

9 December 25

2240198

Rory Toomey
Principal Design Advisor
Government Architect NSW
4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Dear Rory,

RE: Design Review Panel (DRP) – Monday 1 December: Meeting 2.4

Green Square Town Centre HDA Scheme - SSD-83899206

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal for Stages 4 and 5 of the Green Square HDA Scheme (Sites 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 19A and 19B). The material addressed in this advice was the third design review session, primarily focused on the detailed design of Stages 4/5 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 is 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 two panel meetings prior to lodgement.

The development is required to exhibit design excellence in accordance with Clause 6.9 of the Green Square Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013 and the DRP is responsible for providing a recommendation to the consent authority, the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry (DPHI) in this instance, that design excellence is capable of being achieved.

The Stages 4 and 5 Precinct is being lodged as a discrete SSD Application, separate to the Stage 3 Precinct. The detailed design of Stage 3 is subject to previous advice and recommendations of the DRP.

It is the Panel's view that the proposal as presented does not yet achieve design excellence. All the items raised in this advice must be satisfactorily addressed for Stages 4 and 5 of the project to have the potential to exhibit design excellence in accordance with the requirements of Clause 6.9 of the LEP.

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 as per the terms of reference.

Supported Elements

The Panel supports the following elements of the Stages 4 and 5 scheme:

1. The architectural massing is developing positively, with the general shift to taller but slimmer building forms, and the Panel looks forward to the continuing architectural resolution.
2. The massing moves on site 8B is successful and should be enhanced further.
3. The visual relationship between buildings at 8A and 18 as related 'beacons' of the town centre, unique from other plaza-edge buildings, is positive.
4. The Panel notes that the retention of solar access to affected southern neighbours has been optimised through the orientation and form of the buildings.

Advice and Recommendations

The Panel provides the following advice and recommendations for Stages 4 and 5 of the project:

Site Wide Expectations

1. The overarching objectives of the Green Square LEP - to create a town centre - should be further amplified in these final stages given these buildings will form the centre of the Green Square precinct and define its key public space - the plaza. There should be a more meaningful introduction of complementary non-residential uses at Level 1 and potentially in basement locations, to support the already active ground floor level. At a minimum, all Level 1 floors should be configured as non-residential to encourage a diversity of business, retail, office, entertainment and community to support the viability of the Centre. This will allow the development to move away from what currently presents as a concentrated residential precinct towards a more engaging range of non-residential uses (not just retail), to meeting the LEP objective of a town centre, and provide a much broader range of supporting services.
2. The final resolution of the public domain should continue to be discussed with the City of Sydney, taking into consideration emergency egress, safety, utility requirements, and the legibility and equitable access to residential lobbies.
3. The interface between the Green Square Plaza and the adjacent laneways requires design refinement. Currently the laneways appear primarily for use by residents. The 'publicness' and flexibility of use of these laneways should be refined to strongly signal their public space purpose and allow people to feel welcome to move from the plaza into the laneways of Stages 4 and 5 (and Stage 3). The design teams' ambition to create spaces of 'respite' and 'intimacy' is queried in the context of a highly active and engaging town centre. The Panel accepts that the demand for more intimate spaces for respite may arise further away from the plaza.
4. As the architectural expression of each building is refined, the design team should consider how their collective responses strengthen the formation of a 'unique' sense of place for Green Square Town Centre.
5. The design team is urged to refine the balance between diversity and the need for the plaza buildings to work as a coherent ensemble that provides a backdrop for the 'life' of the plaza. The design team is encouraged to establish much greater consistency in the colonnade design, its proportions, rhythm, datums, materiality and alignments. This is to develop better continuity and a more consistent civic expression across the precinct (Stages 3, 4 and 5).
6. Consideration of far greater unity and consistency should be given to the primary building material selection, proportions, compositional elements, parapet heights and colours for the buildings presenting to the plaza. This is in order to achieve a more unified civic expression between the buildings fronting the plaza.

7. The scheme should further address the following requirements of the ADG to ensure adequate provision of residential amenity - communal open space, natural cross ventilation, and corridor design. Noise, ventilation and air pollution should also be carefully considered for Buildings 8A and 8B which address Botany Road. In general the residential buildings do not provide a sufficient proportion of apartments with true natural cross ventilation, and with too many apartments at podium level opening onto long corridors with poor natural light and ventilation. The proposed alternative method for accounting for natural cross ventilation is not supported. Further information is required to demonstrate that the methodology aligns with the performance expectations of natural cross ventilation.
8. The depth of the building facades, particularly the podiums fronting the plaza, are insufficient, resulting in a flattened and unrelieved building expression, and should be further developed to create a more substantial, well-relieved civic architectural character to the plaza. The Panel requests that the design intent for each primary facade type is fully defined and annotated at approximately 1:50 in plan and section (or an equivalent 3D format). The drawings would clearly describe proposed materials, systems and assemblies, junctions, balustrade systems, any integrated landscape planters, and illustrate the integration of services and drainage. The design intent drawings should be submitted with the SSDA to show the anticipated level of design quality of each primary facade type.
9. The integration of vegetation and greenery to buildings is supported in principle, however this needs to be applied more consistently across the podium buildings fronting the plaza to improve their sense of unity and continuity as noted at point 5 above. A strategy for the façade design if the planting is removed after a period of time should also be demonstrated.
10. The Panel acknowledges the Affordable Housing strategy for the provision of 60 apartments in perpetuity represents an improvement on earlier proposals, however would expect that the provision should meet or exceed the requirements of the City of Sydney's affordable housing program when measured on a reasonable comparative basis.
11. The change of use from commercial to residential on the corner of Botany Road (Building 8A) is not supported in its current form due to the high noise and pollution levels existing along Botany Road and consequent health impacts. In order to support the introduction of residential apartments in this environment, much more effective responses to noise and air quality should be implemented to achieve an adequate level of residential amenity, and consistent with the need to exhibit design excellence.

Site 8A

12. The visual relationship between buildings at 8A and 18 as the 'beacons' of the town centre is a successful motif. Consider further uniformity in materiality between the tower and podium elements of Building 8A to strengthen this relationship.
13. The colonnade along Botany Road appears narrow and potentially an unsafe concealment opportunity. This should be reviewed with regard to the anticipated civic experience and sense of safety for pedestrians. The GPO precedent of 2.3 metre clear width is an appropriate benchmark.

Site 8B

14. The stepped massing at the top of the building is successful, however could be further emphasised to create a more confident architectural form wrapping from the Botany Road frontage to Geddes Ave.
15. Similar to 8A, the colonnade along Botany Road appears narrow. This should be reviewed with regard to the civic experience and sense of safety for pedestrians, and to strike a stronger sense of continuity along the entire frontage to Botany Road.

16. Consideration should be given to lifting the three-storey horizontal datum along Botany Road to establish a more urban scale and to signal proximity to the plaza, whilst still managing the transition to Geddes Avenue. Further differentiation of the tower and podium forms, particularly to Botany Road to be explored.

Site 8C

17. The materials, colours and compositional treatment of 8C appears out of place compared to the rest of the precinct, and in the definition of the plaza in particular. A more civic façade expression should be explored at the podium level. The podiums of Sites 8C and 19A should be considered as a more consistent pair, and relate more closely in material, colours and facade expression. The extensive use of glazing in the tower facade of 8C should be further developed to ensure it can effectively manage environmental performance, and balance the competing needs for outlook and visual privacy for residents.
18. The large podium roof of 8C should be reviewed to ensure that the amenity of the apartments at this level facing the roof top is improved. This could be with landscaping or a combination of landscaping, screening and roofing materials.
19. A stronger differentiation of the tower and podium form to the internal laneway should be explored.

Site 19A

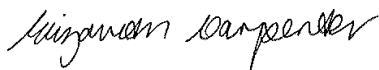
20. The emerging architectural character is positive and supported, however the corner columns interrupting the continuity of the plaza edge colonnade must be resolved, and the Panel is very concerned for the notion of steps within the public domain along the highly active plaza edge. Opportunities to eliminate these steps must be exhausted before a built environment that is not universally accessible could be considered.

Site 19B

21. The Panel questions the utility of a whole block colonnade on Site 19B, and whether this building would be better served by adjusting the glass line to match the colonnade dimensions addressing the Drying Green, with a more conventional shopfront glass line address on the other three street frontages with an awning condition.

As noted, the above recommendations should be addressed in any future SSD Application in order for the proposal to be considered as achieving design excellence.

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