of the western tower is to be retained through design development, with further details and specific design to be determined in consultation with the client and the DRP.
- The intention to incorporate water, drainage and the poetic movement of rain water through the site and ground floor plane is a key element to the scheme and should be retained in some form noting that collaboration with a landscape architect and hydraulic engineer is required.
- The inclusion of a variety of habitable terraces to apartments in low rise buildings is a strong feature and should be retained.



4.2 Areas for further resolution and refinement through design development

Prior to the SSDA stage, the Jury recommends that the following matters should be addressed or further resolved:

- The Jury notes that the proposed floor to floor height of 3.15m is seen as a risk and may need to be adjusted and resolved through design development.
- The operation of the central open space as a purely public approach is not supported. The Jury recommends that movement and connections through this space be reconsidered as a residents-only amenity, including redesigning the north-western corner.
- The inclusion of an office area in the north-western corner is not supported by the Jury. It is recommended that this be redesigned to include additional dwellings and reduce permeability of the courtyard.
- The Jury recommends consolidating and rationalising the number and scale of east-west connections and limiting the amount of undercroft landscaped areas, due to potential maintenance and CPTED difficulties.
- The relationship between the ground floor units and communal open space needs to be resolved through architectural and planting strategies, to ensure appropriate visual privacy, acoustic comfort and physical separation.
- The earth and water façade inspiration is supported in terms of colour and visual effect but further resolution and understanding of specification and technology is required particularly in terms of long term maintenance.
- The Jury notes that based on the QS advice, the yield may need to be adjusted to meet the targets and building design budget. A variety of strategies including rationalisation will be considered by the DRP and client throughout design development.



5 Conclusion

This competitive process has been undertaken in accordance with the Brief and Government Architect NSW's (GANSW) Policy. This Report documents the competitive process and the Jury's recommendation for the selected design.

Of the three architectural firms invited to compete in the process, Fuse Architects design was identified as the successful scheme. The Jury noted a range of design elements to be retained and matters that should be addressed during the design development stage. The Jury considers that this scheme is the most capable of achieving design excellence, subject to further refinement as set out in **Part 2: Jury Recommendations**.

It is therefore recommended that GANSW accept the outcome of the Architectural Design Competition Process undertaken by the proponent in accordance with the relevant provisions relating to design excellence.

This Architectural Design Competition Report provides a summary of the outcomes of the Architectural Design Competition for the redevelopment of Melrose Park South-East – Block B4.

The Competition was undertaken in accordance with the approved Design Excellence Strategy (dated October 2024) for the site, and in accordance with the Architectural Design Competition Brief prepared by The Planning Studio and endorsed by GANSW on 18 October 2024.

- The Architectural Design Competition was undertaken for the redevelopment of Melrose Park South-East – Block B4. The relevant provisions of the Parramatta LEP 2023, Parramatta DCP 2023 and GANSW's *Design Competition Guidelines* have been considered throughout this Competition.
- The Competition was undertaken in accordance with the design excellence requirements of the Design Competition Guidelines, prepared by Government Architect NSW and Clause 9.3 and 6.13 of Parramatta LEP 2023.
- Fuse Architects design proposal was selected by the Jury as the winning scheme. This scheme is to progress to the SSDA stage for lodgement with DPHI/GANSW. The Jury was satisfied this scheme meets the objectives of the Brief. The Jury's decision was unanimous in this regard.
- Subject to further refinements outlined in the Jury's recommendations in Section 4, the winning scheme by Fuse Architects is considered capable of achieving design excellence, noting that the outcomes of this process do not fetter the consent authority's ability to determine whether the proposal achieves design excellence.

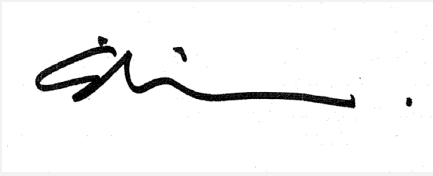


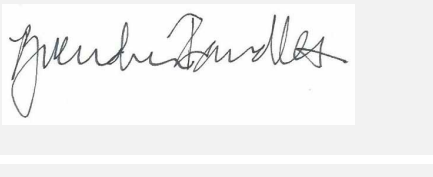

The Jury confirms that this report is an accurate record of the Competition and endorses its assessment and recommendations.

As per the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy, the Design Competition Jury will also function as a site wide Design Review Panel, reviewing the design development and ensuring the ongoing design integrity of the winning scheme at key stages including prior to the:

- lodgement of the SSDA
- lodgement of Response to Submissions



- lodgement of any significant design modification application.

Table 2 – Jury Endorsement			
Juror	Position	Signature	Date
Esther Dickins	DPHI Representative		18.12.2024
Chris Johnson	Proponent Representative		17.12.2024
Bob Nation	Proponent Representative		29.12.2024
Brendan Randles	City of Parramatta Council Representative		29.12.2024
Rory Toomey	Chair & GANSW Representative		17.12.2024

