

17 November 25

Rory Toomey

Principal Design Advisor

Government Architect NSW

4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street

Parramatta NSW 2150

Dear Rory,

**RE: Design Review Panel (DRP) – Tuesday 11 November: Meeting 2.3
Green Square Town Centre HDA Scheme - SSD-83899206**

Thank you for the opportunity to review the pre-SSDA proposal for Stage 3 of the Green Square HDA Scheme (Sites 7, 17 and 18). The advice provided in this letter relates to the second formal design review session held on Tuesday 11 November, primarily focused on the detailed design of Stage 3 and also addresses the Panel's comments raised in the first DRP and interim sessions.

This project was declared State Significant Development (SSD) by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces on the advice of the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) on 26 February 2025. A request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) was submitted for the proposed development and concurrent rezoning, and SEARs were issued on 23 May 2025. The HDA SSD pathway forms part of the NSW Government's response to the housing crisis and has been established to accelerate high yielding residential projects capable of quick assessment and delivery, and requires that the subject SSD be lodged within 9 months of receipt of the SEARs.

As part of this accelerated process, an Alternative Design Excellence Strategy was endorsed by GANSW on 23 September 2025. The Strategy defines an alternative to a competitive design process and commits the project to undertaking design review through a Project-Specific Design Review Panel (DRP), attending a minimum of two panel meetings prior to lodgment.

The proposed development is required to exhibit design excellence pursuant to Clause 6.9 of the Green Square Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013, and the DRP is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the consent authority - the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry (DPHI) in this instance - as it forms an opinion of whether design excellence is exhibited.

The Stage 3 Precinct is being lodged as a discrete and separate SSD Application alongside the Stage 4/5 Precinct. The detailed design of Stage 4/5 was not presented in this meeting and will be subject to separate review by the DRP ahead of SSDA lodgment.

In its current form, the Stage 3 pre-DA material does not exhibit design excellence, however if the items raised below in this advice were each positively addressed in the SSDA, then Stage 3 may exhibit design excellence in accordance with the requirements of Clause 6.9 of the LEP.

However, given the number and nature of these items, the Panel recommends a significant extent of design refinement, and suggests that further review and consideration of the design merits be undertaken by the Panel. Ideally further review would occur ahead of formal SSDA lodgment.

However, mindful of the approaching year end and the time-bound nature of the HDA pathway, the Panel is open to further review occurring post-lodgment should the proponent prefer.

This letter has been compiled with the assistance of Colliers Urban Planning as the applicant's independent consultant and reflects the views of the Panel according to its terms of reference.

Advice and Recommendations

The Panel provides the following advice and recommendations for Stage 3 of the project:

Elements of the Design Supported by the Panel

1. The proposed increase of podium height at Sites 7 and 17 (made in response to earlier DRP feedback) is supported in principle, establishing an improved sense of scale and definition to the northern side of the plaza, the Panel recommends that the height of the podium at Site 17 be increased to align exactly with that of Site 7, as described in the comments below.
2. The removal of tall mounding and the provision of a more level ground plane across the laneways.
3. The incremental reduction in overshadowing impacts upon the Drying Green, and the Panel would support further reductions that can be achieved to bring the proposal into conformity with the relevant control.
4. The landscape design is developing well, and the deep soil outcomes across the Precinct should be retained.
5. The aspiration for Sites 7 and 17 tower facades to embody a calm, gridded expression, however the execution of this concept should be revisited and strengthened, with further consideration of balancing both vertical and horizontal elements, introducing greater facade relief and depth, and improved solar control introducing a hierarchy of façade elements across both sites and with closer attention given to positive qualities evident in the reference imagery.
6. Connected lobbies – the finer grain of the connected Build to Rent lobbies is supported and it is recommended that site lines are further developed to enhance the opportunity for visual connection across each site. This will support the principles of CPTED across the precinct.

Urban Design Principles and Retail Strategy

7. It is important that the design be led by, and respond directly to, the Urban Design Principles established by Cox in the DRP 1.5 Urban Design Principles meeting. The final design proposals should provide further evidence of how each building conforms with these urban design principles. The principles should continue to be developed and strengthened to address matters of materials, facade depths, proportions, solid-to-void ratios, floor levels, parapet heights and ground level interfaces, and be referenced to inform design development.
8. A robust process of design governance - led by Cox as author of the Urban Design Principles - should be implemented, to ensure that the design of each building defining the plaza occurs in concert, and to

ensure the quality and amenity of the public domain achieves of design excellence. It should be noted that this strategy should also be adopted for Stage 4.

9. The Panel acknowledges that the facade refinement, adopting the Panel's advice, may result in a departure from the Urban Design Principle 3.20. As elaborated further below, the Panel recommends that Sites 7 and 17 should be more consistent in terms of architectural expression, character, materials, colours and detailing, while Site 18 may be more individualistic as it sits 'in the round'.
10. The Panel offers no definitive preference for the Primary or Alternative scheme, other than noting that Site 7 and 17 should read as a more consistent pair, and the Primary scheme may be pursued albeit it departs from the Urban Design Principle 3.1 and the Panel's earlier suggestions for tower height articulation.
11. The Retail Uses Study has provided the Panel with a good understanding of the needs and context of the Green Square Town Centre. It is positive to see the translation of this study into the Precinct's thematically organised ground level retail layout. The Panel continues to encourage consideration of non-residential on levels above ground within the podiums to meet the objectives of the town centre aspirations.

'Making' of the Plaza

12. The Panel notes the unique and critically important opportunity for this project to define the 'urban room' of the plaza - the most important public space of the Green Square Town Centre. To this end, Stage 3 and Stage 4/5 together play a part in establishing the sense of definition and character of the plaza, and the Panel's earlier comments regarding a robust process of design governance, led by Cox, along with the consistent application of Urban Design Principles is important.
13. The scheme must establish a strong relationship to the plaza. It is important to deliver a high level of public amenity at the ground plane, and to further interrogate the relationship between the ground plane and built form, architecture and land uses, particularly across the podiums of Sites 7 and 17.
14. The visual consistency between Site 7 and 17 should be strengthened to better conform to the Urban Design Principles established for podium alignment. Currently, Site 7 provides the stronger response to the podium height datums. As noted previously, the Panel recommends that Sites 7 and 17 develop more consistently as a related pair in the next phase of design, while Infinity and Site 18 should serve as more distinctive, individualistic 'book-ends' to the northern plaza edge.
15. The two adjacent podium parapets, which are intended to form one of three plaza-edge datums, appear to be misaligned across the facades of all three buildings, resulting in an inconsistent datum. The podium parapet height of Site 17 should be read consistently with Site 7.
16. Similarly, the awning height datums at Sites 7 and 17, and their relationship to the adjacent Infinity building, should be refined to create a more consistent datum, and this should also relate positively to the awning height datum at Site 18 in order to provide stronger plaza definition and greater amenity along the frontages to the plaza. The extent and continuity of weather protection along the plaza edge and into side streets should be reviewed. The panel would like to understand more clearly how the architecture of the cantilevered podium to sites 7 and 17 provides a fitting edge to the plaza and how this resolves at the laneways where the weather protection is provided by expressed awnings. The intent of the weather protection should be clearly articulated and the design amended if the intent is not met.
17. The proposed facade expression (particularly to the podiums and at street level), their sense of depth and relief, and colours and materials applied to each building requires more resolution in order to establish elements that tie the various facades together, particularly for Sites 7 and 17. Of particular

note, the 'checkerboard' motif and dual colouring on the podium of Site 17 should be rethought to create a stronger and more consistent visual and tonal relationship with Site 7.

18. The design response at the base of Site 18, particularly with regard to the height of the awnings, the expressive tapering columns, egress stair discharge point, and landscape planter beds should be revised to prioritise the plaza edge and public activation, also considering wind and rain protection.
19. The Panel encourages further development in facade articulation, depth and relief. The Panel is concerned at the general 'flatness' of tower facade elements.
20. There may be a need for increased self-shading on towers and the depth of facade elements should be increased significantly.
21. Further interrogation of the design of roof forms should be provided for each building so these elements are properly composed and well-integrated. The Panel recommends the provision of landscape and amenity features such as BBQs, toilets and a kitchen to be provided on the rooftop communal space for residents. The amenity of the roof terrace of Site 7 is supported and the roof terrace of Site 18 should be further developed to align with Site 7's level of amenity.

Town Centre Aspirations

22. Provision of non residential uses should be increased to achieve the objectives of the Green Square Town Centre LEP 2013 to encourage the establishment of Green Square Town Centre as the major commercial, retail, cultural and entertainment centre and to provide an appropriate mix of land use and generate employment in the Town Centre .Further interrogation of the uses at the ground plane, basements and Level 1 is encouraged, particularly in relation to the introduction of more non-retail supporting commercial uses where possible and prioritising active uses in key public areas areas over servicing infrastructure. The interface between Level 1 uses and the plaza should be further developed, with consideration given to future adaptation to alternative non-residential uses. The Panel supports minimisation of car parking in favour of more active uses.
23. Similarly, the concentration of residential amenities within Site 7 is acknowledged and the associated benefits are understood. However, it is also noted that the facade of Site 17 does not provide any non-residential uses above ground level, and as such encourages any opportunities to increase the range of uses that bring activation to this facade.
24. The Connecting with Country response should be further developed to show how the principles for Connecting with Country will be tangibly and genuinely implemented through a range of elements in the design, and not only in Public Art. This is especially important to demonstrate the role of the Town Centre as an important destination for the community and alignment with First Nations principles.

Additional Matters

25. **ADG Compliance:** Compliance with key ADG targets should be interrogated and confirmed in the submission, in particular the approach to quantifying cross ventilation appears to include a number of single-aspect apartments relying on notches to achieve natural cross-ventilation. By further developing compliance with natural cross ventilation and solar access, opportunities may arise to meaningfully improve the expression and hierarchy of facades.
26. **Landscaping and Public Domain:** The Panel recommends that further clarity be provided on the ongoing discussions with Council relating to the design and landscaping of public streets throughout the Precinct.
27. **Affordable Housing:** Further clarity should be provided on how affordable housing will be distributed and managed across the Precinct.

28. **Privacy and cross viewing:** Some apartments orient bedroom windows towards other habitable rooms across the narrow streets and laneways and to Infinity. Further mitigation of visual privacy impacts is required for these interfaces, particularly where ADG building separation targets are not met
29. **Northern Elevations** - as the internal layouts develop in response to the requirements of the ADG, it is recommended that the northern elevations of Sites 7.17 and 18 are further reviewed to provide a consistency of alignments across each site's facades. In many instances the glazing facing adjacent Private Open Spaces (balconies) is misaligned resulting in a complexity which detracts from the northern elevations.

As noted, the above recommendations should be addressed in design refinement, and ideally be presented to the Panel again prior to SSDA lodgment or post SSDA lodgment in order for the Panel to consider whether design excellence can be exhibited.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Carpenter
GANSW Nominee (Chair)

On behalf of the Design Review Panel:

Liz Westgarth – GANSW Nominee

Richard Johnson – City of Sydney Nominee

Matthew Pullinger – Applicant Nominee

Tai Ropiha – Applicant Nominee