

# GYDE

## Design Competition Jury Report

849, 853 and 859 Pacific Highway and 2 and 8 Wilson Street,  
Chatswood

submitted to Willoughby Council  
on behalf of Billbergia

This report was prepared on behalf of the Design Excellence Competition Jury by:

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**Project:** 22-269

**Report Version:** Final

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| Kim Crestani    | Proponent representative                  |  | 12 October 2023 |
| Robert Nation   | Proponent representative                  |  | 16 October 2023 |
| Laura Harding   | Council nominee                           |  | 12 October 2023 |
| Digby Hall      | Council nominee                           |  | 12 October 2023 |

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                  |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction.....</b>                                                                                      | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1. Overview .....                                                                                              | 1         |
| 1.2. Site Description .....                                                                                      | 2         |
| 1.3. The Proponent.....                                                                                          | 4         |
| 1.4. The Consent Authority.....                                                                                  | 4         |
| 1.5. The Regulatory Framework.....                                                                               | 4         |
| <b>2. Competition Process.....</b>                                                                               | <b>5</b>  |
| 2.1. Overview .....                                                                                              | 5         |
| 2.2. Participating Architectural Firms.....                                                                      | 5         |
| 2.3. Competition Manager .....                                                                                   | 5         |
| 2.4. Willoughby Council Observers .....                                                                          | 5         |
| 2.5. Government Architect NSW .....                                                                              | 5         |
| 2.6. Jury .....                                                                                                  | 5         |
| 2.7. Technical Advisors .....                                                                                    | 6         |
| 2.8. Key dates of the Competition .....                                                                          | 6         |
| 2.9. Mid-Point Reviews.....                                                                                      | 8         |
| 2.10. Design Refinement of the Preferred Scheme.....                                                             | 9         |
| 2.11. Selection Process by Jury .....                                                                            | 10        |
| <b>3. Summary of final submissions.....</b>                                                                      | <b>11</b> |
| 3.1. Overview .....                                                                                              | 11        |
| 3.2. Entry 1 – Koichi Takada Architects (KTA) .....                                                              | 11        |
| 3.3. Entry 2 – PBD Architects (PBD) .....                                                                        | 13        |
| 3.4. Entry 3 – GroupGSA .....                                                                                    | 15        |
| <b>4. Jury recommendation .....</b>                                                                              | <b>17</b> |
| 4.1. Elements to be retained to achieve Design Excellence.....                                                   | 17        |
| 4.2. Elements to be reconsidered to achieve Design Excellence .....                                              | 18        |
| 4.3. Matters relating to inconsistencies with the prescribed planning controls to achieve design excellence..... | 21        |
| <b>5. Conclusion .....</b>                                                                                       | <b>22</b> |

## APPENDICES

| APPENDIX | DOCUMENT                        |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1        | Competition Brief and Addendums |
| 2        | Jury Letter to PBD              |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Overview

This Design Excellence Competition Jury Report (report) provides a summary of the Design Excellence Competition (competition) undertaken by the Proponent, Billbergia, in relation to the site at 849, 853 and 859 Pacific Highway and, 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood.

The report outlines the competition process, a summary of each of the schemes as considered by the Jury on the presentation days and the competition Jury's recommendation.

The purpose of this report is to inform Willoughby Council (Council) and Government Architect NSW (GANSW) of the competition process undertaken for the site, the outcomes, and the rationale for the selection of the preferred architectural design for the site.

The competition was conducted in accordance with the Design Excellence Competition Brief (Brief) (attached in Appendix 1) and the GANSW Draft Design Excellence Guidelines 2018 (Draft GANSW DE Guidelines 2018). The Brief was developed in consultation with Council and GANSW where feedback and comments were incorporated into the final Brief issued to competition participants. The Brief was endorsed by Council and GANSW in June 2023, and issued to all competition participants at the commencement of the competition on 26 June 2023. A copy of the Brief and is provided at Appendix 1.

By way of background, the competition was undertaken in the form of an invited single-stage design competition. Three (3) architectural firms participated in the competition and are listed below (in alphabetical order):

- GroupGSA (GSA)
- Koichi Takada Architects (KTA)
- PBD Architects (PBD)

All competition participants had four weeks to prepare their submission from the date of commencement. The submissions were electronically lodged to the Competition Manager (Gyde Consulting) on 4 August 2023. Each of the competition participants presented their schemes to the Jury on 21 August 2023. Following the presentations, the Jury considered the scheme prepared by PBD was the preferred scheme for the competition. The Jury reviewed the scheme and were satisfied that subject to addressing the recommendations in Section 4 of this Report that the PBD scheme has the ability to achieve design excellence in accordance with Clause 6.23 *Design Excellence* in the Willoughby LEP 2012 (WLEP 2012) and the Brief.

The Jury noted their selection of the PBD scheme was based on:

- Being capable of achieving Design Excellence subject to further design development prior to the lodgement of Development Application
- The urban porosity, scale and activation of the podium including the contribution of the cruciform axial connections that establish a strong organising element for the proposal and offer clear way finding from multiple frontages
- The articulation of the towers as a series of bundled forms to reinforce the slenderness and verticality of the proposed massing and to reduce the perceived bulk of the development
- The high performing parti in terms of solar amenity and cross-ventilation for apartments

- The development of a cohesive architectural language and materiality for the tower and podium forms
- The development of a kit of parts within the tower facades that are deployed to respond to the specific environmental conditions of each solar aspect, support improved privacy outcomes between the towers and provide subtle variations in the bundled tower forms

Clause 6.23(6) of the WLEP 2012 notes that development consent must not be granted to development to which Clause 6.23 of the WLEP 2012 applies unless — for a building that is, or greater than, 35 metres above ground level (existing) — an architectural design competition that complies with the Design Excellence Guidelines has been held in relation to the development, and the design of the development is the winner of the architectural design competition. Should it be necessary, the Jury **may** be reconvened to review the proposal as it develops including but not limited to prior to development application (DA) lodgement, at Construction Certificate (CC) and Occupation Certificate (OS) Stages. As the proposal has been subject of a competition, the DA will not be referred to a Design Review Panel.

This Jury Report seeks to:

- Summarise the competition process,
- Outline the assessment of the design merits of each of the entries,
- Present the Jury's decision, including the rationale for the choice of a nominated design and the design excellence qualities that it exhibits,
- Outline any recommended design amendments that are relevant to the achievement of design excellence through subsequent design development, and
- Identify the design excellence qualities exhibited in the competition winning/preferred scheme that are to be retained in any future design development

This report has been prepared in accordance with Draft GANSW DE Guidelines 2018 and the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy for the site prepared by Gyde dated April 2023 (endorsed by Council and GANSW on 19 June 2023).

All Jury members have reviewed and endorsed the content contained within this report.

### 1.2. Site Description

The site is located at 849, 853 and 859 Pacific Highway and, 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood. The site is legally described as:

- Lot 1 Deposited Plan (DP) 1189541 (8 Wilson Street (Lot 1 O'Brien Street))
- SP 52947 (2 Wilson Street)
- SP 1496 (849 Pacific Highway)
- SP 60178 (853 Pacific Highway)
- SP 10110 (859 Pacific Highway)
- SP2 land fronting Pacific Highway

The site is bound by Wilson Street (to north), O'Brien Street (to south), Pacific Highway (to south) and the T1 North Shore and Western Line, T9 Northern Line, and the Metro North-West Line (to east). The site is situated on the northern fringe of the Chatswood Central Business District and is highly accessible. The location of site is illustrated in Figure 1 and aerial photo in Figure 2.



Figure 1: Cadastral map of the site and immediate surroundings (Source: Site Specific DCP for the site)



Figure 2: Aerial photo of the site (Source: Six Maps)

### 1.3. The Proponent

The Proponent of the competition is Billbergia.

### 1.4. The Consent Authority

The site is located within the Willoughby City local government area (LGA). The Sydney North Planning Panel is the consent authority for development given it is anticipated to have a capital investment value greater than \$30 million. A representative from Council, Wil Robertson (Urban Design Specialist), acted as an impartial observer to the competition. Note details in Section 2.4 below.

### 1.5. The Regulatory Framework

The key environmental planning instrument that applies to the site is the *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012* (WLEP 2012). Clause 6.23 of the WLEP 2012 relates to design excellence which provides the regulatory framework for Design Excellence. The competition has been undertaken in accordance with this clause.

A site-specific Planning Proposal (PP-2021-6560), including a site specific draft Development Control Plan (SSDCP), for 849-851 Pacific Highway and 2-8 Wilson Street, Chatswood was gazetted on 26 May 2023 (WLEP 2012 (Amendment 32)) and specifically applies to the site. WLEP 2012 (Amendment No 34) was gazetted on Friday 30 June 2023 following Council's comprehensive review of its LEP and DCP and incorporates a suite of LEP comprehensive changes. Finalisation of Willoughby DCP 2023 came into effect 31 July 2023. All relevant LEP and DCP amendments were considered in the competition process.



## 2. COMPETITION PROCESS

### 2.1. Overview

The competition was undertaken as an invited single stage competition, with three (3) architectural firms taking part, as outlined in Section 2.2 below.

### 2.2. Participating Architectural Firms

The following architectural firms participated in the competition (in alphabetical order):

- GroupGSA (GSA)
- Koichi Takada Architects (KTA)
- PBD Architects (PBD)

### 2.3. Competition Manager

Yvonne Kanti (Senior Associate) from Gyde Consulting was appointed as the competition manager. As the competition manager, Gyde managed the organisational and administrative functions of the competition on behalf of the Proponent.

### 2.4. Willoughby Council Observers

The competition was overseen by one (1) key observer from Council, Wil Robertson (Urban Design Specialist). The role of an observer is to verify that the competition has been followed appropriately and fairly. The Council observer was copied into all correspondence between the competition managers (Gyde) and the participating architectural firms and competition Jury and were invited to attend meetings with the Competitors and Technical Advisors. Council's observer was invited to attend the presentation day on 21 August 2023 and supplementary presentation on 26 September 2023.

### 2.5. Government Architect NSW

Matthew Bennett was appointed as the Chair of the Jury and the nominee from GANSW. As the GANSW endorsed Chair, Matthew Bennett reviewed and endorsed the Brief on 20 June 2023. Gyde advised GANSW of the competition outcome via email on 16 October 2023. Gyde will forward GANSW a copy of the Endorsed Jury Report for their records.

### 2.6. Jury

The Jury comprised five members:

- Chair (GANSW endorsed): Matthew Bennett
- Proponent nominated Juror: Bob Nation
- Proponent nominated Juror: Kim Crestani
- Council nominated Juror: Laura Harding
- Council nominated Juror: Digby Hall

The Jury members have extensive experience in architecture, urban design, planning and development.

In accordance with the GANSW Draft Design Excellence Guidelines 2018, Matthew Bennett, as the GANSW Nominee was the Chair.

## 2.7. Technical Advisors

Technical advisors were appointed to provide technical assistance and clarification to competition participants and the Jury. The technical advisors involved in the competition include:

*Table 1: List of technical advisors for the competition*

| DISCIPLINE        | TECHNICAL ADVISORS | CONTACT         |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Town Planning     | Gyde Consulting    | Yvonne Kanti    |
| Wind              | VIPAC              | Rumman Islam    |
| Traffic           | Stantec            | Rhys Hazell     |
| Acoustics         | Renzo Tonin        | Rebecca Corbett |
| Arborist          | McArdle            | Jim McArdle     |
| Flooding          | BG&E Water         | Ivan Varga      |
| Heritage          | Weir Phillips      | Anna McLaurin   |
| Services (Multi)  | Neuron             | Steven Cassells |
| Structural        | TTW                | Darren Jeffree  |
| Quantity Surveyor | Altus              | David Collins   |

It is noted that some competitors made use of the technical advisors (notably Town Planning, Wind, Acoustic, Structural and Services) in accordance with Section 4.8.1 of the Brief.

All Competitors met with the Town Planner Technical Advisor at the mid-point reviews held on 17 July 2023 and all Competitors were provided the opportunity to receive advice from the Wind, Services and QS Technical Advisors (who were “on call” via Teams) during the mid-point reviews.

All technical advisors (except for Flooding) prepared Technical Briefing Notes (Technical Reports) for the Jury.

The Town Planning, Wind, Services and QS Technical Advisors presented their respective technical advice for all three Competitor submissions to the Jury at Presentation Day on 21 August 2023.

## 2.8. Key dates of the Competition

The competition timeline is below.

| DATE          | MILESTONES                                                   |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26 June 2023  | Commencement and Issue of Competition Brief.                 |
| 27 June 2023  | Competitor Briefing Session (held via Teams)                 |
| 17 July 2023  | Mid-Point Review (held with all competitors at Gyde offices) |
| 1 August 2023 | Jury Briefing Session (held via Teams)                       |

| DATE                           | MILESTONES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 August 2023                  | Final Electronic Submission Lodgement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 7 August 2023                  | Final Hard Copy Submission Lodgement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 7 August 2023 – 11 August 2023 | Review of Final Submissions by Proponent Technical Advisors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 11 August 2023                 | Final Submissions and Technical Briefing Notes from Structural, Transport, Wind and Heritage distributed to Jury                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 11 August 2023                 | Gyde, Council and the Jury notified by the Proponent that the Flood Technical Briefing Notes would not be provided for any of the Final Competitor Submissions.                                                                                                                                           |
| 14 August 2023                 | Town Planning, QS, Acoustic and Services Technical Briefing Notes distributed to Jury                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 14 August 2023                 | Lodgement of Competitor presentation material                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 15 August 2023                 | Revised Transport and Town Planning Technical Reports distributed to Jury.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 17 August 2023                 | Arborist Technical Report distributed to Jury                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 21 August 2023                 | Presentation Day (at Gyde offices). Presentations were given in the following order, as determined by competitor preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koichi Takada Architects</li> <li>• PBD Architects</li> <li>• GroupGSA</li> </ul>                                                   |
| 21 August 2023                 | Jury Decision to extend the competition after unanimously agreeing the potential for Design Excellence has yet to be achieved by all three (3) Final Submissions. Jury selection of PBD Architects and GroupGSA to undertake further design development based on the relative merits of their strategies. |
| 25 August 2023                 | Jury letters to PBD Architects and Group GSA confirming 'Further Submission' requirements involving design revision and refinement.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 6 September 2023               | Mid-Point Proponent Review of Further Submissions (held with PBD Architects and GroupGSA at Gyde offices)                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 18 September 2023              | Submission Lodgement of Further Submissions (Final Design Packages) to Gyde                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 19 September 2023              | PBD and GroupGSA Final Design Packages distributed to QS, Wind, Services. Structural and Town Planning Technical Advisors for review                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 22 September 2023              | PBD and GroupGSA Final Design Packages distributed to the Jury for review                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 22 September 2023              | Town Planning, Services, Structural and Wind Technical Briefing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

| DATE                                                    | MILESTONES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                         | Notes distributed to Jury                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 26 September 2023                                       | QS Technical Briefing Notes distributed to Jury                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 26 September 2023                                       | Supplementary Presentation Day (at Gyde offices) of PBD and GroupGSA's revised schemes to the Jury. Presentations were given in the following order, as determined by Competitor preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PBD Architects</li><li>• GroupGSA</li></ul> |
| 26 September 2023<br>Within 7 days of the decision date | Verbal Notification to Competitors of the competition outcome.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6 October 2023                                          | Issue letter to PBD Architects confirming the winning Competitor's Scheme as the preferred scheme and specification of items requiring design refinement                                                                                                                         |
| 11 October 2023                                         | Competition Jury Report prepared by Gyde and distributed to all Jury members for endorsement                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 16 October 2023                                         | Completion of Jury Endorsed Report<br>Endorsed Competition Jury Report distributed to Competitors, Council, Jury, and Proponent                                                                                                                                                  |

### 2.9. Mid-Point Reviews

Mid-point reviews were held in-person with each Competitor on 17 July 2023. The following attendees were invited to attend the mid-point review and were present for all three mid-point reviews:

- Yvonne Kanti (Gyde - Competition Manager and Town Planning Technical Advisor)
- Wil Robertson (Council Representative – Observer)
- Various representatives from the Proponent
- Competitors (KTA, GroupGSA and PBD)

The following technical advisors were requested to be 'on-call' via Teams for any Competitor enquiries during the mid-point reviews:

- David Collins (Atlas Group – QS Technical Advisor)
- Rumman Islam (Vipac – Wind Technical Advisor)
- Steve Cassells (Neuron – Services Technical Advisor)

Each of the Competitors were given an hour session. General feedback and clarifications were provided on the day.

A second mid-point Proponent review was held on 6 September 2023 as part of the Jury directive to extend the competition period for further design development and refinement of two (2) of the Competitor schemes (PBD and GroupGSA). The following attendees were present for the two second mid-point Proponent reviews:

- Yvonne Kanti (Gyde - Competition Manager and Town Planning Technical Advisor)
- Various representatives from the Proponent – Observers
- Competitors (PBD and GroupGSA)

Council representatives were invited to attend the second mid-point proponent review and elected to not attend.

### 2.10. Design Refinement of the Preferred Scheme

As noted earlier in this report, the Jury selected the PBD scheme as the preferred scheme most capable of achieving design excellence for the competition on 26 September 2023, however requested PBD and GroupGSA to submit and present refined designs in their Jury letter dated 25 of August 2023, prior to nominating the PBD scheme as the winner.

Key refinements required for PBD and GroupGSA involved:

Group GSA:

- For any elevated outdoor areas demonstrate that wind has been appropriately addressed through the use of fixed façade elements
- The lack of fine grain urban porosity (North South) and the potential for greater variation in tenancy typologies and activation opportunities this could offer
- Demonstrate sufficient amenity is achievable in the live/work modules in terms of solar access, separation, and ventilation (through section)
- In the revised tower floor plates, demonstrate sufficient façade ventilation can be accommodated in the scheme for on-floor a/c condensers and illustrate how this is integrated with the overall facade strategy
- Introduce greater articulation in the larger tower forms by continuing to explore and develop the cranking/folding and vertical articulation strategies
- Strengthen the design response to achieve a balanced and coordinated relationship between interior apartment planning and exterior architectural expression
- Recalibrate apartment plans to respond to orientation particularly apartments with Northern aspect
- The fundamental breach of the site specific DCP tower separation controls. The design team should revisit the tower planning to resolve this issue.

PBD:

- Provide a strong organising element and offer clear way finding from multiple frontages
- Break down the scale of the podium by increasing permeability and potential variation in tenancy typologies and activation opportunities
- Establish North South public domain connections shielded from the Pacific Highway
- Provide legible entries and street addresses for residents and visitors to both towers.
- Explore a more deliberate formal expression in this zone with greater architectural articulation
- Reconsider the current breach of DCP setbacks and whether the adoption of planning strategies in the alternative option presented to the Jury could establish a scheme with greater architectural merit and compliance with DCP controls
- Reinforce the slenderness, verticality, and articulation of the tower forms
- Develop a more deliberate architectural approach to massing and articulation of the separation zone between the towers
- Improve the environmental responsiveness and performance of the building
- Provide information on how green infrastructure might be included for the management of stormwater, both

for the purposes of retention and re-use on site, and for minimising downstream pollution of waterways.

PBD and GroupGSA submitted a revised final design package to the Competition Manager on 18 September 2023 and presented the refined scheme to the Jury on 26 September 2023. The Jury was satisfied with PBD's further design development and PBD was nominated the competition winner.

### 2.11. Selection Process by Jury

The selection process was based on the visual and written material supplied by the competition participants, the technical advisors' briefing notes and verbal overview on each scheme, and presentations given to the Jury.

Following a thorough assessment of each submission, the Jury concluded that one submission had the greatest potential to achieve design excellence and was recommended as the preferred design most capable of achieving design excellence. Detailed in Section 4 of this report are those features that the Jury consider to be fundamental to the design integrity and excellence of the scheme and those issues that need to be resolved in detailed design development, prior to the lodgement of any DA.

### 3. SUMMARY OF FINAL SUBMISSIONS

#### 3.1. Overview

Following the electronic submission of the final competition schemes by KTA, GroupGSA and PBD on 4 August 2023, a technical assessment was undertaken by the Proponent's town planning, QS, services, structural, wind, traffic, acoustics, arborist, and heritage technical advisors and a briefing note relevant to each discipline was prepared and provided to the Jury prior to the presentation date. The Proponent's flooding technical advisor did not participate in the review of the final competition schemes. The Proponent's town planning, wind, QS and services technical advisors verbally summarised their briefing notes to the Jury on 21 August 2023 prior to the commencement of the Competitor presentations.

Each competition participant presented their scheme to the Jury for 30 minutes, face-to-face, explaining their design response to the site and its context, design concept, compliance with the planning controls and response to the Brief's design, planning and commercial objectives and the manner in which design excellence is considered to best potentially be demonstrated. Each presentation was followed by 30 minutes questions and clarifications from the Jury.

In accordance with the Brief, the schemes were analysed and assessed by the Jury with a focus on the overall design quality of each submission as informed by the competition Brief's design, planning and commercial objectives, as well as high-level cost advice and buildability.

An assessment of the design merits of each scheme and areas for further development was undertaken during the deliberation process at the conclusion of both presentation days. The Jury commended the responses to the Brief and general standard of submissions. Each submission demonstrated an understanding of the Brief, site context, Brief objectives, and statutory and non-statutory controls. However, at the conclusion of the first presentation day, the Jury unanimously agreed that the potential for Design Excellence was yet to be achieved by all three (3) Competitor submissions and requested two (2) Competitors, being PBD and GroupGSA, undertake further design development based on the relative merits of their strategies. Accordingly, the competition period was extended by an additional five (5) weeks to provide sufficient time for the selected Competitors to revise their schemes, participate in a second mid-point Proponent review and to prepare a final design package and further submission presentation material as requested by the Jury.

Sections 3.2- 3.4 below summarises the Jury's views following the presentations on 21 August 2023 and 26 September 2023.

Based on this assessment, the Jury reached a unanimous decision and identified a preferred scheme, subject to addressing the outlined recommendations, as set out in Section 4 of this report.

In accordance with the Brief, the Jury provides this report which outlines the design merits of each scheme and a recommendation that the architect for the preferred design is retained by the Proponent to prepare DA design documentation, CC documentation and for the construction phase of the project. Refer to Section 4 for further detail.

An overview of each competition scheme is provided below in the order of the presentations.

#### 3.2. Entry 1 – Koichi Takada Architects (KTA)

The scheme acknowledges the unique opportunity for new destination for social diversity in Chatswood. Significant views from the upper floors were proposed and the scheme aligns with Council's CBD Strategy 2026. A linear park

on the eastern frontage and landscape deep soil zone creates a soft natural buffer. The design proposes an organic tower shape to create a slender form with a sheltered calm space to support retail within the through-site link. The through-site link connects the landscape setback to Pacific Highway and provides daylight access and opportunity to connect across the site. Working with the typography of the land, additional shop top housing is incorporated to create a finer grain that orients towards O'Brien Street, with each façade tailored towards its orientation.

The Jury identified the following merits:

- the structure is generally rational, and the treatment of the tower corners adds a compositional dynamism to the proposal
- the arcade is a potentially positive and activated space
- the landscape strategy along Pacific Highway and eastern access way are reasonably strong
- the distribution of commercial and live work uses in the podium relates well to the nature of the eastern and western interfaces
- the outdoor common areas are generous and offer multiple orientations and solar conditions for use during the day
- the apartment planning is efficient and rational, and the residential lobbies are provided with light and air.

The Jury also raised a number of concerns including:

- the scheme was the least compliant with the site specific DCP tower separation controls
- the materiality and character of the facades and in particular the large areas of glazing result in a scheme with a commercial expression that does not articulate its residential use
- the lack of a residential address to O'Brien and Wilson Street does not provide good urban legibility for residents and visitors
- the proposal for street level waste/loading is not compliant under current Willoughby Council guidelines, and does not seem appropriate in a project of this scale
- the use of expansive areas of glazing does not offer a sufficient environmental response - horizontal shading east and west is not effective for low angle sun
- the surplus floor area behind habitable zones of live/work modules appears to have limited amenity and functionality
- the single orientation south-facing apartments in the south tower diminish the overall performance of the proposal.

Figure 3 provides an extract of KTA's photomontage.





*Figure 3: Extract of KTA photomontage*

### 3.3. Entry 2 – PBD Architects (PBD)

The PBD scheme was inspired by the undulating topography of a landscape valley. The forms embrace the flowing lines found in nature, terracing and layering to create a cascading effect that aims to create a harmonious connection and functional relationship between the tower, podium, and the nature.

#### **PBD first proposal**

The Jury identified the following merits:

- the contribution of the cruciform axes to the ground plane as they:
  - Provide a strong organising element and offer clear way finding from multiple frontages
  - Break down the scale of the podium by increasing permeability and potential variation in tenancy typologies and activation opportunities
  - Establish North South public domain connections shielded from the Pacific Highway
  - Provide legible entries and street addresses for residents and visitors to both towers.
- the extent of compliance with the site specific DCP tower separation controls
- the high performing parti of the towers and their potential to read as separate forms from multiple viewpoints

The Jury also raised concerns including:

- the overall the architectural expression, materiality and character of the scheme
- the horizontal stacked expression to the architectural language which undermines the potential slenderness and verticality of the tower forms

- the use of extensive areas of unprotected glazing does not offer a sufficient environmental response and the use of horizontal shading East and West is not effective for low angle sun
- the zone between the towers is not well handled in terms of privacy or modular formal relationships and the response seems to be driven by the meeting of a strict separation alignment rather than developing an architectural expression of slender bundled forms.

### **PBD revised proposal**

The Jury identified the following merits:

- the number, alignments, and dimensions of the pedestrian connections through the podium including the extent of covered arcades and links open to the sky
- the locations of the residential lobbies on O'Brien and Wilson Street establishing clear legibility and way finding for residents and visitors
- the flexibility in the plan for a range of commercial tenancy sizes and types to activate the surrounding streets and connections through the podium
- the provision and locations of commercial and childcare lobbies with dedicated lifts and stairways that provide additional activation to the podium connection
- the articulation of the podium massing as a series of elements that can step with the topography to break down the streetscape scale of the development
- the intention for a refined and simple palette of materials to create an uncluttered urban environment
- the proposed internal separation between the towers to comply with the dimensions set out by the site specific DCP controls
- the development of a cohesive architectural language and materiality for the tower and podium forms

The Jury raised concerns including the need to:

- identify strategies to provide lift access to the upper showroom levels without impacting the urban scale and legibility of the double height arcade through the podium
- improve compliance with the site specific side setback planning controls
- revisit the apartment layouts to locate living and dining areas in corner locations where privacy concerns will not be compounded
- In the design of the podium, the Jury encourages the design team to consider simplify and strengthen the architectural expression and materiality of the proposal
- design the landscaped areas around the building as clear legible extensions of the public domain to be welcoming for both residents, workers, and visitors

The Jury unanimously agreed that the PBD scheme was the preferred scheme for the competition and achieves the matters in Clause 6.23 of the WLEP 2012. Refer to Section 4 below for the elements of the design that are to be maintained and those requiring refinement prior to DA submission.

Figure 4 provides an extract of PBD's photomontage.



*Figure 4: Extract of PBD photomontage*

### 3.4. Entry 3 – GroupGSA

#### **GroupGSA first proposal**

The Jury identified the following merits in the Group GSA's first proposal:

- the cranking, stepping, and sliding of the tower forms to respond to urban alignments and improved solar outcomes for apartments
- the strong attitude to facade solidity in this scheme and the intention to differentiate the towers with colour variation to break down the perceived scale of the development
- the relocation of the pocket park from the Pacific Highway to the Eastern end of O'Brien Street as it establishes visual continuity between O'Brien St and the access way, creates an open space destination along the access way, and reduces the overall bulk of the podium to the south

The Jury also raised a number of concerns including:

- the lack of east-west and north-south connectivity through the podium
- the limited activation and blank interface between the live/work modules and the eastern access way
- the planning and sectional configuration of the childcare and commercial accommodation impacting functionality and flexibility
- the poor legibility and address to the residential tower foyers which were served by a single entry
- the landscaped communal terraces (sky gardens) within the towers increase tower floor plate size, bulk, overshadowing impacts and reduce compliance with the site specific DCP tower separation controls
- the number of dwellings towards the east and west with un-shaded facades to living areas.

### Group GSA revised proposal

The Jury identified the following merits in Group GSA's revised proposal:

- the introduction of the central pedestrian laneway and its strategic alignment with the view line to the street on the western side of the Pacific Highway
- the establishment of separate residential foyers for each tower
- the strong and measured expression of the podium levels
- the interlocking live/work modules was an interesting response to the constraints of the type
- the refinement of the planning to achieve tower separation consistent with the site specific DCP improving residential amenity and the perception of the proposal as two separate towers
- the rationalisation of the relationship between the podium levels and towers brought greater clarity to the scheme
- the reconfiguration of the southern tower planning to achieve three north-facing apartments that look past the northern tower
- the consolidation of the basement to remove one level

The Jury also raised a number of concerns including:

- while the environmental response to the western facades were strengthened, the balance between protection and outlook was yet to be resolved and resulted in buildings with a commercial character and scale
- while the proposal was technically compliant, the scheme co-located many small apartments into a proportionally tight and narrow central laneway space raising privacy and acoustic concerns
- the scale and geometry of the residential towers and circulation paths did not provide a generous sense of arrival or home-coming sequence
- inclusion of a single orientation west facing apartment in the cross ventilated count was questioned (ventilation through a single room within the apartment is not typically accepted)

Figure 5 provides an extract of PBD's photomontage.



## 4. JURY RECOMMENDATION

Of the three (3) schemes presented, the PBD scheme was determined by the Jury to be the most convincing response to the contextual fit, planning, design, and commercial objectives of the Brief. In the opinion of the Jury, the PBD scheme has the best potential to achieve design excellence consistent with the matters in the WLEP 2012 and the draft SSDCP 2023, noting certain variations proposed to site specific DCP controls are supported to achieve design excellence. The Jury has selected the PBD scheme as the preferred scheme to progress to the detailed DA design stage.

Understanding that the scheme will be refined and improve as it is developed, the Jury identified elements that contributed to its success, and which must be retained throughout the design development process.

### 4.1. Elements to be retained to achieve Design Excellence

#### **Podium Planning and Massing**

- the number, alignments, and dimensions of the pedestrian connections through the podium including the extent of covered arcades and links open to the sky
- the locations of the residential lobbies on O'Brien and Wilson Street establishing clear legibility and way finding for residents and visitors
- the flexibility in the plan for a range of commercial tenancy sizes and types to activate the surrounding streets and connections through the podium
- the provision and locations of commercial and childcare lobbies with dedicated lifts and stairways that provide additional activation to the podium connection
- the articulation of the podium massing as a series of elements that can step with the topography to break down the streetscape scale of the development
- the locations of the basement/servicing entry and substations (suitability of this strategy will be confirmed post competition with the Proponent, Willoughby Council and relevant stakeholders prior to DA lodgement)
- the strategy to locate the childcare facilities and open space on a single level to the east of the podium

#### **Landscape and Open Space**

- the intention for a refined and simple palette of materials to create an uncluttered urban environment
- the extent and character of the landscape proposal including planting throughout the podium levels, pedestrian connections, and eastern access way
- the bench seating areas and landscape planting throughout the site that provides a welcoming environment for residents and their guests

#### **Tower Planning and Massing**

- the proposed internal separation between the towers to comply with the dimensions set out by the site specific DCP controls (the Jury acknowledges this does not achieve separation to ADG requirements but notes these dimensions have been endorsed by Willoughby Council and form a key element of the competition Brief)
- the articulation of the towers as a series of bundled forms to reinforce the slenderness and verticality of the proposed massing and to reduce the perceived bulk of the development
- the high performing parti in terms of solar amenity and cross-ventilation (including the removal of the south-facing apartment in the southern tower in the revised scheme)

- residential lobbies that are efficient and well provisioned with natural light and ventilation.

#### **Architectural Expression, Materiality and Character**

- the development of a cohesive architectural language and materiality for the tower and podium forms
- the strategy to use a suite of complimentary materials with varying hues to articulate and differentiate the tower bundles and podium elements including:
  - off-form and precast concrete in light grey tones
  - pre-finished steel and aluminium elements in a rust-red tonal range
- the development of a kit of parts within the tower facades that are deployed to:
  - respond to the specific environmental conditions of each solar aspect with vertical shading elements to east/west facades and horizontal shading elements to northern facades
  - support improved privacy outcomes between the towers
  - provide subtle variations in the bundled tower forms
- the current ratio of solid to glazed facade across the building to support the architectural concept and improve residential amenity and environmental performance
- the articulation of the podium as a series of smaller elements within a consolidated form

#### **4.2. Elements to be reconsidered to achieve Design Excellence**

The Jury has identified **the following items that require further consideration prior to the lodgement of the Development Application**. This process should be undertaken responsibly with a clear understanding of the merits of the current proposal. Any significant change in the scheme will impact its capacity to achieve Design Excellence and will trigger a rigorous review by the Willoughby Council Design Excellence Design Integrity Process prior to the submission of the Development Application.

##### **Tower Massing and Setbacks**

- The Jury notes that a range of options were presented for the towers with varying levels of compliance with the site specific DCP side setback controls. The design team is encouraged to refine the massing to:
  - improve compliance with these planning control
  - refine and reinforce the massing and facade strategies recognised as strengths of the proposal

##### **Podium Planning**

- To support the successful resolution of the podium, the design team is encouraged to:
  - reconsider the entries to live/work modules 1,3,4 and 9,10 to avoid dead-end passageways and improve pedestrian safety and wayfinding
  - reconfigure live/work modules to avoid snorkel workspaces that could be converted to bedrooms if commercial uses are unviable
  - identify strategies to provide lift access to the upper showroom levels without impacting the urban scale and legality of the double height arcade through the podium.

##### **Tower and Apartment Planning**

- To support the successful resolution of the tower, the design team is encouraged to:
  - revisit the apartment layouts to locate living and dining areas in corner locations where privacy concerns will not be compounded

- improve the generosity of circulation/furnishing of living spaces in the typical northeast three bed arrangements in the northern tower
- consider how a secondary living space could be included in three-bedroom apartments or how a bedroom could be located and designed to support this purpose where preferred
- reconsider penthouse apartments to ensure living spaces are not immediately adjacent
- improve the relationship between the on-floor plant areas and bedrooms to improve acoustic outcomes for residents
- reconsider the proposal for tower planting (is it necessary and will it be feasible?)
- identify strategies to maintain natural ventilation to tower lobbies in all climatic conditions

### **Architectural Expression, Materiality and Character**

- While the Jury supported the broad selection of materials and the range of architectural strategies developed for the facades of the podium and tower, there are concerns about the perceived weight and density of these combined strategies when viewed at the overall scale of the development.
- The Jury encourages the design team to continue to develop and refine these architectural strategies and kit of parts (with specialist consultant input) to moderate the architectural expression and character of the proposal.
- The Jury stresses that this suggestion to moderate the proposal is not a justification for a significant reduction in the quality and selection of materials, the refinement of detailing, or the overall architectural merit of the proposal.
- As design development progresses, the Jury encourages the design team to:
  - undertake detailed solar testing for each aspect to optimise the location and distribution of sun shading elements and carefully reviewing these locations in relation to resident view lines (sitting and standing)
  - reconsider the number, density, section and location of the vertical concrete elements in the towers facing west:
    - i. can the number and size be reduced with detailed solar testing
    - ii. can they work structurally to improve material efficiency and reduce redundancy?
    - iii. is the vertical break articulated by paired vertical elements in the concrete bundle necessary in the overall expression?
  - optimise the placement and configuration of screens to mitigate privacy concerns
  - reconsider the intensity of the rust-red elements and whether a more subtle hue or tonal range could be beneficial especially for larger panels and cladding
  - the potential architectural merits of the more varied fenestration combinations (northern tower north-eastern facade) when compared to the static repetitious versions (southern tower southern facade)
  - the potential benefits of greater solidity in balustrades (particularly in lower levels) in relation to privacy and the cost of curving glass panels
- In the design of the podium, the Jury encourages the design team to consider simplifying and strengthening the proposal by:
  - rethinking the need for the curved and folding concrete arches
  - reconsidering the reliance on curved glass shopfronts
  - reducing the major elements to the large horizontal concrete slabs with generous and well provisioned edge planter boxes, and rust-red steel commercial tenancies that sit beneath and between these slabs



### **Communal Open Space and Landscape**

- In the design development of the landscape, the Jury encourages the design team to:
  - design the landscaped areas around the building as clear legible extensions of the public domain to be welcoming for both residents, workers, and visitors
  - increase tree canopy coverage across the site to meet or exceed the required targets
  - extend the Connecting with Country strategy through detailed landscape design, species selection, naming and artwork strategies
  - ensure that planting areas are well provisioned with soil and water to allow planting to thrive and understand the impacts of wind on planting and the viability of the larger trees illustrated within the proposal
  - identify plant species best suited to each elevation and microclimate.
- In the design development of the communal open space, the Jury encourages the design team to:
  - consider the inclusion of a range of indoor amenity to compliment the external spaces to support a wider range of resident activities
  - understand and mitigate any wind impacts on the design of the external communal open spaces including the pool.

### **Basement Configuration**

- The Panel encourages the design team to:
  - identify potential efficiencies in the basement layout to reduce the extent of excavation and material use.
  - confirm deep soil requirements for ground level planting illustrated

### **Environmental Considerations**

- It is recommended that EV charging for 100% of car spaces be considered in the interests of being future-ready, enabling future residents to charge cars overnight.
- It is highly recommended that consideration be given to delivering a 100% electric building, inclusive of heating, hot water, and cooking
- Consider how green infrastructure might be included for the management of stormwater, both for the purposes of retention and re-use on site, and for minimising downstream pollution of waterways.

### **Other Considerations**

- Confirm whether rail corridor anti-throw measures are required to the east facing apartments and childcare open space and incorporate any design responses in a holistic and integrated manner that supports the architectural expression and character of the proposal.



#### 4.3. Matters relating to inconsistencies with the prescribed planning controls to achieve design excellence

##### **Car park entry**

The SSDCP outlines that vehicle access to / egress from the development is to be from one access point in Wilson Street. The selected PBD scheme proposes one vehicular access point from O'Brien Street rather than Wilson Street which is inconsistent with the vehicular access requirements under the SSDCP. The Jury considers access from Wilson Street to be incompatible with providing design excellence related to vehicular access, servicing, and basement design due to the slope of the site, requiring more extensive ramping. The O'Brien Street vehicular access results in a superior design outcome by improving compliance with the relevant AS standards for vehicular access and improves the quality of the streetscape and pedestrian environment along Wilson Street.

##### **Setbacks**

Some portions of the south tower for the PBD scheme do not comply with the SSDCP's required tower setbacks to O'Brien Street /the south boundary. The protrusions are located east of the O'Brien Street frontage and include building elements comprised of balconies and habitable rooms within the tower. Portions of the towers are also recessed and exceed the minimum DCP setback requirements, which contribute to an articulated built form, and allow for logical floorplates and aligned edges above the podium. The Jury would encourage further refinement of the tower massing to demonstrate how setbacks are "averaged" along the south boundary to satisfy the intent of compliance with these setback controls.

##### **Tower envelopes**

The tower envelopes do not strictly align with the SSDCP's reference scheme shown at Figure 2. The selected scheme re-balances the tower envelopes from the south tower to the north tower. The Jury acknowledges that the scheme achieves a slenderness and verticality of the proposed tower massing to reduce the perceived bulk of the development and despite the variation to the SSDCP's reference scheme, the scheme provides 18m tower separation that reduces to 12m to the eastern portion of the towers which complies with the SSDCP's internal tower separation dimensions/controls. The Jury acknowledges the towers internal separation distances do not achieve ADG building separation requirements but notes these dimensions have been endorsed by Willoughby Council and form a key element of the competition Brief.

##### **Pocket Park**

The PBD scheme includes a new pocket park totalling 334sqm at the site's south-east corner, away from the heavy vehicular traffic on the Pacific Highway. The scheme's location of the new pocket park provides for a green link between sites. The SSDCP requires a minimum 190sqm new publicly accessible pocket park to be provided at the southern corner of the Pacific Highway and western portion of the O'Brien Street frontage, which is shown in the amended supported Ground Floor drawing (PP100) for the gazetted site-specific PP-2021-6560). The Jury considers the location of the pocket park to the rear (south-east corner) of the site to be superior in terms of location and amenity for future users. Specifically, the Jury considers the location of the pocket park on the corner of the highway to be undesirable due to viability and safety issues, together with the fact that it would provide poor amenity to future users.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This report summarises the outcome of the competition for 849-859 Pacific Highway, 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood. The competition was undertaken in accordance with the Brief prepared by Gyde Consulting and endorsed by the Council and the GANSW in June 2023.

This report documents the competition and the Jury's final recommendations for the preferred design. In summary:

- A competition has been undertaken for the design of the future development of 849-859 Pacific Highway, 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood.
- The competition has been undertaken in accordance with the Brief, WLEP 2012, draft SSDCP 2023 and the Willoughby Development Control Plan 2023. Where variations are evident and supported by the Jury, justifications are provided.
- The submission of this report to Council satisfies the reporting requirements of Section 4.3 of the Draft GANSW DE Guidelines 2018.
- The PBD scheme was recommended as the preferred scheme of this competition and accordingly this architectural practice is to progress the scheme to be lodged as a detailed DA to Council. This decision is unanimous as the Jury believes that this scheme best satisfies the Brief and is capable of achieving design excellence.
- Subject to further refinement as outlined in Section 4 of this report, the preferred scheme by PBD fulfils the design, planning and commercial objectives of the Brief.

The Jury is to be maintained as the DIP during the detailed design, DA, (any s4.55's) and post DA given their history with the project subject of this competition and to maintain continuity in feedback in the design development process.

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

The decision of the Jury will not fetter the discretion of the consent authority in its determination of any subsequent DA associated with the development site that is the subject of the competition.

# Appendix 1 – Competition Brief and Addendums

# Appendix 2 – Jury Letter to PBD