

31 October 2025

Saul Moran
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Via email: saul.moran@billbergia.com.au

Dear Saul,

SSD-93776214 – 849, 853, and 859 and 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood

Introduction

This Design Advice Letter has been prepared on behalf of the Design Review Panel (DRP), in relation to the Design Review Process for the HDA State Significant Development Application at 849, 853, and 859 Pacific Highway and 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood (SSD-93776214). This letter provides a record of the matters that were discussed in DRP Session No 1 and is based on the design material presented by **PBD Architects** on 23 October 2025.

In accordance with the Alternative Design Excellence Strategy endorsed on 15 October 2025 and the Alternative Design Excellence Strategy Guidelines, the DRP comprises three members including a Chair to review the design. The members of the DRP have been selected in consultation with the Government Architect NSW (**GANSW**) and are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 DRP members

Panel Member	Role / Position
Matthew Bennett	Chair (GANSW endorsed DRP member)
Rob Nation	Proponent nominated DRP member
Digby Hall	Council nominated DRP member

The DRP session was in-person and on-line and attended by key members of the Design Team and BB Wilson Property Pty Ltd (the Proponent). Key stakeholders were also invited to attend the DRP session (including representatives from Willoughby Council and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure). Urbis as the DRP Manager were also in attendance.

This letter provides confirmation of the DRP's advice on which elements of the project are supported and the key design issues to be addressed based on the design material presented by PBD Architects on 23 October 2025.

Elements of the Project that are supported

The following table reflects the DRP's Design Advice on the elements of the project that are supported:

Ground floor arrangement	The panel supports maintaining the cruciform pedestrian connections across the site, the provision of separate tower lobbies, the inclusion of childcare in the location proposed, and the location of a cluster of food and beverage tenancies to the centre of the site with exhaust systems to support restaurant cooking. This site is substantial in size and will be an important mixed-use anchor for this precinct. Separate concerns are raised with the inclusion of live-work tenancies fronting Pacific Highway and further advice is provided on this element to be addressed in the following section of this Design Advice.
Tower Materiality	The panel supports the move to a more muted bronze colouring over the previous deep red scheme. See additional advice regarding materiality, detailing, and environmental performance.
Tower Planning	The Panel supports the retention of the strategy for bundled vertical forms, the proposed dwelling/core ratios, and dwelling amenity for levels 6 and above.
Building scale	- The panel notes that it is not the role of the panel to assess the impacts and appropriateness of height at this scale. This is best undertaken by the DPHI assessment team who have a broader understanding and oversight of similar proposals within the Willoughby LGA and can determine the suitability of the proposal within the evolving built environment of the Chatswood CBD. - The panel acknowledges the overshadowing impacts to Victoria Avenue and the Concourse Open Space will be a key consideration in the assessment of this proposal. - The panel notes they are better placed to assess the design merit and amenity of the proposal, and to comment on the general qualities of height in this context. - The panel acknowledged the Chatswood CBD Strategy included substantial height in this area and the height control envelope presents as a confident edge to the Pacific Highway. The site sits as a gateway to Chatswood CBD which is emerging as a corridor of taller buildings along the ridgeline. Height is not unachievable in this area and additional density has the potential to be supported by the proximity to public transport and services.

Key design issues to be addressed

The following table reflects the DRP's Design Advice on the key design issues to be addressed:

Focus Area	Panel Comment
Overshadowing diagrams	- The panel requests that clear shadow analysis be provided prior to the next DRP session. In the shadow diagrams' current form, the panel is uncomfortable providing wording to support the proposal on overshadowing grounds. - The panel requests that the diagrams clearly demonstrate existing overshadowing without the towers, and the proposed overshadowing impacts at 15-minute intervals. This was requested to be provided within the following week of this meeting taking place.
Façade and wintergardens	- The panel notes the glazing of the western façade and the location of west-facing bedrooms. Concerns around keeping these rooms thermally comfortable were raised. The Design Team notes that they are still working through this detail and will take this on board as they develop the façade in detail. - The panel requested further clarification on the wintergardens and their operability. They asked whether the Design team has looked at the mechanisms for opening and cross ventilation changes as the building transitions to the higher levels considering changes to wind patterns and pressure. The Design Team note that this is something they are working on with their façade engineers. The panel request that detailed sections of the façade, through the wintergarden and apartment be provided to better understand operability, impacts, detailing and materiality. - The panel requested to see a set of each façade condition at a detailed level at the next meeting to understand what different modes the façade take. They want to understand how natural and cross ventilation is achieved on each façade at different zones of the building. Heat mapping of each façade zone would also be beneficial for understanding thermal conditions, especially on the western façade. - The panel suggested bringing the façade engineer to the next meeting and holding an extended session to understand the proposal in greater detail.
Amenity	- The panel enquired about the building's amenity in relation to the proposed uplift including additional community amenity, bicycle parking, shared car spaces and waste management. - The panel emphasised the idea of a vertical township and the potential opportunities for shared amenity and community resilience that could be implemented.

Mid-rise gardens	▪ The panel supported the mid-rise gardens, however suggested increasing the scale of these to turn them into substantial communal spaces for the residential community. It was noted that at the moment it reads like a space that is left over from the plant allocation. ▪ Further detail on what the intention of this space is (are they quiet zones or spaces where families might gather?) as well as consider wind mitigation so that they can be utilised by residents.
Edge planters	▪ The panel asked about how the edge planters to the podium levels will be maintained as some of them appear to be too high for ground access. ▪ The Applicant confirmed that they will all be managed through the Strata scheme from outside of the building and won't be given private ownership.
Ground floor arrangement and live-work units	▪ The panel notes the rearrangement of the ground floor uses, with the live-work units now facing the Pacific Highway frontage. ▪ The panel raised concerns about the residential component of the live-work units facing the Pacific Highway given the impacts of traffic, and the units backing onto the arcade limiting opportunities for natural cross ventilation. They note that a work-work arrangement would be better suited and/or large destination tenancies, such as shops, allied health, wellness or fitness. ▪ The panel raised that they would like to see some flexibility in the use of the ground floor of these units, such as some of the tenancies having the capacity to expand in width to support a range of non-residential activities. Activation on this level would allow for destination opportunities for the community and support the idea of the building as a township.
Affordable housing and cross ventilation	▪ The panel raised concerns about cross ventilation of apartments from levels 3 to 9 relating to the affordable housing dwellings. They noted that some of the apartments that were noted as cross ventilated are not strictly in accordance with the ADG, and that the inclusion of the 'valley' between the two towers takes away from amenity of the apartments in these levels such as cross ventilation and solar, when previously the towers were performing very well. ▪ The panel noted that they would rather see a slightly taller podium or another level of affordable housing in the towers with separation of the towers than the valley proposed. While it makes sense to keep the affordable housing as one band, there is no connection through them, so it is not understood why it is needed. ▪ The Panel noted the importance of delivering an equivalent level of amenity for affordable and market housing in the proposal.

Podium Materiality	▪ The panel note that the concrete materiality of the podium was one of the supported strengths of the previous scheme, helping it sit confidently in this CBD edge location. ▪ The panel acknowledge the additional extent of additional tower structure the team are coordinating through the podium levels and the impacts this has on the planning and expression of the podium. ▪ The panel do not support the shift to metallic and glazed materiality and encourage the team to reinstate and develop the former concrete materiality to develop a podium with a character commensurate with the scale of the towers proposed.
Tower Materiality	▪ The Panel support the strategy for the lower portions of the tower to have horizontal masonry banding but encourage the team to increase the height of the concrete bands to achieve the intended character. This should be presented as part of the façade studies noted above. ▪ The Panel questioned the legibility of the 4-storey 'de-scaling' elements proposed for the tower and look forward to seeing how this has been developed as part of the overall façade design process.
How the building terminates	▪ The panel discussed the termination of the towers at the top level, noting how the tower bundles finish flat, with the lift overrun extending above this along with the façade. The panel asks the Design Team to consider opportunities to work more three-dimensionally here to strengthen the scheme and reinforce the bundled tower expression.
Services level	▪ The panel supports the intention for recessed horizontal bands to separate the upper and lower levels of the tower but questioned the current expression including the depth of the recess and the articulation of the of louvred screens. ▪ The Design Team note that this is something they are working through to resolve. It is their intent to make this area look more recessive whilst negotiating significant structural members in the space and wind impacts. ▪ The panel notes this exercise should be undertaken with the reconsideration of the communal spaces within these levels.
Recycling	▪ The panel asked the applicant to consider opportunities for on-site composting for residents that goes back into the site's landscape as part of the net zero strategy. The panel also requested the team consider opportunities for on-site bulk furniture storage and recycling.
Artwork	▪ The panel noted that, despite it being early days, on-site artwork arrangements could be given greater consideration for a development of this size. The panel requested that a consultant be brought on board, not for the identification of artists or artwork at this stage, but to further develop and clarify the strategy.

Connecting With Country ▪ The panel encourages the design team to develop and extend the Connecting with Country strategy through landscape design, species selection, naming and artwork strategies

Panel Endorsement

The DRP confirms that this letter is an accurate record of the DRP feedback and that the DRP endorses the observations and clarifications by consensus.

This letter is to be used to guide further detailed design refinement of the scheme.

Further information listed in this Design Advice is needed for the panel to form an opinion in relation to design excellence. The DRP requests that the advice and recommendations in this Design Advice is addressed before the next DRP session.

Design Review Panel Endorsement

Name	Signature	Date
Matthew Bennet		31/10/2025
Digby Hall		31/10/2025
Bob Nation		31/10/2025

Yours sincerely,



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