

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

28 October 2025

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PROJECT: 2-4 Giffnock Ave Macquarie Park

RE: State Design Review Panel – 15th October 2025 – Review 3

Dear Danielle,

Thank you for the opportunity for ongoing review of the above project. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on 15th October 2025.

As previously noted, the competition exemption requires that the project undertake design review through the SDRP. The development must exhibit design excellence in accordance with Clause 6.13(4) of the Ryde LEP 2014 (RLEP), and the State Design Review Panel is responsible for determining that design excellence is demonstrated. The development must also be consistent with the requirements of the Macquarie Park Design Guide (MPDG).

Though certain improvements have occurred, the design changes have not been commensurate with the significant additional height and dwellings proposed. Additionally, this increased intensity of development on the site warrants a greater level of attention to the quality of the public spaces, visual prominence of the two towers and the amenities provided for the increased resident population. As such, for the project to achieve design excellence in line with the requirements of the RLEP, further design development addressing these concerns are required.

Structure of this letter

To provide clear and actionable guidance, the advice and recommendations in this letter have been organised into three areas:

- Elements supported and to be retained to achieve design excellence – project elements required to be retained for design excellence to be demonstrated.
- Elements that must be addressed to achieve design excellence – project elements or issues that must be addressed to achieve design excellence.

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- Advice and recommendations – project elements to demonstrate, refine or reconsider through design development and planning approval to assist in the achievement of design excellence.

Elements supported and to be retained to achieve design excellence

The following elements of the proposal are required to be retained for design excellence to be demonstrated:

- Activation of Hyundai Drive through:
 - consolidation of the loading dock with Veriu Serviced Apartments, subject to advice below
 - provision of two retail tenancies.
- Interface with Budyari Mullinawul Garden and Lane Cove Road:
 - openings from corner tenancy directly onto Budyari Mullinawul Garden
 - addition of windows to Level 01 apartments
 - reconfiguration of windows in upper levels.
- Retention of established trees along Drake Avenue.
- Alignment of the towers to relate to the prevailing urban structure and maintain residential amenity.
- Configuration of the podium into two, appropriately scaled podia.
- Creation of a through-site link 'Yura Place' connecting the pedestrian and cyclist bridge to Gari Nawi Park.
- Commitment to provide a generous connected soil network on structure.
- Intent to provide through lobbies to increase passive and physical activation of the ground floor and improve permeability.
- Commitment to deliver affordable housing within the development.

Elements to be addressed to achieve design excellence

- Increase deep soil within the developable site. The quantum and quality of deep soil is below the 15% minimum and includes calculation of areas of hardstand as deep soil.

- Demonstrate that canopy cover has been optimised and targets from the MPDG have been achieved. There is a reduction in canopy since SDRP 02 from 35% (4,600 sqm) to 29% (3,624sqm) for the entire site (including podium and rooftop spaces).
- Refine the configuration within Yura Place to improve legibility and create diverse activity zones. Explore how these changes can reduce clutter and increase soft landscaping opportunities.
- Address the interface of the Loading Dock and extensive vehicle circulation area with Yura Place and Budyari Mullinawul Garden to reduce its visual prominence and discourage use as a pedestrian shortcut. Explore landscape opportunities, fencing and artwork to achieve this.
- Improve street activation. The location and configuration of the substations at the eastern end of the 'Community Green Link' are adversely impacting the activated frontage.
- Demonstrate that a safe wind environment will be achieved for the public spaces.
- Demonstrate residential amenity can be achieved, per the Objectives of the Apartment Design Guide (ADG) – particularly for cross ventilation, natural ventilation and solar access.
- Demonstrate the provision of high-quality communal spaces, both indoor and outdoor, that appropriately respond to the needs of the increase in residential units.
- Demonstrate provision of affordable housing with good amenity.
- Introduce more visual interest and variety into the towers, through increased articulation, greater height contrast and material diversity to manage the vertical scale, massing and visual impacts.
- Increase floor to floor heights to 3.2m in line with the servicing requirements for the NCC.
- Introduce additional openings within the eastern façade of the eastern outdoor play space of the childcare centre to ensure natural cross ventilation will be provided.

Advice and recommendations

The following provides advice and recommendations for the project to demonstrate, refine or reconsider to assist in achieving design excellence:

Connecting with Country

As the design progresses, it is critical that the important Connecting with Country work and identified design principles are not lost but further developed and embedded within the scheme.

1. Continue to ensure alignment in the approach to Country with the MPDG, through regular touch points and targeted engagement.
2. Explore additional opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with Country in both the public and communal open spaces. Consider opportunities such as edible endemic species (bush tucker gardens), local materials, additional places to rest and connect with Country (i.e., place, other kin/species, seasons, etc.).

Site strategy, landscape, and ground plane

The two identified deep soil areas of 'Community Green Link' and 'Giffnock Arrival' are predominantly hardstand and do not constitute genuine deep soil. Additionally, the total area of 14.73% deep soil (1,153 sqm) is still below the 15% minimum required under the MPDG, and unchanged from the amount presented at SDRP 02 (refer Advice Letter 02, Item 9 on attaining a minimum of 15% deep soil).

3. Increase the provision of genuine deep soil to 15% of the developable site (per Advice Letter 02, Item 9). Measure areas without hardstand and that are a minimum 3m by 3m dimension per the MPDG. Explore the following opportunities:
 - a. optimise all hardstand areas to create genuine, connected deep soil areas
 - b. explore provision of additional deep soil areas:
 - along the interface with Veriu Serviced Apartments
 - through minimising required hardstand needed for loading dock access
 - by reducing the basement extent

- c. widen the area of deep soil around the retained Drake Avenue trees to support their long-term health and create opportunities for additional landscaping.

The reduction in canopy for the entire site is unjustified, and it has not been demonstrated whether the MPDG canopy cover targets have been achieved (refer Advice Letter 02, Item 10).

- 4. Demonstrate that the minimum 20% canopy cover required under the MPDG has been achieved for the developable site (per Advice Letter 02, Item 10).
- 5. Optimise canopy cover by exploring the following opportunities:
 - a. revise the configuration of the ramps within Yura Place to better accommodate a range of canopy trees
 - b. provide an additional avenue of trees along the 'Community Green Link' to future-proof for any potential road widening and resultant tree loss
 - c. increase the spread of the on-structure Yura Place soil to provide for a continuous soil network that can accommodate larger, resilient, trees.

Concern remains around the delivery of the public space network and pedestrian wind comfort.

- 6. Confirm delivery of the entirety of Budyari Mullinawul Garden from Drake Avenue through to the existing boundary of Veriu Serviced Apartment, to ensure Yura Place connects through to Lane Cove Road, creating a continuous, and legible public realm.
- 7. Demonstrate that a comfortable and safe wind environment for pedestrians will be achieved for all public spaces and publicly accessible spaces. testing should be undertaken of the precinct and individual buildings. As a minimum, this should include:
 - a. existing and proposed conditions from surrounding developments
 - b. consideration of where activities will occur within the proposed public spaces and what wind comfort is needed to support these uses (i.e., standing at decision points, sitting elsewhere including any outdoor dining adjacent active frontages, etc.).

Residential amenity

The significant increase in population within a predominately non-residential area, with little open space and few services, necessitates a high level of on-site amenity. Further work is needed to demonstrate that future residents will have sufficient access to quality communal facilities that meet their needs, living environments, and attain the minimum objectives of the ADG.

8. Make the following improvements:
 - a. Revise apartment configurations and provide clear diagrams confirming solar access (to private open spaces and living rooms during mid-winter), and cross ventilation can be achieved. This should include reconfiguring apartment layouts, including external and internal openings, room locations, and partition walls to optimise air flow. Noting that narrow slots and snorkel bedrooms would not meet the required pressure differential for effective cross ventilation.
 - b. Ensure corner balconies are appropriately designed to manage wind exposure issues such as corner acceleration to ensure usability, maintain cross ventilation, occupant safety and comfort.
 - c. Conduct noise impact assessment from Lane Cove Road and the plant noise from existing and future surrounding data centres to ensure all apartments will meet acceptable acoustic standards and have access to natural ventilation.
9. Optimise location of air condenser units to avoid impacting on the usable private open space of individual dwellings.
10. Increase the provision of indoor and outdoor communal spaces to ensure there are sufficient spaces and amenities to meet the needs of residents. Demonstrate the following:
 - a. the configuration, quantity and types of spaces meet the needs of residents (consider additional communal spaces to achieve this, such as smaller 'neighbourhood' hubs, and rooftop communal indoor and outdoor spaces atop the towers)
 - b. indoor communal spaces co-located with external communal spaces where possible
 - c. accessible WC serving each communal space

- d. 50% of the principal communal outdoor space receives 2 hours of sunlight at midwinter, per the objectives of the ADG
- e. refer Item 13 for additional commentary on the interface with the childcare centre.

Architecture

As height increases, more attention is required to vertical scale, visual impacts, articulation, and massing. further work is needed to refine the architectural language and create an appropriate response for towers of this scale and high visibility.

- 11. Progress the design language of the towers to improve articulation, manage vertical scale and to provide greater visual interest, consider:
 - a. introducing noticeable horizontal breaks to reduce the vertical scale of the towers and increase visual interest (i.e., unique expression for all the floors with communal spaces, delineation of individual 'neighbourhoods', etc.)
 - b. strengthening the difference between the two towers, through a greater contrast in materials, vertical and horizontal rhythm, balcony expression, and so forth
 - c. topping off the towers with a distinct form, potentially associated with rooftop communal spaces (refer Item 10 above)
 - d. introducing a height change between the two towers to increase their distinction and create a more varied and visually interesting skyline.
- 12. Explore shifting the northern tower further north to increase the separation between the two towers and improve solar access and outlook for residents.

Childcare

- 13. Revise the configuration and design of the skylights to ensure appropriate visual and acoustic separation between the children and residents above.

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The issues outlined above must be addressed as part of RTS process.

Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, Tyson Ryan
(tyson.ryan@dpie.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this advice.

Sincerely,



Brindha Kugan
Principal Design Advisor
Chair, SDRP

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