

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

20 February 2026

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PROJECT: 10 Dangar Street, Wickham
RE: State Design Review Panel – 11 February 2026 – Review 2

Dear Emily,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above project for a second time. Please find below a summary of advice and recommendations arising from the design review session held on 11 February 2026.

The project team is commended for the work undertaken since Review 1. Under the provisions of the Newcastle LEP 2012, the development is required to demonstrate design excellence. The project retains the potential to do so, subject to addressing the recommendations in this letter and matters not yet resolved from the previous letter. Items of key concern include the ability of the ground plane and public domain to service the building height and density proposed.

Previously, in-principle support was provided to 38 storeys. The height of the development, on an already compromised ground plane, is contributing to cumulative impacts on the site and its immediate surroundings.

The proposed increase in height from 38 to 43 storeys constitutes a change from the previously reviewed scheme. The advice below is subject to any amendments required through the HDA planning process as a result of this additional height.

The following elements of the proposal are supported and should be retained as contributing to design excellence:

- The commitment to embed the Connecting with Country response within the built form and public domain design, subject to the advice below.
- Refinement of the through-site link to improve permeability, sightlines and transition to Charles Street, subject to advice below.

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- The increased minimum floor-to-floor heights to 3,200mm.
- The articulation of the tower crown and clearer architectural expression.
- The commitment to housing diversity, including affordable housing and co-living.
- Progress toward integrated sustainability initiatives, including full electrification.

In addition to the advice provided in the previous letter, the following commentary provides further advice and recommendations for the project:

Connecting with Country

The Walk on Country has not yet been undertaken. It is acknowledged that the progress on engagement with local Aboriginal Knowledge Holders has been slow but this engagement is fundamental to informing meaningful spatial, material and public domain outcomes.

1. Undertake a Walk on Country and structured engagement with local Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Holders prior to further design resolution and EIS submission.
2. Demonstrate how engagement outcomes are embedded into the ground plane, landscape strategy and built form in a meaningful way.
3. Identify opportunities for Aboriginal employment, procurement and collaboration, including integration with public art strategy.
4. Continue to ensure ICIP protocols are in place throughout all phases of the project to protect cultural knowledge and ensure appropriate attribution.
5. Continue to refer to the [Connecting with Country Framework](#), [Frequently Asked Questions and case studies](#) on the GANSW website for more information and guidance.

Site planning, public domain and landscape

Further development of the ground plane, colonnade and landscape is required to adequately cater to the density proposed and deliver a safe, legible and generous pedestrian environment commensurate with this key civic location.

1. Demonstrate how the ground plane supports pedestrian and cycle movement between the Newcastle Interchange, Hannell Street cycleway and the future Honeysuckle development.
 - a. Provide movement analysis identifying key desire lines and anticipated volumes.
 - b. Clarify how the south-east corner resolves pedestrian rounding and crossing movement.
 - c. Clearly demonstrate how the relocated east-west cycle route functions and seamlessly connects to Hannell Street and the wider network.
2. Increase the width and depth of the colonnade, particularly along Hannell Street, to better respond to the scale of the building and anticipated foot traffic. This could include reducing the retail area to achieve a more generous and functional colonnade.
3. Revisit the angle and configuration of the stairs on the southwest corner and demonstrate how the level changes are addressed.
4. Continue to refine the configuration of the through-site link to improve usability and spatial quality, having regard to the expected volume of pedestrian movement.
 - a. Review column placement, including the potential to cantilever the single column at the south-east corner.
 - b. Demonstrate that the configuration of columns, landscape and outdoor seating maintains adequate clearances and supports clear pedestrian movement within the through-site link.
 - c. Reconsider the configuration and alignment of the stairs to ensure a more intuitive transition.
5. Review the distribution of ground floor uses to increase spatial clarity and avoid fragmentation of the ground plane, including redistributing some of the programming to floors above and/or below.
6. Revisit the blank facade and servicing dominance along Charles Street and Dangar Street and investigate opportunities for activation. For example, consider introducing a café or public artwork in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.

7. The water feature proposed sits outside the site boundary. Liaise with Council to prioritise the amenity for all public domain works outside the site boundary.
8. Provide sections illustrating how the development interfaces with the transport interchange to the south and adjacent development, including Honeysuckle HQ to the east beyond Hannell Street, to demonstrate cumulative built form impacts, scale relationships and pedestrian movement.

After the session, the following advice (items 9 to 12) was provided:

9. Review the orientation and configuration of the proposed pocket park and landscape elements along Dangar Street to ensure they do not impede pedestrian and cycle movement.
10. Demonstrate how flooding constraints and site level changes have been resolved.
11. Provide further details on hotel arrival requirements and how this is addressed.
12. Review the proposed car parking numbers in relation to the density and mix of uses, having regard to local travel patterns and the Newcastle context.

Built form and architecture

13. Provide an assessment of cumulative built form impacts within the precinct, including the relationship to the Honeysuckle HQ development.
14. Further develop the podium façade to strengthen its relationship with the ground plane and public domain. For example, by extending its geometry and material expression into the public realm.
15. Clarify the architectural and spatial role of the colonnade, including proportional relationships between height and depth.
16. Demonstrate the implications of the proposed height and density on servicing, infrastructure and local amenity, and how these are appropriately addressed.

Amenity

The scale and diversity of the development necessitate generous and well-distributed communal open space and high-quality amenity.

17. Ensure that the co-living component provides appropriate amenity commensurate with the scale and intensity of occupation.
 - a. Consider removing the northeast co-living unit to enhance the quality, usability and size of the communal open space.
 - b. Review the location and orientation of the communal room to ensure appropriate solar access.
 - c. Reconsider the orientation and location of daylight to internal circulation spaces, including opportunities to improve northern rather than western light access.
18. Reassess distribution of communal open space across the tower, including opportunities for smaller, vertically distributed spaces at upper levels.
19. Review Level 6 communal open space to ensure there is adequate solar access, amenity and capacity to cater for the proposed density. Further test opportunities to distribute communal open space in the upper levels.
20. Clarify affordable housing diversity, including opportunities for family-friendly dwelling types.

Sustainability and climate change

Sustainable design is a key design excellence consideration for a project of this scale and civic prominence.

21. Provide clear, measurable sustainability targets and commitments that are supported by appropriate technical studies.

The advice provided is to be addressed through further design development and as part of the EIS submission.

Please contact GANSW Design Advisor, Wendy Lam, wendy.lam@dpie.nsw.gov.au, if you have any queries regarding this advice.

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT NEW SOUTH WALES

Sincerely,



Brindha Kugan
Principal Design Advisor
Chair, SDRP

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