

Conquest
Mr Joeseeph Puckeridge
joseph.puckeridge@conquest.com

Dear Joseph,

**RE: 100 EDINBURGH ROAD, CASTLECRAIG
DRP No. 1 MONDAY 1st DECEMBER 2025
DESIGN ADVICE LETTER**

As you may recall, the first Design Review Panel (DRP) meeting was held in relation to a HDA SSDA at the abovementioned site on 1 December 2025. This correspondence represents the Design Review Panel's Design Advice Letter following the DRP of 1 December 2025.

The letter is prepared in accordance with the '*Housing Delivery Authority: Alternative Design Excellence Strategy Guidelines*'. The letter provides a summary of the meeting. It also outlines the panel member's key issues, advice and recommendations. These items should be reviewed and responded to by Conquest as well as the engaged architect, FJC. Their responses should be discussed at the 2nd DRP scheduled for 2 February 2026.

ATTENDEES

- Paul Berkemeier Chair (GA NSW nominee)
- Mark Raggatt (Council nominee)
- Kim Crestani (Proponent nominee)
- Michael Akkawi (CEO Conquest/proponent)
- Joseph Puckeridge (Assistant Development Manager)
- Mr Richard Francis Jones (Director FJC)
- Mr David Haseler (Principal FJC)
- Ms Michelle Ho (Senior Associate FJC)
- Mr Trent Wink (Manager HDA SSD Assessment DPHI)
- Ms Fiona Dowler (Planning Officer DPHI)
- Mr Tim Griffith (Design Advisor GA)
- Mr Dyalan Govender (Strategic Planning Team Leader, WCC)
- Carlo Di Giulio (Director Principle Planning + urban Design)
- Shilin Zheng (Town Planner Principle Planning + urban Design)
- Ms Serena Li (Town Planner Principle Planning + Urban Design)

PROPOSAL & CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The Panel understands that the original competition winning scheme was divided into two blocks, one 3-storey and the other 4-storey facing the Edinburgh Road frontage. The taller block was at the corner of Eastern Valley Way.

The Panel understands the DA approved project has two 3-storey blocks to the Edinburgh Road frontage and includes a mix of retail and residential uses.

The new scheme that is now before the Panel proposes a substantial uplift in accordance with the HDA / SSD Pathway. Key changes from the DA consent include.

- Retention of a similar footprint to the approval but raising the twin blocks from three to four storeys and adding an 8-storey tower to each.
- Increasing the number of apartments from 38 to 150, including 10 affordable units for a 15-year period.

A separate modification application has been lodged for an additional basement parking level.

During the DRP meeting, Panel members expressed different opinions on the merits and potential of the proposed scheme, noting that the site is adjacent to the Griffin Estate, a low scale residential area of national significance.

SUPPORTED ELEMENTS

The Panel supports:

- The proponent's ambition to deliver a high-quality work of architecture and the engagement of FJC as architects for the project.
- Materiality and detail that responds to the heritage context of Castlecrag.
- Provision of affordable housing.
- Through site link with connection to the local pedestrian network.
- Provision of diverse retail offerings with generous outdoor areas.
- Retention of trees and potential for new landscape.

KEY ISSUES

- Massing – relationship of the base to the towers.
- Height in relationship to heritage and context.
- The proposed floor to floor height to residential levels is 3.4m. This, combined with generous heights to the lower retail levels and the sloping site, will make the building much taller than the nominal height in storeys.
- Overshadowing.
- Visual impact, from Eastern Valley Way, Edinburgh Road and the surrounding area.
- ADG compliance, including lack of natural light and ventilation to lower residential levels.
- Wind impacts.

- Communal open space needs further consideration.
- Tree preservation.
- Community consultation - the Panel was advised that there is no requirement for another round of community engagement, however this should be confirmed with HDA/GANSW.

ADVICE, RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR FUTURE DRP SESSIONS

- Landscape Architect and Heritage Architect should attend and present.
- Develop the Connecting to Country strategy.
- Provide a detailed response to all LEP Design Excellence provisions.
- Provide an analysis of likely future development in the vicinity of the site and demonstrate how the project responds to the current and likely future contexts.
- Maximise the number of trees to be retained and provide evidence of tree protection strategy. Develop the landscape design, include substantial tree cover that responds to the landscape character of Castlecrag.
- Review the height of the two building bases. Investigate options for lowering to 3 storeys. Review the height of the proposed towers in the context of overshadowing, visual impact and heritage values of Castlecrag.
- Demonstrate the effect of the 3.4m floor to floor heights on the overall building height compared to 3.2m.
- Provide detailed analysis of ADG compliance.
- Provide detailed wind analysis and strategies for ensuring wind comfort in the public domain, communal and private open spaces.
- Provide detail and evidence of communal open space provision.
- Provide detailed analysis and justification of impacts on the heritage values of Castlecrag.

Any increase to the height and floorspace of the current approved scheme must be of the highest architectural quality, both in design and in the delivered building. It will be important for FJC Studio, Site Image Landscape Architects and Weir Phillips Heritage to remain engaged for all stages of the project.

DESIGN EXCELLENCE STATEMENT

Clause 6.23(4) and (5) of the Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012 (WLEP 2021) outlines the relevant items to be addressed for the purpose of achieving design excellence. These matters will be addressed in full and presented to the Design Review Panel as the proposal continues to evolve.

In the meantime, the relevant provisions are addressed as follows:

(4)(a) Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved.

This objective will be satisfied largely by retaining the architects FJC, who prepared the original successful design competition scheme. FJC's original design was informed by

an in-depth analysis of the locality's geography and historical context. As a result of this analysis, the vast majority of finishes are sandstone and terracotta cladding which reflect the character and offer high durability.

In addition to high quality materials, the design competition winning scheme was suitably articulated and this will be integrated within the HDA SSDA scheme.

It is intended to add two towers above the approved development. The new tower envelopes will be rectangular in nature. The architects aim to use these to reinforce the horizontal nature of the approved envelope, thereby generating appropriate scale and definition at street level.

(4)(b) Whether the form, arrangement and external appearance of the development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain.

The architects aim to use the addition of 2 envelopes above the previously approved podium element to enhance its human scale. A further aim is to enhance the rectilinear overall presentation, thereby adding further definition to the public domain.

(4)(c) Whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors.

The proposal is not within any land-based view corridors. It will rise well above the tree line and be prominent against the sky.

(5)(a) The suitability of the land for development.

The subject site is within a local centre and previously included a commercial development. It was the locality's key source of convenience goods and dining options and was also a key meeting place for locals. The proposal aims to replicate these features.

The site is large in area with multiple frontages. It is without any prohibitive constraints such as contamination, flooding and the like. The dwellings within the proposal would benefit from high amenity, in particular with district and city views. The proponent's analysis concludes that the locality is severely undersupplied with retail and commercial services, as well as affordable housing. On this basis, the proponent finds that the site is suitable for the proposal.

(5)(b) Existing and proposed uses and use mix.

The proposal is for a mixed-use development comprising a supermarket within the lower ground level as well as specialty retail stores and food and beverage outlets on the ground floor. The upper floor of the podium and the remaining levels above are proposed to include a combination of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings as well as duplexes and penthouses. Specifically, 150 dwellings are proposed, including 10 affordable dwellings.

(5)(c) Heritage and streetscape constraints.

A local heritage item is located approximately 50m to the east of the subject site, at 118 Edinburgh Road. The heritage architect considers that sufficient separation exists between the subject site and the heritage item to avoid any unreasonable impact.

The proposal will retain the key features of the previously approved podium. The approved three storey podium is considered to be a suitable scale for the streetscape. The proposed towers above aim to reinforce the lower scale and its relationship with the street. Numerous trees are located along Edinburgh Road which the proposal will retain. The proposed ground floor food and beverage tenancies will not only provide destination options for locals but also activate the street.

(5)(d) The relationship of the development with other existing or proposed development on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form.

The proposal's podium will adopt the same 0m ground floor setback to the east as the approved scheme. This is considered to be suitable given that the podium is of retail use in a local centre environment.

Landscaping, including deep soil landscaped setbacks are proposed along Eastern Valley Way which the landscape architect considers will provide a suitable relationship to the street corridor.

Above the podium, the proposal will comply with separation recommendations as provided by the Apartment Design Guide. The architects believe the objectives for privacy will be satisfied.

(5)(e) Bulk, massing and modulation of buildings.

The design team believes the proposed overall bulk and massing to be appropriate given the local centre context and the current housing crisis. Separation of the two tower envelopes above the podium, combined with high quality and well detailed materials, aim to provide appropriate modulation.

(5)(f) Street frontage heights.

The proposal will adopt the key features of the previously approved three storey podium to address the street frontage. Given it was previously approved, the proponent considers it suitable for the proposed scheme.

(5)(g) Environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity.

The proponent believes the proposal will achieve a high standard of sustainable design through use of dense external finishes to deflect external heat sources as well as retain comfortable internal temperatures. Screens are also proposed externally to provide shading and deflect UV light but still enable views. The proposal aims to exceed the ADG's recommendations for ventilation. Further, the proposal will be BASIX compliant. Detailed wind studies and overshadowing analysis will be provided.

(5)(h) Achieving the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The proponent believes the proposal addresses the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development including the precautionary principle, intergenerational equity, conservation of biological and ecological integrity and improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.

The proponent's response to ESD principles is as follows:

- **Precautionary principle** - The proposed development does not pose any serious threat to the environment, nor any irreversible damage to the environment. Risks of serious or irreversible damage of the local environment have not been identified.
- **Inter-Generational Equity Principle** - The proposed development will deliver on inter-generational equity by not consuming more resources than required to sufficiently operate the building. Energy consumption will be minimised through thermally efficient construction, energy efficient services, water efficient fixtures and fitting, use of rainwater capture and reuse, and separation of waste streams to minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill and maximise recycling of materials. External shading devices such as louvres and screens will be implemented to offer effective solar heating control. Most importantly, the proposal supports intergenerational equity by delivery more housing, including affordable housing.
- **Conservation of Biological and Ecological Integrity Principle** - The proposed development is within an existing urban environment with limited capacity to impact Biodiversity and Ecological integrity. Energy consumption will be designed to achieve a minimum 10% improvement above National Construction Code requirements. The reduction in water use will be established through high WELS rated water fixtures and fittings, unless otherwise required for clinical purposes. Waste generated during the construction and operational phases will be diverted from landfill to be recycled.
- **Improved Valuation, Pricing, and Incentive Mechanisms** - The proposed development is designed to minimise pollution and waste through responsible construction practices that divert construction and demolition waste from landfill, responsible management of operational waste and stormwater pollution and run-off is minimised. Ongoing monitoring of energy and water usage as well as waste disposal will provide the best mechanisms to incentivise solutions and responses to environmental problems.

(5)(i) Pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements.

The proposal seeks to utilise the existing site access, which is considered suitable. A substantial amount of onsite bicycle parking provisions is provided in the basement. The proponent believes that circulation has been well considered for residents, visitors, and employees, in particular, ample lifts and travellers being provided to ensure convenient and safe circulation for visitors as well as for operational purposes.

The proponent seeks to include a supermarket, as well as food and beverage options and some professional services. The proponent's research indicates that these are currently severely under supplied in the locality. Their provision may reduce vehicle journeys and may improve active transport.

(5)(j) The impact on, and proposed improvements to, the public domain.

The design team aims to improve the public domain by replacing outdated ground level finishes. Existing street trees will also be retained. The proposal contains numerous ground floor tenancies which are intended for a variety of active uses such as restaurants and the like. These elements are intended to create a vibrant and active public domain.

(5)(k) The impact on special character areas.

The subject locality is not listed as a 'special character area' according to any environmental planning instruments. However, it is recognised that there are key features to the area including the involvement by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin in its design, existing vegetation as well as its proximity to water bodies. The site is adjacent to the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area.

The design team seeks to recognise these features by retaining as many street facing trees as possible, planting new trees, as well as using materials which reflect the locality's sandstone geology.

(5)(l) Achieving appropriate interfaces at ground level between the building and the public domain.

The architects propose to retain key features of the previously approved three storey podium. The previously approved podium is low in scale and creates an appropriate relationship at street level. Further, the podium will include retail premises' with relatively small, glazed frontages which aim to create a suitable human scale. The podium will also include outdoor dining facilities; extensive weather protection and the same high-quality materials and finishes used throughout the above podium envelopes.

(5)(m) Excellence and integration of landscape design.

It is intended to retain established and well recognised landscape architectural firm Site Image to prepare landscape architectural concepts for the proposal. Similarly, the projects arborists Tree Wise Men will be retained for the SSDA scheme. Site Image and Tree Wise Men were involved in the original successful design competition scheme as well as the original DA. Therefore, they have extensive knowledge of the site and surrounds.

Both firms, together with FJC, will seek to retain as many trees as possible, proposed replacement trees where necessary, as well as provide a suitable environment within the proposal's podium. As with the original DA, the project team intend to improve the public domain surrounding the site and apply materials in particular which will create a sense of a large public domain area.