

DESIGN EXCELLENCE ADVISORY PANEL RECOMMENDATION

City of Parramatta



Address 264-268 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford
Date 11th June, 2020

Application Summary

Application Number	DA/242/2020
Assessing Officer	Frances Mehrrens
Applicant/Proponent	Baptist Care NSW & ACT
Architect and Registration Number	DKO Architects Nicholas Byrne – Reg No: 8987
Urban Designer	-
Landscape Architect	Scape Design
Planner	Think Planners Adam Byrnes
Other Persons in attendance	DKO Architects & other consultants

DEAP Members	Jon Johannsen, Brendan Randles, Garth Paterson
Chair	Jon Johannsen
Other Persons in attendance	Jay Ahmed – Project Officer Urban Design Jonathan Cleary – Team Leader Development Assessment
Item No	3 of 3
DEAP Meeting Number	1 st Referral

General Information

The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel's (the Panel) comments are provided to assist both the applicant in improving the design quality of the proposal, and the City of Parramatta council in its consideration of the application.

The Design Excellence Advisory Panel is an independent Panel and provided expert advice on applications relating to a diverse range of developments within the Parramatta Local Government Area.

The absence of a comment related directly to any prescribed principle does not necessarily imply that the Panel considers the particular matter has been satisfactorily resolved.

Proposal

Project description:

- Consolidation of existing lots and subdivision to create four lots.
- Earthworks comprising cut to a maximum depth of approximately 3.5m and fill to a maximum depth of approximately 1.2m.
- Construction of three four-storey residential flat buildings in accordance with State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009, comprising a total of 162 dwellings:
 - 82 x 1 bedroom units.
 - 63 x 2 bedroom units.
 - 17 x 3 bedroom units.
- The residential flat buildings will provide affordable housing for 99 independent living units for seniors and 63 dwellings for low-income families.
- Construction of a single level basement with new vehicle access from Martins Lane for:
 - 82 car parking spaces;
 - 40 bicycle parking spaces; and
 - Loading dock.
- Landscaping to accommodate deep soil planting as well as communal open space.
- Public domain works, including upgrade of Martins Lane and construction of East West and North South Road.

The application would be determined by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP) as it has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million. The application also triggers assessment by the SCCPP as it is for affordable housing with a capital investment value of more than \$5 million.

Panel Comments

The Design Excellence Advisory Panel has the following comments in relation to the project:

1. Context

Limited contextual analysis has been provided with the proposal, with virtually no recognition of the site's unique landscape, topography, vegetation, outlook and existing suburban character. Consistent with Council's master plan for the site (see Figure 4.3.8.1.2), two new public streets are provided, however, with limited urban design quality or character, they appear more like private service lanes, which the Panel cannot support. While the streets formally separate the northern block from the southern block, there appears no attempt to gauge how this proposal will impact on future development or how proposed built form and courtyard spaces could benefit from the new streetscape and outlook to the south. In addition :

- circulation and wayfaring are both extremely constrained
- street character appears institutional and uninviting
- the setback to Pennant Hills Road fails to provide meaningful opportunities for use and engagement
- to better function as a public street, should the western street connect to Pennant Hills Road, rather than become a dead end as proposed?

In view of these issues, the Panel believes that the proposal has failed to grasp the qualities of its unique context, to respond with a considered built form and provide a vibrant and amenable open space and public street network. An ADG compliant site analysis should be prepared, with alternative well considered built form configurations leading to a preferred option demonstrating contextual response, internal and open space amenity and ADG compliances.

The Panel also agrees with Council officers who do NOT accept the applicant's use of "two different areas – 10,022 to calculate FSR and 7,889 to calculate ADG requirements", "as this would enable density to be increased without commensurate increases in open space areas for residential amenity".

2. Scale and Built form

While the blocks generally follow the pattern illustrated in the master plan, The Panel does not believe that sufficient site appraisal and block testing has been undertaken to arrive at a viable proposal. Three buildings are proposed (instead of four, or even five), which contributes to numerous amenity issues (see below in Amenity). Access to Buildings A and B is extremely poor, Building C is simply too long and the magnificent outlook to the south apparently ignored. Rather than facilitating outlook and breeze, gaps proposed between buildings are awkward and difficult for adjacent apartments to face into.

As the major communal open space, the more open areas of the courtyard are largely overshadowed in winter months and will not be able to facilitate communal interaction without causing adverse acoustic impacts on adjacent apartments. The landscaped front setback has simply not been designed for any meaningful use.

Individual building layouts struggle with ADG compliance (such as cross ventilation) and rely on minimally sized entries and narrow corridors for access. The long fold back access fold ramps that feature along the new east west road not only adversely impact on streetscape but remove the opportunity for amenable open spaces adjacent to

building entries. Many of the apartments proposed have significant internal amenity issues (see below in amenity).

3. Density

The Panel notes that the proposal includes an additional 20% GFA due to affordable housing provisions allowable under ARH SEPP 2009—(updated?). On a master planned and constrained site with the applicable height limit, additional density is bound to make it difficult to successfully resolve site planning, massing, amenity and compliance issues against the ADG guidelines. With so many built form and amenity issues, the proposal does not adequately demonstrate that the density proposed can be accommodated on the site in this configuration. Under these circumstances it would be expected to have more analysis of the built form typologies studied, with considered rationale to support a preferred option, and a case mounted for alternatives solutions where strict compliance may not be possible.

4. Sustainability

The proposal fails to meet the ADG's most fundamental sustainability requirements. For an open site, with good access to light and air, this is unacceptable.

Contrary to the diagrams provided, the proposal fails by a significant degree to meet the cross ventilation requirements of the ADG. Only corner units, cross through units and units **demonstrating** cross ventilation via well located and specifically designed operable skylights can be considered cross ventilating.

Although the site would appear to have favourable orientation, mid-winter solar access too may not meet the requirements of the ADG. This is due to the location of living spaces behind deep balconies (for example Building A's 3G unit, Building B's lane facing 1A units, Building C's 2D units; above and/or below). In the light of less units gaining mid-winter solar access than claimed, the number of units proposed with no mid-winter solar access between 9am and 3pm is liable to be in excess of the 15% maximum required by the ADG.

While sustainability was not discussed at the meeting, the Panel notes that there are further opportunities for including sustainability initiatives in the design above and beyond those required by BASIX, such as solar energy generation, rainwater harvesting, etc.

5. Landscape

As noted above, the streetscape's visual and physical amenity is constrained by :

- a lack of clarity and generosity provided to entries
- relentless institutional architectural character and/
- poor landscape quality of street facing gardens

It is therefore recommended that all lobbies face the street, that entries and lobbies are increased in size, that access ramps are replaced with well-integrated platform lifts, that the character and expression of the buildings is amended and that landscaped gardens are designed to provide a richer engagement with the street.

Also noted above, the proposed courtyard is largely overshadowed and will not be able to facilitate communal interaction without causing adverse acoustic impacts on

adjacent apartments. It is therefore recommended that in addition to the courtyard, amenable and accessible roof top terraces are provided.

Council officers note that the COS falls short by approximately 200sqm and that deep soil areas may include pathways, paved areas and other areas not compliant with ADG deep soil requirements; COS and deep soil areas must be clarified.

The front setback and potential for more substantial landscape treatment to deal with amenity impacts from Pennant Hills Road should be considered further.

6. Amenity

See comments above limitations of current layout generally including awkward gaps, poor wayfinding and access to Buildings A and B, excessive length of building C, overshadowed courtyard, etc. It is the Panel's view that the layout should be completely redesigned based on a concept that follows more detailed built form analysis as noted above under Density.

See comments above regarding cross ventilation and solar access compliance; these requirements must be fully complied with.

See comments above regarding the limited amenity and lack of generosity of proposed entry lobbies and circulation corridors.

The Panel notes that many of the units feature bathrooms facing into living and kitchen areas (for example, Level 2 : 1I, 2S, 2I, 2C, 2N, 2R, 3D, 2R and 1K and above/below); this is an unacceptable outcome. In addition, many of the units proposed have multiple bedroom entries off living spaces, resulting in access constraints and difficulties in furnishing as well as associated amenity issues.

Some units such as Level 2's 3F, 2A, and 2R (and above/below) have balconies deeper than they are wide, resulting in dark adjacent internal spaces.

Council officers note that many units include combined living dining spaces that do not comply with the ADG's minimum width. Without clear dimensions, this is difficult to confirm. The applicant must therefore verify compliance in this regard.

It is also apparent that many main bedrooms (in apartment types 1B, 1D, 1F, 1H, 1J, 1K and 2D) do not comply with the ADG's minimum main bedroom size (10sqm excluding wardrobes). The applicant must verify compliance in this regard.

The Panel also notes that confirmation of storage areas, balcony sizes (as per ADG minimum sizes) and ground floor courtyards (15sqm min. with 3m depth) must be confirmed on a unit by unit basis.

7. Safety

Without further design development, it is difficult to imagine how the northern landscaped setback will be amenable by day and safe at night.

The currently proposed street network needs significant design development to ensure that street safety truly benefit from activation including but not limited to :

- street facing lobbies
- public open spaces
- private gardens and
- ground level units.

8. Housing Diversity and Social Interaction

Affordable housing is greatly needed in Sydney generally and will make a significant contribution to the amenity and general well being of the local context. However, as with all multiple residential projects, proposed dwellings must be well accessed from public streets, must be well laid out, designed for comfort and privacy, comply with ADG requirements and be supplemented with amenable private and open spaces. At the density proposed, all of these aspects are crucial.

While it may meet numerical requirements (this is to be confirmed – see note about COS area compliance in Landscape above), the proposed communal space provided does not adequately serve the needs of the 162 dwellings proposed in terms of active and passive spaces, places for gathering, social interaction etc.




9. Aesthetics

As noted above, the consistently applied expression and materiality across all buildings creates an institutional rather than residential character. The relentlessness of expression proposed is exacerbated by the arrangement of bulk, the length of individual buildings (especially building C) and continuous building heights with little variation to roof line.

Rather than proposing a consistent parapet height, different building types (such as L shaped buildings) could incorporate a change of height, thereby creating accessible roof terraces, opportunities to change material and introduce articulate roof forms. A more strategic approach to the location of “gaps” between discrete building forms, could better facilitate breeze and outlook from the central garden to the street. It may be better too, if the ground level and front gardens were completely reimaged, so as to emphasize frontage, address and engagement with the street.

The balustrade treatment to balconies also provides scope for more animation of the façade treatment. At first floor level a less transparent solution would provide more privacy to residents and screen items that may be stored there by residents, notwithstanding a management system to control this that could work short term but may not be there in later years.

Panel Recommendation

Selected Recommendation	Description	Action
<p>Green</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) supports the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that this is a well-considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality is of a high standard.</p>	<p>Only minor changes are required as noted and provided these changes are incorporated, and presented to the City Architect, the Panel Does not need to review this application again</p>
<p>Amber</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) generally supports the proposal in its current form with caveats that require further consideration.</p> <p>The Panel advises that this is a reasonably well considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality are of a reasonable standard.</p>	<p>Once the applicant and design team have addressed the issues outlined, the panel looks forward to reviewing the next iteration</p>
<p>Red</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) does not support the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that there are a number of significant issues with the proposal.</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that the applicant/proponent contact the Council to discuss.</p>

DESIGN EXCELLENCE ADVISORY PANEL RECOMMENDATION

City of Parramatta



Address 264-268 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford
Date 27th AUGUST, 2020

Application Summary

Application Number	DA/242/2020
Assessing Officer	Frances Mehrrens
Applicant/Proponent	Baptist Care NSW & ACT
Architect and Registration Number	DKO Architects Nicholas Byrne – Reg No: 8987
Urban Designer	-
Landscape Architects	Scape Design
Planner	Adam Byrnes et al. (Think Planners)
Other Persons in attendance	David Cowdery et al. (Baptist Care) Sonny Oh (DKO Architects) Joshua Brandon (Lendlease)

DEAP Members	Russell Olsson, Brendan Randles, Oi Choong
Chair	Russell Olsson
Other Persons in attendance	Jay Ahmed – Project Officer Urban Design Jonathan Cleary – Team Leader Development Assessment
Item No	1 of 3
DEAP Meeting Number	2 nd Referral

General Information

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The absence of a comment related directly to any prescribed principle does not necessarily imply that the Panel considers the particular matter has been satisfactorily resolved.

Proposal

Project description:

- Consolidation of existing lots and subdivision to create four lots.
- Earthworks comprising cut to a maximum depth of approximately 3.5m and fill to a maximum depth of approximately 1.2m.
- Construction of residential flat buildings in accordance with State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009, comprising a total of 162 dwellings. Three options were prepared by the applicant for the meeting.
- The residential flat buildings will provide affordable housing for 99 independent living units for seniors and 63 dwellings for low-income families.
- Construction of a single level basement with new vehicle access from Martins Lane for:
 - 82 car parking spaces;
 - 40 bicycle parking spaces; and
 - Loading dock.
- Landscaping to accommodate deep soil planting as well as communal open space.
- Public domain works, including upgrade of Martins Lane and construction of East West and North South Road.

The application would be determined by the Sydney Central City Planning Panel (SCCPP) as it has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million. The application also triggers assessment by the SCCPP as it is for affordable housing with a capital investment value of more than \$5 million.

Panel Comments

The nine SEPP65 design principles were considered by the Panel in discussion of the development application. These are: **Context and Neighbourhood Character, Scale and Built Form, Density, Sustainability, Landscape, Amenity, Safety, Housing Diversity and Social Interaction, and Aesthetics.**

The Design Excellence Advisory Panel has the following comments in relation to the project:

1. CONTEXT

At the last design review meeting, the Panel noted the proposal's departure from the DCP envelopes prescribed for the site. Three (3) buildings instead of four (4) were proposed, including very long east west buildings, a long north south building with one core and gaps aligned east west instead of north south. This resulted in numerous amenity and compliance issues previously noted and addressed below.

While the Panel can understand the motivation in modifying the envelopes - to align with contours and avoid an inefficient interface with the ground plane - what is lost is the potential to have clearly defined visual links afforded by the north south gaps, linking Pennant Hills Road through both stages of the development to the lowest part of the property. In addition, the stepping of both north south buildings would allow for communal terraces, which would greatly enhance the courtyard's provision of communal open space.

It is the Panel's view that an amended layout – necessitated in part to address the proposal's remaining amenity and compliance issues – should reflect on the logic and urban design strengths of the DCP envelopes and at least in part, attempt to adapt some its principles and objectives.

2. SCALE AND BUILT FORM

The departures from the DCP envelopes referred to above – as well as a reduction in lift cores from six (6) to five (5) - result in a number of significant urban design and amenity issues, which greatly impacted on the initial proposal's capacity to achieve design excellence (which is mandatory for this site). The amenity issues directly related to the built form proposed include : loss of visual corridors and breeze; poor open space amenity (the courtyard is largely overshadowed and falling short of the amenity required for such a large residential population); non-compliant natural ventilation and non-compliant mid winter solar access. With so many amenity and compliance issues and with limited site analysis and block testing, the Panel could not support the proposal and recommended that alternative layouts be tested.

In response to the Panel's comments, three options have been proposed for discussion. As they are in fact only variants on the original proposal, the additional options do not substantially improve the scheme - especially in terms of open space amenity and natural ventilation compliance. The new gap proposed in Option 02 would not increase communal open space amenity and access to sun, as the proximity of this additional open space to apartments would severely restrict use. Option 03's extra partial level, which Council is unlikely to support, would most likely lead to additional planning issues.

While the flagging of these options did not really address the current layout's failings, it did lead to a positive discussion about how the scheme could be improved through a slight modification of buildings B and C – see below.

To address the amenity, compliance and urban design issues noted above and below in Amenity (as well as optimizing the chance of achieving design excellence), the following modifications should be made to the currently proposed built form (Option 01) :

- Building B should be extended to run the full length of Martins Lane and provided with an additional core and street entry. The required step in built form should provide the opportunity for an accessible landscaped communal terrace to supplement the communal courtyard.
- Building C should be shortened to accommodate Building B's amended envelope, with two cores retained. The gap between building C and B can be minimal in width (6m minimum) but should be designed to allow cross ventilation through well considered and screened openings without adversely impacting privacy. Aligned with the existing gap between Buildings A and B, the north south visual links intended in the master plan will be partially reinstated.
- To ensure that each building demonstrates full compliance with the ADG's solar access and natural ventilation requirements, proposed skylights must be more concisely arranged and detailed; it may be preferable to use continuous north facing operable roof lights rather than skylights as currently proposed. Solar access will need to be demonstrated for each unit reliant on skylights for solar compliance.
- Alternative options to the fold back accessibility ramps adjacent to the Building B entries must be reconsidered. It is just not credible that a well-integrated platform lift is any more "discriminatory" than the ramps proposed.
- All balconies deeper than they are wide should be modified so that the longer dimension of each balcony is parallel to the building façade.

3. DENSITY

The previous Panel noted that the proposal did not demonstrate that the allowable density (boosted 20% under the ARH SEPP 2009) could be accommodated on the site. With the many amenity and compliance issues still remaining, the capacity of the site to accommodate the density proposed remains unproven.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Natural ventilation remains non compliant with the requirements of the ADG – this must be resolved to achieve Design Excellence. See notes above regarding the proposed skylights.

The Panel notes that there are further opportunities for including sustainability initiatives in the design, above and beyond BASIX, such as solar energy generation, rainwater harvesting etc.

5. LANDSCAPE

See notes above regarding the over shadowing of the courtyard and the need to provide additional open space types to cater for a diversity of active and passive uses. As noted previously, this would be best provided in the form of roof terraces. Apart from BBQ or kitchen and a variety of settings, the roof terrace(s) proposed should be provided with soft landscape, shade giving structures, an accessible WC and storage for furniture.

Further thought should be given to the design of the central communal open space in relation to the following :

- more defined entries into the space from all 4 sides,
- location of more seating areas to encourage social interaction
- location of footpaths and pedestrian desire lines across the space
- 'containment' of the playground area from the adjacent pathway

The suggested 'north south visual link' referred to in Item 2 could be envisaged as a 'green link' comprising a series of linked courtyards with seating areas.

The Panel recommends a close liaison with Council on the design of the adjacent streetscapes and the appropriate species and location of street trees. The street trees could be complemented by smaller flowering trees in the front courtyard planters of each Block.

It is assumed that all overhead wires will be undergrounded to allow large canopy trees to thrive.

6. AMENITY

To address the many amenity issues identified by the previous Panel, the proposal's interior layout has been substantially modified. Entry lobbies have been widened; apartments now demonstrate that they are all area compliant; mid winter solar access has been improved through living room modifications; bathrooms no longer face living rooms and bedrooms opening to living rooms have been greatly reduced. These changes and the resulting amenity improvements to apartments generally are commended. However, some amenity issues have not been adequately addressed, which will continue to impact on design excellence requirements.

Contrary to the applicant's claims, natural ventilation still fails to achieve ADG compliance, mainly due to non compliant slots in Building B and questionable first floor window locations in Buildings A and C.

Apart from being largely over shadowed, the courtyard's singular form and close proximity to adjacent apartments, would suggest that it cannot provide the amenity and diversity of spaces that will be required by such a large residential population. For these reasons, a roof terrace is still strongly recommended.

As noted previously, Building C in particular is excessively long, which, apart from creating very long corridors and natural ventilation issues, results in a monotonous streetscape which can only be partially addressed through the building's remodelling. In re-planning Building C to address the future public street, it is suggested that opportunities to increase façade modulation should be taken. These could include turning fire stairs through 90 degrees, to create deeper recesses.

Main entry lobbies to Building C are still compromised by excessive fold back ramps and lack of quality open space adjacent front doors.

In view of design excellence requirements, it is clear to the Panel that only some modification to the currently built form layout (Option 01) – as described above in Scale and Built Form - can resolve outstanding amenity and compliance issues.

7. SAFETY

It is still not clear how the front setback landscape will be used and how safety and security can be maintained at night.

All lobbies now have a street address, which improves safety, security and way faring generally.

8. HOUSING DIVERITY




The Panel reiterates its support for affordable housing.

Communal open space still needs to be improved to address the diversity of spaces required by future residents.

9. AESTHETICS

In response to the previous Panel's comments about the proposal's materiality and expression, various modifications were flagged, including stepping, changes to balustrade, modified alignments and so on. While these strategies were presented as sketch options only, the Panel supports the direction and intent of these measures and would encourage the Applicant to develop them further.

Panel Recommendation

Selected Recommendation	Description	Action
<p>Green</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) supports the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that this is a well-considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality is of a high standard.</p>	<p>Only minor changes are required as noted and provided these changes are incorporated, and presented to the City Architect, the Panel Does not need to review this application again.</p>
<p>Amber</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) generally supports the proposal in its current form with caveats that require further consideration. The Panel advises that this is a reasonably well considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality are of a reasonable standard.</p>	<p>Once the applicant and design team have addressed the issues outlined, the panel looks forward to reviewing the next iteration.</p>
<p>Red</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) does not support the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that there are a number of significant issues with the proposal.</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that the applicant/proponent contact the Council to discuss.</p>

DESIGN EXCELLENCE ADVISORY PANEL RECOMMENDATION

City of Parramatta



Address 264-268 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford
Date 9th SEPTEMBER, 2020

Application Number	DA/242/2020
Assessing Officer	Frances Mehrtens
Applicant/Proponent	Baptist Care NSW & ACT
Architect and Registration Number	DKO Architects Nicholas Byrne – Reg No: 8987
Landscape Architects	Scape Design 27 th August 2020
Planner	Adam Byrnes et al. (Think Planners)
Previous DEAP meeting	27 th August 2020 (2 nd referral)
Panel members	Russell Olsson Brendan Randles Oi Chong

DEAP Review	9 th September 2020
DEAP Representative	Brendan Randles
Material assessed	Amended drawings (DKO Package 200904)
Background	<p>This assessment is in response to amended drawings submitted subsequent to the most recent DEAP meeting on 27th August 2020. For the second time, the Panel found that the Proposal did not adequately address the requirements of the ADG and failed to meet Design Excellence standards. The proposal therefore failed to demonstrate that the density proposed could be accommodated on the site in the form proposed.</p> <p>This report includes the comments from the last DEAP meeting (italicized in red) and addresses each of the issues raised.</p>

Application Summary

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Panel Comments

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The comments of the Design Excellence Advisory Panel from the meeting on 27th August 2020, are shown in italics in red.

1. CONTEXT

At the last design review meeting, the Panel noted the proposal's departure from the DCP envelopes prescribed for the site. Three (3) buildings instead of four (4) were proposed, including very long east west buildings, a long north south building with one core and gaps aligned east west instead of north south. This resulted in numerous amenity and compliance issues previously noted and addressed below.

While the Panel can understand the motivation in modifying the envelopes - to align with contours and avoid an inefficient interface with the ground plane - what is lost is the potential to have clearly defined visual links afforded by the north south gaps, linking Pennant Hills Road through both stages of the development to the lowest part of the property. In addition, the stepping of both north south buildings would allow for communal terraces, which would greatly enhance the courtyard's provision of communal open space.

It is the Panel's view that an amended layout – necessitated in part to address the proposal's remaining amenity and compliance issues – should reflect on the logic and urban design strengths of the DCP envelopes and at least in part, attempt to adapt some its principles and objectives.

In response to the previous Panel's comments, the layout has been amended. It now comprises :

- Building A : a similar L shaped built form to previously proposed to Pennant Hill Road and the proposed North South Road (with two cores)
- Building B : a longer and stepped built form along Martins Lane (with two cores), with a communal terrace now proposed at level 4
- Building C : a shorter built form along the proposed East West Road (with two cores)

The alignments of the amended Buildings B and C now provide a clear north south view corridor from Pennant Hills Road to the south. Apart from improving orientation and breeze through the site, it greatly enhances its relationship with context. The new layout more clearly indicates how the southern side should be developed, to further extend this spatial corridor down the site. With the new arrangement, the length of Building C has been shortened considerably. This too improves the visual and physical amenity of the proposed East West Street, and allows the new gap to impact positively on the new streetscape.

While this measure does not achieve the two north south view corridors featured in the DCP's Block Layout (which featured four buildings), this departure does not impact negatively on the courtyard space; the layout could be seen to address the site's asymmetrical shape and the proposed western "gap" will ensure that breeze and outlook are facilitated. In regards to both of these aspects, the revised proposal significantly improves the its relationship with context.

2. SCALE AND BUILT FORM

The departures from the DCP envelopes referred to above – as well as a reduction in lift cores from six (6) to five (5) - result in a number of significant urban design and amenity issues, which greatly impacted on the initial proposal's capacity to achieve design excellence (which is mandatory for this site). The amenity issues directly related to the built form proposed include : loss of visual corridors and breeze; poor open space amenity (the courtyard is largely overshadowed and falling short of the amenity required for such a large residential population); non-compliant natural ventilation and non-compliant mid winter solar access. With so many amenity and compliance issues and with limited site analysis and block testing, the Panel could not support the proposal and recommended that alternative layouts be tested.

In response to the Panel's comments, three options have been proposed for discussion. As they are in fact only variants on the original proposal, the additional options do not substantially improve the scheme - especially in terms of open space amenity and natural ventilation compliance. The new gap proposed in Option 02 would not increase communal open space amenity and access to sun, as the proximity of this additional open space to apartments would severely restrict use. Option 03's extra partial level, which Council is unlikely to support, would most likely lead to additional planning issues.

While the flagging of these options did not really address the current layout's failings, it did lead to a positive discussion about how the scheme could be improved through a slight modification of buildings B and C – see below.

To address the amenity, compliance and urban design issues noted above and below in Amenity (as well as optimizing the chance of achieving design excellence), the following modifications should be made to the currently proposed built form (Option 01) :

- Building B should be extended to run the full length of Martins Lane and provided with an additional core and street entry. The required step in built form should provide the opportunity for an accessible landscaped communal terrace to supplement the communal courtyard.*
- Building C should be shortened to accommodate Building B's amended envelope, with two cores retained. The gap between building C and B can be minimal in width (6m minimum) but should be designed to allow cross ventilation through well considered and screened openings without adversely impacting privacy. Aligned with the existing gap between Buildings A and B, the north south visual links intended in the master plan will be partially reinstated.*
- To ensure that each building demonstrates full compliance with the ADG's solar access and natural ventilation requirements, proposed skylights must be more concisely arranged and detailed; it may be preferable to use continuous north facing operable roof lights rather than skylights as currently proposed. Solar access will need to be demonstrated for each unit reliant on skylights for solar compliance.*

- *Alternative options to the fold back accessibility ramps adjacent to the Building B entries must be reconsidered. It is just not credible that a well-integrated platform lift is any more “discriminatory” than the ramps proposed.*
- *All balconies deeper than they are wide should be modified so that the longer dimension of each balcony is parallel to the building façade.*

As noted above in Context, the proposal has now been modified to include a longer and stepped Building B to Martins Lane and a shorter Building C to the new East West Street. These modifications significantly improve the courtyard’s outlook, breeze and open space quality. In addition, the new roof terrace to Building B will enhance the proposal’s open space amenity on the site.

The revised proposal also significantly improves streetscape potential – especially to the proposed East West Street, which will benefit from the landscaped steps that feature in the newly located gap between Buildings B and C. The amended block layouts are supported.

The steps down to the east West Road provide a lovely place to enter the site, to sit and catch the breeze. It is assumed that a secure gate (with keypad) will be provided at street level. This is to be confirmed.

The additional built form above level 4 - required to house roof terrace access and egress - exceeds the height requirements for the site. While the Panel can support this breach, it is not known if additional egress is required from this terrace. If not, it may be better to access the roof terrace from Building B’s northern core only.

The communal roof terrace should incorporate an accessible WC and storage for furniture; this would be best incorporated into the built form at the terrace’s northern end. A shade structure and planting should be provided (see Landscape below).

While cross ventilation is greatly improved, Building B still fails to achieve 60% ADG compliance (see below in Amenity). To achieve compliance, the number of units proposed in Building B will need to be reduced or/ as many as three additional units will require complying ventilated skylights on level 3 below. As the three (one bedroom) units required are located directly south of the proposed terrace, strategic design measures will be required to prevent visual and acoustic privacy issues; south facing roof lights above the southern party walls may be the best option.

All windows required for cross ventilation located to adjacent balconies and internal habitable spaces (such as those adjacent to Building B’s cross through units) must be detailed in DA drawings to demonstrate that they do not cause adverse visual and/or acoustic impacts between units.

The gap proposed between Buildings B and C is 9m wide; while this is less than the ADG’s Separation requirements of 12m, it would appear that amenable and compliant apartments can be designed adjacent to this space. This separation can therefore be supported. However, to address privacy while achieving amenable layouts, the following design strategies must be demonstrated on DA drawings :

- minimising openings onto the “gap”
- locating living rooms away from the “gap” where possible
- strategically locating openings to prevent looking into adjacent habitable spaces
- angling and screening of openings (similar to the apartments facing the gap between Buildings A and B)

There are still a number of balconies deeper than they are wide; all balconies must be reviewed to ensure that their depth is equal to or less than their width.

Alternative options to the fold back accessibility ramps adjacent to the Building B entries are still to be considered. A well-integrated platform lift in each location, would allow for valuable open space (with a seat) near the entries, enhancing opportunities for incidental meetings and social exchange. This issue must be addressed and resolved on DA drawings

With the dimensions presented and discussed at the last panel meeting, the apartment sizes and widths of habitable spaces (living rooms and bedrooms) are considered acceptable.

3. DENSITY

The previous Panel noted that the proposal did not demonstrate that the allowable density (boosted 20% under the ARH SEPP 2009) could be accommodated on the site. With the many amenity and compliance issues still remaining, the capacity of the site to accommodate the density proposed remains unproven.

Notwithstanding the need for further detail to demonstrate compliance and amenity (see above in Scale and Built Form and below Amenity), the revised built form layout with communal open terrace appears to demonstrate that the density proposed can be accommodated on the site.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Natural ventilation remains non compliant with the requirements of the ADG – this must be resolved to achieve Design Excellence. See notes above regarding the proposed skylights.

The Panel notes that there are further opportunities for including sustainability initiatives in the design, above and beyond BASIX, such as solar energy generation, rainwater harvesting etc.

With the changes outlined above in Scale and Built Form, it would appear that the proposal can comply with the ADG's cross ventilation requirements.

As noted above, there are further opportunities for including sustainability initiatives in the design, above and beyond BASIX, such as solar energy generation, rainwater harvesting etc.. These measures must be demonstrated.

5. LANDSCAPE

See notes above regarding the over shadowing of the courtyard and the need to provide additional open space types to cater for a diversity of active and passive uses. As noted previously, this would be best provided in the form of roof terraces. Apart from BBQ or kitchen and a variety of settings, the roof terrace(s) proposed should be provided with soft landscape, shade giving structures, an accessible WC and storage for furniture.

Further thought should be given to the design of the central communal open space in relation to the following :

- more defined entries into the space from all 4 sides,*

- location of more seating areas to encourage social interaction
- location of footpaths and pedestrian desire lines across the space
- ‘containment’ of the playground area from the adjacent pathway

The suggested ‘north south visual link’ referred to in Item 2 could be envisaged as a ‘green link’ comprising a series of linked courtyards with seating areas.

The Panel recommends a close liaison with Council on the design of the adjacent streetscapes and the appropriate species and location of street trees. The street trees could be complemented by smaller flowering trees in the front courtyard planters of each Block.

It is assumed that all overhead wires will be undergrounded to allow large canopy trees to thrive.

The above landscape recommendations must be integrated into the amended design and fully incorporated into amended DA drawings. Once the landscape plan is fully resolved, the revised landscape strategy must be fully coordinated with amended DA drawings.

6. AMENITY

To address the many amenity issues identified by the previous Panel, the proposal’s interior layout has been substantially modified. Entry lobbies have been widened; apartments now demonstrate that they are all area compliant; mid winter solar access has been improved through living room modifications; bathrooms no longer face living rooms and bedrooms opening to living rooms have been greatly reduced. These changes and the resulting amenity improvements to apartments generally are commended. However, some amenity issues have not been adequately addressed, which will continue to impact on design excellence requirements.

Contrary to the applicant’s claims, natural ventilation still fails to achieve ADG compliance, mainly due to non compliant slots in Building B and questionable first floor window locations in Buildings A and C.

Apart from being largely over shadowed, the courtyard’s singular form and close proximity to adjacent apartments, would suggest that it cannot provide the amenity and diversity of spaces that will be required by such a large residential population. For these reasons, a roof terrace is still strongly recommended.

As noted previously, Building C in particular is excessively long, which, apart from creating very long corridors and natural ventilation issues, results in a monotonous streetscape which can only be partially addressed through the building’s remodelling.

Main entry lobbies to Building C are still compromised by excessive fold back ramps and lack of quality open space adjacent front doors.

In view of design excellence requirements, it is clear to the Panel that only some modification to the currently built form layout (Option 01) – as described above in Scale and Built Form - can resolve outstanding amenity and compliance issues.

As noted above the amended Built Form layout greatly improves the open space amenity of the courtyard, with better outlook, access to breeze and relationship with context. The new communal open terrace will enhance the courtyard’s provision of open space and access to sun. See notes above in Built Form relating to the provision of a WC and storage as well as sun shading at terrace level.

Streetscape too is improved and the new East West Street will benefit from the new gap with landscaped steps.

As noted above in Scale and Built Form, alternative options to the fold back accessibility ramps adjacent to the Building B entries are still to be considered.

While cross ventilation is greatly improved (Building A and Building C both exceed 60% ADG compliance), Building C appears to be 3 units short of compliance and therefore only achieving 55.6% compliance with the ADG. Each individual building must achieve a minimum of 60% cross ventilating units. To achieve compliance, the number of units proposed in Building B will need to be reduced or/ three additional units will require complying ventilated skylights on level 3 below. See notes above in Scale and Built Form.

The amenity and privacy of the four units on each level adjacent to the new “gap” between Buildings B and C is yet to be demonstrated. These units must be fully resolved in the amended DA drawings.

See notes above in Scale and Built Form regarding balconies deeper than they are wide. These balconies need to be amended.

7. SAFETY

It is still not clear how the front setback landscape will be used and how safety and security can be maintained at night.

All lobbies now have a street address, which improves safety, security and way faring generally.

The boundary condition of the site needs to be resolved and represented on DA drawings. Gates and other security measures need to be located and designed.

The Pennant Hills Road landscape frontage requires a more comprehensive description of its role and character, especially at night.

8. HOUSING DIVERSITY

The Panel reiterates its support for affordable housing.

Communal open space still needs to be improved to address the diversity of spaces required by future residents.

The provision and character of the proposed communal open space (including the communal roof terrace) has been substantially improved.




9. AESTHETICS

In response to the previous Panel's comments about the proposal's materiality and expression, various modifications were flagged, including stepping, changes to balustrade, modified alignments and so on. While these strategies were presented as sketch options only, the Panel supports the direction and intent of these measures and would encourage the Applicant to develop them further.

With a new arrangement of built form, the new proposal significantly increases the aesthetic potential of the proposal through :

- better proportioned built form
- reduced length of Building C, which was formerly excessive
- a more strategically located gap along the East West Street
- better aligned spatial corridors

Panel Recommendation

Selected Recommendation	Description	Action
<p>Green</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) supports the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that this is a well-considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality is of a high standard.</p>	<p>Only minor changes are required as noted and provided these changes are incorporated, and presented to the City Architect, the Panel Does not need to review this application again</p>
<p>Amber</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) generally supports the proposal in its current form with caveats that require further consideration. The Panel advises that this is a reasonably well considered and presented scheme and that the architectural, urban design and landscape quality are of a reasonable standard.</p>	<p>Once the applicant and design team have addressed the issues outlined, the panel looks forward to reviewing the next iteration</p>
<p>Red</p> 	<p>The Parramatta Design Excellence Advisory Panel (The Panel) does not support the proposal in its current form. The Panel advises that there are a number of significant issues with the proposal.</p>	<p>The Panel recommends that the applicant/proponent contact the Council to discuss.</p>