



5 December 2025

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Dear Saul,

SSD-93776214 – 849, 853 and 859 Pacific Highway and 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood | DRP Session #2 Advice

Introduction

This Design Advice letter (**Advice**) has been prepared on behalf of the appointed Design Review Panel (**DRP**) in relation to the Design Review Process for the State Significant Development Application at 849, 853, and 859 Pacific Highway and 2 and 8 Wilson Street, Chatswood (SSD-93776214). This Advice provides a formal record of DRP session #2 on 28 November 2025 and the design presentation from PBD Architects.

In accordance with the Alternative Design Excellence Strategy (**ADEX Strategy**) endorsed by the NSW Government Architect (**GANSW**) on 15 October 2025 and Alternative Design Excellence Strategy Guidelines, the DRP comprises three members to review the design. The DRP comprises the members outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1 DRP Members

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

The DRP session was held in-person at the Urbis Sydney office, with invited observers attending online, and attended by representatives from Urbis, PBD Architects, and the proponent (BB Wilson Property Pty Ltd) (**Billbergia**). Invited observers included representatives from Willoughby City Council (**Council**), the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (**DPHI**), and the Housing Delivery Authority (**HDA**).

This Advice provides a formal record of the DRP's position on the elements of the project which are supported and key design matters which require further refinement and resolution prior to the submission of the SSDA.

Elements of the project that are supported

Table 2 identifies the DRP's advice on the design elements of the project that are supported.

Table 2 Supported Design Elements

Focus Area	Panel Comment
Building scale	The Panel notes that it is not the role of the Panel to assess the impacts and appropriateness of building 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 the SSDA. The Panel notes it is 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.
Sun diagrams	The Panel acknowledged the preparation of overshadowing diagrams provided at 15-minute intervals during the prescribed hours at mid-winter and noted they provide adequate information for detailed assessment by the DPHI team. These diagrams were requested by the Panel following DRP session #1.
Cross-ventilation of affordable housing apartments.	The Panel acknowledged the re-configuration and design refinements to the affordable housing apartments levels achieve an appropriate degree of natural cross-ventilation. The Panel was supportive of this refinement.
Building termination	The Panel reassessed the termination of the top of the tower forms ('crown' elements) in collaboration with technical façade and wind consultants. The Panel was generally supportive of the refinement of the top of tower forms.
Recycling and FOGO	The panel was supportive of the provision of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) and bulky waste arrangements and charity bins in the basement. These elements were requested following DRP session #1. The Panel noted that further consideration should be given to maximising the simplicity and efficiency of the waste arrangements from the perspective of the appointed building manager and residents delivering waste to these rooms, including resolution of potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.

Apartment Planning

The Panel commended the design team on the planning, design, and amenity of apartments. In particular, the Panel remained supportive of the bundled vertical forms, proposed core to apartment ratio, and individual unit planning.

Key design matters for refinement and resolution

Table 3 details the DRP's position and advice on key design issues which require further refinement and resolution in order for the project to be capable of achieving design excellence.

Table 3 Key Design Issues

Focus Area	Panel Comment
Façade	The Panel commented that positive development was made in relation to the external façade treatment; however further refinement was required, as summarised below. Thermal Comfort - The Panel questioned if the design had fully considered and resolved the thermal heat loading on the glazed west-facing bedrooms. - The proponent's ESD consultant confirmed that the triple-glazing and ceiling fans achieve a 7.1-NatHERS star rating (as an average of all low-rise, middle, and high-rise scenarios), and the apartments can achieve high energy efficiency. - The Panel cautioned that averages can often hide the poorly performing rooms and encouraged the design team to continue to finesse the design with the façade consultant to ensure every bedroom can achieve a high level of thermal comfort. Shading - The Panel raised concern over the proposed shading façade elements, particularly in relation to the west-facing façade. It noted that horizontal shading elements on west-facing facades are not effective due to the low angle of the sun. The Panel highlighted opportunity for the design team to explore vertical shading or opaque elements. Wind - The Panel questioned the operability of wintergardens at the upper levels, noting that it was unlikely any windows at the levels would be opened due to high-wind speeds. - The Panel raised concerns about the consistent window operability for all tower levels and aspects and requested the design team to develop a more considered proposal that responds to the specificities of aspect, height, and acoustic considerations. This should include increasing façade operability for levels up to Level 20 corresponding to align with wind advice. - The proponent and design team explained that sash windows had been considered; however, there were environmental and building certification limitations to implementing these holistically, recounting the 'patchy' outcomes. - The Panel encouraged the design team to interrogate and refine each element of the development to the highest standard to ensure it can deliver the very best outcome.

Solidity and Materiality

- The Panel remained concerned about the relationship between the tower forms and the lower podium 'base' and its ability to respond to the suburban edge condition of the tower. The Panel noted the provision of an architectural and façade strategy that mediates between the Chatswood CBD and the surrounding suburbs is an important consideration for the proposal to be capable of achieving design excellence.
- The Panel supported the proposition of solidity of the GRC horizontal banding in the lower levels (the affordable housing apartments) and recommended this is continued further up the towers up to approximately L20 and be explored concurrently with wintergarden window operability. This would improve amenity and liveability of the apartments and improve view lines from the public domain and alleviate concerns about the scale of the glazed towers.

Glazing

- The Panel reiterated that the selection of façade glazing types must have consideration to its environmental performance and representation with minimum reflectivity and a high level of transparency, to allow for winter sun penetration.

Acoustic Impacts

- The Panel encouraged the design team to explore refinement and opportunities to further mitigate acoustic impacts from the Pacific Highway and rail corridor through the refinement of façade design.

Mid-rise gardens

- The design team explained the refinements made to the mid-rise gardens following DRP session #1, specifically the consideration given to wind impacts and the provision of a glazed balustrade surrounding the gardens with a 1m gap to allow for air flow.
- The Panel raised concerns about the quality and quantity of communal open space relative to the size of the future community, specifically the mid-rise gardens which had limited flexibility, rigid uses, and a lack of diversity in its offering. The communal open spaces required significant reworking to ensure they provide an appropriate level of amenity and diversity for future residents.

Live / work units

- The design team outlined the refinements to the live / work units following DRP session #1. Notwithstanding the refinements, the Panel formed the view that the live / work units could not be supported in the ground level or lower podium level. Specifically:
 - The scale of the development and number of future residents calls for provision of significant and diverse community facilities, amenities, and offerings.
 - The Panel does not support live /work units to the Pacific Highway frontage or the internal arcade / laneway tenancies.

Ground floor and podium uses

- The Panel was very concerned about the limited activation of the ground floor and podium levels, and the lack of flexibility in communal amenities and non-residential uses, particularly given the increase in residents from the original DA scheme. The Panel noted the mixed-use accommodation appears to be half what was proposed in the DA scheme, while the density of residential accommodation has doubled.

	▪ The Panel noted that if the project were a greenfield subdivision, there would be a significantly greater level of communal amenity. The Panel were disappointed that the incoming community would not have adequate access to natural and quiet spaces, particularly given the lack of these in the proposal's immediate vicinity. ▪ The Panel noted the significance of this site to anchor this gateway precinct for Chatswood, and the size and porosity of the ground plane and podium offering a strategically important location for mixed-use offerings for this and surrounding sites. ▪ The proponent noted that their commercial analysis indicated that the proposed amenities and non-residential uses would be sufficient for the scale of the project. ▪ The Panel requested the design team to consider how the communal amenity level relates to the broader surrounding context in terms of commercial and retail offerings.
Podium materiality	▪ The Panel questioned the lack of commitment and certainty as to the materiality of certain elements of the podium. The design team should provide further detail as to the proposed concrete items to ensure clarity and commitment to these materials. ▪ The Panel requested clear identification of the extent, detail and finish of off-form and precast concrete elements to be included to alleviate concerns regarding less integral and durable masonry-look finishes.
Connecting with Country	▪ The design team explained the engagement undertaken since DRP session #1 in terms of meeting with the Connecting with Country consultant who identified and provided themes and principles to guide the artwork strategy. The design team has identified locations for artwork and will participate in a Walk on Country in the coming weeks. ▪ The Panel clarified that they are not looking to see specific artwork at this stage; rather greater detail about locations and extent of artwork opportunities. The Panel noted that, given the scale of the development, the current public art strategy feels a little timid. The Panel encouraged the design team to develop the artwork strategy, which will also assist in the greater contribution and activation of the public domain and lower levels.
Wind impact and mitigation	▪ The wind consultant confirmed wind testing is yet to be undertaken for the proposal at this height and scale. The Panel requested a detailed wind study be undertaken to inform the design proposal prior to assessment. ▪ The Panel noted concerns regarding the wind impacts on the public domain, arcade links, podium rooftop communal open space/pool area, and outdoor childcare space. ▪ The Panel recommended detailed wind testing be undertaken to ensure appropriate wind mitigation measures are provided for communal and public domain areas and for these to be incorporated into the proposal in a considered and integrated way. ▪ The design team noted that they have discussed the wind comfort environment with the wind consultant who did agree that the west-east link in particular will be intense. ▪ The design team confirmed that they will further the wind comfort strategy and they are currently working on a wind protection piece for the centre of the cruciform space.

Through-site link	Levels - The panel requested further consideration to the levels of the through-site links, specifically in relation to adjacent tenancies and how they interact with each other. The north-south arcade is not adequately activated given the current difference in levels, the blankness of the lift wall, and the current inclusion of live-work suites. Lift Wall - The Panel noted that the blank lift wall in the through-site link represented an underutilised space and expressed a view that this could be an artwork opportunity.
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Panel Endorsement

The DRP confirms that this letter provides an accurate record of their review and feedback on the design presentation at DRP session #2 (28 November 2025) and that the DRP endorses this advice by consensus.

This letter is to be used to guide further detailed design refinement prior to lodgement of the SSDA.

Further design refinement and resolution in accordance with the comments and recommendations outlined in this advice is required for the DRP to form a view on the ability of the project to achieve design excellence. The DRP requests that the advice and recommendations is resolved prior to lodgement of the SSDA.

Table 4 Design Review Panel Endorsement

Name	Signature	Date
Matthew Bennett		4 December 2025
Digby Hall		4 December 2025
Bob Nation		4 December 2025

Yours sincerely,



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