

URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL ADVICE for Modification Proposal

PROPERTY: 1-20 Railway Road, Meadowbank

MEETING DATE: 31 October 2024

DEVELOPMENT: Mixed use Retail, Residential Apartment Building and Co-living

ATTENDANCE:

UDRP Panel:
Peter Smith
Matthew Pullinger

Council:
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Proponents:

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NOTES FOR PROPONENTS

The purpose of the UDRP is to review the proposal and provide impartial, constructive feedback and expert advice on the design quality of your development proposals.

The aim of the review process is to help proponents, project designers and Council's planning staff by providing expert, context-specific design advice that will contribute to improving the design quality of the built environment. Applicants will be required to take the feedback onboard and incorporate changes in their design for further submission and review by Council.

Positive feedback from the UDRP does not guarantee development approval, but the panel's advice will be considered by Council as part of its review and assessment process.

This review does NOT constitute a formal assessment of your proposal and the comments of the Panel members should be taken as a guarantee of approval of your proposal.

This is a Modification Application and the Proponent is thanked for its engagement with the Urban Design Review Panel.

As a mixed use residential apartment building subject to the provisions of Chapter 4 of the Housing SEPP, the proposal has been reviewed against the Design Principles set out at Schedule 9 of the Housing SEPP.

HOUSING SEPP – Design Quality of Residential Flat Buildings	UDRP Comments
<p>Context and Neighbourhood Character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design responds and contributes to its context which 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. 2. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character. 3. Well-designed buildings respond to and enhance the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood. 4. Consideration of local context is important for all sites, including sites in the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Established areas b. Areas undergoing change c. Areas identified for change. 	<p>The Panel has previously reviewed and provided comments on a similar proposal for this site and is aware of the broad project history, including a Court-approved DA and subsequent Modification recently approved by Council.</p> <p>This proposal is a further Modification Application seeking consent for a number of relatively minor design amendments including to internal planning within a number of apartment types, changes to typical floor to floor heights and associated facade refinements.</p> <p>The large site is located in the Meadowbank renewal area and comprises a whole urban block bounded by Constitution Avenue, Railway Road, Underdale Lane and Faraday Lane.</p> <p>The site is zoned B4 Mixed Use with a permissible height of 21.5m for the majority of the site before stepping down to 18.5 at the northern end along Constitution Road. The FSR control is 2.7:1.</p> <p>Various policy-based incentives for additional building height and floor space have been applied and are reflected in the existing DA consent.</p> <p>The approved development includes a supermarket and supporting retail tenancies on the ground floor with 4 buildings above, housing residential apartments in Buildings A, B and C and affordable housing, co-living units in Building D, all arranged around a central courtyard.</p> <p>A loading dock is accessed via Constitution Road and serves the retail uses. Car park access is provided at the southern end of Faraday Lane.</p> <p>The approved development includes a new pocket plaza at the corner of Railway Road and Constitution Road. The plaza supplements the existing plaza to the rail station and provides a northern aspect with additional seating along the street and along the steps in addition to outdoor dining space. This is a key public domain interface and an important contribution the project makes to the renewal of Meadowbank.</p> <p>A series of approved public domain works are also important to the future success of the project. These are not proposed to be modified.</p>

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<p>Built Form and Scale</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings. 2. Good design also achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. building alignments, proportions, b. building type, c. building articulation d. the manipulation of building elements. 3. Appropriate built form <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. defines the public domain, b. contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, c. provides internal amenity and outlook. 	<p>The Modification maintains the broad built form, bulk and scale of the existing approved DA. Minor amendments that reflect changes to the internal configuration of a number of apartment layouts are evident, but bring no material change to the approved building forms. These changes are supported by the Panel.</p> <p>More significant, the Modification seeks to increase typical floor to floor levels sufficient to ensure that the requirements of the ADG (2.7m floor to ceiling height) and NCC requirements for waterproofing, slab setdowns and insulation can be achieved.</p> <p>Subject to Council being satisfied that any additional off-site overshadowing impacts are acceptable, the Panel supports the proposed increase in building height.</p> <p>In offering this support the Panel also notes:</p> <p>_3.2m floor to floor is rapidly emerging as the industry standard for a typical repeating plan. The Modification seeks consent for floor to floor heights of 3.165m, which may be technically feasible with a high degree of structural and services integration. An additional 35mm per floor is unlikely to be perceptible from public vantage points and may simplify construction methodologies.</p> <p>_Further information regarding the minimum extent of lift over-runs should be provided to ensure these are no taller than necessary</p> <p>_The Panel appreciates that in seeking to minimise the extent of building height increase, the retail floor level may have been lowered marginally. Given the relationship between retail ground level, the pocket plaza and Constitution Road is a critical aspect of the project, the Panel encourages closer analysis of this area to ensure the retail entry does not feel necessarily divorced from street level or 'subterranean'. Lifting the retail level to improve these relationships would be supported by the Panel. Adjustments to the design of the awning to enable 'opening' up the internal mall to the sky (by removing more of the slab/planting above would be supported in order to provide a better public experience. (The curve of the awning is not considered to be a critical design feature that must be maintained). Refer also to comments under 'Landscape'.</p>

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<p>Density</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design achieves a high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in a density appropriate to the site and its context. 2. Appropriate densities are consistent with the area's existing or projected population. 3. Appropriate densities can be sustained by the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. existing or proposed infrastructure, b. public transport, c. access to jobs, d. community facilities and the environment. 	<p>The Panel acknowledges the policy settings that allow for height and density bonuses in return for the provision of affordable housing and acknowledges the existing consent reflects an exceedance of the FSR control for this site.</p> <p>The Modification appears to be broadly consistent with these policy settings and the existing DA consent.</p> <p>Subject to Council being satisfied that any additional overshadowing impacts are relatively minor and acceptable, the Panel supports the density configured on the site.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design combines positive environmental, social and economic outcomes. 2. Good sustainable design includes 3. use of natural cross ventilation and sunlight for the amenity and livability of residents and 4. passive thermal design for ventilation, heating and cooling reducing reliance on technology and operation costs. 5. Good sustainable design also includes the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. recycling and reuse of materials and waste, b. use of sustainable materials and <p>deep soil zones for groundwater recharge and vegetation.</p>	<p>Sustainability was not explicitly discussed in the meeting, however the Panel expects existing sustainability commitments will be maintained by the Modification and would support the adoption of additional ratings and targets.</p> <p>The social sustainability benefit of providing affordable co-living and Build to Rent housing is supported.</p>

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<p>Landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in attractive developments with good amenity. 2. A positive image and contextual fit of well-designed developments is achieved by contributing to the landscape character of the streetscape and neighbourhood. 3. Good landscape design enhances the development's environmental performance by retaining positive natural features which contribute to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. local context, b. coordinating water and soil management, c. solar access, d. micro-climate, e. tree canopy, f. habitat values and preserving green networks. g. Good landscape design optimises useability, h. privacy and opportunities for social interaction, i. equitable access, j. respect for neighbours' amenity and <p>Good landscape design provides for practical establishment and long term management.</p>	<p>The Modification Application does not propose any significant changes to the currently approved landscape design or public domain design.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, the Panel encourages a careful refinement of the pocket plaza configuration, its levels, alignments and relationship to Railway Road and Constitution Road.</p> <p>The geometry, profile and cantilever of the approved awning over the retail entry also warrants refinement.</p> <p>The floor levels and ramps should permit a direct path of travel and views to and from the internal mall and Constitution Road. The retail entry should not feel buried under ground.</p> <p>The presentation of Retail Units 1, 2 and 3 should also figure in this refinement.</p> <p>A number of minor discrepancies evident within the architectural drawing set (plan and section) should be resolved.</p> <p>The Panel makes these recommendations given the pocket plaza is the key moment of pedestrian priority and public domain contributed by the project and a key component of its public benefit.</p> <p>The creation of an amenable, legible and safe entry experience to the retail level is strongly encouraged. Refer also to comments regarding the retail floor level under 'Built form and scale'.</p>

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<p>Amenity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design positively influences internal and external amenity for residents and neighbours. 2. Good design contributes to positive living environments and resident well-being. 3. Good amenity combines <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. appropriate room dimensions and shapes, b. access to sunlight, c. natural ventilation, d. outlook, e. visual and acoustic privacy, storage, f. indoor and outdoor space, g. efficient layouts and service areas <p>ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility.</p>	<p>The proposed design changes to apartment plans and the ground floor communal room are supported, including the proposed deletion of approved 'blinker' windows between Buildings A and B, and C and D.</p> <p>Details should be provided to demonstrate that the alternative privacy screens provided to these windows entirely eliminates all opportunities for cross viewing between apartments/buildings.</p>
<p>Safety</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design optimises safety and security within the development and the public domain. 2. Good design provides for quality public and private spaces that are clearly defined and fit for the intended purpose. 3. Opportunities to maximise passive surveillance of public and communal areas promote safety. <p>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.</p>	<p>Safety was not specifically discussed during the meeting.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledges that in terms of safety, security and passive surveillance, the Modification remains generally consistent with the existing consent and is supported, subject to comments regarding the design refinement of the pocket plaza and retail entry sequence noted earlier in this report.</p> <p>The relocation of the common residential areas to more prominent areas of the site is supported and provide communal facilities that are more inviting with a higher degree of safety.</p>

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<p>Housing Diversity and Social Interaction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design achieves a mix of apartment sizes, providing housing choice for different demographics, living needs and household budgets. 2. Well designed residential apartment development responds to social context by providing housing and facilities to suit the existing and future social mix. 3. Good design involves practical and flexible features, including— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. different types of communal spaces for a broad range of people, and <p>opportunities for social interaction among residents.</p>	<p>The Panel supports the provision of affordable housing and Build to Rent housing.</p> <p>The broad mix of housing apartments is supported.</p>
<p>Aesthetics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good design achieves a built form that has good proportions and a balanced composition of elements, reflecting the internal layout and structure. 2. Good design uses a variety of materials, colours and textures. <p>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.</p>	<p>Given the early phases of construction documentation and cost planning are underway, the Panel appreciates that the proposed construction methodology, facade systems and architectural language are likely to be well-resolved.</p> <p>Hence, the Panel encourages this resolved design intent and architectural expression to be provided with the Modification Application.</p> <p>In particular, the Panel encourages the preparation of detailed design studies of each primary facade type (ideally in 3D) at a scale of approximately 1:50 to confirm and resolve the design intent. The Panel encourages these design studies to form part of any Modification approval.</p> <p>Given the detailed architectural expression is reliant on the brick forms along primary street frontages with contrasting screened elements set back and above - these facade types should be elaborated upon. This could include rationalisation of screens and windows to ensure they appropriately relate to the rooms behind the façade and provide a balanced facade composition.</p> <p>The Panel is keen to understand that proposed materials, construction systems, balustrade types and fixings, balcony edges, window operation, integrated landscape planter beds, material junctions, rainwater and balcony drainage systems, including any downpipes and similar details within the proposal are described to a satisfactory level of resolution.</p>

Further Comments & Outcome
The Panel encourages the proponent to adopt the recommendations set out in this report and asks that Council satisfy itself they have been appropriately addressed prior to any potential approval.

End of advice