



St George Design Review Panel

Hurstville City Council | Kogarah City Council | Rockdale City Council

REPORT OF THE ST GEORGE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 19 January 2016 at Hurstville City Council

Panel Members – Mr Peter Annand, Prof Peter Webber, Ms Suzanne Moulis

ITEM 1

Date of Panel Assessment:	19 January 2016
Applicant:	Dickson Rothschild
Architect:	Dickson Rothschild
Property Address:	53-75 Forest Rd, 108-126 Durham St and 9 Roberts Ln Hurstville
Description:	Planning proposal to amend HLEP2012
No. of Buildings:	One (1) with four (4) towers
No. of Storeys:	Up to twenty eight (28)
No. of Units:	Three hundred and fifty seven (357)
Consent Authority Responsible:	Hurstville City Council
Application No.:	SF15/623
Declaration of Conflict of Interest:	None

The Panel was advised that an Urban Design report has been commissioned by Council to recommend appropriate building controls for the subject and nearby sites. The comments below relate to the revised submission and could not take into account the recommendations of the report which will not be available for several weeks. The Panel were concerned that the representatives of the applicant present at the meeting advised that they had not been provided by their colleagues with

copies of the Panel report of 19 November 2015 on the submission relating to the previous design. It appears that for this reason the present submission has not responded effectively to the issues previously raised.

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Context and Neighbouring Character Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. Well designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in established areas, those undergoing change or identified for change.	<i>The Panel has not been provided with adequate or appropriate information with which to make any assessment of the proposal's contribution to its context.</i> <i>The proposal responds to planning constraints rather than presenting well considered design rationale. The proposal fails to justify the built form that is proposed in any way. The Panel expects that preparation of an urban design study will deliver a very different urban form outcome.</i> <i>The Panel requests that the proponent prepare an urban design study. This study should comprise:</i> • <i>Strategic planning analysis</i> • <i>Economic and land use analysis</i> • <i>Physical context analysis of the site, surrounding character, and its relationship to the town centre and surrounding environment</i> • <i>Heritage analysis and opportunities</i> • <i>Built form analysis of current and potential development</i> • <i>A public domain and pedestrian movement analysis</i> • <i>Landscape and open space analysis of current and potential open space areas, their typology and use</i> • <i>Design options that compare a range of densities, building typologies and uses, and heights</i> • <i>An assessment of the above options in economic and environmental terms</i> • <i>A preferred option justification that considers the context and immediate interface with adjacent land uses</i> • <i>The proponent should clearly demonstrate any public benefits that flow from the proposal</i> <i>An urban design study has been prepared by Dickson Rothschild for the site which recommends a similar form to that previously proposed without any significant justification. The Panel should be presented with some real options for alternatives including 'a</i>

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	<i>range of densities, building typologies and uses and heights' as previously recommended, rather than simply alternative designs for the 2 storey podium, with various locations for high-rise towers above.</i> <i>The Panel agrees that rezoning from the current industrial zone to mixed use including residential, commercial, hotel, etc, is appropriate.</i> The Panel is very concerned that the above items have not been seriously addressed as noted in the pre-amble.
Built Form and Scale Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings. Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements. Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.	<i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above.</i> <i>The Panel is concerned that the very tall towers growing out of two (2) storey podium may not be the most appropriate solution. The bulk, mass and extent of the very large two (2) storey podium is not appropriate to the immediate context. The height of the towers remains unjustified.</i> <i>This remains a concern. The typically modernist solution of high rise towers above a flat podium frequently produces very poor amenity at pedestrian level.</i> <i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above.</i> <i>It is most likely that the residential scale and character of Roberts Lane will remain in the immediate to mid-term future. The proposal needs to respond positively to this in scale, character, permeability, use and form.</i> <i>One obvious option is to locate medium density residential uses along a widened Roberts Lane, potentially also with some re-zoning of the existing R2 zone on the northern side.</i> The revised submission has not addressed this option. As proposed the present lane would be largely dedicated to service traffic, car park entrance, etc, with a three (3) storey podium wall addressing the lane - which cannot be supported. <i>The Panel generally concurs with building heights along Durham Street as these relate to heights in East</i>

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	<i>Quarter across the road, however the panel feels that the northernmost building (currently nominated as Hotel) should be no taller than 6-7 storeys to enable transitioning to the north. The building set back behind the open space could perhaps sustain a higher building say 15 floors. Building heights on this site should support the Gateway function of East Quarter rather than compete with it</i> <i>The proposed open space at the entrance to hotel and commercial spaces could be a very attractive forecourt to the commercial activities, but is unlikely to function effectively as a public space. The complete pedestrian pathway system, both internal and public has not been convincingly designed or demonstrated to operate conveniently and safely.</i> No convincing evidence has been provided which supports the proposed development form and scale. Alternative options have not been explored by the applicant. The site planning and proposed rezoning of the site into two (2) parts appears to respond to planning constraints and existing site ownerships and be driven by planning risk mitigation rather than arising from any considered design analysis. It is appreciated that site consolidation can sometimes be challenging, but achieving appropriate controls must take priority, irrespective of property boundaries. See above for earlier comments relating to urban design analysis.

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Density Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. Appropriate densities can be sustained by existing or proposed infrastructure, public transport, access to jobs, community facilities and the environment.	<i>It is suggested that a generally open to the sky and air network of pedestrian spaces should be investigated with small squares and places connected by open pedestrian pathways (as in Barcelona, Rodeo Drive, LA and Rouse Hill). These would connect proposed development with Forest Road, Durham Street, Kempt Park and Allawah Rail station</i> <i>Unjustified by the present proposal and the split between the sites is arbitrary.</i> <i>The considerable density proposed remains to be justified in quantity or location.</i> See above – no further comments.
Sustainability Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. Good sustainable design includes use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and liveability of residents and passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. Other elements include recycling and reuse of materials and waste, use of sustainable materials and deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.	<i>Performance in resource, energy and water efficiency was not demonstrated. The Panel expects that a development of this size and scale would meet or exceed current best practice for environmental performance.</i> <i>No further comments at this stage.</i> As above. In addition, opportunities to retain or introduce deep soil zones on site need to be investigated and considered in any revised proposal.

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Landscape Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. A positive image and contextual fit of well designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood. Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the local context, co-ordinating water and soil management, solar access, micro-climate, tree canopy, habitat values and preserving green networks. Good landscape design optimises useability, privacy and opportunities for social interaction, equitable access, respect for neighbours' amenity and provides for practical establishment and long term management.	<i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above.</i> <i>The Panel expects that the development will contribute positively to environmental performance and landscape character and values both on and off-site.</i> <i>This has not been adequately addressed.</i> <i>The proponent should consult with Council with respect to the intended use, location and design of public open space areas. The design needs to clearly demonstrate and define public and private open space through location, form, intended use and activation and materials. The dedication and management responsibility of any proposed public space needs to be addressed. The location of open space above underground parking may not be acceptable as it limits the capacity for large tree planting.</i> <i>See comments in built form above relating to the proposed public open space area.</i> <i>Deep soil provision must be clearly articulated.</i> <i>This has not been addressed. The proposal should clearly demonstrate areas of deep soil and how deep soil planting will contribute to the landscape character of the proposal and the character transition to the adjacent low density residential areas, which is typified by large trees. The sitings of communal open areas should take advantage of deep soil planting and the amenity that this can contribute.</i> <i>A desired streetscape for Durham Street and Forest Road and Roberts Lane should be presented.</i> See comments above that have not been addressed. In addition, public open space areas should demonstrate a considered and feasible program of public use. For example the small site on the northern corner which is indicated as public open space appears to have very limited potential for public use.

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Amenity Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. Achieving good amenity contributes to positive living environments and resident well being. Good amenity combines appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, outlook, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.	<i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above.</i> <i>Thought needs to be applied to the various and numerous (and possibly conflicting) uses proposed within the development.</i> <i>No further comment.</i> <i>Communal open space areas should be thoughtfully located and designed for good amenity, preferably collocated with areas of deep soil, and support a range of outdoor recreational activities, rather than being arbitrarily allocated to left over areas.</i> The current community building located on Roberts Lane would benefit by having a stronger address point perhaps to Durham Street. Insufficient study of the impact of shadows has been undertaken, and the shadow diagram submitted is completely inaccurate. As proposed it appears that in reality there would be extensive shadow impact on Kemp Field on winter afternoons, and also on nearby residential areas. The height and form of any buildings on the subject site must not result in any unacceptable overshadowing impacts on existing residential areas and particularly on a public park. No further comments.
Safety Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. It provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety. A positive relationship between public and private spaces is achieved through clearly defined secure access points and well lit and visible areas that are easily maintained and appropriate to the location and purpose.	<i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above – to be addressed.</i> <i>This remains to be addressed.</i> <i>The proponent has in the meeting revealed a number of possible pedestrian pathways. These need to be confirmed and explained in terms of hours of use, passive surveillance and other safety and security concerns etc.</i> The safety and security of Roberts Lane is of particular concern.

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Housing Diversity and Social Interaction Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets. Well designed apartment developments respond to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people and providing opportunities for social interaction among residents.	<i>See comments relating to urban design study in 'Context' above – to be addressed.</i> <i>Not addressed at this stage.</i> No further comment.
Aesthetics Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures. The visual appearance of a well designed apartment development responds to the existing or future local context, particularly desirable elements and repetitions of the streetscape.	<i>Not relevant at this stage until the urban design study has been undertaken and its findings incorporated into a better resolved design response.</i> <i>No further comments at this stage until built form issues have been resolved.</i> No further comment.

RECOMMENDATION

- The proposal cannot be supported in its present form. The issues raised above must be addressed and a revised submission prepared. This will need to also take into consideration the independent urban design report presently in preparation for Council. The applicant must respond to the issues raised above, as well as the recommendation of the Urban Design report before a revised proposal is submitted to the Panel.