

beam

## Design Competition Report

79-81 Queens Road and 2-8 Spencer Street, Five Dock

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Beam Planning acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia. We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we work with.

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This Design Competition Report has been reviewed and endorsed by the Jury:



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Peter Poulet – Director of the Cities Institute at University of NSW (Chair).



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Oscar Stanish – Senior Associate at Architectus



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Conrad Johnston – Co-founder and Director at Studio Johnston

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Appendix Title	Prepared by
A. Design Excellence Strategy	<i>Beam Planning</i>
B. Evaluation Criteria	<i>Beam Planning</i>

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# 1.0 Introduction

This Design Competition Report has been prepared by Beam Planning in relation to the Invited Design Competition (Design Competition) undertaken for the redevelopment of 79-81 Queens Road and 2-8 Spencer Street, Five Dock (the site). The Queens Road and Spencer Street project will be delivered by DPG Project 37 Pty Ltd (the Proponent, also known as Develotek) and is for a mixed-use development, comprising ground level retail and residential accommodation above (including 15% affordable housing).

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Government Architect's Design Competition Guidelines* (GANSW Design Competition Guidelines) and summarises:

- The competition process.
- The competitor submissions.
- The Jury's deliberations, decision and recommendations.

This Report should be read in the context of the Competition Brief, which is provided under separate cover. The Design Competition was conducted in accordance with the Brief, which was endorsed by the Office of NSW Government Architect (GANSW) on 11 June 2025. During the preparation of the Competition Brief, consultation was undertaken with the City of Canada Bay Council (Council) and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (the Department).

## 1.1 Design Excellence Strategy

The Design Competition was undertaken in accordance with the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy dated 24 January 2025 (refer to **Appendix A**). The Design Excellence Strategy was prepared to define the location and extent of the Competition, the type of Competition, and the key elements of the competition process, including ongoing design integrity requirements.

## 1.2 The Site

The competition site is located at 79-81 Queens Road and 2-8 Spencer Street, Five Dock within the Canada Bay Local Government Area (LGA). The site comprises six allotments, which are legally described as Lot 17, 20, 21 and 22 in Section 3 of DP1117, Lot 18 in DP651570, and Lot 1 in DP540151. The consolidated site has a total area of approximately 3,151m<sup>2</sup>.

The site has an 'L' shaped configuration and is bound by Queens Road to the north, William Street to the east, and Spencer Street to the south. Currently, it is occupied by 1-2 storey buildings that are used for light industrial purposes, including vehicle workshop and warehouses.

It is located within Area 17 of the Kings Bay Precinct and is subject to specific controls governed by the *Canada Bay Local Environmental Plan 2013* (Canada Bay LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP). It comprises the majority of Area 17, however, excludes 10-12 Spencer Street at the south-western corner of the block because the owner of this land does not wish to sell or redevelop their land at this current point in time.

## 1.3 The Project

The project comprises a mixed-use development comprising ground level retail and residential land uses, including infill affordable housing. More specifically, the project will contain the following key features:

- Consolidated basement with vehicular access from Spencer Street.
- Shared single storey podium comprising ground level retail, loading facilities and communal open space above.
- Two residential buildings above, comprising a five (5) storey building fronting Queens Road and a twenty-five (25) storey building fronting William Street.
- Ground level landscaping and public domain improvements, including:
  - 3m public domain setback along Queens Road and Spencer Street.
  - 8m public domain setback along William Street.
  - 6m north-south through site link along the western boundary which will connect Queens Road and Spencer Street in the future once 10-12 Spencer Street is redeveloped.
- Associated infrastructure upgrades and utility diversions.

## 1.4 Competitors

The architectural firms invited to participate in the Design Competition were (in alphabetical order):

- FK Architects
- Plus Architecture
- Squillace Architects

## 1.5 Jury

The Jury was formed with consideration of Section 2.3 of the GANSW Design Competition Guidelines and the Design Excellence Strategy. The Jury comprised a total of three (3) members, each of whom have no pecuniary interest in the development or involvement in the planning process, and included one chosen by GANSW, one chosen by Council and one chosen by the proponent.

The Jury comprised of the following members:

- **Peter Poulet** – Director of the Cities Institute at University of NSW (Chair)
- **Conrad Johnston** – Founder and Director of Studio Johnston
- **Oscar Stanish** – Senior Associate at Architectus

The substantial breadth and depth of experience across the Jury ensured there was informed debate and rigour applied during the deliberation and selection process.

## 1.6 Technical Advisors

The Proponent made available several technical advisors during the Design competition to provide technical assistance to the Competitors and/or the Jury, including:

- **Planning:** Beam Planning, Michael Rowe
- **Cost Planner:** All Rise Projects, Brad Smith
- **Structural Engineering:** El Australia, Graeme Deaker
- **Services and Vertical Transport:** IGS, Mays Chalak
- **Wind:** CPP, Joe Paetzold
- **Flooding:** SGC Consulting, Sam Haddad
- **ESD:** Efficient Living, Troy Daley

## 1.7 Observers

DPHI, GANSW and Council appointed impartial observers to oversee the Competition. The following were present as impartial observers at the Competitor Presentations and Jury Deliberations:

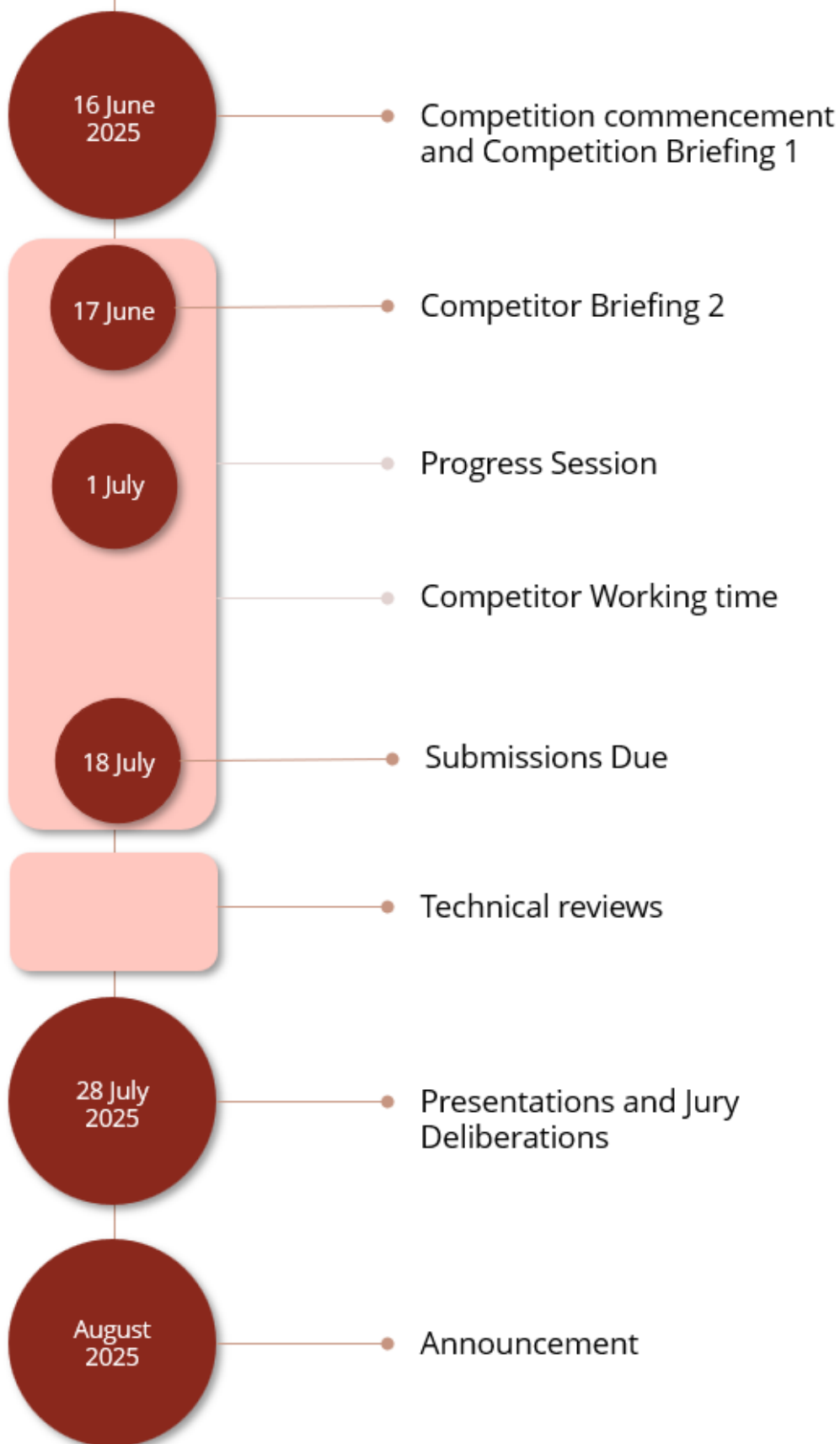
- Tim Griffiths – GANSW
- Michelle Niles – DPHI
- Shannon Anderson – Council

## 1.8 Competition Manager

Beam Planning (Michael Rowe) was engaged by the Proponent to act as the Competition Manager.

## 2.0 Competition Program

An outline of the key events in the Competition is provided below.



## 3.0 Submission Summary and Assessment

A design scheme from each Competitor was considered by the Jury. Each scheme met the requirements of the Competition Brief and Competition Conditions and demonstrated an outstanding level of detail and thought given the 5-week working period. The design schemes presented by the Competitors were of an extremely high-quality and addressed the complexities of the site and provided solutions to address the planning, design and technical objectives of the Competition Brief. It was noted by the Jury that all schemes exceeded the project budget specified in the Competition Brief. A summary of the schemes and accompanying Jury's assessment is provided in the following section.

**FK Architects**



**Plus Architecture**



**Squillace Architects**



## 3.1 FK Architects

### 3.1.1 Summary of Submission

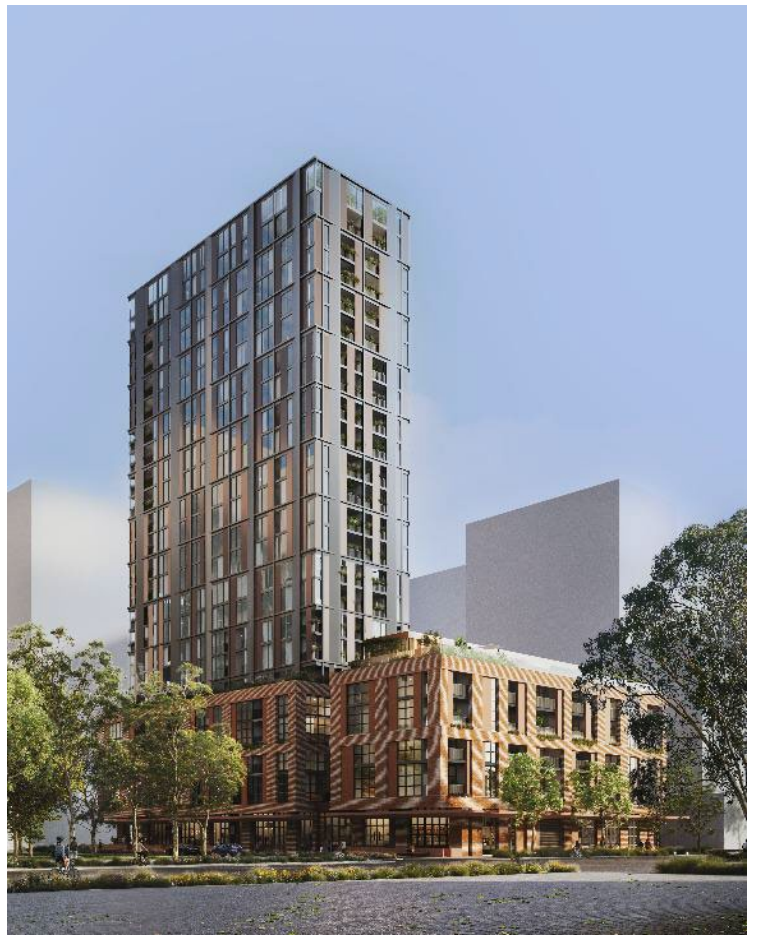
FK Architect's scheme proposed a consistent five storey podium across the site, with a twenty-three-storey tower on William Street. The following features were integral to the scheme:

- The scheme accommodated a mix of apartment types, including 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-beds, totalling 103 apartments.
- The podium consists of a consistent five (5) storey street wall height across the site, and the facade has been designed with warm toned brick, rose coloured panels, and black aluminium grid windows, which were selected to reflect the site's industrial heritage.
- Retail premises are located on the ground level and have been raised above the street to address flooding conditions. Access to these tenancies is provided via ramps or stairs.
- Landscaping is integrated throughout the scheme, including at ground level and within the building, featuring active landscaped zones, bike paths and street furniture.
- The tower comprises a total of twenty-three storeys, which is one level lower than the brief and the maximum height of building. The intention of this was to mitigate solar impact on surrounding development.
- The tower features a window wall system with a charcoal super grid and warm terracotta coloured infill panels, creating a light-weight metallic feel.
- Generous communal open space is distributed throughout the building, including a kid's playground and outdoor garden on Level 1, pool and outdoor terrace on Level 5, and rooftop terrace on Level 23. Additional internal communal amenities are also distributed throughout the building, including a gym, wellness centre, music room, etc.
- Photovoltaic solar panels are proposed on half the rooftop of the William Street building.

### 3.1.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury commended the FK scheme, and provided the following feedback:

- The scheme demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the broader context and the site and thoughtfully integrated this analysis into the overall design and materiality.
- The proposed materiality, including the contrast between the brick podium and the darker, metallic tower was well-considered, cohesive and worked well together.
- The general design approach was thoughtful, with a mature approach to the reference of the site's heritage.
- The integration of conceptual landscaping into the design was a positive aspect of their scheme.
- The podium was well considered and resolved.
- The Queens Road building was well-considered, featuring a good floorplate with lifts, lobbies and apartments that connected well with the garden and quality communal areas on the podium.
- Apartment layouts were generally clear and considered, however, many of them appeared unresolved.
- The ground floor was underdeveloped, with unresolved issues relating to flooding, accessibility and the retail strategy, which raised significant concerns about the functionality and the activation of the public domain.
- While the scheme presented a structural solution, it was considered unresolved and challenging, requiring significant rework.
- The building form felt monolithic and lacked sufficient articulation and expression.
- Basement and carparking design were poorly resolved and the scheme failed to address the impacts of stormwater and sewer diversion requirements. The Jury also expressed concern over the use of a turntable in the loading dock.
- Building separation and apartment interface at the lower levels were not sufficiently considered or resolved.
- The scheme did not address the interim condition relating to the through site link, including how it would look or function prior to redevelopment of surrounding sites.
- The scheme lacked a strong ecologically sustainable development strategy, which is a critical element in securing the 5% sustainability floor space bonus.
- While the façade was refined and of quality, it lacked a distinct identity or presence that would set it apart in its context.



**Figure 1** Renders of the FK Architecture Scheme

## 3.2 Plus Architecture

### 3.2.1 Submission Summary

Plus Architecture's scheme incorporated a stepped podium form along Queens Road, with a twenty-five-story tower along William Street. The following features were integral to the scheme:

- The podium is stepped back from two-storeys along Queens Road, in accordance with the DCP requirement.
- The podium façade incorporates repurposed bricks from the site and has been designed to create a gridded façade that pays tribute to the site's industrial heritage.
- To address flood constraints, the ground plane and retail tenancies along William Street are proposed to be elevated, while retail spaces along Queens Road and the laneway will maintain level access from the street.
- A carved ground plane or 'urban room' is featured along William Street, which will be landscaped and furnished with outdoor seating that extends from the lobby and retail spaces. This area is intended to function as a public plaza and arrival space.
- The through site link has been designed to consider both the interim and future scenario. It features a generous landscaped amphitheatre that connects directly to the Level 1 podium and extends the communal amenity spaces.
- Extensive communal areas are distributed throughout the development, including a 'village green' on Level 1, and a primary residential amenity hub on Level 5, offering amenities such as a games room, lounge, play area, and kitchen.
- Landscaped breezeways are also proposed within the Queens Road building, which offer an extension of the apartments to the outdoor communal amenity spaces.
- The tower accommodates a mix of apartment types, including 1 bed, 2-bed, and 3-beds totalling 117 apartments.
- The tower façade has been designed with a modular approach and will either be delivered by one of two key systems, including a curtain wall system or a window wall strategy.
- The design prioritises the reduction of embodied carbon through careful material selection and construction methods, while also promoting energy efficiency and full electrification.

### 3.2.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury commended the Plus Architecture scheme, and provided the following feedback:

- The design successfully acknowledges the site's significance in the broader precinct regeneration and draws on its post-industrial heritage to ground the design concept with clarity and intent.
- Floor planning was rational and well-considered, with generously sized apartments that respond to site conditions.
- The scheme appropriately addressed flood planning levels and proposes a strong and dynamic retail offering that contributes to the potential for a vibrant and activated public domain.
- The podium was effectively broken up through the stepping of the street wall height, which assists in creating a human scale building along Queens Road.
- The carved-out lobby or 'urban room' had the potential to be a very high quality north east orientated space that was also protected from traffic on Queens Road and should be further enhanced throughout detailed design.
- Communal open space was distributed equitably throughout the building, which was a positive element.
- The scheme demonstrated the strongest sustainability performance, which is recognised as a key factor of the development in gaining access to the 5% sustainability floor space bonus.
- The podium-level apartment planning requires refinement to better manage interface issues and overlooking between private units and shared spaces.
- The eastern façade, including the diagonal stepped form was commended for its articulation and visual interest. However, the blank lift core walls was a concern as it limited eastern views. Replanning of the south-eastern apartment is recommended to maximise the outlook, while retaining the existing expression.
- While the stepped landscaping along the western boundary may need refinement, the through site link and the building's interface with it was commended for thoughtfully addressing both the interim and future development scenario.
- The built form and massing of the Queens Road building was supported, however, the jury considered that the materiality lacked cohesion. The contrast between the northern upper-level glazing, the eastern fins, and the bricks was considered stark, and the jury recommended the consistent use of a warm brick finish across the podium.
- The vertical fins on the elevation were appreciated for their aesthetic value, however, their functional purpose in improving building performance and residential amenity was questioned.

- The jury considered the western façade to be underdeveloped, and therefore, further consideration and refinement of the western façade is required in terms of both articulation and solar protection.



**Figure 2** Renders of the Plus Architecture Scheme

## 3.3 Squillace Architects

### 3.3.1 Submission Summary

Squillace Architect's scheme was drawn on the site's Indigenous, European and Industrial heritage, with a design concept that acknowledges and celebrates its layered and multifaceted history. The following features are integral to the scheme:

- The development features a winged wall façade system that references the existing saw tooth roof forms on the site and in the surrounding context, while optimising northerly orientation for improved views and solar access.
- The podium maintains a consistent five-storey street wall height, aligning with the canopy height of the adjacent Ficus trees along Queens Road.
- A green "patina" finish with horizontal bands and curvilinear articulation is proposed for the podium, providing contrast to the angular saw tooth geometry and assist in reducing the building's perceived scale.
- Residential and retail entries are located on Queens Road and William Street. A finer-grain, two-storey terrace frontage is proposed at the north-west corner to provide an appropriate interface with the adjacent pocket park.
- Vehicular access is provided from Spencer Street and a porte-cochere drop off zone at ground level is proposed.
- A publicly accessible through site link is proposed along the western boundary, to function initially as a landscaped pocket park. This space will include a contemporary yarning circle and native planting to enhance connection with Country.
- Landscaping is integrated throughout the site and includes native plant species to enhance biodiversity, provide shading and soften building edges.
- Communal amenities are located on Level 5 and include vegetable gardens, gyms, sauna and spa, meeting rooms, a pool, BBQ areas, and various seating zones.
- Approximately 99 apartments of varying sizes, including 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bedrooms are provided, which are located in both the podium and the tower.
- The tower façade incorporates angled blades to enhance solar performance and privacy, maximise northern orientation, and shield apartments from western exposure.

### 3.3.2 Jury Assessment

The Jury commended the Squillace Architects scheme, and provided the following feedback:

- The scheme successfully responded to the brief's emphasis on the northern orientation through the use of winged windows, which enhanced northern outlooks to Hen and Chicken Bay, increased solar access and provided solar shading to the west.
- The flooding planning strategy and the treatment of the retail interface was sophisticated and well-considered.
- The sustainability strategy, along with the structural and services design, were regarded as strong components of the scheme. The basement and carpark strategy were also noted as a positive feature of the design.
- The scheme performed strongly in technical areas such as cross ventilation, solar access, and compliance with the Apartment Design Guide (ADG), which was commended.
- The inclusion of a residential drop-off area at the ground floor was questioned for a building of this nature and its design and treatment appeared unresolved. The Jury also expressed concerns regarding safety and security due to potential conflicts between pedestrian access and service vehicle movements.
- The podium treatment was considered complicated, as the saw tooth geometry conflicted with the curved articulation form, resulting in a lack of consistency in the architectural expression.
- The architectural complexity, particularly in the variety of forms, raised questions about the feasibility of resolution and execution.
- Concerns were raised regarding the ambiguity of the materials and how materials and colour palette might be achieved with integrity.
- The proposal included an interim solution for the through site link in the form of a pocket park, however, the jury noted that it lacked clarity and resolution. The internal landscaped connection to the park along the south-western boundary was also considered weak and unusual.
- Apartments located within the tower were highly regarded, however, the podium level apartments were seen as less successful. In particular, the angled layout of the eastern podium apartments was questioned, as they missed opportunities to capture desirable easterly views towards the adjacent park.
- The expression of the podium lacked a human scale and was perceived as industrial or monolithic in character.



**Figure 3** Renders of the Squilace Architects Scheme

# 4.0 Jury Decision

## 4.1 Reasons for Selection

Following deliberations, the Jury unanimously selected the **Plus Architecture** scheme as the winner. In consideration of all three schemes, the Jury determined that Plus Architecture presented a compelling scheme that has the potential to achieve design excellence. In comparison to the other schemes, the Jury believed that Plus Architecture's scheme best met the Competition Brief and was capable of further development and refinement to achieve design excellence. The Jury acknowledged the scheme will need to maximise the project objectives to the best ability of the design and constraints of the budget, while maintaining the core design intent and principles through the design integrity process. The Jury also noted the extremely high-quality of all submissions and commended all design teams on their well-considered responses to the Competition Brief.

The following attributes of the winning scheme (in no particular order) were valued by the Jury and should be retained through the design and delivery phases of the development in order to demonstrate design excellence:

- **Overall comments:**

- The design acknowledges the significance of the site and its role in regenerating the precinct as part of the broader redevelopment.
- The scheme demonstrated a well-rounded and coherent response to a broad range of design issues and site-specific constraints.
- The choice of materials was contextually appropriate and well-considered with reference to the industrial heritage of the site and surrounding area.
- The scheme presented a strong sustainability strategy, which is a positive and should be maintained.

- **Public Domain:**

- The generosity of key elements, such as the creation of the protected northeast facing urban room, and overall approach to the public domain was appreciated.
- The scheme demonstrated the best consideration to both the interim condition and the long-term future of the through-site link.

- **Podium:**

- The northern podium, including the stepped street wall height to Queens Road was convincing and considered a key element in achieving a suitable transition to the street and surrounding development.
- The resolution of the podium building with breezeways, while needing more detail, was seen as having potential to provide enhanced amenity and should be further explored.

- **Tower:**

- The tower offers a convincing relationship to the adjacent park to the east of the site and demonstrates a good understanding of the site conditions by designing the facades accordingly to respond to their orientation.
- Apartment layouts are clear, rational and generous in scale.
- The inclusion of floor-by-floor air conditioning was supported, as it allows better use of the rooftop for photovoltaic panels to enhance sustainability and energy efficiency.
- The vertical articulation of the eastern façade was well-received; however, further exploration is encouraged to maximise the extent of habitable space.
- The opportunity to modularise the tower construction was considered a strong and practicable design feature.

## 4.2 Further Refinements

In acknowledging the 5-week working time of the Design Competition, the Jury recognised that refinements and further design development will occur. The Jury identified a range of matters that require further resolution during the design development phase of the project to ensure the design responds to all aspects of the Competition Brief, maintains the key design intent and principles, and ensures the scheme achieves design excellence:

- **Basement:**

- Further development of loading, basement and carparking design, and the treatment of underground sewer and stormwater infrastructure is required, ensuring alignment with technical objectives and constructability considerations.

- **Public Domain and Ground Floor:**

- The dynamic and flexible nature of the retail offering was considered a positive, however, the jury would expect further refinement and integration with the public domain once the retail strategy has been developed.
- The lobby is lacking size and character given the scale of the tower and as such, it is recommended to consider the lobby with greater spatial generosity and architectural presence.

- **Podium:**

- The northern elevation above the 2 storey street wall to Queens Road should be reconsidered to provide a more consistent podium materiality that would strengthen its relationship with the rest of the podium and street whilst creating opportunities for sun shading and articulation.
- The eastern elevation of the northern building should also be reconsidered to provide a more consistent materiality with the rest of the podium.
- Greater solidity in the podium should be explored to improve privacy for residents.
- The design should investigate the potential for communal open space on the rooftop of the northern podium.

- **Tower:**

- The western façade requires further development.
- There are concerns with the effectiveness of the shallow angled façade, and its expression could be amplified to also provide a more functional purpose to create openings with a northerly aspect that provide views whilst achieving thermal comfort through balancing solar access and sun shading.
- Subject to support from the consent authority, support is given to exploring encroachment into setbacks, particularly to the east and west, where this offers opportunity to improve residential amenity and building articulation, provided it does not result in adverse impacts on the surrounding development, does not result in blank walls and can still comply with the relevant NCC standards. One potential area to investigate this would be to reconfigure the south-eastern apartment so that the balcony wraps around the lift core (within the setback) and makes better use of the premium eastern façade, which offers views to the park and Sydney Harbour. It is important that any change maintains the strong verticality of the eastern façade and does not have significant adverse overshadowing impacts.

### 4.3 Design Integrity

Consistent with the endorsed Design Excellence Strategy, a quorum of the original jury members will form a Design Integrity Panel (DIP). The DIP may be convened by the applicant with assistance from the competition manager, with membership approved by the Chair. The DIP may then review the design to ensure the key design excellence attributes noted in this Competition Report are retained or improved upon through the development of the design, and that areas noted as requiring further design refinement are appropriately addressed (refer to **Section 4.2**).

The DIP will ensure that the design integrity of the winning scheme has been maintained, will review the project throughout design development, and ensure the recommendations identified in the Competition Report for the winning scheme are implemented.